Adolescent identity experiences of historically disadvantaged scholarship recipients attending independent South African high schools

BY

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Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Education in Educational Psychology

in the Faculty of Education

at

Stellenbosch University

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March 2012

DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Little is known about the experiences that previously disadvantaged bursary and scholarship learners have in independent South African schools. Many scholarship and bursary recipients are from homes that fall into the low to middle income groups and they find themselves surrounded by boys and girls who are from high income, affluent homes. The aim of this study is to gain an understanding of the experiences that scholarship learners have within independent school environments and to find out what the opportunities and challenges are that they may face. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model was used as theoretical framework as it incorporates a number of different interconnected systems that will influence the participant's lives and their experiences. These microsystems included parents, school, peers and the individual.

This study's research methodology is a phenomenological approach which is embedded within the interpretative paradigm. Purposeful sampling was used to select eight learners from four different independent schools in the Western Cape. Two semi-structured interviews were conducted within two months of each other, with each of the participants. Phenomenological data analysis was conducted to analyse the information provided in the interviews.

The research findings indicated that previously disadvantaged scholarship learners face a great deal of pressure in the form of high expectations being placed on them, both academically and behaviourally. Racial stereotyping was found to be prevalent with regards to assumptions made about learner's academic abilities and financial backgrounds. Challenges related to cultural difference and financial challenges were also noted.

OPSOMMING

Min is bekend oor die ervarings wat voorheen benadeelde beurs-leerders in onafhanklike (private) Suid-Afrikaanse skole. Baie beurshouers kom uit huise wat in die lae tot middel inkomste groepe val, en hulle vind hulself tussen seuns en meisies wat van hoë-inkomste huise kom. Die doel van hierdie studie is om die ervarings wat die beursleerders in onafhanklike skool omgewings beter te verstaan en vas te stel watter geleenthede en uitdagings hulle ervaar. Bronfenbrenner se bioëkologiese model word gebruik as 'n teoretiese raamwerk omdat dit verskillende stelsels insluit wat 'n invloed sal hê op die deelnemers se lewens en ervarings. Die mikrostelsel sluit die ouers, skool, portuurgroep en individu in.

Hierdie studie se navorsingsmetodologie is 'n fenomenologiese benadering wat binne die interpretatiewe paradigma ingebed is. Doelgerigte steekproefneming is gebruik om agt leerders van vier verskillende onafhanklike skole in die Wes-Kaap te kies. Twee semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude is gevoer met elkeen van die deelnemers tussen 'n tydperk van twee maande. Fenomenologiese data-analise is gebruik om die inligting van die onderhoude te analiseer.

Die navorsingsbevindinge het aangedui dat die deelnemers baie druk ervaar in die vorm van hoë verwagtinge wat op hulle geplaas word, in terme van hul akademiese prestasie en gedrag. Algemene rasse-stereotipering was gevind met betrekking tot die aannames wat gemaak is oor die leerders se akademiese vermoëns en finansiële agtergronde. Kulturele verskille en finansiële uitdagings is ook opgemerk.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I thank my Mum and Dad who have supported me every step of the way along my chosen path. Their love and care has carried me through the tough times and has helped me in ways I cannot explain. I am eternally grateful to them.

My heartfelt thanks to:

- My family, Nick, Leigh, Georgina, Justin, Annabel and Matthew as well as my closest friends for their understanding and support.
- My dear friend and classmate, Natalie, for her wisdom and honesty.
- My supervisor, Professor Carolissen, for her advice and care.
- Barbara for inspiring this research idea, and to my fellow staff at the International School of Hout Bay who have been incredibly supportive throughout my studies. Thank you for your understanding and patience.
- The independent schools and the participants who gave up their time to participate in this study.

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CHAPTER 1

CONTEXT AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Issues concerning education in South Africa have been debated for many years. Since the 1994 elections ushered in the post-apartheid era, greater focus was placed on providing all learners with equal opportunities to, and within, education. Previously, apartheid laws were designed to structurally and materially escalate and maintain white supremacist domination. One of the ways in which the government hoped to achieve oppression and privilege in black and white education, respectively, was to segregate schools into hierarchical racial groupings of white, coloured, Indian and black. Children of different racial groupings received different levels of education and resources, with white learners receiving the most educational resources and black learners the least.

In this hierarchy, coloured and Indian students received fewer resources than whites but more resources than blacks. In 1993, an interim constitution was introduced, and this was the final move to remove all segregationist laws, which included legislated racial restrictions on jobs and different educational resources for different races. In November 1996, the South African Schools Act was passed. It stated that no learner, child or adult, may be denied access to education and that no discrimination of any sort may prevent a person from being enrolled at an educational institution.

The enormous inequalities created by apartheid still remain for the majority of South Africans, and disadvantage is demographically disproportionately skewed towards black South Africans. On average, white South Africans still have the highest annual income whilst the poorest population is black South Africans (van der Berg, 2010). South Africa's socio-economic conditions have resulted in poorer areas having public schools that generally do not receive adequate resources to provide the quality education that is required. Lack of funds, socio-economic problems, vandalism, overcrowding, insufficient classrooms and a shortage of competent, well-qualified teachers contribute to some of the challenges that many learners experience in this country.

Independent schools (previously referred to as 'private schools') have existed in South Africa since 1848. The majority of the schools were Anglican, Catholic, Jewish or state-

subsidised mission schools that were open to all learners. When the National Party came to power in 1948, many mission schools had to close down while those that were able to remain open no longer received state subsidies and had to register as private schools and follow the departmental curriculum (Hofmeyr & Lee, n.d.). As part of the South African Schools Act of 1996, two official school categories were created: public and independent.

Public schools are funded and run by government; however, there are discrepancies among public schools whereby some are very poorly resourced while others have a great deal more resources owing to the apartheid legacy. The latter schools were formerly known as model C schools and, pre-1994, were for white learners only. Independent schools, on the other hand, are well-resourced and funded by parents who pay high school fees (www.isasa.org). Their resources include science laboratories, well-stocked libraries and technology centres. Sporting and cultural opportunities are afforded by many of these schools as they often have a number of well-maintained sports fields and theatres or large halls with well-equipped stages for dramatic performances.

Another advantage to attending an independent school is a lower teacher-to-learner ratio. The teacher-learner ratio is also invariably smaller than that in government schools, with classes averaging 24 -26 in independent schools, a factor that facilitates academic success (Finn, 2002). Statistics show an average of 16 learners per teacher in independent schools while previously white government schools have an average of 30 learners per teacher. In disadvantaged, historically black schools though, it is not uncommon to have classes of 50 learners (Dept of Basic Education, 2010). This average is calculated by dividing the total number of learners in the school by the total number of teachers employed by the school, including sports, music and extracurricular staff.

Thus in independent schools, there is a high standard of education with numerous state-of-the-art resources. Many independent schools opened their doors to historically disadvantaged black learners even before 1994 by offering bursary and scholarship programmes to those who showed academic, musical or sporting potential.

Affluence and privilege is experienced among a small percentage of learners who come from wealthy backgrounds and are able to access expensive independent schools.

School fees of the schools involved in this study ranged from R54 000 - R67 000 for day scholars; fees that included boarding ranged from R117 000 - R123 000 per annum. In contrast, the average South African household income in 2010 was R31 600, so it becomes startlingly obvious how out-of-reach independent schools are for the average South African family (Van der Berg, 2010; www.isasa.org).

The Department of Basic Education's survey, conducted in 2009, found that there are 1207 independent schools in South Africa with 393 447 learners, while there are 24 699 government schools with 11 834 516 learners. The percentage of learners in independent schools nationally is only 3.2%, with 96.8% of all learners attending government schools. The study took place in the Western Cape where, in my experience, the majority of independent schools have a preponderance of white learners. In the Western Cape, there are 144 registered independent schools, which 3.7% of all Western Cape learners attend, while Gauteng has 420 such schools, with 9.6% of the province's school-going learners attending these schools. There is a high demand for independent schools in Gauteng as it is the highest-income province in South Africa, generating 33% of South Africa's gross domestic product (GDP), whereas the Western Cape delivers 14% of the GDP (Dept of Basic Education, 2010; www.statssa.gov.za).

Bursary and scholarship programmes aim to allow learners who are unable to afford tuition fees at top independent schools the opportunity to experience the diverse and rich learning experiences offered by these schools. Each learner who applies for a scholarship undergoes an interview and a written exam (literacy and numeracy) before acceptance. Independent schools that have boarding facilities usually offer full board and lodging to scholarship learners during the school term. Many learners accepted into these schools become full boarders for a number of reasons; they either live too far away from school, or transport to and from school is enormously cumbersome and time-consuming. To provide learners with an optimal learning experience, full boarding facilities become a viable option.

There are a number of different sources for scholarship and bursary funds. Some big companies such as Allan Gray offer bursaries through the Orbis Trust. Some schools offer scholarships for sport, music and academics from their own funds. Old Boy or Girl trust funds that contribute towards bursary funds also exist. In addition, there are overseas investors who have created trust funds in the hope to better the individual lives

of some learners in South Africa. Often a combination of scholarship sources exists at different schools.

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Studies conducted about learners' experiences in middle- and upper-class schools (ex-model C and independent schools) in South Africa have so far been based on investigating the experiences of racial desegregation and post-apartheid relationships in schools (Soudien, 2001; Dawson, 2001; Bornman, 1999; Thom & Coetzee 2004; Bray, Gooskens, Kahn, Moses & Seekings, 2010). In a context where schools provide bursary and/or scholarship programmes that aim to provide learners from historically disadvantaged backgrounds an opportunity for a better education and academic success, it is appropriate to also examine learners' experiences when they attend these schools. It does not appear that any specific studies have been conducted that document the experiences of scholarship/bursary learners in independent schools.

For the purposes of this study, I have selected to investigate challenges as well as opportunities that previously disadvantaged black scholarship and bursary learners experience within independent schools. Their cultural, home and disadvantaged financial backgrounds are in sharp contrast to many of their peers at their schools. How their experiences were influenced by these contrasts is the centre of this inquiry.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Little is known about the experiences that previously disadvantaged bursary and scholarship learners (who hereafter are referred to as scholarship learners) have in independent schools. Many scholarship and bursary recipients are from homes that fall into the low- to middle-income groups and they find themselves surrounded by boys and girls from high-income, affluent homes. Learners from high-income homes in these contexts (especially in the Western Cape) are often very privileged white learners who have grown up with financially privileged backgrounds. Soudien (2001) explains that those learners from disadvantaged backgrounds who are in 'better' schooling environments, went there because they sought the social status of attending independent schools and had the perception that the education they received there will be better (Soudien, 2001).

1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to gain an understanding of the experiences that scholarship learners have within independent school environments. These experiences may come with challenges that we are unaware of, and it is these experiences and challenges that I aim to explore.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Given the background, the following research question was posed for this study.

- What are historically disadvantaged adolescent scholarship learners' experiences in independent school education?

1.6. CLARIFICATION OF RELEVANT TERMS

1.6.1 Scholarship learner

For the purpose of this study, the term scholarship learner means that financial aid has been given to a learner based on their academic merit and achievements. The scholarship learners referred to in this study are from a black cultural background.

1.6.2 Bursary learner

Also known as a bursarship or scholarship, a bursary is given to a learner who is in need of financial assistance to attend a school. There are two types of bursaries, the first being dependent on the amount the parents earn. The amount paid by the bursary fund is determined by the contributions that parents are able to pay on a sliding scale. The second type of bursary is given on academic merit.

1.6.3 Independent school

The South African School Act of 1996 stipulated two categories of schools: public and independent. Independent schools are financially run by the income from the school fees paid by parents who send their children to the school. Government may subsidise independent schools but this is not guaranteed. These schools were formerly known as private schools.

1.6.3 Historically disadvantaged learner

An historically disadvantaged learner is a black learner whose family does not have the financial resources to pay for them to attend an independent school. They are from a family that was previously disadvantaged under the apartheid regime.

1.7 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1: Context and rationale for the study

This chapter provides an overview of the study as well as the context within which it is set. The background and motivation for the study are also discussed.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter provides an in-depth discussion of Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model which is used as a theoretical framework for this study. The various systems around the scholarship learner that may affect or influence their experiences within independent schools are discussed. This chapter also provides an overview of different theories of identity that can be used in the discussion of the research findings. Theories include Erikson's psychosocial identity theory, social identity theory and racial identity development theory.

Chapter 3: Research and design methodology

This chapter identifies and discusses the research paradigm and the methodologies that were used. Methods for data collection that are best suited to the study are discussed along with the verification process and ethical considerations that need to be made.

Chapter 4: Research findings and discussion

This chapter reviews and discusses the findings that were deduced from the interview process conducted with the participants.

Chapter 5: Concluding remarks, limitations, strengths and recommendations

This chapter summarises the research by discussing its limitations, strengths and recommendations. It also comments on concluding remarks which include the researcher's reflections.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review aims to identify and discuss relevant information by other researchers and experts in different psychological sub-disciplines. The empirical value of their findings will help to better understand and conceptualise the process and findings of this research. At the same time, it will allow the researcher to focus on the most relevant aspects and to use past research to substantiate and discuss the findings in greater detail and with greater insight (Henning, 2004; Boote &Beile, 2005).

Gray (2009, p.99) identifies five key reasons for doing a comprehensive literature review:

- To provide an up-to-date understanding of the subject, its significance and its structure.
- To identify significant issues and themes that present themselves for further research, particularly where there are gaps in current knowledge.
- To guide the development of research topics and questions.
- To assist future researchers in understanding why the research was undertaken, its design and direction, and help others to replicate the process.
- To present the types of research methodologies and tools that have been used in other studies, which may guide the design of the proposed study.

The current literature will be reviewed within the conceptual framework of Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecosystemic model which is based on his theory of bio-ecological development. A conceptual framework is used to provide structure, organisation and guidance to the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Development within this theory is defined by Bronfenbrenner (2005, p.3) as 'the phenomenon of continuity and change in the bio-psychological characteristics of human beings both as individuals and as groups. The phenomenon extends over the life course, across successive generations and through historical time, both past and present'.

2.2 DISCUSSION ON THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Bronfenbrenner's model has a number of distinctive properties that have been developed by him over the course of five decades. He refers to **experience** as incorporating both objective and subjective elements of human experiences and posits that 'very few of the external influences significantly affecting human behaviour and development can be described solely in terms of objective physical conditions and events'. Objectivity and subjectivity need to be considered together if they are to be 'sufficient' in describing experiences (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p.5).

This developmental model has been used as the framework because it allows the incorporation of several key role players in the experiences of the scholarship learners. It incorporates different interconnected systems that interact with one another across time that influence the experiences, perceptions and identity development of the participants in this study. These systems include the individual, parents, school and peers (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Taylor, 2010).

The influence of the environment is not uni-directional. It is bi-directional in that, although individuals are influenced by the environment, they too influence the environment through their interactions with it (Rogoff, 2005). It is essentially a case of 'give and take' or 'reciprocity' (a systems theory term) that a change in one system will cause a change in other systems, or parts of those systems (Becvar & Becvar, 1996).

Experiences that learners have had in their lives depend on their interactions within their world and how they interpret and make meaning of those experiences through the stages of their life (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Rogoff, 2005). When we think of previously disadvantaged scholarship learners, their experiences, and how they perceive those experiences, we cannot contemplate understanding these unless we look at all the different systems and influences that they have had in their lives.

The individual child is the centre of the bio-ecological system and interacts with each of the other systems in some way or another. There are also the interrelated dimensions of the environment and the individual that need to be considered. These are proximal processes, person characteristics, systems and time (chronosystem). The different systems referred to by Bronfenbrenner included the microsystem, mesosystem,

exosystem and macrosystem, all of which interact within the chronosystem (Swart & Pettipher, 2007).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) defines a **microsystem** as 'the complex relations between the developing person and environment in an immediate setting containing that person' (e.g. home, peer group or school). In other words, the microsystem incorporates the systems that are closest to the individual, such as his family, peers, or school systems that he most frequently interacts with, and it is through these immediate environments or contexts that the proximal processes are played out. These proximal processes in individual interactions between the subsystems are discussed in greater detail below.

The **mesosystem** is the system within which the microsystems interact. For example, a child's peer group is a microsystem which interacts with the school microsystem which in turn interacts with the family microsystem. All these are interconnected with the child in their own way but influence each other within the mesosystem (Swart & Pettipher, 2007; Cross & Frazier, 2010).

The **exosystem** represents the subsystems that the child does not directly interact with however, has an influence on the child's life in one way or another. The education system, a parent's place of work and health services are examples of exosystems that influence the individual, though not directly. Bronfenbrenner (1979, p.25) defines the exosystem as one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Landsberg, Kruger and Swart, 2011).

