

IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF BLACK STUDENTS DURING THE FIRST YEAR

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2015

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Kind regards

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Yours faithfully



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“It always seems impossible until it’s done.”

— Nelson Mandela

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ABSTRACT

In this study, black first-generation students' experiences related to identity development during their first year at a higher education institution were explored. Students who are the first in their family to attend higher education embark on a life-changing journey like neither they nor anyone in their family have experienced. These students' higher education experiences have the potential to shape their lives and identities.

Theorists use student development theories to understand and describe the unique development trajectories students, a subgroup of individuals forming part of the population of emerging adults, experience during their time at university. This study is based on the theoretical framework of Arthur Chickering's student development theory. Chickering determines that students move through seven vectors during their time at university. The seven vectors include developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy to interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing an identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity.

This qualitative research study followed a case study approach embedded in an interpretive paradigm. Purposive sampling and snowball sampling were used to select black, first-generation students from the University of the Free State. Ten participants took part in focus group discussions and individual interviews, where they had the opportunity to reflect on their first-year experiences related to their identities. The data were analysed by using thematic analysis, reconstructing participants' experiences into main and subthemes. The following six main themes emerged: "My emotional reaction when confronted with the challenge of higher education"; "My people at home"; "My social networking on campus"; "Being exposed to a diverse student population"; "Becoming independent"; and "Getting to know myself".

A significant factor in black first-generation students' identity development appears to be the influence of other individuals on their development. Black first-generation students' ability to remain connected at home while forming new social connections on campus enabled them to feel safe in their exploration of new worldviews, relationships, and occupational considerations. Black first-generation students' unique progression in vector attainment

confirms the importance of research on the application of Chickering's theory in a more diverse higher education environment.

Keywords: student development, identity, vector development, emerging adults, first-generation students

OPSOMMING

In hierdie studie is swart eerstegenerasiestudente se ervarings ten opsigte van identiteitsontwikkeling gedurende hulle eerste jaar aan 'n hoërondewysinstelling ondersoek. Studente wat die eerste in hulle familie is wat hoër onderwys bywoon, begeef hulle op 'n lewensveranderende reis soos nóg hulle nóg hulle familie ervaar het. Hierdie studente se hoërondewyservarings het die potensiaal om hulle lewens en identiteite te vorm.

Teoretici gebruik studenteontwikkelingsteorieë om die unieke ontwikkelingsbane wat studente, 'n subgroep van individue wat deel van die bevolking van opkomende volwassenes vorm, gedurende hulle tyd aan die universiteit, ervaar te verstaan en te ondersoek. Hierdie studie is gebaseer op die teoretiese raamwerk van Arthur Chickering se studenteontwikkelingsteorie. Chickering bepaal dat studente gedurende hulle tyd aan 'n universiteit deur sewe vektore beweeg. Die sewe vektore sluit in ontwikkeling van bevoegdheid, beheer van emosies, beweging deur outonomie na interafhanklikheid, ontwikkeling van volwasse interpersoonlike verhoudings, vestiging van 'n identiteit, ontwikkeling van doelstellings, en ontwikkeling van integriteit.

Hierdie kwalitatiewe navorsingstudie het 'n gevallestudie-benadering wat in 'n verklarende paradigma vasgelê is, gevolg. Doelgerigte steekproefneming en sneeubal-steekproefneming is gebruik om swart eerstegenerasiestudente aan die Universiteit van die Vrystaat te selekteer. Tien deelnemers het deelgeneem aan fokusgroepbesprekings en individuele onderhoude, waar hulle die geleentheid gehad het om oor hulle eerstejaar-ervarings ten opsigte van hulle identiteite te besin. Die data is ontleed deur tematiese ontleding te gebruik en deelnemers se ervarings in hoof- en subtemas te herkonstrueer. Die volgende ses hoofemas het na vore gekom: “My emosionele reaksie wanneer ek met die uitdaging van hoër onderwys gekonfronteer word”; “My mense by die huis”; “My sosiale netwerk op die kampus”; “Blootstelling aan 'n uiteenlopende studentebevolking”; “Om onafhanklik te word”; en “Om myself te leer ken”.

'n Beduidende faktor in swart eerstegenerasiestudente se identiteitsontwikkeling blyk die invloed van ander individue op hulle ontwikkeling te wees. Die vermoë van swart eerstegenerasiestudente om tuis in kontak te bly terwyl nuwe sosiale verbintenisse op die

kampus gevorm word, het hulle in staat gestel om veilig in hulle verkenning van nuwe wêreldbeskouings, verhoudings en beroepsoorwegings te voel. Swart eerste generasie studente se unieke vordering in vektor-bereiking bevestig die belangrikheid van navorsing oor die toepassing van Chickering se teorie in 'n meer uiteenlopende hoër onderwysomgewing.

Slutelwoorde: studenteontwikkeling, identiteit, vektor-ontwikkeling, opkomende volwassenes, eerste generasie studente

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

The transition from high school to higher education has been described as “a highly interrelated, web-like series of family, interpersonal, academic, and organizational pulls and pushes” (Terenzini et al., 1994, p. 61). Students who are the first in their family to attend higher education (first-generation students) experience unique transitional challenges (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011) resulting in unique developmental changes (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). This study is aimed at gaining a better understanding of the experiences related to the identity development of black first-generation students during their first year at a higher education institution.

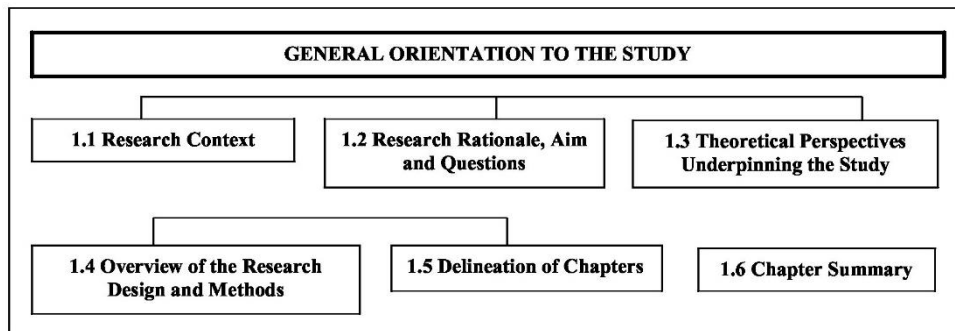


Figure 1. Visual display of Chapter 1 outline

As indicated in Figure 1, the focus of this chapter is to orientate the reader to the study. The reader is introduced to the research context, rationale, aim and questions, as well as the theoretical perspectives underpinning the study. Thereafter, an overview of the research design and methods of the study is given. The chapter concludes with a brief outline of the chapters in this research study.

1.1 Research Context

After the end of apartheid in 1994, the expectation was that the South African post-apartheid government was to transform social, economic, and political structures and institutions (Soudien, 2010; Wangenge-Ouma, 2010). Despite the school system being identified as an important catalyst for social and economic transformation in South Africa, ongoing racial

inequities remain (Liebowitz et al., 2005; Rebelo, 2005, Spaul, 2013). Racial inequities in higher education are reflected mainly in the enrolment numbers as well as the retention and graduation rates of black students. Brüßow (2007) and Cross, Shalem and Backhouse (2009) reveal that black students constitute 68% to 72% of higher education enrolments, which seem like an improvement in equal admission opportunities. However, according to the Council of Higher Education (2011), only 14% of the black people in South Africa continue their education after high school, while 57.4% of white South Africans enter higher education. The Council also determined that the retention and graduation rates of black students in higher education were dismal. For instance, in a quantitative analysis of South African students' graduation rates, Scott (2009) found that, of black students who enrol for higher education, only 35% eventually graduate, whereas white graduation rates are in the 60% to 70% range.

In an attempt to understand the low attendance and retention rates of black students, researchers focus on how the legacy of apartheid affects the black population (Lourens, Fourie, & Mdtshkelwa, 2014). Owing to the racial discrimination and purposeful degradation experienced during apartheid, the black population forms part of a group labelled the “previously disadvantaged” (Lourens et al., 2014, p. 3). Individuals in this group tend to struggle with common obstacles, including inadequate high school education, financial constraints, and low socio-economic conditions (Chambel & Curral, 2005; Lourens et al., 2014; Soudien, 2008). Segregated education during apartheid also ensured that only a few black students were able to attend higher education and even fewer to complete their higher education degrees. However, in July 1997, the Education White Paper 3 was released (Department of Education, 1997), which endorsed equity of access to higher education institutions and fair chances of success to all South Africans (Soudien, 2010). A direct consequence of the implementation of the act was an increase in higher education students whose parents had not attended any higher education institution.

The term ‘first-generation student’ was coined to refer to students who are the first in their immediate families to attend higher education (Cho, Hudley, Lee, Barry, & Kelly, 2008; Dumais & Ward, 2010; Inkelas, Daver, Vogt, & Leonard, 2007; Orbe, 2008). Other theorists broadened the definition to include students whose parents had attended higher education but had not obtained a degree (Ishitani, 2003; Soria & Gorny, 2012). The term ‘non-first-generation student’ refers to students whose parents earned at least one higher education degree (Cho et al., 2008; Ishitani, 2003). Since first-generation students form part of the so-called “new-

generation students” (Van der Bank, 2014, p. 2131) entering higher education, very little is known about the functioning of this group in the South African higher education milieu (Scott, 2009). However, it is known that, compared to non-first-generation students, first-generation students experience significant obstacles on their path to retention and academic success. For instance, based on international trends, first-generation students are 71% more likely to drop out of higher education than non-first-generation students are (Balemian & Feng, 2013; Ishitani, 2003). In South Africa, 80% of first-generation students are unable to complete their degrees (National Planning Commission, 2011). To accommodate these students better, it would be valuable for South African higher education institutions to obtain information on the challenges first-generation students face, as well as how these challenges affect their developmental trajectory.

Theorists have found that comprehension of the psychological nature of students’ undergraduate experiences can assist higher education administrators in understanding and meeting the unique needs of a more diverse student population (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011; Jehangir, 2009; Malefo, 2000; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The first year of university is crucial for all students who must overcome the major transition issues in order to persist in their field of study (Letseka & Maile, 2008; Leibowitz, Van der Merwe, & Van Schalkwyk, 2009; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). According to Van Schalkwyk (2007), one out of every three South African students entering higher education drop out at the end of their first year. Considering first-generation students, Ishitani (2003) found that these students have a greater risk of leaving higher education during their first year than during their second year. Thus, early intervention is critical (Yeh, 2010).

During the transition from high school to university, students begin to establish a new sense of self apart from their family (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Orbe, 2008). A section of student development theory is devoted to theorising and understanding the identity development process or changes students encounter in their sense of self (Chickering & Braskamp, 2009; Sokol, 2009; Tsai & Fuligni, 2007). However, the diversification of the student population compels researchers to expand research on identity development to new-generation students including first-generation students. Since first-generation students’ sense of self is influenced significantly by their family and culture (Orbe, 2008), it is expected that these students will have a unique identity development process (Luckett & Luckett, 2009; Shelton, 2013; Wang, 2012). The existing literature on first-generation students generated in America (USA) is

informative and useful in understanding some aspects associated with first-generation students in South Africa. However, some student experiences are highly specific to themselves as well as the environment created by the specific higher education institution. Thus, theorists, including Heymann and Carolissen (2011) and Toni and Olivier (2004), expect that South African students would yield identities unique to a South African context and different from, for example, USA students.

1.2 Research Rationale, Aim and Questions

Chickering (1969) observes that students must attain certain developmental tasks or vectors on their path to creating a clear sense of self. Various factors, including gender (Draucker, 2004; Foubert, Nixon, Sisson, & Barnes, 2005) and ethnicity (Steyn & Kamper, 2011), have been found to affect the sequence of vector attainment. Although literature and research with regard to identity development in a diverse student population exists, the student population has undergone much diversification in the past decade (i.e. more female, racially diverse, adult, and disabled students enter higher education) (Thelin, 2004). Especially in the South African context, an increase in black and first-generation students has prompted research in these groups (International Education Association of South Africa, 2009). It would be valuable to add to existing identity development literature by exploring black first-generation students' experiences related to identity development during their first year at a higher education institution. To reach this aim, the following research question was explored: Which vectors of identity development can be identified in black first-year first-generation students?

Reflecting on the experiences of black first-generation students might open up conversations on the cultural and academic experiences of educationally disadvantaged students in classes, on campus, and in residences. Research findings may also add to the growing body of literature on the application of Chickering's theory in a more diverse higher education environment.

1.3 Theoretical Perspectives Underpinning the Study

Developmental approaches, including perspectives on lifespan development, student development, and identity development, were utilised to create a theoretical framework for the research.

The lifespan development approach purports that development takes place through the attainment of specific developmental tasks within specific developmental domains and life stages (Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2009; Santrock, 2005; Sigelman & Rider, 2009). One such a developmental stage is emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000). Emerging adulthood stretches from 18 to 29 years, bridging the stages of late adolescence and early adulthood as conceptualised in earlier developmental theories (Arnett, 2000). Emerging adulthood is described as a time of instability, possibility, self-focus, feeling in-between, and exploring who you are (Arnett, 2000). In this period of personal change and exploration, it is immensely important for individuals to experience movement towards greater independence but also a greater sense of self (Arnett, 2000, 2003; Benson, Scales, Hawkins, Oesterle, & Hill, 2004). If identity development is not negotiated successfully, it may affect the psychological and emotional well-being of individuals negatively later in life (Benson et al., 2004; Thom & Coetzee, 2004).

A subgroup of individuals in the population of emerging adults attends higher education (Patton, McEwen, Rendón, & Howard-Hamilton, 2007). Since it is theorised that emerging adults attending higher education undergo unique development trajectories (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010), it is expected that their developmental course will be distinctly different to emerging adults not attending higher education (Benson et al., 2004). Numerous theorists have studied the unique developmental trends, including identity development, in students (e.g. Erikson, 1968; Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1987; Marcia, 1966; Phinney, 1990; Torres, 1999). However, the most significant contributions have been made by Chickering (1969) and later Chickering and Reisser (1993). Chickering (1969) and Chickering and Reisser (1993) investigated the life tasks and developmental issues likely to confront traditionally aged (18 to 22 years) university students. Using the term 'vector' (developmental tasks), Chickering (1969) and Chickering and Reisser (1993) aimed to describe identity development as a spiralling progression rather than a linear developmental process consisting of stages. Chickering and Reisser (1993) describe the following seven vectors: developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity.

1.4 Overview of the Research Design and Methods

The following aspects relating to research design and methods are mentioned briefly and will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

For this descriptive and exploratory study, it was decided to use a qualitative case study approach, embedded in an interpretive paradigm (Patton, 2002). The design allowed the researcher to investigate the personal experiences related to identity development of black first-year, first-generation students at a higher education institution.

Participants for the study were identified by means of purposive sampling (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002) followed by snowball sampling (Mack, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005). Inclusion criteria were set for the selection of black first-generation students attending the University of the Free State (UFS). Since participants were required to reflect on their experiences during the first year, five male and five female second year students (between the ages of 18 and 22 years) were selected. The final sample represented three main ethnic groups, namely the Sesotho, Setswana, and isiXhosa groups. One participant was from the coloured racial group.

Three focus group discussions, followed by two individual interviews, were held. The researcher employed a semi-structured interview schedule with open-ended questions based on Chickering's theory. The interview schedule was designed to promote continuous interaction and flexibility between the researcher and participants (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The researcher audiotaped and transcribed all the qualitative interviews and discussions. Thereafter, data were analysed by using the thematic analysis approach based on the recommendations of Braun and Clarke (2006, 2013). The six stages of thematic analysis include the following: 1) Familiarising oneself with the data; 2) Generating initial codes; 3) Searching for themes; 4) Reviewing themes; 5) Defining and naming themes; and 6) Producing the report. By applying these stages, the researcher was able to explore and identify themes and subthemes that emerged from the data.

Authorisation and ethical clearance for this study was gained from the Research Committee of the Department of Psychology as well as the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of the Humanities at the University of the Free State. All of the participants provided informed

consent. Ethical considerations, such as autonomy, confidentiality, anonymity, non-maleficence, and beneficence (Allan, 2008) were adhered to.

The qualitative nature of this study required the promotion of trustworthiness through the enhancement of credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 2000; Shenton, 2004). The above-mentioned was done by implementing various strategies including triangulation, reflexivity, an audit trail, and peer examination (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 2000; Shenton, 2004).

1.5 Delineation of Chapters

This research report is structured as follows:

Chapter 1: Chapter 1 consists of an overview of the study, including the research context, research question, and theoretical perspectives underpinning the study. It also outlines the research process that was implemented during the study.

Chapter 2: This chapter constitutes an in-depth review of existing literature with a focus on lifespan development, student development, and identity development. By using lifespan development and student development theory, the uniqueness of higher education students' development is highlighted. Next, identity is defined and conceptualised, followed by a discussion of various theories underlying students' identity development. The discussion is concluded with an examination of general and gender- and ethnic-related aspects of identity development.

Chapter 3: After the discussion on identity development in Chapter 2, this chapter concentrates on Chickering's theory on university students' identity development. A detailed description of the theory, including the strengths and weaknesses, is provided. Next, existing research findings on Chickering's vectors are discussed, guided by gender- and ethnic-related findings and differences. The developmental trajectories unique to first-generation students form the last section of this chapter.

Chapter 4: This chapter consists of a comprehensive discussion of the research process, including the research paradigm, design, and methodology. The sampling methods, data-

collection procedures, data analyses, ethical considerations, and trustworthiness are described and discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 5: In this chapter, the results of this study are presented. Verbatim quotations from the focus group discussions and individual interviews are used to identify the main themes emerging from the qualitative data. Any areas of divergence and differences are also included. After the presentation of the themes, a summary of the main experiences that emerged from the interviews is provided.

Chapter 6: In Chapter 6, the themes presented in Chapter 5 are discussed by using Chickering's seven vectors as a framework. Previous studies and/or literature based on Chickering's vectors or associated with student identity development are used to assist in understanding and interpreting the findings of the current study.

Chapter 7: This chapter focuses on the most prominent findings, strengths, and limitations of the study. Recommendations for future research are provided in the final section of this chapter.

1.6 Chapter Summary

The content of this chapter was aimed at contextualising the research and motivating its importance. The theoretical approach was discussed briefly to provide a framework for the study. The research process implemented was also provided. Finally, this chapter provided an outline of the different sections of this research document. In the next chapter, the psychological perspectives regarding undergraduate student development are discussed.

CHAPTER 2

**PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES REGARDING UNDERGRADUATE
STUDENT DEVELOPMENT**

To exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly.

French philosopher Henri Bergson

By definition, being alive involves being in constant development. Muir (1999) describes human development as transformations in the structure, behaviour and/or thought process of an individual due to internal (biological) or external (environmental) influences. He emphasises that the definition of human development will depend on the specific theory or perspective in which that definition is embedded. The numerous theories regarding human development can be classified in one of three philosophical models, namely the organismic, mechanistic, and contextual worldviews (Allen, 2005; Woolf, 1998). Based on the organismic worldview, the individual is viewed as a whole and the parts that relate to the whole. In this instance, development occurs due to internal expansion and not external forces. In comparison, mechanistic theorists believe that the different parts of an individual are just as important as the whole. In addition, development occurs as a response to external forces (Allen, 2005; Woolf, 1998). However, this research study adheres to the more contemporary perspective, namely the contextual worldview. From this perspective, change in an individual occurs due to both internal changes and environmental influences (holistic view of development). In short, to understand an individual's development, a researcher must consider biological, psychological, historical, and sociological factors (Baltes, Lindenberger, & Staudinger, 2006; Moran, 2001).

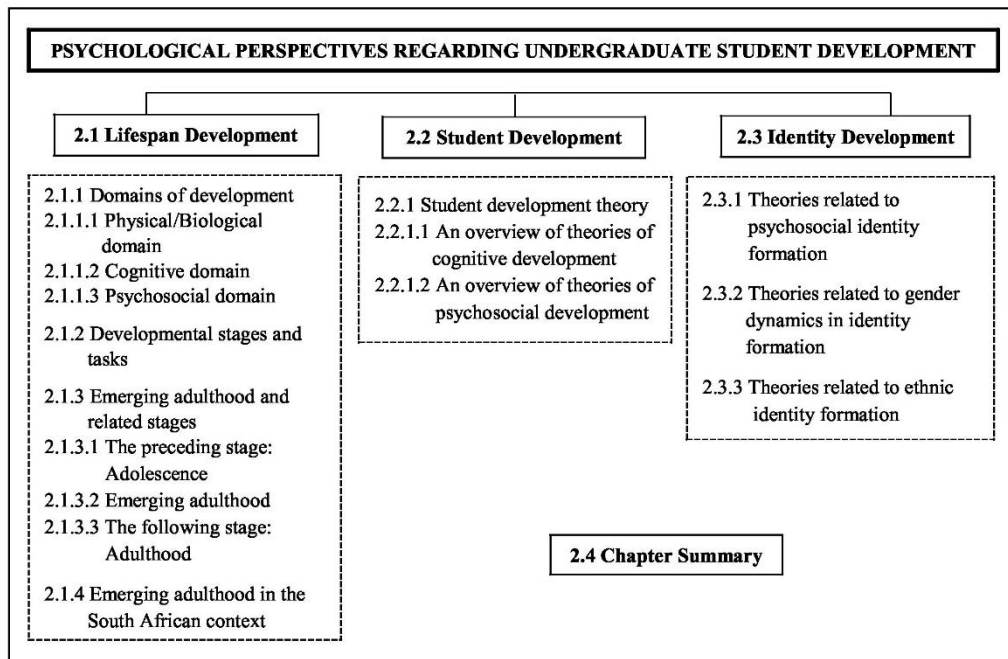


Figure 2. Visual display of Chapter 2 outline

After considering Figure 2, it is clear that the researcher’s aim with this chapter was to create a general idea of lifespan development, with a more specific focus on student and identity development.

2.1 Lifespan Development

According to Berger (2008) and Sigelman and Rider (2009), lifespan development entails sequential changes that occur from conception to death. These changes or transformations occur due to internal and external influences. Martin, Jäncke and Röcke (2012) and Newman and Newman (2006) add that lifespan development includes age-related changes and age-related stability across the entire lifespan and, in particular, within the distinct life periods of infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age.

Researchers typically use developmental principles as a meaningful framework to investigate specific aspects of human development at different stages in the lifespan (Sigelman & Rider, 2009). Baltes (1987) identified six developmental principles, namely that development is lifelong, multidimensional, multidirectional, plastic, contextual, and multidisciplinary. The fact that development is lifelong suggests that it encompasses the entire lifespan, from conception

to death. By implication, development may involve processes that are not present at birth but emerge throughout the lifespan. The term multidimensional signifies that development is affected by the complex interplay of components in the three major domains, namely the physical, cognitive, and psychosocial domains, and that not one single criterion can determine development of a domain. Multidirectional implies that development in a particular domain does not occur strictly in a linear pattern (Baltes et al., 2006). At times, developmental changes are prominent, and at times they are obscure. The fourth principle emphasises the plasticity of development. In essence, plasticity refers to the changes in neural connections due to environmental interactions and learning (Santrock, 2005). The principle of contextuality refers to development varying across different contexts. This ‘individual in context’ approach includes studying individuals’ socio-cultural context, influential situations to which they are likely to be exposed (i.e. peer group, life events), and the stage of development in which they are (Fleming, 2008). Baltes (1987) also theorises that the historical period in which development occurs will affect the direction of developmental trajectories. Finally, Baltes (1987) believes that the study of human development is multidisciplinary. This means that one discipline cannot explain the sources of age-related changes (Fleming, 2008). Subsequently, a researcher concentrating on individuals’ development in a specific developmental stage must consider all these principles before truly comprehending his or her observations.

To summarise, theorists use lifespan theory to understand people and the dynamic nature of human development and change throughout their lifetime (Berger, 2008). In this literature review, the researcher aims to highlight the uniqueness of student development in relation to other developmental stages. Subsequently, knowledge with regard to 1) the biological, psychological, social, and environmental factors (developmental domains), 2) the overall structure and sequence of development across the lifespan (developmental stages), and 3) the interconnection between earlier and later developmental stages (developmental tasks) (Baltes et al., 2006) is of importance. In the next section, the discussion centres on these three themes.

2.1.1 Domains of development

As stated earlier, lifespan development is multidimensional in nature. The three main developmental domains or dimensions are the physical domain, cognitive domain, and psychosocial domain (Papalia et al., 2009; Sigelman & Rider, 2009). According to Santrock (2011), these domains are bidirectional, inferring that biological processes can affect cognitive

processes and vice versa. Although the developmental domains are interconnected, theorists tend to study each domain separately. In the next section, the three domains are discussed.

2.1.1.1 Physical/biological domain

Physical changes in the human body are primarily a product of biological processes, which include height and weight gains, changes in motor skills, development of the brain and hormonal changes (Sigelman & Rider, 2009). Accordingly, the study of physical development mainly focuses on growth (i.e. body, organs, and physical systems) and functions (i.e. brain, nervous system, muscles, and senses) of the human body. The knowledge obtained with regard to physical changes in humans explains behavioural patterns during a specific developmental stage. For instance, during puberty (early adolescence), dramatic changes in the physical and hormonal domain have a direct effect on the development of a sense of self. During the transition from late adolescence to emerging adulthood, the body begins to complete the growth changes contributing to peak physical development during individuals' twenties (Papalia et al., 2009).

2.1.1.2 Cognitive domain

Development in the cognitive domain involves changes in mental processes, learning, memory, language skills, and problem-solving skills (Sigelman & Rider, 2009). The cognitive improvement experienced enables the individual to apply knowledge to new problems and contextual situations (King, 2009). According to Sigelman and Rider (2009), developmental researchers examine the cognitive domain to gain better understanding with regard to the different processes that allow people to grow and change in their intellectual capabilities. In turn, this knowledge can be used to explain and understand individual thinking patterns and behaviour in a specific life stage. For instance, young adults must decide on a worldview, recognise the subjectivity of their worldview, and acknowledge the existence of diverse worldviews (Labouvie-Vief, 2006). To reach these developmental expectations, young adults need to experiment and explore different ideas, values, and behaviours (Arnett, 2000).

2.1.1.3 Psychosocial domain

Growth entails not only physical changes people experience throughout their lives, but also psychological changes. Through interaction with others, personal and interpersonal aspects of development occur, including changes in emotions, interpersonal skills, personality traits, and relationships (Newman & Newman, 2006; Sigelman & Rider, 2009). Diener and Seligman (2002, p. 83) go so far as to state, “Good social relationships are, like food and thermoregulation, universally important to human mood.” Rutledge et al. (2004) concur that social integration or the active engagement in a broad range of social relationships contributes to a decrease in depression.

In conclusion, development in a specific domain is proportionate to development in the other domains (Sigelman & Rider, 2009). To create a collective view of development in a specific domain, theorists propose the use of developmental stages and tasks.

2.1.2 Developmental stages and tasks

An influential theory with regard to the study of developmental change over the course of life is Havighurst’s (1948) theory of human development and education. He conceptualises development as individuals’ progression through different stages or periods in their lifetime during which they must cope with age-specific challenges or demands (developmental tasks). From his definition, two questions arise: 1) What is a developmental stage? and 2) What is a developmental task?

While a variety of definitions of developmental stages exists, this research study will use the definition suggested by Newman and Newman (2006). They describe a developmental stage as an age-related period of life characterised by distinct features that differentiate development in the present stage from the preceding and succeeding stages. This definition incorporates the idea that life stage theories have two main approaches: The first holds that stages of development are age specific, and the second holds that stages are sequential and cannot necessarily be linked to a specific age (Evans, 2003). Theories forming part of the latter approach place greater emphasis on developmental tasks to distinguish one stage from another.

Researchers use developmental tasks to define typical development in humans (Newman & Newman, 2006) and can serve as a benchmark of adaption (Roisman, Masten, Coatsworth, & Tellegen, 2004). According to Havighurst (1948), individuals overcome developmental challenges through the attainment of new skills and competencies. Hence, success in one developmental period (the successful completion of developmental tasks) leads to greater chances of successful adaption in the next developmental stage (Havighurst, 1948; Roisman et al., 2004). This pattern gives way to the idea that the course of human life has acquired a “prototypical invariant developmental trajectory” or ideal developmental course; for example, being born, maturing into adulthood, and entering into a romantic relationship (Van Lieshout, 2006, p. 515). However, although certain developmental tasks are considered universal, other tasks and their sequence are influenced directly by the society and/or the cultural context in which it is embedded.

Developmental theorists, such as Chickering (1969) and Arnett (2000), provide theories that act as lenses to understand development in a certain developmental period. In the next section, the focus is on emerging adulthood as a developmental period.

2.1.3 Emerging adulthood and related stages

According to Bauman (2001), life course events that once were structured more normatively (i.e. marriage and childbearing, or starting a career) are now characterised by fluctuations, reversals, and discontinuities. To gain better understanding of developmental trajectories and transitions, the developmental period between 18 and 29 years, previously known as a part of the years of young adulthood (Erikson, 1968) or early adulthood (Havighurst, 1948), is now considered a distinct developmental period coined as emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000).

Arnett (2000) describes emerging adulthood as a “transitional period” (p. 477), which by definition implies that development during emerging adulthood is deemed distinctly different from development during adolescence and development during later stages of adulthood. Therefore, to understand development in the developmental period of emerging adulthood, a general description of developmental tasks of adolescence, emerging adulthood, and adulthood follows.

2.1.3.1 The preceding stage: Adolescence

Theorists characterise adolescence as a critical intermediate period commonly associated with rapid physical, cognitive, emotional, and social maturation (Sisk & Zehr, 2005). To ensure a safe passage into emerging adulthood, psychosocial, physical and cognitive resources must be utilised to assist adolescents in overcoming developmental challenges (Erikson, 1968).

Numerous developmental tasks and challenges confront adolescents, including accepting one's body, becoming emotionally independent from one's parents, developing more intimate relationships with peers of the same and opposite gender, establishing personal values, and preparing for an occupation (Seiffge-Krenke, Kiuru, & Nurmi, 2010). For the purpose of this research study, it is necessary to align the developmental tasks in adolescence with those discussed in the emerging adulthood section. With this in mind, the next section examines the tasks of 1) exploring an identity, 2) increasing emotional regulation, and 3) connecting to peers.

a) Exploring an identity

During adolescence, the cognitive capacity to reflect upon oneself and to make sense of one's surroundings becomes established (Eccles, Wong, & Peck, 2006). A consequence associated with this cognitive progression is adolescents' need to foster a sense of continuity, coherence and belonging – an identity (Erikson, 1968). However, adolescents' identity formation is based on a balance between the self and others (Kroger, 2003). Consequently, adolescents are faced with three important questions: “Who am I, what do others think about me, and where do I fit in?” (Pfeifer & Peake, 2012, p. 56).

When comparing early and late adolescents, Moretti and Peled (2004) highlight that individuals in the early phase of adolescence are still developing abstract systems to resolve conflicting aspects of the self. In comparison, older adolescents undergo deeper identity exploration, which increases the likelihood of identity achievement (Marcia, 1966). Interestingly, female adolescents explore and commit to an identity early in the developmental period, while adolescent boys commit only later in the developmental period (Klimstra, Hale, Raaijmakers, Branje, & Meeus, 2010). However, theorists (Alessandria & Nelson, 2005; Arnett & Brody, 2008) found that, owing to the current social and demographic changes (i.e. longer periods of

postsecondary education and later ages of entering marriage and parenthood), identity exploration is prolonged into emerging adulthood.

b) Increasing emotional regulation

Emotions are recognised as both the product and the process of social relationships (Morris, Silk, Steinberg, Myers, & Robinson, 2007). Since adolescence is characterised as a period of extreme social and physical change, it is expected that the average adolescent experiences emotions and temperamental mood states more intensely than adults do (Blakemore, 2008; Casey, Getz, & Galvan, 2008; Somerville, Jones, & Casey, 2010). For instance, Adkins, Wang, Dupre, Van den Oord and Elder (2009) and Arnett (2004) found that depression levels rise through early adolescence and peak in mid- towards later adolescence. Subsequently, emotional regularity responses or coping strategies, especially in the social domain, are important developmental challenges for adolescents (Silvers et al., 2012; Zimmermann, Mohr, & Spangler, 2009).

c) Connecting to peers

During this stage of development, a shift in perspective occurs with regard to the importance of peers (Casey, Duhoux, & Cohen, 2010). Papalia et al. (2009) assert that, in adolescents' social domain, friendships and romantic relationships become integral parts of social interaction. This turning point in relationships with peers is associated with the escalation in self-assurance, self-knowledge, and self-discovery adolescents experience (Montgomery, 2005). Between the ages of 12 and 15, a growing reliance on peers leads to increased sensitivity for peer evaluation and a desire to fit in (Pfeifer et al., 2009). According to Montgomery (2005), older adolescents who have developed advanced perspective-taking skills (the ability to reason about others' viewpoints) become less influenced by peers and focus more on developing intimacy and interconnectedness with their peers.

Schulenberg, Sameroff and Cicchetti (2004) found that the transition from adolescence to adulthood involves significant contextual and social changes and challenges. Consequently, some adolescents are successful in completing age-specific developmental tasks, while others have trouble in overcoming developmental obstacles. However, as mentioned earlier,

developmental fluctuations contribute to the extension of some traditionally adolescent tasks to emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000).

2.1.3.2 Emerging adulthood

No clearly defined normative expectations (developmental tasks and/or roles) associated with emerging adulthood existed before this century. However, Arnett (2000, p. 7) describes distinct features associated with the developmental period of emerging adulthood. He portrays emerging adulthood as “the age of instability” (evidence of changes in relationships, work and education), “the age of possibilities” (the potential to steer life in any direction), “the age of self-focus” (not being self-centred, but also not having any obligations towards others), “the age of feeling in-between” (not being an adolescent or adult), and “the age of identity exploration” (particularly in the areas of work, love, and worldviews). King (2009) adds that individuals in the emerging adult developmental stage experience advanced cognitive functioning ability and complex ways of organising their thoughts. The successful development of these cognitive abilities will contribute to various personal enhancements (Zarrett & Eccles, 2006). Firstly, individuals obtain the ability to reflect on their own abilities, interests, desires, and needs that contribute to their identity formation process (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Secondly, these individuals will have the ability to think and discuss issues of tolerance and human interaction with others, which contributes to increases in civic involvement (Benson et al., 2004; Martínez Alemán, 2010; Zarrett & Eccles, 2006). Thirdly, such individuals develop the ability to be planful, which is important for the pursuit of educational and occupational goals (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Tanner, Arnett, & Leis, 2009). Finally, cognitive development will enable individuals to understand their own and others’ internal psychological states, which can result in close and intimate friendships (Erikson, 1950; Masten et al., 2004). Benson et al. (2004) summarise these advancements into dimensions and indicators of successful emerging adult development (see Table 1).

Table 1

Summary of the Key Indicators of Successful Emerging Adult Development

Developmental task	General dimensions experienced in each task
Formulating an identity	Psychological and emotional well-being: Emerging adults develop a positive self-identity, life satisfaction, a positive outlook, sense of purpose, pro-social orientation, and self-efficacy.
Developing moral reasoning ability	Ethical behaviour: Individuals in this stage value telling the truth, keeping promises, avoiding crime, obeying the law, demonstrating care and concern for others, and taking responsibility for themselves.
Accepting social roles and responsibilities	Civic engagement: Increases in volunteer work, political participation, and charitable giving are observed in emerging adults.
Identifying and preparing to enter a career	Educational attainment: The majority of emerging adults focus on high-school completion, the completion of a post-secondary degree or occupational certification.
Entering increasingly more mature and intimate relationships	Healthy family and social relationships: Emerging adults demonstrate bonding and frequent interactions with a parent, being in a relationship with an intimate partner and with peer(s), involvement in groups such as community sports teams, church groups, music groups, and dance classes.

Adapted from Benson et al. (2004, p. 6)

In the following discussion, the developmental tasks of a) formulating an identity, b) developing moral reasoning ability, c) accepting social roles and responsibilities, d) identifying and preparing to enter a career, and e) entering increasingly more mature and intimate relationships are considered:.

a) Formulating an identity

As mentioned earlier, theorists consider emerging adulthood as the age of identity exploration (Arnett, 2000; Schwartz, Côté, & Arnett, 2005). Freund and Baltes (2002) agree that, with the increase in opportunities and the decrease of immediate responsibilities, emerging adulthood is a critical period during which individuals must experiment to learn more about themselves and what they want out of life. Ideally, individuals move from reliance on external formulas (which leads to an externally defined identity) to advancing in interpersonal and intrapersonal

maturity (which leads to an internally defined identity) (Baxter Magolda, 2001). This partially explains the theory that identity formation and the formation of intimate relationships are interrelated (Arnett, 2004). In addition, Tiwari and Ghadially (2009) found that gender identity, a component of general identity, changes rapidly during emerging adulthood. However, the gender identity of young women changes much more than that of young men does. A possible reason for this observation is that young women move away from traditional personality traits to non-traditional personality traits.

In higher education, emerging adults have the opportunity to practise self-governance, direct their own lifestyle, and delay many adult responsibilities. As a result, students have the opportunity to extend exploration of the self (Grob, Krings, & Bangerter, 2001; Syed & Azmitia, 2008; Zarrett & Eccles, 2006). However, individuals who enter the workforce directly after high school will not be hindered in their identity development but will rather experience a different course of identity exploration (Papalia et al., 2009). Whichever path an individual follows, it is anticipated that by the end of emerging adulthood, a relatively stable identity will have developed (Tanner, 2006).

b) Developing moral reasoning ability

Being moral has been associated with character development, empathy, altruism, and spirituality (Zarrett & Eccles, 2006). According to Aquino and Reed (2002), having a moral identity displays the degree to which individuals' moral character forms a central part of their self-concept. In addition, Shao, Aquino and Freeman (2008) found that moral identity has a direct influence on how individuals interpret and respond to situations involving moral judgement and choice. As a result, individuals with a mature moral identity also have a greater sense of obligation to society (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Based on Kohlberg's (1969) theory, emerging adults are typically in the post-conventional moral reasoning phase. These individuals become more aware of their moral code and their duty to display ethically acceptable behaviour. Martínez Alemán (2010) believes that this awareness indicates an increase in moral identity. However, King (2009) found that young adults, especially women, find it difficult to balance their needs with the needs of others.

c) Accepting social roles and responsibilities

Theorists agree that emerging adulthood is a crossroad between the social world of family and friends on the one side and the larger society on the other side (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Meeus, 2011; Phinney, 2006). Arnett (2000) and Tanner et al. (2009) explain that, owing to the lack of clear social roles and an increase in self-focus, emerging adults initially do not experience a feeling of obligation towards others. This occurrence is particularly evident among university students who experience a moratorium period. However, Erikson (1968) maintains that later on, through personal role identification, individuals gain an understanding of the role and position they have in the broader society. This contributes to the beginning of civic responsibilities and more active involvement in the community (i.e. volunteering and charity work) (Benson et al., 2004). Arnett (2013) also confirm that emerging adults today show greater participation in community service.

d) Identifying and preparing to enter a career

As individuals move into emerging adulthood, their choices and challenges shift to include decisions about education or vocational training. Benson et al. (2004) found that, after completing high school, emerging adults become more constructively engaged in one of two distinct activities: They either attend higher education or immediately enter the workforce. The former attend a social institution, which assists in the crossover to autonomy and the transition to the labour market (Zarrett & Eccles, 2006). The latter tend to experiment and explore with different types of occupations in an attempt to find secure, well-paying employment (Tanner et al., 2009).

e) Entering increasingly more mature and intimate relationships

Based on Erikson's (1950) theory, to prevent becoming socially isolated, an emerging adult needs to form intimate relationships. Emerging adults experience progression in their interpersonal skills including providing emotional support and advice, appropriate disclosing, managing interpersonal conflict and distinguishing between nurturing and unhealthy relationships (Benson et al., 2004; Masten et al., 2004). These skills assist emerging adults in maintaining peer relationships that are more intimate and, in particular, emotional intimacy with one individual (Larson, Whitton, Hauser, & Allen, 2007). Consequently, emerging adults

engage in a series of committed relationships. However, in most cases, these relationships do not lead to marriage (Jamison & Proulx, 2013; Sassler, 2010). The aim of these relationships is only to discover features the emerging adult like in partners, but also what type of partner they will be (identity development) (Arnett, 2000; Erikson, 1950). The exploration of male and female emerging adults' interpersonal identities increase from adolescence to young adulthood (Bartoszuk & Pittman, 2010).

From a lifespan developmental perspective, Sneed, Johnson et al. (2006) and Tanner (2006) identify re-centring as an important social developmental task in emerging adulthood. Tanner (2006) describes re-centring as the relational restructuring or reattachment between emerging adults and their families. In essence, it means that the parent-child relationships must be challenged to become adult relationships.

