CHRONICLES OF THE EXPERIENCES OF ORPHANED STUDENTS IN A

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN KWAZULU-NATAL

BY

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, Philemon Siphathimandla Mkhize and

my late mother Christina "**THOKOZILE**" Mkhize who passed away

on 22nd of May, 2013.

My dearest Mother, although you ascended to heaven when I was in the verge of

data generation phase of my study; and faced with a myriad of challenges,

your humble character, unconditional love, incessant prayers and strong faith you

had and strong belief in me all enthused me to gain strength every step of the way;

I believe as is **"uTHOKOZILE"** with all my effort.

To ubaba wami, uKhabazela: your perpetual and unselfish support keeps me

growing everyday. You have taught me that change has to begin with self

in order to succeed in life.

And to my children whom God has blessed me with, Malusi Nkazimulo and

Sandisiwe Amahle Mthiyane, I only want to share one of the BEST lessons I learnt

from BOTH my parents that:

"to be highly educated does not mean that one is wiser than the uneducated".

May this study serve as reminder to you that self-awareness, respect and dedication

are key to success.

ABSTRACT

Given the escalating number of orphans globally, orphanhood and caring for the orphaned has become one of the major challenges faced by societies. In South Africa, the major goal for the supportive initiatives and developments is to meet the needs of a democratic society. This growing numbers of Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC's) may have considerable impact on the higher education institutions (HEIs) and on the lives of higher education (HE) students. One of the consequences of challenges faced by students in HEIs is characterised by the recent access of students from diverse historical, educational, socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds. Access to students from diverse backgrounds previously unrepresented in HE, the disadvantaged and orphaned, is still a challenge for HEIs and to some extent contributes to them giving up their studies or dropping out.

Working within the critical emancipatory paradigm, this study seeks to chronicle the experiences of orphaned students at a HEI; to give them a platform on which to voice their perceptions through critical engagement in meaning-making discourses about their lives and circumstances. An eclectic mix of Critical Emancipatory Research (CER) and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (BEST) is utilised with the understanding that orphanhood is a social challenge; and inorder to make any interventions the outcomes are to be psychosocially, historically, politically and culturally responsive or appropriate to individuals who are pushed to margins of the society. While CER in this study addresses issues such as empowerment in contexts, inequality, oppression, domination, suppression, alienation, power and transformation, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological systems theory is adopted to focus on the quality of interrelationship between HE orphaned students and their contexts.

Methodologically, this qualitative study presents how CER and BEST principles are integrated within Participatory Action Research (PAR), an approach which enhances collaborative engagements, and empowers students to take decision by putting theory into practice. A single case study was chosen and utilised to allow for in-depth explorations of the participants' experiences and how they address orphanhood needs and challenges in a HEI. Purposive snowballing sampling was utilised to identify participants. To generate data from one-on-one and focus group discussions (FGDs), reflection journals and verbal reflections, a Free Attitude Interview (FAI) technique was employed. Considering the sensitive nature of reliving the past in this study, ethical considerations were observed to guard against possible

ethical dilemmas, and the less obvious yet harmful effects of research. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach was utilised to analyse written texts and spoken words to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality, and bias and how these sources are initiated, maintained and transformed within specific contexts.

The findings and conclusions of the study have proved the existence of orphaned students in HEI. Further highlighted is how issues of orphanhood, economic challenges and poverty are embedded in how this impact on academic performance, curricula needs and approaches relevant for pre-service teachers. Therefore, following engagement in transformative and participatory methods that embraces students' capabilities, form basis for psychosocial empowerment. As a recommendation based on findings and conclusions, I have suggested that further studies on the application, monitoring and evaluation of the strategies for care and support framework of the orphaned in an HEI and how these could be linked to and applied utilising participatory approaches (PAR). Further recommendations include pre-service training programmes on psychosocial development; review of HE policies focussing on accessibility and relevancy and creation of ongoing support and mentoring programmes for the students to feel effectively empowered and emancipated in the years spent in HEI an implication for improved rates of input and output.

KEY WORDS:

orphanhood	higher education institution
critical emancipatory research	action research
participatory action research	critical discourse analysis
Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory	critical onsciousness
empowerment	reflective practice
critical emancipatory research	critical thinking

SAMEVATTING

Weens die groeiende aantal weeskinders wêreldwyd, het weesouerloosheid en die sorg vir die weesouerlose een van die grootste uitdagings vir die samelewing geword. In Suid-Afrika, is een van die vernaamste doelwitte vir ontwikkeling en ondersteundsinitiatiewe om die behoeftes van 'n demokratiese samelewing na te kom. Die groeiende aantal Wees-en Kwesbare Kinders (WKK) mag 'n aansienlike uitwerking hê op Hoër Onderwys Instellings (HOI) en op die lewens van studente in Hoër Onderwys. Een van die gevolge van die uitdagings wat HOI studente in die gesig staar, word gekenmerk deur die onlangse groeiende toegang tot Hoër Onderwys deur studente vanuit verskillende geskiedkundige, opvoedkundige, sosio-ekonomiese en sosio-kulturele agtergronde. Toegang aan student van diverse agtergronde, wat voorheen onverteenwoordig in Hoer Onderwys was, die minderbevoorregtes en weesouerlose, is nog steeds 'n uitdaging vir HOI en dra tot 'n sekere mate daartoe by dat studente of hulstudies opskop of staak.

Deur die gebruik van 'n kritiese vrystellende paradigma, beoog hierdie studie om die ervarings van weesouerlose studente by 'n HOI ten boek te stel; om sodoende 'n platvorm te skep waar studente hul waarnemings kan uitspreek, deur krities om te gaan met diskoerse oor betekenisonderhandeling wat betrekking het tot hul eie lewens en omstandighede. 'n Eklektiese vermenging van Kritiese Vrystellende Navorsing (KVN) en Bronfenbrenner se Ekologiese Sistematiese Teorie (BEST) is gebruik met die verstandhouding dat weesouerloosheid 'n sosiale uitdaging is; sodat, om enige bemiddeling te laat plaasvind, die uitslae psigososiaal, geskiedkundig, polities en kultureel responsief of van pas moet wees vir gemarginaliseerde individue in die samelewing. Terwyl die KVN in hierdie studie strydpunte soos bemagtiging in kontekste, ongelykheid, onderdrukking, oorheersing, vervreemding, mag en transformasie aanspreek, is BEST aangeneem om klem te lê op die gehalte van die binne-verwantskap tussen weesouerlose studente in Hoër Onderwys en hulle kontekste.

Metodologies bied hierdie kwalitatiewe studie aan hoe KVN en BEST se grondbeginsels geïntegreer is binne Deelnemende Aksie Navorsing (DAN), 'n benadering wat samewerkende deelname verhoog, en studente bemagig om besluite te neem deur teorie in die prakties toe te pas. 'n Enkele gevalestudie is gekies en gebruik om toe te laat vir 'n in diepte ondersoekende studie van die deelnemers se ervarings en hoe hulle hul behoeftes en uitdagings as weesouerloses in HOI aanspreek. 'n Doelbewuste sneeubal metode is gebruik on deelnemers te identifiseer. Om data voort te bring is van een-tot-een en

fokusgroep besprekings (FGS), nadenkende dagboeke en mondelinge oordenkings, sowel as 'n Vrye Gesindheidsonderhoudtegniek (VGO) gebruik gemaak.Deur die inagneming van die sensitiewe aard van die herlewing van die verlede in hierdie studie, is etiese oorwegings gemaak om te waak teen moontlike etiese dilemmas, en die minder klaarblyklike tog skadelike nagevolge van navorsing.'n Kritiese Diskoers Ontledingsbenadering (KDO) is gebruik om geskrewe tekste en gesproke woorde te ontleed om die beredenerende bronne van mag, oorheersing, dominansie, ongelykheid en veroordeling te openbaar asook hoe hierdie bronne ingelei, onderhou en vervorm is binne spesifieke kontekste.

Die bevindinge en gevolgtrekkings van hierdie studie het die bestaan van weesouerlose studente in HOI bevestig. Verder is beklemtoon hoe kwessies van weesouerloosheid, ekonomiese uitdagings en armoede ineengebed is en hoe die kwessies akademiese werksprestasie, leerplan behoeftes en benaderings toepaslik vir indiensopleidingsonderwysers, beïnvloed. Dus, vorm die navolging van en verbintenis tot transformerende en deelnemend metodes wat studente se vermoëns omhels, die basis vir psigososiale bemagtiging.