The **macrosystem** represents the system that is the most distant from the individual but that still affects their environment. It includes social roles, attitudes, beliefs, ideologies, economic structures and practices that influence all the other systems. In South Africa, the change from the apartheid regime to a democratic society had an impact on all people, the economy, and its structures and policies. These affect everyone and their interactions with the microsystems within the mesosystem and with the individual. Furthermore, the participants' cultural background and beliefs would be considered an exosystem (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2008: Landsberg et al., 2011).

The **chronosystem** refers to the timeframe within which the different interactions between systems occur. It can also be viewed as the historical context that the child is in. It can influence the way in which the child grows up within the family. A good example of this dynamic is the apartheid system and how the history of that has affected many children in many different ways (Swick & Williams, 2006).

Apartheid was an underlying system that still influences people in South Africa today. When conducting research about gathering and understanding learners' experiences, we must incorporate and discuss how our apartheid past may affect these experiences. Although abolished in the 1980s, its legacy and repercussions still remain. The participants within this study were born into a democratic South Africa; however, their parents would have been raised within the turbulent years of apartheid and the fight for equality (Soudien, 2001).

The experiences of South Africa's adolescents cannot be separated from the country's historical past. Soudien (2007, p.3) states that consciousness is a 'historical condition' and that 'it invests the experience of youth with the marks of time and space in which it is being experienced'. It has become part of their identity and this in turn affects their personal experiences and the meaning they give to those experiences.

This paper is not aimed at researching the issues of race within independent schools in South Africa, but it is important to discuss how racism may affect the experiences and identity development of the learners who volunteered to participate in this study because it is so entrenched in our past. Race remains a reality as it was a dominant part of South Africa's history, and school contexts played a part in the development of racialised identities. Learners see it in their everyday life, on the streets, in their suburbs, how they get to school, and their teaching staff, and it affects their perceptions of themselves and their race. Peer relationships and attitudes towards race may also affect how they perceive themselves and the way in which they view racism (Soudien, 2007).

In a study conducted by Seekings (2008), he discussed racial categorisation and how the different races (white, coloured, Indian and black are apartheid terms) within South Africa categorise themselves. White people are more likely to categorise themselves according to their skin colour and descent, while black and coloured people categorised themselves in terms of their cultural background rather than the colour of their skin.

Steyn (2001), cited in Seekings (2008), identified that white people do not place as much emphasis on their culture, while black people have a strong sense of culture. They speak different languages at home, often attend different types of religious ceremonies, and hold their own cultural beliefs that are different to those of white people. Other terms of categorisation include being a South African, belonging to a certain class (working class, middle class or poor) or in terms of their religion (Muslim, Christian etc.). However, although people may describe their categories differently, people in South Africa are still classified according to the four race categories assigned during the apartheid era, as is evident when we look at a population census, income groups and population statistical studies. For example, forms we fill in for university applications, medical checks, travel visas, the census etc. ask for a person's racial grouping, therefore we cannot say that we do not live in a racialised society (Seekings, 2008; www.statssa.gov.za).

Apartheid ideologies entrenched the concepts of White, Black, Coloured and Indian into our vocabulary (Seeking, 2008; Gibson, 2004). As a country, we have tried to 'deracialise' and to see everyone as equal in their work and school environments. However, Carrim (2000) noted that by attempting to be 'colour blind' we are not actually acknowledging the differences that people have, and this results in a lack of support structures that are needed for those from different racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

After speaking to a number of independent school principals about this research, all of them emphatically stated that they saw everyone as equals within the school and did not treat their learners according to their racial grouping. This was the main aim of the new inclusive South Africa. However, as Soudien (2001, p.312) argues, 'students and teachers inside them (the schools), continue to struggle with the disparate messages about who they are and who they ought to be'. Racism is still evident within school environments. Through his interviews with learners from a number of different schools, Soudien (2007) points out that black learners still come across racial jokes and stereotyping; however, they seem to laugh about it and don't take it very seriously.

With South Africa's historical context in mind, literature regarding the individual, family, school and peers (the microsystems), and the roles they play in the experiences of learners at school, will be discussed in greater detail below. The discussion regarding

the role of identity development, both individually and racially, and its influence on the learner's experiences, is incorporated into the discussion.

2.2.1 The individual as a microsystem

Scholarship learners are central to this research study, and their individual experiences provide great insight towards answering the research question. It is therefore important to have a good understanding of the individual as a microsystem and to understand how proximal processes and personal dispositions, ecological resources and demand characteristics may influence their experiences. The effects of adolescence, school stress and identity developmental stages are also discussed below.

2.2.1.1 Proximal processes

Proximal processes are enduring forms of interaction between the individual and the microsystems that surround the learner and that have an influence on their biological development. According to Landsberg et al. (2011, p.12), this 'involves progressively more complex reciprocal interactions between an active individual and the person, objects and symbols in his or her immediate environment.' Their personality and disposition are a result of these interactions and sets them up for the way in which they will interact in the microsystems, which in this research paper is the privileged school environment, peers and family that they are surrounded by. These are considered to be 'enduring patterns' of interaction, and it is through these proximal processes that 'genetic potentials for effective psychological functioning are actualised' (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994, p.568). It is also through the proximal processes that individuals develop their reference points for their lives, good and bad (Landsberg et al., 2011; Swick & William, 2006).

Personal characteristics include an individual's disposition, ecological resources and demand characteristics. Dispositions are the forces which can 'mobilise proximal processes and sustain their operation, or conversely interfere with, limit or even prevent their occurrence' (Landsberg et al., 2011, p.12). For example, if an individual is very shy, he may limit his interactions with people around him; or, if the individual is assertive, then this will influence the way that the systems interact with him and react to him. Learners are born with 'a set of temperamental attributes, each distributed along the normal continuum'. There is no good or bad disposition that a learner can have, but

their disposition can definitely influence the way in which they are able to respond to different situations at school and how they develop as individuals (Teglasi, Cohn & Meshbesher, 2004, p.9).

Ecological resources relate to mental, emotional, social and material resources that influence the way in which we engage over time with the systems that surround us (the proximal process). Academic ability is considered to be an ecological resource that can have a positive influence on the participant's interactions with peers, parents and the school context. To become recipients of scholarships and bursaries, the participants of this study had to undergo an interview process in which their personalities and academic abilities were taken into account. It is therefore assumed that the participants of this study are intellectually capable of coping with the academic levels provided at the independent schools. To retain the scholarship/bursary, they need to maintain a good academic level of achievement or risk losing the scholarship; this may add to the level of stress already experienced at school.

2.2.1.2 Stress and coping abilities

Studies have shown that, in Western countries, friendships, boy/girlfriends, family relationships, lack of self-confidence, and physical inadequacy have repeatedly been areas of concern. These are considered to be common stressors and 'result from everyday interactions associated with the adolescent developmental period' (Howard & Medway, 2004, p391). When moving from primary to high school, the transition from one school to the next can be stressful in itself, particularly if the school culture and academic expectations are very different. Learners go through many changes including friendship groups, changes in school environment, in teachers, curriculum and work load, all of which can cause stress (Seidman, Aber, & French, 2004).

Research has also shown that the way in which adolescents respond to stress can vary. They can either respond appropriately (positive coping) or respond inappropriately (negative coping). Positive coping includes actively seeking help and support from the people in their lives, exercising, taking time out and dealing with their emotions appropriately. Negative coping is shown through avoidance of the problem, becoming angry and aggressive and putting blame on others (Bausted & Tammy, 1998; Howard & Medway, 2004; Seiffege-Krenke, Aunola, & Nurmi, 2009).

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To cope with academic pressures, it is important for learners to maintain motivation. Maehr's theory of personal investment identifies several reasons for personal motivation. According to Nelson and DeBacker (2008), Maehr proposes that the meaning a learner creates for an activity determines whether time or energy will be invested in that activity. Within the school academic environment, the learners 'personal goals' and their 'sense of self' play an important role in the development of meaning. For this meaning to take place, the teaching and learning environment as well as the sociocultural context need to be taken into account. The way in which participants attribute meaning to their learning experiences, as well as the formation of personal goals, is influenced by the structures provided for them at school and by the experiences they have at school (ibid.).

Similarly, goal orientation theory of motivation theorises that learners who have clear goals and who know why they have them and how they are going to achieve them, are more likely to be motivated to achieve. Their goal orientation results in guiding them in their 'interpretation of events and producing patterns of cognition, emotion and behaviour' (Kaplan & Maehr, 2007, p.142). Kaplan and Maehr's (2007) discussion of goal-orientated theory highlighted two goal orientations, namely, mastery and performance goals. Learners who have goal mastery orientation are more likely to achieve 'personal development and growth' which 'guides achievement related behaviour and task engagement'. It was also found that goal mastery orientation correlates positively with positive outcomes such as 'self-efficacy, persistence, preference for challenge, self-regulated learning, and positive affect and well-being'. Studies have shown that learners who have a sense of belonging at the school also show a higher level of motivation to achieve academically, and those who have higher self-esteem tend to do better than their peers who have lower self-esteem (Anderman & Anderman, 1999; Kao & Turney, 2010).

2.2.1.3 Personal and social identity

For scholarship learners in independent schools, there may be further challenges added to their navigations of high school years and adolescence. They find themselves in a school surrounded by peers who are mostly very privileged and who have grown up in affluent circumstances. The independent schools involved in this study had a predominantly white learner population who have a different cultural background to

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those of other racial groups. The differences between white and black culture could potentially be seen as an additional challenge faced by black scholarship learners in these independent school environments. Their personal identity is often divided between what they know as their 'inside world' (home life) and their 'external world' (their new school and surroundings) (Soudien, 2001).

Erving Goffman used a metaphor to describe a person's self-image (personal identity) and their public image (social image). He viewed people as actors in their own lives. The 'actor' has his 'backstage' and 'front stage' – in other words, his public and private lives that are used to understand daily routines and interactions. He also refers to 'frames' which are the specific settings of one's life – for example, school, where there are 'characteristic meanings and rules' and where interaction between people is organised. He goes on to discuss how 'individuals present an image of themselves – of self – for acceptance of others' (Jenkins, 2004, p.71).

Identity development is described by Soudien (2001, p314) as 'a process in which young people bring resources, find new ones and constantly work to make sense of their position relative to others.' This quote is particularly relevant to this study as it highlights personal identity in relation to oneself and to others in a schooling environment. It is during the adolescent years that a person develops their personal identity and, for the participants of this study, their experiences may influence how their personal identity develops. Adolescence is a time when they begin to work out who they are through their interactions with others, through adult role experimentation, and through their experiences. It is the time when they begin to develop their own unique identity. For this reason, it is essential that we have a better understanding of what identity is and how it develops, so that we can better understand the experiences of historically disadvantaged scholarship learners in independent school education and how their identity development may be affected by those experiences (Kroger, 2007).

Jenkins (2004) explains that identity can be seen in two ways: as individual (personal) and as collective (institutional). However, he also points out that personal identity cannot be separated from the social world around the individual. Although everyone is different and unique in their own ways, the influence that social surroundings and interactions have on our identity development is inevitable. Identity is essentially socially constructed and is a process which we all undergo to form our own identity.

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There is never an end to identity development; it goes on throughout one's life. 'Identity is our understanding of who we are, and reciprocally, other people's understanding of themselves and of others' (Jenkins, 2004, p.5).

When researching identity development, one has to include the influential work of Erik Erikson. He described identity as 'involving a subjective feeling of self-sameness and continuity over time' (Kroger, 2007, p.7). Erikson described identity as the way that people see us and the way we see ourselves, and how we respond to people across multiple contexts such as schooling, work or home. The 'continuity' of one's character is part of the understanding of identity, as is the predictability of the way that one behaves in these multiple contexts (Kroger, 2007).

Erikson's theory discusses the specific developmental stages of a person's personality development. He developed the Life Span theory, comprising eight stages, which takes into account the influence that social factors have on a person's development. He theorised that genetic and social factors work simultaneously and that they cannot be separated from one another as they influence each other in numerous complex ways (Meyer & Viljoen, 2002).

Every person has a 'genetically determined ground plan', explained with the use of the epigenetic principle of development, which states that each person has a genetic path that they follow that is biologically and sequentially predetermined. At different ages, our physical and psychological characteristics develop and we gradually build up the person that we become. This occurs both visibly and discreetly. As Meyer and Viljoen (2002, p.193) explain, 'while one specific trait or developmental theme dominates the developmental scene at any particular age, changes are occurring simultaneously in all other areas of the individual development'. At the same time, social influences and demands made by society provide 'opportunities for growth' at the different stages of development. 'These demands and opportunities are in accordance with, and are complementary to, the developmental potential and needs of the individual at each stage of development' (Meyer & Viljoen, 2002, p.193). Each part of the development process needs to occur at a particular time in the individual's development; when it does not, their psychologically healthy self may be at risk of not developing as it should (Erikson, 1959).

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Erikson described each developmental stage as a developmental crisis which occurs as a result of the interaction between genetic and social influences. This crisis occurs near the end of each stage of development. There is a 'turning point' at which the person needs to make a choice between two opposing developmental possibilities that can be seen as 'complementary opposites' (Thom & Coetzee, 2004; Meyer & Viljoen, 2002). A healthy solution to this crisis is to strike a balance between the two opposites, thereby creating a positive resolution. This solution is dependent on the 'mutuality between the individual and society' and whether or not the former has been able to satisfy the needs that society has prescribed. The recognition of these needs is also needed for the crisis to be resolved (Thom & Coetzee, 2004). The solution developed from the crisis helps with the development of a person's ego strength, which in turn helps the person to 'advance to a higher level of development (Meyer & Viljoen, 2002, p.195).

In his Life Span theory, Erikson postulated that there are eight different developmental stages that occur throughout a person's life. These stages are: trust versus mistrust (infancy), autonomy versus shame and doubt (early childhood), initiative versus guilt (the play age), industry versus inferiority (the school stage), **identity versus role confusion** (adolescence), intimacy versus isolation (early adulthood), generativity versus self-obsession and stagnation (adulthood) and, finally, ego integrity versus despair (maturity) (Meyer & Viljoen, 2002). The first four stages of identity development are primarily concerned with identification with role models and developing ego strengths of hope, willpower, purpose and competence. The fifth stage (adolescence) is cited as being the most important (Thom & Coetzee, 2004), and is the stage most relevant to this paper and therefore discussed in greater detail.

Stages that occur prior to adolescence focus on how the child's identity is formed through identification with role models in their lives. Social interaction forms the basis of identity formation and development and, according to Erikson's theory, is dependent on a child acquiring 'a sense of trust, autonomy, pleasure from achievement, an ability to work well with others' (Thom & Coetzee, 2004 p.184).

The identity versus role confusion stage begins at the beginning of puberty and continues until the age of 18 - 25 (depending on culture and academic and vocational studies). It develops in order to form an 'integrated image of oneself as a unique person' (Stevens & Lockhat, 2003, p.134), and it is during this time that individuals begin to

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question what they knew before and what they were sure of. In the adolescent years, there is a change in the way learners think, and they begin to question what they have learned thus far from role models and society around them – questions such as 'What am I in the eyes of other people? How do images that people have of me correlate with my self-image? How can my previously acquired roles and skills fit into the career world and my projected future?' (Erikson, 1963, cited in Meyer and Viljoen, 2002). Adolescents are essentially on the path to adulthood and need to find their 'niche in society' so that they can determine and establish the roles they will play in the future (Meyer & Viljoen, 2002; Thom & Coetzee, 2004).

2.2.1.4 Racial identity development

With South African society's history of racial divisions, it is inevitable that race will form part of one's identity development. There are several different racial identity stage theories originating from African-American studies in the United States of America. These theories apply to both black and white racial identity and suggest that racial identity development progresses through a number of stages. I will focus largely on black racial identity theories as all the participants in the study are black. These theories have been based on either the 'process' across the lifespan of the development of individual attitudes or on the content of individuals' attitudes toward their racial group membership such as positive or negative feelings about being black (Scottham, Cooke, Sellers & Ford, 2010).

Janet Helms, cited in Tatum (1992, p.9), defines racial identity development theory as a theory that 'concerns the psychological implications of racial-group membership, that is belief systems that evolve in reaction to perceived differential racial-group membership'. The process of identity development is described by Tatum (1992, 2004) through the use of William Cross' model of black racial identity development. This model was used on African-Americans. However, as with black South Africans, there is a history of white domination and a racist society, and I therefore suggest that it can be used to provide a better understanding of the racial identity development of the participants of this study. Five developmental stages are identified: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion/emersion, internalisation and internalisation commitment (Tatum, 1992, 2004).