During emerging adulthood, individuals become increasingly independent, acquire and manage greater responsibility, and take on an active role in their own development (Arnett, 2000). Tanner et al. (2009) warn that, even though the acquisition of tasks can act as a measure of progression in development, becoming an adult is rather a process towards greater independence.

2.1.3.3 The following stage: Adulthood

Different criteria exist to classify someone as 'being an adult'. Traditionally, chronological age markers such as turning 18 or 21 were related to an adult status (Arnett, 2000). Other status markers included further education and training, getting permanent employment, living away from one's parents, getting married, and/or becoming a parent (Berg, 2007).

However, the criteria for adult status are different today than they were 50 or 100 years ago. Now, internal indicators such as sense of autonomy, personal responsibility, making independent decisions, and self-control are included as criteria (Arnett, 2003). According to Arnett (2003), the majority of emerging adults view their transition to adulthood as the accomplishment of several cognitive, individualistic, and emotional developmental tasks. The central theme for most of these tasks is independence, including 1) accepting responsibility for the consequences of one's actions, 2) deciding on personal beliefs and values, 3) attaining financial independence from parents, and 4) establishing equal relationships with parents.

Cultural influences also guide the criteria for adulthood. In contrast with the theme of independence and individuality emphasised by Western cultures, African cultures promote interdependence. For instance, individuals who fulfil a social transitional role such as entering into a marriage or being the head of the household earn adult status (Arnett, 2003; Lewis, 2010).

2.1.4 Emerging adulthood in the South African context

The transition from adolescence to adulthood is not simply biological but also social and cultural (Arnett, 2003). Consequently, it has been suggested that the beginning of emerging adulthood varies depending on the country, social class, and culture of the individual (Arnett, 2006; Furstenberg & Kmec, 2000; Syed & Mitchell, 2013). If so, will South Africans experience the developmental period of emerging adulthood?

Based on findings by Schlegel and Barry (1991) and Arnett (2000), only the urban and middle classes of developing countries, including South Africa, experience emerging adulthood. It could be that individuals with less economical, intellectual, and psychological resources experience fewer opportunities for exploration and educational advancement (Hendry & Kloep, 2010). However, the current economic conditions experienced in South Africa, including poverty and high unemployment rates, increase the demand for higher education and/or training. As a result, South African youths tend to further their education and delay entering into marriages and becoming parents – characteristics distinctive to emerging adulthood (Hendry & Kloep, 2010; Rebelo, 2005).

Since cultural beliefs and values influence individuals' developmental pathways, Arnett (2000) initially reported that emerging adulthood is not a universal period. Arnett (2000) postulates that emerging adulthood is more prominent in cultures that postpone entry into adult roles and responsibilities until well past the late teens. He also theorises that the centrality of independence in emerging adulthood could hinder the occurrence of this developmental period in certain cultural groups. For instance, Juang, Syed, Cookston, Wang and Kim (2012) and Lewis (2010) found that individualistic cultures value independence and the advancement of autonomy, whereas collectivistic cultures value interdependence and interrelatedness (*ubuntu*). The *ubuntu* principle promotes the idea that individuals exist and define themselves through interaction with others in their social environment (Bamford, 2007). However, due to globalisation and acculturation, South African black youths have experienced an ideological

shift from collectivism to individualism (Norris et al., 2008; Thom & Coetzee, 2004). For instance, in a South African study on black adolescent youths, Rebelo (2005) found that the participants presented behaviour that was more individualistic in nature (i.e. attending to their own needs rather than addressing the needs of the community). Consequently, it is more than likely that, in the past decade, emerging adulthood as a developmental period has become more pertinent among black South African youths.

A subpopulation in emerging adulthood is individuals who attend higher education. According to Patton et al. (2007), student development theories assist researchers to gain a better understanding of the functioning of higher education students. In the next section, a general discussion of student development theories follows.

2.2 Student Development

The term *student* refers to individuals who invest in education, employment, and career development by attending a higher educational institution (Macmillan & Eliason, 2003). Owing to enrolment at an institution of higher education, it is theorised that students undergo unique developmental changes and processes of transformation (Evans et al., 2010), which enable them to integrate and act on different experiences and influences (Rogers, 1990; Sanford, 1967). King (1994) captures the complexity of student development by comparing student development to a kaleidoscope or mosaic of changing skills, attitudes, beliefs, and understandings.

Sanford (1967) postulates that, because of the new challenges students face, it is a necessity for students to acquire new coping strategies. Some of the challenges students encounter include relocation, being away from home for the first time, coping with more independence and freedom, and feeling adrift in new surroundings (Nkuna, 2008). For other students, the challenges are more concrete, including challenges that emanate from academic demands, lack of information, and lack of financial security (Bojuwoye, 2002). How students cope with the previously mentioned dissonance will contribute to positive adaption or adjustment difficulties. Positive adaption causes the expansion of students' developmental capacities, for instance the acquisition of new skills, moving outside one's comfort zone, and expanding cognitive abilities (Anderson & Lopez-Baez, 2011). Adjustment difficulties could lead to developmental issues, including issues with identity, intimacy, and separation (Bojuwoye, 2002). Mental health

problems, such as depression, low self-rating of emotional health, as well as substance abuse, could also emerge (Schulenberg & Zarrett, 2006). To understand the developmental changes students experience at university, student development theories can be utilised.

2.2.1 Student development theory

In broad terms, theorists regard student development theories as being a set of diverse theories aimed at explaining the way students develop, grow and mature during the years they attend a higher education institution (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Literature on student development includes many dimensions of student development, including development in the cognitive, identity, and civic or moral domains. Although theories of student development are interconnected, they have traditionally been grouped into distinctive areas (Gardner, 2009). Initially, Knefelkamp, Widick and Parker (1978) organised student development research literature into five theory clusters or families, namely psychosocial theories, cognitive developmental theories, typology models, person-environment interaction models, and maturity models (see Table 2). These theories are all concerned with individuals' development during their time at university.

Baxter Magolda's (2009) review of student development literature presents the following findings: Firstly, maturity model theorists have converted their focus away from student development theory. Secondly, typology theories are not regarded as truly developmental theories owing to the lack of a developmental progression, and finally, person-environmental theorists have become a separate literature on campus environment and ecology. Accordingly, the focus falls on cognitive and psychosocial development theories to attain information on the functioning of higher education students (De Larossa, 2000; Dunn & Forney, 2004).

Table 2

Summary of the Five Clusters of Student Development Theory

Theory	Description
Psychosocial theories	These theories examine the content of development and the important issues people face as their lives progress; for instance, how individuals define themselves, how individuals experience their relationships with others, and how individuals decide what to do with their lives. An example of such a theory is Chickering's theory on identity development.
Cognitive development theories	These theories explain how students' thought processes change and how they make meaning of their experiences. Perry's scheme of moral and intellectual development is an example of such a theory.
Typology models	Typology models are not theories of development but rather indicate differences in learning styles, personality styles, temperament or socio-economic backgrounds of students. It is also used to understand how students relate to or adapt to their educational environments. The temperament theory of Kiersey and Bates is an example of a typology model.
Person-environment interaction models	The core idea in interaction models is that the environment plays an extensive role in shaping a person. Holland's theory of personality types and model environments is an example of such a model.
Maturity models	Maturity models attempt to synthesise an overall developmental picture and link the other models of student development. An example of a maturity model is Heath's maturity model.

Adapted from Walker (2008)

Although identity development (the focus of this research study) forms part of psychosocial development theory, theorists agree that cognition is an important aspect in identity formation (Chickering, 1969; Erikson, 1968; Josselson, 1987; Marcia, 1980; Phinney, 1990). In the following section, theories of cognitive and psychosocial development are discussed broadly.

2.2.1.1 An overview of theories of cognitive development

Derived from Piagetian psychology, theories of cognitive development fundamentally focus on “how people think, reason, and make meaning of their experiences” (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998, p. 124). In essence, the theories purport that cognitive development entails a process consisting of distinct stages, and in order to move to a higher level of cognitive ability, the previous stage must be completed successfully (Jones & Abes, 2011). Furthermore, each stage consists of different assumptions. When dissonance or conflict is experienced, these assumptions are revised and accommodated (Piaget, 1952). Ruble (1994) and later Labouvie-Vief (2006) claimed that the transition to university presents new situations of which students know little. Students seek information to make sense of a new situation and, consequently, experience a rapid expansion of complex thought structures and changes in thinking styles. To understand the influence of students’ unique thinking styles on their psychosocial development, it is necessary to review the main cognitive theories applied to students.

Using Piaget’s (1952) work as a platform, Perry (1970) sought to describe and understand how higher education students handle the dissonance between their current ways of knowing and the new information and experiences on campus. Perry (1970) believes that the way students think as well as their belief system transform with maturity. His scheme of moral and intellectual development consists of three successive epistemological positions/stages, namely the dualistic stage, multiplicity stage, and the relativism stage. Movement through the different stages provides a description of how students change in their understanding of themselves and their environment. Students in the first stage of this model believe that knowledge is certain and concrete. They acknowledge that there is only one right answer and they regard the lecturer as an authority figure with infallible knowledge (West, 2004). During the transition from the first to the second stage, students realise that knowledge is uncertain. They elevate their own opinions, become more self-centred, and believe that their views are as good as the lecturer’s knowledge (Perry, 1970). In the last stage of Perry’s model, individuals acknowledge and accept that the context and relevant evidence shape knowledge.

To accommodate the more diverse student population, Perry’s three major phases of cognitive development have been adapted and improved by using longitudinal studies on university students and adults (Baxter Magolda, 2009). For instance, Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) concentrated on the epistemology of female students and compared their

meaning-making experiences with those of their male counterparts. They classify cognitive development in female students as the movement through various stages. Before entering higher education, women tend to feel disconnected from knowledge and power – the silence stage. During the received knowledge stage, female students believe that knowledge is a set of absolute facts provided by infallible authorities. In the next stage, the subjective knowledge stage, individuals begin to put their own beliefs above the ideas of authorities. In the procedural knowledge stage, individuals receive context-specific procedures from authorities to use systematically to interpret information. Finally, in the constructed knowledge stage, female students understand that the knower constructs all knowledge and has the responsibility to analyse and develop his or her own knowledge. In the procedural knowledge stage, individuals become connected knowers (they seek to understand others' ideas and viewpoints, including those of their mothers and friends) or separated knowers (they apply critical analysis excluding personal feelings and beliefs, for instance to challenge authorities, including professors). In the constructed knowledge stage, these two groups become interconnected.

Baxter Magolda (1992) included male and female students in her research to create a more complete picture of the gender similarities and differences among students' ways of knowing. She observed four ways of knowing, namely absolute knowing, transitional knowing, independent knowing, and contextual knowing. These ways of knowing were observed in two different, yet equally complex, reasoning patterns based on gender. Individuals experiencing absolute knowing perceive knowledge as absolute (women: knowledge is received; men: knowledge is mastered). Transitional knowers acknowledge that some knowledge is certain and some is not (women acquire knowledge through interpersonal interaction; men acquire knowledge through debate). Independent knowers experience knowledge as uncertain and individually formulated (women consider others' views as an important influence on individual thinking; men focus on independent thinking). Finally, when the individual's way of knowing depends on the evaluation of specific contextual evidence to judge the knowledge claims, he or she is in the contextual knowing stage. During the last stage, gender differences converge.

King and Kitchener (1994) were interested in understanding how students think about problems without explicit solutions. They created a reflective judgment model consisting of seven stages and described how individuals come to understand what knowledge is, how they justify it and how it changes throughout life (West, 2004). During Stage 1, individuals acquire knowledge through experience. Stage 2 is similar to Perry's dualistic knowers – students believe that

absolute knowledge is possible. In Stage 3, uncertainty of knowledge emerges. The uncertainty of knowledge heightens during Stage 4. As a result, individuals begin to justify knowledge in a self-centred manner. By Stage 5, the importance of context-specific rules emerges. This stage is the same as Perry's relativistic knowers. Reflective thinking only surfaces during the last two stages. According to King and Kitchener (1994), individuals who are able to demonstrate reflective thinking believe that knowledge is constructed. Solutions to problems are generated through ongoing inquiry and re-evaluation. Table 3 summarises how the stages of different theories are linked.

Table 3

A Comparison of the Main Cognitive Stages in Students' Development

	Description of level	Perry (1970)	Belenky et al. (1986)	Baxter Magolda (1992)	King and Kitchener (1994)
Level 1	Individuals feel mindless and voiceless. Individuals do not attend higher education.		Silence		
Level 2	Students view knowledge as certain and concrete. Students do not question authority.	Dualistic stage	Received knowledge	Absolute knowing	Stages 1 to 3
Level 3	Students experience knowledge as uncertain. Self-centred views arise.	Multiplicity stage	Subjective knowledge	Transitional knowing Independent knowing	Stage 4
Level 4	Students evaluate opinions based on context and evidence. Ultimately, reflective thinking occurs.	Relativism stage	Procedural knowledge Constructed knowledge	Contextual knowing	Stage 5 Stages 6 to 7

Adapted from West (2004)

Closely related to intellectual development is the ability to make decisions among morally ambiguous choices. Here, Kohlberg (1969) and Gilligan (1982) played an important role in identifying stages and differences among men's (justice orientation) and women's (care orientation) moral development. Kohlberg (1969) used male participants. He proposed that moral development occurs through three levels, namely the pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional levels. Individuals who do not yet understand societal rules and expectations find themselves in the pre-conventional stage of development. Individuals in the conventional stage are able to identify the rules and expectations of others. In the last, post-conventional stage, individuals are able to separate themselves from others' expectations and make decisions based on their own moral orientation and principles. In comparison, Gilligan (1982) found that men's and women's moral development is different due to the influence of relationships on women's development. She believed that moral development occurs through three levels. Initially, individuals are self-centred and focused on their own survival (orientation to individual survival). Later, individuals begin putting the needs of others before their own (goodness of self-sacrifice). Finally, individuals experience morality of nonviolence and understand they have to balance their needs with those of others. Two transitions, namely selfishness to responsibility and goodness to truth, take place when individuals experience cognitive dissonance.

The preceding discussion provides evidence that students experience cognitive growth towards more complex meaning-making. These increasing capabilities facilitate psychosocial development.

2.2.1.2 An overview of theories of psychosocial development

Psychosocial theories regarding students evolved primarily from the work of Erikson (1968), who proposes that development occurs due to the interaction of physical and cognitive growth and the demands of the environment (Baxter Magolda, 2009). Evans and her colleagues (1998, 2010) propose that psychosocial theories focus on interpersonal and intrapersonal issues individuals face as they progress in their lives, including defining oneself, entering into relationships with others and finding purpose in one's life. In accordance, Newman and Newman (2006) describe psychosocial development as a balancing act between positive forces towards growth and negative forces towards self-protection and withdrawal.

Psychosocial theorists place emphasis on the accomplishment of a series of developmental tasks. Erikson (1968, p. 92) uses the following metaphor to illustrate the importance of developmental tasks in psychosocial development:

Anything that grows has a ground plan, and that out of this ground plan the parts arise, each part having its time of special ascendancy, until all parts have arisen to form a functioning whole.

Developmental tasks are sequential; yet, individuals will not necessarily resolve the challenges in the order they encounter them. For instance, gender and culture affect the pattern of task attainment (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), the tasks qualitatively alter an individual's feelings, behaviour, thinking, valuing, and relations with the self and others.

Theorists group psychosocial theories into two broadly defined categories: overall/general development (intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects, including personality development) and more specifically, identity formation (including gender, race, and sexual identity) (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Identity development is a separate category because it is an important outcome and component in facilitating other critical growth processes during student development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Gohn and Albin (2006) also emphasise the importance of identity development by stating that theories of student development provide a framework describing how students move through their university experiences, while theories of identity development assist in understanding unique issues and experiences of different subgroups. In the next section, existing research regarding identity development among students is explored.

2.3 Identity Development

Chickering (1969) found that knowledge regarding individuals' progression in identity formation is of great importance during the explanation, description, and prediction of behaviour of higher education students. For instance, theorists have already identified a correlation between identity development and preparedness for higher education (Boyd, Hunt, Kandell, & Lucas, 2003), academic performance (Berzonsky & Kuk, 2005; Lounsbury, Huffstetler, Leong, & Gibson, 2005), and academic motivation (Perez, Cromley, & Kaplan,

2014). Although Chickering’s (1969) theory on students’ psychosocial development is the theoretical framework for this study (which is discussed in-depth in Chapter 3), the next section consists of a review of general identity development theories.

Torres, Jones and Renn (2009) describe identity as a developmental progression from simple ideas others have about a person to a more multifaceted understanding of oneself. An identity includes individual aspects (i.e. behaviour, personality, goals, morals, and beliefs) that are unique and emphasise qualities that set individuals apart from one another (Schwartz, 2001, 2005). However, generally, the term *identity* is understood as being flexible and multifaceted in nature and cannot be defined concisely (Dolby, 2001; Erikson, 1968). It is certain that identity formation is a continuous process (Luyckx, Goossens, & Soenens, 2006), and “[o]ne cannot have a lot of identity or a little bit of it, although one can be without a sense of identity” (Josselson, 1987, p. 28).

Based on Jones and McEwen’s (2000) model of multiple dimensions of identity (see Figure 3), it is theorised that an individual’s identity can be defined internally by the individual (personal identity / individual self) and externally by others (social identity / categorisation of self) (Erikson, 1968; Thom & Coetzee, 2004). Therefore, an individual’s personal and social identities are fundamentally interrelated (Jones, Kim, & Skendall, 2012).

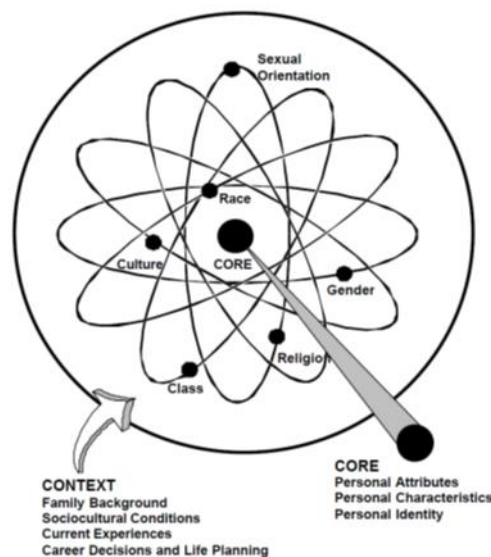


Figure 3. Model of multiple dimensions of identity (Jones & McEwen, 2000)

From a psychological perspective, personal identity is defined as the cognitive meaning individuals attach to themselves (Toni & Olivier, 2004), the understanding of the self (Torres et al., 2009), or the answer to the question ‘Who am I?’ (Toni & Olivier, 2004). Jones and McEwen (2000) and Shields (2008) add that an individual’s core identity includes unique attributes and characteristics that provide the individual with the opportunity to express his or her authentic sense of self.

Social identity is a sub-set of personal identity (Archer, 2000). To develop a social identity, individuals need to confront the social and cultural structures in their immediate environment (Archer, 2000; Jones & McEwen, 2000; Liebowitz et al., 2005). As illustrated in Figure 3, social influences may include family, friends, and communities (Alessandria & Nelson, 2005; Jones & McEwen, 2000; Moran, 2001), ethnicity and race (Torres, 2003), gender, sexual orientation (Chickering & Reisser, 1993), socio-economic status (Hendry & Kloep, 2010), educational context (Jones & McEwen, 2000), personal beliefs (Marcia, 1980; McLean & Mansfield, 2012), religion or spiritual beliefs (Hunsberger, Pratt, & Pancer, 2002; Jones & McEwen, 2000), and life experiences (Erikson, 1968; Jones & McEwen, 2000). A consequence of these social influences is that individuals’ identity consists of many different, related, and yet constantly changing dimensions (i.e. social, ethnic, and gender identity) (Erikson, 1968; Liebowitz et al., 2005; Schwartz, 2005). In the South African context, Akiba, Szalacha and Garcia Coll (2004), Booysen (2007), and Jones and McEwen (2000) regard gender and ethnicity as the most salient social identity groups.

The main identity developmental theories applicable to traditionally aged students are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4

Summary of Identity Developmental Theories

Theorist's name	Title of theory	Year of first publication	Description of theory
General theories on psychosocial identity			
Erik Erikson	Stages of psychosocial development	1950	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Erikson describes eight stages through which a healthily developing individual should pass from infancy to late adulthood. ▪ In each stage, a crisis is confronted, and successful completion safeguards movement to the next life stage.
James Marcia	Identity status paradigm	1966	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marcia portrays identity development as a progression through four identity statuses: moratorium, diffusion, foreclosure, and identity achievement. ▪ After a period of exploration, individuals must commit to an identity.
Arthur Chickering	Students' psychosocial development	1969	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chickering believes that individuals develop an identity through the acquisition of seven vectors. ▪ These seven vectors are a) developing competence, b) managing emotions, c) moving through autonomy toward interdependence, d) developing mature interpersonal relationships, e) establishing identity, f) developing purpose, and g) developing integrity
Theories related to gender dynamics in identity			
Carol Gilligan	-	1977	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gilligan emphasises a care orientation and the influence of interpersonal development on moral development. ▪ To enhance moral development, she believes women move through a sequence of three levels and two transition periods. The first level is the orientation to individual survival, the second level is goodness of self-sacrifice, and the last level is the morality of nonviolence.

Theorist's name	Title of theory	Year of first publication	Description of theory
Ruthellen Josselson	Pathway to identity development in women	1987	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Josselson focuses on identity formation in women through the exploration of internal differences of four identity groups. ▪ The four statuses are foreclosure (purveyors of heritage), moratorium (daughters of crisis), identity achievement (pavers of the way), and identity diffusion (lost and sometimes found).
Theories related to ethnic identity			
Jean Phinney	Model of ethnic identity development	1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Phinney proposes three stages in identity development, namely diffusion-foreclosure, moratorium, and achievement, which develop sequentially. ▪ Like Marcia, she expects individuals to first explore ethnicity and then commit to an ethnic group.
Vasti Torres	Bicultural orientation model	1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Torres describes three cultural orientations with regard to identity development, namely bicultural orientation, Latino orientation, and the marginal orientation. ▪ Two core elements of the model are acculturation and ethnic identity.

In the next section, general identity development (Chickering, 1969; Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1966), gender identity development (Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1987), and ethnic identity developmental theories (Phinney, 1990; Torres, 1999) are reviewed.

2.3.1 Theories related to psychosocial identity formation

As mentioned earlier, the study of psychosocial identity formation has its roots in Erikson's (1950, 1968) model of psychosocial development (see Table 4). Erikson (1950, 1968) describes identity as a type of wholeness that stems from past experiences and includes future goals and plans. He conceptualises identity formation occurring across the lifespan through a series of stages. Before moving to the next developmental stage, the identity crisis in the previous stage is confronted and negotiated (Faye & Sharpe, 2008). In contrast, Marcia (1966) views identity development as an interrelated process between exploring alternative possibilities and making

a commitment. Accordingly, movement through the identity statuses of diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and achievement are not sequential. Despite their theoretical differences, Erikson and Marcia agree that the unsuccessful formulation of an identity would contribute to difficulties later in an individual's life (Jenkins, Buboltz, Schwartz, & Johnson, 2005). Yet, both of these theories have some limitations. Only male participants were included in their research (Sigelman & Rider, 2009), Erikson's theory lacks a coherent theory of development (Miller, 2002), and Marcia's identity statuses are too narrow and fixed (Sneed, Schwartz, & Cross, 2006). In an attempt to neutralise these shortcomings, Chickering (1969) developed his theory on psychosocial development.

Chickering's theory is focused on male and female students' identity development. Chickering agrees with Marcia, that identity formation is a fluid and dynamic process (Alessandria & Nelson, 2005). However, Chickering did not use statuses but rather measured identity development of university students through the acquisition of predetermined vectors (see Table 4): developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Instead of focusing only on moral, social, emotional, or intellectual development, Chickering's vectors enable a more holistic view on identity development. In addition, the vector establishing identity includes gender role, ethnicity, and sexual orientation (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). In Chapter 3, an in-depth discussion of these vectors continues.

2.3.2 Theories related to gender dynamics in identity formation

Gender is the characteristic that differentiates people into one of two categories, namely male or female (Sigelman & Rider, 2009). Tiwari and Ghadially (2009) explain that gender identity is a central component of an individual's self-concept. It also refers to the degree to which an individual identifies with masculine or feminine personality traits. They explain further that three psychological theories exist about how gender identity is acquired, namely the biological determinism theory (physical differences as male and female), social learning theory (masculine and feminine skills are acquired through imitation), and cognitive developmental theory (interaction between experience and prestructured capacity for conceptual thinking). Together, the broader issues of masculinity and femininity, as well as the biological, psychological, and societal connotations associated with being a man or a woman, directly

affect each individual's identity developmental pathway, ensuring that men and women experience identity development differently (Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1987).

Theorists agree that identity development is complex and may vary by gender (Creamer, 2000; Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1987). Josselson filled a critical gap in the literature on women, by presenting the first study to examine how women find their individual identities. Josselson (1987) modified Marcia's (1966) four identity statuses to relate to women's movement towards identity achievement: identity diffusion (lost and sometimes found), foreclosure (purveyors of heritage), moratorium (daughters of crisis), and identity achievement (pavers of the way). She found that different factors affect identity development in women and men. For instance, interpersonal relationships have a greater influence on the identity formation of women than on the identity formation of men (see Table 4). Therefore, the identities of women and men differ in quality.

The different gender approaches recognised in identity development also emerge in moral development (an important component of identity development). Gilligan (1982) introduced a relational model of female moral development. Gilligan claims that women tend to think and speak in a different way than men do when they confront ethical dilemmas. She found that women display a care orientation towards others during moral decisions (Sneed, Schwartz et al., 2006), while men base moral decisions on rules and hierarchies (a justice orientation) (Kohlberg, 1969). As mentioned earlier, Gilligan (1977, 1982) found that women progress in moral development through a sequence of three levels and two transition periods (see Table 4). However, Gilligan (1977, 1982), like Kohlberg, limited her participants to white, middle class children and adults; consequently, researchers question the universality of the theory.

2.3.3 Theories related to ethnic identity formation

Researchers (Cheah & Nelson, 2004; Thom & Coetzee, 2004) agree that individuals, though unique, are largely the products of their cultures or ethnicities. The term *ethnicity* is an umbrella concept for the cultural traits of a particular group including cultural norms, values, attitudes, and typical behaviours (Verkuyten, 2005). Torres (2003) describes ethnic identity as what individuals learn with regard to their culture, through family and the community. Thus, compared to personal identity, individuals do not select their ethnicity freely; it is assigned to them by birth (Phinney, 1990). Booyesen (2007) believes that an individual's ethnic self-concept

is derived from mainly three components: membership of the group (or category), psychological value, and the emotional significance attached to that membership. Therefore, the extent of engagement in cultural aspects and the personal meaning an individual attaches to his or her culture are determined individually (Erikson, 1968; Phinney & Ong, 2007).

Phinney (1990) examined the process of ethnic identity development, basing her work on that of Erikson (1968) and Marica (1966). Phinney proposes that ethnic identity development entails the sequential movement through three distinct developmental statuses of ethnic group identification namely diffusion-foreclosure, moratorium, and achievement (Phinney, 1990; Phinney & Chavira, 1992). According to Phinney's model, development will take place over time, in response to new experiences and opportunities (Syed, Azmitia, & Phinney, 2007). For emerging adults who enter higher education, this is a time when individuals move away from their immediate social world (family, friends, and neighbours) to the larger society (Phinney, 2006). These individuals have the opportunity to question the essence of their culture independent from familial influences. A positive or negative perception of the ethnic group will determine the progression to a culture of origin or the majority culture (Phinney, 1992).

In contrast with Phinney's developmental statuses, Torres (1999) categorises individuals into three cultural orientations, namely bicultural orientation, Latino orientation, and the marginal orientation. Torres (2003) explains that, once the identity base has been established, exposure to different cultures will further identity development. However, without a definitive identity base, exposure to different cultures may lead to the acceptance of the majority culture and promote acculturation. Thus, the maintenance of the individual's culture of origin will contribute to the development of a strong ethnic identity (Torres, 1999) (see Table 4).

From this section, it is clear that various personal and social variables (i.e. gender, race, environment etc.) affect the identity formation process. Ultimately, these factors determine whether an individual develops a stable sense of self or a lack of purpose and direction (Erikson, 1968).

2.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter consists of three distinct sections. The first section concentrated on development from a lifespan perspective. The discussion included the developmental dimensions of this

perspective, as well as the developmental tasks that traditionally form part of adolescence, emerging adulthood, and adulthood. Since students form part of the developmental period of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000), the study of emerging adulthood was situated under the umbrella of student development theories, with a particular focus on cognitive developmental theories and psychosocial developmental theories. The last section of the chapter sheds light on psychosocial development and, in particular, identity development. An overview of the theories most influential to an understanding of identity in higher education, such as the works of Erikson (1950), Marcia (1966), Chickering and Reisser (1993) was incorporated. Theories related to gender (Gilligan, 1977, 1982; Josselson, 1987) and ethnic identity development (Phinney, 1990; Torres, 1999) were also included. This deliberation paved the way for a discussion of Chickering's (1969) model of students' psychosocial development.

CHAPTER 3

THE VECTORS OF IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN

FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS

James, Bruch and Jehangir (2006) use the metaphor of a bridge to describe the transition from high school to higher education. The one side of the bridge represents the student’s home (i.e. family, peers, culture, race, and values) and the other side of the bridge represents the higher education institution (i.e. rules, traditions, discourse, and values). What happens to a student while he or she is crossing this bridge? What is the role of race, ethnicity and other social categories in the formation of a student’s identity? This study aimed to gain insight with regard to the identity development of first-generation students as a subgroup in the non-traditional student population. To achieve this aim, Arthur Chickering’s model of students’ psychosocial development, one of the most popular student development theories used in student affairs practice (Evans et al., 2010), is used as meta-theory.

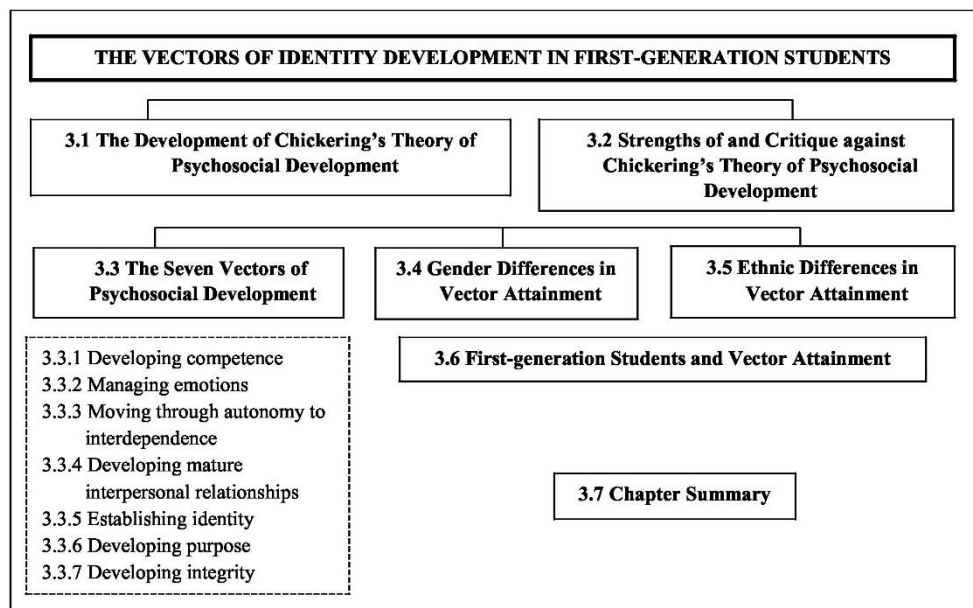


Figure 4. Visual display of Chapter 3 outline

As illustrated in Figure 4, this chapter is devoted to an in-depth account of Chickering’s theory and, more specifically, the seven vectors constituting the pathway to an established identity.

This theory is a framework for understanding the identity development processes of black first-year, first-generation students.

3.1 The Development of Chickering's Theory of Psychosocial Development

Building on the work of Erikson, Chickering's theory is an overview of the life tasks or developmental issues that likely confront traditionally aged (18 to 22 years) university students (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003; Evans et al., 2010; Patton et al., 2007). Chickering subdivides Erikson's fifth stage (identity achievement versus identity confusion) into seven vectors to serve as a map to determine where students are and where they are heading (Chickering, 1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Proceeding through these vectors is expected to be a positive experience, since gaining the strengths and skills associated with each vector contributes to the strength, ability, and versatility of individuals to overcome unexpected pitfalls and barriers (Chickering 1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the term "vector" accentuates the direction and magnitude of identity development as being a spiral progression rather than linear development through stages (Chickering, 1969, p. 8). Chickering's vectors are not rigidly hierarchical, but they do build on one another, leading to greater complexity. However, Chickering notes that changes arising in one student will not necessarily occur in another, and vector attainment will be unique to each individual. For instance, it is possible for a student to skip to Vector 4 before developing Vector 3 or to regress to preceding vectors when certain tasks are not successfully completed (Chickering 1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993). In Chickering's original theory (1969), the seven vectors were achieving competence, managing emotions, developing autonomy, establishing identity, freeing interpersonal relationships, developing purpose, and developing integrity.

In an attempt to adapt to a changing student population, Chickering and Reisser (1993) revised Chickering's original theory. In the 1993 version, four of the seven vectors were modified. In the new version, attention fell on the diversity in the dimensions of identity namely gender, race and sexuality (Torres et al., 2009). Further changes followed. Firstly, Vector 3, developing autonomy, was renamed to moving through autonomy toward interdependence, adding emphasis to the concept *interdependence* (being aware of one's interconnectedness with others) (Evans et al., 2010). Secondly, Vector 5, freeing interpersonal relationships, was retitled

developing mature interpersonal relationships. The rationale for this change is that individuals in modern society value respect and appreciation towards differing individuals (Scholl, 2001). Finally, Chickering and Reisser (1993) moved the vector, developing mature interpersonal relationships, to the fourth position. By this move, the theorists highlighted the importance of interpersonal relationships in identity attainment.

3.2 Strengths of and Critique against Chickering's Theory of Psychosocial Development

Chickering's theory on identity development is one of the best-known and widely used theories on the psychosocial development of higher education students. Theorists choose this theory because it provides the reader with in-depth understanding and description of the identity formation process. Furthermore, various studies have proven the validity of the theory, which considers internal and external influences and is applicable to a diverse student population (Evans et al., 2010). Yet, it does not mean his theory is flawless.

The inclusive focus on emotional, interpersonal, ethical, and intellectual development ensures a holistic approach to student development. However, Evans et al. (2010) argue that, because of the inclusivity of this theory, the theory is deemed too broad and not applicable to specific student subgroups.

In Chickering's original theory (1969), the research population consisted of USA college students. Since then, the student population has undergone considerable diversification, including an increase in female students, students of colour, adult students, students with disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students (International Education Association of South Africa, 2009; Jacobs & Pretorius, 2014; Thelin, 2004). Although the 1993 version of Chickering and Reisser's theory is more relevant to a diverse student population, continued research with particular focus on race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and gender is needed (Torres, Howard-Hamilton, & Cooper, 2003). This need is prominent at South African universities, where transformation has led to an increase in the enrolment of a more diverse student population (IEASA, 2009).

Evans and her colleagues (2010) summarise some of the main limitations other studies have identified regarding Chickering's vectors: 1) Studies that attempted to confirm Chickering's

theory through experiments, identified too many parallels between the vectors concerning identity, purpose, and integrity. 2) Critics pointed out that the theory lacks specificity. The definition of each vector is somewhat general, which in turn makes it difficult to measure. 3) Other studies challenged the order of the vectors by providing evidence that developing purpose (Vector 6) occurs earlier in a student's university experience. There are clear inconsistencies regarding vector attainment in the literature. For instance, Chickering and Reisser (1993) originally asserted that the first three vectors develop during the first university year. Later, Valentine and Taub (1999) and Taub (2008) proposed that the first four vectors are attained during the first two years of university. Several recent studies (Gardner, 2009; Hadley, 2006) show that students traditionally explore the first three vectors during the first three years at university, while post-graduate students begin to discover the remaining vectors. Thus, measuring the attainment of Chickering's vectors is a daunting challenge (Evans et al., 2010).

Chickering's theory has been tested, refined, partly validated, partly revised, and partly reconfigured (Torres et al., 2009). Nonetheless, continued change and development in higher education constitutes the need to, firstly, enrich the knowledge of identity development in distinct domains and, secondly, to identify factors that affect identity development (Evans et al., 2010; Jones & Abes, 2013; Torres et al., 2009). The adaption of Chickering's theory to a higher education student population of this millennium is crucial.

3.3 The Seven Vectors of Psychosocial Development

Attending a university provides two means for discovering one's identity: a new social group and a more dynamic environment that promotes development. Consequently, university students undergo dramatic changes in their thinking, feeling, behaving, valuing, and relating to others and to the self (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Chickering and Reisser (1993) believed their theory could provide a researcher or educator with the lenses to observe these changes and to help students along the path to selfhood. As mentioned earlier, the seven vectors serve as beacons to recognise and measure these changes (see Table 5). In the next section, a discussion of Chickering and Reisser's seven vectors follows.

Table 5

Vectors in Student Development, according to Chickering and Reisser (1993)

Vector	Description
Developing competence	Developing competence entails increases in intellectual, interpersonal and physical knowledge and skills.
Managing emotions	To manage one's emotions, an individual must learn to direct strong emotions in suitable channels, through recognition and acceptance of these emotions.
Moving through autonomy to interdependence	Transitioning from autonomy to interdependence requires emotional independence, instrumental independence and the recognition of interdependence.
Developing mature interpersonal relationships	Entering more mature interpersonal relationships entails developing a more in-depth understanding of and intimacy in one's relationships with significant others.
Establishing an identity	Progressing in the establishment of an identity requires learning to be comfortable with one's body, gender, and sexual orientation. Individuals also need to develop a sense of self in a historical, social, and cultural context, clarify a self-concept through roles and lifestyles, and cultivate an increase in self-esteem and self-acceptance.
Developing purpose	Developing purpose entails an increasing ability to be intentional, to have clear goals, to recognise interests and options, to make plans and to persevere despite obstacles.
Developing integrity	Developing integrity includes three stages, namely humanising values, personalising values, and developing congruence.

3.3.1 Developing competence

With regard to Vector 1, developing competence, students need to acquire intellectual abilities, gain experience in interpersonal relationships, and increase physical or manual skills (Chickering, 1969). Theorists believe that development in these areas will contribute to various positive outcomes, including an overall sense of competence and the confidence to overcome obstacles (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Taub, 2008). When students gain confidence in themselves, they are more likely to accept additional challenges in other areas of their lives.

In a recent study conducted by Benson and Morgan (2014), it was theorised that the cultural competence should be added as an additional competency in Vector 1. Individuals who are not culturally competent will be able to enter into relationships, but they will still feel uncomfortable or feel as if they do not fit in on campus. The development of cultural competence is especially vital for non-traditional students.

3.3.1.1 Intellectual competence

According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), it is difficult to reach agreement on what intellectual competence entails. They describe three broad areas of intellectual competence, namely 1) the acquisition of subject matter knowledge and academic skills (including the ability to listen, question, reflect, and communicate), 2) gains in cultural, aesthetic, and intellectual sophistication, and 3) the development of general intellectual and cognitive skills (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). This description corresponds with Baxter Magolda's findings (2004) that students are intellectually competent when more complex structures of meaning-making is acquired and higher-order intellectual abilities are developed, including communication skills, reasoning ability, critical thinking, and conceptual complexity. Like Chickering and Reisser (1993), Evans et al. (1998) believe that intellectual competence involves active participation in gaining skills and knowledge with regard to specific subject matter. Students who develop along this vector will become more interested in understanding learning material and not simply memorise the facts (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Various theorists have studied the link between intellectual development and identity development (Baxter Magolda, 2009; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Marcia, 1966). Erikson (1968) explains that individuals, who experience identity confusion or struggle to achieve an identity, would also find it difficult to relate to other individuals. This means these students will struggle to interact with other students and lecturers in the classroom and, consequently, profit intellectually less from the university experience. Researchers that used Marcia's identity status theory determined that individuals in the foreclosed identity status tend to be less open-minded, less flexible, and more performance and externally orientated (Baltazar & Coffen, 2011; Was, Al-Harthy, Stack-Oden, & Isaacson, 2009). In comparison, individuals in the identity achievement or moratorium status are better prepared for the academic challenges associated with university (i.e. will be able to use study strategies that are more effective) (Berzonsky & Kuk, 2000; Lange & Byrd, 2002).