As 'n aanbeveling gegrond op die bevindinge en gevolgtrekkings,van die studie, stel ek voor dat verdere studies oor die aanwending, monitor en evaluering van die strategieë vir sorg en ondersteuningsraamwerke van die weesouerlose in 'n HOI gedoen moet word, asook hoe die begenoemde aspekte gekoppel kan word aan en toegepas kan word deur gebruik te maak van 'n deelnemende benadering. Verdere aanbevellings sluit in indienseopleidingsprogramme oor psigososiale ontwikkeling; 'n oorsigvan HOI beleide met die fokus op toeganklikheid en toepaslikheid, asook die skepping van deurlopende ondersteuning-en mentorprogramme vir die student om doeltreffend bemagtig en geëmansipeer te voel tydens hul jare in 'n HOI, 'n implikasie vir verbeterde inset en uitset.

SLEUTELWOORDE:

weesouerloosheid	hoër onderwys instellings
kritiese vrystellende navorsing	aksie navorsing
deelnemende aksie navorsing	kritiese gespreksontleding
Bronfenbrenner se Ekologiese Sistematiese Teorie	kritiese bewustheid
bemagting	nadenkende praktyk
kritiese vrystellende navorsing	kritiese denke

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE STUDY

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AR	Action Research
BEST	Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CER	Critical Emancipatory Research
DA	Discourse Analysis
DoBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
FAI	Free Attitude Interview
FET	Further Education and Training
FGD	Free Attitude Interview Focus Group Education
GOK	Government of Kenya
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HIV/AIDS	Human Immune-deficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal (province)
LO	Life Orientation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NYC	National Youth Commission
NYP	National Youth Policy
OS	Orphaned Students
OVS	Orphaned and Vulnerable Students
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PR	Participatory Research
SA	South Africa
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SMT	School Management Team
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	United Nations Joint Program on HIV/AIDS
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United State of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter chronicles the experiences of orphaned students in a higher education institution (HEI). The brief background, rationale and motivation for the study is presented, followed by the significance of the study, a summary of the choice of research design, methodology and methods utilised to generate data, taking into cognisance the sensitivity of the study. The choice of Critical Discourse Analysis and justification to answer the key research questions and ethical issues relevant to this study are discussed. The theoretical frameworks that inform the study are briefly highlighted.

1.2 INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Globally, orphanhood and caring for the orphaned has become one of the major challenges faced by societies. A number of studies attribute the escalating number of orphans to the scourge and consequences of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which exacerbates poverty, unemployment and problems with education in communities (Sibanda, 2010; Zweig, 2003; Nyambedhla, Wandibba & Aagaard-Hansen, 2003). For this reason, many studies conducted internationally, in Sub-Saharan Africa have concentrated on the plight of orphans, care and support of orphaned and vulnerable children (OVCs), adolescents or youth, and some on community and OVC or youth empowerment programmes.[1] However, the indication in some of these studies is that in diverse communities there are still inequalities and poverty, despite supportive initiatives and practices offered by government and community organisations for the orphaned children and youth. In South Africa, the major goal for these initiatives and developments is to meet the needs of a democratic society. Based on these challenges that still remain it is not surprising to learn that the number of the orphans continues to grow, estimated by the Strategic Framework for Care of Orphans,

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[1] (Wood, Ntaote & Theron, 2012; Wood & Goba 2011; Chinyoka and Ganga, 2011; Skovdal, M., Mwasiaji, W., Webale, A. & Tomkins, A. 2011; Beegle, Weerdt & Dercon, 2010; Beegle, Filmer, Stokes & Tiererova, Abebe, 2009(b); van Dijk & Driel, 2009; Chitiyo, Changara & Chitiyo, 2008; van Dijk, 2008; Wood, Chase & Aggleton, 2006; Beegle, Weerdt & Dercon, 2006; Chirwa, 2002, Ramphele, 2002)

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Children Affected by HIV and AIDS and other Vulnerable Children (2001) as increasing by 20-30% over a period of 10 years.

This growing numbers of OVC may have considerable impact on the higher education institutions (HEIs) and orphaned students in them. As highlighted above, poverty is a barrier to access and contributes to students becoming more vulnerable economically as they face financial problems, which Erlich (2004:1) notes may contribute to them giving up their studies or dropping out. Literature is scarce on the day-to-day lived experiences and coping strategies of orphaned students in an HEI, and few supportive measures put in place by HEI structures to empower them to realise their potential or escape poverty. I therefore draw mostly on literature on OVC and youth studies. Whilst poverty is still deep-rooted and endemic as a legacy of apartheid, I recognise the findings of Lalthapersad-Pillay (2007:17) in her study titled *The Poverty Alleviation Impetus of the Social Security System in South Africa* which indicates how this state of affairs has led to joblessness, homelessness and illiteracy, particularly in rural areas.

This study aims to explore the experiences of orphaned students in a HEI and the strategies they employ in mitigating those challenges, if any. Brid (2007:2) argues that adults should have the ability to listen to orphaned youth, accept their feelings as real and as important as for any individual. It is as important for adults to model openness in dialogues about issues eof life and death which assist youth as they seek effective ways to deal and cope with loss, grief and bereavement in diverse contexts. For Thrupp (2006:308), there is a greater need and concern to recognise and understand context, how people influence it and how they are influenced by the environment in which they find themselves. There is a similar need to recognise the depth of interrelationships and influence between the individual and the context is emphasised in Bronfenbrenner's theory (Kellner, 2001:220; Kiernan, 1992:214), however, the ecological systems theory underlines the importance of recognising the individuals in the systems not as passive but active people who assist in the construction of a setting. This has implications for the interconnectedness between the orphaned students and the HEI structure, as well as understanding their backgrounds.

In Zimbabwe, Novella (2013:1) presented an interesting study of the effects of orphanhood on allocation of time to schoolwork and employment activities. The emphasis on findings indicated that although orphans could access education, orphanhood challenges posed by conditions in school or in their household, including time allocation and number of activities, can impede effective academic performance or proper functioning. An HEI is a larger social system which is supposed to be the support structure dealing with physical, economic, political and emotional wellbeing of students, and in that way affects the developing person

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directly or indirectly (see definition of HEI in Chapter 2, subsection 2.7.3). Bleakley (1999:315) postulates that one of the core functions of Higher Education (HE) is developing critical thinkers, while Paul and Elder (2006:4) include people who are self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored and self-corrective thinkers. The context of this study is an HEI in South Africa, a country which Thrupp & Lupton (2006**:**311) argue suffers multiple social justice needs for recognising the contexts seriously, such that they are structured with its practices in a way that they could speak to the needs and challenges of the marginalised and oppressed, including orphaned students.

However, understanding education in developing countries remains key to unlocking the future of youth, in line with developing and sharing positive values and attitudes for effective human development. The consequences of challenges faced by students in HEIs is characterised by the recent access of students from diverse historical, educational, socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds (Erlich, 2004:1; *Higher Education Monitor*, 2007; Education for All (EFA), 2013; MDG *Country Progress Report of South Africa, 2013)*. For, Scott, Yield and Hendry (2007:iv), in the *Higher Education Monitor* Number 6 of October 2007, Council on Higher Education, 2004, *South African Higher Education in the First Decade of Democracy*), while the emphasis in South Africa has recently focused on the improvements in Higher Education, racial background has also been identified in some studies as impacting on orphanhood and considered as a major risk factor for poverty in adulthood (Beegle, De Weerdt & Dercon, 2010:163). This kind of attraction to students from diverse communities suggests that HEIs should be geared not only to provision of also pedagogies (teaching and learning) but to forging relationships which respond to students' cultural variations of acquiring knowledge and skills, effectively dealing with developmental experiences and having varied support systems in changing contexts (Walker, Gleaves & Grey, 2006:347; Bronfenbrenner, 1994:38, 1986:724).