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During the **Pre-encounter** stage, black learners internalised and 'absorbed many of the beliefs of the dominant white culture'. In doing this, they looked for acceptance from white learners by adapting or 'assimilating' to their beliefs and values, but at the same time they were also distancing themselves from their own culture. If something happens that causes them to feel that they cannot be accepted as white, they enter the **Encounter** stage. During this phase, they are 'forced to focus on their identity as a member of a group targeted by racism' (Tatum, 1992, p.11).

The third phase of racial identity development is the **Immersion/Emersion** stage. During this, black learners embrace their race and cultural backgrounds in every way they can so that they can avoid and reject anything that is associated with whiteness. They show a greater interest in their cultural history and seek to share this with their peers. Through this process, anger towards white learners seems to dissipate as the focus is on their own culture, which results in 'a newly defined and affirmed sense of self' (Tatum, 1992, p.11). Once this has occurred, stage four – **internalisation** – is reached. Now that they have a more positive sense of self and a more secure sense of racial identity, black learners become more open and accepting of friendships with white learners and are less defensive about their 'blackness' (ibid).

Stage five – **internalisation/commitment** – incorporates not only a change in thinking regarding their own cultural identity, but also a commitment to putting their 'plan into action', and allows them to 'both proactively perceive and transcend race'. Cross, Parham and Helms, cited in Tatum, 1992, explain that 'blackness' becomes the point of departure for discovering the universe of ideas, cultures and experiences beyond blackness in place of mistaking blackness as the universe itself (Tatum, 1992, p.12). The change in their perceptions of themselves allows the learners to perceive different experiences from a position of a secure sense of self and not from a position of being the previously disadvantaged minority learners in the school.

A process model proposed by Jean Phinney (1989, 1992), cited in Scottham et al. (2010), is based on Erikson's concept of ego identity formation between the ages of 12 and 18. The model proposes that 'adolescents can be in one of four statuses: Neither explored nor committed to their identity (diffused), committed to an identity without exploring (foreclosed), explored but have not committed (moratorium), or have both

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explored and committed to an identity (achieved)' (Yip, Seaton, & Sellers, 2010, p.1431).

Post colonialism is a further theoretical approach that considers identity and 'seeks to understand the relationships of domination and/or resistance that manifest when one's culture owns or controls another culture even after the era of formal colonialism has ended' (Hook, 2002, p.111). Fanon, who studied racial identity through lived experiences of black people during the times of colonisation, describes racial alienation as a term which 'seeks to show the sense of separation in the relationship of the Black self and the things and objects and others around itself' (Hook, 2002, p.112). Fanon also refers to 'Lactification', which implies black people wanting to be 'white' and how, to do so, they change their accents, straighten their hair, use skin lightening lotions and take on mannerisms of their white friends. Essentially, they have a deep-seated idea that white is better, a 'socially induced inferiority complex' (ibid).

Fanon further describes the concept of double consciousness as a double bind. On the one hand, the black learner has a need to be accepted into the dominant culture (the white coloniser in Fanon's theory and the white school system in the independent school in this research) but, as they do this, they undergo a tendency to move further away from their own original culture and community. There is the risk that their community alienates them as they feel that they have been alienated by the learner who has assimilated into the white culture of the school (Hook, 2002).

2.2.2 Parents as a microsystem

South Africa has a unique history that has greatly influenced the schooling system. The apartheid years created significant inequalities, and those of colour received inferior levels of education that were very poorly resourced and usually poorly taught. This has had long-term consequences for the people of South Africa; although the participants of this study were born after the 1994 democratic elections, they are still influenced by past inequalities in different ways. Their parents would have lived through the apartheid period, and their education, attitudes, and beliefs would have been affected. This in turn would have influenced their children.

Parental contributions to a child's experiences were identified as the most important environmental contribution to proximal processes that occur between them and their

child. Through the course of their lives, the activities and time spent with parents becomes more influential when there is regular, meaningful interaction between parent and child. 'For the younger generation, participation in such interactive processes over time generates the ability, motivation, knowledge and skill to engage in such activities both with others and on one's own' (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, p.6) This is due to the 'effects of proximal processes' being 'more powerful than those of the environmental contexts in which they occur'. It follows that the role of the learner's parents can be very influential in their life experiences and their ability to cope with those experiences (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994, p.577; Harrell, Neblett & Onyewuenyi, 2010).

Similarly, Barbarin and Richter (2001), cited in Soudien (2007, p.21), describe how the family is the 'most significant determinant of the quality of care and the adequacy of psychological resources available to a child'. However, family structures in South Africa are described by Soudien (2007) as 'ambiguous' because many of them are single-parent families with absent fathers or unmarried parents. Bronfenbrenner's and Ceci's (1994, p.577) studies showed that the most effective proximal processes are most powerful in families that have two parents in the home. This is the optimal situation. However, many mothers and fathers are single parents who take on the sole responsibility for raising their children. They play an important role in modelling behaviour for their children during the adolescent years. Although this is not always the case, the most important aspect of family background is the sense of 'family cohesion' as this helps adolescents to cope with, and manage, their stresses with greater efficiency (Soudien, 2007).

Research has shown that parental involvement in the school life (attendance of school events, involvement in parents' associations, and parent/teacher meetings) of their children can be correlated with their socio-economic status (SES). It was found that the lower the SES of parents, the less involved the parents are in the school. This finding can also be linked to their lack of confidence in their own education and also to difficulties such as transport costs, language barriers and inability to get time off work (Kao & Turney, 2010).

Different parents will have different expectations of the school's role in their child's education and will place different expectations on their child. Studies have shown that those parents who are from moderate- or high-income groups have more realistic

academic expectations for their children than those who are from lower-income families. It was found that those from the low-income groups had high expectations of their children and that these expectations did not always meet their child's actual academic performance. The parents' own education influences the level of expectations positively, and it was found that those parents who were more educated had a 'positive influence on achievement' (Eccles, 1993, cited in Davis-Kean, 2005; Kao & Turney, 2010).

Many South African children face a great deal of stress owing to their socio-economic circumstances. Financial difficulties, poor living conditions and unemployment have adverse effects on a high proportion of families. For some, the outcomes are alcoholism, drug abuse and physical abuse, and some parents even abandon their children. This results in an emotionally stressed family as well as 'emotionally and cognitively stressed children' (Soudien, 2007, p.23). Some families have developed ways in which to cope with their stresses and have developed resilience toward their situations, and at the same time are able to show 'nurturing and protection'. This in turn gives them the emotional stability to cope with the hardships and challenges that they may face (Swanson, 2010).

Fataar (2007, p.12) argues that adolescents bring the attributes of their environments with them to school and that these play a major role in their everyday navigations in school. This would also mean that their family support and upbringing will influence how they cope in their school environment, and affect their attitudes towards education, the way they behave, and how they interact with others. Soudien (2007) supports this by saying that adolescents are 'responsible for their choices but it is their social support structures that help them to carry their responsibilities'.

The educational experiences of those who have grown up in a more privileged environment are very different to those who have come from financially disadvantaged backgrounds. It has been found that those who have greater financial resources and better schooling are more likely to be mentored and guided by their parents and schools. Not only are the schooling resources more readily available, but the support from families and schools also provides them with the emotional resources to cope more effectively with educational challenges (Soudien, 2007). However, in an American study, affluent parents were often found to be less supportive. Luthar's (2003) study on

affluent families and communities suggested that these parents placed significant pressure on their children and recognised their academic achievement as being more important than their personal growth. Isolation, both physically and emotionally, was also observed because parents work long hours and have little time to spend with their children (Luthar, 2003; Luthar & Latendresse, 2005).

2.2.3 The school as a microsystem

Four independent schools were involved in this study. Two of the schools were founded many decades ago and are traditional Christian schools that are well-established with a great deal of tradition and history. Sport, music, arts and drama form a large part of their school culture, and all learners are expected to take part in one or more of these activities. The learners do compulsory community service, and there are many societies and clubs such as debating, hiking, dancing, music and choir. Academic standards are very high within these schools, and both boast a 100% matric pass rate. The other two are smaller independent schools that were established between 10 and 15 years ago respectively. They have smaller classes and fewer sporting facilities, and the arts and culture departments are not as prominent; however, academic expectations and pressures are equally as high as the schools that follow international baccalaureate curricula.

These independent schools invariably have better resources in terms of textbooks, libraries, technology, laboratories and sports facilities than historically black schools, particularly those in poorer township settings. Better-resourced schools provide their learners with greater opportunities for better learning, understanding of the curriculum and capacities for optimal personal and social development. In Soudien's research (2007, p.71), he interviewed a number of learners from independent high schools in Cape Town and found that 'identity-making structures are prominent in the formality of these schools' through activities such as dinners and societies, and in the support of the academic staff at the school. These types of activity also foster a sense of belonging in a school (Taylor, 2010). He also noted that there was a greater academic pressure felt at these schools and that the learners knew, and acknowledged, that education was a privilege.

Schools in poor socio-economic areas, such as townships and rural areas, are usually less resourced than independent schools. Many of the former schools are also over-

populated, and have a very low teacher:learner ratio and a higher rate of school dropout. It is evident from goal orientation research and goal orientation theory that the school and the classroom play a role in the motivation of learners within the classroom. Research has also shown that learners are more likely to take on personal goals regarding their academics if they feel that their classroom structures are goal-orientated.

School becomes a 'stage' on which we play out our lives and in which we come to express our psychological needs and interests. It provides the environment and background for a number of different activities that learners engage in with others. These include the formation of friendships, playing, bullying, teasing, and interactions with teachers and other adults. These activities and interactions occur within the various spaces of the school, such as classrooms, corridors, team houses and the sports field (Carrim, 2011, Farmer & Farmer, 1999). Soudien (2007, p.34) discusses how schools are the 'terrain' where learners reach their potential influence as learners during their 'growing up' years.

School classroom environments and the relationship that learners have with their teachers is comparable to their home environment. For example, learners spend most of their time at school; and if they are in boarding school, this comprises almost all their time. Studies have shown that if the learner has a positive and supportive relationship with his or her teachers, there is a greater chance that they will feel a sense of belonging to the school and that their academic performance will be positively affected (Taylor, 2010). However, teachers' attitudes and prejudices may have a negative effect on black scholarship learners. In Lea and Helfand's (2004) book on narratives of racial experiences, Elena Featherston writes: 'The implicit and explicit message to people of colour in most educational settings is that few of us can excel while white students are expected to do well. And should a white student fail to meet that expectation his/her whiteness is not presumed to be a contributing factor in the failure' (Featherston & Ishibashi, 2004, p,91). Case studies in the United States conducted by Beverly Tatum (2004, p.132) also revealed that teachers were 'surprised' when black learners did well. This 'stereotypical expectation' of the black learners was found to negatively affect their racial identity development (ibid.).

Taylor (2010) discusses several studies that focused on teacher expectations of black learners. These studies have focused on 'self-fulfilling prophecies that may operate

through the quality and nature of the instructional practices and behaviours to which girls, ethnic minorities and the poor are exposed' (Taylor, 2010, p.399). It was found that this was not the always the case, but that some learners from minority groups and poorer backgrounds may not actually have the psychological support and guidance to overcome these teachers' negative prophecies (ibid.).

South Africa is a country with numerous different cultures and 11 official languages. Even though most of the population are people of colour, the schooling system is based on the Western system. The majority of independent schools in South Africa are predominantly white and are seen as the schools for the rich (Soudien, 2007). The differences between cultural values and behaviours at school and at home may cause a number of barriers to learning, as well as behavioural problems in the home or at school (Prinsloo, 2007). Many learners in South Africa have to try to work out what the dominant middle-class culture expects of them. It is often difficult to develop the skills to traverse between one's own culture and one's dominant school culture without losing oneself in the dominant one, i.e. sacrificing one's own culture for the Western culture (Soudien, 2007).

The world of careers and global economies is dominated by Western ways of thinking and cultural expectations. It is understandable that young people feel pressured to act and express themselves in the Western way so as to feel that they fit in with society's expectations. Soudien (2004) suggested that, in some schools which he studied, there is an attitude that the white middle-class culture is superior and that others are encouraged to 'give up' the different aspects of their own culture. This attitude may create an impression that, if one is to succeed in society, one needs to try to 'assimilate' into the dominant white middle class-culture. This notion is further supported by Dolby (2001) and Johnson (2007), cited in Fataar, (2007) who describe a 'discourse of cultural assimilation' whereby black learners are expected to 'adopt' the 'culturally white' ethos of the school.

Soudien (2007) describes two different types of assimilation that may take place in different schools. The type is dependent on the context within which it is taking place. The first type describes the assimilation that occurs in schools that are generally found in small towns and rural areas. These schools remain unchanged in their 'formal and informal ceremonies', their types of play and 'pedagogical practice', and this often

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results in conflict and racial tensions. The second form of assimilation comes across as more subtle because the school attempts to make a show of their positive attitude towards multiculturalism and inclusion. However, although this is being shown, the 'dominant structures in the school' remain unchanged (Soudien, 2007, p.56).

2.2.4 The learner's peers as a microsystem

'Friendship is the comfortable space in which young people experiment, try on identities and find the qualities of trust which enable them to develop a sense of who they are' (Soudien, 2007, p.57). The development of meaningful and positive friendships in adolescence teaches learners about friendship and influences the relationships that are formed in adulthood (Kao & Turney, 2010).

A learner's peers play an influential role in their path through adolescence and therefore in their experiences at school. Studies have shown that they have significant influence over whether or not a learner enjoys school and that they provide psychological support through meaningful friendships (Kao & Turney, 2010). When one is affiliated with a peer group, there is an assumption that the individual identifies with the values and the norms of the group. When an individual feels accepted and that he belongs, and that his personal values are supported by his peers, then this will in turn influence his identity development (Kroger, 2007).

Peer relationships can create either negative or positive influences on behaviour and attitudes (Kao & Turney, 2010). According to Nelson and DeBacker (2008), studies have shown that peers may influence learner's attitudes and beliefs about school as well as their academic achievement. According to Parsons's theory of influence, cited in Hallinan and Williams (1990, p.122), 'influence is any factor that affects the formation of a person's attitudes and opinions by acting directly on his or her beliefs'. Learners tend to be more influenced by close friends, and it has been shown that close friendships generally develop between those who have similarities between them such as similar status, shared values and attitudes, and those who reciprocate friendship. Friendship strength is increased by being of the same race or gender and consequently so too is the amount of influence that a friend has on the individual (Hallinan & Williams, 1990). Similarly, if peers perceive one as having similar values to the typical member of the 'crowd', then one is more likely to be 'assigned' to that crowd (Pugh & Hart, 1999).

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Research has shown that individual racial identity is strengthened when the learner is with peers of the same race, and that these relationships have a strong influence on their racial identity development (Yip, et al., 2010; .Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind & Vedder, 2001; Tatum, 2004; Datnow & Cooper, 1996). The diversity of the school setting was also found to be influential; the less diverse it was, the more likely that there were negative interactions such as discrimination and racial incidences, and the higher the chances were that learners wanted to change their racial identity status group. Inter-racial friendships are more likely to occur within 'integrated and predominantly white schools'. However, only about a third of those friends socialised with one another off the school campus (Yip et al., 2010, p.1433).

In an interesting study on the correlations between inter-racial friendships and school diversity conducted by Yip et al., (2010), it was found that 'the school setting does not shape racial identity development from a top-down approach; rather, the adolescent creates his or her developmental context through choices like one's close friendship network' (Yip et al., 2004, p.1440).

In a study conducted with African-American learners in a privileged independent school in the United States, it was found that academic success by the learner boded well with his peers and they were considered 'cool' and seen as role models. One of the contributing elements that helped them in their academic success was the 'bonds' that they had with one another. 'Their formal and informal peer networks supported academic success while simultaneously creating opportunities for them to reaffirm their racial identities and seek refuge from what could otherwise be a difficult place for them to fit in' (Datnow & Cooper, 1996, p.69).

According to social constructionism, people from similar cultures and ethnic or social backgrounds are more likely to attribute similar meanings to their experiences and therefore will have similar social expectations. People from a different culture or social background are less likely to understand their experiences because they do not have the social background that has been developed over time by the other person's community. This fact is particularly relevant to this study because the participants were all from black cultural and social backgrounds and attended schools where there were mainly white learners. It has been shown that, even though black people have different cultural and social backgrounds, there is a tendency to live between multiple belief systems of

dominant and specific cultural and ethnic practices; this can sometimes result in negative consequences if the learner does not feel that they are meeting the social expectations made of them (Moore, 2002, p.467).