3.3.1.2 Interpersonal competence

Initially, Chickering (1969) described interpersonal competence as having communication skills, functioning in different relationships, and being able to work effectively with others. In 1993, Chickering and Reisser proposed the inclusion of more interpersonal components. For instance, an individual with interpersonal competence will be able to provide effective feedback, have the ability to ask reflective questions, and be able to demonstrate appropriate self-disclosure. Furthermore, these individuals will be able to distinguish between when to speak, when to listen, and when to use verbal, non-verbal or written communication. Benson et al. (2004) state that interpersonal competencies assist individuals in being able to interact with different people in different settings, be able to share personal ideas, and adapt to the ideas of others. According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), interpersonal skills are “a prerequisite for building successful friendships and intimate relationships” (p. 77). They also state that students living on campus are more likely to interact with other students, which promotes development of interpersonal competence and a sense of self through mature relationships.

Berzonsky and Kuk (2000) found that individuals classified as having a diffused identity are less likely to spend time with friends or peers in a group setting. These individuals will exhibit limited interpersonal competence in social situations. Individuals with limited interpersonal competence also have a greater chance of experiencing limited identity development (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1966). In comparison, individuals with effective interpersonal competencies experience less avoidance and anxiety in social situations (Paulk, 2008).

3.3.1.3 Physical and manual competence

Chickering and Reisser (1993) found that physical competence originates through athletic and recreational activities, the promotion of wellness, being involved in artistic and manual activities, and gaining strength and fitness. Physical and manual competence is included in Vector 1 based on research, showing that exposure to physical activities contributes to the development of self-discipline, competitiveness, stress relief and advanced thinking skills. The inclusion of physical competence also emphasises the importance of physical well-being in an individual’s pursuit of an identity (Baxter Magolda, 1992; Pascarella, Palmer, Moye, & Pierson, 2001).

Studies on the relationship between personal identity development and physical competence provided conflicting results. Some researchers found a positive correlation between identity development and physical competence (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Kivel & Kleiber, 2000), while other researchers determined that sport and extracurricular participation might delay identity formation (Allender, Cowburn, & Foster, 2006). However, a link between social identity development and participation in extracurricular activities does exist (Campbell, 2007; Eccles & Barber, 1999). Other benefits of physical competence include learning to trust one's own personal abilities, being able to manage strong negative emotions (i.e. aggression and anxiety), and learning to do one's best (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Researchers found that the absence of physical and extracurricular activities could contribute to undesirable changes in nutritional habits, as well as the development of negative body image among male and female students (Caspersen, Pereira, & Curran, 2000; Konczos et al., 2012).

3.3.2 Managing emotions

The transition from high school to university is characterised by intense positive and negative emotions including anxiety, anger, depression, guilt, frustration, hope, anticipation, and exhilaration (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Christie, Cree, Hounsell, McCune, & Tett, 2008). Moran (2001) explains that there are two emotional categories: emotions that nourish identity development (positive emotions) and emotions that silence identity development (negative emotions). According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), Vector 2 involves acknowledging, accepting, expressing, and controlling positive and negative emotions.

According to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) research, students who attain Vector 2 are able to understand and confront their negative emotions and learn appropriate ways of expressing them. In addition, these individuals develop awareness in three areas. Firstly, they become aware of the full range of emotions they experience as well as how to differentiate between emotions. Secondly, these individuals are able to assess the intensity of the emotions they are feeling. Finally, these individuals are able to be aware of self-transcending (feelings created due to a bond with someone) and toxic feelings (feelings that interfere with daily life). Students who move through this vector also find ways to balance the negative emotions with emotions that are more positive and, as a result, develop mature self-regulation techniques.

Individuals who are able to regulate their positive emotions, tend to experience positive personal and social identity development (Masten et al., 2009). For instance, it is theorised that individuals with a moratorium or foreclosed status are more likely to experience doubt and anxiety (Hunsberger, Pratt, & Pancer, 2001), while individuals in the achieved status exhibit lower levels of anxiety (Baltazar & Coffen, 2011). In addition to the positive influence on identity development, emotional regulation also contributes to social competence, academic success, and positive adaption to new circumstances (Mayer, Roberts, & Barsade, 2008). However, failure to manage emotions has been connected to a greater risk of academic drop-out, interruption of studies, or even more serious problems, including drug abuse and suicide (Christie et al., 2008).

3.3.3 Moving through autonomy to interdependence

A student moving away from home has to develop a sense of responsibility as well as individuality (become one's own person) (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Erikson, 1968). Young adults need to rely less on their parents and more on their own capacities. Josselson (1987, p. 19) describes this process as a "revision of relationships with parents". However, it is important that students understand that greater autonomy must enable healthier forms of interdependence (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Therefore, development towards interdependence entails movement through three components, namely emotional independence, instrumental independence and accepting interdependence (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The most progression along this vector usually occurs during traditional university students' first and/or second academic year (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

3.3.3.1 Emotional independence

According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), emotional independence occurs when students learn to act without the constant need for assistance, reassurance, and/or approval from others. Faye and Sharpe (2008) and Gardner (2009) describe emotionally independent individuals as being self-sufficient – being able to choose and implement their own actions. For De Larossa (2000), emotional independence is crucial during the transition to higher education. For some, this means being away from their parents, peers, or teachers for the first time. If students do not know how to manage their emotions (Vector 2), they tend to be overwhelmed by the separation from parents.

3.3.3.2 Instrumental independence

Instrumental independence is the advancement in organisation, self-directedness, problem-solving ability and mobility (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Becoming independent entails learning to engage in activities and cope with problems on one's own. De Larossa (2000) explains that, through critical and independent thinking, students learn to translate ideas into actions, making emotional independence an inseparable component of instrumental independence.

3.3.3.3 Interdependence

As students develop emotional and instrumental independence, they realise the importance of interdependent relationships in their lives. Chickering and Reisser (1993) propose that, for individuals to be interdependent, they must accept that complete dependence or complete independence is not possible. An interdependent individual is aware of his or her interconnectedness with others and the benefit it holds to depend on others and be the person others depend on (Evans et al., 2010). These individuals are also able to distinguish between when to ask for help and when to stand alone (Scholl, 2001). Finally, Chickering and Reisser (1993) emphasise that interdependent individuals are aware of their responsibility to the greater community.

Acknowledging interdependence has many advantages. Interdependent individuals experience greater social integration in the higher education institution, which in turn ensures greater academic autonomy (Lien, 2002). Being interdependent is also associated with being able to relate to others, harmony, a sense of belonging, being able to seek others' advice, and the development of a contextual self (Oyserman, Coon, & Kimmelmeier, 2002). By implication, it means that being interdependent contributes to connectedness or developing more mature interpersonal relationships.

3.3.4 Developing mature interpersonal relationships

Chickering's fourth vector entails students' ability to maintain and sustain long-term, healthy relationships with significant others in their lives (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). King and

Baxter Magolda (2005) also describe individuals with mature interpersonal abilities (Vector 1) as having the capacity to engage in meaningful, interdependent relationships. For Chickering and Reisser (1993), movement along this vector reflects the ability to tolerate and appreciate differences in other individuals and the capacity to be intimate with another individual.

3.3.4.1 Tolerance and appreciation of differences

Based on Chickering and Reisser's (1993) definition, tolerance entails the ability to accept people in their own right, without being prejudiced or stereotypical. Having tolerance also entails the acceptance of those of different backgrounds, races, cultures, beliefs, lifestyles, and appearances (Lien, 2002). Accordingly, students who have tolerance will be able to comprehend the unfamiliar rather than dismiss or degrade it. However, Chickering and Reisser (1993) emphasise that mere contact with other racial or cultural groups will not necessarily lead to an improvement in empathy and tolerance in a student. Developmental movement in this vector involves progressing from assessing others based on appearance and social acceptability towards accepting others' diversity and authenticity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Exposure to a diverse student population creates the opportunity for multicultural socialisation. In this context, students learn to appreciate and acknowledge differences in others (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Researchers agree that active interaction with individuals who are different from oneself also promotes the establishment of a new sense of self or identity (i.e. comparing personal beliefs and values with new information provided by others) (Azmitia, Syed, & Radmacher, 2008; Bojuwoye, 2002; Chickering, 1969; Chickering & Braskamp, 2009). However, when individuals do not have well-defined identities, exposure to diversity will lead to identity confusion (Erikson, 1968; Torres, 2003).

3.3.4.2 Capacity for intimacy

Students' exposure to different and more mature relationships in a university setting contributes to the development of a new social sense of self and especially the increase in intimacy (Beyers & Seiffge-Krenke, 2010; Chickering & Reisser, 1993). In essence, intimacy is a change in the quality of relations, which entails skills in awareness, respect, openness, curiosity, objectivity,

empathy, and altruism (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), students will experience improvement in their friendly and romantic dispositions when they move away from dependent and domineering relationships towards interdependence between equals.

A link exists between interpersonal development and identity development (Arnett, 2004; Erikson, 1968; Gilligan, 1982; Marcia, 1966). The exact nature of the link is debatable. For instance, Erikson (1968) argues that the development of mature interpersonal relationships and an identity are interrelated yet independent processes. Theorists such as Arnett (2004) propose that the processes of identity development and intimacy development occur simultaneously. Irrespective of the relationship between identity and interpersonal relationships, it is generally accepted that individuals with an achieved identity will be more interpersonally developed (Baltazar & Coffen, 2011; Kerpelman & Pittman, 2001), while individuals with a diffused identity tend to avoid interpersonal relationships (Baltazar & Coffen, 2011).

3.3.5 Establishing an identity

If generalised, all the developmental vectors form part of ‘identity formation’. Therefore, any development in the previous four vectors ensures movement towards the establishment of an identity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The fifth vector, establishing an identity, involves a number of complex tasks including whether the individual 1) is comfortable with his/her body and appearance, 2) is comfortable with his/her gender and sexual orientation, 3) develops a sense of self in a historical, social, and cultural context, 4) clarifies a self-concept through roles and lifestyles, 5) develops a sense of self in response to feedback from valued others, 6) develops self-acceptance and self-esteem, and 7) develops personal stability and integration (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). To promote the development of an integrated identity, it is of critical importance that these factors must be stable and integrated.

3.3.5.1 Comfort with body and appearance

During students’ time at university, appearance becomes a matter of conscious concern and decision, which results in heightened self-consciousness (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Chickering and Reisser (1993) highlight that a positive attitude towards one’s body is an important component in the development of a positive identity. Accordingly, individuals who

experiment with different ideas and identities (i.e. trying out new wardrobes and hairstyles) promote positive development, while constant self-criticism and low self-confidence reduce energy and promote development (Evans et al., 1998).

3.3.5.2 Comfort with gender and sexual orientation

Gender identification and appropriate gendered behaviour varies across time, ethnic group, and social situation (Deutsch, 2007). Chickering and Reisser (1993) assert that higher education could assist in promoting comfort with gender by exerting a liberalising effect on gender-role attitudes. Conversely, sexual orientation refers to the components of sexual behaviour, sexual attraction, and sexual identity (Jasinski & Ford, 2007). Chickering and Reisser (1993) regard sexual identity development as a component of overall identity development and not as a separate entity. Additional developmental challenges will occur when a student experiences sexual preference towards the same sex (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

3.3.5.3 A sense of self in a historical, social, and cultural context

Having an awareness of one's cultural and historical background will promote positive identity formation (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Students' ethnic heritage (religious and/or cultural traditions) and the value their family places on their ethnic origin directly determine the value students place on their ethnicity and ethnic identity (Phinney, 1992). Chickering and Reisser (1993) emphasise that the formation of a strong identity relies on a student's ability to integrate aspects of his or her historical, social, and cultural background with his or her current sense of self. Especially in a South African setting, factors such as cultural beliefs, institutional structures, and historical events affect young adults' motivation, thinking and behaviour (Salmela-Aro, Aunola, & Nurmi, 2007). For example, Steyn, Badenhorst and Kamper (2010) found that black adolescents have positive future expectations because of retribution and affirmative actions promoted by the new political dispensation in South Africa.

3.3.5.4 Clarity of a self-concept through roles and lifestyles

Students entering higher education are encouraged to clarify a self-concept through the exploration and testing of different lifestyles, social and cultural roles (Sparling, 2003). However, if students have a strong self-concept, they will find it easier to identify and commit

to additional roles or lifestyles. These individuals will also be able to improvise when necessary (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Fortunately, modern society values the promotion of democratic views, especially with regard to educational and occupational opportunities, gender roles, and familial responsibilities (marriage and family relations) (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Consequently, students entering a moratorium developmental phase have more possibilities to explore.

3.3.5.5 A sense of self in response to feedback from valued others

Erikson (1968) believes that the formation of an identity is dependent on recognition from valued others. Thus, changes in an individual's identity are connected to changes in self-perceptions but also others' perceptions (Moran, 2001). In higher education, students receive feedback from various avenues, including feedback from faculty members, other students, and family. The information gathered assist students to formulate a clear picture of who they are. Consistent and specific feedback (including advice and questioning) will contribute to individuals' sense of adequacy, self-acceptance, and identity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). However, inconsistent feedback could impede students' identity development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

3.3.5.6 Development of self-acceptance and self-esteem

During their time in higher education, students become more aware of who they are and who they want to be (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Chickering and Reisser (1993) describe self-esteem as an overall level of satisfaction with oneself. Furthermore, Chickering and Reisser (1993) postulate that a high self-esteem would contribute to more confidence and assuredness in oneself and one's capabilities. However, Crocker and Wolfe (2001) pointed out that the contingencies that determine high self-esteem differ from individual to individual. For instance, for some, self-esteem may depend on being loved, competent, and attractive, while others depend on being self-reliant, powerful, or virtuous.

3.3.5.7 Development of personal stability and integration

The final component of Vector 5 encapsulates the importance of amalgamating individual identities with the big picture of society. For Chickering and Reisser (1993), stable and

integrated individuals have a well-ordered set of values, know what they like and do not like, and are aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Thus, before individuals can contribute as civilians, they must first understand themselves.

To understand how all the different dimensions of this vector fit together, Chickering and Reisser (1993, p. 206) provide the following metaphor of constructing a house:

...establishing identity involves first, becoming more familiar with all the rooms, furniture, and equipment, as well as the neighbourhood. It involves understanding the particular patterns of behaving, feeling, thinking, and relating that have been built in ahead of time and becoming aware of the cultural heritage passed down through the generations. It involves noting the expectations or hopes of one's group there may be family portraits on the walls or trophies on the mantelpiece that symbolize their ideals. Through this exploration, the new owner finds answers to the question, 'Who am I?'

This vector includes various aspects of students' identity, including competencies (Vector 1), emotions (Vector 2), relationships (Vector 4), and values (Vectors 3, 6 and 7). Development in the first four vectors will promote overall development in Vectors 5, 6 and 7.

3.3.6 Developing purpose

Developing purpose entails an increasing ability to be intentional, to have clear goals, to recognise interests and options, to make plans and to persevere despite obstacles (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Hence, an increase in competence precedes an increase in purposefulness (Galilee-Belfer, 2012). According to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) research, students become more purposeful and are able to set realistic goals when the following aspects are considered: career goals (vocational plans and aspirations), personal aspirations (personal interests), and commitments to family or other important people in their lives (interpersonal and family commitments) (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The problem is that students entering higher education have not yet explored their goals and beliefs or are relying on goals and beliefs 'borrowed' from others such as their parents (Boivin, Fountain, & Baylis, 2000). When students are able to make decisions based on their own reflections and priorities, they will

experience development in this vector. Therefore, Chickering and Reisser (1993) believe that development in this vector would occur only later in a student's time at university.

3.3.6.1 Vocational plans and aspirations

A vocation can include unpaid work, paid work, or both (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Students need assistance (i.e. experiential opportunities, counsellors, professors) in determining their vocational interest during university. However, no clear time limit is set in which students should identify their vocational plans. For instance, in contrast to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) idea that developing purpose occurs only in senior students, some researchers (Foubert et al., 2005; Gardner, 2009) found that undergraduate university students are also able to explore vocational purpose and goals. Thus, some students develop purpose early while others may take years to determine a sense of their purpose or personal mission in life (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

3.3.6.2 Personal interests

Students entering higher education have more opportunities to experience and explore their interests. For Chickering and Reisser (1993), students' personal interest can easily be determined based on the amount of time spent on the activity (i.e. exploring and preparing for activities). Thus, if a student's academic career is not in line with his or her personal interest, the student will be less motivated (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Subramaniam, 2009).

3.3.6.3 Interpersonal and family commitments

A student's decision on a career path also depends on family influences and circumstances (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). For instance, individuals from a low socio-economic status (SES) background tend to find it challenging to integrate institutional and familial obligations. Most of these students tend to work part-time to contribute to their families at home or to pay their own tuition (Tinto, 2004). According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), the ideal is for each student to consider his or her lifestyle, vocational and a-vocational interests before deciding which academic career to follow. When nearing graduation, students tend to become

more self-focused and ask themselves: What is important? What do I have to do? What can I live without? (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

3.3.7 Developing integrity

Chickering and Reisser (1993) describe identity formation, purpose and integrity as being interrelated. The core values and beliefs (important components in a personal identity) an individual develops serve as a basis for interpreting experiences, guiding behaviour, and maintaining self-respect. In order to develop a value system and promote integrity development, Chickering and Reisser (1993) identify three sequential but overlapping stages, namely humanising values, personalising values, and developing congruence. Students will move towards congruence when they are able to evaluate and personalise their values, beliefs, and actions (Erikson, 1968). However, very few adults, let alone students, achieve a high level of integrity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

3.3.7.1 Humanising values

The concept *humanising values* entails basing values and beliefs on a more humane frame of reference (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). It also involves a shift from an absolute belief in rules towards a more relative implementation of rules. Chickering and Reisser (1993) state that students who have humanised their values will be able to apply their ethical principles based on the analysis and understanding of the broader context. These individuals will also understand that moral behaviour is beneficial for them and others (Kohlberg & Turiel, 1972).

In Kohlberg's (1969) moral development theory, he explains that cognitive disequilibrium occurs when individuals interact with diverse individuals in unfamiliar situations. In consequence, students experience change in their perspectives, beliefs, values, and moral viewpoints (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; King, 2009). However, students who do not interact with diverse individuals are less likely to develop a pluralistic orientation or a humanisation of their values (Engberg, 2007).

3.3.7.2 *Personalising values*

Kohlberg's model on moral development can provide an understanding of the movement in this vector. Based on Kohlberg's theory, adolescents function within the conventional level of moral development. Subsequently, students are expected to experience movement from a conventional level (view morality as living by rules) to a post-conventional level (being able to personalise values). During this progression, students begin to define moral values and principles apart from the value system of the groups with which they associate (Kohlberg & Turiel, 1972). Students also begin to develop a balance between their own and others' interests, and they acknowledge and respect other peoples' beliefs (Valentine & Taub, 1999). This developmental progress is in line with Marcia's (1966) description of identity commitment when individuals are able to select and integrate a personal set of goals and values.

3.3.7.3 *Developing congruence*

Chickering and Reisser (1993) describe congruence as being the peak of personhood. A coherent sense of self ultimately contributes to individuals accepting themselves, their life cycle, and the significant people in their lives (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Such individuals will also be able to harmonise personal values with socially responsible behaviour. Based on these descriptions, development in Vector 7 is parallel with the shift from the multiplicity stage to relativism stage in cognitive development (Perry, 1970).

Marcia (1980) postulates that identity achievement is the most mature identity status and can lead to various positive consequences, including increases in post-conventional moral reasoning, reflective decision-making, and complex cognitive abilities. Thus, an identity must first be established (Vector 5) before integrity development can be promoted (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Marcia, 1966). Although individuals displaying integrity will not sacrifice the self or their personal interests, they also know that integrity forms the foundation for love and care of others' interests (Van der Walt & Potgieter, 2011). However, individuals in the foreclosed identity status or experiencing identity confusion are unwilling to explore new values and beliefs. Hunsberger et al. (2002) found that individuals with underdeveloped identities are more likely to embrace values provided by significant others, including their parents. Furthermore, these individuals use self-preservation techniques to protect themselves against anything or anyone questioning their basic belief system. Consequently, these

individuals will display low levels of moral and ego development resulting in limited integrity development (Baltazar & Coffen, 2011).

In Table 6, a summary of the developmental directions of the seven vectors as described by Chickering and Reisser (1993) is provided. It demonstrates the baseline from which students develop towards an optimal level of development.

Table 6

General Developmental Directions of the Seven Vectors

From	To
Developing competence	
Low level of competence (intellectual, physical, and interpersonal)	High level of competence in each area
Lack of confidence in one's abilities	Strong sense of competence
Managing emotions	
Little control over disruptive emotions (fear and anxiety, anger leading to aggression, depression, guilt, shame, and dysfunctional sexual or romantic attraction)	Flexible control and appropriate expression
Little awareness of feelings	Increasing awareness and acceptance of emotions
Inability to integrate feelings with actions	Ability to integrate feelings with responsible action
Moving through autonomy toward interdependence	
Emotional dependence	Freedom from continual and pressing needs for reassurance
Poor self-direction or ability to solve problems; little freedom or confidence to be mobile	Instrumental interdependence (inner direction, persistence, and mobility)
Independence	Recognition and acceptance of the importance of interdependence
Developing mature interpersonal relationships	
Lack of awareness of differences; intolerance of differences	Tolerance and appreciation of differences
Non-existent, short-term, or unhealthy intimate relationships	Capacity for intimacy that is enduring and nurturing

From	To
Establishing identity	
Discomfort with body and appearance	Comfort with body and appearance
Discomfort with gender and sexual orientation	Comfort with gender and sexual orientation
Lack of clarity about heritage and social/cultural roots of identity	Sense of self in a historical, social, and cultural context
Confusion about “who I am” and experimentation with roles and lifestyles	Clarification of self-concept through roles and lifestyle
Lack of clarity about others’ evaluation	Sense of self in response to feedback from valued others
Dissatisfaction with self	Self-acceptance and self-esteem
Unstable, fragmented personality	Personal stability and integration
Developing purpose	
Unclear vocational goals	Clear vocational goals
Shallow, scattered personal interests	More sustained, focused, rewarding activities
Few meaningful interpersonal commitments	Strong interpersonal and family commitments
Developing integrity	
Dualistic thinking and rigid beliefs	Humanising values
Unclear or untested personal values and beliefs	Personalising (clarifying and affirming) values while respecting others’ beliefs
Self-interest	Social responsibility
Discrepancies between values and actions	Congruence and authenticity

Adapted from Chickering and Reisser (1993, pp. 38-39)

3.4 Gender Differences in Vector Attainment

As mentioned earlier, Chickering’s (1969) original work was criticised for not including female participants. In their 1993 version, Chickering and Reisser (1993) acknowledge that developmental movement through the vectors is affected by the individual’s gender. Yet, scholars still question whether Chickering and Reisser’s theory is applicable to both male and female students. This question has given rise to the focus of more contemporary scholars on gender differences within the dimensions of each vector.

Research on gender differences in intellectual competence is limited and ambiguous. For instance, in Furnham, Callahan and Akande’s (2004) study, 181 male and female South African

first-year students were examined, and no gender differences in self-estimated intelligence were found. This finding was surprising, since the majority of studies conducted outside South Africa found a significant gender difference in self-estimated intelligence. Draucker (2004) used Chickering's vectors as a framework to determine whether a correlation between gender and intellectual development exists. He found little or no correlation between participants' gender and intellectual development. However, Chee, Pino and Smith (2005) found that when the academic ethics and academic achievement of male and female students are compared, female students possess higher levels of academic ethical behaviour (i.e. high level of academic effort), while male students place greater value on academic achievement. This finding confirms Gilligan's (1982) theory that men's identity development is determined by their achievement. In contrast, women's sense of self is shaped by social connections as well as their value of responsibility and care ethics. Consequently, female students are more likely to respond and conform to the expectations and norms associated with being a student. Sax and Harper (2005) found that it is also possible that, because female students experience more emotional distress than male students do, they tend to work harder to achieve academic success in order to relieve their anxiety.

When comparing male and female students' interpersonal competence, researchers (Bartoszuk & Pittman, 2010; Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1987; Morgan & Korobov, 2012) observe that female students are engaged more cognitively in interpersonal aspects of everyday life than male students are. Morgan and Korobov (2012) investigated how young adults co-construct their interpersonal identities. They found that young women have more interactions and a more active interpersonal dating identity than their male counterparts have. Other researchers (including Bartoszuk & Pittman, 2010) also found that female students are more engaged in the exploration of friendships and dating than male students are, and female students have more interpersonal competence than male students have. Draucker (2004) used Chickering's vectors to identify gender differences in interpersonal competence. He found that, compared to male students, female students are more able to show empathy, respond to other's needs, and rate their own interpersonal skills as high.

Various researchers (Adkins et al., 2009; Bojuwoye, 2002; Maciejewski, Prigerson, & Mazure, 2001; Schwartz et al., 2005) studied gender differences in emotional experiences and emotional regulation. They concluded, firstly, that women are more likely to experience negative emotions (i.e. shame and guilt) in comparison to men and, secondly, that men are able to

regulate negative emotions with greater efficiency than women are. Cooke, Bewick, Barkham, Bradley and Audin (2006) examined the psychological well-being of 5600 first-year students. They found that, compared to male students, female students experience more feelings of hopelessness, sadness, and being overwhelmed during their first year. Findings like these confirm the notion that coping strategies are gender dependent (Contrada & Baum, 2011). For instance, female students tend to use emotion-focused coping strategies (i.e. rumination, social support seeking), while male students use problem-focused coping strategies (i.e. active coping, reflective solutions) (Mullis, Mullis, Schwartz, Pease, & Michael, 2007). When comparing the two strategies, Shankland, Genolini, França, Guelfi and Ionescu (2010) found that problem-focused coping is more effective when one is confronted with high levels of demands, difficulties, and perceived distress (associated with higher education circumstances). This could explain the theory that women endorse more coping strategies than men do; yet, they are less effective in handling their emotions.

When comparing male and female autonomy development, Chickering and Reisser (1993) note that male students assert autonomy through individual rights, separation from parents, and living by the rules. Pahl (2011) used the Iowa Developing Autonomy Inventory and found that male students measured significantly higher in the emotional-independence subscale than female students did. Theories with regard to the link between female students' autonomy development and their relationship with their parents could explain why female students find it challenging to establish emotional independence. Some researchers (Baxter Magolda, 1992; Beyers & Goossens, 2003; Gilligan, 1982) caution that excessive emotional support provided by parents can hinder autonomy development in female students. Other theorists are of the opinion that female students' attachment to parents actually aids them in their autonomy development (Bartle-Haring, Brucker, & Hock, 2002; Taub, 2008). Pahl (2011) also established gender differences in the development of interdependence. He found that female students measured significantly higher on the interdependence subscale of the Iowa Developing Autonomy Inventory than male students did. Cross, Gore and Morris (2003) used the Relational-interdependent Self-construal Scale on 362 undergraduate students and found that female students scored higher than male students did on this scale. A possible reason for this gender difference is that women are continually encouraged to be communal, caring and concerning – characteristics of an interdependent individual. Conversely, men are encouraged to develop an independent self (Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1987).

As is the case with autonomy development, clear gender differences exist with regard to interpersonal relationship development. Theorists (Foubert et al., 2005; Schwartz et al., 2005; Sneed, Schwartz et al., 2006) confirm that female students, compared to male students, are developmentally more advanced in developing mature relationships throughout their university experience. Foubert et al. (2005) administered the Student Development Task and Lifestyle Inventory to a racially mixed random sample of 247 students. They found that female students are more advanced in intimacy and tolerance development than male students are. In an attempt to explain these differences, Creamer (2000) observes that men are restricted to male role models (i.e. boys imitate their fathers and other men), while girls are encouraged to regard role models of both genders. Accordingly, women have a propensity to develop interpersonal relationships before men do. Women are also more likely to develop autonomy (third vector) through cultivating a mature, healthy relationship (fourth vector) (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

The existence of gender differences in identity development was and remains a much debated subject. For instance, the pioneers of identity development theory did not consider gender differences in identity development and neglected the inclusion of female participants (Erikson, 1950; Marcia, 1980). After the inclusion of both genders, some researchers (Archer, 1989; Schwartz et al., 2005) found that there are more similarities than differences in the identity development processes across gender (i.e. both men's and women's attachment with parents are associated with positive identity development). Other researchers (Bartle-Haring et al., 2002; Erikson, 1968; Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1987) suggest clear domain-specific gender differences regarding identity formation. However, the main contention for gender differences is based on the idea that women define themselves through their relationships (interpersonal domain) and men through their occupational selves (autonomy domain) (Gilligan, 1982). A more recent study by Foubert et al. (2005) reveals that female students might experience establishing identity (Vector 5) as problematic due to the multiple roles they have to fulfil in different settings. Undoubtedly, there is still much debate regarding the existence of gender differences in the identity formation process.

Foubert and his colleagues (2005) found no gender differences in the vector of developing purpose. They warn that environmental factors associated with a specific higher education institution could influence male and female students' development of purpose. Various theorists (Jordaan, 2009; O'Brien, Friedman, Tipton, & Linn, 2000; Perrone, Sedlacek, & Alexander, 2001) focused on gender differences within career goal settings. For instance,

Perrone et al. (2001) found that male and female students valued intrinsic interest in their field of study. Gender differences emerged when considering the most frequently endorsed item in the questionnaire. Men regarded earnings as the most important factor in their choice, while female participants indicated that respect and prestige were important factors in their choice of an occupation. Jordaan (2009) focused on South African undergraduates. She also found that male students attach higher importance to wealth than female students do. Jordaan (2009) explains that this finding could be linked to the traditional notion that men are the financial providers for the family. It is also likely that female students' decisions are influenced by their interdependent sense of self – they rely on their family and friends to assist in their decision regarding a career and career goals (Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1987).

Researchers agree that the increases in cognitive abilities during students' time at university also contribute to improvement in integrity and morality (Perry, 1970). When comparing moral development in men and women, King and Mayhew (2002) and Mayhew and King (2008) found that female students tend to score higher on measures of moral reasoning than male students do, and female students are more likely to use post-conventional moral reasoning than male students do.

In conclusion, researchers found contradicting results with regard to gender differences in the identity development of higher education students. Some researchers (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Foubert et al., 2005; Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1987; Sneed, Schwartz et al., 2006) acknowledge gender differences, especially with regard to issues of intimacy (Vector 4), autonomy (Vector 3) and interpersonal competence (Vector 1). Other researchers (Archer, 1989; Schwartz et al., 2005) were unable to find significant gender differences in the aforementioned vectors. The inconsistencies in male and female development are a reflection of the complexities of identity development. Often, differences can be attributed to distinct individual differences, rather than gender-related variations.

3.5 Ethnic Differences in Vector Attainment

The majority of researchers studying ethnic differences in vector attainment included African American participants (Coombs, 2013; Demirian, 2010; Jordan, 2011). Very few studies focus on ethnic differences in a black South African population. The majority of black South African

higher education students form part of the group described as previously disadvantaged students (Furnham et al., 2004; Soudien, 2008). This group faces various challenges that affect their ability to succeed in higher education negatively. These adversities and vector attainment for black South African students are discussed in the next section.

Intellectual competence in the South African context cannot be considered without recognising socio-economic factors. Findings that white students intellectually outperform black students (Rushton & Skuy, 2000) should be evaluated against the background of the circumstances of black students. The majority of black students are academically underprepared due to ineffective high school education (Demirian, 2010) and less opportunity for the development of self-discipline, independent learning, and effective time management (Steyn & Kamper, 2011; Van Schalkwyk, 2007; Zulu, 2008). Black students are also expected to attend higher education classes in their second or third language, which hampers reasoning ability, communication, and even academic identity development (Boughey, 2002; Lourens et al., 2014; Petersen, Louw, & Dumont, 2009; Soudien, 2008; Steyn & Kamper, 2011; Zulu, 2008).

Racial/ethnic differences in emotional disposition have been documented, but the direction and magnitude of these differences are still uncertain. In two studies in the USA, Adkins et al. (2009) and Gore and Aseltine (2003) found that during the developmental periods of adolescence and young adulthood, black individuals reported being more depressed compared to white individuals. In a South African study by Niemand, Brand and Cilliers (2006), the same observation was made. Bojuwoye (2002) and Niemand et al. (2006) attribute black students' negative emotions to academic underpreparedness, adjustment problems, and high incidence of exposure to trauma. Black students also tend to experience inner conflict due to the contradicting demands of their African culture and the higher education culture (Bojuwoye, 2002). It has also been documented that black and white students' emotional coping strategies are culture specific (Chiang, Hunter, & Yeh, 2004). For instance, black students prefer coping resources and strategies that involve family, friends, and significant others (Chiang et al., 2004).

Black students have a greater propensity towards interdependence (including responsiveness, connectedness, and collective goal attainment) than white students have (Arnett & Brody, 2008; Chiang et al., 2004; Cross et al., 2003; Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias, 2012). According to Stephens, Fryberg et al. (2012), black students find it

challenging to balance their collectivistic culture with the independent culture promoted at university and thus experience a cultural mismatch. However, in a Korean study, it was determined that individuals who embrace and promote their collectivistic culture find it easier to adjust to higher education, since they value and are able to establish high-quality interpersonal relationships with others (Choi, 2002).

Researchers (Choi, 2002; Cross et al., 2003; Stephensen et al., 2012) found that black students are more dependent on their interpersonal relationships than white students are. For instance, after entering higher education, black students tend to maintain strong and dependent relationships with their parents (Choi, 2002; Hinderlie & Kenny, 2002). However, relationships with peers and faculty members are also vital in black students' interpersonal adjustment in higher education (Botha, Snowball, De Klerk, & Radloff, 2013; Demirian, 2010). Jones, Coetzee, Bailey and Wickham (2008) determined that black South African students who live on campus have more opportunities to socialise and develop their social skills than students living off campus have. According to the researchers, socialising with other students adds to black students' ability to adjust to the cultural and social capital on campus. However, Soudien (2008), Walker (2005) and Zuma (2013) established that black students in a racially mixed residence still chose to interact with students of the same race and background. Continual isolation and marginalisation could lead to a lack of appreciation and acknowledgement of differences in others (Chickering & Braskamp, 2009; Chickering & Reisser, 1993), which will influence identity development negatively.

Higher education students' identities exist within two interdependent domains, namely the sociocultural (i.e. class, gender, and ethnic identity) and academic (i.e. how students fit in; how they see themselves as students; their relationship with peers and lecturers) domains (Hawkes, 2014). During their time at university, students are able to explore the foundation of their identities (Norris et al., 2008; Rebelo, 2005). This exploration results in one of three outcomes: the cultivation of a new ethnic identity, ethnic identity confusion, or the confirmation of the ethnic identity established before entering higher education (Azmitia et al., 2008; Bojuwoye, 2002; Phinney, 1992). The outcome of their ethnic identity exploration also affects students' ability to formulate a sense of self in the new academic context (Badenhorst & Kapp, 2013)

Black and white students use different avenues to set academic goals and develop purpose (Jordaan, 2009; Kamper, Badenhorst, & Steyn, 2009). For instance, Kamper et al. (2009) and

Perrone et al. (2001) found that financial value is the main consideration in academic and vocational decision-making of black students. For white students, information and advice from valued others are important (Jordaan, 2009). In addition, compared to black students with less ethnic identification, black students with an achieved ethnic identity experience greater academic goal fulfilment (Harper, 2007; Quintana, 2007) and stronger commitments in occupational, educational, political, and religious domains (St. Louis & Liem, 2005).

Students functioning in a diverse student population have more opportunities to explore and question their values and beliefs. For instance, Zúñiga, Williams and Berger (2005) found that multicultural and multiracial interaction creates the opportunity for students to change their preconceived ideas and beliefs in order to promote inclusive and non-discriminatory behaviour.

When considering vector attainment in black students, Steyn and Kamper (2011) determined that black students function within the first three vectors. Their development is limited due to learning barriers including study barriers (i.e. lack of finances and resources) and emotional barriers (i.e. fear of failing or not being able to care for their families). Therefore, ethnicity is one of the factors that will determine the direction and tempo of vector attainment.

3.6 First-generation Students and Vector Attainment

The term *first-generation student* refers to a subgroup of students whose parents or immediate family have not attended higher education (Dumais & Ward, 2010; Inkelas et al., 2007; Orbe, 2008) or whose parents attended higher education but did not graduate (Jehangir, 2009; Soria & Gorny, 2012). Most of the research conducted on the psychosocial functioning of first-generation students was done in the USA (Bui, 2002; Gibbons & Borders, 2010; Hall, 2011; Hodge & Mellin, 2010; Jehangir, 2009; Shelton, 2013). Very little is known about the functioning and characteristics of first-generation students in a South-African context (Badenhorst & Kapp, 2013; Heymann & Carolissen, 2011). Consequently, to create a profile of first-generation students in this study, the next section will consist of a combination of studies conducted in the USA and South Africa. Since the majority of first-generation students in South Africa are black (Stones, 2001), many of the arguments related to black students (as formulated in the previous section) are also applicable to first-generation students.

First-generation students tend to exhibit low intellectual competence and find it difficult to function at a higher education academic standard (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum, 2003; Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004; Penrose, 2002). The absence of a higher education degree in the immediate family results in first-generation students experiencing difficulty to adjust to cultural capital (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum, 2003), understanding professors' or lecturers' expectations (Collier & Morgan, 2008), and adopting the 'student' role (Badenhorst & Kapp, 2013; Collier & Morgan, 2008). However, Van Zyl-Schalekamp and Mtombeni (2015) found that the better the quality of the South African high school the first-generation student attended was, the better the student's chances were of overcoming the mentioned academic challenges associated with being the first to attend higher education. An improvement in academic self-efficacy could also ensure an increase in academic performance (Vuong, Brown-Welty, & Tracz, 2010).

In addition to the typical emotions all students experience, first-generation students may experience a greater fear for failing, pressure to put more time into studying, and concerns regarding financial aid (Bui, 2002; Cho et al., 2008; Christie et al., 2008; Cox, 2009; Gofen, 2009; Stuart, 2013; Wheeler, 2014). Richardson and Skinner (2000) used the term "survivor conflict" (p. 4) to describe first-generation students' difficulty to cope with the fact that they are more successful than their parents or other family members. Male and female first-generation students experience survivor conflict differently. Female students tend to experience guilt when they enter relationships outside the family (Stieha, 2010), while male students feel guilty when their goals and interests differ from those of their parents (Olenchak & Hébert, 2002). However, Gofen (2009) found that parents of first-generation students could defuse survivor conflict through the promotion of unconditional support. He refers to "family capital" (p. 115) as the family's investment to benefit from their children's future. Through the promotion of family capital, the first-generation student's success is viewed as the family's success. First-generation students who do not receive emotional support from their families, will have fewer coping strategies and fewer buffers against the emotional distress they experience in higher education (Hodge & Mellin, 2010; Jenkins, Miyazaki, & Janosik, 2009; Spencer, 2013; Williams & Butler, 2010).

First-generation students have a greater propensity than non-first-generation students to be interdependent (Bui, 2005; Stephens, Fryberg, & Markus, 2011; Stephens, Fryberg et al., 2012). However, first-generation students find it difficult to function independently (Stephens,

Fryberg et al., 2012; Stephens, Townsend, Markus, & Phillips, 2012). In a South African study, it was determined that one of the reasons first-generation students find it challenging to function independently is that they are dependent on the feedback of important others during decision-making (Luckett & Luckett, 2009).

First-generation students have a tendency to experience challenges in social and interpersonal competencies during their time in higher education (Antonio, 2001; Bozick, 2007; Folger, Carter, & Chase, 2004; Kahn & Nauta, 2001; Lien, 2002; Pascarella et al., 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Pike & Kuh, 2005). The same reasons purported in the discussion on ethnic differences apply to first-generation students. Additionally, first-generation students do not have a framework on which to base their social expectations. Consequently, they tend to feel alienated and less confident to interact with other students (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011; Jehangir, 2009; Jones et al., 2008). Researchers found that first-generation students tend to have more friendships off campus than friendships on campus (Hertel, 2002; Pascarella et al., 2004). However, the more diverse the student population, the greater the chance that first-generation students will be able to identify students on campus with the same background with whom to enter into relationships (Cho et al., 2008; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Pike & Kuh, 2005). First-generation students also find it difficult to interact with faculty members and support staff (Hinderlie & Kenny, 2002; Lunceford, 2011; Olenchak & Hébert, 2002).