The generalisation of university student community status is a concern as highlighted in a study conducted in France into the effects of care and support of new students where the findings indicated that some of the students dropped out before completing their degree (Leroux, 2011:157). This exemplified how access to students from diverse backgrounds previously unrepresented in HE, the disadvantaged and orphaned, is still a challenge for HEIs, in South Africa as well. For example, on the African continent alone, studies reveal that there are about 14 million orphans, estimated to increase to 50 million by 2015 (UNAIDS 2007). Amongst these orphaned children are students in HEIs and those faced with a myriad of challenges in accessing higher learning or post-matric qualifications. A study by Beegle, De Weerdt and Dercon (2010:163) to assess the impact on permanent health and education

of orphanhood provides evidence that childhood orphanhood has permanent effects on adulthood and creates a lifelong deficit in human capital.

Although South Africa has evolved with regards to economic infrastructure there are still observable social and inequalities inherited from decades of racial discrimination and injustice.[2] As highlighted in the Report on Social Profile of South Africa, 2002-2009, more than two-thirds (69%) of South Africa's population comprises people under the age of 35, these being youth or young adults. Out of this population, the age cohort 15–34 (youth) comprises 38% of the total population (Statistics South Africa, 2010) and it is significant to note that, the age group of students in HEIs, including the orphaned in an HEI, fall within this category. The question arises as to how to sustain youth in an HEI such that they are able to transform their situation and escape emotional and situational poverty. The definitions used in international policies and official documentations define or construct an orphan in a discriminatory, oppressive and socially excluding way. For example, in Zimbabwe, Chirwa (2002:95) finds the conceptualisation of orphanhood as based on social and economic conditions which contribute to social exclusion as opposed to social inclusion.

In addition, comparison with the Netherlands' broad definition of youth as comprising an age group between 0-25 years of age (The Youth Policy in Netherlands, 1998:18) with the South African Youth Policy (The National South African Youth Policy, 2008-2013:10) shows a difference as young people inclusively are those falling within the age group of 14 to 35. Despite the disparities in age groups, orphanhood is loosely culturally and socio-politically framed as perceived differently by countries. Using an age category excludes orphaned students in HEIs, hence the need to be accommodated in planned strategies for care and support as with the OVCs. In addition, when considering the educational perspective, the South African Schools Act (SASA) No 29 (1) (b; c) of 1996 (The right to Education) emphasises supportive and structured measures rather than focusing on age groups. It provides motivation for the objectives of this study recommending that reform should: "… empower young people who are able to realize their full potential and understand their roles and responsibilities in making meaningful contribution to the development of a non-racial and prosperous South Africa".

It is in this context that youth or young people worldwide are placed at the centre of each country's growth and development. Understanding the consequences of orphanhood and the impact on the lives of orphaned students in a HEI, one of the aims of this study is to

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[2] National Plan for Higher Education 432 No. 22329, 2001; USAIDS Strategic Framework for Care; White Paper for Post School Education and Training, 20 November 2013, The National Framework For Teacher Education and Development in South Africa, 2007; Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education, 2009.

explore how orphaned students are shaped by the experiences of orphanhood in an HEI. Accessing HEIs for the orphaned provides an opportunity to change the self or circumstances and the situation in context. According to Christens, Speer and Peterson (2011:172), this change is likely to be possible if an individual is empowered to do so. They elucidate that empowerment is a mechanism, a multidimensional social process which can assist individuals, groups and communities gain control over their lives. It fosters power to act for those who are less powerful on issues they define as important to them, and counter oppression by dominant culture, values and language. In this current study, empowerment is a possible framework for the understanding and promotion of wellbeing among orphaned young people.

Some approaches to empowerment focus on enabling individuals to gain access to assets, information, choices and opportunities so that they are able to improve their own situations, while an acknowledgement of individual rights and responsibilities is also emphasised (Pettit, 2012:7). For instance, New York City youth were involved in a survey that resulted in development of leadership skills and activism in Lesbians, Gays Bisexual Transgender Intersex (LGBTI) matters. The study raised awareness on challenges of exclusion, inequality and many forms of discrimination faced by youth, an indication that human–based approaches are best for youth to enhance leadership empowerment (Powers & Allaman, 2012:3-4).

Keeping young students in HEI involved in important projects, which are about changing their lives and their societies, enhances self-esteem and the development of creative, innovative individuals who are able to sustain participation in addressing, physical, social, economic and intellectual access in HEIs. The view is corroborated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 2 (IPPF, 2010) which states the following:

- children and young people also have the right to be heard, express opinions and be involved in decision making (Article 12).

- they have the right to education which will help them learn, develop and reach their full potential and prepare them to be understanding and tolerant towards others (Article 29).

- Also, young people have the right not to be discriminated against (Article 2).

In the United States, the Historical Youth Development Programmes in the Early Twenty-First Century (2008), indicate that the development of youth programmes in the mid-1800s influenced transformation of children and youth and services rendered for them. However, in the 21st century, as indicated in this report, a change occurred that focussed on a strength-

based approach with the focus on meeting the needs of youth and developing competences for all. Youth developments were to replace the deficit-based model and improve the communities in which youth live, where support and participation is an objective for improved lives leading to successful adulthood. A study by Makina (2012) on the empowerment of youth in a South African context supported interaction and engagement whereby students are enabled with creative thinking skills as active participants and co-creators of knowledge. Makina (2012:101) explores the impact of development of critical thinking skills in order to survive in the 21st century, which he claims empowers students to take decision by engaging in dialogues, in other words putting into practice theory as presented in policies.

If policies are to be relevant they should respond to the needs of diverse communities, including orphaned students and in cognisance of contexts confirmed in the approach used by Ubuntu Empowerment programme (Ubuntu Education Fund, Annual Report, 30 June 2008) in a township in Port Elizabeth. The programme's approach is mainly child/student-centred, placing people at the centre of their own development and providing access to resources and opportunities that enable the orphaned and vulnerable to empower themselves. To achieve this kind of interconnectedness and regard for individuals as unique selves, Theron (2011:8), Ginwright and James (2002:27) and Gruenewald (2003:12) confirm this view on empowerment of the disadvantaged or orphaned but place emphasis on the creation of an encouraging space that embraces multiplicity of voices in solving social problems of the day. Gruenewald (2003:2) further argues that the lack of articulated theories of change and participatory methodologies is likely to hinder empowerment of individuals pushed to the margins of the society (Carlson, Engebretson & Chamberlain, 2006:837).

On the second preamble page of the Ubuntu Education Fund for the Children of South Africa (2008), Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a Patron, acknowledged that it is a basic human right to be recognised as a person, no matter what predicaments one faces. He states the following about the empowerment programme of the Ubuntu Fund and its beneficiaries who are OVC and youth students: "The Ubuntu Education Fund is reaching people who count…" He said: "you are not helpless; you are not ciphers that can be manipulated. You are people who can prepare your own thought… and that is important". Loss of parent(s) by adolescents or young adults may be traumatic and result to loss of psychosocial support, threatening social wellbeing. Snider and Dawes (2006:13) posit that in order for the orphaned to be able to recover and attain psychosocial wellbeing, understanding their environment and the nature of relationships in which they are engaged is critical in fulfilling requirements for social justice.

1.3   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Orphanhood is a social challenge which is critical to youth development and in some ways stems from historical and structural injustice (Waldegrave, 2009:48; Herlocker, 2006:36). The effects of orphanhood have an impact on the lives of students which is a consequence of increased incidents of social, emotional, physical, economic and human rights problems. This experienced complexity of orphanhood influences developing youth or students' development and social wellbeing. When parents die the orphaned are either left with care of an extended family or with no one to ensure support or survival, and/or left to fend for themselves. According to Nowak-Fabrykowski (2004:626), in a study of orphans living in institutions, the findings revealed that children's homes and foster care centres do not replace a regular home or good family, either in creating a climate for caring or in providing education. Keller (2001:219) and Kiernan (1992:213) argue that family disruption reduces students' school achievement, even after high school, and are less likely to access university or be retained if accepted without their self-esteem being impaired.