Social contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954, cited in Happ, 2007) suggests that the more contact there is between peers from different racial groups, the greater the level of understanding and acceptance between them. Through exposure to each other's cultures, learners develop a greater understanding of each other's cultures and are able to identify how they are similar to one another. This also results in fewer conflicts between the different racial groups. However, Soudien (2007) found that racial solidarity also appeared to be prevalent, particularly in girls' schools, where he described the girls as seeming to need the 'comfort of their "own" kind'. Similarly, Tatum (2004) found that, although both boys and girls expressed that they found friendships with learners of the same race as important; it was the girls in the largely white communities that sought out intra-race friendships more predominantly.

According to Erikson (1959), social interaction between learners and the people in their lives is the basis for identity development. These reciprocal relationships are vital for healthy identity development. In adolescence, learners may be preoccupied about the way others view them in comparison with how they feel about themselves, and therefore will feel a great need for peer recognition, and they will try to conform to their peers' expectations. They do this to discover which roles fit them best; however, at the same time, they need to be wary of accepting others' values and beliefs without thinking about how well they may fit themselves. At the beginning of adolescence, learners replace dependence on their parents with dependence on their peers. When they are able to move away from this dependency, they are able to achieve a mature identity which allows them to have a sense of who they are, what they want in life and where they are heading in the future (ibid).

2.3 CONCLUSION

To conclude, it can be seen that the experiences of the learners participating in this study cannot be understood in a one- dimensional manner. We have seen through reviewing the literature that there are many different factors that play a role in the perception that learners have about their experiences, and how they manage and cope with those various events and stresses. Personal and social identity are both integral to

the way that learners experience their schooling, and cannot be excluded from a study of this nature.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH AND DESIGN METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This study aims to learn about the experiences that historically disadvantaged scholarship learners have had so far in their high school careers. It also aims to explore how learners think that these experiences may have affected their identity development during their adolescent phase of development.

Research questions are one of the most significant factors in determining the success or failure of a qualitative research (Flick, 2000). This chapter will discuss the research process used to answer the research question "What are historically disadvantaged adolescent scholarship learners' experiences in independent school education?" Further discussion of the ethical considerations will also be included.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

To conduct good research, researchers need to be sure of the paradigm in which they wish to work. Paradigms provide the structure that will guide the way in which the research question is posed and data are collected, analysed and interpreted. According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999, p.6), research paradigms 'are all-encompassing systems of interrelated practice and thinking that define for researchers the nature of their enquiry along three dimensions: ontology, epistemology and methodology'. These three terms cannot be separated as they are intimately linked in the research process. Krauss (2005, p.758) explains that 'ontology involves the philosophy of reality, epistemology addresses how we come to know that reality while methodology identifies the particular practices used to attain knowledge of it'.

The ontological dimension recognises that everyone has their own lived experience and that, because of this, they will have their own subjective viewpoint of their reality. In other words, one could say that 'multiple realities' exist. How we come to know these realities is the epistemological dimension, while the methodological dimension is the way in which we are able to find out what these realities are (Terre Blanche & Durheim, 1999; Krauss, 2005).

Research paradigms provide the structure that guides the way in which research should be conducted. They are described by Guba and Lincoln, (1994, p.30), and cited in Krauss (2005) as a 'basic belief system or world view that guides the investigation'. In order to decide on the research paradigm in which to work, Henning (2004) suggests that the researcher first pose the question that highlights what they want to study and then examines the verbs that are used in the formulation of the questions. Verbs such as 'understand' and 'experience' lend themselves to the interpretative paradigm. Within this paradigm, 'knowledge is seen to be comprised of multiple sets of interpretations that are part of the social and cultural context in which it occurs' (Kim, 2003, p.9).

The interpretative paradigm places the central concern on the participants and allows for the researcher to obtain information from participants about their subjective worlds and their experiences, perceptions and meanings about their subjective worlds. Furthermore, it aims to 'retain the integrity of the phenomena being investigated' by 'getting inside the person' and understanding them from within (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Through the 'empathetic interpretation' of what they say, the researcher can begin to understand their experiences as well as the effect that these experiences have had on their identity development (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999, p.7).

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design is the 'plan or blueprint' of the procedures that the researcher follows when conducting their research (Mouton, 2001). Cohen et al. (2011) identify three factors that need to be considered when planning the research design. These are 'the consideration of the research question, the main purpose of the research and the research paradigm and principles within which one is working, and the philosophies, ontologies and epistemologies that underpin them' (Cohen, et al., 2011, p.116).

A research design is needed to conduct systematic and thorough investigations of the phenomena that are studied. The structure of the design should be connected to the paradigm being used, it should ensure that the correct methods and strategies that will be used for data collection, and, finally, it should include how that data will be collected and analysed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p.244). At the same time, the design may still be 'open and flexible to permit exploration of whatever the phenomenon under study offers for inquiry' (Patton, 2002, p.255).

3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research approaches have gained increasing popularity in social science research as they allow broad, holistic approaches to research. They have a number of key characteristics such as being empirical, descriptive and detailed, and at the same time inductive because, through the details obtained, and the interpretations thereof, theories and concepts can be built. Multiple methods such as observation, interviews, documents and focus groups can be used to gather information (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Conrad & Serlin, 2006; Babbie, 2011).

For the present research, the qualitative approach was used to help the researcher understand the experiences of adolescent scholarship learners in their school environments. One of the most important characteristics of qualitative research is that it supports the idea that each individual participant constructs their own reality through their interactions in the various social contexts in which they find themselves. 'Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world' (Merriam, 1998, p.6; Merriam, 2009). Denzin and Lincoln describe a qualitative researcher as a 'bricoleur' which, if directly translated, is a handy(wo)man who is able to take snippets of information from people's lives and put them together by using the tools and methods needed to collate them. By collating them, 'the process creates and brings psychological and emotional unity to an interpretive experience' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p.4,5).

In an ever-evolving society where social issues and ways of life are constantly changing, there is a need for research to take people's subjective perspectives of their worlds into account. Within qualitative research there are a number of different methodological approaches that fall under the 'umbrella' of qualitative research. Some of these approaches include ethnography, phenomenology, heuristics, chaos theory, grounded theory, the case study, ethnomethodology, narrative study, discourse analysis and systems theory. To determine which approach to use, one needs to look at the main characteristics of the different design types so that the one that is selected is the one that best suits the intended research (Merriam, 1998; Henning, 2004).

In educational research, grounded theory, case studies, ethnography and phenomenology have commonly been used. All of these methodologies aim to produce a better understanding of the topic being researched as well as gaining meaning from the study (Merriam, 1998; Henning, 2004).

I have selected to use phenomenology as an approach. Phenomenology 'holds that any attempt to understand social reality has to be grounded in people's experiences of that social reality' (Gray, 2009, p.22). This methodological approach seeks to find out about the lived experience of the participant, 'how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others' (Patton, 2002, p.104). The researcher working within this approach needs to put aside preconceived ideas (bracketing) and current perceptions of the phenomena being studied so that the results 'speak for themselves'. This will result in new, fuller and renewed meaning being created (Gray, 2009; Flick, von Kardoff & Steinke, 2004).

3.5 RESEARCH METHODS

Research methods that were used in this study included purposeful sampling, semi-structured interviews and phenomological data analysis. These were all selected as they are consistent with the research design and can provide numerous sources of data that may be used for analysis.

3.5.1 Selection of participants

Non-probability sampling is commonly used in qualitative research. From the various sampling types, purposive sampling was selected as the technique that has been used in this research study. Patton argues (2002, p.230) that 'the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information rich cases for in depth study. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry thus the term purposeful sampling'.

According to Allasuutai, Bickman, and Brannen (2008), purposeful sampling allows selection of participants from places that would have cases that best fit the research albeit a school, a location, demographics or other selection criteria. For this study, the criteria used will assist in the gathering of information-rich data. The selection criteria for participants were as follows: learners must currently be on a bursary or scholarship

at an independent school, and they must come from an historically disadvantaged background.

The independent schools involved provided the researcher with a list of scholarship/ bursary learners from historically disadvantaged backgrounds. Each of these learners was approached via consultation with their parents and was informed of the study and what it entailed. A letter was provided to each of the learners and their parents that explained the process (Appendix A). The participants then volunteered to participate in the study after consent was given by their parents. Eight participants were approached to participate and all of them agreed to volunteer to participate in this study. All participants were required to participate in 2 interviews, which were done within 2 months of each other.

3.5.2 Methods of data collection

The research methods selected for this study best support the processes needed to gather information required to answer the research questions. Methods used included purposeful selection of participants, semi-structured interviews and phenomenological data analysis.

3.5.2.1 Procedures

Several independent schools that offer bursaries and scholarships to historically disadvantaged learners were contacted to participate in the study. After meeting with the respective principals, four schools gave permission for me to gain access to the names of bursary or scholarship learners who were attending their school. Written permission was given by each of the schools involved. Each school requested to remain anonymous, and therefore the permission letters provided have not been included in the appendix. To conduct research in independent schools, permission does not have to be obtained from the Western Cape Education Department, as is the case with public schools. Hence permission was only obtained from the schools involved in the study.

An application was made to Stellenbosch University's ethics committee in January 2011 for permission for the study to go ahead. Permission was granted in March 2011: reference no. 494/2011 (Appendix E).

3.5.2.2 Data collection

- Semi-structured interviews

One of the most useful ways of gathering information within a qualitative study is by means of in-depth interviews because, notwithstanding that observation work might also be done, a researcher is unable to observe participants' thoughts and feelings, and the meanings that they attach to those experiences (Patton, 2002). Face-to-face interviews allow greater flexibility, and the interviewer is able to structure the interview so that the optimal amount of data can be collected. Interviews allow rapport-building between the participant and the interviewer, resulting in the participant possibly feeling more comfortable about sharing their experiences (Alusuutari et al., 2008). Interviews also allow the researcher to explore the world of the participant without being too formal and directive in their questioning. Through the use of questions, 'the participant's perspectives on the phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participant views it (the emic perspective), and not as the researcher views it (etic perspective)' (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p.101).

To allow the 'unfolding' of participants' perspectives, an interview guide was used to conduct a semi-structured interview (Addendum B). The interview guide provided a list of questions and topics that the researcher wished to cover in all the interviews conducted, but at the same time it allowed the interview to seem more like a conversation. Within this conversation, the interviewer can probe some answers and gather rich information (Patton, 2002). An semi-structured interview allows the researcher to discuss and probe different experiences of the learner; this also helps to prevent the development of prior categorisation of the data that are to be collected, as this can 'limit the field of inquiry' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p.129).

Two individual (one-on-one) semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant who took part in the study so as to allow time for the development of a second set of questions based on the findings of the first interviews. Interview transcriptions were then analysed to discover the meaning embedded in the words of the scholarship learners. According to Patton, cited in Merriam (2009), 'the experiences of different people are bracketed, analysed, and compared to identify the essence of the phenomenon'. The participants of the present study have had some differing

experiences; however, those experiences that are shared have been identified, bracketed and analysed so as to gain a better understanding of their experiences.

These interpretations are subjective in nature, and interpretative researchers need to ensure that they are aware of, and understand, how different contexts are interpreted subjectively by those who have different experiences (Henning, 2004; Merriam, 2009).

3.5.3 Data analysis

Qualitative research leads to a great deal of information being collected. To gather concise and insightful findings, one first needs to go through the process of analysing the interview transcriptions. There are a number of different approaches that can be taken to analyse the data, including conversation and discourse analysis, biographical and narrative approaches, and phenomenological analysis (Gibbs, 2007). Within the phenomenological approach, analysis continues from the 'assumption that there is an essence to an experience'. This 'essence' can be identified by analysing what each participant has said about their experience as a bursary learner, and then comparing all their individual experiences with one another (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

To understand and explain the 'essence' of the learners' 'lived experience', the researcher used phenomenological analysis. To do this, however, the researcher ensured that she did not approach the data with any preconceived ideas and views that she might have previously held about the learners and their experiences. This step is called **epoche**, a Greek word meaning 'to refrain from judgement and … the everyday, ordinary way of perceiving things' (Moustakas, 1994, p.33, cited in Patton, 2002, p.484). The researcher consistently reflected on and discussed in supervision, any prejudices, judgements and assumptions that she might previously have had about the phenomenon being studied. In doing this, she allowed herself to review the data collected as openly as possible so that she was able to conduct the second step in the analytic process, phenomenological reduction (ibid).

During the reduction phase 'bracketing out' occurs. The following steps are involved in this process (Husserl, 1913, cited in Patton, 2002, p.485-487).

i.   Locate within the personal experience, or self-story, key phrases and statements that speak directly to the phenomenon in question.

ii. Interpret the meanings of these phrases as an informed reader.

iii. Obtain the subject's interpretations of these phrases, if possible.

iv. Inspect these meanings for what they reveal about the essential, recurring features of the phenomenon being studied.

v. Offer a tentative statement, or definition, of the phenomenon in terms of the essential recurring features in step iv.

All the bracketed data are given equal weight and put into themes that are relevant to the research. To obtain a full understanding of the learner's experiences, it is necessary to look at the themes from all angles. This is called 'imagination variation', and it is through this process that the 'researcher develops enhanced or expanded versions of the invariant themes' (Patton, 2002, p.486). Once this has been done, a textual portrayal of each theme is created. This is 'an abstraction of the experience that provides content and illustration and not yet essence' (ibid.).

Structural description now takes place and is then synthesised to gain an understanding of the essence of the experience. Patton (2002, p.486) describes it as follows: 'in the structural synthesis, the phenomenologist looks beneath the affect inherent in the experience to deeper meaning for the individual who, together, make up the group'. Finally, the amalgamation of the texture and structure is done in order to gain the essence of the experience.

3.6 VERIFICATION

In qualitative research there are no specific numbers or data statistics that can be used to establish the reliability or the validity of a study. 'Validity and reliability in qualitative research involves conducting the investigation in an ethical manner' (Merriam, 2009, p.209). The qualitative researcher is essentially the data collection instrument, and it is therefore very important that they 'report/record' accurately and do not 'oversimplify or misinterpret' the information that they gather (Lewis, 2009, p.7).

Lincoln and Guba (1985), cited in Merriam (2009), believed that the paradigm within which research is done must be considered. They renamed the concepts of internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity, replacing them with the terms credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability (Merriam, 2009). These are the headings under which the data verification of this study is discussed.

3.6.1 Credibility (internal validity)

The question asked here is: How much do the research findings match the actual reality of an event, situation or phenomenon? With this research project based on the phenomenological approach (the study of the lived experience) within the interpretative paradigm (interpreting their lived experiences), this issue would be one of the major difficulties that could have an impact on the overall results and 'validity' of the study.

Five threats to validity within qualitative research were identified by Maxwell (1996), cited in Lewis (2009, p.9). These are the description and interpretation of data (how they are done), conscious or accidental manipulation of data (to fit a theory), researcher bias towards the participants (inherent reflexivity), and a change in the participant's behaviour or responses owing to the interviewer's presence (reactivity).

In the process of phenomenological analysis, 'imaginative variation' is done to look at all the data from all angles and, when no alternate interpretations can be made, the credibility of the initial findings that the researcher has made is improved (Patton, 2002). For this research report, the researcher ensured that all possible interpretations were considered. These findings were also reviewed by a research supervisor as part of the peer review process (Merriam, 2009).

3.6.2 Consistency (reliability)

Consistency is primarily concerned with how consistent research findings would be if the same research topic were conducted again. This is challenging when studying people, their behaviour and social interactions because everyone has a different reality and different experiences that will influence the outcome of the research. There may also be different interpretations of the same data. Merriam (2009, p.221) states that 'the more important question for qualitative research is whether results are consistent with the data collected'. If another researcher had to look at the data presented and come up with the same findings and that the results 'make sense', then they are deemed 'consistent and dependable' (ibid).

To prevent threats to reliability, the researcher had to ensure that she was not biased towards participants and the information that was gathered. It should be made clear how the sample population was selected and how the information was gathered from them. This research was conducted by only one researcher, and therefore all the

interviews were conducted using the same interview style and the same leading and follow-up questions. Furthermore, each participant took part in two interviews and was asked questions formulated from the first interview to help cross-reference their experiences. Transcriptions were transcribed verbatim by the interviewer. All these components of the data collection process influenced the level of reliability for this research paper and its findings (Lewis, 2009).