First-generation students struggle to answer the questions ‘Who am I?’ and ‘Who should I be?’ (Wheeler, 2014). Since there is a proverbial gap between experiences of first-generation students at home and at university, these students tend to develop multiple as well as multidimensional identities (Mowbray, 2008). However, first-generation students tend to conceal their first-generation status to other students (Orbe, 2004), which confirms the idea that first-generation students tend to ‘hide’ their multiple identities in order to comply with the expectation of being a ‘typical higher education student’ (Jehangir, 2009; Mowbray, 2008; Wheeler, 2014). According to Badenhorst and Kapp (2013), first-generation students shift their own sense of self in order to survive in the academic culture created on campus.

First-generation students find it difficult to connect their academic path, degree choice, and career aspirations (Dubow, Boxer, & Huesmann, 2008; Jenkins et al., 2009; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Penrose, 2002; Shelton, 2013; Van Schalkwyk, 2007). Parents of first-generation students are not able to provide assistance with the logistical requirements

associated with career and university planning (Bui, 2005; Pascarella et al., 2004). First-generation students also tend to start exploring their interests or/and become aware of new areas of interests only after entering higher education (Coombs, 2013; Shelton, 2013). Consequently, the majority of first-generation students' make uninformed decisions and base academic career choices on the social, economic, and occupational standing it will hold for them and their families (Ayala & Striplen, 2002; Bui, 2002; Stephens, Fryberg et al., 2012). Shelton (2013) observes that, due to inadequate academic counselling, first-generation students have a greater propensity than non-first-generation students have to leave university or change their field of study after the first year.

As mentioned in the discussion on the influence of ethnicity on vector attainment, being exposed to a diverse student population enable students to question their existing value system (Arnett, 2000). Manago (2012) conducted a study on the changes in value systems Mexican first-generation students experience in higher education. The researchers observed that due to knowledge acquisition and exposure to diversity, first-generation students are able to develop multiple perspectives on moral behaviour as well as an independent knowledge base (i.e. asserting individual choices and opinions, self-fulfilment).

A first-generation status is only one of many identities these students must navigate every day (Orbe, 2004). From the discussion above, it is clear that the identity formation of first-generation students is different from that of non-first-generation students. It would be interesting to determine how first-generation students' experiences in higher education affects the formation of their identities.

3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter was utilised to provide an understanding of the value of (and critique against) Chickering's psychosocial development theory. From an examination of Chickering and Reisser's theory, as well as other relevant studies, it is evident that gender and ethnic differences with regard to identity development exist. Although little is known about vector attainment in South African first-generation students, the trends in the international literature form a framework against which the findings of the current study can be compared. In the next chapter, the research design and methodology used in this study are examined.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

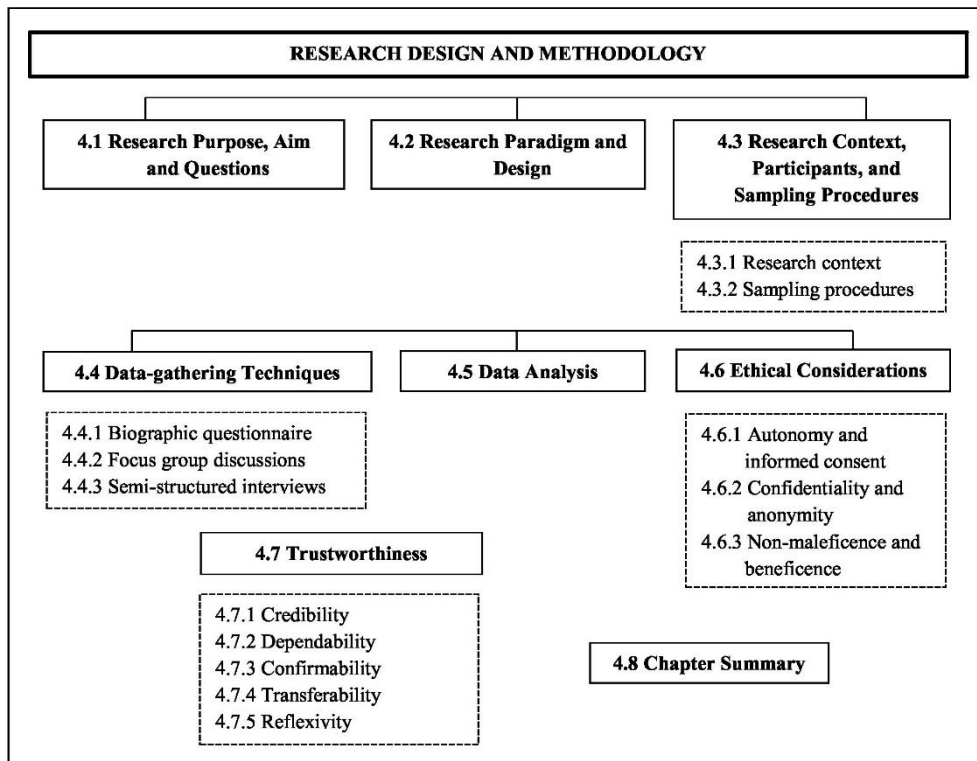


Figure 5. Visual display of Chapter 4 outline

As illustrated in Figure 5, this chapter incorporates the research aim and design, as well as the procedures followed to reach this aim (e.g. sampling, data-gathering, and analysis). The ethical considerations and strategies followed to ensure trustworthiness are also discussed.

4.1 Research Purpose, Aim and Questions

Owing to rapid changes in the South African higher education student population, it is of paramount importance for higher education institutions to gain insight into the psychosocial functioning of the so-called ‘new-generation students’ (Scott, 2009; Van der Bank, 2014). Student development theories pertaining to the development of individuals attending higher education can be applied to obtain information regarding the new-generation students with a view to improve academic programmes and student services (Winberg, 2006). Identity development is an important component of normal student development (Chickering &

Reisser, 1993). However, a gap exists in the knowledge regarding the identity development of different ethnic and socio-economic groups (Schwartz, 2005). This research study is aimed at exploring black first-generation students' experiences related to identity development during their first year at a higher education institution. In order to achieve the above-mentioned aim, the following research question was investigated: Which vectors of identity development can be identified in black first-year, first-generation students?

4.2 Research Paradigm and Design

A research design is the action plan or a strategic framework that ensures that the methods employed will facilitate the answering of the research question(s) (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Gelo, Braakmann, & Benetka, 2008). Durrheim (2006) describes a research design as the foundation of the entire research process. He sees the research design as a bridge between the research question and the implementation of the research. Thus, the golden thread in both definitions is that a research design must ensure research coherence and the answering of the research question(s). A research design consists of four core elements: the purpose of the research, the theoretical paradigm, the context, and the techniques used to collect and analyse the data (Durrheim, 2006; Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006). While designing the research study, the researcher considered these four core elements. The purpose of the research is discussed in Chapter 1 and stated again in the previous section. The research paradigm is considered next.

In essence, a research paradigm is a broad view or perspective of a topic (Taylor, Kermode, & Roberts, 2007). More specifically, a research paradigm is a set or framework of beliefs, values, and methods that guide the thinking and actions in research (Joubish, Khurram, Ahmed, Fatima, & Haider, 2011). For instance, an interpretivist research approach is incorporated typically when a researcher wants to understand how people interpret their experiences or to understand the meaning people attribute to their experiences (Henning, Van Rensburg, & Smith, 2004; Merriam, 2009).

To comprehend the interpretivist approach, three dimensions namely ontology (What is the nature of reality?), epistemology (What is the nature of knowledge and relationship between the knower and the would-be-known?), and methodology (How can the knower go about

obtaining the desired knowledge and understanding?) must be considered (Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

Ontology, the interpretivist researcher believes that there is not an objective reality and that each participant's own interpretation of reality is of value (Merriam, 2009; Mertens, 2005). With regard to epistemology, the subjective reality experienced by the participants will become known only through interaction (i.e. asking questions) between the researcher and participants (Maree, 2007). Methodology refers to how the researcher deals with the question of epistemology; in the case of this research, through an interactional, interpretive, and qualitative approach including interviewing or observing participants (Gelo et al., 2008; Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Owing to the interpretivist research paradigm used in this study, the researcher was able to explore the subjective experiences of participants in a specific context. This was done by means of focus group discussions and individual interviews.

Taking into account that the research paradigm of this study is within the interpretivist framework, the research approach must be qualitative in nature (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004). The qualitative researcher wants to understand phenomena in a natural setting with interviews, observations, and interactional and visual texts in order to produce a descriptive account of events or experiences (Miller, 2010; Parkinson & Drislane, 2011). A qualitative research approach has many advantages and disadvantages. Mack et al. (2005) and Miller (2010) consider the strength of qualitative research as the researcher's ability to enhance understanding and provide rich and informative descriptions of how different individuals experience a specific research issue. Thus, a qualitative approach enables the researcher to develop a holistic perspective of a phenomenon, especially the 'human side' of an issue (Tewksbury, 2009). A qualitative approach is also beneficial in the investigation of constructs that are complex and difficult to measure (Moran, 2001). For instance, Mack et al. (2005) found that a qualitative approach is useful when culture-specific experiences must be considered. However, some of the limitations of a qualitative approach are that proper analysis of text is time consuming (involving transcribing, coding, and interpreting of the data), and the skill of the researcher largely determines the quality of the organisation, management, analysis, and interpretation of data collected (Miller, 2010; Patton, 2002).

The qualitative case study methodology (also known as collective case study approach) is one qualitative tool that researchers can use to study a phenomenon in a specific context (Baxter &

Jack, 2008). Yin (2009) postulates that a case study approach should be considered when it is believed that the contextual conditions are important in understanding the phenomenon under study and/or when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clear. For instance, in the current research study, the case (identity development in black first-year, first-generation students) could not be understood without considering the context (UFS and, more specifically, the effect of being the first in the family to attend higher education).

Yin (2009) categorises case studies as explanatory, exploratory, or descriptive. The current study is exploratory and descriptive in nature. According to Polit, Beck and Hungler (2001), a descriptive case study approach allows the researcher to describe, observe, and document a phenomenon that cannot be valued objectively. Yin (2003) adds that a descriptive approach enables the researcher to consider the phenomenon and real-life context in which the phenomenon occurs. Likewise, a researcher using an exploratory case study approach attempts to gain a better understanding of the phenomena or aims to develop a new hypothesis about an active phenomenon (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Durrheim, 2006). Yin (2003) also explains that an exploratory approach is used when there is no clear, single set of outcomes in the phenomenon being researched.

To summarise this section: this exploratory and descriptive research was aimed at gaining an understanding of identity development in black first-generation, first-year students. A qualitative case study approach based on the philosophical underpinnings of the interpretivist paradigm was ideally suited for investigating this topic.

4.3 Research Context, Participants, and Sampling Procedures

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), an issue or event can be understood truly only when the background of the whole context that confers meaning to the issue or event is understood. Durrheim (2006) also emphasises the role of context in decisions concerning the research design. Since the current research study is aimed at understanding individuals' experiences in a specific context, it is important to gain a clear understanding of the social context of this study.

4.3.1 Research context

The research study is positioned at the University of the Free State (UFS) in the city of Bloemfontein, South Africa. In the strategic plan of the UFS for 2012-2016 (University of the Free State, 2012), the UFS is described as one of the oldest historically white universities in South Africa, serving approximately 33 000 students on three campuses. The UFS is depicted as a “microcosm of society at large” (University of the Free State, 2012, p. 52), accommodating students of different socio-economic backgrounds, cultures, races, and language groups. At the time of data collection, the statistics below with regard to racial and gender distribution at the UFS were available (Figure 6) (University of the Free State, 2010). The figures shown are consistent with transformation trends identified in other South African higher education institutions. The diversification of the South African student population with regard to race, gender, and disadvantaged students (including first-generation students) has led to a demand for knowledge regarding the functioning and needs of these groups.

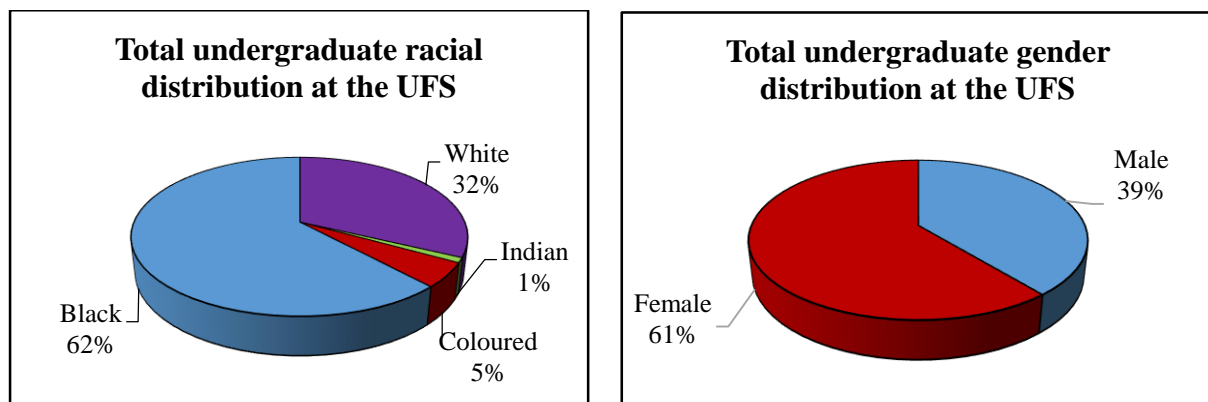


Figure 6. Racial/gender representation

The UFS has increased access to first-generation and other historically disadvantaged students through several programmes, including The University-School Partnership Project and the University Preparation Programme (UPP) (University of the Free State, 2012). However, now that these students have entered the system, the UFS is confronted with a lack of knowledge regarding the functioning and needs of these student groups. Information is needed to understand the financial, academic, and psychosocial barriers new-generation students experience better. The current research focused on collecting information regarding identity

development (psychosocial dimension) of black first-generation UFS students during their first year.

4.3.2 Sampling procedures

It is not always possible to collect data from all the members in a target population; therefore, a sample group must be selected from the total population (Patton, 2002). Qualitative research entails the identification of a specific group of individuals who will have relevant information to share (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004). For this reason, participants in this study were recruited by means of purposive sampling (criterion-based selection) and snowball sampling.

Purposive sampling is a convenient and economical technique utilised by qualitative researchers to identify information-rich participants (Patton, 2002). The advantage of using purposive sampling is that it allows researchers to use sampling criteria to identify individuals with specific characteristics related to the research (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). However, the disadvantage of gathering information by using purposive sampling is that the researcher uses personal judgement while selecting the sample, which could lead to bias (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). To identify participants for this research, the researcher made a conscious decision to include participants based on certain inclusion criteria. The following inclusion criteria were used to select participants for the study:

- All the participants were required to be registered students at the UFS.
- All the participants had to belong to a black African racial group.
- All the participants had to be first-generation students.
- Since all the participants were expected to reflect on their identity development during their first year of attending higher education, all the participants had to be second-year students (between the ages of 18 and 22 years).
- All the participants were required to have basic English proficiency.

In addition to purposive sampling, the researcher opted to use snowball sampling. In this method, participants who have already been recruited by the researcher use their social networks to assist the researcher in identifying other potential participants (Mack et al., 2005). Therefore, the first group of participants is requested to suggest other potential participants, the

second group of participants has to identify the third and so forth (Fink, 2000). This method was very useful in the current study, since it was rather challenging to identify first-generation students (a ‘hidden subgroup’) in the student population (Mack et al., 2005).

The following process was followed to identify participants: Initially, the researcher attended second-year classes where she explained the aim of the research and the inclusion criteria. The researcher then invited individuals who satisfied the criteria to attend the first focus group. After the first focus group session, more participants were identified by means of snowball sampling (Patton, 2002). This process was continued until a saturation point was achieved (Gelo et al., 2008) or when no new information or themes were detected in the data (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Table 7 presents the biographic information of the research participants in this study.

Table 7

Biographic Information of Research Participants

Participant	Gender	Ethnic background	Age
P1	Female	isiXhosa	19
P2	Female	isiXhosa	20
P3	Female	Setswana	20
P4	Female	Setswana	19
P5	Female	Coloured	20
P6	Male	isiXhosa	20
P7	Male	Setswana	20
P8	Male	Sesotho	20
P9	Male	Sesotho	19
P10	Male	isiXhosa	20

Ten participants who met the criteria for inclusion were selected for the focus group discussions and individual interviews. Participant 5 was coloured (and therefore not, strictly speaking, from the black African racial group). However, she considered herself as being part of a black African racial group. Therefore, it was decided to apply the inclusion criteria with leniency because racial categorisation is relative when viewed from a pure psychological perspective. Although this participant did not form part of the black African racial group, she did fulfil the rest of the inclusion criteria. The small sample size allowed for in-depth understanding of

participants' experiences, which is consistent with the aim of qualitative research methodology (Merriam, 2009). All the research participants were the traditional second-year university age of 19 or 20. The sample was representative of male (5) and female (5) students, as well as four ethnic divisions, namely isiXhosa (4), Sesotho (2), Setswana (3) and coloured (1). All participants were first-generation students.

4.4 Data-gathering Techniques

The methods used to collect data during the research process must be congruent with the research aims and paradigm of that study (Merriam, 2009). Because this study is classified as interpretivist qualitative research, two appropriate forms of data collection were used, namely focus group discussions and individual interviews.

The researcher conducted the focus group discussions and individual interviews, which were semi-structured in nature. In semi-structured interviews, the researcher poses predetermined questions related to the research aim, and then follow-up questions are asked based on the participants' responses (Mack et al., 2005). A potential concern regarding semi-structured interviews is that the researcher can steer the conversation in a specific direction. To prevent this from happening, the use of an interview schedule is recommended (Knox & Burkard, 2009; Patton, 2002). The questions included in the interview schedule of present study were derived from Chickering's seven vectors. Two examples of the questions included in the interview schedule of the present study are the following: "What do you understand regarding the term *identity*?" and "Reflecting on your first year at the university, how did your identity develop?". The interview schedule was followed as far as it was useful in bringing about an understanding of participants' experience (Knox & Burkard, 2009). Diverging from the interview schedule was determined by the interviewer's own discretion (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006) and the same interview schedule was used during all the focus group discussions and individual interviews.

In preparing for the interviews, the researcher kept the following in mind: The researcher had to use words and language that were non-threatening to the participants. It was important to use thought-provoking interjections. This was done to promote discussion, ensure in-depth focus on the specific issue, and make sure information was understood correctly (Leech, 2002).

Finally, the researcher had to encourage descriptions and explanations of critical events in participants' lives to ensure full consideration of each question/point (Pathak & Intrat, 2012). The methods of data collection are discussed next.

4.4.1 Biographic questionnaire

Each interview began with the completion of a biographic questionnaire (see Appendix A) to obtain biographic details of all the participants. The biographic questionnaire used in this research study consisted of items to gather information with regard to the participants' gender, ethnic background, age, and fields of study. A section was also included where participants had to indicate whether their parents had attended a higher education institution or not (to ensure that only first-generation students were incorporated). Each participant then had to provide a brief description of his/her identity. This was done to create context and stimulate thinking.

4.4.2 Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions can be described as a small group of individuals who come together to talk about a specific topic in a specific context (Patton, 2002). Focus group discussions were included as a research method for various reasons: Firstly, it was a fast and efficient way in which a researcher could obtain information from multiple participants (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Secondly, data generated by means of focus group interaction represented a collective rather than an individualistic view (Bagnoli & Clark, 2010). Finally, the process also ensured that different cultures, values, languages, and views were taken in account (Flores & Alonso, in Williams & Butler, 2010). However, the researcher was aware that conducting focus group discussions also has its limitations. The main weakness is that group participation could contribute to conformity and social desirability. For example, when a participant does not want to share his or her thoughts because it is opposing the thoughts of other participants (Hollander, 2004).

The researcher opted to use mini focus groups consisting of three or four participants. According to Krueger and Casey (2000), smaller focus groups are easier to manage, and participants feel more comfortable to interact with fewer individuals. A summary of the focus group participants and discussions is provided in Table 8.

Table 8

A Summary of the Focus Group Participants and Discussions

Focus group discussion	Number of participants	Gender of participants	Length of focus group discussion
1	Two	Female	70 minutes
2	Three	Female	70 minutes
3	Three	Male	57 minutes

An excerpt of a focus group transcription is included in Appendix B. The information gathered during the focus groups was corroborated by conducting semi-structured individual interviews with new participants.

4.4.3 Semi-structured interviews

Pathak and Intratat (2012, p. 4) describe a semi-structured interview as a “focused yet conversational two-way communication with the participants”. For various reasons, researchers prefer semi-structured interviews to other interview structures. Firstly, using specific questions as a guideline during the interviews provides a level of consistency in topics between interviews. Secondly, in comparison to structured interviews, semi-structured interviews have more room for probing and clarifying follow-up questions (Merriam, 2009). During the more spontaneous and adaptable interaction between the researcher and participants, participants feel more comfortable to provide more personal, in-depth information (Hadley, 2006). Potential disadvantages regarding individual semi-structured interviews include that it is time consuming, need administrative planning, can be more expensive than focus groups are, and the participant does not benefit from interaction, as is the case in focus group discussions (Patton, 2002). A summary of the individual interview participants and sessions is provided in Table 9.

Table 9

A Summary of the Individual Interview Participants and Sessions

Individual interview	Gender of participant	Length of interview
1	Male	27 minutes
2	Male	34 minutes

The individual interviews listed in Table 9 contributed to the researcher’s understanding of black first-generation students’ identity development during the first year and provided an opportunity to corroborate the themes that emerged during the focus group discussions.

4.5 Data Analysis

The qualitative researcher obtains a large volume of data that, for practical reasons, must be analysed to form conclusions and recommendations (Patton, 2002). The researcher opted to utilise the qualitative method of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013) for this task. During thematic analysis, the aim is to identify patterns and emerging themes in the data, which then become the categories for analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). Braun and Clarke (2006, 2013) describe thematic analysis as a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes in data. Based on their research, thematic analysis is a foundational method for qualitative analysis and can be used in a range of paradigms, including the interpretivist paradigm. It is also very useful in capturing the complexities and meaning in textual data sets (data gathered by means of focus group discussions and individual interviews) (Guest et al., 2012). However, identifying implicit and explicit ideas in the data entails additional involvement of and interpretation by the researcher. For critics, it is difficult to determine how the themes are ‘found’, which could have a negative effect on the validity of the research as a whole. Critics also describe this technique as too flexible, creating the idea that ‘anything goes’ (Antaki, Billig, Edwards, & Potter, 2002). Braun and Clarke (2006) believe that this problem can be reduced by using the six-phase process of analysis (clear steps and guidelines) they propose for thematic analysis (see Table 10). Their description of the analysis process is clear and concise, which eases the potentially difficult procedure.

Table 10

A Summary of the Phases in Thematic Analysis Used in this Study

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarising oneself with the data	Transcribe the data. Read and re-read the data. Make notes of initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes	Code relevant features of the data systematically and across the entire data set. Collate data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes	Collate codes into potential themes. Gather all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes	Check whether the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1). Check whether the themes work in relation to the entire data set (Level 2). Generate a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes	Continue with the analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and the overall story the analysis tells. Generate clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report	Select vivid compelling extract examples. Make a final analysis of selected extracts (determine if extracts relate to the research question and literature). Produce a scholarly report of the analysis.

Adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87)

Before starting with the analysis, it was important to determine whether it would be best to follow an inductive or deductive approach. Since the research study was guided by an interpretivist paradigm, an inductive approach was the appropriate choice. Braun and Clarke (2006) and Frith and Gleeson (2004) state that inductive or ‘bottom up’ thematic analysis entails that the themes identified in the data are linked strongly to the raw data gathered. In this way, the experiences voiced by participants are provided as accurately and comprehensively as possible (Guest et al., 2012) and not directed by a preconceived theory (Hewitt-Taylor, 2001). During the initial phases of thematic analysis, participants’ voices were placed first, with Chickering’s theory serving only as a sensitising framework.

In the next section, the implementation of Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-phase process is discussed. In Appendix C, a section of the analysis of one focus group’s discussion is provided.

The first phase in the process was to transcribe the collected data. Although time-consuming, it formed the foundation for the analysis and created an opportunity for the researcher to familiarise herself with the data (Bird, 2005; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher conducted the interviews and did the transcriptions, which helped the researcher develop a more thorough understanding of the data. In addition, before starting the coding process, the researcher had already read the whole data set and was familiar with the content.

During the second phase, the aim was to code as many potential themes as possible. Braun and Clarke (2006) consider these initial codes as the most basic elements of the raw data and more elementary than the units of analysis (the themes in the data). The researcher used her computer to code by tagging and naming selections of text in each data item. Some of the surrounding data were kept to ensure the context stayed apparent.

During the third phase, the main activity was to search for themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), a theme captures an important part of the data in relation to the research question; consequently, a patterned response or meaning in the data set is identified. The phase can be divided into two levels: firstly, the researcher analyses the codes, and secondly, the researcher considers how different codes can be organised to form overarching themes. At the end of this phase, themes and sub-themes are identified.

The fourth phase is characterised as the stage during which themes are reviewed. It is important that the themes are clear and distinctive (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this phase, the researcher must first determine whether the themes form a coherent pattern. Thereafter, the researcher must establish whether the individual themes are valid in relation to the data set. The researcher must also ensure that the themes accurately reflect the meanings evident in the data set as a whole.

Defining and naming themes form part of the fifth phase. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 93) emphasise that the names should immediately provide the reader with an idea of what the themes are – names that are “concise and punchy”. The researcher defines and refines the themes to ensure that the essence of the theme is identified. The themes identified in the data generated in this study are presented in Chapter 5.

In the final phase, the conclusive analysis and writing of the report follow. The report must tell the intricate story of the data and convince the reader of the validity of the research and analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Accordingly, it is important to ensure that the documentation is to the point, consistent, rational, and non-repetitive.

In the aforementioned section, the six phases that guided the analysis process in this study were discussed. These guidelines were not applied linearly, but rather recursively. Every step was documented to ensure transparency of the process. As a result, trustworthiness (which is discussed in a later section) was promoted.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethics in research is an integral part of the research planning and implementation process (Mertens, 2005). The first step in the research process was to gain approval for this study from the Department of Psychology and the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of the Humanities of the University of the Free State (see Appendix D).

In this research study, the ethical principles of autonomy and informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, non-maleficence and beneficence were considered (Allan, 2008) and employed throughout the research process to ensure the human dignity of the participants.

4.6.1 Autonomy and informed consent

The ethical principle of autonomy entails that the participants have the right to decide whether they want to accept or decline participation (Mertens, 2005). No participant may be pressured, coerced, or bribed into taking part in a research study (Allan, 2008). The principle of autonomy is promoted through the principle of informed consent. The participants must be informed fully with regard to the extent and purpose of their involvement in the research (Allan, 2008; Patton, 2002). An informed consent form must be provided to ensure that all the participants receive the same information. The informed consent form must be signed to serve as proof that the participants were aware of what their participation would entail (Mertens, 2005).

In keeping with Marshall's (2006) outline of informed consent, the researcher included in the informed consent form 1) the purpose of the investigation, 2) the process that would take place

during the focus group discussions and individual interviews, 3) the potential benefits and anticipated risks of participation, 4) the confidentiality of participants' participation, 5) the voluntary nature of participation, and 6) the right to withdraw at any point during the research process without any negative personal consequences (justice principle). To ensure the formalisation of consent, each participant had to sign the informed consent form. The informed consent form used in this study, is available in Appendix E. Additionally, the participants also needed to provide consent for the audio digital recording of the focus group discussions and individual interviews (Allan, 2008). Since all the participants were 19 or 20 years at the time of the interviews, no additional consent from parents or legal guardians was necessary (Patton, 2002).

4.6.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

Two important principles pertaining to protecting the privacy of research participants are confidentiality and anonymity. Fundamentally, confidentiality entails that the participants are guaranteed that any information obtained during the interviews will not be made available to anybody who is not directly involved in the study (Patton, 2002). The researcher took active steps to ensure that all the information obtained during the interviews was kept confidential. These steps included that the researcher and her supervisors, were the only individuals involved in scheduling and conducting the interviews as well as transcribing and analysing the data. In focus group discussions, where participants knew one another, the researcher ensured that participants understood that information shared during the discussion should not be discussed afterwards.

The second principle, anonymity, ensures that the participants in a study remain unidentified throughout the study (Patton, 2002). The researcher did not include any names or identifiable information of the participants in the transcriptions. To distinguish between participants, the researcher allocated a code to each informant, for example (Participant 1, female), (Participant 6, male) etc. (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009).

4.6.3 Non-maleficence and beneficence

The principle of non-maleficence, when applied in a research context, entails that the researcher must ensure that no harm will come to any research participant. However, when unavoidable

harm has occurred, steps should be taken to minimise the damage caused (Allan, 2008). The researcher put strategies in place to counteract any potential harm. Firstly, the researcher explained the topic that would be discussed. This was done to ensure the participants were informed and could prepare themselves for the discussion. Secondly, the researcher used an interview schedule to ensure that only information relevant to the topic/study was discussed. Finally, if a need was identified, the researcher was prepared to refer participants to Student Development and Counselling. However, this was not necessary for any of the participants.

The ethical principle of beneficence compels the researcher to ensure that the research will benefit the participant in some way (Allan, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The aim of this research was to collect information regarding the identity development process of first-generation students to equip university administrators with the knowledge to assist these students in adjusting to higher education. Therefore, the participants and future students of this academic institution would benefit by the research findings.

Apart from implementing ethical principles to protect the individuals participating in the study, the researcher had to ensure the transparency and accuracy of the research findings (trustworthiness of research findings).

4.7 Trustworthiness

In contrast to a quantitative researcher's objective distance from the research (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004), a qualitative researcher is an active respondent or primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Patton, 2002; Pezalla, Pettigrew, & Miller-Day, 2012). Baxter and Jack (2008) describe the more direct involvement of the qualitative researcher as a necessity to ensure that the researcher truly listens to participants and becomes involved in their lives. However, the direct involvement guarantees that the qualitative researcher's unique attributes have the potential to shape data. For that reason, steps must be taken to ensure that qualitative research is conducted authentically (Merriam, 2009).

To ensure the accuracy of qualitative findings is not an easy task. However, various criteria (i.e. credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability) and strategies (i.e. triangulation, referential adequacy, and audit trails) can be used to enhance the trustworthiness of qualitative research findings (Hammersley, 2007; Merriam, 2009). Although some strategies

are more relevant to a specific criterion, these strategies can be used to ensure more than one criterion. At this point of the discussion, it is necessary to describe the concepts of credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability, as well as the strategies that were applied in this study.

4.7.1 Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985, 2000) postulate that credibility is the most significant factor to promote trustworthiness. Credibility in a qualitative research study refers to the congruency or link between the researcher's interpretation and the meanings and perspectives of the research participants (Shenton, 2004). Thus, proving credibility entails proving that the phenomenon being researched is represented accurately (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 2000; Shenton, 2004). Pannucci and Wilkins (2010) found that certain aspects of qualitative research could invalidate qualitative research findings, for instance, conscious or accidental manipulation of data (to fit the theory proposed by the researcher), a change in the participant's behaviour or responses due to the interviewer's presence (reactivity), and researcher bias towards the participants.

In this research study, the researcher made several provisions to ensure credibility. The first strategy was to promote triangulation or to derive data at different times and by different means in order to compare and cross-check the consistency of information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 2000). The second strategy to ensure credibility was to make audio-recordings of all the focus group discussions and individual interviews. Transcriptions of these recordings ensured that the researcher's accounts were supported (Miyata & Kai, 2009; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002). According to Merriam (2009), another strategy to ensure credibility is an audit trail, which is an account of the decisions and descriptions of the data collection and data analysis process implemented in a research study. Chapter 4 of this research study, as well as Appendix B and Appendix C, serves as proof of how the collection and analysis process was implemented in this study. Finally, since the research is part of a master's degree, supervision and peer review were integral parts of the verification process. Debriefing sessions between the researcher and supervisors also served as a sounding board for the researcher to develop ideas and recognise researcher biases (Shenton, 2004).

4.7.2 Dependability

Dependability, also known as *reliability* in quantitative studies, relies on how consistent the research data would be if the study were to be conducted again (Merriam, 2009). To achieve this, it is necessary to report the process followed in the study in detail, thereby enabling a future researcher to repeat the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 2000; Shenton, 2004). A challenge in qualitative research is the subjective nature of reality in which each participant has a unique reality, which results in a unique research outcome. Therefore, reliability in the traditional sense is not practical in a qualitative study. In a qualitative study, the question with regard to consistency/dependability should rather be directed towards whether the results are consistent with the data collected (Merriam, 2009). Accordingly, researchers also use the techniques outlined in the credibility section to prove the dependability of the research.

In this study, various steps were taken to ensure consistency of findings. The researcher was the only person to conduct interviews, which ensured that the interview questions and interviewing techniques were consistent. The researcher also transcribed all of the interviews verbatim. The sample group was based on the specific criteria, and only individuals who complied with the criteria were interviewed. The data collected from each participant were related, compared, and analysed, finding both the similarities and differences between the cases. Subsequently, the consistent implementation of the analysis process also increased dependability of findings (Merriam, 2009). Finally, the researcher provided a detailed account of the data collection and analysis procedures implemented in the study (Shenton, 2004).

4.7.3 Confirmability

Confirmability involves the extent to which the results of the study reflect the participants' current reality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 2000; Patton, 2002). Especially in a qualitative study, the researcher must ensure that the research findings are the result of the experience of the participants, rather than the characteristics or preconceived notions of the researcher (Shenton, 2004). To achieve confirmability, the research methods and procedures must be transparent, and there should be a clear link between the source information and the conclusions, interpretations, and recommendations made in the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 2000).

In this study, the researcher applied triangulation and a detailed methodological description to enable the reader to determine how accurate the findings of the study are. In addition, the researcher applied two strategies to clarify that the findings were developed from the research data and not from personal biases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 2000; Shenton, 2004). The strategies involved the inclusion of direct quotations in the discussion of the themes derived from the participants' experiences and the application of reflexivity and constant self-awareness by the researcher during the collection and interpretation of findings. The latter was also promoted by continuous feedback from her supervisors.

4.7.4 Transferability

Transferability is the degree to which research findings are transferable or applicable beyond the limits of the study to other settings or groups. In qualitative research, the small sample size and absence of statistical analyses makes it difficult to generalise findings to the broader population (Patton, 2002). However, the essence of transferability is to create a rich context of the study to enable researchers to determine whether the study's results are applicable to their own research.

In this study, the aim was not to generalise the findings to a larger population. This study focused on providing a rich description of the current participants' experiences during their first year at university. To achieve this, the researcher used verbatim quotations from the interviews as a basis to describe the experiences of the participants (Miyata & Kai, 2009). In addition, a clear description of the sampling criteria and sample group was provided (Patton, 2002). Strategies already mentioned (triangulation and reflexivity) were also important in promoting transferability in this research.

4.7.5 Reflexivity

An essential component embedded in any qualitative research study is researcher reflexivity. Based on the principles promoted through the interpretivist paradigm, reality is formulated subjectively (Merriam, 2009). By implication, this means that the researcher has a subjectively formulated reality of the phenomenon being researched. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) and Merriam (2009) emphasised that the researcher needs to reflect on his or her own beliefs and

assumptions. The researcher must also consider how these beliefs and assumptions influence the research process and the interpretation of the research findings.

The researcher is a white, Afrikaans speaking, female student. Since both her parents and two of her siblings attended university, the researcher is a non-first-generation student. Compared to the participants, the researcher did not encounter difficulties with regard to being academically prepared, being informed of higher education expectations or adjusting to social life on campus. Her subjective experience could have made it difficult for her to identify with the participants and/or to interpret the qualitative research data.

After each focus group discussion and individual interview, the researcher made notes on her observations (see Appendix F for an example of the researcher's reflective journal). She also reflected on her interactions with the participants and possible stereotyping she encountered. For instance, during one of the focus group sessions, the participants spoke about their negative perceptions of white people. The researcher observed that she was not comfortable to talk about racial aspects with the participants. However, the researcher was able to probe the participants without being defensive. The researcher also made sure that she had reflective conversations with her supervisor to counter the possibility of bias during the data analysis process.

4.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter was utilised to discuss the research paradigm, design and methodology (data collection and analysis) applied in this study. Ethical considerations and trustworthiness as it pertains to this research were also discussed.

The following chapter presents the research results that emanated from the data.

CHAPTER 5
PRESENTING THE RESEARCH RESULTS

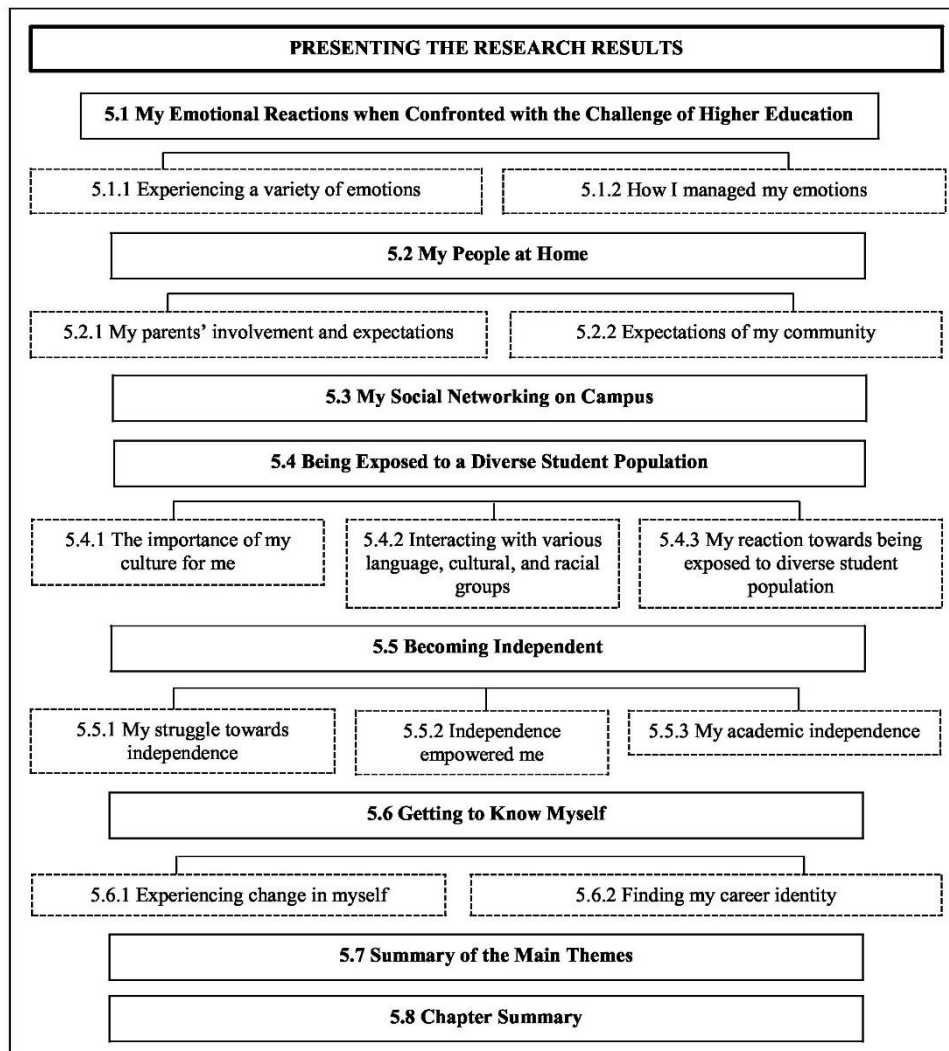


Figure 7. Visual display of Chapter 5 outline

In Chapter 5, the themes that emerged from the focus group discussions and individual interviews are presented (see Figure 7). Using the accounts provided by the participants, the researcher grouped the congruent ideas and experiences into themes. This process of analysis and synthesis led to the identification of six main themes and various subthemes. In the discussion that follows, these themes (as well as areas of divergence) are explicated. Direct quotations are included to promote the credibility of the discussion. The verbatim quotations have been altered slightly. Information that has been removed is indicated by using three periods. Information that has been added is indicated by square brackets. No identifiable

information is included. A distinction between participants is indicated by using numbers, e.g. Participant 1 and Participant 2. The participants' gender is also included after each quotation, e.g. Participant 1, female.

5.1 My Emotional Reactions when Confronted with the Challenge of Higher Education

The first main theme that emerged from the discussions is the emotions participants experienced during their first year at university. All of the participants provided detailed accounts of their emotional experiences during the first year, as well as the strategies they used to cope with their emotions.

5.1.1 Experiencing a variety of emotions

The emotions that emerged from the participants' discussions reflect the ambivalence participants experienced during their first year. Most of the participants described their first year as being an emotional journey filled with feelings of excitement, loneliness, uncertainty, and anxiety. As the year progressed, participants were able to experience emotional stability.