In an HEI, orphanhood requires redefinition and careful examination of its impact on students at different systemic levels. In a study addressing the psychosocial needs of OVC, Goba (2009) indicated that loss of parents has serious consequences, including access to basic needs such as shelter, food, and clothing, healthcare and education, impacting negatively on their development and psychosocial wellbeing. Another study, exploring experiences of first-year students in an HEI, found amongst the numerous factors that impair development to be structural and psychosocial (Erlich, 2003:5). The critical factor here is that experiences associated with death exacerbate instability in life, fear, depression, loss of hope, silence and exclusion, and feelings of powerlessness and helplessness. In a comparative study by Mthiyane (2003), conducted with adolescent orphans (AO) in high school, findings indicated that apart from other challenges facing students, anxiety about the future, particularly access to institutions of higher learning (HL), was the major challenge. This confirms Griessel's (1990:71) contention that an unsupportive environment makes it stressful to venture into new situations because an individual might feel unsafe. Carneiro (2013:2) argues that apart from the unsupportive environment which goes hand-in-hand with orphanhood, meaning-making is an ultimate goal in an individual's learning culture, along with empowerment and new citizenship, democratic, social egalitarian good and social cohesion.

By way of definition, an HEI as an organisation encompasses events, contingencies, decisions and policies (Johnson 2008:3) that in many ways influence how students act, positively or negatively, to voice needs and challenges, including the maltreatment or

injustices they are perceived to suffer (Hong, Cho & Lee, 2010:567). In the past most HEIs experienced violent strike actions, based on interconnectedness and misunderstanding, insufficient financial support, and problems of inequality over residence, transport, tuition fees, lecture theatres, and health (HESA, 2004; White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, 2013).

Access to HEIs is mostly an individualistic initiative which requires an applicant paying fees in advance for application and registration, tuition, lodgings, food and transportation. The policies on funding are not explicit or specific, with one being guaranteed that on access the type of support will be readily available, hence the need for parents or guardians to provide financial support. When orphaned school-leavers gain access to HEIs they are suddenly on their own with no familiar structures or social networks, therefore, an HEI is a challenging new adventure and setting (Erlich, 2003:13). There is a wide gap between what has achieved and what still to be achieved to address the challenges and to protect orphans' rights to equality of opportunity in an HEI.

The Ubuntu Education Fund for the Children of South Africa (2008:23) provides access and employability to students in response to the needs of the diverse community and endorses working together to form a comprehensive interconnectedness as the key to success in empowering orphaned students to empower themselves (2008:5). However, there is a persistent gap between post-secondary and higher education in addressing issues of access and support for those wishing to enter an HEI. The initiative and policy frameworks implemented in primary and secondary schools are supported by a network of mostly government structures and programmes that cater for the personal needs, and physical, psychosocial, emotional and economic wellbeing of orphaned learners in school communities (South African Schools Act, 1996 (SASA); Orphaned and Vulnerable Children Tool Kit for Sub-Saharan Africa, 2009: A Toolkit on how to support orphans and other vulnerable children in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA); Policy Framework for Orphans and other Children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS in SA, 2005; The African Leadership Initiative on OVCs in South Africa, 2007 & Equality Act No.4 of 2000 or [PEPUDA]). There is emphasis on understanding the context and how it influences individuals' holistic development and the way their world is interpreted.

From the perspective pre-service teachers, the escalating rate of orphanhood in the South Africa and other southern African neighbouring countries is likely to bring many personal challenges after completion of their degree. Self-awareness and being empowered to deal with traumatic experiences, including loss through death, may enhance the probability of HEI orphaned students being a responsive community of the educated who can influence

transformation for others as well as themselves. As Bronfenbrenner (1994:38; 1986:723) states, students have capabilities and learn to construct their microsystem in their setting if empowered to do so. In interpreting this, Shaffer and Kipp (2010:58) and Addison (1992:18) maintain that the successful journey of life of individuals to higher education (HE) and self-sufficient adulthood begins at home**.**

Higher Education was considered a major factor in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2014, which included eradication or alleviation of extreme poverty and hunger, promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, environmental sustainability and establishment of a global partnership for development. This in turn compelled institutions to accommodate all students, including orphans in HEIs, by highlighting and enforcing policies that were inclusive and non-discriminatory in nature. (Millennium Development Goals Report, 2002 & 2009).

In support of the above, the South African Minister of Higher Education, Blade Nzimande (2010) stated that "a great deal of the country's students come from under-prepared backgrounds and are often not well-equipped to deal with academic challenges posed by university curricular and context". He called on universities "to create settings that responds to specific needs of diverse students and that also ensured that no student was left behind…". Christens and Peterson (2012:624) suggest that only those who are interested in what happens in and around their environment collaboratively engage in discursive practices to (re)create new knowledge, however, tools and strategies need to be provided. Sompondo, a director of Ubuntu Education Fund Empowerment (2008:3), argues, "When you give a child the tools to achieve their dreams, you sent them down the right path. ….we help to keep children on that path by empowering them to believe in themselves…".

The focus on the development on self-confidence, leadership skills, and promotion of social engagement by fostering of empowering emancipatory methodologies thus leads to the rationale and motivation of the study.

1.4   RATIONALE AND MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 aimed to regulate higher education holistically, covering broad issues ranging from micro- to macro-systems' needs and interventions. In addition, the Act (1997:1) sought to promote respect and the values which underlie "an open and democratic society" based on human dignity, equality and freedom, as construed in the South African Constitution. The Act aimed to redress past discrimination and ensure

representation and equal access in HEI, recognising that HEIs were positioned to legitimise supportive structures through the design and implementation of relevant policies, whilst recognising the communities they served and the conducive ecological space. When drawing on critical studies with goals of empowering students to critique and challenge power structures, emancipatory approaches and programmes need to be employed.

As Justo and Erazun (n.d.:4) state, marginal voices are to be integrated into the social power distribution as it is their right, and through raising critical consciousness, real discrimination and oppression that people experience in their everyday life is exposed (Almeida, Parker & Dolan-Del Vecchio, 2008:26). The aim of this study is to explore experiences of orphaned students in an HEI, determine how they are shaped by these experiences and navigate challenges drawing from the HEI policies, if any. Orphaned students who strive to overcome adversity by managing to be admitted to HEIs justify possession of strength and vision that they are driven to pursue their goals, thus working towards their emancipation to become socially responsible citizens in a just society in future.

As noted in the methodology section of this chapter (subsection1.9), and detailed in Chapter 4, this study explores lived experiences of orphans and is considered sensitive in that it suggests reliving the past for the orphaned in an HEI. As Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011:166) argue, sensitive research can act as a voice for those who are not listened to, and for those who are weak and oppressed, or it can focus on the powerful and those in high profile positions. Theron (2011:1) highlighted a number of studies on orphanhood and resiliency that found some orphans capable of succeeding if empowered to do so, even when challenged by significant difficulties in diverse contexts. This is a significant strength which requires support in dealing with effects of change in one's life circumstances. However, as demonstrated in Chapter 2 (subsection 2.2 & 2.3), critical studies are concerned with the analysis of socio-economic conditions and class structures (Parker, 1999:11), yet of significance is gaining the emancipatory and transformative knowledge which Murphy and Fleming (2009:37) refer to as "the goal to human emancipation".

As personal motivation for the study I highlight as being of based on the duty of care and support rendered to those who are less fortunate, and providing help for those who are helpless, poor and destitute, specifically orphans and widows. I then realised that as a practicing teacher and critical researcher I needed to rediscover internal dialogues about my position in an HEI, finding emancipatory ways that expound how best this obligation can benefit the community of the orphaned in my workplace, such that there is an understanding of their socio-political environment and influence their psychosocial development regardless of orphanhood experiences.

Of both professional and personal concern are the growing numbers of orphaned and disadvantaged youth leaving school and in HEIs, often left to fend for themselves with limited resources, opportunities and support to access and sustain themselves. For most of the orphaned, life is politically, socio-culturally and economically motivated, thus a challenging factor which requires that they be supported such that their voice, space or place and time influence how they acquire decision-making skills. Schatzki's (2000:64) panoramas explicitly describe how an individual's actions might respond to events in his or her social environment, but also depend solely on features of the individual or institution, above all his or her intentions and desires. Changes in family lives follow exposure to challenges and consequences of orphanhood, including vulnerability and the worst consequences of poverty, discrimination, abuse, oppression, homelessness, and non-fulfilment of basic personal needs, all of which impact on the way orphans construct themselves, whether in a school or an HEI (Mamphela, 2002:95). Further changes include hardships experienced in child-headed households (CHHs) and youth-headed households (YHHs) following perceptions by communities as passive victims of loss. In a study conducted in Rwanda, reports affirmed that in YHHs participants felt uncared for, isolated, stigmatised, and rejected by community members (Snider & Dawes, 2006:27; Skovdal & Campbell, 2009:19).