3.6.3 Transferability (external validity)

External validity is the extent to which the results of a study can be generalised i.e. its ability to be applied to other situations (transferability). There are two ways in which one can help with transferability. Firstly, it is important to select the sample that will be most representative of a population. For this research, purposeful sampling was used so that the experiences of bursary learners, who represent the bursary/scholarship population, could be better understood. Lincoln and Guba (1985), cited in Merriam (2009), argue that for the research findings to be transferable, the researcher needs to ensure that they use rich descriptions of the context and findings in their research report. In this way, the reader of the findings will be able to make an accurate judgement about whether or not the findings are applicable or relevant to their situation (Bless, Higson-Smith, Kagee, 2006; Merriam, 2009).

3.6.4 Confirmability (objectivity)

Objectivity, which is termed 'confirmability' in qualitative research, is not actually possible in social research. Every researcher and participant involved has their own cultural and ideological background which can influence the research process. 'Culture and ideology create implicit and explicit expectations of outcome that permeate the research' (Bless, et al., 2006, p.175). For this research to contain confirmability, the researcher reflected on commentary made in her findings and cross-checked them with her supervisor. Through ongoing reflective commentary, a clearly outlined research process (audit trail), and taking the participants' views (and not the researchers) in interpreting the findings, confirmability is more likely (Shenton, 2004).

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics is a vital part of all qualitative research, particularly because one is working with people. It concerns consideration for others and what is best for them, and at no point

does the finding of "truth" become more important than human dignity (Gilbert, 2008). Ethical considerations made by the researcher also contribute to the validity and reliability of the research work (Merriam, 2009). There are a number of key ethical principles (discussed below) that govern social research. The consideration of these ethics while compiling a research proposal and conducting research is paramount.

Ethical clearance was issued by the Stellenbosch University Ethics committee who reviewed the research proposal. They confirmed that the study is feasible and that the methodology is appropriate. This peer review of the research process helps to ensure that ethical lapses are minimised.

Ethics are defined as 'moral principles' or standards that need to be met and maintained when working in the field of health care (HPCSA, 2008). Ethical standards in research help to prevent ethical abuses and violations, and provide researchers with an understanding of their responsibilities (Bless et al., 2006). The researcher's own ethical values will be influential in the research process. Being an ethical and moral person, this researcher has considered the different aspects that are needed for the process of this research project to be deemed to have been done in an ethical manner. Some of these ethical principles are discussed below.

3.7.1 Autonomy and informed consent

Each participant has the right to **autonomy**. This means that they have the right to know what is being researched and what the potential risk and limits to confidentiality there might be.

The principle of **informed consent** implies that the participant who is mentally sound and has legal capacity to consent is given all information about the research process, what is being studied, what their involvement is, and if there are any potentially harmful effects that could be caused by the research process (Gilbert, 2008). As stated earlier, parents and learners received a letter outlining the study and were asked to participate voluntarily. This letter informed them fully of their responsibilities should they volunteer to take part in the study and allowed them to carefully consider the risks and benefits of taking part in this study. This full and open disclosure to the participant is necessary for informed consent and shows that there was a 'commitment to respect' the participants involved (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p.66).

Each participant will be given an option to participate and will not be forced to participate involuntarily. 'Informed consent therefore implies informed refusal' (Cohen et al., 2011, p.78). Permission from the participating school's principals was obtained. Permission from the Education Department of the Western Cape was not required owing to the independent status of the schools involved.

This study was conducted with adolescent learners under the age of 18 and therefore the researcher needed to obtain written consent from the learners' parents/guardians, and assent from the learners, for them to participate in the study. Each learner was deemed to have sufficient competence to assent to their participation (Allan, 2008).

3.7.2 Non-maleficence and beneficence

Two key ethical principles in psychological research are **non-maleficence** (absence of harm) and **beneficence** ('a moral obligation of psychologists to act for the benefit of others') (Allan, 2008 p.135). For the researcher, non-maleficence would mean that they must do all that they can to avoid harming participants in any foreseeable way. When harm has been done owing to unavoidable circumstances, they need to make an effort to minimise the damage done. Harm can be done in numerous ways and can be intentional or unintentional (Allan, 2008). Before research takes place, the researcher should try to identify where harm could possibly occur and ensure that, should this happen, that counselling and support services are made available to the participant (Gray, 2009).

Beneficence requires the researcher to ensure that their research will benefit the participant in some way and that they 'secure the well-being of their subjects'. Research cannot take place without it affecting the participant in some way, albeit only on their time. It is therefore important that their contribution results in potential benefits for them. In this study, the benefits will be the recommendations that can be made by reviewing the findings of this research project (Allan, 2008, Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

3.7.3 Confidentiality

Participants have a right to privacy and confidentiality. This principle ensures that the names of participants and the locations where the research took place are anonymous (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This is particularly relevant for this research because in interviews, unlike surveys and questionnaires where anonymity is the norm, the participants' names are known to the researcher. The participants' names have been

changed so that their anonymity is maintained, and all information obtained is kept confidential and was and is not accessible to anyone but the researcher (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009).

Digital copies of documents and transcripts have been password encrypted, and hard copies locked in a filing cabinet. These documents and digital recordings will be stored for 5 years before being permanently erased.

3.8. REFLEXIVITY

Reflexivity is defined as the 'continuous process of reflection by the researcher on his or her values and preconceptions, behaviour or presence and those of the participants, which can affect the interpretation of responses' (Parahoo, 2006, cited in Jootun, McGhee & Marland, 2009, p.42). I had to consider my position in relation to the participants and how this might affect the interview process as well as the interpretation of the interviews.

Two researcher subject positions that are applicable to this research are important to discuss. I am a white person speaking to black learners about their experiences in a white-dominant school; and secondly, I am an adult who is essentially in a position of power over school learners. I ensured (as far as possible) that I did not bring any preconceived ideas into the research process and made sure that the learners felt comfortable sharing their stories by guaranteeing confidentiality of the interview contents. The participants' quotes (which are essentially their voices in this research) were also used as part of the research findings to ensure that their expressions of their experiences are not lost through the phenomenological data analysis process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

3.9 CONCLUSION

When designing a research project, there are many different components that need to be well thought out and included in the research plan. All the different components have been discussed here as well as the considerations regarding validity and reliability within qualitative research. The findings made through the above research process are discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Throughout this research paper, the aim has been to answer the research question posed at the beginning of the research process.

- What are historically disadvantaged adolescent scholarship learners' experiences in independent school education?

Learners interviewed were all from historically disadvantaged families that ranged from middle- to low-income households. Learners had had different experiences in their school careers owing to the different levels of support they received, their academic abilities, their peer groups and parental support (financial and emotional). However, although some of the experiences are different, there are several experiences that were noted by the majority of the participants. These experiences (themes) will be discussed first.

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model was used as theoretical framework. This model incorporates a number of different interconnected systems that influence the participants' lives and experiences. Through my interaction with the participants in the interview process, it became clear to me how the different systems within their lives influenced their experiences and their perceptions of their experiences.

Each finding is discussed under a theme heading and then according to the microsystem within which the experience was located. The microsystems surrounding the participant, which were discussed in Chapter 2, include the school, peers and family. It is important to remember that the participants interact with these microsystems within the mesosystem.

Another microsystem that was not discussed in Chapter 2, but that needs to be considered, is the scholarship or bursary programmes and how they interact with the individual participant within the mesosphere. This system is important to note because the learners are recipients of different scholarships or bursaries. These were discussed in

the interviews and are relevant as they provide different levels of financial and emotional support. The support they received influenced their experiences at their independent school and how they managed there.

Four of the participants are recipients of the Allan Gray scholarship. For the past four years, this organisation has run a comprehensive programme that has given scholarships to 124 learners across the country. They pay for flights, full boarding and tuition fees, a stationery and book allowance and pocket money, and hold camps once a year for all learners on their programme. Each school is assigned a mentor who speaks to the scholarship recipients regularly. The organisation makes itself available for discussion of any issues that the learners may be having. Suffice it to say that these learners appear to be well supported.

One of the participants was given a scholarship by an overseas benefactor who came to South Africa to do charity work and decided to set up a scholarship fund for one child from the township school he was working with. The scholarship covers full boarding and tuition fees for the duration of the child's high school career, provided that the child continues to do well academically. This benefactor currently lives in Europe and visits once a year to meet with the participant.

The other three participants secured bursaries after their parents applied to the individual schools for financial support that would allow their children to attend that school. These learners are all day scholars and their full tuition fees are paid by a bursary committee. Each of these participants has a mentor who is available to them to discuss their academic progress.

The research findings will now be discussed alongside quotes taken from interviews with the participants. To maintain confidentiality, participants' names have been changed, and they are called Bongani, Cebo, Dumisa, Emma, Fundiswa, Gabi, Hannah and Jane.

4.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS

All the participants were very eager to talk about their experiences in the independent school environment. There were a number of different experiences; however, there were four primary themes. These themes included the increased pressure of high academic

and behavioural expectations, racial stereotyping, cultural differences and financial challenges. As mentioned earlier, the bioecological model as a conceptual framework for the discussion and each microsystem is discussed individually.

4.2.1 THEME 1: INCREASED PRESSURE AND HIGH EXPECTATIONS

4.2.1.1 Microsystem: The individual

Each participant seemed to be coping under the pressure of their academic work and the scholarship expectations by reaching out to a parent, scholarship mentor/advisor or school counsellor when they needed academic support. For the Allan Gray participants, emotional support is provided as part of the programme through camps, mentors and advisors.

> **Dumisa:** *…they also have personal support so if you have any personal problems you can talk to them about it. They also do workshops and motivational stuff, so it's quite an all-rounder scholarship* (lines 26-28).

> **Bongani***: They [Allan Gray] are quite active in your school life because they give you skills like time management skills and they give you tools which help you connect you with other scholars because talking to them once a day really helps you feel better* (lines 318-320).

> **Gabi:** *Besides from financial support, like with most scholarships they just put you in the school and never see you again but with Allan Gray it's different. We have SMI meetings and they come every month and talk about motivation and how to handle different types of situations – it's kind of like therapy because they talk to you and it's a big happy family I guess – it's like a second family who is your support system* (lines 47-51).

> **Hannah:** *Allan Gray started this wellness programme – I think it's called – and basically if you feel like you need to talk to someone then you just call and then someone will come to the school and talk to you. So I think that really cool and that all scholarships should be like that and be more involved in the kids' lives because the scholarships that don't do that, the child ends up feeling like …lost…nowhere… I am not sure of what word to use* (lines 180-186).

Although the other four participants are not Allan Gray scholarship recipients, there is evidence that their parents are very supportive. They spoke very highly of their parents (or guardian) and that they were able to talk to them about school.

> **Jane:** *Ja, they are supportive, like every time I need, like I talk to them about everything, whatever happens at school, I always tell them, they are supportive.* (lines 119-120).

In two of the cases, both participants' parents approached the school about a bursary for their children. Their persistence paid off and both of them were accepted.

4.2.1.2 Microsystem: Parents and family

As discussed in Chapter 2, the role that parents and family play in the participants' lives is significant with regard to the psychological resources and coping abilities. Each of the participants seemed to have good relationships with their family and spoke highly of their parents and their expectations. Parents are considered to be one of the most important contributors to the proximal processes. If they continue to be involved and interact with their children, and show love and support, they provide them with greater abilities to cope under stress and pressure (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

Participants showed a great deal of respect for their parents and an understanding of why their parents wanted them to work hard and to be grateful for their education. All of their parents lived through the apartheid era of poor schooling and felt that they were disadvantaged by that. The participants showed an appreciation of what they have compared with what their parents had received. In some way, it could be considered that their children are being provided with the education that the apartheid system deprived them of, and in some way they are living through their children by providing them with unconditional support.

The literature shows that parents who are from a lower socio-economic background tend not to be as actively involved in the learner's school life (Kao & Turney, 2010). Three of the participants' parents lived in different provinces and therefore could not attend school events, parent meetings or serve on school committees. For the remaining participants, socio-economic status played a role in parental involvement. This does not mean that the parents were not involved at all. Participants reported that their parents

had attended some school events such as a rugby game or a parent meeting, but that getting time off work was difficult.

Previous research also suggested that parents' expectations may exceed the learners' actual capability (Eccles, 1993, cited in Davis-Kean, 2005; Kao & Turney, 2010). This was not reflected in this research study. No learner, when speaking about their parents, mentioned that parents placed excessive pressure on them – at least not explicitly. There was an overwhelming sense that parents provided support, guidance and inspiration to the participants. However, this might have placed additional implicit pressure on the learners. They might have felt that they should achieve and take full advantage of their educational opportunities.

All learners indicated that their parents desired to have a better future for them. As Fataar (2007) noted, attitudes towards education can be linked to the attitudes of the participant's family.

> **Fundiswa:** *It* [parents value on education] *is very important especially, also, because my dad didn't do his matric and he understands now what he needed to do and he didn't get where he wanted to be and he knows why he didn't get there so that is what he is trying to do for me* (lines 181-183).

> **Gabi:** *I am their investment* [her parents] *so that I can have a better future so you shouldn't waste and I think that is why I always work so hard because I know there is a lot that goes into me sitting here in this chair with you, there is a lot that goes into building that* (lines 313-316).

> **Jane:** *My dad went to first-year university but he got stabbed so he had to move out of school and then my mum didn't finish, she ended up in grade 10* (lines 255-256).

> **Dumisa:** *My dad has a really hectic background and the fact that we are just an average family took a lot of work to get there because he was from like a really really really poor background so the fact that we are average is to him it's like, achieving wealth, even though it's not much financially, to him it's wealth compared to the conditions he grew up in* (lines 299-301).

All the participants received good support from their parents or, in one case, a guardian, concerning their education. It was as if their parents were living vicariously through the lives of their children because they have the opportunity for the better education that they were not able to receive during the apartheid years. In addition, Allan Gray Scholarship learners are supported by a team of mentors who are in charge of advising them on their academics, establishing if extra lessons are needed and who are able to provide emotional support if needed.

4.2.1.3 Microsystem: School

As mentioned in Chapter 3, school is the 'stage' where we play out our lives and express our psychological needs and interests. Soudien (2007) noted that greater academic pressure was felt by learners at independent schools. This finding was also reflected in this research, with all the research participants saying that they felt that being a scholarship or a bursary recipient was a highly pressurised experience. They were acutely aware that they were only able to attend their respective independent schools because someone else, be it an individual sponsor, a corporate scholarship fund or a school bursary programme, was paying for their fees. With this opportunity comes an expectation that they will work hard, achieve good results and take full advantage of all the opportunities presented to them – which increases pressure.

Comments made by various learners that clearly describe the feelings about the pressure they feel because of this are included below:

> **Cebo:** *You are expected to be the cleverest student in class and you are expected to better… I am expected to do better because I am a bursary student* (line 111).

> **Hannah:** *You feel more pressure and in some way you feel that you have to be perfect and you also feel like you can't do anything wrong, because once you do something wrong then you feel okay, it's over, you don't feel like the perfect child anymore… you feel like you are restricted, like you basically don't have a voice* (lines 131-140).

> **Fundiswa:** *I can't afford to fail and it still to be okay because I am on bursary and my academics need to be to their expectations, and my behaviour at school needs to be to their expectations* (line 80 – 82). *I can't afford to* [be naughty]

because my parents aren't paying for the schools fees and their parents are, so I can't be naughty and I have to walk on eggs basically (lines 401-404).

Through these extracts we see that living up to other people's expectations comes across strongly and that these learners feel that they have to portray a certain level of perfectionism and obedience. As Goffman, cited in Jenkins (2004), explains, in order to be accepted by others, there is a tendency to become an 'actor' within school, which is their front stage so that they can feel that they can be accepted by others. This appears to be the case with these learners because they have to act in a certain way.

> **Jane:** *'It makes me feel angry when at school you can't complain about other things because you are on scholarship – you always have to be this perfect little girl – you have to behave in a certain way. You can't be like a normal girl because even if you see something wrong you have to keep it to yourself even if you don't agree because you are scared they might take away your scholarship* (lines 542-546).

> **Emma:** *I want to impress people here who are helping me. You can't just help a person and then you see that they don't care and get bad marks, and they will lose interest. That's the whole point, so they keep on helping you* (Lines 199-200).

Part of this pressure that the learners feel is that their scholarship or bursary could be taken away from them. The majority of them are grateful for the educational opportunities that they have been given and are constantly aware that if they don't achieve the results required, that opportunity can be taken away from them. This would not only be detrimental to them but would also disappoint their parents and families. For many of the participants, this would be devastating, as they all expressed how their parents wanted them to achieve a good education so that they can have better financial lives than their parents.