Before entering higher education, participants experienced a variety of emotions. Some were excited about university, because it symbolised a new beginning for them: *"I was anxious and the same time excited, because I am done with school"* (Participant 4, female), and *"Fear, confusion, but excited at the same time. Because you are done with school and you have forever wanted to come to varsity"* (Participant 5, female). Others felt worried about the new challenges: *"I got stressed [about] the fact that now it is a whole new chapter in my life"* (Participant 9, male).

Many participants said that after entering higher education and beginning with lectures, they felt overwhelmed and uncertain. This is illustrated in the following statement: *"The first week was actually fun ... the cheering and rotation, the craziness, the rag ... But once you got to the lectures and to studying ... loneliness, bitter, confused – just don't know where to start"* (Participant 3, female). Participant 6 (male) shared the same experience: *"... you are sort of lost and you are really on another level. You are just stressed out like you don't know what to do."* From these accounts, it is apparent that the participants realised that they were underprepared for higher education. The uncertainty experienced pertaining to not feeling

ready for the academic challenges associated with higher education emerged from all of the participants' discussions.

Participants admitted that frustration was a common emotion they experienced during their transition to higher education. This is evident in the following statements: "*Always angry*" (Participant 2, female), and "*I was moody*" (Participant 1, female). In further accounts, it became clear that participants were frustrated because they were struggling to adapt to higher education standards. Participants also admitted that not knowing what they were doing wrong contributed to feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. This is illustrated in the following statements: "... *then, at a point where you come neutral and you don't really care about anything. You just die*" (Participant 3, female), and "*During my first year, I ... a lot of things happened. I just died. I was alive but I just died inside*" (Participant 2, female). One female participant shared that she developed depression during the first term. Another female participant developed ulcers after the first term. All of the accounts reflect that participants initially found it demanding to adapt to higher education.

Another emotional consequence of being underprepared for higher education was stress and anxiety. For instance, Participant 8 (male) stated, "... *in [my] first year, my emotions was highlighted. It was like, when I was stressed, you could see that I am under stress.*" Various reasons for the anxiety, including academic challenges, were provided: "*I got stressed ... academics came, which was more harder than what I am used to*" (Participant 9, male), and "*I had to push [work hard] like three times more than I did in school*" (Participant 1, female). The participants also experienced interpersonal challenges: "... *intimidated by the people you meet up with for the first time, because you are not comfortable around them*" (Participant 6, male). It is apparent that the main contingency was that participants did not know what to expect and what was expected of them.

In summarising the section, it is clear that the participants initially experienced mixed emotions with regard to becoming students and being away from home. After realising that they were unprepared for the challenges of being students, both male and female participants experienced intense negative emotions, including stress, anxiety, and frustration.

5.1.2 How I managed my emotions

During the course of the first year, participants managed to progress towards higher levels of emotional competence. All the participants were able to learn from their mistakes, adjust their expectations and accept their circumstances. They also developed various strategies to alleviate the pressure they experienced, such as self-motivation, listening to music, prioritising, and associating with positive people. In the next section, the adaptations and strategies used to relieve the participants' emotional strain are reflected.

After entering higher education, most of the participants found that they did not have the academic resources necessary to succeed in higher education. Most of the participants made mistakes, which was a difficult learning curve. This is reflected in the following statement by Participant 5 (female): “... *let's say you failed in a test. By the second semester you know this [is] what happened last semester. [Now] I really have to study ... you are going to have less stress.*” After participants had developed a clearer idea of what higher education entails, most participants experienced less stress. This is apparent in the following statements: “*The first semester is the most emotional part because everything is unexpected ... In the second semester, you have a clear idea of what to expect. So, there is less emotions involved and it becomes part of your life - a daily routine*” (Participant 3, female), and “*I know what is expected. I know what I have to do. I know what I have to study ... I know when to start preparing for it*” (Participant 6, male). These statements also illustrate that knowing what to expect, enabled participants to develop a routine, plan ahead, and experience more security. Another consequence was that participants were able to adjust their own expectations. This process is reflected in the following statements: “... *first semester you push for things to go your way, and if it doesn't you feel like, 'I've lost this.' But going into the second semester you realise, 'OK, I don't have to have control over everything' and you [become] more confident*” (Participant 4, female), and “*So, you get into a situation where you don't have much choice but to deal with what you have ... to tolerate and just manage ... To overcome all the obstacles that you come across*” (Participant 3, female). By accepting and managing their situation, these participants felt more comfortable and self-confident to function independently and to persevere.

Participants' fear of failing also served as motivation to persevere. The following statements illustrate the aforementioned: “*I was forced to think, 'When I fail, I lose this. If I lose this, I*

will have to go home' - that's not the choice ... I just had to push ...” (Participant 2, female), and “... *I just told myself, 'I am going to do this. I am going to pass even if I fail some of my modules.' ... I don't [want to] end up like my sister and drop out. I am not a quitter*” (Participant 1, female). These statements reveal the importance of succeeding in higher education for first-generation students as well as the lack of first-generation role models who have succeeded.

Participants also used specific strategies to manage their emotions. A strategy mentioned frequently was listening to music: “*I just listen to music ... there is always a song for each and every situation*” (Participant 9, male), and “... *listen to some soft music ... that makes you happy on the inside*” (Participant 1, female). Listening to music enabled participants to express and manage their emotions.

In their accounts, participants revealed that they understood the value of prioritising. This realisation is reflected in the following statements: “*I felt like restricting myself from a lot of things will help. [Rather] than me letting myself get involved in so many things that I end up losing myself and not having control*” (Participant 3, female), and “*I was a first year and was vulnerable to anything that would come my way ... [I] will ask, 'How is that going to contribute? Will it give me credits for my degree?' No ... it will be a disappointment for my parents if they hear that I won stage door but I failed a module*” (Participant 7, male). Especially the statement made by Participant 7 (male) shows that the participant understood that he had to place his academic career before anything else. From their accounts, it is clear that participants knew that being first-generation students required a greater academic input from them.

It was evident that participants realised the importance of identifying and interacting with positive individuals. Participant 8 (male) commented, “... *if you associate yourself with the negative people who are always going to tell you that, 'Ah, we are going to fail,' you are going ... to fail.*” Being able to distinguish between who to identify with and who not to identify with had a positive influence on the participants' emotional well-being.

Most of the participants used previously developed coping strategies to manage stress in their new circumstances. A statement such as “*I always pray about my emotions*” (Participant 7, male) reveals that this participant's religion served as a strategy to manage his emotions. In this instance, using previously developed strategies to cope with new challenges was effective. However, other participants' strategies were ineffective in their new circumstances. The

following statement illustrates this: *“I just wanted to solve everything now ... I used to bottle things up inside and I used to portray this happy face”* (Participant 2, female). This statement also illustrates the individual differences in coping with challenges.

Participants were able to develop and apply more coping strategies later during the first year. Participants experienced less negative emotions later in the year, which could indicate that their strategies became more effective. The following comment of Participant 4 (female) illustrates this participant’s increase in awareness, which added to her coping: *“... going into the second semester, you realise, ‘OK, I don’t have to have control over everything’, and you are more confident.”* The statement by Participant 3 (female) reveals the important link between early success and the participant’s motivation and coping: *“... the fact that you managed to survive and you succeeded in your first semester. You come back with your head held high.”*

The majority of participants affirmed that they continued to use the emotional management strategies they had developed during their first year. Participant 8 (male) stated *“... now it [the emotional management strategies] comes naturally. I know that I am going to write a difficult module, but I know how to relax myself.”* The participant’s decision to use strategies developed during the first year in his second year shows the effectiveness of the strategies he was able to develop during the first year.

In conclusion, participants admitted that it was demanding to cope with the challenges they faced during their first year. Once participants understood what was expected of them, they became calmer and were able to adapt their expectations. All of the participants were able to develop and implement a variety of emotional management strategies during their first year. The majority of participants continued to use the coping strategies developed during their first year in their second year.

5.2 My People at Home

In the next theme, participants’ experiences regarding their family relationships during their first year are discussed. The participants’ connections to family and their parents in particular constituted an important factor in participants’ adjustment or lack of adjustment to higher education. Participants’ self-motivation was connected to the expectations their parents and people in their hometowns had for them.

5.2.1 My parents' involvement and expectations

All the participants' parents supported their children in furthering their education. However, because their children were the first to attend higher education, the parents were unable to identify with the challenges their children faced. The parents also found it difficult to assist in their children's academic decision-making; consequently, most of the participants found it difficult to be the first in their family to attend higher education.

Participants' parents placed great value on their children furthering their education. Participants mentioned that their parents supported them and expected them to go to university: "... my parents supported me all the way. They told me that if I am happy, they are happy" (Participant 9, male), and "They [my parents] told me, 'Whatever happens, we will make a plan to get you to varsity to get your degree'" (Participant 10, male). Some of the participants' parents gave their children the freedom to make their own decisions: "... they [my parents] wanted me to pursue in any career of my choice. As long as I would be someone in the future" (Participant 7, male), while other participants' parents were very specific on which career their child had to follow: "... my mother wanted me to change [my degree] ... She thought that with my degree I am not really going to find a job" (Participant 4, female). The latter statement also reveals the inconsistency between the participant and her family's ideas surrounding choosing a field of study. Some of the participants admitted that they changed their initial academic career path because their parents were afraid they would not earn enough money in their first career choice. This tendency is evident in the following examples: "... the drama door is not closed up for me ... in the future, I still want to pursue something in the drama category but for now because of family issues and ... 'just get the certificate' ... let them rest assure that I have my law degree" (Participant 6, male), and "... first get my degree then present it in front of them ... now I can do my stuff" (Participant 7, male). The aforementioned statements further provide evidence that participants' parents regarded higher education as a means to ensure a future for their children.

However, after entering higher education, the knowledge and skills typically provided by parents who have attended higher education were not available to these participants (first-generation students). This is evident in the following statement: "... most of the parents who have not gone to university, don't really know the different fields and everything" (Participant 8, male). For this reason, all of the participants mentioned that they were compelled to attain

information about higher education and possible academic careers on their own. This situation complicated some of the participants' decision-making processes. The following statements summarise how two participants decided on their academic careers: "*I didn't want to do accounting really. The only reason I chose it was because I looked at my prospectus and I saw this is something I can do*" (Participant 8, male), and "... *both my friends from my high school came to the same university to study it [a degree]. And I [thought], 'It will make the three of us, why not?'*" (Participant 7, male). These statements reveal that these participants' parents were eager for them to attend higher education, but did not have adequate information to help the participants make an informed decision about an academic career. In addition, participants did not consider future possibilities based on their current decision: "... *when I got here I wanted to do Chemistry, but I didn't really know what I really wanted to do with Chemistry*" (Participant 9, male), and participants were able to learn more about their career path only after being exposed to the content in their lectures: "*I realised with my degree I can actually do a lot more than I planned*" (Participant 4, female).

Without a higher education background, participants' parents found it difficult to identify with their children's experiences and challenges at university. This is illustrated in the following statements: "... *now it is the first time that my parents doesn't really really know what's happening. They have no idea and I have no idea*" (Participant 9, male), and "... *my parents don't even understand my modules*" (Participant 1, female). Their parents' inability to understand their academic difficulties contributed to participants' feelings of loneliness and hopelessness.

Participants' parents ensured that their children understood that they had a great responsibility being the first in the family to attend higher education. The pressure participants experienced is reflected in the following statements: "*Remember you are the first person in the family to go to varsity. If you spoil that, know that now it is doomed*" (Participant 7, male), and "*I am the only child. I have cousins, but they sort of failed at varsity and university. I am the only hope*" (Participant 6, male). It is also clear from the statements that these participants were regarded as being examples for other members of their families.

For the majority of the participants being the first to attend higher education, it also meant being the first to leave home for long periods. The participants revealed that being away from home strengthened their relationships with their parents: "... *you realise that you are in a world*

of strangers and nobody really cares about you. Back home they weren't torturing you. It was just a touch of love" (Participant 3, female), and *"We became a family and we just realised that family is important"* (Participant 2, female).

Since the participants were the first in their families to enter higher education, they were also the first to be exposed to the values and beliefs associated with higher education. For most of the participants, being exposed to new values and beliefs made them aware of the importance of the value system created at home: *"... in your first year, you realise that your values that you are taught at home are really important"* (Participant 4, female), and *"... the same thing that I got from home ... [I] put into work when I came here"* (Participant 2, female). For others, this exposure served as a major source of stress and tension between them and their families: *"My grandparents are always complaining ... that I lost ... my Xhosa foundation"* (Participant 1, female).

To sum up, all of the participants experienced support from their parents to attend higher education. However, being the first to attend higher education created challenges for the participants and their families, including making uninformed decisions about their academic careers, loneliness due to a lack of understanding from participants' parents, and experiencing pressure to succeed.

5.2.2 Expectations of my community

Apart from their parents' expectations, participants were also influenced by the expectations members of their community had for them.

Based on the stereotype that few first-generation and black students succeed in higher education, participants experienced that the community at home did not have confidence in their ability to succeed. This sentiment is illustrated in the following statement: *"You know back home they are not [only] telling you, 'You are going to fail', but they are also expecting you to fail. When you fail, they are going to say, 'I hate to say, I told you so'"* (Participant 3, female). It appears as if the doubts of the community and neighbourhood members were instrumental in participants' motivation to succeed, for instance as reflected in the following statements: *"So, the last thing I wanted was to be a first-year dropout and be a statistic ... You are determined to prove a point"* (Participant 3, female), and *"I am going to prove my point to*

these people” (Participant 4, female). Despite being told they would not succeed, participants still believed that they were worthy of attending higher education. The aforementioned is evident in the following statement: *“I came here because I deserve to be here”* (Participant 2, female).

In brief, individuals from participants’ hometowns doubted their ability to succeed in higher education. For the majority of participants, this motivated them to work harder and prove the pessimists wrong.

5.3 My Social Networking on Campus

A prominent theme that emerged from the participants’ discussions was the importance of socialisation during the first year. All the participants experienced an increase in social interaction during their first year. Initial acquaintances were made to assist participants in adjusting to higher education expectations and standards. However, as the year progressed, participants were able to enter into close and meaningful relationships with other students.

Participants admitted that after entering higher education, they felt overwhelmed by the number of people they met. The aforementioned is reflected in the following statement: *“... in high school, you get subjected to your school of about maximum 500 people. And when you get here, stay in a hostel and then you meet more people ... and then you go to class and you meet more people”* (Participant 8, male). Despite feeling overwhelmed, participants understood the value of having someone on campus to assist in their adjustment. The participants’ realisation is reflected in the following statements: *“... you get here, like me first-generation student, and you know no one. You are alone on this huge campus. You have to start from scratch. New friends, new connection and everything. I think it is kind of necessary for you ... to connect to people because if you connect to people, then somewhere, somehow the very same connection is going to help you achieve something”* (Participant 9, male), and *“... university is quite big ... You need to know everything about the campus. So, you can’t do it alone. You have to know people”* (Participant 6, male). These statements also reflect the participants’ eagerness to make new friends. In addition, the statements also reveal the participants’ willingness to ask for assistance from other students and individuals on campus.

Some participants had trouble adjusting to new friends. This is illustrated in the following statement: *“I had to make new friends. So, it took me time to trust new friends. Cause it is not easy to trust new people”* (Participant 4, female). Other participants experienced social challenges, including not feeling accepted: *“... new town, province, everything far away from home ... I thought I was going to come here and make friends easily but didn't ... These girls have their own clicks. They come from high school and they are not into making new friends”* (Participant 3, female). From this account, it is apparent that, initially, it was not easy for all of the participants to enter into new relationships.

Participants who lived in campus residences during their first year, found it easier to make friends and broaden their social network. One participant mentioned how the mentoring programme in the residence assisted in his adjustment to the university's academic requirements: *“... the mentoring in the res (university residence) really helped me. Cause there is a guy [name omitted] who has been in the varsity for, I think, three years now and he was the one mentoring me through accounting. Now I am getting distinctions because of that mentoring”* (Participant 6, male). Another participant emphasised the value of having a roommate during the first year: *“... the person I always turn to with my emotions and stress and everything is my roommate ... whenever I am under pressure ... He knows how to calm me down ... I influence him and he influences me”* (Participant 8, male). Participant 9 (male) provided the following example of how students in his residence helped him to register: *“... there was problems with my AP-score (admission score) ... and I didn't know what to do in this situation. But now I had to open up to someone – which was the HK (house committee of his residence). That step helped me to know ... how it is done”*. From these accounts, it can be inferred that being part of a campus residence ensured security and provided participants with additional opportunities for social interaction and assistance. Although some of the participants regarded university activities, including inters (social activities hosted by other residences on campus), as a *“waste of time”* (Participant 6, male), other participants felt that university activities expanded their social networks: *“You make friends with them [other students], especially people from your department or from the same faculty”* (Participant 7, male). Integration with campus life and activities initiated more opportunities for emotional and social support, which made adjustment easier for these participants.

As the year progressed, the participants were able to choose their friends and form close relationships with other students. This progression in their personal relationships is reflected in

the following statements: *“When it comes to personal stuff, you know who to be open with and who to share with”* (Participant 5, female), and *“... I learned to pick and choose my friends properly”* (Participant 10, male). One participant explained the social transition as follows: *“... we grew out of that stage [of being friends with everyone] ... now we know who we are and where we suit and ... which people to associate yourself with”* (Participant 7, male). In this explanation, it is clear that, as the participant experienced an increase in self-knowledge, he also developed the ability to distinguish between friends and acquaintances.

An example of the closer and more intimate friendships that developed during the first year is romantic relationships. Interestingly, only the female participants reported that they were dating and developed romantic interests during their first year. The participants who entered into romantic relationships described them as demanding and that they struggled to balance their academic demands and being in a relationship. This struggle is illustrated in the following statement: *“... it was tough ... the first semester. I [didn’t] have his time ... Second semester I realised I have to give him time, help him with his work. Then we spent more time together”* (Participant 1, female). Another participant stated, *“When I came to varsity, I prayed that I will not date in my first year because it will be a distraction”* (Participant 3, female). The statement reveals that this participant understood that a romantic relationship during the first year had the potential to interfere with her academic goals.

All the participants understood that the principle of reciprocity was important during their first year, which is clear in the following statements: *“You tell each other or show each other the roads to achieving something”* (Participant 9, male), and *“... if you have something I don’t and I have a thing you don’t ... you might need me and I might need you in a certain time. So I learnt to build relationships around people whom ... I would benefit from knowing ... and they will benefit from knowing me”* (Participant 10, male). Especially the statement by Participant 9 (male) reveals the value first-generation students place on interacting with and relying on other students. Participants were also willing to assist other students, for instance as reflected in the following statement: *“... if a guy comes to my room needing anything, I would say, ‘It is in the fridge, grab whatever’ ... If I had enough bread and someone came along and asked for bread ... Let’s say I had 8 slices, I would tell them, ‘You can grab the four slices, the other four slices are mine’”* (Participant 8, male). In this statement, the participant reveals that despite not having much to offer, he was still prepared to provide for other students. The same tendency is reflected by the following statement: *“I had this tactic ... my housemate was doing the same*

course [as my boyfriend], so I would [know] ... he is not in class. I helped him, he is now doing second year" (Participant 2, female). The statement reflects the participant's concern and active steps to assist her boyfriend (altruistic qualities) in a time when she was the one who needed assistance.

To sum up, all the participants' social interaction increased during their first year. Initially, acquaintances were made to assist in adjusting to the new environment. Later, participants were able to distinguish between friends and acquaintances. Unfortunately, the female participants' romantic relationships served as a distraction. Despite the challenges participants encountered during their first year, they were still able and willing to assist other students.

5.4 Being Exposed to a Diverse Student Population

In this theme, the experiences with regard to participants' interactions with other cultural and racial groups, as well as the effect of these interactions on their ethnic identity, are discussed.

5.4.1 The importance of my culture for me

Family background directly determined whether participants valued their culture before and during the transition to higher education.

Most of the participants were not exposed to a strong cultural foundation at home, for instance as is evident in the following statements: *"We don't have such strict activities or strict ethnic obligations. Well, if there are ... I am not exposed to them that much"* (Participant 7, male), and *"I wasn't really raised in a cultural background. There was no slaughtering of sheep and cows. My parents don't do that"* (Participant 4, female). For these participants, rituals and cultural traditions have a negative connotation (obligations and inflexible customs).

Although the majority of participants did not actively practice cultural rituals and traditions, two male participants indicated that they valued their ethnicity. The next account reflects the importance of culture for Participant 9 (male): *"My parents practiced them and I have seen them and helped them and then I would also practice them."* Participant 8 (male) also provided evidence of his eagerness to teach others his cultural rituals and traditions: *"I want to teach them [my children] my culture ... teach them what I was taught."* These participants

demonstrated a strong ethnic identity. The statements also illustrate that, in contrast to participants who did not value their ethnicity, participants who did participate in cultural rituals experienced a strong connection with their culture and ethnicity.

Thus, participants had different experiences with regard to ethnicity. Some of the participants promoted their African cultural norms and heritage, while others did not value their ethnicity.

5.4.2 Interacting with various language, cultural, and racial groups

After entering higher education, participants experienced an increase in interaction with different racial, language, and cultural groups.

Each student who enters higher education has a unique background and experiences. Some of the participants had little or no contact with other racial, language, or cultural groups before entering higher education. This is clear in the following statement: “... *where I am from, black people and white people don't meet up. Coloureds and black people don't meet up*” (Participant 9, male), and “*I am used to black people. Went to a black school, primary till grade 2 black, cresh black, high school and finished black ... only two white teachers in my school*” (Participant 2, female). However, after entering university, participants were exposed to a diverse student population. This exposure made participants aware of individuals whose ideas and beliefs differed from their own, for instance in the following statement: “*You have to respect people's opinions and views on certain things and accept the fact that not everybody sees the world the way you see it. You must at the same time be open for other ideas but necessarily means that you have to change yours*” (Participant 3, female). From this statement, it is apparent that exposure to a diverse student population also made this participant more aware of and open towards different ideas and opinions.

Participants also had to learn to interact with and accommodate different language groups: “... *you are used to an environment where you can speak your language only ... We just had to accommodate ... You can't just speak Xhosa in front of a white person. That person doesn't understand the language you are speaking*” (Participant 2, female). Some of the participants used their knowledge of different languages to connect with other students on campus, which is apparent in the following statement: “*I have lived in Bloem; I had to learn to speak Sotho. When I am at home, I have to speak Xhosa ... I have a lot of coloured friends. I had to learn to*

... speak Afrikaans ... I had to study with a lot of white people, so had to perfect my English” (Participant 10, male). However, for other participants, language served as a barrier between them and other students. Participant 9 (male) mentioned that the inability to communicate effectively made it difficult to interact with other cultural and racial groups: *“I was not used to always speaking English ... the first two days when I got to res, I tried to stay away from coloureds and white people because I don’t understand Afrikaans ... I focused on Sothos and Tswanas because they understand me.”*

Being part of a diverse student population ensured that participants interacted with people living with disabilities. For some, it was the first time they met individuals with disabilities. Participants in one focus group shared their experiences: *“... at school, I never saw disabled people ... here, I see them every day and I feel for them and I want to know and I want to help”* (Participant 5, female), and *“... I am going on about myself ... This person is blind. How do they do that? ... I should just stand up and stop moping because clearly somebody is going through ten times worse than what I am going through”* (Participant 3, female). The statements reveal how these participants, who experienced various challenges in their first year, were still able to empathise and focus on others in need.

In conclusion, after entering higher education, participants had more opportunities to interact with individuals who were racially, culturally, and linguistically different from them. For the majority of participants, this exposure was positive and prompted them to expand their preconceived ideas. However, other participants still experienced challenges, for instance with regard to language, when interacting with other students.

5.4.3 My reaction towards being exposed to a diverse student population

Participants reacted differently to being exposed to a diverse student population. Some of the participants were intimidated, others tried to ignore the differences, and others actively wanted to understand and accommodate the differences.

Some of the participants mentioned that, on campus, students’ racial identities were too prominent, which contributed to racial tension. Consequently, some participants had negative experiences during their interactions with other cultural and racial groups. Two participants experienced that students segregated themselves along racial lines: *“Here [university], I realise*

that people pay a lot of attention to your ethnic and racial identity ... I didn't understand why do people have to make such a huge fuss about it. 'Why are you studying in Afrikaans?'; 'Why are you not with your own colour?'” (Participant 3, female), and “*... you come here and the racial issue is so magnified that it affects your thinking, your mentality. You always know that, OK, those are white people; those are black people. I should probably associate with black people*” (Participant 8, male). Other participants had negative preconceived ideas regarding racial interaction before entering higher education: “*... I came here and I thought of UOVS (UFS) as a racial varsity ... that black people are just treated inferior, just isolated ... people of different races don't connect*” (Participant 2, female). These statements reveal that certain preconceived racial ideas directed the participants' behaviour in higher education. The statements also illustrate that some of the participants were intimidated by the diversity to which they were exposed in higher education.

Some of the participants felt that the Western culture promoted on campus was too dominant, which made it difficult to express their own ethnic identity. Participant 7 (male) made the following statement: “*Now, in university, we only have one day or rather a week at most in which we celebrate the variety of culture ... the rest of the year, there is no way that you can actually promote your cultural identity. You now believe in Western ideas ... speak English so elegantly, while you can't even understand one of your own languages' words*”, and Participant 9 (male) stated, “*Some forget that, no, we still have our own ways of doing stuff. When you come here [university], the Western ideas kind of overpower you ... there are resses that have cultural events. That's the only time you can see, oh, there is Sothos, there is Vendas, oh, this is how they dress ... other than that, it is Western all the way. No room for other cultures.*” From this statement, it is clear that exposure to diversity on campus made him more aware of the value of his own ethnic identity as well as his need to express his ethnic identity. Participant 8's (male) perspective was, “*I think my culture is more of a solid thing. But us as people are starting to adopt other people's cultures and we implement it in our culture – remove this and keep that. And in 10 years' time our cultures will be so alike that we won't be different anymore ... I think it [my culture] is something I want to preserve ... but what is happening now this globalisation – we are adopting each other's cultures, and we are losing the identity*”. The participant's fear of losing his ethnic identity is apparent in this account.

Some participants felt that they did not want to focus on racial differences. This is illustrated in the following statements: “*... after all, we are all human. We all want to further our*

education. Whether you are black, coloured, purple, yellow, or orange, that doesn't really matter" (Participant 4, female), and "*... differences is not the biggest thing. Because at the end of the day it comes down to one thing and that is being human. And we face the same kind of challenges*" (Participant 3, female). For these participants, it was easier to ignore the diversity than to face additional challenges.

For some participants, it was a positive experience to be exposed to a diverse student population. Some of the participants were curious and had a desire to know more about the other racial groups. This is evident in the following statement: "*The white people are sitting right next to you ... I want to understand them and then they can understand me*" (Participant 9, male). This statement also illustrates this participant's desire to be understood by other racial groups. Exposure to diversity on campus helped participants to feel more comfortable and open to interact with other racial groups: "*I just had this ... white friend from last year. I connected with him ... was very strange because ... when I saw white people, I saw this people who don't like associating themselves with blacks ... it is not every white person, not all white people are like this. Some are good, some are bad*" (Participant 2, female). This statement also illustrates a change in the participant's preconceived perceptions. One participant explained how this exposure changed him: "*... I don't think I am the same person that I was in high school. I have changed. I have seen different people and I have been exposed to different cultures that has really opened my eyes ... from high school, you have your own opinion and you think those are the perfect opinions, but if you come here and you interact with different people, you start to see their side of the story ... you get a more broader spectrum*" (Participant 6, male). This participant's intercultural experiences contributed to his openness to diversity.

To sum up, some of the participants were intimidated by the diversity of the student population, which limited their expression of their own cultural identities on campus. Other participants tried to cope with the diversity by ignoring the differences between students. However, the majority of the participants were able to adapt to and accommodate other racial, language and cultural groups.

5.5 Becoming Independent

Independence was a prominent theme in all the discussions. During their first year at university, participants moved from struggling to gain independence towards finding their own balance and feeling empowered due to greater independence.

5.5.1 My struggle towards independence

Participants found it difficult to become more independent. Initially, some of the participants' parents were too involved in their children's decision-making. However, after entering higher education and being confronted with challenges, most of the participants found it difficult to cope with the responsibilities associated with being independent. During their first year, participants had to learn to balance their independence and interdependence.

Some of the participants felt that, at the beginning of their first year, their parents did not completely allow the independence they wanted: "... *my mother was always the one against my plans. She thought she knew better ... Let me just make my mistakes and I will learn from them*" (Participant 4, female). This statement illustrates the participant's frustration and greater need for independence. Participant 2 (female) commented, "... *if you were in high school they were like, 'Get matric and then you can do whatever you like.' And then you decide, OK, I want to go to varsity. 'OK, get your degree and then do whatever you like'; 'If you get your degree you must find a job.' If you get a job they will be like, 'Get married'.*" In this statement, it is evident that the participant experienced a lack of autonomy and did not like to abide by her parents' rules. Some of the participants had to claim their independence from their parents. This struggle is illustrated in the following statements: "*When you are the youngest child in the family, everybody tends to think they know what is best for you ... I have learned to overcome that and stand firm on my foot with pride*" (Participant 4, female), and "*I had to fight with my parents ... [I] had to struggle alone and fight them, and finally they agreed*" (Participant 1, female). The statements also highlight these participants' need for self-control. However, not all of the participants had the same experience. In the statement: "*We [parents] are not going to force you to do something you don't want to do ...*" (Participant 1, female) it is evident that this female participant's parents gave her the freedom she needed.

After being confronted with the reality of higher education, participants realised the implications of being more independent. This realisation is reflected in the following statements: *“I understood now I am really making major decisions of my life. And whatever decision I make here, it is going to affect my whole future”* (Participant 9, male). The majority of the participants experienced their greater independence as challenging, which is evident in the following statements: *“... you are now in a strange place. You subconsciously break down. You lose that sense of ‘I am in a secure place and everybody is looking after me’”* (Participant 4, female), and *“... you are on your own right. You are used to your parents backing you up ... you have to get things done ... I got very impatient. I cried almost every night”* (Participant 1, female). In an attempt to cope with more responsibilities, participants continually obtained advice and guidance from others: *“... you needed that help [from others] ... to progress as your first year goes on”* (Participant 6, male), and *“We really need other people ... you move away from home ... I felt the need to rebuild a family”* (Participant 8, male). These statements illustrate the important influence other individuals had on the participants’ experiences and development. Participants used different avenues to obtain assistance. Some participants used family contacts: *“Thank goodness my sister was here ... She was there when I ... felt ... I don’t know what to do”* (Participant 3, female), and *“I have a cousin here. She would be with me. If she couldn’t help me, she would get a friend”* (Participant 5, female). Another participant turned to his roommate: *“... the person I always turn to with my emotions and stress and everything is my roommate ... He knows how to calm me down”* (Participant 8, male). Some participants focused on their lecturers’ guidance: *“I interact with [my] faculty heads ... You sort of grow from them”* (Participant 6, male). Having a role model in higher education was of great value for Participant 3 (female): *“I met this girl ... she has done her honours and she is busy with her PhD at 24 ... I really looked up to her.”* From these accounts, it is clear that participants needed the assistance from other individuals to adapt to higher education.

To sum up, participants initially found it difficult to be more independent; therefore, they relied more on the assistance and knowledge other individuals provided.

5.5.2 Independence empowered me

As the participants grew more confident in their ability to act independently, they became more self-focussed. The uncertainty associated with the newfound freedom was replaced by a feeling

of empowerment. The majority of the participants were able to cope maturely with greater independence.

Participants used the information and guidance they had obtained from other individuals to make independent decisions. This process is apparent in the following statement: “... *you learn to depend on yourself ... you realise that people around you won't help you figure stuff out. You have to do it by yourself, because they are not always with you*” (Participant 4, female). As participants grew more confident in their independence, they became more self-focussed. Participants admitted that, as the year progressed, they decided to put their own needs before those of others: “... *I tried to please everyone but also please myself ... but as the year went on, I realised that I should be a bit selfish here*” (Participant 6, male), and “*I became more self-centered in a way ... I was [only] busy taking care of people, and that had [a negative] influence on the way I took care of myself*” (Participant 2, female). These statements illustrate that participants developed autonomy through their dependence on other individuals.

Participants experienced a maturation process in themselves, as illustrated in the following statements: “*I matured. I was able to stand on my own two feet. I was forced ... to make decisions on my own. Couldn't see my parents. Couldn't see anyone who is guiding you*” (Participant 2, female), and “... *I came to university, I had to learn more things. New things. A whole lot of new people ... I matured a lot*” (Participant 5, female). Another participant described her independence as follows: “*You must get used to the fact that you are not going to be spoon-fed every day. You have to find things yourself ... It makes you a stronger person in your first year*” (Participant 4, female). This participant exemplifies that she experienced the growing independence as making her stronger and more confident. Participant 3 (female) shared the same sentiment in the following statements: “... *you can survive on your own. [You] learn to be independent and strong ... now you realise, 'I am much more stronger than I ever thought I was'.*” In this statement, it is evident that the participant underestimated herself and her abilities. Being away from home made it possible for the participant to identify new dimensions in her sense of self. The same participant stated, “... *you knew that you don't have to explain to anybody who you really are. They either see you or they don't. To have a point where you don't have to satisfy anybody. People get to see this is [name omitted], and [name omitted] is not going to try and be someone. I really think I had a platform to empower who I really was and actually realise that I didn't really change that much from high school. Just*

matured with time. Empowered who I really were.” This statement reveals that this participant’s strong sense of self helped her to cope with her growing independence.

The majority of the participants were able to display self-control amid the increase in independence: “... *in high school, I hated home ... the freedom wasn’t there, and I couldn’t wait to get here and be on this freedom-trip ... But when I got here, I realised I don’t actually give myself the freedom I thought I would have here*” (Participant 3, female). This participant also revealed that she was able to regulate her independence. However, Participant 10 (male) perceived the growing independence as an opportunity to abandon responsibilities, which is evident in the following comment: “... *no responsibility – no consequences. I just did whatever I wanted to do ... I just told myself I want to have fun – that was what I was here to do.*”

To conclude, the participants developed autonomy through their dependence on other individuals. As the year progressed, participants felt more comfortable and empowered by their independence. For some, it was easy to regulate their independence, while others rather abandoned their responsibilities in order to cope with their independence.

5.5.3 My academic independence

The theme of independence also emerged from participants’ academic experiences. Initially, various factors including finances, being uninformed, and struggling to adapt to higher education standards limited participants’ academic independence. As the year progressed, participants were able to overcome these obstacles.

Some of the participants were limited by financial constraints. For instance, participant 7 (male) had to comply with the rules of a bursary. He explained, “*I had a bursary before coming to university. But it gave me a restriction to the faculty or rather the courses that I had to enter into ... my parents couldn’t afford the fees and they wanted me to pursue any career of my choice. They said, ‘Here is the opportunity; choose within the given list. Which one would you pursue?’.*”

Other participants experienced the lecturers and the new teaching style as challenging and restricting: “*I struggled a lot ... I am used to back at school where in class we would have a discussion on a question and spend more time on it ... It was difficult because I had to be on*

my own, had to figure things on my own ... You are basically teaching yourself here. The lectures just like guide you” (Participant 1, female). Apart from the lecturers’ new teaching styles, most of the participants felt that the lecturers were not approachable: *“Some lecturers, they just lecture. In high school, you know most of the teachers”* (Participant 2, female), and *“The lecturer isn’t there for you. He doesn’t even motivate you – you don’t have to go to the lecture. You don’t have contact with the lecturer”* (Participant 1, female). The statements illustrate that participants initially were not comfortable in their classes.

Participants also stated that it was challenging to be independent in their cognitive functioning: *“I had to learn to think on my toes ... [I] have to come up with an answer, and that answer shouldn’t be from the book. Even I have to write an essay that had to do with a topic from the book but I should not use information from the book. I had to think outside the box”* (Participant 2, female). This statement illustrates that this participant was not prepared adequately for these academic challenges associated with higher education.

Outside the lecture halls (i.e. when retrieving study material), participants also struggled to function independently. Having to use technology was difficult for Participant 9 (male): *“... there was certain things that I was not aware of ... it is no longer a term, it is a semester. [Lecturers] uses the slides ... where [I am] from you do not use computers ... now you have Blackboard (an interactive, electronic-based communication format between the lecturer and students) and most of the information is posted on there.”* The majority of the participants admitted that it was difficult to be self-disciplined, which is illustrated in the following statement: *“I had to develop self-discipline ... I had to actually learn how to study, because in high school I never studied ... [Last year], you have to make notes. You can’t just study by looking through the work”* (Participant 4, female). However, Participant 3 (female) was able to be self-disciplined: *“When I got here, I don’t know how did it happen, but for some reason I knew exactly how to deal with it and my self-discipline was just on point ... I was able to have self-discipline.”* This participant exemplifies the importance of having developed academic techniques while in high school.

Participants acknowledged that, as the year progressed, they learnt how to adjust to lectures and lecturers. Participants understood that they had to be able to work on their own: *“If I don’t go to class, I am lost ... I have to figure this out by myself. This is where you learn to depend on yourself”* (Participant 4, female), and *“... when you get to varsity, no one is going to force*

you to do anything. There is no homework, no nothing ... you study alone” (Participant 9, male). Participants also learnt to adjust to their circumstances and to develop the necessary academic skills to overcome shortcomings: *“I am one person, not really a slow learner, but I cannot write fast”* (Participant 7, male), and *“Reality sunk in ... you can’t always achieve things in the time you have set”* (Participant 4, female).

For the participants, it was important to put their academic careers before their social lives. This is evident in the following statements: *“During my first year, I would say I had a self-interest ... I do not blame myself for that ... I was more focused on my academics than on anything else”* (Participant 7, male), and *“There was a point that I realised, ‘You know what I am here for myself’ ... All you were focusing on were on your books last year”* (Participant 3, female). The importance of their academic career was also illustrated in their choice of friends. The majority of participants focussed on making friends in their classes: *“Making friends in every class also helped”* (Participant 5, female), and *“Learn to communicate and knowing your class mates really helped”* (Participant 3, female). Especially the AFS (Academic Facilitation Sessions) classes provided the participants with the opportunity to build confidence: *“I think the AFS classes really gave me confidence ... you can interact with the lecturer on a personal basis. And you didn’t really fear the fact to consult to the lecturer”* (Participant 3, female), and *“... you say nothing in the main class. You just sit there and you look at the lecturer ... After that, we get to the other group, which is smaller. We just talk. That’s where you learn that there are other people besides yourself in the lecture hall”* (Participant 4, female). In these statements, the participants highlighted their preference for smaller classes and more collaboration. Being able to rely on the assistance of other students also made adjustment easier for these participants.

As the year progressed, participants’ became more confident in their own academic abilities. Good academic results served as positive reinforcement, as reflected in the following statements: *“... when you realise that your books are not letting you down, I have no reason to be moping because clearly I am getting something right”* (Participant 3, female), and *“I am one of the best performing students in the department and I am very proud of myself”* (Participant 7, male). Thus, being more prepared contributed to participants feeling in control and having more confidence in their own academic abilities.

To summarise, the theme of independence also emerged in participants' statements regarding their academic careers. Initially, various obstacles hindered their progression towards academic independence. However, through the assistance of individuals on campus and an increase in self-confidence, participants were able to overcome the mentioned obstacles.

5.6 Getting to Know Myself

At the beginning of their first year, the majority of the participants focused on adapting to higher education and managing the obstacles that confronted them. As the participants adjusted to their new circumstances, they experienced change within themselves and especially in their career identity development.

5.6.1 Experiencing change in myself

Participants were able to overcome challenges and adapt to higher education expectations during the first year. Their experiences contributed to changes that occurred in them.

Participants had to adapt to their new circumstances by blending in with the other students. Therefore, the majority of the participants hid their first-generation status. During the discussions, only Participant 9 (male) mentioned his first-generation status: *"It is really important, cause now you get here like me first-generation student and you get here and you know no one."* None of the other participants spoke of their first-generation status, and they did not include it as being part of their identity.

Some of the participants felt that interacting with diverse students made it possible for them to adjust or confirm what they believed and valued: *"You must at the same time be open for other ideas but necessarily means that you have to change yours ... you don't allow certain things to influence you easily because you look for facts and a proper reason before you allow dramatic changes in your life"* (Participant 3, female). These statements reveal that this participant had enough self-knowledge to evaluate when change was necessary.