Having worked for the Department of Education (DoE) as a Life Orientation/Life Skills teacher, a school Counsellor/Guidance teacher and a Head of Department (HoD), and in KwaZulu-Natal schools for many years, I have experience in both teaching and counselling students, and in some cases parents/guardians of students/youth. The contexts of these schools ranged from farm, rural area, informal settlement and peri-urban township, characterised by high rates of unemployment, lack of resources and in some cases traces of extreme poverty and its consequences (refer to subsection 1.1 above). These challenges are uniquely diverse, and intensified by the nature of the context.

As a teacher, HoD, and member of a school management team (SMT) I have been exposed to a number of learners' and communities' social challenges, working with orphaned adolescent learners in programmes that lead to becoming self-sufficient and finding educational opportunities. This entails becoming involved in the implementation of intervention programmes that guarantee the wellbeing of learners and OVC in a school context provided by the DoE, such as nutrition programmes and vegetable gardens, school fee remissions and breakfast programmes during holidays. I have had an opportunity to mobilise, network and form collaborations with other government departments in the school communities, including negotiations with the South African Social Security Agency [SASSA], (Ministry of Social Development); South African Department of Health and health therapists

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in nearby clinics and hospitals, police departments, and community institutions such as churches, businesses and volunteers of parent bodies. In this way I sought to inculcate the collaborative approach in valuing and feeling for others, respecting the interest of others and taking social responsibility. Understandably, the complexity of the impact of orphanhood is not a responsibility of a single institute but requires that the orphaned are not denied or ignored, but their care and support is a responsibility for society and they need not be left out of socially engaging programmes set out with them and for them. The first page of the background of the National Youth Commission Act (NYCA) of 1996, and National Youth Policy (2000) and the National Youth Development Policy Framework (NYDPF) 2002/07 state how policies of the past government prevented a number of young women and men from developing their full potential and denying them access to education. To address and improve the situation, both proposed democratisation in South African society, with access to HE and education as a priority. Specific policies addressing opportunities and programmes that address the interests, needs and opportunities of youth should be provided. Having deliberated and reflected on these factors I questioned my current employment and status as a lecturer at the HEI in which this study was conducted.

Engaging with pre-service students as a Life Orientation (LO) lecturer in this HEI, the nature, focus and purpose of this subject has exposed me to a number of challenges faced by students in the institution, some of which emanated in the engagements in class and out of class. LO focuses on the holistic development of a student, that is, personally, socially, psychologically, emotionally, culturally, spiritually and politically (DoE RNCS Policy, 2000; DoBE CAPS, 2011). Despite the provisions of support offered by HEIs, I engage with many students presenting different challenges, ranging from academic, personal, health, emotional, and economic, primarily linked to the impact of family backgrounds, counselling and referring them to the professional university psychologist. I have observed that some of the programmes offer limited assistance to all students and their unique needs, which is why on a regular basis I find myself spending time listening to and sharing emotional stories with a number of students.

The support programmes provided by the HEI, for example, counselling, are intended to enhance basic skills which identify barriers to academic achievement, such as improved self-confidence, attitude towards work and acquaintance with the HEI life, culture and processes. My current employment as an LO lecturer and academic grounding in Psychology has broadened the horizon of my knowledge, motivating and encouraging me to explore more in the education of the orphaned in HEI. Importantly, the aim is not only to understand

students' orphanhood experiences but also to find further creative ways of engaging them in the emancipatory processes in their environments (Zimmerman, 1995:581).

My theoretical motivation draws on Zimmerman (1995) and Esau (2013:829), who conducted emancipatory and participatory action research (PAR) with pre-service teachers, and argued that research should impact on the lives of teacher candidates such that they benefit significantly from engaging and reflection to become critical, imaginative teacher researchers. I acknowledge that orphaned students in an HEI have strengths and capabilities to transform themselves, their situation and contexts (Chapter 2 subsection 2.5.1). This view is embedded in the principles of CER, the aspect of 'agency' having the capacity to act for and speak on one's behalf; fostering greater links between theory and practice.

In consideration of The White Paper for Post-school Education and Training of November 2013; Higher Education Act Number 101 of 1996, which stipulate that the aim of post-school system is to prepare workers for the labour market so that individuals are enabled to earn sustainable livelihoods and make a living for themselves, especially to contribute skills to developing the economy of every individual country. The main focus is on all students who access an HEI to realise their full potential; however, HEIs are currently faced with a series of student protest actions, linked to inadequacy of funding (Media Statement form Joint Meeting between University Councils Chairpersons Forum, HESA, SAUS, DHET on Violent Students Protest at Universities, 30 September 2014). Although the policies exist, the lack of engagement by relevant people for whom these are structured prevents the HESA from building a healthy HE system. The same deficit has a ripple effect on orphaned students whose lives are already overburdened by a myriad of personal and psychosocial challenges. The lack of resources and ecological space highlighted by Gruenewald (2003:5&6), creates environmental crises which eventually influence quality of life in HEIs.

In a Higher Education Council Report, CR113 (2003) on Access to Quality Higher Education it is stated that HEIs already make considerable provision for the wellbeing of their students through support structures and policies, but no mention has been made of orphaned students being integrated within them. According to the report, HE should increase participation and responsiveness to those students previously excluded from entering certain HEIs (Jali, 2006:26). The CER (chapter 2 subsection 2.2, 2.3), Edstrome and Khan (2009) and many other critical theorists argue that vulnerable children, adolescents and youth are not and should not be mistaken for passive objects, but rather facilitation should made for exposure to engagement opportunities as agencies for their maturation and interacting.

Reaching out to someone requires understanding, but this requires respectful communication.

South Africa's Constitution has been lauded for its provision for transformation of the educational system; however, orphaned students and vulnerable students do not see themselves as sufficiently resourceful to address their educational and orphanhood challenges. They depend on the HEI structures and external stakeholders, such as the government, to address their lack of resources. The policies and practices of these structures do not regard these students as requiring assistance or even acknowledge their existence. As HEIs accommodate students from diverse communities, the question arises as to how orphans are known, their backgrounds and immediate needs, and what they can do for themselves as responsive pre-service teachers to succeed.

Although being aware that empowerment strategies alone is insufficient to change inequitable conditions without examining the societal norms that lead to marginalisation (Mohajer & Earnest, 2009) the most important intervention strategy which involved orphaned students by creating awareness through self-reflection for change needed to be thought of. In support of the idea of change, Murphy and Alexander (2007) regard 'change' as integral to the human experience, should be reflected in every part of existence, from physical makeup to the way one thinks, interacts with others, and feels emotionally.

Since orphanhood in an HEI is perceived as an issue embedded in disempowerment, inequality, oppression, domination, suppression and alienation (Pain & Francis, 2003:47; Dysthe & Engelsen, 2004:107), the necessity for engaging students in emancipatory ways of transformation of 'the self' requires to be practiced for change to ensue. These should place more emphasis on the participation of orphaned students, knowledge production and realisation of the objectives (outcomes) and more empowered selves. An approach that can shift power or bring structural change is relevant to the study and allowing orphaned students to participate promoted community change, giving them a voice to shift inequities, and promote an increased sense of power and control, responsibility and psychological empowerment (Bhana, 2006: 39; Worthen, McKay, Veale & Wessells, 2010:152).

Drawing on the South Africa context, the National Youth Policy (2008-2013) recommends that for equal participation and inclusion, service providers must design policies, strategies and programmes for and with young people by sharing information, creating opportunities and involving them in decision-making as active participants in their own development. This, underlines the importance of active participation when engaging with policies presented and those that still need revision, therefore, for orphaned students, development of critical

consciousness is a key for inclusion, engagement, and empowerment to reconstruct meaning while bringing about change and consequently emancipation. There can be no equitable transformation without the right skills and education, however my concern about unequal provisions of support grew from daily engagements with HEI students themselves, some of whom were orphans, and from rigorous library search.