Two of the four schools involved in the study have a support centre which included counsellors and/or psychologists who are available for emotional support. However, it seems that the learners don't always make use of these services. There is a sense that the learners do not feel that they can talk about and express the issues that they experience regarding the pressures and expectations that they have at school, because they feel that

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they have been given this great opportunity and they shouldn't complain. Talking about it makes them feel that they are complaining. Comments that support this finding include:

> **Jane:** *It is really nice because we don't really get to express it* [their experience] *to anyone and this is one of those times when you do actually get to express without having pressure like a teacher listening* (line 561-562).

> **Hannah:** *Ja, it allows us to express our feelings because we don't really get to express them a lot. We can't, we really can't express ourselves, that is the negative thing even if someone is against you, you kinda keep it to yourself because you scared that it is gonna have a negative consequence* (line 228-231).

Several of them said that the interview process that was conducted was really enjoyable and they were keen to share their experiences. They also wanted to know if others were experiencing the same things. This suggests that they want to talk about their experiences but do not feel safe talking about them for fear of negative repercussions.

4.2.2 THEME 2: RACIAL STEREOTYPING

As discussed earlier, racism has been a part of South Africa's history for very many decades and has been included in a great deal of the literature on studies of schools in South Africa. Racial differences arose in this study in several different ways. These included racial stereotyping, racial jokes, and differences in cultural background. Some participants could provide more accounts of racial remarks or encounters than others.

4.2.2.1 The individual

All of the participants experienced racial stereotyping at school in some form or another. The dominant stereotypical assumption made was that all black learners receiving scholarships are poor. This came across as frustrating to some of the participants because four of them were from middle-class family backgrounds where at least one parent worked. Even when they did come from a lower-income family background, the participants were offended that this assumption was made on the basis of them being black scholarship learners.

> **Dumisa***: When they* (his peers] *hear the word scholarship, people actually think that you are someone who is really in need* (line 139).

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Gabi: *It's also like the day girls and everyone else is like 'she is on scholarship so I am guessing she is poor'* (line 96).

Hannah: *Oh yes. It's like just because you on scholarship, they automatically think 'this chick is so poor', they just helping her out because her family can't afford it. My family can't afford to take me to this school but we can afford our lifestyle* (line 446*).*

Jane: *People, when they think of scholarship, don't think 'maybe they got a scholarship because they are smart' they think oh 'It's because they don't have money'* (line 107).

Gabi was quite vocal about how she experienced race and racial stereotyping as quite dominant still in school. She felt frustrated about it and seemed angry that people were not yet living the 'rainbow' nation dream of not stereotyping people because of their colour.

Gabi: *I think that some people, I don't know if they forget that this is the new South Africa, but they need to get the deal because their arrogance is defining who they are. They say don't judge a book by its cover but it's very hard not to judge if you act that way and not allow me to see us as equals* (line 289-291).

4.2.2.2. Microsystem: School

Within the school, a stereotypical assumption made by teachers emerged through the interviews. Six of the participants found that at some point in their high school career, they experienced that teachers and/or their peers were surprised when they did well. This often resulted in them receiving praise that was beyond the credit they deserved in comparison with achievements made by their white peers. This correlates with findings of Tatum (2004) which also found that teachers were 'surprised' by black learners doing well.

Although receiving praise is not negative, the participants felt that the praise received did not need to be high as it was because a white learner with a similar achievement did not necessarily reecive the same recognition. These comments were therefore experienced as patronising and could potentially have a negative influence on the learner's racial development (Tatum, 2004).

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The 'surprise' arose particularly regarding written work and English essays, as follows:

> **Cebo**: *You're expected to be the cleverest student in class and you are expected to do better, and when you do you do better some students look at you and then they act differently* (line 116).

> **Jane:** *And like when you write something good, they will be like 'is this your own work' and they just undermine, as if, because you black you can't do that or you won't be able to write such a perfect essay. If it's a white person writing an excellent essay it is expected of them* (lines 358-362).

> **Gabi:** *Teachers, some teachers in school think that just because you are black, you are dumb – I don't know if I am putting it right – so when you get marks in the nineties they like 'oh my gosh – she got 90!' and I am like yes!* (line 157).

The messages that the learners received were contradictory. On the one hand, they are expected to achieve very good marks because they are scholarship recipients, but on the other hand, teachers are surprised when they do well. These contradictory messages may affect their individual identity development. During the adolescent years, a learners' social surroundings and the interactions they have with those surroundings, influence their identity development (Jenkins, 2004). They question what others think of them and try to correlate those images with their own sense of self (Erikson, 1963, cited in Meyer and Viljoen, 2002).

Emma explained that she felt she had to work twice as hard to prove that she was equal to her white peers. She had the following to say over the lowered expectation that teachers and peers had of her:

> **Emma:** *Ja, and they* [her peers] *get offended that I have done well… It's all with this racist thing… I feels that it will never go away because black is black and white is white – it's because they different colours and black is always like second – that's how I see it* (line 335 – 344)*…I don't mind – actually I do mind if people look down on me* (line 346).

This last comment was particularly interesting and leads me to the next point. When each participant was asked whether they had felt they were treated differently or had

any racial incidents at school, many said no. However, through the process of the interview, comments were made that showed that this was not always so. This was the case for Emma, who said that she felt she wasn't treated differently, and was treated fairly; but I got the impression that she felt that she was treated as inferior to her white peers.

Similarly, Fundiswa commented on perceptions that some black people may have about white people, and white people being seen as better.

> **Fundiswa:** *Well, throughout history, there has always been that generalisation and so people adapt to that – there has always been that picture that white people are better than black people because the looks and you know all that kinds of stuff. But, I don't know, I think it just depends on the person themselves, if they can't find themselves then they just lost. But, ja, I think people are very much influenced by the idea of that white people are a lot better than black people* (lines 269-274).

This assumption is borne from South Africa's apartheid past where racial categorisation took place and when white people benefited most in education and employment. This setting created the false impression that white was better. Internalisation of the idea that white people are better is a 'socially induced inferiority complex' that could be reinforced by the dominant white independent school environment as well, especially when we consider the earlier comments about teachers' expectations (Hook, 2002, p.112; Seekings, 2008).

4.2.2.2. Microsystem: Peers

Racism, taking the form of racist jokes was mentioned by all participants. However, among peers, the majority of the participants preferred to see the lighter side of them and to not take offense when they were said in jest with friends.

> **Dumisa:** *To be an honest, racism, it's never really been an issue but you get those slight jokes, and they make slightly offensive jokes, but it's not intentional to make it offensive but maybe you make it personal but I would say there isn't intentional racism, but it's unconscious, and unintentional* (lines 115-118)

> **Gabi:** *I love racist jokes, they the funniest thing. But of course if you are going to say them with meaning then it's offensive, but if it's a joke, why not, it's funny. We should be able to laugh about ourselves. That's the only way racism is going to go away if we laugh at ourselves* (lines 284-286).

> **Hannah:** *Well, it depends who is saying it. Sometimes it's my friends but it's fine because it's my friends and I understand it but if it's someone else, then I am like 'Wait. Hold up. What you going to achieve by saying something like that?' It makes you question what people think and stuff* (lines 299-301).

> **Fundiswa:** *I think people have become tolerant because amongst some people, that's how they feel towards their own people so they accept those jokes to be true (lines 281-283) There are a couple of racist jokes but I just tend to throw them over my shoulder because it doesn't faze me* (lines 285).

However, when they felt that a line had been overstepped and that the joke was said to intentionally be mean, they felt the need to set the boundaries. Most of the participants stated that they would say something if the boundary was overstepped.

> **Cebo:** *I had one (racial incident) from a friend. Every time he spoke he would say 'I saw this white guy hitting this black guy'. The other day I was in his car and a taxi cut us off and then he shouted 'kaffir' so I was like okay like that's quite racist dude. He apologised though* (line 50 -52).

> **Dumisa:** *There are obviously boundaries… there are some jokes you can tell and you can say 'ja, this is funny' and you can tell that this is not funny, this is clearly racist* (line 416*).*

In one of his studies, Soudien (2007) also found that learners were more inclined to laugh off racist jokes and to not take them very seriously. This seems to be the attitude reflected by seven of the eight participants. In the development of one's personal identity, there is a need to feel accepted by one's peers; and perhaps, by laughing along with the jokes that are made, they are seeking this acceptance (Kroger, 2007).

In all the cases above, participants reported indirect witnessing and experiencing of racism. However, one participant experienced direct racism. He had negative

experiences with racial slurs and name-calling at school, which appears to have amounted to racial bullying. Names such as 'monkey', 'darkie' and 'blackie' were used as well as 'bol' which, according to the participant, refers to a black person who is illiterate. Although I am sure his experiences were not unique, no other participants in this research reported the blatant racism aimed directly at them that this participant had experienced.

Racial stereotyping doesn't only occur between races but also seems to occur among students who ostensibly fall into the same racial group. The term 'coconut' came up in the first round of interviews. After asking several participants what this term meant to them and trying to come up with a simple definition, I defined it as follows: 'A coconut is a black person who acts like (s)he is white.' One learner felt that 'coconuts' were those that were rejecting their culture and that they were against being black. Another said that they didn't mind as it was a person's choice on how they wished to act. Three of the participants had the following to say:

> **Jane:** *I just think that people who are coconuts are just wanting to be accepted…sometimes you can understand – people who have never been exposed to black culture, who have been around white people since like they were young, and have been in a private school since they were four years old… I don't really mind whatever they do is their choice but I respect my culture* (lines 389 – 394).

> **Dumisa:** *Yes, that what people think of us (school A) guys because it's the way we act. We are surrounded by white people so much we have actually adapted to the white culture I would say* (line 109-110).

> **Fundiswa:** *Some people just try to avoid their traditional roots and just take the easy route out because everything has been modernised* (lines 283-284).

According to Racial Identity Development Theory, black learners take on the dominant culture (white in this case) in the pre-encounter phase as a way of feeling that they belong by assimilating with white beliefs and culture (Tatum, 1992). These 'coconut' learners could be in this phase of their racial identity development.

Another theory with regards to this 'coconuts' is that of Fanon. He refers to 'Lactification', a process of acting and behaving white by attempting to adopt white characteristics and behaviours. This 'self-objectifying' becomes a form of racism from within the black learner onto him or herself because they are inadvertently 'affirming' white culture as 'superior' and viewing their own black culture as 'inferior' (Hook, 2003, p.115).

One of the learners commented that she thinks that people are scared to express and show their cultural background because they think that they will be judged and not accepted.

> **Jane:** *People should not be ashamed to believe in what they believe in because of other people, people should embrace themselves, and not be shy about their religions and stuff because most people don't respect their cultures because they so scared of what people might think of them when they perform stuff that people are not used to doing* (lines 331-335).

Fundiswa spoke of how some people in her informal settlement judged her and have labelled her as a coconut only because she has had greater exposure to white culture.

> **Fundiswa:** *Ja, I don't know, some people tend to exaggerate and say that person is a coconut because you not like them. You not a typical township black person, you have been influenced by the whites, you know, that kind of thing* (lines 259-261).

Hannah spoke of differences in cultural behaviour at celebrations that would be frowned upon if it happened at school.

> **Hannah:** *It's not necessarily acting white. You have to be proper, or like, like I don't know if you have been to a black wedding or a celebration, but people go crazy. If my parents were to come and I was getting some amazing award, they would stand up and be like uwuwuuwwu, you know that noise. I can't do that here because people will be like, that's awkward, ja, that type of vibe. So in that way you kind of feel restricted to be as contained. Ja, so we do have kind of 'this is how you have to act'* (lines 331-335).

There seems to be an expectation on how to act in the dominant white school environment. This is perhaps because of a lack of understanding and appreciation of black culture and their traditions. To fit in and to avoid being seen as different, some 'adapt' to white dominant culture; but at the same time there is a risk that their own community alienates them. Four of the participants commented on the negative perceptions that friends or peers who were not at an independent school have about them now that they were at a 'white school'. One of the perceptions shared was that if you are a black person and you speak English, then you see yourself as upper class. Even though the participants did not feel that they had taken on the white culture by rejecting their culture, some still found that their peers from their communities alienated them in some way. On peers at home (a township area), Fundiswa and Jane had the following to say:

> **Fundiswa:** *I don't have a lot of friends…that's the thing because a lot of people think you go to this all rich school so you kind of, I don't want to be your friend because you going to think you superior to me kinda thing but I have one best friend* (lines 48-50).

> **Jane:** *…people change and some are jealous that I went to another school so they just don't really speak to me and I didn't really have friends... They say that I think that I am better than them but I don't really say anything and I am by myself and always at home* (lines 227 -231).

For these participants, their scholarship has meant losing their friends from their community. This could be seen as one of the sacrifices that they had to make to attend an independent school.

4.2.3 THEME 3: DIFFERENCES IN CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS

4.2.3.1 Microsystem: School

Being in the independent schooling system which is predominantly white, the participants mentioned the word 'adapt' a number of times. 'Adapting' to the white culture is something that some of them felt they had to do.

> **Dumisa:** *the majority of the school is white so us black people have to adapt to them'* (line 441).

The adaptions that they felt were made concerned several different experiences. Family life seems to have been differently experienced by a few of the participants. White families, mentioned two participants, seem more together and open with one another. Dumisa said that he didn't understand the white sense of humour when he first arrived at the school, and he found it difficult to follow jokes that were told. He said that you get used to it, though. He also found it uncomfortable being in white people's homes on the weekends, and in grade 8 he preferred not to visit his white friends as he didn't understand their way of life.

> **Dumisa:** *...in grade 8 because I didn't really understand the white culture that much, I didn't even visit many people's houses because I just thought I didn't fit in there and I didn't like most parents, ... I like them here, because we all adapt to each other but at home they become their actual selves and I couldn't adapt to their situations there but as I grew into the school, I would actually say I understand the white culture now and I find it much easier to go over to people's houses and actually understand how their families work , very different to my culture's – well obviously not the fundamentals like parents are parents and a child is a child but there are certain things that are still there that are different and I have kind of adapted to that now* (320-330).

Furthermore, through their experiences at the independent schools, most of the participants found that there were definite differences between how white and black learners treated adults.

> **Fundiswa:** *'In Mandela Park, you have to humble yourself to an elder and the way you speak to them and everything like that… in this school the children don't necessarily humble themselves to the way they speak to someone older than them'* (line 68).

> **Dumisa:** *'And in the Zulu culture, your elders are highly respected and you listen to your parents and don't argue back'* (line 371).

> **Emma***: Oh like respect – we don't speak up to an adult, you keep quiet and then they have their word. White children speak up to their parents but we don't, we keep quiet and listen* (lines 246-247).

These differences in levels of respect carry over into the school environment where the majority of the teachers are white. The following are comments made by the participants.

> **Dumisa:** *'…the way they address teachers and in a way its like, they treat them like peers, they give them more respect but not as much as us black people'* (lines 367-369).

> **Fundiswa:** *'I definitely know about black students. In particular, they get taught at home that you respect your elders no matter what the hierarchy is, you know, even if you are richer than them or if you more educated than them, they are still your elder, you have to respect them. My dad still implements that'* (lines 252-255).

> **Hannah:** *'The relationship between teachers and students here is different; they act like best friends –they talk to teachers like they talk to friends. I think it's cool'* (line 221).

As discussed in Chapter 3, learners who are exposed to each another's cultures are more likely to develop a greater understanding of each other. I found that the black scholarship learners felt that they had developed a greater understanding of the white culture and had to work out what the dominant upper class culture expected of them at school.

> **Gabi:** *'It's not a lot of people who get to grow up in both modern and cultural* [backgrounds]… *I think that being brought up in a sort of environment like that has been an experience and to learn about other cultures besides my own and to embrace the differences'* (lines 266-268).

> **Hannah:** [on adapting to white culture] *'No. it's just that it's accepting that you guys are different and then, you know, finding some way to* [trails off]… *I don't have a problem with the difference' (lines 205-206).*

> **Dumisa:** *'The majority of the school is white so us black people, we have adapted to them. So I would say that we are more enriched from a mixed race because we have adapted to both culture, I understand the white culture, I*

understand the black culture, I go to their parties and go to their socialising events but they never come to ours so they actually don't understand our side of the story' (443-446).

Fundiswa commented that, in order to be at a white-dominant school, you need to have a strong sense of who you are and what your identity is.

> **Fundiswa:** *'You actually have to be a certain type of personality. If you are a weak person, then it will have a very bad influence on you because you are constantly surrounded by these people. You come here every day and do this thing every day so you have to be strong and know who you are to come here and say to yourself, this is who I am, this is how I live and, you know, I learn from them and they can learn from me, in our different situations and it's the only way we grow and get to know and learn things from each other'* (lines 149-155).

Gabi emphasised how she was proud to be black and that she feels that people should not be labelled because of their skin colour.