Some of the participants acknowledged that they had not experienced change in their value systems. They applied the principles they had been taught at home in their new circumstances, which is evident in the following statements: *"I come from a family which promotes respect.*

So, I don't think it changed that much, because respect has always been one thing that I admire and uphold" (Participant 9, male), and *"When one comes to a new place, for me it was to remain loyal to home ... I believe that I didn't come here to change but to establish my education, to broaden my knowledge, but not to include other weird changes ... You remained loyal to your beliefs back home and how your parents raised you. I think the fact that you respected it when you grew up ... you don't really find a reason to change"* (Participant 3, female). For these participants, exposure to other cultural ideas and values did not affect their beliefs.

Participants also experienced that they were becoming more mature during their first year. An example of participants' growing maturity was the value they placed on being unique, which is evident in the following statements: *"... I have to grow up. There is no more trying to please this person ... you are learning to be more content with yourself ... People must accept you for who you are. And if they don't, they can go fly"* (Participant 4, female), and *"I think the fact that you don't care anymore about who says what, you become stronger ... You learn to stand up and remain who you are and not always try to impress"* (Participant 3, female). These statements also illustrate an increase in self-acceptance and pride in oneself. However, some participants provided evidence of changing themselves in order to fit in: *"It's not like I want to please them. I just want people to be happy. I don't like people being sad"* (Participant 2, female), and *"Our characters begin to change ... I don't know why. To fit in"* (Participant 1, female). For these participants, it was important to feel accepted and to act like the other students.

In brief, all the participants experienced change in themselves during their first year. In most cases, the changes contributed to greater self-acceptance.

5.6.2 Finding my career identity

During the first year, participants were able to attain information and learn more about themselves in an academic context. As a result, they were able to begin to formulate future career possibilities and career identities.

Participants learned more about the requirements of their academic careers during the first year: *"In my course, I think that I need that open-mindedness"* (Participant 8, male), and *"... in your*

first year, you get to know more about the course and you sort of grow into the course. For example, if you do law ... you have to be very disciplined, and I think, depending on what course you are doing and the people you will meet ... you grow into that course” (Participant 6, male). These statements illustrate that participants entered academic careers unprepared and without clear expectations. The statements also reveal that these participants were able to make adjustments based on their observations and experiences.

As the first year progressed, participants developed clarity with regard to which academic careers to follow. For some, this meant changing their academic path: *“I came here with the concept of me being a psychologist. Then I had all these modules and I fell in love with criminology. So, now I am thinking of following the criminology-route”* (Participant 1, female). Others felt more certain that they had made the right decisions: *“... I fell in love with accounting. And then I was exposed to the accounting world and I think now I really want to be a CA”* (Participant 8, male). These statements illustrate that participants reflected on and gathered information about their current academic careers. Participants learnt more about their career identities, as is evident in the following statements: *“When I am done with this degree, after working, I want to pay to study Architecture”* (Participant 1, female), and *“When I get my degree, I get my honours. When I get my honours, then I work and do my master’s part-time”* (Participant 2, female). These participants had already started thinking of continuing with additional degrees. These statements also confirm that participants were able to move their focus from current obstacles to planning for future ventures.

In brief, participants were able to gather information and apply introspection in order to develop a career identity. Therefore, the majority of the participants were able to develop clarity about their career choices and future academic career possibilities.

5.7 Summary of the Main Themes

During the analysis of the focus group discussions and individual interviews, participants were able to express the emotions they experienced during their first year. The majority of participants experienced mixed emotions before entering higher education. After the initial excitement of entering higher education, participants faced challenges associated with higher education. Participants experienced feelings of being unprepared, which resulted in emotions

of frustration, anxiety, and stress. Later in the year, as participants implemented various strategies to manage emotions, they became more self-confident and positive. From their accounts, it became clear that the strategies developed during their first year, were still being implemented in their second year.

Participants also discussed experiences associated with their families and being the first to attend higher education. All the participants' parents supported their decisions to further their education. Although their parents were uninformed about the logistics regarding attending higher education, they still provided emotional support and advice where possible. However, participants mentioned that they felt lonely because their families could not identify with the challenges they were facing in higher education. Being the first to attend higher education also meant that participants were underprepared and uninformed when they had to make important decisions. Participants felt pressured to succeed because they were viewed as examples other family members would be able to follow. Other consequences of being away from home were the improvement in familial relationships and greater appreciation for family values. The community in participants' hometowns had low expectations about participants' likelihood to succeed in higher education. These doubts motivated participants to prove people at home wrong.

All the participants entered higher education with a limited social network, with a rapid increase in social interaction during their first year. The majority of the participants were able to build social connections. Participants who resided in campus residences experienced more opportunities for emotional and social support. Initially, acquaintances assisted participants in gaining information and adjusting to higher education expectations. However, as the year progressed, the majority of participants were able to form intimate relationships with other students. Only the female participants included accounts of their experiences with regard to romantic relationships. Participants were also able to provide evidence of altruism and their willingness to assist other students during their first year.

Since the South African student population is very diverse, participants experienced increased interaction with other racial, language and cultural groups. Participants also experienced an increase in interaction with people living with disabilities. While some participants felt intimidated by this diversity and wanted to ignore the differences, the majority of participants were able to provide evidence of an increase in their awareness and active steps to appreciate

individuals who were different from them. Another consequence of interacting with diverse student groups was the influence on participants' ethnic identity. Some of the participants became more aware of the value of their own ethnicity and developed a fear of losing their ethnicity because of exposure to diversity.

The theme of independence emerged from all the participants' discussions. Participants mentioned that their parents' involvement initially frustrated them, and they wanted more independence from their parents. However, after entering higher education and being confronted with greater responsibilities, participants found it challenging to cope with the greater independence. Despite having more independence, all the participants valued advice and guidance from different individuals on campus. Different avenues were used to attain information and assistance. Participants had to learn to balance their dependence and independence, which resulted in feelings of empowerment. The topic of independence also emerged in their academic careers. Practical aspects (i.e. bursaries) and personal aspects (i.e. lack of information) initially limited participants' academic independence. The participants found it difficult to adjust to the lecturers, teaching methods, and the new technology. However, as the year progressed, participants became aware of what was expected of them, became more self-confident and disciplined, and prioritised their academic careers. They appreciated collaborative learning experiences and felt more comfortable to interact with other students and lecturers.

As the year progressed, participants became aware of changes taking place in themselves. Participants were exposed to new ideas and values that either made them revise their own beliefs or made them appreciate their original value systems. Participants also mentioned that they felt that they had matured during their first year. The majority of the participants experienced self-acceptance, while some participants still felt that they had to change themselves in order to fit in. The experiences and the information participants had gathered during their first year contributed to the development of a strong career identity. Some decided to change their academic careers, while others experienced confirmation that they were on the right career paths. The majority of participants had already started planning to do additional university degrees.

5.8 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, a presentation of the themes and subthemes resulting from the data analysis was provided. Evident from all the accounts was that participants experienced the transition to university as an enormous leap across social, cultural, and academic barriers. The first theme, 'My emotional reactions when confronted with the challenge of higher education' described the variety of emotions participants experienced during their transition and the emotional management strategies implemented. In the next theme, 'My people at home', the researcher incorporated participants' experiences with regard to the reactions of their family members and communities towards their attending higher education. The challenges associated with being a first-generation student were also discussed. The third theme, 'My social networking on campus', consisted of accounts of participants' social interaction on campus. This section included making new friends, entering into close relationships, and implementing reciprocity. Socialising with other students also contributed to 'Being exposed to a diverse student population' (theme four). In this theme, the discussion centred on participants' interactions with other racial and cultural groups and the effects of these interactions on their ethnic identity. The next prominent theme was 'Becoming independent'. Participants initially found it difficult to be more independent, but later they mentioned the value of being more independent. Finally, in the theme 'Getting to know myself', the discussion concentrated on the changes participants experienced in themselves and their career identities. In the next chapter, the mentioned themes will be considered in relation to the literature.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS

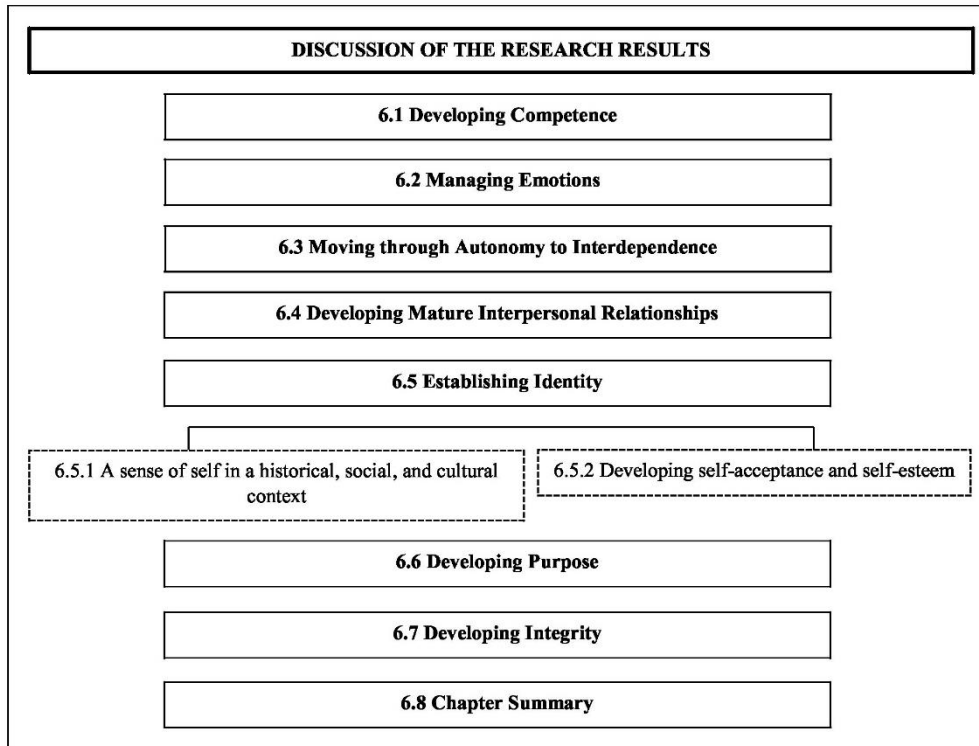


Figure 8. Visual display of Chapter 6 outline

In Chapter 6, the emerging themes are interpreted in the light of the existing research and literature. The research aim of the study, namely to explore black first-year, first-generation students' experiences related to identity development, as informed by Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theoretical framework, guides the discussion. A comparison with other research studies assists in determining whether the current research findings correspond with or vary from existing knowledge on identity development.

6.1 Developing Competence

In this study, participants reported that their first year enabled them to develop the necessary intellectual and interpersonal competence. Aspects regarding physical and manual competence did not emerge from the participants' discussions.

The majority of the participants found it difficult to adjust to the high academic standards of higher education. This finding is consistent with other researchers' findings on the subject (Collier & Morgan, 2008; Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum, 2003; Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005; Pascarella et al., 2004; Penrose, 2002). Researchers agree that the absence of a university degree in the immediate family results in the majority of first-generation students entering higher education academically unprepared and with inadequate information regarding higher education (Gibbons & Borders, 2010; Ishitani, 2003, 2006; Keels, 2013; Pascarella et al., 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Penrose, 2002; Van Schalkwyk, 2007). However, one of the participants was able to apply self-discipline and effective time management from the onset of her first year. To understand this finding, it is important to consider Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory that students who are better prepared for higher education can process the new and diverse experiences and challenges effectively. For instance, in Van Zyl-Schalekamp and Mtombeni's (2015) study, it was determined that South African first-generation students who receive adequate academic preparation during high school, are able to overcome the challenges associated with being the first in the family to attend higher education. This finding confirms the theory that the successful completion of developmental tasks in one developmental period (in this case adolescence) will enhance the chance of successful adaption in the next developmental stage (emerging adulthood) (Havighurst, 1948; Roisman et al., 2004).

Participants initially found it difficult to interact with lecturers and to change their perspectives with regard to the different roles teachers and lecturers fulfil. This finding is consistent with other researchers' observation that first-generation students find it challenging to interact with faculty members and support staff (Botha et al., 2013; Demirian, 2010; Hinderlie & Kenny, 2002; Lunceford, 2011; Olenchak & Hébert, 2002). Interestingly, participants who attended the facilitation (AFS) classes, which were smaller and more collaborative, did not experience the mentioned challenges. This finding corresponds with findings by Rovai, Gallien and Stiff-Williams (2007) and Stephens, Fryberg et al. (2012) that individuals promoting a collectivistic cultural orientation, as is the case with most first-generation students, prefer more social interaction and personal assistance in order to feel comfortable and function effectively in classes (Rovai et al., 2007; Stephens, Fryberg et al., 2012).

As the year progressed, participants experienced improvement in their academic performance and skills. This finding is supported by Demirian's (2010) observation that, owing to black students' academic underpreparedness, they require additional time to develop academic skills

(i.e. time management and study skills) and to adjust to academic expectations. It is also plausible that the participants academically felt more capable later during their first year. According to Chickering and Reisser (1993) and Vuong et al. (2010), to a certain extent, students' academic self-efficacy will determine their academic performance and self-confidence.

The participants experienced an increase in social interaction and interpersonal competence. This finding is consistent with Bartoszek and Pittman's (2010) theory that emerging male and female adults experience an increase in their interpersonal identities and skills. Chickering and Reisser (1993) state that interpersonal skills are important for the development of mature interpersonal relationships. Therefore, it was decided to provide a more in-depth discussion on the participants' interpersonal development in the section on developing mature interpersonal relationships.

Accounts on physical and manual competence development did not emerge from the participants' accounts. None of the participants took part in any sport or extracurricular activities presented at the university during their first year. In Pascarella et al.'s (2004) research, it was also determined that first-generation students generally do not participate in extracurricular activities. A possible reason for this occurrence is that individuals with a low socio-economic status (SES) tend to be less involved in extracurricular activities than their counterparts are (Allar, 2008). Since first-generation students generally form part of the lower SES group (Bui, 2002; Lourens et al., 2014; Soudien, 2008), it is possible that financial aspects limit their extracurricular involvement. Another explanation for the lack of involvement in extracurricular activities could be that first-generation students allocate of their resources to academic demands and adjusting to higher education (Bui, 2002; Vargas, 2004). Participants provided the same reasons in the present study.

According to the participants in this study, as the year progressed, they grew more confident and felt more capable of overcoming any obstacles they encountered. This finding is similar to the findings by Shelton (2013) that, when first-generation students' interact with other students and faculty members, they obtain social and cultural capital, which makes them feel more comfortable and confident. Hence, development in the social domain promotes development in cognitive processes, and vice versa (Santrock, 2011). This finding is also congruent with the notion of theorists (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Taub, 2008) that development in students'

general competence will lead to an overall sense of competence and confidence in their abilities.

The transition from high school to university was challenging for the majority of the participants. However, participants were able to develop the competencies necessary to adapt to their new academic and social circumstances.

6.2 Managing Emotions

All the participants were able to describe the emotions they experienced during their first year. Their initial feelings of excitement were replaced by negative emotions including frustration, anxiety, stress, loneliness, confusion, intimidation, and fear. Some of the participants were able to cope with their emotions, while others' inability to cope contributed to the development of depression and ulcers. Fewer negative emotions were experienced later in the year.

Participants experienced more negative than positive emotions during the transition from high school to higher education. Although an increase in the amount of stress, anxiety, and depression during the transition to university is common (Adkins et al., 2009; Arnett, 2004; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Cooke et al., 2006), researchers agree that first-generation students face additional challenges (Bui, 2002; Christie et al., 2008; Ishitani, 2003; Wheeler, 2014). Some of the challenges participants had to face were being less prepared for the academic challenges associated with higher education, having less instrumental assistance from their parents, and experiencing a burden of responsibility to succeed. According to Chiang et al. (2004), coping strategies are culture specific, and for black students it is important to involve their family, friends, and significant others in their strategies. Since first-generation students' parents are not able to identify and assist with the challenges their children face, these students tend to have limited coping strategies, which makes it difficult for them to manage their negative emotions (Hodge & Mellin, 2010; Jenkins et al., 2009; Williams & Butler, 2010). The same observation was made in this study.

None of the participants mentioned that they felt guilty because they were more successful than their parents. This finding is interesting, since other researchers (Bui, 2002; Richardson & Skinner, 2000; Vargas, 2004) suggest that first-generation students tend to experience 'survivor conflict', including guilt and shame, after entering higher education. This finding can be

explained by Gofen's (2009) theory that unconditional support by parents of first-generation students (family capital) can counter the effects of survivor conflict. Thus, the support provided by participants' parents made it possible for the participants to experience less guilt and shame for entering higher education.

All the participants mentioned fear of failing. Researchers (Bui, 2002; Gofen, 2009; Stuart, 2013; Wheeler, 2014) agree that this is a common emotion experienced by first-generation students at university. According to Gofen (2009), first-generation students experience a fear of failing when their families doubt their abilities. However, in the current study, members of the community and not members of the participants' family doubted their ability to succeed in higher education. This contributed to conflicting emotions in the participants: fear of failing but also motivation to succeed. McNair (2004) points out that first-year students who experience self-doubt, including doubt by family and community members, can be assisted by individuals on campus, including mentors and role models, to promote a positive change in self-perception. The majority of the participants had mentors and role models during the first year, which could have made them aware of and motivated them to change their negative perceptions. It is also likely that support by the participants' parents made them aware that they had a responsibility towards their parents to succeed. Thus, the negative expectations of community members served as extra motivation to endure (Gofen, 2009; Hodge & Mellin, 2010; Winkle-Wagner, 2009).

The participants desired to succeed during their first year. As already mentioned, the majority of the participants were motivated by their parents' support and belief that they would succeed. This finding is supported by Gofen's (2009) theory that first-generation students have a desire to please their parents and they are motivated to fulfil the expectations of their families. Other participants were motivated by the idea that a degree would improve their socio-economic stance. According to Turek (2012), first-generation students are motivated to attend higher education in order to take better financial care of themselves and their families.

In the participants' accounts, it became clear that they experienced fewer negative emotions later in the year. Other researchers identify various reasons to explain this observation. Rutledge et al. (2004) determined that active engagement in a broad range of social relationships contributed to a decrease in negative emotions, including depression. Anderson and Lopez-Baez (2011) highlight that positive adaptation, including the acquisition of new skills,

moving outside of one's comfort zone, and expanding cognitive abilities, could reduce negative emotions. Chickering and Reisser (1993) also theorise that, when students develop mature self-regulation techniques, they become more effective in understanding and confronting their negative emotions. All these aspects emerged from the participants' discussions.

Participants did not make much reference to the positive emotions they experienced during their first year. However, this does not mean they did not experience positive emotions. Chickering and Reisser (1993) stipulate that students who experience movement in this vector are able to balance their negative and positive emotions. Thus, the fact that participants experienced fewer negative emotions later in the year can be considered as proof that they were able to experience positive emotions, which they used to balance negative emotions. On the other hand, it is possible that the retrospective design of this research contributed to this finding. According to Buchanan (2007), people tend to recall negative emotions when the situation they are recalling was experienced as challenging, as was the case for the participants in this study. Based on this perspective, participants did experience positive emotions, but they did not recall the positive emotions they experienced during the interview or focus group discussion.

Participants were able to describe and confront the negative emotions they experienced during their first year. Participants also learnt how to manage their emotions and express them in appropriate ways.

6.3 Moving through Autonomy to Interdependence

Based on previous research (Cross et al., 2003; Stephens, Fryberg et al., 2012), black first-generation students display interdependent qualities even before entering higher education. During the transition to higher education, some of the participants found it difficult to be more self-reliant. However, as the year progressed, participants became more comfortable and able to balance their independence and interdependence.

All the participants mentioned that it was challenging to be more independent during their first year. This finding is also suggested in previous studies (Lockett & Lockett, 2009; Stephens, Fryberg et al., 2012; Stephens, Townsend et al., 2012). Lockett and Lockett (2009) determined that one of the reasons first-generation students found it challenging to function independently was that they were dependent on the feedback of important others during decision-making.

Since first-generation students' parents are able to provide only passive support (Gibbons & Borders, 2010; Turek, 2012), it is possible that especially the female participants did not feel safe in their progression towards independence (Beyers & Goossens, 2003; Gilligan, 1982; Taub, 1995). Stieha (2010) also found that first-generation students felt that being too independent would lead to abandonment by their family and parents.

The majority of the participants accepted the responsibility to manage their independence maturely. Yet, some participants associated greater independence with an opportunity to abandon their responsibilities. This behaviour is not abnormal for emerging adults who are still experimenting with their identity in the moratorium phase of their identity development (Arnett, 2000; Berger, 2008; Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 2002). It is also important to consider that these participants were only beginning to experiment with their independence. According to Flowers (2002), senior students, who function in a higher stage of personal development, will manage their autonomy more maturely than first-year students will.

All the participants recognised and accepted the importance of being interdependent during their first year. Participants depended on the feedback and assistance of individuals on campus. This finding is supported by Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory that shifting from being dependent on parents to depending on peers, non-parental adults, and university staff is a normal progression towards developing emotional independence. In addition, despite the challenges they were facing, participants were able to promote reciprocity by focusing on the needs of other students, including disabled students. It is also possible that participants displayed interdependent qualities as well as reciprocity because of their ethnic and first-generation status (Arnett & Brody, 2008; Bui, 2005; Chiang et al., 2004; Cross et al., 2003; Stephens et al., 2011; Stephens, Fryberg et al., 2012). Cabrera (2014) and Shelton (2013) determined that, owing to first-generation students' underpreparedness for higher education, they tended to be more dependent on others' input and assistance. Furthermore, first-generation students often come from a working-class context where interdependence and reciprocity are encouraged (Stephens, Fryberg et al., 2012). These theories could explain why there were no clear gender differences with regard to interdependence (Cross et al., 2003; Pahl, 2011).

The participants developed greater autonomy through their interdependence. This finding is inconsistent with Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory that interdependence is a product of autonomy development. The finding can be explained by Wheeler's (2014) observation that

the more first-generation students know and learn through others, the more confident they are to make independent decisions and act independently. Secondly, moving through interdependence towards greater independence highlights the importance of interpersonal relationships in autonomy development for black first-generation students as well as the possibility that Vector 4 is developed before Vector 3.

Participants initially found it challenging to be more independent. However, they learnt that complete dependence or complete independence was not possible. Their interdependence contributed to their ability to adapt to higher education and to act independently.

6.4 Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships

Participants regarded their relationships on campus and at home as equally important. All the participants experienced an increase in their interaction with other racial, cultural, and language groups. Some of the participants had negative interracial experiences, while other participants wanted to ignore differences between groups. However, the majority of the participants were curious about the functioning of other racial and cultural groups.

The participants' parents supported their children's attempts to further their education. Hicks (2006) makes the same observation. According to Spencer (2013), parents who believe their first-generation child will be successful at university provide support and assistance where possible. This support strengthened the majority of the participants' parent-child relationships, which is consistent with Turek's (2012) observation. This finding is also reflected in studies on black students. According to Choi (2002) and Hinderlie and Kenny (2002), black students tend to maintain strong and dependent relationships with their parents, even after entering higher education.

All the participants in this study were able to enter into and maintain peer relationships during the first year. This is an interesting finding, since researchers have established that first-generation students generally find it challenging to build relationships with other students (Antonio, 2001; Bozick, 2007; Folger et al., 2004; Kahn & Nauta, 2001; Lien, 2002; Pascarella et al., 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Pike & Kuh, 2005). However, the sample of participants in this study differs from those in the above-mentioned studies. None of the participants in this study worked part-time while studying, and at least six of the participants

lived in a campus residence during their first year. According to Chickering and Reisser (1993) and Mohammadi, Schwitzer and Nunnery (2010), students who live on campus experience an increase in the likelihood to interact with other students, which promotes interpersonal competence as well as the development of a sense of self through mature relationships. This theory could also explain why participants in this study did not display gender difference with regard to interpersonal development. It is also plausible that first-generation students' interdependence enable them to relate with other students and to find it easier to enter into relationships (Choi, 2002; Oyserman et al., 2002).

Participants made specific mention of their relationship with classmates. This is interesting, since researchers have determined that first-generation students tend to have more friends off than on campus (Hertel, 2002; Pascarella et al., 2004). It is likely that participants were able to enter into relationships with students in their classes because of the diverse student population on campus. According to Cho et al. (2008), Lohfink and Paulsen (2005), and Pike and Kuh (2005), the more diverse the student population, the greater the chance that first-generation students will be able to identify and enter into meaningful relationships with individuals who have backgrounds similar to theirs.

Only the female participants mentioned that they entered into romantic relationships. This finding is similar to findings by Bartozuk and Pittman (2010) and Draucker (2004) that female students are more engaged in the exploration of romantic relationships than male students are. However, the female participants described their romantic relationships as a distraction, and evidence emerged that the nature of the relationships were more dependent than interdependent. Thus, the romantic relationships participants experienced during their first year have not yet reflected the interdependence of a mature interpersonal relationship, as described by Chickering and Reisser (1993).

The majority of the participants provided evidence of increases in their openness, curiosity, respect, and empathy towards other racial and cultural groups as well as their willingness to comprehend rather than just dismiss or degrade differences. This finding is consistent with Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory that students who become more tolerant of other students are able to accept others in their own right, without being prejudiced or stereotypical. In a diverse student population, students have numerous opportunities to experience multicultural and multiracial socialisation, which contributes to an increase in appreciation and

acknowledgement of differences in other students (Azmitia et al., 2008; Beyers & Seiffge-Krenke, 2010; Bojuwoye, 2002; Chickering, 1969; Chickering & Braskamp, 2009). This increase in tolerance can also be attributed to an increase in identity exploration (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Lien, 2002; Zarrett & Eccles, 2006) and cognitive improvement (Benson et al., 2004; Martínez Alemán, 2010) typically experienced by emerging adults.

Participants did not experience an increase in close interracial friendships. This finding is consistent with findings of other South African researchers on interracial relationships in a South African student population (Soudien, 2008; Zuma, 2013). Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory that mere contact with other racial or cultural groups will not necessarily lead to friendship also supports this finding. In contrast to the finding, Worthington, Navarro, Loewy and Hart (2008) postulate that exposure to greater diversity will contribute to an increase in interracial friendships. Two feasible reasons for the findings of the present study emerged from the discussions. Firstly, language can limit interaction between different racial groups (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011; Jehangir, 2009; Zuma, 2013). Secondly, South African students, especially black students, tend to choose friends based on the similarity in background (i.e. socio-economic, parents' education level, and type of school) (Soudien, 2008; Walker, 2005; Zuma, 2013). The latter can also explain why one of the female participants, who attended her classes in Afrikaans, found it difficult to make social bonds in her classes.

Participants developed the ability to develop quality interpersonal relationships during their first year. They were also able to develop appreciation of differences in other students.

6.5 Establishing Identity

The vector *Establishing identity* consists of seven subsections (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). In this study, only two of the seven subsections emerged from the discussions, namely 'the individual develops a sense of self in a historical, social, and cultural context', and 'the individual develops self-acceptance and self-esteem'.

6.5.1 A sense of self in a historical, social, and cultural context

For the majority of the participants, their ethnic background was not a dominant factor in their self-definition. However, a small number of participants displayed a clear sense of self in a cultural context.

Participants admitted that their family background had a determining influence on whether they valued their culture or not. Participants who perceived that their families did not attach value to cultural traditions expressed ambivalent feelings towards their culture and were unable to define their ethnic identity clearly. This finding is consistent with observations by other South African researchers (Booyesen, 2007; Norris et al., 2008; Rebelo, 2005) that, owing to an ideological shift from collectivism to individualism among the black South African youth, black students are becoming less engaged in their African culture, which contributes to their ethnic identity being less distinct. This observation is also supported by Arnett (2003) and Phinney's (1990) observation that African American students are beginning to reflect bicultural tendencies, combining individualism with a greater emphasis on obligation towards others.

However, another perspective is that, because black students tend to 'hide' their ethnic identity in order to adopt the identity of a 'typical higher education student', they experience less identification with their cultural heritage (Azmitia et al., 2008; Jehangir, 2009).

A small number of participants (mostly males) displayed an eagerness to continue with traditional practices and carry forward the legacy of their ethnic group. This finding is consistent with Chickering and Reisser (1993) and Torres's (1999) theory that the maintenance of an individual's culture of origin will contribute to the development of a strong ethnic identity. These participants admitted that they experienced emotional conflict about the contradicting demands of their African culture and the higher education culture during their first year. Bojuwoye (2002) made the same observation.

The majority of the participants experienced bicultural tendencies during their first year. A small number of participants demonstrated the important influence of being aware of one's cultural and historical background on ethnic identity development.

6.5.2 Developing self-acceptance and self-esteem

During the transition to higher education, some of the participants experienced that they became less self-confident. However, as the participants adapted to their surroundings and felt more competent, they experienced an increase in self-confidence and self-acceptance.

As mentioned in the discussion on development of participants' competence, the majority of participants experienced an increase in self-esteem and self-efficacy during the first year. It is plausible that the participants experienced an increase in self-esteem because they were able to adapt to the challenges they encountered during their first year, and vice versa. Hertel (2002) also determined a link between positive self-esteem and better adjustment on campus, while Chickering and Reisser (1993) postulate that a high self-esteem would contribute to more confidence and assuredness in oneself and one's capabilities. Alessandria and Nelson (2005) determined that first-generation students experienced high self-esteem when they experienced a sense of belonging to a group or student population. It is also likely that first-generation students, who are the first in their generation to attend higher education, experience high self-esteem because of this accomplishment.

During the discussions, participants described their own identities. Participants included personal, racial, and gender characteristics, but did not mention their first-generation status. Mowbray (2008) established that continual interaction with significant others (including students and faculties on campus) contributes to the refinement of first-generation students' identities. Through this interaction, salience is given to the identities significant others value, in this case being a typical higher education student. On the other hand, not including their first-generation status in their self-description could be due to the participants' attempts to move away from their past experiences towards future goals and plans, as theorised by Erikson (1950, 1968).

6.6 Developing Purpose

Participants in this study made their initial academic career decisions without future considerations. However, during their first year, most of the participants obtained occupational information and developed clear vocational plans and aspirations.

Participants found it difficult to connect their academic paths, degree choices and career aspirations. Consequently, the majority of the participants decided on fields of study without considering vocational plans. This finding is supported by other studies (Dubow et al., 2008; Jenkins et al., 2009; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Penrose, 2002; Shelton, 2013; Van Schalkwyk, 2007; Wheeler, 2014). Olenchak and Hébert (2002) attribute this occurrence to first-generation students considering career and graduation goals as being in the distant future and not necessary to define now. Moreover, first-generation students' parents do not possess useful career-related resources and are not able to provide meaningful assistance in their children's academic career choices (Bui, 2005; Pascarella et al., 2004). According to Hertel (2002), Phinney and Haas (2003), and Turek (2012), the knowledge of career opportunities first-generation students' parents do have is limited. Consequently, choices are made based on the amount of money or status the career will provide for the child and the family (Ayala & Striplen, 2002; Bui, 2002; Kamper et al., 2009; Perrone et al., 2001; Stephens, Fryberg et al., 2012). The same observation was made in this study.

One of the male participants mentioned that he was not able to choose the career path that he wanted because he was a bursary holder. This finding is consistent with findings of other researchers (Bui, 2002; Cho et al., 2008; Jehangir, 2009; Hicks, 2012; Wheeler, 2014) that first-generation students come from low-income families and that financial constraints limit and guide their choices while they are at university. This finding also confirms Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory that a student's family background and circumstances at home (socio-economic status of the family) will influence which career path the student will follow.

Participants described themselves as examples for other family members to follow, which meant that attending higher education also served as a family commitment. This finding is consistent with a previous observation made by Hodge and Mellin (2010) and Winkle-Wagner (2009). Based on their findings, first-generation students feel responsible to serve as role models for other family members. First-generation students also tend to feel that failure will reflect poorly on their family members.

During their first year, participants were able to attain vocational information, develop clear career identities, and decide what they do not want to do. Some of the participants decided to change their field of study, while others determined that they were in the right fields of study. The finding that first-generation students begin to explore possible occupational outcomes and

possibilities only after entering higher education is also suggested in other studies (Coombs, 2013; Shelton, 2013). This research finding can be explained by Galilee-Belfer's (2012) theory that only after students have developed academic competence (i.e. know what to do in order to succeed educationally at university), will they be able to make informed decisions regarding future careers. Chickering and Reisser (1993) also assert that being on campus enable students to explore their interests and to develop purpose. However, this finding also suggests that students, including first-generation students, are able to develop in this vector during their first year. Several other researchers (Coombs, 2013; Foubert et al., 2005; Gardner, 2009) have made the same observation. However, this finding is not congruent with Chickering and Reisser's (1993) idea that developing purpose occurs only later in the students' time at university.

After attaining information and assistance from individuals on campus, all the participants were able to either confirm or change their fields of study, which contributed to development in this vector.

6.7 Developing Integrity

Very little evidence emerged from the data that first-generation students developed along this vector during their first year. However, being exposed to a diverse student population enabled participants to initiate the process of questioning and adapting their existing value systems (personalising and humanising values).

All the participants mentioned that they had been exposed to new ideas, values, and beliefs on campus, which enabled them to question and, in some cases, change preconceived ideas and beliefs. When considering this finding from a moral development perspective, participants were beginning to make a transition from a conventional level (which views morality as living by rules) to a post-conventional level (being able to personalise values) in their moral development (Kohlberg, 1969). This finding is also reflected in observations made in studies by Manago (2012) and Zúñiga et al. (2005). Theorists believe that, because of an increase in cognitive functioning, students will be able to reflect upon their own and others' beliefs (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Perry, 1970). Another perspective is that individuals are able to broaden their worldviews because they are exploring and experimenting with different identities (Arnett, 2000; Gurin, 2002; King, 2009; Labouvie-Vief, 2006).

Some of the participants found it challenging to adjust to the new culture on campus. Other researchers have also determined that first-generation students and black students tend to experience a ‘cultural shock’ after entering higher education (Gofen, 2009; Stephens, Fryberg et al., 2012; Stephens, Townsend et al., 2012). According to Jones et al. (2008), one of the reasons first-generation students find it challenging to adapt to higher education is the big difference in the values and beliefs created at home (interdependent basis) and values and beliefs fostered at higher education institutions (independent basis).

It is accepted that black first-generation students will experience more development in this vector during their time at university. According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), an individual’s identity must first be established before integrity development can be promoted.

6.8 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the themes that emerged from the focus group discussions and individual interviews were discussed using Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) seven vectors as a framework. The next chapter provides a conclusion of this study, with particular focus on the limitations and strengths of the study, as well as recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

National and international student population numbers reflect an increase in first-generation students (Heymann & Carolissen, 2011; Ishitani, 2003; Lockett & Lockett, 2009; Orbe, 2008). Despite an increase in research on this subgroup, little is still known about black first-generation students in South Africa. This research study aimed to explore the experiences of black first-generation students in their first year, as well as how these experiences contributed to their identity development. In addition to revealing the unique identity development trends in black first-year, first-generation students, research findings can also add to the growing body of literature on the application of Chickering's theory in a more diverse higher education student population.

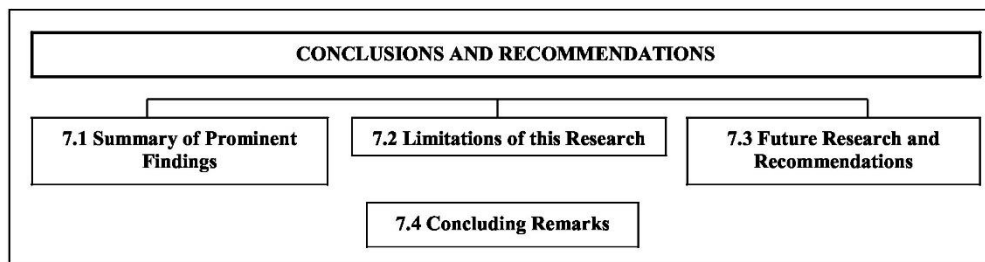


Figure 9. Visual display of Chapter 7 outline

As illustrated in Figure 9, the prominent research findings are summarised, and then the limitations associated with the study are discussed. Finally, recommendations are made for future studies, and concluding remarks are made.

7.1 Summary of Prominent Findings

The aim of this section is to summarise the significant findings with regard to first-year experiences of black first-generation students and how these experiences related to their identity. From the analysis, six main themes were identified, namely 1) My emotional reactions when confronted with the challenge of higher education; 2) My people at home; 3) My social networking on campus; 4) Being exposed to a diverse student population; 5) Becoming independent; and 6) Getting to know myself. The results were found to correspond to a degree

with existing theory and literature on the attainment of vectors, as proposed by Chickering and Reisser (1993).

It is evident that black first-generation students experienced their first year as a time of instability. Apparently, this was due to participants' inadequate preparation for the psychological, social and especially the academic challenges during the first year, because they were the first in their families to attend higher education. The challenges black first-generation students faced are consistent with results on first-generation students in other studies. Although participants faced challenges, they were also able to be concerned about other students' needs.

Generally, emerging adults are viewed as being in a moratorium state of self-focus. However, the majority of participants' relationships with their families either stayed the same or improved during the first year. The participants' parents supported and believed in their children's ambitions and contributed to the importance participants attached to academic success and perseverance. This burden of responsibility could also explain why the negative feedback participants received from community members added to their motivation to succeed.

A significant factor in participants' experiences regarding identity appears to involve the influences of other individuals on their development. Since black first-generation students' parents had limited higher education information, participants relied on the assistance of individuals on campus. Through their interdependence, participants became confident to act and make decisions independently. This finding highlights the instrumentality of assistance by higher education officials in the development of black first-generation students' autonomy. In addition, the assistance black first-generation students received created the foundation from where participants felt safe to explore their career possibilities during the first year. Initially, most of the participants' career choices were based on the amount of money or status the career would hold for them and their families. However, during the first year, participants explored more occupational possibilities, which appear to have broadened their prospects and influenced their identities and especially career identities.

Among the participants was an interest to explore new relationships on campus. However, consistent with other South African studies (Soudien, 2008; Walker, 2005; Zuma, 2013), participants initially limited interaction with other racial groups before becoming open and curious about students who differed from them. Interacting with students in a diverse student

population prompted participants to explore new worldviews. Although the majority of participants indicated that they did not value their culture, bicultural tendencies that combined individualism with a greater emphasis on obligation towards others, emerged. However, the participants who valued their culture displayed eagerness to continue with traditional practices and carry the legacies of their ethnic groups forward.

No clear gender differences in vector attainment emerged from the data. However, some tendencies are worth mentioning. Despite not being able to identify gender differences in developing interdependence, black female first-generation students tend to encounter more difficulty in becoming independent than male students do. This propensity is also reflected in the progression of female first-generation students towards academic independence. Consequently, female first-generation students tend to experience more negative emotions and find it more challenging to manage their emotions during the transition to higher education than male first-generation students do. In an attempt to feel safe in their conversion to greater independence, female first-generation students tend to enter into romantic relationships and/or to stay connected with their parents. This observation also confirms the importance of meaningful relationships, especially in the development of female first-generation students' identities.

Observations made in this study mainly reflect Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory on vector development in students. Firstly, black first-generation students were able to experience development in later vectors even before successfully completing earlier vectors, which confirms that Chickering's vectors are not strictly hierarchical. Secondly, proceeding through the vectors was a positive experience. As black first-generation students gained the strengths and skills associated with each vector, they became more confident and versatile to overcome the obstacles they were facing. Thirdly, the lack in specificity of the definition of each vector made it difficult to determine whether development in a vector had taken place or not.

The study also yielded findings that did not correspond with Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory. Black first-generation students experienced development in the first three vectors, as postulated by Chickering and Reisser (1993). However, black first-generation students already experienced development in Vector 6, *developing purpose*, during their first year. This increase in career exploration could be because the first-generation students did not receive the necessary academic guidance before entering higher education. The order of vector attainment

also differed slightly from the proposed order. Black first-generation students depended on their relationships with other students and individuals on campus to assist in their progression to greater independence. This could indicate that black first-generation students experience development in Vector 4, *developing mature interpersonal relationships*, before Vector 3, *moving through autonomy toward interdependence*. This could also explain why black first-generation students develop independence through their interdependence and not the other way around.

The study contributes to the body of literature on identity development in ethnic groups as well as the application of Chickering's theory in a more contemporary higher education environment. However, this study also gives a voice to the participants. The qualitative contributions clarify that black first-generation students' experiences during the first year did affect their identity development in a particular manner.

7.2 Limitations of this Research

This study has some limitations that need to be considered in future research. Chickering and Reisser's theory of identity development was used to relate the findings of this study to black first-generation students' vector attainment during their first year in higher education. However, critics of Chickering's theory found that it is difficult to determine whether a student has achieved a vector or not. The same difficulty surfaced in this study.