The scarcity of literature which ensures debates about the protection of rights of all students, including orphans in an HEI (see 1.2 above), which is not clearly indicated and spelt out in HEI policies is a cause for concern that requires urgent rigorous discourse. Therefore, this study seeks to chronicle the experiences of orphaned students at HEIs specifically; to give them a platform on which to voice their perceptions through discourse by critical engagement in meaning-making about their lives in related systems, including HEIs. It also aims, through development of critical consciousness and reflective practice, to empower orphaned students during and after the research process in support programmes and workshops to devise a framework through participatory action processes. The exposure to reflective practice by creating more engaging activities can create critically responsive citizens who are socially responsible pre-service teachers, leading to the critical research questions and objectives of this study.

1.5   RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Based on the above motivation, and in chronicling the experiences of orphaned students in HEIs in South Africa, the study aims to explore their experiences as the following objectives:

   i.   understand and describe the experiences of orphaned students in a HEIs.

   ii.   explore how experiences of orphaned students shape their lives in a HEI.

   iii.   explore how orphaned students navigate the needs and challenges of orphanhood in an HEI.

   iv.   find if there are HEI policies that support orphaned students and how they experience these.

   v.   explore possibilities of engaging HEI orphaned communities in the development of an empowerment framework

1.6 KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

i.   What are the experiences of orphaned students in a Higher Education Institution?

ii.   How do experiences of orphaned students shape their lives in HEIs?

iii.   Do the orphaned students navigate the challenges of orphanhood in an HEI, if any?

iv.   What HEI policies are there to support orphaned students and how do they experience them?

v.   What are the possibilities of engaging HEI orphaned communities in the development of an empowerment framework?

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Numerous studies have been conducted in developed and developing countries, including South Africa, with regards to the impact of orphanhood in families, schools and society in general (Ganga & Maphalala, 2013; Ismayilova, Ssemawala, Mooers, Nabunya & Sheshadri, 2012; Theron, 2011; Abebe, 2009 (a); The Millennium Development Goals Report, 2009). Most of these studies found that orphanhood rates continue to increase, mostly in African countries. However, the lack of literature focussing on care and support for orphaned and vulnerable children in HEIs has motivated my study, aiming to raise awareness of the problem, in relation to issues of power, inequality, discrimination, oppression and social injustices. It offers new empirically grounded conceptual knowledge to pre-service HE students, HEIs and relevant stakeholders, thus enhancing equal distribution of services and resources to all students. The study prompts, encourages and suggests employment of collaborative roles which could be played by relevant government and HEI structures, and pre-service students themselves, to ensure that supportive measures are in place to improve their psychosocial wellbeing, a concern for social justice in a democratic society. This action informs the existing policies and structures in creating and maintaining empowerment processes that will enhance change in the personal, social and structural conditions.

Sensitive in nature, the study attempts to capture the experiences of orphaned in an HEI through their voices and engages them in understanding themselves better, increasing self-

awareness, including in discourses about (re)conceptualization of orphanhood in an HEI. To devise intervention strategies that best suit orphaned and vulnerable students stimulated by employing the PAR principles (Powers & Allaman, 2012:6), a possible means to psychosocial wellbeing and socio-political development. Finally, one positive goal of the study is that engagement in discursive participatory approaches, including reflective practice, critical consciousness and critical thinking, which all are dialectic and thoughtful actions, is likely to enable HEI students to transfer it to the life skills development in their academic world and as practising teachers in future. On implementation, the framework promises to demystify some of distorted views of reality, environmental or contextual problems, by interrogating dominant ideologies in an HEI.

1.8   OVIERVIEW OF THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This qualitative critical emancipatory study is underpinned by Critical Emancipatory Research (CER) and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (BEST) (see Chapter 2 subsections 2.2 & 2.5.3). The eclectic mix of theories is utilised with the understanding that in order to make any interventions, the outcomes of which are to be psychosocially, historically, politically and culturally responsive or appropriate to individuals who are pushed to margins of the society, change should begin with a person in a conducive environment. It is also important to include or draw from some conceptual frameworks and is paramount in the understanding of the effects of orphanhood in the South African context. In particular, the theoretical implications for both CER and BEST are significant in meaning making and decision-making as derived from diverse social, cultural, political and, economic conditions which have important theoretical implications. The purpose for the choice of these frameworks is discussed hereunder.

1.8.1   Critical Emancipatory Research (CER)

Critical emancipatory research (CER) involves use of critical theories, participatory action research (PAR), Marxism, feminism and ethnic studies. Freierian theories, race-specific theory and post-colonial theories (Chilisa & Preece, 2005; Mertens, 1998) are utilised to promote individual freedom within a democratic society and to transform social structures and challenge oppression (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Creswell, 2009; Viljoen & Eskell- Blokland, 2007:53). Literature confirms that orphanhood is a social challenge and CER addresses issues such as empowerment in meaningful contexts, inequality,

oppression, domination, suppression, alienation, power and transformation (Mertens, 1998; Chilisa & Preece, 2005). The epistemology of critical theory takes cognisance of the inseparability of what we know and what consequently influences our inquiry as researchers. Literature places emphasis on the importance of an emancipatory paradigm in this study, that is, it seeks to bring about independence from influences on the individual students and reveals some unjustified assumptions based on the understanding and interpretation of experiences (Nieuwenhuis, 2012:64(c); Walliman, 2009:121; McKernan, 2004:183). However, to deal effectively with interpretation of experiences of human behaviour or attitude, understanding the influence of contextual factors is the basis of interventions resulting in development of decision-making skills for meeting social challenges, including orphanhood.

1.8.2   Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (BEST)

This study recognises the interrelationship between individuals and their context. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (BEST) is adopted to focus on the quality of human interactions in social contexts (Santrock, 2009; Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2007 & 2005; Visser, 2007; Hadebe, 2007; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Tickett, Kelly & Todd 1972). This focusses on how individuals and groups at different levels of society are linked in dynamic, interdependent and interacting relationships. Using Bronfenbrenner (2005) argument that both the real and perceived aspects contexts may influence human behaviour, both the reality and experiences of orphanhood in an HEI influence how it is understood and managed, and how the perceived uneven commitments to social justice by HEI structures are troubled in building a psychosocial empowerment framework that interrogates various economic and political themes (Gruenewald, 2003:6). The framework recognises the change and interdependence of social and physical environments, including in the HEI, perceived as a link between complex interrelationships and the healthy wellbeing of orphaned students in HEIs. To conclude, also affirmed in both theories is the position of working against the development of the attitude of helplessness and hopelessness, whilst promoting enhancement of psychological strength to solve personal and social challenges.

1.9   METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND TECHNIQUES

In this methodological section is a presentation of how CER and BEST principles are integrated within PAR. This qualitative study uses philosophical, theoretical and

methodological foundations in interpreting the global impact on the development of an empowerment framework to acquire insight and develop understanding by getting closer to the data in order to understand participants' points of view and to obtain social knowledge (Clarke, 1999:S5). For this reason, qualitative methodologies and methods to generate data and foster creativity, accountability and responsibility in the whole emancipatory process were utilised. I found PAR best-suited for this study as it is concerned with problem-solving by linking knowledge to action, providing the enhancement of opportunities for intellectual social growth and sense of urgency in action towards social change (Powers & Allaman, 2012:36; Botha, van der Merwe, Bester, Albertyn, 2007:10). The context of the study is an HEI for pre-service teachers, the aim of which is to become responsive teachers and at the same time to work towards changing their situation and consequently contribute to the economy of the country. One of the important requirements for students in HEI is the development of problem-solving skills, seen by Marock (2008:7) in a study on employability of youth as one of the key capabilities of employability. I also find problem-solving skills as relevant to application of PAR principles in this study and in gathering data that seeks to answer the questions of why things are the way they are, as opposed simply to quantifying the information collected by means of statistical procedures.

A single case study was chosen and utilised to allow for in-depth explorations of the participants' experiences and how they address needs and challenges in a HEI (Ferreira, 2012:35; Kelly, 2006:297). Consideration of the uniqueness of participants and acknowledgment of their individual knowledge and experiences is fundamental, however, with the understanding that personality cannot only be observed directly, and that its existence has to be inferred from behaviour in different interpersonal relationship in varied contexts with individuals, family, community and society, a methodology that would consider putting theory into practice was relevant. In this way, employing PAR endorses individual and group strengths, fosters active participation, and stimulates attainment of knowledge, empowerment and continued participation (Ochieng, 2010:1725; Galletta & Jones, 2010:355; Kinsler, 2010:172; van der Velde, Williamson & Ogilvie, 2009:1293; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007:287).