> **Gabi:** *It makes me feel like people are narrow-minded and that they are not opening up to the word freedom and democracy you know, we meant to be this big happy rainbow nation. It doesn't matter where you come from or what religion you follow, or your skin colour, you just have to accept each other as human beings because that is actually the only race that exists, human beings'* (line 167-172).

4.2.4 THEME 4: FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

When speaking to the participants about their experiences, I asked them whether or not they felt different from their peers; if they said yes, most of them commented about something that was directly related to their financial situation.

> **Dumisa:** *'Definitely holidays, considering I just came from holidays, because the holidays here they are probably going overseas somewhere, so they always have these expensive kind of things, it kinda makes me feel different in some cases because me and my holidays is basically going home and chilling and catching up with old friends'* (line 386-390).

Emma: *'Well, sometimes you get a bit down because they have everything and I have to work hard to try and be at their level. But mostly we get the same grades, sometimes it's kinda hard'.* **Interviewer:** 'What do mean by kinda hard?' **Emma:** *'Between girls there is like competition in fashion and clothes and stuff'* (lines 95-98).

Jane: *'It's just the little things like you can't do certain stuff because your parents can't afford it, like everyone is invited to a party and you have to make an excuse "'I can't go because I am busy this weekend", you not busy, you just can't go because you haven't got money'* (lines 583-586).

Fundiswa: *Ja, and also with the money, sometimes I will be like 'I don't have the money' and then they will be "'No it's cool, we will pay for you", but at the same time I am thinking, no, because people can just turn on you* (lines 406-408).

During adolescence, the need to fit in and to be part of social group is important. It must be challenging for those receiving scholarships who want to live as the other learners do and to 'fit in' with them in term of finances. Dumisa was asked if there was anything he would change about his experience at his school. He said that he would have liked to have a 'normal' School A background as he would have had less challenges. 'Normal' in this instance meant to come from a wealthy or more affluent background.

Dumisa: *'I would probably prefer to have the normal 'school A' background as it would be less challenging rather than when you are on scholarship. That's probably the only thing I would change. I love my family and like everything but my financial standing is the only thing I would change'* (lines 197-199).

Five out of the eight learners lived in the school boarding houses during the school terms, when they had the same living standards as their peers in terms of food and accommodation. This factor might have lessened the differences that they felt concerning themselves and their peers. As Jane commented:

Jane: *'Sometimes I don't really think about it* [financial differences] *because when you are in the boarding house it doesn't really show up because we all share the same food, we all sleep in the same beds, it only shows when people go*

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out sometimes and when they buy things you can't afford to buy. That's the only time you sort of see a difference' (lines 61-64.)

Fundiswa and Emma both currently live in nearby informal settlements where their home lives are in sharp contrast to many of their peers. Fundiswa walks to school while Emma catches a taxi every morning. Both learners mentioned the winter weather and how rain affects their travels.

> **Emma:** '*Sho, now that it is winter, and if it's raining, you have to sometimes pack an extra uniform because you get wet'* (lines 183-184).

> **Fundiswa: '***Sometimes, it will be like "You can't afford it so we will do something about it or make an exception," like I remember I was late for school twice because it was raining and my tutor was like 'please guys if you can give Fundiswa a lift in the morning". It kind of hard – because I don't like asking for things from people, it's really hard for me to ask things from people and loaf off people, not loaf but you know'* (lines 313-318).

The final comment made above by Fundiswa leads me to the next finding. Five participants felt that they were treated like 'charity cases' by those around them – peers and teachers. One learner explained how he was given free burgers at the tuck shop several times. He laughed and said:

> **Dumisa:** '*Ja, if I go to the tuck shop and you want a burger, I ask them for something, they give it to me but if a white guy had to ask, then no ways. I guess they think it's some sort of community or charity work* [laughs]. *I don't actually care 'cause I get my burger'* (lines158-160).

Dumisa did not seem to mind that this sometimes happened; however, Emma and Fundiswa had negative feelings towards the 'charity case' association.

> **Emma:** '*Well, they do feel sorry for me but I hate it when they do that because I am coping… well I don't react, I just keep quiet. I hate it. You know someone will be like 'we have to go somewhere' and I can't get there – and they will be like 'oh shame' and stuff and go on and on about it'* (lines 316- 322).

Fundiswa: *'Not always* [treated like charity case] *but sometimes it kind of tends to get irritating but I am not going to say Oh no and get irritated with it because I know that I am not as rich and I understand why sometimes that comparison is made because I am not rich at all'* (lines 309-311).

Fundiswa explained further on that she did not want people to offer to pay for things for her because they may use that against her later on.

Fundiswa: *'Ja, and also with the money, sometimes I will be like 'I don't have the money' and then they will be "'No it's cool, we will pay for you"' but at the same time I am thinking no, because people can just turn on you'* (lines 406-408).

As mentioned earlier, all the learners recognised that being at their independent school was an opportunity and a privilege. I asked each of them what privilege meant to them. The following are some of their responses:

Bongani: *'The word privilege to me is an opportunity which you work for because if you work for something or a certain thing and opportunity arises to go further, you take it. That is a privilege that was given to you, however, now you making it your own'* (lines 218-220).

Hannah: *'Umm, well, privilege is, I think it's an opportunity, something you wouldn't imagine yourself being a part of or experiencing'* (line 162).

Gabi: *'Having a family that loves you. Having a proper support system, having good friends, not people who are friends because of your status but for who you are'* (line 149).

Jane: '*It means that I am privileged enough to get things that other people can't get hold of'* (line 113)

With these comments in mind, it was also found that some of the participants felt that some of their peers did not really appreciate or value the opportunities that their parents could afford to give them.

Dumisa: *'It is irritating especially when it's non-deserving children because some of them just slack at school, they don't want to be good at anything, they don't work for anything but yet they still get everything'* (line 378).

Cebo: *'It's not what I expected from most students. They like to party, I thought they were more different than me, I don't like partying a lot, I like studying and staying with my family at home…but then when I look at the students here they don't want to be here at all. I kind of find that weird because I thought everyone would want to be here because I know I want to be here'* (line 41).

Gabi: *'This school is very expensive so if you are going to sit around and waste your parent's money, first of all you are wasting their money, you wasting your time, your teacher's time, you wasting your classmates' time… I see a lot of kids doing that and I think 'Why are you wasting your parent's money like that?' A lot of kids would love to be sitting on their chair. And people don't appreciate what they have* (lines 353-358).

Jane: *'Ja, it's not easy. Sometimes I just get angry in front of people and they not very nice people and they have everything and you work hard and then they don't work hard but they just get everything and it just gets very frustrating'* (line 289).

This lack of appreciation was something that the participants found difficult to understand because, for them, this schooling experience was one that they really appreciated and did not ever take for granted.

Participants saw the experiences gained at an independent school as a catalyst for a good university and career placement as '*it will look good on* [their] *CV*' (Gabi, line 122). Dumisa would like to study at the University of Cape Town or Johannesburg, while Fundiswa would like to go to Rhodes or the University of the Western Cape. All the participants had aspirations to go to university; three of them would like to travel overseas to study at universities such as Cambridge or Oxford.

4.3 OVERVIEW OF THE FINDINGS

Each of the scholarship/bursary learners had their individual personalities, different home lives, different perspectives on who they were and, overall, were unique. Each of

them came across as a confident individual who was not afraid to talk about their experiences. However, the knowledge that what they were telling me was going to be held as confidential really helped them to open up about their experiences.

Parents of scholarship learners want them to achieve, and to improve their financial position in life by gaining a good education. The participants see themselves as role models for their siblings, and ambassadors for their families, and wish to make their parents proud. In the eyes of their parents, they have the chance to do this, which places pressure on them to achieve and, although this is not necessarily a negative pressure, it may restrict them in different ways. One learner stated that she couldn't really be who she wanted to be because of the bursary she has.

In the eyes of their peers, the learners were stereotyped in ways which might affect their feelings of self-worth and personal validation. There is the presumption that because they are black learners, they must be poor and, for the same reason, that their academic abilities will not be as high as their white peers. Two participants spoke about how they were also teenagers, going through the same difficulties as their peers, but they had the added pressure of proving themselves and trying to fit in with learners from higher-income homes.

Although teachers' perceptions were not directly researched for this thesis, the impression received through interviews with the learners was that some teachers were surprised that they could do well. This may be because they presumed that because they were black learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, the level of education they had thus far received would be lower and they would therefore achieve lower marks than their white peers (Taylor, 2010).

In Chapter 2, I reviewed literature about the personal and social identity of learners in the adolescent phase of their lives and their navigation of school life. It is not clear from this research what the learners' personal views of their self-image might be and if they correlated with what others thought of them. This could not be confirmed because the people who interact with them were not interviewed. However, I found that most of the participants had a strong sense of themselves and a connection to their culture and belief system that supported them through the challenges that they faced.

Six of the learners interviewed identified having at least one 'best friend' with whom they had the closest bond. These friends were also black learners. Although the participants reported having white friends as well, most of them were closest to girls and boys who were black. This was particularly evident for those in boarding school. Dumisa commented that, when he first arrived at the school in grade 8, he made friends with three other black boys on the very first day. These boys weren't actually in the same boarding house but they had a close friendship bond and saw each other socially at school. Only one of the learners mentioned socialising with white peers outside school. This correlates with Yip's (2010) finding that the less diverse schools have a higher chance of inter-racial friendships but that only a third of those friendships continued off the school campus.

Through their experiences at independent schools so far, the participants explained how boarding house life had forced them to grow and to become more independent from a younger age. Comments about good time management and hard work were found among all boarders. Those who were not boarders stated that they felt they worked harder than their peers and did not socialise as much because they had to maintain a certain level of academic performance. Although this was difficult for them at the time, it could be argued these life skills learnt at school would help them a great deal in the future.

All the learners involved in this research commented on how being at an independent school such as theirs would have a positive influence on their future. They did not view their 'adaptation' to white culture as negative because, as the literature suggests, the world and global economies are dominated by Western ways of thinking and cultural expectations – which in the Western world are predominantly white. Each of the participants had assimilated or adopted the 'culturally white ethos' of the schools and felt that this would help them in future (Fataar, 2007).

4.4 CONCLUSION

On the whole, I feel that the participants were very honest with me about their experiences and gave me much insight into those experiences. All the participants were mature in their ways of thinking, and some were highly insightful about their experiences at their respective independent schools. Three primary themes were found and were discussed along with the participant's comments.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUDING REMARKS, LIMITATIONS, STRENGTHS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This research's primary goal was to gain an understanding of the experiences of learners from previously disadvantaged families who are on scholarship or bursaries at independent South African high schools. Through interviews with eight learners who volunteered to participate in this study, several significant themes associated with their experiences were revealed and discussed in Chapter 4.

This chapter contains the limitations and strengths of the study as well as the recommendations that may be made to independent schools regarding the support they can provide to scholarship and bursary learners.

5.2 LIMITATIONS

Only eight participants were used for this study. This is a small sample and, although this is acceptable for a qualitative study such as this one, the data collected are limited to the experiences of only these eight scholarship learners.

Five of the eight learners were in boarding school, which must be taken into consideration as it may be a limitation to the findings of the interviews. These learners did not experience their lower-income homes and the challenges that go with them, on a daily basis. The transition between home and school for the three day learners is quite different to those who board. The former go from a wealthy school environment to a poor community environment on a daily basis.

5.3 STRENGTHS

The study followed a methodology that should provide findings that would be credible and consistent for a study of this nature. The study also gave learners an opportunity to express their experiences and feelings about those experiences. Several of the learners felt that this study would be beneficial because they thought that it would be good for

others to understand that they do face additional challenges, and the acknowledgement of this and any support forthcoming would be invaluable.

5.4 POSSIBILITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There are a few different studies that could follow on from the present one. A study could be done in the form of a longitudinal narrative study that follows the lives of two or three scholarship learners from different financial backgrounds (poor, middle-income and high-income groups). The study could follow them from school to university level and the different challenges that they face away from the protected boarding school environment.

The learners within the present study expressed how they had to be perfect and always well behaved, which could affect their psychological and identity development; further studies could be done to investigate this aspect.

The present study has focused only on historically disadvantaged black learners who are scholarship recipients. A further study could be conducted on the experiences of scholarship learners from any racial background.

Teachers who have worked with and spent time with scholarship learners could have their own perceptions of scholarship learners' experiences. The formers' expectations and understanding of historically disadvantaged scholarship learners in independent schools may provide some insight into current perceptions. Identifying these perceptions and experiences may help with recommendations on how better to support these learners.

All the participants were interested in studying at university. Two of them wanted to study overseas while the other participants wished to study at the University of Cape Town, University of the Western Cape, University of Johannesburg and Rhodes University. This was an interesting observation as these universities are all known to be more culturally diverse and not based on Afrikaans traditions – such as may occur, for example, at Stellenbosch University or Rand Afrikaans University. When speaking about universities, one participant commented that he just didn't like the 'vibe' at Stellenbosch; this could be an interesting study to find out why some learners feel more

at ease at different universities and to find out whether it's a personal choice of location or a race issue based on the Afrikaans-related apartheid legacy.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

High school is difficult for all learners but, as we have seen, there is a noticeable pressure on scholarship learners to achieve and to meet the expectations that the school places on them. There is little room for error, and their academic marks, behaviour and attitude are constantly monitored and observed by teacher, parents and peers. Teachers need to be aware that historically disadvantaged learners who are on scholarship have much on their shoulders, especially when they first arrive at school in grade 8. All the grade 8s will experience the discomfort and anxiety of being in a new school environment and the difficulties in transitioning from primary to senior school. However, black learners from financially disadvantaged backgrounds face additional adjustments. These adjustments include becoming a part of new cultures, the first being of the dominant white culture, and secondly that of the school culture. The participants' primary and high school educational expectations were very different. Two of the participating schools are well-established and have had a number of traditions that have evolved over many decades. There are certain expectations of their learners; the way they behave and interact with teachers, their work and their peers. It is important for teachers to ensure that they take the time to get to know the different cultural backgrounds that the learners come from, especially if they come from an area or country that they are not familiar with.

Most of the learners interviewed said that it would be nice to hear what other learners' experiences were and it is therefore recommended that several support groups be created for scholarship learners so that they can share their experiences in a safe and confidential environment.

It is recommended that teachers involved with the learners take the time to get to know the learners' backgrounds – culturally, financially and socially. Showing an understanding of the challenges they may face will help the learners to feel that they are supported by teachers in the school environment.

Teachers should also reflect on their own perceptions of race and racial stereotyping that they may unconsciously hold. The way in which they treat and speak about

scholarship learners will be observed by fellow learners and modelled by them. An open understanding of one another's cultural background needs to be nurtured within the school environment, and not simply overlooked. As Soudien (2007) observed, there are some schools that attempt to exhibit a positive attitude towards multiculturalism and inclusion but, at the same time, the dominant structures of the school remain unchanged. By 'ignoring' differences in cultural background, we create an environment where a lack of understanding may develop because the dominant culture ends up becoming that which other learners have to 'adapt' or 'assimilate' to.

In teacher education, racial identity development is not covered as part of the curriculum. This was found by Tatum (2004) as playing a part in teachers' lack of understanding and socialising of socially marginalised students within the school environment. This is perhaps an area that should receive attention in curriculum planning.

5.6 CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

When deciding on this research topic and discussing it with relevant parties, it was interesting to find how many people were genuinely interested in gaining a better understanding of scholarship learners' experiences in independent high schools. Teachers, headmasters and fellow student psychologists all indicated that it was something that they would like to find out more about.

I myself am a product of well-established independent schools and have some understanding as to academic pressures, life as a boarder and expectations placed on learners within this environment. With this in mind, I had to carefully consider my own experiences and the impact they may have on the deductions and interpretations derived from the interviews. The added advantage that I was able to bring to the research included a genuine understanding of the contextual factors related to the learners' scholastic experiences within an independent school environment. This really helped with rapport building and in so doing, helped them to feel more at ease when discussing their experiences. However, it is also important to reflect on the fact that I am white, and did not experience similar challenges with regards to financial difficulties and racial stereotyping.

Through this research, the voices of previously disadvantaged scholarship learners are heard for the first time. It has highlighted a few key issues that have not necessarily been considered by those who know and interact with scholarship learners. Through the interview process it became clear that the learner's motivation is intrinsic due to the value they place on the opportunities they have been given within the independent school environment. This motivation is evidenced despite the contextual challenges that are experienced.

It is through this research that I hope that teachers, headmasters and peers can develop a greater understanding of the challenges scholarship learners' potentially face when they enter into an independent school environment from a disadvantaged financial background. The results of this research indicate that acknowledgement of these challenges can make a great difference to the learners' educational experiences.