All the focus group discussions and individual interviews were conducted in English. Even though most of the participants were able to express themselves in English, it is their second language. The researcher took precautions to ensure the participants were able to understand the questions and discussions, including defining unfamiliar terms and clarifying questions. Despite these alterations, some of the participants still found it difficult to understand and interpret the questions. It is also possible that participants were unable to articulate the full extent of their thoughts about themselves and their experiences related to their identities.

One of the participants in the second focus group did not form part of the black African population. The participant represented the coloured racial group. During the snowball sampling of participants, it was clearly stated that the participants had to form part of the black African population. The fact that this participant attended the focus group could mean that she

identified herself as being part of the mentioned population group. This situation illustrates the complexity of ethnicity, but also the ambiguity of the boundaries between personal and ethnic identity development. This participant's interactions during the focus group were noted. Her answers were clearly distinguished from the others by the indicator Participant 5, female. The accounts provided by this participant were consistent with the other participants' accounts.

The participants' discussions and interpretations were shaped by the researcher's personal beliefs, values, feelings, and viewpoints. It is acknowledged that the researcher's own ethnicity, socio-economic status, and experiences related to being a student could have caused possible subjectivity in understanding and interpreting participants' answers. Supervisor feedback and a reflective journal were used in an attempt to limit any researcher bias. Furthermore, it is recognised that the experiences that emerged from the discussions were only some of many possible co-constructed by the researcher and participants at the particular time of interaction.

The researcher was a novice in conducting focus group discussions and individual interviews. If the researcher had more experience, she could have created more opportunities for clarification, exploration, and gathering of even richer information.

The retrospective design of this research enabled the researcher to acquire knowledge about the experiences of participants throughout their first year of attending higher education. In this way, participants were able to provide information on their first-year experiences in a focus group or individual interview. However, in a retrospective approach, the accuracy of the information gathered depends on the participants' ability to recall their experiences. Thus, a possible concern is that this approach does not capture the full extent of the nature of the participants' experiences.

Although this study was done on a small scale, the themes identified and the unique developmental trajectories with regard to vector attainment in black first-year, first-generation students highlights the importance of this study. The data gathered will contribute to knowledge about identity development in new-generation students in a South African context.

7.3 Future Research and Recommendations

Several recommendations for future studies can be considered. Most of the considerations pertain to the research limitations mentioned in the previous section as well as the expansion of present research findings in future studies.

Owing to the nature of this study, it is not possible to generalise the results of this research study. In the future, researchers can possibly transfer the findings to different contexts by repeating the study in different settings. By repeating the study in other higher education institutions, additional details regarding identity development of black first-year, first-generation students can be obtained.

Since there are concerns regarding the accuracy of a retrospective approach in capturing the experiences of black first-year, first-generation students, it would be valuable to conduct a longitudinal study. Ideally, this research would begin with an incoming cohort of students and would conclude with the same participants the year after they have completed university. Such a study will also make it possible to determine the influence of black first-generation students' identity development and functioning during the first year on subsequent years in higher education.

Although the aim of the present study was to describe black first-generation students' experiences during the first year, future studies could broaden the focus by including the influence of prominent individuals on the participants' first-year experience. For instance, an interesting finding in this study was that black first-generation students did not experience guilt about attending higher education. This study and Gofen's (2009) study suggest that the support provided by family members will reduce survivor conflict in black first-generation students. Therefore, data from collateral sources may provide in-depth understanding of identity development of black first-year, first-generation students before as well as during the transition to higher education.

This study and Jones et al.'s (2008) study observed that black disadvantaged South African students living on campus found it easier to adapt to higher education than students living off campus did. Future studies could focus on exploring experiences of black first-year, first-

generation students on campus and the influence of these experiences on their vector attainment and identity development.

Finally, it was determined that cultural competence is an important component in the ability of first-generation students to adjust to higher education. Future studies can concentrate on cultural competence in first-generation students and whether it should be included in Vector 1, *developing competence*.

7.4 Concluding Remarks

This chapter focused on concluding the study by giving an overview of the most prominent findings, research limitations, and recommendations. The aim of this study was to explore identity development in black first-year, first-generation students. A qualitative case study approach was chosen to gain deeper understanding of the topic. From the observations made, insight was gained regarding the obstacles black first-year, first-generation students face during their transition to higher education. The results of this study also highlight the unique developmental patterns in vector attainment first-generation students' encounter due to these challenges.

The insights gained from these findings are crucial for the ability of higher education professionals to assist first-generation students in their adjustment to higher education. It is hoped that this study has highlighted the uniqueness of the challenges and development trajectories of black first-year, first-generation students and that further research on the subject will follow.

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APPENDIX A: BIOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE



Focus group: Identity development of black students during the first year.

(Please clearly print all information requested in each field listed below. Where necessary, indicate using a X)

Student information:

Sex/gender:

MALE	FEMALE
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Ethnic background:

ISIZULU	SESOTHO	ISIXHOSA	SETSWANA	OTHER SPECIFY:
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Your age today:

18	19	20	21	22
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Did your parents attend higher education?

YES	NO
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Your field of study (name of degree):

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Describe your identity in two to three sentences:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

APPENDIX B: EXCERPT OF A FOCUS GROUP TRANSCRIPTION

FACILITATOR: OK, good afternoon everyone. You have already read through the consent form and you know why you are here and that it is actually very nice information that we are going to gather today. So, everyone knows the information is confidential. Nobody is going to know your name. I am just going to use the information in my study. All right? Now for identity development. Because that is why you are here today. We are going to focus on identity development in the first year. You are going to look reflectively back to your first year. All right? So, all the questions we are going to ask here is on your first year. It is not for now, it is for when you were first-year. We are going to use Chickering's model of identity development. And according to his model, there is seven vectors or things you have to do before you can develop an identity. So, that is why we have A to H for the different questions; because each question is a specific vector. Let's start with number 1. What do you understand regarding the term identity? Anyone?

PARTICIPANT 3: Because the 'I' is for individual. So, identity may be more of a personal aspect than you being an individual. Cause you are one individual but identity goes more to a personal aspect.

FACILITATOR: OK. So, it is a personal thing? Something unique to each one of us?

PARTICIPANT 4: I think identity is how you portray yourself. How you see yourself. And how you think other people portray you. Because now you are basically focusing on yourself.

FACILITATOR: OK. Well done!

PARTICIPANT 5: Identity is what you know about yourself. When you introduce yourself to others. What you say about yourself. I am so and so. Your personal details. Like your ID.

FACILITATOR: OK. Well done. I really enjoyed that. OK. So, it is actually the attitude you have towards yourself and a sense of self, 'This is who I am.' That is identity. All right? Next question. Reflect on your first year at the university. How did your identity develop? So, we just said what identity is, but in your first year - when you were in a new place and everything was new. How do you know you are unique and this is who I am? How did it develop?

PARTICIPANT 4: Identity in your first year. What happens because you are now in a strange place. You subconsciously break down. You lose that sense of, 'I am in a secure place and everybody is looking after me.' You lose that. That is part of your identity you are going to lose. And then you have to find yourself. Seeing things - your surroundings. You must get used to the fact that you are not going to be spoon-fed every day. You have to find things yourself.

So, it kind of builds your identity. It makes you a stronger person in your first year. Because you have to learn how to survive. Or else you are not going to survive your 4 or 3 years on campus.

FACILITATOR: So true.

PARTICIPANT 3: I think identity makes you realise there are parts of you, you never knew you have. The fact that you can survive on your own. And you are not really going to rely on anybody. And you learn to actually, what shall I say, to ya, just learn to be independent and strong. And you have no choice in most cases.

FACILITATOR: Ya. OK?

PARTICIPANT 5: During the first year, my identity kind of developed. Matured. Cause, like she said. In school I was spoon-fed. And now, when I came to university, I had to learn more things. New things. A whole lot of new people. So, ya I matured a lot.

FACILITATOR: All right! So, how did it make you feel to be in a different place? Was it scary?

PARTICIPANT 3: For me it was a totally new town, province, everything far away from home. I think it was not what I expected it to be. Because I thought I was going to come here and make friends easily but didn't. So, I really didn't like my first year in a way. There was some parts that was exciting. The fact that my books were satisfying. So, I find that my books are my best friends. So, I don't ... I think my first year didn't give me the platform to develop because I didn't have a connection with people.

PARTICIPANT 4: With me it was different. We had friends who come from school and you expect those friends to be around you on campus. So, to me it was kind of different because those friends weren't there anymore. I had to find a way to make new friends and actually to form other surroundings around myself. To make sure if I go there I know they are not going to be there. I had to formulate my mind into thinking, 'You are not with these people anymore. Find new friends.' So, it was that kind of thing that you had to be strong to actually find new people. To get that momentum of, 'OK, I am going to find new friends. The old friends are gone.'

PARTICIPANT 3: There was a point that I realised, 'You know what I am here for myself.' If people are making it hard for me to make friends with them, then I would rather focus on what I am here to do. Otherwise, I am only depressing myself and try and fit in to people. And I don't think I am in high school anymore. I don't need to fit in with any people.

FACILITATOR: No, definitely! It is not high school. You don't have to entertain everyone.

PARTICIPANT 4: Now you just be yourself. People must accept you for who you are. And if they don't, they can go fly.

PARTICIPANT 3: Luckily you are always busy. Like forever ever busy. So, you don't even realise that you are actually struggling to make friends. Until you get those days off and you realise, 'O my gosh! I don't have friends!'

FACILITATOR: OK, that is interesting. Because the main thing is you are in a new situation. So, you have the ability to really define yourself. There is no one who defines you. You must define yourself.

PARTICIPANT 3: But what if it comes from high school. That you have actually accepted who you are. Not to a point that you are hypercritical about yourself and two-faced, but actually realise that you are actually empowered from who you really were. From a more formal basis. Where you knew that you don't have to explain to anybody who you really are. They either see you or they don't. To have a point where you don't have to satisfy anybody. People get to see this is [name omitted], and [name omitted] is not going to try and be someone. I really think I had a platform to empower who I really was and actually realise that I didn't really change that much from high school. Just matured with time. Empowered who I really were.

PARTICIPANT 4: And I think if you get to varsity, you accept yourself the way you are. You don't expect people to like you for who you are not. You actually get into a situation where you claim you are my friend but you don't show the signs of being my friend. So, OK fine. I will be who I am. Whether you like it or not. You get that sense of I have to grow up. There is no more trying to please this person, "I am your friend. I am your friend." When you don't feel like being around them that's fine. Growing up you are learning to be more content with yourself.

FACILITATOR: OK. That's good. All right. The next question. Developing competence. What do you understand regarding developing competence? What is competence?

PARTICIPANT 3: I am not sure. Is it patience and tolerance? Having to tolerate other people around you?

FACILITATOR: Competence, in the Chickering view, is ... it looks at different types of stuff. On an intellectual level, it shows that you can form your own opinion. You are able to do that. On a physical level, it is that you are self-disciplined. That you really can be yourself. OK? And then on an interpersonal level. It is like listening skills, communication skills. That your interpersonal relationships were better. OK? So, that's developing competence. Do you understand that? So, how did your competence develop in your first year?

PARTICIPANT 4: I think, in our first year, we are all shy to talk around people. Because who is around you? But when you got into that there was a certain group of people that you actually could talk to and be yourself around. We had a class. A crazy class. I remember you say nothing in the main class. You just sit there and you look at the teacher. The lecturer. Whatever she is doing. And then after that we get to the other group, which is smaller. We just talk. That's where you learn that there are other people besides yourself in the lecture hall. There are other people that you don't notice, who are more like you. And you really don't take notice because you are scared of your surroundings. So, I think that with competence it is actually being able to listen and look for people who are more like you. And to truly try and understand more people around you. Because we come from different schools. Some of us are from girls' schools and some are from boys' schools. So, being in a situation where you are mixed in class. The mixed thing. When you don't know how to feel. When to feel. Like serious. Talking from experience. You learn that having boys in your class is not that scary. It is like having a girl in your class. But you have to get used to that surrounding. So, that you can be justified by the whole situation of having a mixed class.

PARTICIPANT 3: When coming to the part of saying that you must be able to form your own opinion. I think the fact that you don't care anymore about who says what, you become stronger to raise your view. To argue. You even have guts to fight with a lecturer (management). You don't fear anything. It makes you fearless. And to be able to listen. I think when coming to that part of me in general I am a bad listener. When in an argument I will talk. When you come to tell me your part, I am like, "I don't want to hear it."

FACILITATOR: OK. So, that is a personal thing?

PARTICIPANT 3: That is a personal thing. Where I struggle to be able to listen. Because when we are arguing, while you are telling me what you think, I don't want you to finish. Because I am already thinking what to respond. So, if I wait for you to finish. By the time I want to talk, I have already forgotten everything what I wanted to say. So, on an individual basis, I have learnt a lot of competence by empowering myself with views, opinions and expression.

FACILITATOR: OK! Great!

PARTICIPANT 5: Can I not answer that?

FACILITATOR: How was your self-discipline last year? Did you develop self-discipline?

PARTICIPANT 4: I had to develop self-discipline. Under these circumstances I had to actually learn how to study because in high school I never studied. I took a book and read through it. Last year I had to come here. New subject. Sit down. Go through this. You have to

make notes. You can't just study by looking through the work. You have to really study. With the studying part I developed competence to sit down and be patient with myself. And actually grasp everything that I am going through. Unlike in high school that I ... So, now I had to really get down to it. OK? It is just a new surrounding. 50 pages for one test is not easy. So, now study and make sure you understand everything. With the studying, it came down to you really had to be patient with everything.

PARTICIPANT 5: You really have to have self-discipline here. Because nobody is going to tell you. Like in school you had periods. You were there from 8 to let's say 1 going to classes. Now you can decide, OK, I don't have to go to class. But you have to go to class. Make decisions for yourself.

FACILITATOR: OK, it sounds like you developed competence. Really. Because it is actually very important to have self-discipline. That's a very important characteristic.

PARTICIPANT 3: For me self-discipline. I think because of high school I was in a res. So, my mom was never there. My parents were never there. And it was always a thing of, "It is yourself. I am not going to force you to get 80. I am not going to force you to pass. But I am not saying you must fail." When I got here, I don't know how did it happen, but for some reason I knew exactly how to deal with it and my self-discipline was just on point. With everything I had to do. With time management and keeping track of everything. I was able to have self-discipline. I take what I had from high school.

FACILITATOR: OK. Well done! So, I think we already answered the third one there. In which areas did your competence develop? So, we did that one. The next one is managing emotions. I think that is a very important one. You are very emotional in your first year. Describe your emotions in your first year. When you got here, what was going through your mind?

PARTICIPANT 3: Fear. The first week was actually fun. You were just glad you had people around you. The cheering and rotation, the craziness, the rag and everything. But once you got to the lectures and to studying. I realised that back home I was actually so close with so many people that I missed. So, loneliness, bitter, confused - just don't know where to start. And then, at a point where you come neutral and you don't really care about anything. You just die.

FACILITATOR: OK, you have to die before you can rise?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yes that is true. Yes, just die. And then second semester. That's when the socialising started for me. Just try and make friends.

FACILITATOR: OK. So, socialising helped you cope with your emotions?

PARTICIPANT 3: Not really. Just a way to create just another space. Where you are not forever behind your books. You come to varsity ... work ...

FACILITATOR: OK, to be more balanced?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yes, to be more balanced.

PARTICIPANT 4: Well, in my first year. Well, I never had those type of fears. All I feared was lecturers. Because I was facing a new course I didn't know was happening in it. So, the only thing I had actually problems with this was facing the lecturers and what if I don't like the lecturers? What then? That was my first thought. What if I don't like this lecturer? What's going to happen to my marks? And then I kind of noticed that it doesn't matter if you like the lecturer or not. Being in class is what is important. Whether you like him or not, it is not going to help you with anything. Just be in class and just do your work. And that was when I got over that fear. Ag whatever. I literally got over it and I am fine. I will get through this and I did so!

FACILITATOR: All right. So, what did you feel when you were in class? Are you excited?

PARTICIPANT 4: I was kind of anxious. I was anxious.

FACILITATOR: Why?

PARTICIPANT 4: I was anxious and the same time excited, because I am done with school.

PARTICIPANT 3: My first class was COM, COM114. So, I was just sitting there and the lecturer was like, "Wara wara wara ... I am not going to give you notes in my classroom", right? And she is loud. And you are like, oh OK. But before I got to varsity I had this mind set - acceptance. No matter who stands before you you have to tolerate the person. So, that was when I walk into the lecture hall I was like, don't question the work or anything. Just accept that you are suppose to know it.

FACILITATOR: Well done! OK.

PARTICIPANT 5: Fear, confusion, but excited at the same time. Because you are done with school and you have forever wanted to come to varsity. So, now you are like here and ya. Fear because not knowing where your classes are. You are lonely. You don't have any friends. And you must figure it out and at some point you just want to give up. But then you are like, 'I made it this far. They accepted me. So, I can't give up.' So, commitment.

FACILITATOR: Well done! That is part of the second question. How do you manage your emotions? What did you do? You said that you had acceptance. People accepted you. So, that made you feel it is all right! I can feel everything. I am not alone. What else? What did you do to manage this confusion, this fear and all that stuff?

PARTICIPANT 4: Having friends around you sure helped a lot. Because for the first lecture I also stepped into. I sat in front of someone I didn't know. I looked around me and didn't see

anybody I know. And then when the people I know stepped into class, I was like, ‘Yay! Finally somebody I know!’ So, knowing people it helped. But you are not with them all the time. So, you had to find another thing to suppress the fear. Just put on a brave face and walk on campus like you know everything. Put on a brave face. You don’t ask for directions. You just walk. You read every building outside and you finally find the one you are looking for. Brave face.

PARTICIPANT 3: Thank goodness my sister was here. Because I would like call her and be like, “Where is this building?” and whatever. She was there when I got to varsity. When I felt like, ‘O my gosh! I don’t know what to do?’ So, having a sibling around really makes a difference. Because you don’t really get to go through that extra loneliness. But just sometimes she was busy and she can’t be with me. But just having her around really helped.

PARTICIPANT 5: It was the same for me. I have a cousin here. She would be with me. If she couldn’t help me, she would get a friend. Making friends in every class also helped.

PARTICIPANT 3: Learn to communicate and knowing your classmates really helped. I think the AFS-classes really gave me confidence. That was the best! You are less and you can interact with the lecturer on a personal basis. And you didn’t really fear the fact to consult the lecturer. That is when you got the guts to say if you don’t understand something. You go to him or you go to her.

FACILITATOR: All right! So, managing your emotions you were able. It is very important to have people. Because it helps you and make you feel not alone.

PARTICIPANT 3: Yes, and I think sometimes When you realise that your books are not letting you down, I have no reason to be moping because clearly I am getting something right.

FACILITATOR: Nee, sjoe! I really admire you. You really did very good in your first year. OK, how did your emotion management change during the year? So, what did you do at the beginning of the year and what did you do to manage your emotions at the end? Did it change?

PARTICIPANT 3: The first semester is the most emotional part because everything is unexpected. You are doing something you don’t even know. In the second semester, you have a clear idea of what to expect. So, there is less emotions involved and it becomes part of your life - a daily routine. When coming to managing emotions, I think there was less to deal with the second part of the year as things developed. Because you’ve practically adjusted to everything. Now you are just going with the flow.

PARTICIPANT 4: You don’t fight it. Because first semester you push for things to go your way, and if it doesn’t you feel like, ‘I’ve lost this.’ But going into the second semester you realise, ‘OK, I don’t have to have control over everything,’ and you are more confident. And you are more calm when it comes to such things. You can approach a lecturer. It is not like the

first semester. What if she does this and this and this? Now, it is, 'OK, I will go up to her and ask her.' You are more calm regarding certain situations and you let things be. You don't try and control everything that is out of your reach.

PARTICIPANT 3: And the fact that you managed to survive and you succeeded in your first semester. You come back with your head held high. And you realise clearly what they say about varsity is not true. You find that you defined your own way of varsity and you've lived the moment. So, you just come back to actually change the views of other people. And learn more about what everybody has been telling you about.

PARTICIPANT 5: I think the second semester ... what could have caused stress the first semester was basically let's say your studies. Because you are just out of school and you didn't really focus on your books. Then you ... let's say you failed in a test. By the second semester you know this is what happened last semester. So, now I know I really have to study and do so and so. So, you are going to have less stress. Ya.

FACILITATOR: OK. So, you know what the varsity wants from you?

PARTICIPANT 4: What they expects of you.

PARTICIPANT 3: You know what the expectation is. And the fact that you've managed the exams and all. You kind of have a better idea and the light is light. There is clarity in everything that you want to do.

FACILITATOR: OK. The next one. Moving through autonomy towards interdependence. Do you have a need to connect with others? When you came out of school you were here. Nowhere and you don't know anyone. Did you feel a need to connect with people?

PARTICIPANT 4: Yes. It was the first time I actually felt a need to connect to people. Because in school people know you. I don't need to know you. As long as you know me it is fine. You are like 'a nobody'. You were the seniors in your year. So, everybody knew who you were. You didn't have to speak to that person. They knew you automatically. Because you are older than them. But if you come here it's like ... whose here?

PARTICIPANT 3: And the fact that you can't differentiate first-years and seniors. Then you realise everybody ...

PARTICIPANT 4: They all look the same! And then you have that thing of I need to connect to people I know. That's when you have a need to connect with people.

PARTICIPANT 3: You realise that in high school you had this vibe. Sort of a click. And you know that this week they say it is happening there. You know who to call and what what. You knew where to go to relieve stress and get away from people. But because it seemed like everything just came naturally and it's been there. You come here and you have a need for

moments you shared in high school. You want to share it with other people and go through things. But this time, at a varsity level, you get to be, “O my gosh! I went out with whoever whoever.” You really want to connect with people.

PARTICIPANT 5: I think it is such a big place and new things to learn. I felt that I needed to connect with people. Ya.

PARTICIPANT 3: It is a utter need. It is the core. Because when you have that one person who understands you. If on campus and I see [name omitted], I am like, “O my gosh! Hi!” It even changes your emotion on your face.

PARTICIPANT 5: It’s like, you didn’t even talk to that person in school and now you see them here. It is like, “HI!”

PARTICIPANT 3: It changes your emotion. The fact that you know you are not alone. Cause you walk here and you look and look and look. For me, even everybody seemed alike. When I saw them I saw resemblances of someone back home. There is this one girl who looked just like my best friend back home. And then this one time it was like, ‘Ahh! She came!’ And then I walked pass and it wasn’t. So, ya there is a big need for that.

FACILITATOR: No, it’s true. Then the next one. Did your interdependence change during last year? Now that’s not dependence on others. Interdependence is dependence on self. OK, that’s what it means here. I got it wrong. I thought it is your dependence of other people. But actually your dependence on yourself. OK, did that change during your last year? Your first year?

PARTICIPANT 4: I think that it actually changes because you learn to depend on yourself. You leave other people around you because now you realise that people around you won’t help you figure stuff out. You have to do it by yourself, because they are not always with you. This is when like you learn to depend more on yourself. Not like saying, ‘OK, I will call my friend and she will know what to do.’ Now there is no such thing. If I don’t go to class, I am lost. If I don’t do this, I am lost. I have to figure this out by myself. This is where you learn to depend on yourself even more.

PARTICIPANT 3: From the household I come from, the environment ... I think I just empowered my interdependence because it is very hard knowing that I don’t trust easily. I never really depended on anybody. Not even my parents. But interdependence grew even more. It is stronger and you realise that you thought that you were independent and you thought you grew up. But now, you realise, ‘I am much more stronger than I ever thought I was.’ And you realise how much you actually know that you thought you weren’t able to do.

PARTICIPANT 5: You have to be dependent on yourself. Because we didn't all come here for the same thing. So, what she wants to experience here and what I want to experience is not going to be the same. So, I can't go to her asking her for advice for my studies. But she is studying maybe say mathematics or something. So, I can't go ask her when I am studying languages. So, I have to figure everything out by myself. So, I had to depend on myself to listen in class and to be what do you call it? To have self-confidence.

PARTICIPANT 3: And control over everything.

PARTICIPANT 4: These are the things you can control. But other things around you ... don't worry about the things you can't control. In this stage, you learn that you work with what you have basically. If I can control this or if that is outside my control, it is fine. I can't do anything about it.

FACILITATOR: So true. No, jinne! You are very bright people. OK. The next one. Focusing on relationships. OK. To what extent do you have the capacity for intimacy? That you wanted to be intimate with someone last year.

PARTICIPANT 3: Can I answer?

PARTICIPANT 4: You can answer that.

PARTICIPANT 3: I know it is different (laughing) for me, because I have this thing. Mind I am going to *vloek* now. Because my sister was a year ahead of me and she has always been my little mentor when coming to guys. And from the concept of cause ... I was in an all-white, *boeremag, khaki skool*. And she was in a more English but majority were black people. So, she would actually get to live and tell me, "O my gosh! These guys do this and this to the girls." So, I was, OK, *mans is bliksems* (Laughing). So, I came with the mentality and you realise that each time you are in a relationship, that you want to go all out. When I came to varsity, I prayed that I will not date in my first year because it will be a distraction. The last thing you need is ... Cause every senior is eager to date a first-year. They just want a bit of a first-year because you are dumb and you don't know anything. So, I promised myself that no relationship will step into my life and try and take over that what I have. You know back home they are not only telling you, "You are going to fail," but they are also expecting you to fail. When you fail, they are going to say, "I hate to say I told you so." So, subconsciously you are proving a point. Because in high school, you would go out and you will never miss out on anything. But you were still able to pass. So, they are like, "How are you going to do it? You never miss a party back home. 500 km from here and you are all alone." So, subconsciously, I was basically proving a point that I will not do what you expect me to do.

FACILITATOR: Well done!

PARTICIPANT 4: Ya, but I kind of like differ from her. I was dating a guy from here. On the same campus. But then I noticed there was no spontaneity anymore. Us being on the same campus. So, that is where it then ended. Hey, no bad feelings! I think my mentality around it actually changed. Widened my perspective on guys. Widened it. I noticed changes in relationship patterns. Like you don't necessarily have to meet this guy to date and I kind of like changed my opinion.

PARTICIPANT 5: I have nothing to add.

FACILITATOR: OK. So, what they say. Intimacy makes you move from dependence on others towards interdependence between people. You get more involved with people. You feel intimate. You really want to have a relationship with someone - that they know you and that you know them. When I was at school our relationships with people were really ... it was like, "I don't know that person really. It's just another crush." You don't really do the effort to go and try to really know the person. But now, when you are in your first year, you really want to know this person. Do you feel that way?

PARTICIPANT 5: No.

PARTICIPANT 3: I just want to know you by name and know I can talk to you. And when I bump into you on campus, "I know you! Hey, how are you?" But sometimes you don't want to know. You don't want to dig too deep. Cause I just want him to be who I thought he was. So, I would rather want to keep my concept and respect for who I see you for. Than me digging into something that just disappoint me and I change my attitude towards you. So, I'd settle with what I see, what I have and then I will accept you for who you are. Besides the fact that other things might lead me to judge you.

FACILITATOR: OK, that makes sense. OK. Now how did your interpersonal relationships change during last year? Now this is not just relationships with boys. This is with friends and with family. Because you are now away from your family. How did it change now that you are not at home?

PARTICIPANT 4: I am at home. But I think with my friends. I had to make new friends. So, it took me time to trust new friends. Cause it is not easy to trust new people. So, it basically came down to me being honest in saying, 'OK, I have a new friend. I have to make the effort to actually trust my new friend.' Because what will our friendship be like if I don't trust her. So, it took some time to adjust to but *op die ou einde het dit op daai punt gekom dat ek my nuwe vriende vertrou.*

PARTICIPANT 3: At home ... the fact that I am away from home I realised that in high school, I hated home. Just cause the freedom wasn't there, and I couldn't wait to get here and

be on this freedom-trip and know I can do whatever I want whenever I want to. But when I got here, I realised I don't actually give myself the freedom I thought I would have here. So, it even strengthened my relationship with my parents. Me and my mom. We are like this now (cross fingers). I would call her often to talk and you realise what you have back home is so much more important and you learn to appreciate your family. You don't even want to go on holiday anymore. Where every holiday you wanted to be at somebody's house. You would rather be home. Because you remember the finer things. My mom would send me a sms, "Having tea or coffee with cinnamon" or "Having coke with cream." Just the finer things you start to realise in life and start to appreciate what you had. Because right now you realise, that you are in a world of strangers and nobody really cares about you. Back home they weren't torturing you. It was just a touch of love. You didn't realise it was then.

PARTICIPANT 5: Ya, when you came to varsity you know that these are the friends you maybe grow old with let's say. Because you left your old friends at school. So, you are no longer friends. So, ya ...

FACILITATOR: So, you made an effort to have very nice, intimate relationships?

PARTICIPANT 5: Ya, but you didn't just trust anybody - *elke janrap en sy maat* (laughing).

PARTICIPANT 3: My friend that is in UPE ... it actually strengthened our relationship even more. Because we were going through the same thing. I would call and say, "You know what? These girls have their own clicks. They come from high school and they are not into making new friends." So, we communicated even more and you know in high school 'I promise to call you every day' and that connection just breaks. Here by the third month of the new year. But funny enough we kept on. Every Friday. I even knew when certain classes in between ... because I knew she call me then and I call her there. And as if when I see her back home it feels like, I've been seeing you every day even if you are not there. And I realise how much I missed you, because I talk to you so much. I think I see you every day, until I see you physically and it's like, "O my gosh! I missed you so much!"

FACILITATOR: So, you really value relationships now?

PARTICIPANT 3: I do, a lot of my friendships.

FACILITATOR: OK, now the next one is, which of the following characteristics developed last year. So, you are going to have to look back at last year. Your awareness of things around you, did that develop? Respect for other people. Openness, curiosity, objectivity, empathy, and altruism. Altruism is that you will gladly be part of someone's problem and try and help them to go through it. You know? That you care for other people's problems. Because if you are not altruistic you will just say, "OK, that is your problem, you sort it out." All right?

PARTICIPANT 3: In the commune I am in ... we are all from ... none of us are from Bloem. Actually one. So, this girl actually had problems back home. One or two of my friends got deregistered last year. Even though the one, her father was a lecturer on campus, and she managed to get deregistered. The other one because of personal issues. So, at some point I knew how it feel like to be alone. And having to find out accidentally about it and confronted her. I just told her to be there for a person to learn to be altruistic. You realise it is not *lekker* to be alone. To want to care for somebody. But there was another girl in the house that always like be on a suicide trip. And at the end we realised that it is a trend. She comes with me from a young age. So, there I wasn't ... I was straight forward and be like, "You know what? We all have issues of our own and just because your mom doesn't want to call you every day and you can get on a cab two minutes away. You don't have to do this." So, I wasn't really sympathetic with her because it depends on the situation where you really want to care and sometimes you just don't want to get involved.

PARTICIPANT 4: I think that objectivity. Because you learn to see things in a different way and hear things in a different way. So, you learn how to accept a situation. Unlike turning your back on a certain situation. You really learn to fix a situation by saying, "You are my friend now." And it is not about whether your parents are in Bloem or what not. But it is about our friendship and if I am your true friend. I will really do help you in such a situation. I think for me it was objectivity.

PARTICIPANT 3: And knowing that when you respect other people around you it will not be that hard. But yet, you put your respect on such a basis that the person is clear that even though I respect you, you will not walk over me and not treat me like trash. You know? So, you make it clear. There is respect and tolerance. So, you just try and keep it on a level where you avoid conflict by all means. By tolerating one another whatever happens and staying calm by all means.

FACILITATOR: OK. So, what do you think?

PARTICIPANT 5: Curiosity and empathy. Curiosity. There is a lot of different cultures and people from different places. So, I would like to find out what is it like there. And empathy. So, I was at school, I never saw disabled people. OK, I saw them but not that much. So, here, I see them every day and I feel for them and I want to know and I want to help.

PARTICIPANT 3: And you actually realise that empathy of ... I would actually be like, I am going on about myself and be all emotional of being alone. 'O, I am so alone'. This person is blind. How do they do that? There was this student *hy is so skraal soos nog iets*. It looks like

everything just crawled up in each other and he is in a wheelchair. And I am like, I really applaud and I look up to him.

PARTICIPANT 4: It means the world to come to school and study further. And you feel sorry for yourself not being around somebody.

PARTICIPANT 3: To realise that. You realise that there is bigger things to worry about. And you get back down ... you get back on earth and you like, 'I should not be doing this. I should just stand up and stop moping because clearly somebody is going through ten times worse than what I am going through.' And it is not going to end in varsity. Clearly he is going to facing it all his life. So, you learn to be sympathetic by all means when it comes to certain situations.

FACILITATOR: So true. The one you didn't use. The openness. Where you open for new things? Or where you like, "I know I have control over this stuff. So, I will let everything in?"

PARTICIPANT 4: I am a very open person. So, I think I let things come with ease. Because I never complained about situations on campus. I just let things come with ease and I accept things the way they are.

PARTICIPANT 3: Openness when coming to relationships with others, I think I just ... I am not a very open person. So, I just let it be and keep my distance. People tend to misinterpret things and just because you said something they might just make a hoha out of it. So ... and the fact that I was out to prove a point most of the time. I felt like restricting myself from a lot of things will help me even better. Than me letting myself get involved in so many things that I end up losing myself and not having control over anymore. So, I minimized the things. And only went over to things I knew that I could handle and won't need to go further. So, a lot of invitations got ...

PARTICIPANT 5: When it comes to personal stuff, you know who to be open with and who to share with. Being open to doing stuff and accepting. I think that developed a lot because you are now in a new school. You want to be part of something. So, you are open to a lot of things.

FACILITATOR: Ya, very true. All right the next one. This is very important. Establishing identity. What do you understand regarding the term ethnic or racial identity? OK?

PARTICIPANT 4: Well, with ethnic identity. I think it is your culture basically. Tswana, Zulu, Xhosa or what what. That is your ethnic identity. And your racial identity is your colour. Whether it's black, you're white or you're Chinese or you're Indian. That's when they see your identity. But I don't think both of them should play such a huge role. Because after all, we are all human. We all want to further our education. Whether you are black, colour, purple, yellow, or orange, that doesn't really matter. Ya, that's me.

FACILITATOR: All right. So, what do you see as ethnic identity? You said it is culture. So, is it like rituals?

PARTICIPANT 4: It is rituals basically. Because different cultures, there are different rituals. For a certain thing that happens in the Tswana culture, the Xhosa culture does not do the same. So, I think we like, most Xhosa's and most Tswana's, we differentiate ourselves because of those things. And I don't think those things should play such an important role.

PARTICIPANT 3: I think religion also plays a role in ethnic identity. Cause with culture comes religion. It builds up into one. But I am very ignorant when towards ... to differences when coming to individuals. I look at you as human. So, I wouldn't go into depth. Here, I realise that people pay a lot of attention to your ethnic and racial identity. By all means. Where I didn't understand why do people have to make such a huge fuss about it. "Why are you studying in Afrikaans?"; "Why are you not with your own colour?" So, for me I think I have always had a strong general open-mindedness when coming to differences. But I realise that people are still very small minded when coming to certain things. So, I am just eager to let people know that differences is not the biggest thing. Because at the end of the day it comes down to one thing and that is being human. And we face the same kind of challenges. Just that it is such a different aspect that you don't play such a huge role in life.

FACILITATOR: OK. Jip?

PARTICIPANT 5: Ethnic to me is like your background. Like your cultures and so on. And then race your physical appearance. Let me say your skin colour and so on.

FACILITATOR: OK. Now how did your ethnic identity change during last year? According to Chickering the idea is that, if you come to university there is a lot of Western ideas. They want to know does it have an effect on your racial or on your ethnic identity? The culture you had. Did it change when you came to a new cultural situation or did you keep your culture?

PARTICIPANT 3: I think we do not really face a lot of such challenges. When one comes to a new place. For me it was to remain loyal to home. Like home will be home and I will not change. That's why people are Tswana. But Sotho and Tswana is really close to each other. So, I speak English by all means because I don't want to adapt the Tswana language. So, I would be very conservative towards my culture and religious values. Because I believe that I didn't come here to change but to establish my education. To broaden my knowledge but not to include other weird changes.

PARTICIPANT 4: It is like with me. I am also Tswana. But the problem is I didn't grow up speaking Tswana. I grew up speaking Afrikaans. So, now people have a problem. I don't even have a problem with it. Cause my parents accepted that you don't go to a Tswana school. We

didn't teach you to speak Tswana first. We taught you Afrikaans and that is acceptable to us. But now because of other Tswana people. They expect me to speak Tswana. When I explain to them I can but it is not fluent. So, I might say a couple of things wrong and I might mispronounce a couple of words. So, just bear with me because I am still not fluent in this language. They said that I am ignorant towards my language, which I am not. They say that I don't want to learn and like that I don't respect the whole Tswana culture. Which is totally like the wrong perspective.

PARTICIPANT 5: I can't say my ethnic identity changed because I don't really have, as a coloured, I don't really have ethnic identity. So, pretty much stayed the same.

FACILITATOR: OK, so over all, it didn't really changed when you got here and you had like this Western ideas put in your mind. It didn't change you because, like you said, you are here to learn and to study you are not here to change your beliefs and values.

PARTICIPANT 3: You remained loyal to your beliefs back home and how your parents raised you. I think the fact that you respected it when you grew up and you never found yourself in a funny situation. And you don't really find a reason to change. Because if you want to change it will be so confusing. Because this is not a stable platform to really learn from. So, when I get this Western ideas and I follow all these other things it won't be at a more intellectual and mature basis. We are all amateurs in trying to discover. So, I will be putting myself in a midlife crisis that could have been prevented.

FACILITATOR: True. OK, now do you think. The next one is, do you think the Western ideas makes it difficult to promote your own cultural ideas?

PARTICIPANT 4: Well, with me it was a different story. I wasn't really raised in a cultural background. There was no slaughtering of sheep and cows. My parents don't do that. They believe that once you are a Christian you are a Christian. There is no slaughtering and what not. So, with my culture it didn't really change anything. Because I was taught that there is only one God and slaughtering a cow or a sheep is wrong. So, that's how I understood it. My culture will not change. I am a Christian and that's that. And when I got here nothing changed.

PARTICIPANT 3: We did COM124 last year, which is intercultural communication. And that just broadened my perspective that the Westerns do dominate the world but ... And they do play a huge role. But you should know who you are. And you look at TV and you should be open-minded. TV is not a reality. So, before TV already shows you everything is a lie out there. You get here and you know you should be very careful by all means. So, you don't allow certain things to influence you easily because you look for facts and a proper reason before you allow dramatic changes in your life.

FACILITATOR: Very true. OK. All right, developing purpose. Now as a first-year student, did you already have vocational plans? So, did you come to varsity with a clear mind that this is what I want to do?

PARTICIPANT 4: Yes.

FACILITATOR: OK. What more? When did you know this is what I want to do?

PARTICIPANT 3: For me it was like a mix and match. At the end, it came down to a conclusion. They don't really have everything you wanted but because I wanted to come to the Free State and my sister is here. I thought it would be best. Subconsciously, I knew what I wanted to be. But were hoping that it would be on a different platform. So, I took journalism because it is broad. I love agriculture and I love politics. Everything. So, it gives me a chance to where I will be in an environment. Where I can choose where I want to put my main focus on. So, at the end of the day, I had to reach a conclusion. Yet, I put on a broad mind-set. What I am going to do is going to help in various levels, which I would like to touch on.

PARTICIPANT 4: Umm ... yes, I had a plan. I knew since grade 11 what I wanted to be. So, even when I applied in my application forms there was only one subject. Like only one course that I wanted to do. No second or third option. I didn't take any other option. I just went for that. I realised with my degree I can actually do a lot more than I planned. So, that is when I decided OK this is it. You are not going to change your mind now. And then when last year progressed and I challenged myself. It is too late to change. It is too late to change. No more changing. So, I kind of stepped into it and grew onto it. That you are not going to change anytime soon. You are just going to start and you are going to finish what you started.

FACILITATOR: Did you want to change?

PARTICIPANT 4: No, but my mother wanted me to change.

FACILITATOR: Why?

PARTICIPANT 4: She felt that ... she thought that with my degree I am not really going to find a job. So, I had to explain that there is a lot of job-opportunities in this for me. "Whether you like it or not I am not going to change. This is my degree."

FACILITATOR: So, you had to stand up for yourself and what you believe in?

PARTICIPANT 4: Yes.

PARTICIPANT 3: I came here and I only knew that I wanted to study languages. I didn't know what am I going to do. Where am I going to find myself at the end. As time went on I have learned more and some lecturers talked to me. So, ya. I already decided and I know what I can do now. So, ya. So, later in the year I knew exactly what I wanted to do.

FACILITATOR: OK. So, what role did it play? That you had your career goals, your personal aspirations and then family and their idea of what you must study. Did all that things play a role in your decision or what?