As a critical researcher it was important to look for the ways in which this research would or would not benefit participants and consider how their views and situations as individuals and as a collective are respected, referred to by Worthen, McKay, Veale and Wessells (2010:149) as 'privileging local knowledge'. It is important first to be in a position to better understand the subtle and overt manifestations of oppression in an HEI and increased awareness of power relations in order to be able to address the issue of the day,

'orphanhood in an HEI', disempowerment, inequality, oppression, domination, suppression and alienation, as well as the emancipatory ways to be pursued or practiced for change (Dworski-Riggs & Langhout, 2010:216). To generate data from participants and other stakeholders a Free Attitude Interview (FAI) technique was employed, which encompasses asking one question to initiate the conversation with the participants, (Nkoane, 2010:326; Mahlomaholo & Nkoane, 2002:4). To find the essence of underlying meanings of experiences of participants in this study, one-on-one and focus group discussions (FGDs), reflection journals and verbal reflections were utilised. These data generation methods enabled cross-checking of findings and so ensured reliability.

1.9.1 Participants and context of the study

Purposive snowballing sampling was utilised to identify participants in one South African HEI, namely orphaned students as best-suited, appropriate and sufficient for this qualitative study (Leedy & Armond (2001:153). The strength and richness of data generated and analysed required special consideration, since as a qualitative researcher I preferred to understand the participants' actions, events and processes in their context (Babbie & Mouton, 2011:272). I considered that true knowledge can be obtained through interactive and empowering relationships to those without power, using the participants' language of choice (Mthiyane, 2014:89).

1.9.2 Data analysis approach

According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1993:93), analysis is an attempt to organise, account for, and provide explanations of data so that sense may be made. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a qualitative research approach was utilised to enable participants to undergo the processes of deconstruction, that is, analysis of written texts and spoken words was employed to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality, and bias and how these sources are initiated, maintained and transformed within specific social, economic, political, and historical contexts. (Schurink, Fouche & de Vos, 2012:403; Fairclough, 2012:453-454; Cohen et al. 2011:537; Nkoane, 2010:324-325). CDA in this study also justifies the frameworks employed (CER and the Ecosystemic Theory) to answer questions about the relationship between language and society, how it is or is not used to perpetuate and reveal overt workings in an HEI in which orphaned pre-service teachers are exposed in complex process of critical social discursive practices (Fairclough, 2012:458 &

459; Breeze, 2011:494; Kendall, 2007:7). CDA assisted in the (re)construction of forms communication in which language signals the understanding of who we are, where we are and what kind of situation we are in (Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hui & O'Garro, 2005:365). Three levels of analysis in CDA, as presented in Fairclough (2012:458) and van Dijk (2006:360); Janks (1997:329) citing Fairclough (1989, 1995) are explored (see Chapter 4 subsection 4.5.3.1) to determine the relationship between (a) the actual text (subsection 4.5.3.1.1); (b) the discursive practices, that is, the process involved in creating, writing, speaking, reading, and hearing (subsection 4.5.3.1.2); and (c) the larger social context's impact upon the text and discursive practices (subsection 4.5.3.1.3)

1.10   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Mkhonta (2008:25) claims that researching the lives of people is a privilege not a right, which prompted me to consider prioritising treatment of individuals and communities participating in the study with respect and dignity. Ethical considerations were discussed with the participants prior, during and after the research process. Considering the sensitive nature of this study, measures to guard against possible ethical dilemmas, and the less obvious yet harmful effects of research (Mertens, 1998:78) were sought and put into place. The ethical issues considered in this study included seeking approval and permission, consent, maintenance of confidentiality, anonymity privacy, and debriefing, further discussed in context in Chapter 4 (subsection 4.6).

1.11   OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

In **Chapter One** I have provided an overview of the background, rationale and motivation for the study and the research questions posed. I detailed the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the study, emancipatory approaches (CER and BEST) supported by the demonstration of triangulated value of PAR and multi-methods of generating data used to answer the key research questions. The choice of and justification for using CDA as an appropriate data analysis method for this qualitative critical emancipatory study was highlighted briefly.

In **Chapter Two,** I deliberate on the theoretical frameworks underpinning this study, namely, CER and BEST. The origins and how the theories fit into this study are discussed, and I further acknowledge the relevance of some components of critical theory, for example,

Freire's Transformative and Emancipatory Principles and Jürgen Habermas's views, all of which form a basis for triangulation to ensure trustworthiness. The ecological systems theory situates individuals in a social system and advocates that all orphaned students are part of interrelated systems and connect their psychological development to social context in a continuing relationship. A review of literature provides clarification of critical terms that are used and which form the basis of this study.

In **Chapter Three** attention is drawn to the nature and consequences of orphanhood in societies globally, from reviewed literature. The high numbers of OVCs in numerous studies has implications for HEIs, as their students are increasingly from diverse educational, socio-economic, historical and socio-cultural backgrounds However, few qualitative studies focus exclusively on exploring experiences of orphaned students in HEIs, so this chapter explores the effects of grief and bereavement processes as experienced by orphaned students. Their needs and challenges as demonstrated in youth development programmes, including school-based support services, are explored and used as a basis for participation for HEI students in acquiring coping resources for improved psychosocial wellbeing and to navigation of experienced challenges of orphanhood in an HEI. Further explored in this chapter is the impact of dealing with socio-economic conditions in an HEI which exacerbate conditions of accelerated rates of poverty and its impact on academic performance and drop-out rates; poor self-image leading to silenced emotions; vulnerability caused by changed family structure; new roles and identities; and consequences of poverty. The chapter explores the empowerment strategies needed and offered in HEI to raise orphaned student teachers above adversity and to become socially responsible citizens.

In **Chapter Four** I discuss the research design and qualitative approaches operationalised in the study. I indicate how the critical emancipatory paradigm, its principles and procedures are integrated within PAR methodology to address the issues of orphanhood in an HEI, disempowerment, inequality, oppression, domination, suppression and alienation, as well as the emancipatory ways to be pursued or practiced for change in a proposed framework. Participants are profiled, highlighting their involvement, with access to HEIs, ethical considerations and theoretical and multi-methods used for triangulation. This chapter also provides details on selection and justification of adherence to issues of ethics in research. It examines the researcher's role and reflections on action cycles to evaluate the potential impact of the study.

Chapter Five presents participants' data generated from one-on-one discussions, verbal and written reflections and data from focus group discussions (FGDs), and discussed it following the three critical levels of the CDA (Fairclough, 1997:201-204; van Dijk, 1993:249).

An eclectic mix of CER and BEST, selected participants' extracts, methodological principles/foundations (PAR) and reviewed literature are used to strengthen analysis and findings on participants' experiences, challenges and needs in a HEI.

In **Chapter Six**, as in Chapter Five, each individual's data generated from one-on-one discussions, verbal and written reflection as well as from FGDs are presented, analysed and discussed, using the three levels of CDA. Analysis pertaining to possibilities and vision about the development of the framework and possibilities for its sustainability in an HEI is deliberated on in detail, citing voices of students themselves.

In **Chapter Seven** I begin by reiterating the objectives of the study and succinctly summarising the study. A synthesis of findings, reflections and conclusions, recommendations and implications, and limitations of the study are further discussed. Implications are based on what the participating team suggested in the findings from chapters 5 and 6, and as corroborated in literature and theoretical underpinnings.

1.13   CHAPTER SUMMARY

This introductory chapter has presented a background to the problem of orphaned students in an HEI and the role they could play through participation in finding ways to navigate challenges by developing empowerment strategies. Motivation and a rationale for the study was presented, with a statement of the problem, key research questions, aims and objectives and its significance. An overview of theoretical frameworks, literature review and research design and methodology was given.

The next chapter outlines the theoretical and conceptual frameworks underpinning this study.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Having introduced the study on the prevalence of orphanhood and its consequences for the education system, especially as experienced by HEI students in chapter 1, in this chapter I deliberate on the theoretical frameworks underpinning this study, namely, Critical Emancipatory Research (CER) and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (BEST).