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APPENDIX A : LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

<u>Information regarding the study for which your participation is requested</u>

I am conducting research as part of my Master's in Educational Pscyhology degree at the University of Stellenbosch, under the supervision of Professor Ronelle Carolissen. The title of the study is 'Experiences of historically disadvantaged bursary/scholarship recipients attending independent South African high schools'.

My main objective for this study is to gain a better understanding of the experiences that you as a bursary/scholarship learner have within the independent school environment. There do not seem to be any specific studies done with regards to researching and documenting the experiences that bursary learners have at private schools, or if there are any challenges and specific opportunities that you may experience with regards to being a bursary learner. Your insight and input will be invaluable to my research should you agree to participate.

The research process will require you to take part in 2 interviews which will be conducted at your convenience. With your permission, these interviews will be digitally recorded so that your words can be accurately transcribed. These will be kept in a password encrypted digital file to ensure that confidentiality is maintained. These digital recordings will be permanently erased on completion of the research data analysis.

Should you volunteer to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequence. You may also refuse to answer any questions that you are not comfortable answering. There are no foreseeable risks, however, should you, for any reason, experience any emotional discomfort, you will be provided with the contact details of your school counsellor / psychologist / social worker.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please could you contact me either telephonically or by email so that I can set up a time to meet with you. I will need you to sign a form stating that you are giving me permission to interview you. I will also be sending a similar letter to your parents as I will need their permission too.

I would like to reiterate that everything that is said within the interview process is kept confidential and your school, parents or peers will not know what was discussed.

I hope to hear from you soon

Kind Regards,
Abigail Simpson

APPENDIX B: FIRST INTERVIEW GUIDE
Interview guide – Interview 1

1. How do you get to school?

2. Was it a choice to come to this school?

   a. When did you start here?

3. Why did you want to come to this school?

4. Where were you at school prior to this one?

5. What are the differences between the two?

6. How do you experience school life here?

7. In what way is school life different compared to your previous school?

8. What are your best experiences within this school?

9. What are your worst experiences within the school?

10. What activities outside of the curriculum do you take part in?

11. How do you perceive your self-identity?

    a. Within school?

    b. And outside school?

12. Who do you identify with most at school

    a. Do you have many friends?

    b. How do you feel with these friends?

    c. Do you have different groups of friends?

13. How do you feel about the fact that you are a 'scholarship' learner?

14. How do you find yourself treated? The same? Different?

15. Do you feel the word 'scholarship' has a stigma attached to it?

16. What is your perception of 'privilege'?

17. Does race get spoken about at school – is your race acknowledged or is the 'everyone is equal' slogan promoted? How do you feel about this –what would you change?

18. How do you find going to school with boys/girls that are from very wealthy families?

19. Do you have friends from home who you still see on a regular basis?

    a. What do they think about you being at this school?

    b. Are they supportive and encouraging

20. What is your family's support for you at school?

    a. Are they happy that you are here?

    b. Are they supportive?

    c. What are their views on a 'good' education

21. How do you think being at this school will make a difference to your future?

22. Is there anything you would change about your life right now? Miracle question.

APPENDIX C: SECOND INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Role models: Who are your role models inside school – and outside your school environment?

2. Can you describe yourself to me in terms of your cultural values?

3. In what way are the words scholarship and bursary different to you?

4. Have you heard the term 'coconuts'? What does it meant to you?

5. What are the 'white' behaviours that are expected of you?

6. How would you describe **unconscious racism**? And why do you think it happens?

7. Does it really not bother you even if it's 'unconscious'?

8. If a racist 'joke' or comment is made by someone who is not a friend of yours, do you think you would have the same reaction? What would that reaction be?

9. Relationships between black and white boys and girls?

10. Black parties ' white parties? Interracial dating?

11. Who do you identify (or relate to) most with – the black kids at the school or the white kids? Who do you prefer to hang out with?

12. How would you describe your identity – who you are – what you believe in?

13. How do you think your identity development would have been different if you continued with schooling in --------------?

14. How do you think living in the boarding house and being away from home has shaped you as a person?

15. In what sense is life here different to life at home?

16. What are you definitions of middle class, and upper class? How do you feel about being from a middle class family in a school like this?

17. What does the word success mean to you?

18. Do you ever made to feel like a 'charity case'. Have there any incidences where you have felt like the 'charity case'?

19. How does it feel/what are your thoughts when this happens?

20. I have picked up from several people that peers and teachers are 'surprised' when you as a black learner do well. Have you experienced this?

21. How do you cope with the pressures that are placed on you as a scholarship learner – do you have an outlet for these pressures to be 'perfect'?

22. Do you ever get an opportunity to truly express yourself and the feelings that you have expressed to me?

23. In what ways are you the same as everyone else in your grade?

24. In what ways do you think you may be different?

25. Would you send your daughter/son to this school? And why?

26. If you get to say one thing about being a scholarship learner, what would be the first thing that pops into your mind?

27. Since we last spoke, have you thought about anything else that may be relevant to what was discussed – any afterthoughts – or thoughts that were generated through our discussion that got you thinking?

APPENDIX D: LETTER OF CONSENT

Adolescent identity experiences of historically disadvantaged bursary recipients attending private South African high schools

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

You are asked to give permission to allow your child to participate in a research study conducted by Abigail Simpson from the Educational Psychology Department at Stellenbosch University. The data collected will form part of a study conducted as a Master mini- thesis submission as part the programme requirements.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this proposed study is to gain an understanding of the challenges and opportunities that learners from historically disadvantaged backgrounds, who have received bursaries/scholarships to private schools, may face in terms of their daily experiences.

2. PROCEDURES

If you give permission for your child to volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask that they participate in two interviews which will be conducted at a time that is most convenient for them. The interviews will be approximately 45 to 60 minutes each.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

In the very unlikely case that questions will be asked during the interviews that make your child feel uncomfortable, please note that they are not compelled to answer any such questions. If questions are asked during the interviews that evoke uncomfortable feelings, they can contact the school counselling services.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

The research and data generated from this study may potentially be used to improve bursary and scholarship programmes in private schools in South Africa.

Recommendations about supporting learners who are bursary/scholarship learners will be made to the schools involved.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Participants will not receive any incentives or financial compensation for participation in this study.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

The information gathered for the purposes of this study will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission. To ensure confidentiality, the information will be kept under lock and key. A pseudonym will be used and at no stage will your child's real name be used.

Once the study has been completed, findings will be presented in the form of a Master's thesis.

In order to accurately record the interviews, a digital audio recorder will be used with your permission. The recording will only be heard by the researcher and will be transcribed verbatim. For the duration of the research process, these recordings will be stored in a confidential computer file which will require a password protected. On completion of the study, these audio files will be permanently erased.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your child can choose to be in this study or not. If he/she volunteers to be in this study, he/she may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. He/she may also refuse to answer any questions they don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw them from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me, Abigail Simpson, Tel. 0828944306 (abisimpson@gmail.com) or the research's

supervisor, Prof. R. Carolissen at the Department of Educational Psychology at Stellenbosch University. Tel. 021 8082739 / 0833035022 or email rlc2@sun.ac.za.

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

As a participant, you have the right to withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this study. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact Marléne Fouché of Stellenbosch Universities Unit for Research Development on 0218084622 or email mfouche@sun.ac.za.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to me **and/or** the participant in my home language (English). I **and/or** the participant was/were given the opportunity to ask questions (or contact the researcher with any questions) and these questions were answered to my **and/or** her satisfaction.

I hereby consent for my child to participate in this study **and/or** I hereby consent that the participant may participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of the participant: _____

Name of legal representative: _____

_____   _____

Signature parent/legal representative   Date

Language used to provide information for consent _____

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ to and his/her legal representative (parent/guardian)_____. He/she were encouraged to ask questions if they were concerned in any way about the research that is to be done.

_____   _____

Signature of Investigator

APPENDIX E: ETHICS COMMITTEE CLEARANCE LETTER

UNIVERSITEIT·STELLENBOSCH·UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot · your knowledge partner

3 March 2011

Tel.: 021 - 808-9183
Enquiries: Sidney Engelbrecht
Email: sidney@sun.ac.za

Reference No. 494/2011

Ms ASJ Simpson
Department of Educaitonal Psychology
University of Stellenbosch
STELLENBOSCH
7602

Ms ASJ Simpson

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE

With regards to your application. I would like to inform you that the project, *Experiences of historically disadvantaged bursary recipients attending private SA high schools*, has been approved on condition that:

1. The researcher/s remain within the procedures and protocols indicated in the proposal;
2. The researcher/s stay within the boundaries of applicable national legislation, institutional guidelines, and applicable standards of scientific rigor that are followed within this field of study and that
3. Any substantive changes to this research project should be brought to the attention of the Ethics Committee with a view to obtain ethical clearance for it.

We wish you success with your research activities.

Best regards

MR SF ENGELBRECHT
Secretary: Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Non-Health)

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APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW DATA ANALYSIS TABLE
An example of the data analysis process

Primary theme	Sub-theme	Participants comments	Researchers comments/ notes
Increased pressure and high expectations	Support from scholarship sponsors	Dumisa: …they also have personal support so if you have any personal problems you can talk to them about it. They also do workshops and motivational stuff, so it's quite an all-rounder scholarship (lines 26-28). Bongani: They (Allan Gray) are quite active in your school life because they give you skills like time management skills and they give you tools which help you connect you with other scholars because talking to them once a day really helps you feel better (line 318-320). Gabi: Besides from financial support, like with most scholarships they just put you in the school and never see you again but with Allan Gray it's different. We have SMI meetings and they come every month and talk about motivation and how to handle different types of situations – it's kind of like therapy because they talk to you and it's a big happy family I guess – it's like a second family who is your support system (47-51). Hannah: Allan Gray started this wellness programme – I think it's called - and basically if you feel like you need to talk to someone then you just call and then someone will come to the school and talk to you. So I think that really cool and that all scholarships should be like that and be more involved in the kids' lives because the scholarships that don't do that, the child ends up feeling like …lost…nowhere… I am not sure of what word to use (line 180-186).	*Allan Gray – actively supportive with academics, finances*
	Family expectations	Fundiswa: It (parents value on education) is very important especially, also, because my dad didn't do his matric and he understands now what he needed to do and he didn't get where he wanted to be and he knows why he didn't get there so that is what he is trying to do for me (line 181-183). Gabi: I am their investment (her parents) so that I can have a better future so you shouldn't waste and I think that is why I always work so hard because I know there is a lot that goes into me sitting here in this chair with you, there is a lot that goes into building that (lines 313-316).	*Parents living vicariously through their children – they are getting an education Apartheid did not allow them.*

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		Jane: My dad went to first year university but he got stabbed so he had to move out of school and then my mum didn't finish, she ended up in grade 10 (line 255-256). Dumisa: My dad has a really hectic background and the fact that we are just an average family took a lot of work to get there because he was from like really really really poor background so the fact that we are average is to him its like, achieving wealth, even though its not much financially, to him its wealth compared to the conditions he grew up in (lines 299-301).	
	Expectations placed on them by the school	Cebo: You expected to be the cleverest student in class and you are expected to better… I am expected to do better because I am a bursary student (line 111). Hannah: You feel more pressure and in some way you feel that you have to be perfect and you also feel like you can't do anything wrong, because once you do something wrong then you feel okay, it's over, you don't feel like the perfect child anymore… you feel like you are restricted, like you basically don't have a voice (lines 131-140). Fudiswa: I can't afford to fail and it still to be okay because I am on bursary and my academics need to be to their expectations, and my behaviour at school needs to be to their expectations (line 80 – 82). I can't afford to (be naughty) because my parents aren't paying for the schools fees and their parents are, so I can't be naughty and I have to walk on eggs basically (lines 401-404). Jane: "It makes me feel angry when at school you can't complain about other things because you are on scholarship – you always have to be this perfect little girl – you have to behave in a certain way. You can't be like a normal girl because even if you see something wrong you have to keep it to yourself even if you don't agree because you are scared they might take away your scholarship (lines 542-546). Emma: I want to impress people here who are helping me. You can't just help a person and then you see that they don't care and get bad marks, and they will lose interest. That's the whole point, so they keep on helping you (Lines 199-200).	*Perfection demanded of them at all times – could potentially impact their identity development Worries about risks of losing scholarship could be seen as added pressure.* *No voice – no means to express themselves and their true feelings and frustrations* *Always needing to impress*
Racial Stereotyping	Presumptions made because learners are black scholarship	Dumisa: When they (his peers) hear the word scholarship people actually think that you are someone who is really in need (line 139). Gabi: It's also like the day girls and everyone else is like 'she is on scholarship so	*Even though these learners were from poorer backgrounds, it*

	recipients	I am guessing she is poor' (line 96). Hannah: Oh yes. It's like just because you on scholarship, they automatically think 'this chick is so poor', they just helping her out because her family can't afford it. My family can't afford to take me to this school but we can afford our lifestyle (line 446). Jane: People, when they think of scholarship, don't think 'maybe they got a scholarship because they are smart' they think oh "It's because they don't have money" (Line 107).	*still incensed them that there was that presumption made. People see being poor as a part of who they are*
	Teachers / peers lower expectations of their academic abilities	Cebo: You expected to be the cleverest student in class and you are expected to do better, and when you do you do better some students look at you and then they act differently (line 116). Jane: And like when you write something good, they will be like "is this your own work" and they just undermine, as if, because you black you can't do that or you won't be able to write such a perfect essay. If it's a white person writing an excellent essay it expected of them (lines 358-362). Gabi: Teachers, some teachers in school think that just because you are black, you are dumb – I don't know if I am putting it right – so when you get marks in the nineties they like "oh my gosh – she got 90!" and I am like yes! (line 157). Emma: Ja, and they (her peers) get offended that I have done well… It's all with this racist thing… I feels that it will never go away because black is black and white is white – it's because they different colours and black is always like second – that's how I see it (line 335 – 344)…I don't mind – actually I do mind if people look down on me (line 346). Fundiswa: Well, throughout history, there has always been that generalisation and so people adapt to that – there has always been that picture that white people are better than black people because the looks and you know all that kinds of stuff. But, I don't know, I think it just depends on the person themselves, if they can't find themselves then they just lost. But, ja, I think people are very much influenced by the idea of that white people are a lot better than white people (lines 269-274).	*Surprise from peers and teachers with regards to marks* *Expectations that if you black then you can't be as clever as white peers – perhaps a presumption on their earlier school experiences*
	Racist jokes	Dumisa: To be an honest, racism, it's never really been an issue but you get those slight jokes, and they make slightly offensive jokes, but it's not intentional to make it offensive but maybe you make it personal	*It seems that most of the participants make light of the racist*

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		but I would say there isn't intentional racism, but its unconscious, and unintentional (line 115-118)	*jokes.*
		Gabi: I love racist jokes, they the funniest thing. But of course if you are going to say them with meaning then its offensive, but if it's a joke, why not, it's funny. We should be able to laugh about ourselves. That's the only way racism is going to go away if we laugh at ourselves (284-286).	
		Hannah: Well it depends who is saying it. Sometimes it's my friends but its fine because it's my friends and I understand it but if its someone else, then I am like 'wait. Hold up. What you going to achieve by saying something like that?" it makes you question what people think and stuff (line 299-301).	
		Fundiswa: I think people have become tolerant because amongst some people, that's how they feel towards their own people so they accept those jokes to be true (lines 281-283) There are a couple of racist jokes but I just tend to throw them over my shoulder because it doesn't faze me. (Line 285)	
	Offensive and explicit racism	Cebo: I had one (racial incident) from a friend. Every time he spoke he would say "saw this white guy hitting this black guy". The other day I was in his car and a taxi cut us off and then he shouted "kaffir" so I was like okay like that quite racist dude. He apologised though (line 50 -52).	*Know when acceptable and when it's not.*
		Dumisa: There are obviously boundaries… there are some jokes you can tell and you can say "ja, this is funny" and you can tell that this is not funny, this is clearly racist (line 416).	
		Bongani: : being part of the minority group it sort of brings up teasing (he says it doesn't affect him because his mom has instilled confidence in him but I get the impression that it does) Line 56	*Bongani seems to have had the worst experiences with regards to explicit racism – it occurs every day.*
		… this participant referred to racism in terms of teasing - It was name calling and racial slurs like "darkie", "Blackie" or even sometimes "monkey". (line 3008)	
		… Being called 'Bol' – meaning illiterate - in other words – black people who are illiterate. This happens to him nearly every day. Lines 256-268	
		… When asked if any bullying is related to scholarship he said - Not really scholarship because here its viewed as a great achievement. Its more racial stereotypes that are attached to it.	