PARTICIPANT 4: Well, not really. Cause my father was always on some trip of study what you want to study. “I can’t make choices and decisions for you. It is your life. At the end of the day. I have lived mine. So, it is time for you to live yours according to your own plan.” But my mother was always the one against my plans. She thought she knew better. But because I knew what I wanted I really had to stand up to her. I had to tell her that, “I understand you only want what’s best for me but I think I know what is best for me. Because I know what I want. Let me just make my mistakes and I will learn from them. And if I don’t make any mistakes then fine. I will deal with them accordingly. But just let me have my way. For just the coming five years at least.”

PARTICIPANT 3: In my household there is freedom of choice. From A to Z. If you wanted to go overseas and screw up your life, so be it. So, there was a lot of freedom of choice and they don’t really interfere. But there was support because when my mom saw something she would call me and ask, “Did you see this incident?” or “Whoever and ever is coming to your ...” Like when Opera was coming, she was like, “Make an appointment. Opera is coming!” She would also help to empower me in every aspect. She gave me connections and my dad would help. So, when I go home, I have people to go to. So, instead of turning against me they actually helped support me and gave me other ideas of what I could do.

FACILITATOR: And you were open for their ideas?

PARTICIPANT 3: Yes open. In journalism everything takes down. You are in touch with everything and as long as you can combine something out of it, it could be valuable. It just depends what angel you take. So, I really accepted anything.

PARTICIPANT 5: I had no pressure at all. I told them what I wanted to do and they accepted. Ya.

FACILITATOR: OK! So, they were like, “OK, go and do what you want to.”

PARTICIPANT 5: They accepted everything. They just tell me, “If it is possible do it.” Ya.

FACILITATOR: It actually makes you think how great it is to have parents who are really supportive of you. Because I think life would have been very difficult if you are alone and everyone is like, “You are wasting your time.” Ya, that won’t be nice. Are you able to make and stay with decisions even in the face of opposition?

PARTICIPANT 4: Yes. I have learned to do that with pride. I have really really learned to do that with pride. When you are the youngest child in the family, everybody tends to think they

know what is best for you. They know like really. In my household, “You are the youngest. You listen to us.” I have learned to overcome that and stand firm on my foot with pride. I told them already that, “I understand that I am the youngest in this. Whatever I am doing. I am not going to be the youngest and I think my opinion matters more than anything. Cause I am the one who is going to be sitting in those lecture halls. I am the one who has to do those assignments. And if I am going to study something I don’t like it is a waste of time. I think here you have to give me credit. Cause I made it to matric and now it is time to face and dance to the music.” That’s what I told them.

FACILITATOR: Great. Are you able to make decisions and even if there is opposition? You are able to stay with it?

PARTICIPANT 3: Ya. The fact that it is a new environment it plays a big role in having to stand your word. Because you know in varsity you watch so many movies where people always try to persuade you to be who you are not and to take part in things you don’t want. When you make a decision you make sure you stick with it. Like keeping up with your time management program or your daily routine. So, you don’t allow anybody to interfere with your decisions. Cause everybody is a stranger. It is like letting yourself walk into a dungeon and you know you don’t know how you are going to get out.

PARTICIPANT 5: For me it is different. Because I am really indecisive. So, when I put my mind on something and I am going to do this and somebody comes along and says, “So and so.” I am going to be like, “Ya ne?” So, then I am going to get confused and I might change my mind. So, ya.

FACILITATOR: OK. So, that is a personal thing? Everyone is different and everyone handles the situation differently. OK, but when someone tells you, “OK, try and do that.” Are you able to make a decision and make and stay with it afterwards? Or are you still open for ideas?

PARTICIPANT 5: Ya, I am still open for ideas. Like I said. I am really indecisive. So, if I have to face opposition or something really hectic I don’t think I will be able to deal with it. As for somebody who made a decision, ‘OK, I am going to do this.’ If anybody comes and try to change my mind, I am still going to stick with that thing. So, ya.

FACILITATOR: If someone said, “No, you mustn’t go study languages. You have to go study law.” Would you have done that?

PARTICIPANT 5: If I was ... the thing ... if it is possible and you gave me your reasons like, you are not going to get a job in languages and so on so on so on. Then I am going to be like, ya. I won’t just say, “OK, I will do it like you said” and I am going to think and go for the idea. I won’t be, “No, leave me alone. I made up my mind.”

FACILITATOR: OK. So, you are open-minded? Well done. All right. How did your goals and purpose change last year? What was your goal when you came out of matric and you were like, “OK, this is going to be my goals and this is my purpose for the year” and then you came here. How did it change? When reality set in?

PARTICIPANT 4: My goals didn’t really change. But reality sunk in. It just show that you can’t always achieve things in the time you have set. There are going to be struggle somewhere somehow. But that doesn’t mean your goals and purposes have to change. You struggle yes and you overcome everything. And you still achieve what you wanted to achieve at the beginning. You just have to learn to be patient with time. You have to learn to work with time and not against time.

FACILITATOR: Well done. Well said.

PARTICIPANT 3: Your goals don’t change. Because there is clarity. You know your varsity. There is this thing back home where everybody flies to Joburg and Pretoria and those who fail come back home. Or the next year they are in a uni in the North West - Mafikeng. So, in Zulu or something it’s like (Zulu word). ‘You go. You come back.’ So, the last thing I wanted was to be a first-year dropout and be a statistic. I am like, I don’t want to be a statistic. I don’t want to be a dropout. And you are determined to prove a point as always. And you stick to what you want. No matter how hard it seemed. You are like, you know what, there is nothing you can’t do at this point and you clearly don’t have a choice. Because if you find yourself in a hectic schedule, you can’t say, “No, I am not going to write that test.” So, you get into a situation where you don’t have much choice but to deal with what you have. So, you learn to tolerate and just manage in some way. To overcome all the obstacles that you come across.

FACILITATOR: OK. Did your goals and purposes change?

PARTICIPANT 5: No.

FACILITATOR: OK. All right. The last one, developing integrity. Is it important to acknowledge and respect other people? Why?

PARTICIPANT 3: As an individual, you have to be open-minded and know you are not always right. You have to respect people’s opinions and views on certain things and accept the fact that not everybody sees the world the way you see it. You must at the same time be open for other ideas but necessarily means that you have to change yours. So, when coming to integrity you just learn to be neutral at all times and know that you are not the centre of everything. The world changes. You will meet people who are brighter than you and intimidates you. You learn to stand up and remain who you are and not always try to impress and be this girl who you are not. So, you just remain neutral at all times.

PARTICIPANT 5: Ya. To get respect you have to give respect.

FACILITATOR: OK. Is there anything else you want to add? OK. To what extent did you learn to balance social responsibility with self-interest?

PARTICIPANT 4: Well, last year there was not much of a social responsibility. You didn't have social things to go to. Though there might be things your res might be hosting. Ag whatever. You would not go to such things. So, there wasn't really a social responsibility. All you were focusing on were on your books last year. You are like, I am here for a purpose. I am going to prove my point to these people. That's what you were here for last year.

PARTICIPANT 3: You don't really know people. And I have this thing. I have been partying with the same people since high school. All my life I have never been in a situation where I had to adjust to new people. And I felt that adjusting to varsity was already such a mission. I don't have space to adjust to the way Sotho people function outdoors and in their social lives. And you realise varsity is not a *jol* like everyone says it is. Forever in the books. Every weekend. When you think you are going to go out. Forget about it. I can't go out. So, you actually suppress your social life just to dominate this new world you came into. So, social responsibility wasn't really a factor. We had to kind of ignore it, because there is a fear of adjusting to new things. What if I weren't able to deal with it? And I heard that Bloem is the centre of everything. Human traffic and everything. Drugs and everything just flows through here. So, you are forever paranoid about everything that happens around you. And it makes it even harder to trust. So, I am going to go to a place you don't know. This Second Avenue you only see when you are passing by and you don't know how it is at night. So, what could happen? So, you don't really want to take the risk.

FACILITATOR: So, self-interest was really important for you in your first year because you have to look out for yourself. You are not really there to look out for everyone else?

PARTICIPANT 3: You don't want to be naive and think that nothing will ever happen to you, so. Because in varsity you hear a lot of stories. Everybody just come back and have their little book to tell. At the end of the day it is all about you because you are alone. So, you have no choice but to respect your opinion and look out for yourself no matter what.

PARTICIPANT 5: I really didn't have that challenge because I didn't have a social life. Because I still live with my parents. So, they would be like, "No, focus on your books." So, ya. So, obviously self-interest before my social life.

PARTICIPANT 3: Ignorance. In this point you realise ignorance is strength. I will say it again. Because you don't want it to interfere. Because if you always accept everything. My housemate will be like, "Dude, just like once." And I am like, "Aha. I don't think." And you realise that

people ... cause it doesn't mean we are really friends. The few conversations you've had you don't really think you would get along with this person when you go out. So, you really avoid the scene at all times.

FACILITATOR: OK, last question. How did your integrity develop last year? OK, other ways of seeing integrity is integrity for one's beliefs, values, and purposes must be established. So, you must have real self-respect for yourself and self-interest.

PARTICIPANT 4: Well, I think that ...

FACILITATOR: O, and the other thing is, you must know you have these values and stuff and know that other people's values and stuff will differ. You must have integrity of balancing between. Just because you think differently I don't want to speak to you.

PARTICIPANT 4: Well, I think that in your first year, you realise that your values that you are taught at home are really important. Because when you are far away from your parents you are ... *... jy is geneig om verskillende goed te probeer.* And this is when you realise, 'Wow, these things actually happen.' This is where you see different things every day. So, I think here your values play a very important role. And you learn to respect other people's values because you come to a point where ... you come in a situation that you realise, 'Wow, there are people with dignity unlike what had heard from somebody who is in varsity.' We drink when we want to and then you come across this person who say, "I am not here to party. I am here to study and I am not going to waste money or waste time on things that are not important." Those people kind of give you a green light on university. On how it really is. It doesn't have to be negative all the time. Like you've heard on TV or radio. What not. You get those people who actually teach you values in a way. You never expect that you would actually account for somebody else's values.

PARTICIPANT 3: The fact that you surround yourself with positive people. Last year I met this girl. I think she is turning 24 now or something. But she has done her honours and she is busy with her PhD at 24. She is a lecturer and she is travelling the world and recently she was in China for some law thing. So, I really looked up to her. I am like, "How did you do it?" And she is like, "My spirituality, my values and knowing who I am really helped." So, I always find space to look up to people who really can be a guideline in life. So, I took her as my little pillar, sideboard. I realise that before you can even think of other people you must know who you are. So, you'd want to remain loyal to who you are. And even if there are changes, you just do it in a very sensitive manner. Where you don't twirl yourself around. So, your integrity, self-respect, values, and morals they all grow depending on who you surround yourself with.

APPENDIX C: EXAMPLE OF DATA ANALYSIS

Excerpt of a focus group transcription	Themes	Subthemes
<p>FACILITATOR: Good morning. I understand you already read through it. And you know what is going to happen. Umm ... Well, today we are going to focus on identity development. All right. How you developed as a person last year. In your first year. So, I just want you to be honest and just talk. All right. Do you understand?</p> <p>FOCUS GROUP: Yes.</p> <p>FACILITATOR: All right. Let's start with number one. What do you understand regarding the term identity?</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 6: Well, identity. I think it's who you are or, if I can say, who you choose to be. Ya. So, identity depends on who you are.</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 7: It's also a recognition of one's personal traits and attributes. Who you actually are. How you perform. How you behave actually amongst others and the things you relate yourself with, is identity.</p> <p>FACILITATOR: Nice. OK. Great.</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 8: OK, the things you do will also reflect your identity. Because you might ... people might think you are so and so or they might think you are this. But you are actually something else. You know? So, what you do that defines your identity as well.</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 6: Who you associate yourself with and you know. The most difficult thing about identity is when you cannot be accepted by society. And then you feel like you have to conform ... to be part of that ... to form part of that identity</p> <p>FACILITATOR: The society sets. Ja ...</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 6: So, I think identity is a very complex issue.</p> <p>FACILITATOR: Wow! You really know what you are talking about. I am impressed. OK. Now if we reflect on your first</p>		
	Being exposed to a diverse student population	Interacting with various language, cultural and racial groups

<p>year in university. How do you think your identity developed? All the things you just talked about. Do you think it developed? Did it change?</p>		
<p>PARTICIPANT 7: Yes. Well, from my own personal perspective. I know when I came to varsity it was very difficult, especially during my first year, for other people to recognise ... not really recognise my identity but rather to accept, like he said. There was a lack of that sense of belonging and sense of accommodation rather and tolerance. You know? Because we came from different backgrounds with different social community. So, my identity developed very well because I'm a very diverse person. So, I promote integration, interrelation, and interaction as well amongst people. So, regardless or irrespective of colour, gender or whatever form of diversity you might have, I just associate myself with people. So, being so confident and outspoken, it was then how I developed my identity. And it made me so firm to stand my ground and be who I am.</p>	<p>Being exposed to a diverse student population</p>	<p>Interacting with various language, cultural and racial groups</p>
<p>FACILITATOR: Great!</p>		
<p>PARTICIPANT 6: Ya, just to add on what he said. Umm, you know identity development for me was more of a growth. Because I don't think I am the same person that I was in high school. I have changed. I have seen different people and I have been exposed to different cultures that has really opened my eyes and opened my vision to a broader lens of identity. So, I think I grew.</p>	<p>Getting to know myself</p>	<p>Experiencing change within myself</p>
<p>FACILITATOR: Now that exposure. How did it effect you? You said it developed but what did you develop?</p>	<p>Being exposed to a diverse student population</p>	<p>Interacting with various language, cultural and racial groups</p>
<p>PARTICIPANT 6: OK, like how I respond to issues. You know? When you come from high school, you have your own opinion and you think those are the perfect opinions or ideal opinions, but if you come here and you interact with different people, you start to see their side of the story and you know you get a more broader spectrum of what identity is.</p>	<p>Getting to know myself</p>	<p>Experiencing change within myself</p>
<p>FACILITATOR: OK. Great!</p>	<p>Being exposed to a diverse student population</p>	<p>Interacting with various language, cultural and racial groups</p>
<p>PARTICIPANT 8: I think what is also important is the type of course you are doing. That is a vital issue. Because you find that, OK, most people are not fit to do certain courses. They just choose it because they want to enter into varsity. So, I think, as in your first year, you get to know more about the course and you sort of grow into the course. For example, if you do law for instance. Like for law</p>	<p>Getting to know myself</p>	<p>Finding my career identity</p>

<p>you have to be very disciplined, and I think, depending on what course you are doing and the people you will meet, in which ever course, you grow into that course as well. So, you sort of not create a new identity. You sort of I don't know ...</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 6: Associate yourself with a relevant identity. Different characteristics and stuff like that.</p>	<p>Getting to know myself</p>	<p>Finding my career identity</p>
<p>FACILITATOR: That is so true! Sjoe! OK. Right. Now, the theory I work with in my research is Chickering. Now Chickering said there is seven vectors that you have to accomplish when you are at university. Now a vector is like a developmental task. OK, and the next questions are going to be regarding those developmental tasks. OK. So, the first one is developing competence. Now, what do you understand regarding the term developing competence?</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 7: Well, competence. I understand right. Competency is ability? Rather of pulling your strings a bit tighter as compared to someone else. Especially when you stand in for, not really a leadership portfolio or anything of that kind, but being prominent than others. And showing your ability and a platform that you can create in order to show your worth. That is competency. As competent to that other person or your constant. So, it also works with character of ability of doing such an assigned task.</p> <p>FACILITATOR: OK. Now, Chickering specifically focused on intellectual, interpersonal, and also physical competence. Do you think that that developed during your first year?</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 6: Sorry, can you please repeat those three competencies?</p> <p>FACILITATOR: Intellectual. So, it's cognitive. Interpersonal has to do with social and then physical like athletics.</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 6: All right. Umm ... With regards to intellectual. I think we are in varsity and we are learning every day. So, I think that has developed in each and everyone in this room in fact. And then interpersonal I think has really developed. We moved away from our home. And we moved away from the people we knew for like, say five years in high school. And then you come here and you meet new faces. Then you have to interact with different people and I think that really sharpens your interpersonal skills. And ya [name omitted]...</p>		
	<p>My social networking on campus</p>	

<p>PARTICIPANT 8: I think. OK. Ya, just to follow-up on that. Like in high school, you get subjected to your school of about maximum 500 people, for example. And when you get here, stay in a hostel and then you meet more people and more people. And then you go to class and you meet more people as well. Then like you are really exposed to different people and you sort of grow upon them and you sort of get to know about them and so.</p>	<p>My social networking on campus</p>	
<p>FACILITATOR: Do you think you can ... your communication and you know all that social skills. Do you think that developed?</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 8: Yes, most definitely!</p> <p>FACILITATOR: Definitely?</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 8: Ya, and your confidence really plays a role in this one. Cause, if you are not confident then you won't be able to stand in front of people and express yourself and I think it is all about confidence.</p> <p>FACILITATOR: OK. Great! And physical? Do you think that developed?</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 7: Physical, I wouldn't really think developed. Seriously! I cannot see any physical change.</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 6: Well, maybe in high school there is always transport to school. But here, you have to walk to classes. You are sort of getting some, it's not a lot but, it is some exercise. So, that's cool.</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 7: On campus remember ... campus is like a city on its own. So, you walk from one point to another. You walk from the main building to class. To the student centre. To where you are staying. Especially if you are staying in res you really don't need transport. Only when you go off campus then you get transport.</p> <p>FACILITATOR: Ya, I think people who live off campus really struggle. Transport is really an issue.</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 6: Another aspect of our physical competence is that we don't take care of our own bodies. Umm. Cause we stay in res and we always study. We don't have time for cooking. I can recall. Umm. When I first came to this university I was staying in Villa and I think the only thing I had for two straight weeks was bread,</p>		

<p>noodles, and chips at the deli. Those were like my staple food. I had it in the morning. I had it at night. It was like my supper. So, there was no lunch in between. So ...</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 7: I am a health practitioner, as I put it. I really love cooking. I love verges. I love fruit. I just had a fruit now on my way here. You know I love verges and I love cooking at large. So, I really don't know if that will be physical competency you know.</p> <p>FACILITATOR: That is kind of because of your physical health.</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 6: Well, like looking after your body ...</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 7: And from high school compared ... I am a dancer anyway. In high school I had a dance group that I had to practice like five times a week.</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 6: Sports, sports, sports, sports.</p>		
<p>PARTICIPANT 7: When you come to varsity. When I get to varsity, I sacrifice the dance time and replaced it with book time. I thought that when I come here I would actually get fatter or slim or something. Because it was a regular thing and it was happening for more than three years. So, now it seems here, I don't know, I have danced probable two times in two years. So, I don't know if I should take it as a disadvantage or what but ...</p> <p>FACILITATOR: It's just adaption. Because you have to adapt to your new environment.</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 7: That's true! It is also adaption.</p> <p>FACILITATOR: Umm. OK, you said that you developed this stuff. Which competence do you think developed best or the most?</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 7: I feel intellectual.</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 6: Ya, intellectual.</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 7: You know, this is a higher education level and it is an academic institute. Remember we came with that a bit a bit ... with that IQ-level of high school. Like he said,</p>	<p>Becoming independent</p>	<p>My academic independence</p>

<p>we thought we were the best in high school. You thought that if you got 90's you are the best. If you are SRC-president you are the best. But here the competition became tighter and actually now it is exposure of a real world thing. Whereby now they prepare us for the future. When we are career men and women and family people as well. So, I believe intellectual has increased in a very diverse way and it has contributed a lot.</p>	Getting to know myself	Finding my career identity
<p>PARTICIPANT 6: I also think it is effected by who you not associate yourself with but the people you interact with. Like your faculty heads or whatever. You sort of grow from them. You grow on what you have to do in order to, I don't know, fit in the field you want to study. You have to grow into that. I think that effects intellectual ...</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 7: Understanding it all better through this people.</p>		
<p>FACILITATOR: OK, let's move a bit to emotions. OK, what emotions did you experience during your first year? Let's talk about when you first came here and second semester. Did there ... was there any change?</p>	My social networking on campus	
<p>PARTICIPANT 6: OK, I was a bit intimidated by the seniors in our hostel. I don't know. I remember the first day I got here I ... like I stayed in Bloem. So, I had to go home after getting my stuff and then umm ... I was talking to (the prime of the residence). So, I said, "Good night gents" and they called me back in. And they were like, "Who is a gent? Who are you calling a gent? We are your lords." Whara whara whara. I was like so scared. Cause you get here and you know these people are like of higher authority and you are all scared and whatever!</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 7: Am I going to be evicted?</p>		
<p>PARTICIPANT 6: So, you are really intimidated by the people you meet up with for the first time, because you are not comfortable around them. You don't know them that well. As time goes on, second semester, you sort of get used to them. Like your emotions towards them or your feelings towards them sort of change and you sort of relax you know.</p>	My emotional reactions when confronted with the challenge of higher education	Experiencing a variety of emotions
	My social networking on campus	
	My emotional reactions when confronted with the challenge of higher education	Experiencing a variety of emotions

<p>PARTICIPANT 8: Ya, just to add on what he said. Umm. You know when you get to varsity, if you stay in hostel. The leadership in your hostel is the first leadership you experience in the university. So, if the leadership is intimidating you sort of view the whole varsity as intimidating. I can relate to what he said. Because [the prime of the hostel] was like, “Boys this is how you are going to do stuff.” He was really strict and very intimidating.</p> <p>FACILITATOR: And you’re not used to being strict with?</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 8: That kind of strictness. It was a freight you know. You were scared because if you don’t abide what is going to happen?</p>	<p>My emotional reactions when confronted with the challenge of higher education</p>	<p>Experiencing a variety of emotions</p>
<p>PARTICIPANT 7: But that was a good thing! Yes, I was also intimidated by them. But I felt that was a good thing for first-years. It was a first step of leading us to who we are today. I believe in who I am today and I can conform to any rules that come my way. Because I was shown the first time that I got to varsity that this is how you do this. This is how you operate. So, I feel it was a good lesson he has taught us. Although it was through emotional depression!</p> <p>FACILITATOR: Umm and academics? Did that make you feel stressed? Or did you think, “Ag no! This is going to be easy.”?</p>	<p>Getting to know myself</p>	<p>Experiencing change within myself</p>
<p>PARTICIPANT 6: Definitely, you get stress levels. Especially like your first first first test in varsity.</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 7: And it is always a horrible one.</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 6: You know. OK. When I came here, you know I am studying B.Com accounting now, and I didn’t have accounting in high school. So, when I came here I was telling them that, “OK, I am going to be studying B.Com accounting.” Everyone told me that, “You are going to fail! People repeat that module!” Those stats modules ... accounting! They don’t graduate and stuff. And then that was something that really stressed</p>	<p>My emotional reactions when confronted with the challenge of higher education</p>	<p>Experiencing a variety of emotions</p> <p>How I managed my emotions</p> <p>Experiencing a variety of emotions</p>

<p>me and I was under a lot of stress. But hey. I think it was the mentoring in the res that really helped me. Cause there is a guy (name omitted) who has been in the varsity for, I think, three years now and he was the one mentoring me through accounting. Now I am getting distinctions because of that mentoring. I don't see that you can't do it.</p>	<p>My social networking on campus</p>	
<p>PARTICIPANT 7: It is just a perspective that they have and it contaminates their mind. It really spoils their mind, like he said. It is the same thing that is happening in my department. I am also studying BSG ... I mean B.Sc in geology. So, they always tell us that in geology it's not about your famous glamorous looks and it's not about you being so flamboyant. It's about you being so down to earth that you can even identify the rock that you are standing on. And I was like, oh OK. If it comes to that point then I will have to do it. But I am not going to lose my glam. But now here I am. I am one of the best performing students in the department and I am very proud of myself.</p>		
<p>FACILITATOR: Sjoe! That is very good! Now, how do you manage your emotions? If you are really feeling stressed. How do you manage it? Or don't you manage it?</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 6: I think it is important to try and avoid the stresses as early as possible. Like if you know you are writing in like four weeks' time. Like its best you start even as the term starts. You know day by day. Go through your work and read through stuff. Because you find that a week before you write you are all stressed out. 'I am writing in a week' or 'I don't know this.' So, you can't study properly because you are stressed. You know? So, I think it's best you start well and then come test time you are good.</p> <p>FACILITATOR: OK. So, planning is very important?</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 6: Ya, planning is important.</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 7: Well, I am a different person. Yes, planning is important.</p>	<p>Getting to know myself</p>	<p>Finding my career identity</p>
	<p>My emotional reactions when confronted with the challenge of higher education</p>	<p>Experiencing a variety of emotions</p> <p>How I managed my emotions</p> <p>How I managed my emotions</p>

<p>PARTICIPANT 6: I also work better under pressure. I don't know why?</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 7: That's good. I don't know. What I am going to say now might sound funny. I always pray about my emotions. I always pray. Not just academical emotions or anything. I am one person who comes through a lot of things. Yes and all that. So, I always just take a moment of silence and say, "Dear Lord, just help me pull through this." And believe you me it will perfectly go much beautiful than I thought it could be. And you know that is one thing. Planning as well and strategy is a good thing. Though I am one person who works under pressure as well. If I know I am writing tomorrow. I promise you I can even enter that room without sleeping tonight. That is how I can deal with my emotions.</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 8: OK. I want to go away from what they are saying. But for me, I think it depends on the people you associate yourself with. Because if you associate yourself with the negative people who are always going to tell you that, "Ah, we are going to fail," you are going into that exam room with that mind-set that you are going to fail.</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 7: That's true.</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 8: And for me, like the person I always turn to with my emotions and stress and everything is my roommate. I have been staying with this guy since last year and whenever I am under pressure I always say, "Rooms, bra this is what happening. Bra help me or something. Advice me." So, ya. He knows how to calm me down because we are doing the same module and everything. So, that is like, I influence him and he influences me and it's a win win.</p> <p>FACILITATOR: Great! OK. So, do you think that your management of your emotions ... did it change during the first year? Did it get better? Or don't you think it got better?</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 7: Well, for me I think it is still the same. Unless, if there is a change, I don't recognise it as yet. But I feel the same thing I am going through last year is the same thing I am going through this year. You know</p>	<p>My emotional reactions when confronted with the challenge of higher education</p>	<p>How I managed my emotions</p>
	<p>My social networking on campus</p>	
<p>PARTICIPANT 7: Well, for me I think it is still the same. Unless, if there is a change, I don't recognise it as yet. But I feel the same thing I am going through last year is the same thing I am going through this year. You know</p>	<p>My emotional reactions when confronted with the challenge of higher education</p>	<p>How I managed my emotions</p> <p>Experiencing a variety of emotions</p>

<p>emotions are emotions. If you are writing a test you are writing a test. If you have pressure you have pressure ...</p> <p>FACILITATOR: Ya, and the stuff you use to calm yourself is still the same?</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 7: Still the same.</p> <p>FACILITATOR: You are still trying to plan ahead and pray and have nice people around you?</p>	<p>My emotional reactions when confronted with the challenge of higher education</p>	<p>Experiencing a variety of emotions</p>
<p>PARTICIPANT 6: I am a bit more relaxed now because I know what to expect. Like in your first year you are sort of lost and you are really like on another level. You are just stressed out like you don't know what to do. But like right now. I know what is expected. I know what I have to do. I know what I have to study. All that stuff. I know what I am writing. I know when to start preparing for it. So, it is much better to handle emotions.</p>	<p>Getting to know myself</p>	<p>How I managed my emotions</p> <p>Experiencing change within myself</p>
<p>PARTICIPANT 8: Ya, I think with the better handling of emotions. When I was in first year, my emotions was highlighted. It was like, when I was stressed, you could see that I am under stress. When I have to study you could see that this guy is about to study. But now it comes naturally. I know that I am going to write a difficult module, but I know how to relax myself. I think I am more relaxed and I am doing well.</p>	<p>My emotional reactions when confronted with the challenge of higher education</p>	<p>Experiencing a variety of emotions</p> <p>How I managed my emotions</p>
<p>FACILITATOR: Great. OK. Now, the next one is moving from autonomy to interdependence. Now, to be independent is to feel that, "OK, you don't need anyone. You can function on your own." Where interdependence says that, "Right, I know I can function on my own but I acknowledge that I need other people also." OK. So, the first question here is: Do you need or have a need to connect to people? Or do you think, "Ag no! I want to be alone"?</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 7: I really feel the need of other people. Yes, I know I am a bursary performing student and I know I can unleash my potential at a given platform. But it doesn't just come with me being single or something. It also</p>	<p>My social networking on campus</p>	

<p>contribute with other efforts that people put towards me or towards pushing my ability. So, I am one person, not really a slow learner, but I cannot write fast. So, it does not mean now that I think I am clever. I know I have to refer to other people. They help me throughout. That I need such notes. I need that, I need that. They help me. So, besides academics I feel throughout my lifetime I am just going to be interdependent.</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 8: Ya, I am just going to continue what he say. I feel the need to be connected to other people. In my course, I think that I need that open-mindedness. I need to be able to speak to [name omitted] about anything. I need to be able to speak to [name omitted] about anything. So, I think that I am a quite person. I don't really mingle much. But when I do speak to a person and then I connect with that person on a certain level. Then I can speak to them about anything. But I think we all need that connectedness towards other people.</p> <p>FACILITATOR: Definitely. And do you think it changed during your first year? Did you just come here and you are like, "I am not going to talk to anyone cause I am stressed" or did you immediately just say, "Right, I see you are also stressed"?</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 6: Ya, I sort of like try to talk to people. Cause I am like a socialite. So, I really talk to people and try to find out. Cause like this university is quiet big. You need to know what is what. You need to know everything about the campus. So, you can't do it alone. You have to know people. But like right now it is not a question of need. You just know, OK, if you need someone for something then they are there. Back in first year definitely needed. Like you needed that help. You needed to connect with others. You know to progress as your first year goes on. But right now it is sort of like, OK, you know what is expected but in case you need any help with something, then you can go to somebody</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 8: We really need other people because when you move away from home we are dependent on our family and our parents and everything. So, for me when I moved away because it was the first time ever like moving away from my mom. So, when I came here I felt the need to rebuild a family. Like people who I could like ... whatever I wanted to say to my mother I could say to my brothers in the hostel. So, I felt that need to be able to speak to the other guys.</p>		
	Getting to know myself	Finding my career identity
	My social networking on campus	
	Getting to know myself	Finding my career identity
	My social networking on campus	
	My social networking on campus	
	Becoming independent	Independence empowered me
My social networking on campus		

<p>FACILITATOR: How was your relationship with your parents? Did they support you to come to university? Or did they say, “No, you are going to fail”?</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 6: No, definitely!</p>		
<p>PARTICIPANT 7: They supported me. Well, my mom actually (laugh). She had a problem with me choosing the stream at high school not coming to varsity. I chose a science stream and she said, “No, rather choose a common stream with geography, tourism you know. Not science.” Because during our time only those top students would do it. And I said, “You know what? I am going to show you. I am taking this stream.” And I took it. But as the year progressed she saw that, “Ag, you can manage well with this thing. I was just naive and paranoid. But I do now realise this is what you are best in. Continue.” So, she really didn’t have a problem with me coming to varsity. Because she knew, “You know what? I developed a belief in him and trust that he will continue. He will do well.”</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 8: You know about the support of parents. Umm well, for my mom. I think all, OK most of the parents who have not gone to university, don’t really know the different fields and everything. My mom knew the basic stuff. And there was a point in my life when I said I wanted to be a psychologist and she supported me still. So, she was like, “No, you know what? All I want you to do is go to varsity and study whatever. Even if you want to study music and you can’t even sing.” So, it was that support and ya. Then I researched and it was my own decision to change from wanting to do psychology to do commerce because money.</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 7: I also remember the time that I was signing my contract with my bursary and my university. My dad told my mom, “[name omitted], you have to go to varsity. Now we are telling you. Now please focus on your studies. Stop doing this and that.” Sort of like, not really to monitor but giving you advice on what to do and what not to do. As about just do this. And he further mentioned, “Remember you are the first person in the family to go to varsity. If you spoil that, know that now it is doomed.”</p> <p>FACILITATOR: Sjoe! That is pressure.</p> <p>PARTICIPANT 7: Yes, it is! “This is the best thing you have ever brought to the family and we really appreciate you. So, please pull yourself right and come with a degree home. And open the doors for the rest of the people coming.”</p>	<p>My people at home</p>	<p>My parents’ involvement and expectations</p>

FACILITATOR:

Sjoe! OK. Great! Now the next one is kind of connected to the previous one. How did your interpersonal relationships change during your first year? Because a very important one here is intimacy. So, to be intimate with someone. Close, personal. Did you have personal friendships or did you come here and you were like, “No, I am not really going to connect with someone.”

PARTICIPANT 7:

Ya well, during our first year we were obliged to attend certain varsity activities called ‘inters’. Whereby you go to female hostels. You make friends with them, especially people from your department or from the same faculty you are. So, for [Prime of hostel] it was a must that you come out with a phone number or an email or whatever form of contact from that person. So, that tomorrow or whenever you communicate with that person. So, to be honest with you. So, I don’t know if this other things were forced or not but I turned up to do them because it was part of the first-year activities. I met a lot of girlfriends. From there it was different as compared to this year. I know those people. Yes, they are my last year friends or my first-year friends. But it seems like we grew out of that stage. Now we turned to know who we are and where we suite and what to do. You know which people to associate yourself with blah blah blah. So, I think interpersonal relationships as a first-year is at a higher rate. But as the years go it turns to not really to decrease but the intimacy ... you focus it into people of your own personal perspective or people who you prefer of your own preference. But while as a first-year you are obliged to have friends from Akasia or Soetdoring or where ever. You should have friends whereby when you go to that hostel you can sit down with them and talk to them and share your experience and all that.

PARTICIPANT 6:

I think also it depends on what type of person you are. Cause like you get people that are really independent and quiet and they do not want anything to do with others. They just want to like focus on why ever they are here for. But from my side I am a social person. Like I accept whoever comes into my life. Because I feel everybody that I meet up with sort of influences me in one way or another. With some people I am close to than others. But like it is important that you sort of not be intimate with everybody.

My social networking on campus

APPENDIX D: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

25 February 2014

Dr L. Naudé
Department of Psychology
UFS

Ethical Clearance Application: Access with Success: Academic facilitator sessions in the extended programme of the Faculty of the Humanities

Dear Dr Naudé

With reference to your application for ethical clearance with the Faculty of the Humanities, I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the Ethics Board of the faculty that you have been granted ethical clearance for your research.

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence, is:

UFS-HUM-2013-17

This ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted for one year from issuance. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension in writing.

We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your research project be submitted in writing to the ethics office to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise.

Thank you for submitting this proposal for ethical clearance and we wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,


Katinka de Wet
Ethics Committee (Faculty of the Humanities)

Copy: Ms Chamé van der Walt (Research Co-ordinator: Faculty of the Humanities)



APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT FORM



INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The researcher, Lindi Liversage, is currently a Psychology student at the University of the Free State. She is busy with her Master's in research. The focus group session is part of a project conducted by the researcher to explore identity development among black first-year students. Contact information: lindiliversage@yahoo.com

PLEASE READ THIS CONSENT DOCUMENT CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

Title of study: Identity development of black students during the first year.

Purpose of the investigation: To understand how identity develops in black students – in particular, first-generation students.

Process: You will be asked to participate in a focus group discussion. The discussion will be recorded. Questions will be asked to promote discussion. Your active participation in the discussion is important for the success of the study.

Time required: 1 hour – 1 ½ hours.

Potential benefits and anticipated risk: No more than minimal risk. There is no direct benefit to the participant in this research. However, this research can add to the understanding of identity development of black students and the effect it has on the individuals' academic performance in higher education. It can promote discussions and further research. Higher education institutions can use the research findings to accommodate students better in general.

Confidentiality: Your identity will remain anonymous. The final research will not reveal any participant's name.

Compensation: There is no compensation.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not wanting to participate.

Right to withdraw from study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

I have read and understand the information on the form, and I consent to volunteer to be a participant in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time.

Name (PLEASE PRINT): _____

Email address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX F: EXAMPLE OF THE RESEARCHER'S REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

My initial thoughts and feelings following the focus group discussion:

This was a positive experience. The participants were able to describe their experiences and ended the focus group discussion positively. It was striking that the participants found it challenging to understand some of the words or terminology used during the focus group, probably because English was not their first language. This made me wonder how effective the participants understood the questions and how that affected their understanding and answering of the questions. In the next focus group, I shall have to spend more time on defining the terminology.

Interestingly, despite the fact that the participants did not know me, all of them seemed comfortable to talk to me and share personal aspects of their experiences during their first year. It also appeared that their interaction with each other enhanced their ability to recall and express what they had been going through. All the participants knew one another, which could have contributed to them feeling comfortable to share and talk openly about their experiences. During the interviews, I never felt that participants were keeping something off the table because they were afraid of what the other participants would say.

One participant's confidence increased throughout the focus group. Initially, the participant was soft-spoken and appeared to be shy. However, the moment he was able to talk about his culture and his beliefs, he was more willing to contribute. It is possible that this topic was very important to him. It is also possible that he became more talkative because none of the other participants felt so strongly about their culture and ethnicity. It appeared that culture was an important component in his sense of self.

The participants in this focus group really enjoyed reflecting on their first year. All of them mentioned that they would enjoy doing something like this more often. I think that this opportunity made them aware of how difficult their first year was and how effective they were able to cope with the challenges. It also seems as if the discussion acted like a confidence booster. They seemed more positive after the session. Interestingly, I think that the participants were able to learn something from one another. All of them are living in the same residence, but now it seems as if they are closer or more able to identify with the other participants.

More specific interpretations and thoughts following the listening of the recording and reading the verbatim transcription thereof:

This particular group placed more emphasis on their experiences on campus and in the residence on campus. It seems as if the assistance they received in the residence (i.e. mentorship, house committee members, and roommates) was very important in their process of defining themselves and coping with the new challenges. Also unique to this group was that they openly admitted that they had changed their career decisions because their parents were not happy with their first choice. Was this because of their culture? Is this the norm for individuals in an interdependent culture? If so, why did this not emerge in the female participants' discussions? I would have thought that this theme would emerge in female rather than in male students.

I also observed that this focus group consisted of very diverse individuals. There were participants who did not care about their culture and ethnicity. There were also individuals who really valued their culture and included culture in their description of identity. Does this indicate that culture is just a dimension in these students' identity and that the lack of the dimension does not have a negative influence on their identity as a whole? It also appeared that they were aware that they were first-generation students, but that it did not define them. Is it possible that their experiences in the residence and the feeling that they belonged made it possible for these participants to view themselves firstly as students and secondly as first-generation students?

The participants in this focus group did not include experiences regarding their independence. Is it possible that they felt safe in the residence and did not experience difficulty to cope with their independence? Is it possible that gender played a role in this difference between the focus groups?

Having friends and contacts on campus was very important for this group. Yet, none of the participants spoke about romantic relationships during their first year. The female participants in the other focus groups did talk about their romantic relationships. I wonder whether the female participants needed more intimate relationships during their first year in order to cope with their independence.

These participants did not mention their parents much. They were only prominent in the process of their making career decisions. Is this an indication that these participants were able to function without their parents, while the female participants included more stories about their parents because they were struggling with their independence?

The participants in this focus group appeared to be goal-orientated. Each one of them wanted to do an additional degree. However, it was not clear whether they wanted to do another course because they were motivated or because they were not doing the course that was their first choice?

The participants were able to empathise with other students, especially towards students in their residence. However, the participants did not show increase in awareness of their social responsibility in the community.

Concluding thoughts following the analyses of this focus group:

This group is very well rounded. During their discussion, it emerged that they experienced development in most of Chickering's vectors. Interesting gender differences emerged. However, I wonder if living on campus was not an important factor in the differences compared to other focus groups.

With regard to culture, it was interesting to observe that a generation change was occurring. It seems as if black students are allowed to choose what they want to believe. It is also apparent that going to university is something the previous generation did not consider, while the current generation views continuing one's education as their right and a necessity.

APPENDIX G: TURN-IT-IN REPORT

Aug 2015

ORIGINALITY REPORT

6%	4%	3%	3%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	thescholarship.ecu.edu Internet Source	<1%
2	Submitted to University of Newcastle upon Tyne Student Paper	<1%
3	dspace.library.drexel.edu Internet Source	<1%
4	Nicole Zarrett. "The passage to adulthood: Challenges of late adolescence", New Directions for Youth Development, 2006 Publication	<1%
5	digital.library.unt.edu Internet Source	<1%
6	www.hpcnet.org Internet Source	<1%
7	Karen Kurotsuchi Inkelas. "Living–Learning Programs and First-Generation College Students' Academic and Social Transition to College", Research in Higher Education, 02/23/2007 Publication	<1%