2.2   OPERATIONALISING THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

A theory is a set of interrelated and abstract concepts, constructs, ideas, definitions, statements, principles and propositions that attempt to predict and verify a particular phenomenon by generated data (De Vos & Strydom, 2012:512; Babbie, 2010:43; Neuman, 2003:7; Neuman 2006:11). Components of critical theory in the perspectives of Freire's transformative and emancipatory principles and Habermas have been chosen to strengthen the framework, acknowledging the necessity to make interventions the outcomes of which are to be culturally responsive or appropriate, knowledge of the South African context.

2.3   HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CRITICAL EMANCIPATORY RESEARCH

Boss (2008:110) writes that "a good theory is useful theory", and that when practitioners are faced with human suffering a theoretical map can guide what one must often do quickly. Mindful of the above, I utilised Critical Emancipatory Research (CER) as the most suitable theory for this study of orphaned students in HEI. Critical theory has its origins in the Frankfurt School, a philosophical movement founded in the twentieth century (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2012:77; Breuing, 2011:4; Silva, 2007:171) in a theoretical tradition developed most notably by Horkeimer, Adorno, Habermas and Marcuse. The theorists of the Frankfurt School's political and social world were influenced by the devastation of World War 1, which compelled reinterpretation of the social world. Critical research associated with the Frankfurt School attempts to concern itself with social life and interrogates its structure, goals and values (Keller, 2001:1 & Kellner, 1993:44). Their work is a critical response to the works of

Marx, Kant, Hegel and Weber, hence critical theories that narrate human struggles against dominative social contexts are termed neo-Marxist rather than radical Marxist theory. Critical theorists, supplemented by Karl Marx with Sigmund Freud and Jürgen Habermas (of the second generation), incorporated pragmatism and systems theory. The emphasis has been on the dialectic of domination or oppression and emancipation or liberation as critical theorists develop a praxis centred on emancipation. Oliver (1995:107) and Walmsley (2001:188) purport that emancipatory theory is seen as taking the opposite view of the positivist paradigm which is accused of denying participants a voice to reveal their own situation. Moreover, critical thinkers believe that in order to attain the theoretical goals, satisfaction is not only drawn through emancipating oppressed individuals but it also consequently empowers and enables individuals to transform their lives and others' conditions. The emphasis is on people taking action themselves to challenge any form of discrimination, inequality, domination, oppression, subordination or marginalisation.

McMahon and Patton (2009:103) identify key recursive dimensions in the career counselling process, namely: connectedness, reflection, meaning-making learning and agency, all of which denote what CER presents in contextual interrelationships. Further noted is that CER has its roots in several traditions and influences, including Marx' analysis of socio-economic conditions and class structures (Parker, 1999:11), Habermas's notions of technical, practical and emancipatory knowledge, and Freire's transformative and emancipatory education; critical race theory, critical gender studies, and critical management studies (Murphy & Fleming, 2009:37). Since CER is associated with the work of the Frankfurt school, drawing on the thoughts of Marx, this study is not an end in itself but has the goal of human emancipation (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2012:78, Merriam, 2009:36). For Merriam (2009:34), in critical social science the goal is to critique and challenge, transform and empower minorities pushed to the margins of the society. It can be said that critical research seeks not only to study and understand society (not what is going on), but also to critique (the way things are) and to bring about a more just society (a changed society). To elaborate further, examining critical theory also distinguishes between conventional approaches, justice and post-conventional justice, which focus on why problems initially exist.

Although, in critical qualitative research, power dynamics are at the centre of CER, with people sometimes accepting things the way they are, critical thinkers reject this behaviour and warn that in so doing one might reinforce the current unequal distribution of power. Such reactions indicate that while other groups or individuals are trying to resist the status quo, others act in a self-destructive or counterproductive manner, which might be the case with orphaned students in HEI. Power in combination with hegemonic social structures result in

the marginalisation and oppression of those without power (Merriam, 2009:34), leading McLaren and Kincheloe (2007:136) to conclude that critical theory retains its ability to disrupt and challenge the status quo. Nkoane (2012:99), Radebe (2010:69); and Kincheloe (2008:4&6) state that CER produces knowledge that critiques and questions surplus power or domination and therefore its position is to emancipate or liberate human beings from an ideologically distorted conception of reality and enhance the principles of democracy.

The CER opposes the positivist paradigm views and is concerned with how struggling people are made to be dependent following their deficiency. It is for this reason that CER as a lens is utilised in this study, in which experiences of orphaned pre-service teachers are explored. This view of research is corroborated by Hlalele (2014:104), Steinberg and Kincheloe (2010:142) and Mahlomaholo (2009:34), for whom critical emancipatory research is practical and motivates people to action, transforming and empowering, changing the lives of the participants and context in which they live as well as places of employment. Participants own the problem and process, hence providing solutions. Critical researchers contend that participatory approaches challenge conventional dichotomies between researcher and researched and place emphasis on the need to conduct research *with* and *for* participants rather than *on* them (Silva, 2007:171), using simultaneous involvement to make sense of diverse perceptions through signs and symbols.

The goal for this research is thus important for orphaned students to be empowered through engagement so as to control their own lives for the collective, egalitarian good. This theory according to Meeussen, Delvaux and Phalet (2013:1) views individuals as "able persons [with] psychological strength"; who should cope in diverse social contexts and form appropriately engaging relationships. In this study, the theory aims to investigate how the world that surrounds the orphaned students affects their development in HEI to shape/reshape who they are holistically, acknowledging that the students' contexts change over time, and the (re)construction of their identity. In recognition that individuals create their own reality, produce and reproduce their own existence in a communication-centred manner within varied contexts, CER allow individuals to act rationally to increase their autonomy. It allowed students to explore inescapable political and historical agendas, considering that "an action taken collectively while learning from each other by sharing experiences is resultant to transformation of lives in social contexts" (McGregor, 2003 in Hlalele, 2014:104).

2.4   OBJECTIVES OF CRITICAL EMANCIPATORY RESEARCH

The philosophical assumptions that form the basis of the critical theory and which incorporate the concepts of Kant, Fichte, Hegel and Marx (Peca, 2000:10-11) specify that reality is both objective and subjective, based on the dichotomy between human consciousness and its created external reality, and it is in a state of continuous change. Critical theorists believe that individuals are inseparable from what they know. There is also an inextricable interaction between researcher and the participants about what is known to them. This reality (concepts and how things are described) is interactively constructed and created by people through language, resulting in shared reality. In this sense, a critical theory acknowledges the existence of both objective and subjective knowledge (Giddens, 1977:140, as cited in Peca, 2000:4).

Critical theory assumes that orphanhood is created and is shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender-based institutions that are taken to be natural or real. Hill (2010:8) explicates that critical theorists attempt to explain how culture is produced and reproduced, how individuals struggle with meanings which shape their socialization, and how power, or a lack of it, affects this production and reproduction of culture. Kant stressed the importance of space as a universal principle of human cognition, as highlighted in van Leeuwen (2008:88), and the link to social action to act out social practices. Therefore, analysis of power in an HEI should not ignore the role of space, seen by Nkoane (2012:98) as 'invitational environments', but rather privilege social justice for all. On the other hand, knowledge is attained through the interactive relationship between external reality and human consciousness, resulting in action which furthers the evolutionary process. People in CER are consistently evolving towards a higher level of knowledge that moves them towards emancipation. Similarly, after having explored research approaches, the CER as a framework demonstrated how the 'power of difference' viewed by Steinberg and Kincheloe (2010:145) as a distortion of power and inability of dominant culture to deal with difference can be destroyed if people become aware of who they are and that they exist independently of another. Such viewpoints highlight and validate the employment of this culture of difference, the exception being solidarity among those who have been excluded.

Methodologically, the critical emancipatory paradigm denotes a family of research designs that are influenced by various philosophies and theories with a common theme of emancipating and transforming communities through group action (Martens, 2009:59; Chilisa & Preece, 2005:33). They align themselves with the interests opposed to those of dominant culture, with the aim of uncovering inner workings of society. In the *Archaeology English Dictionary* (1999:182), concerns are addressed about how the inner workings of society

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which have remained concealed from view by a veneer of ideology, that is, "the philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways a point which according to Marx (1843:80) is to change it in a direction for *democracy* and *social justice"*. Mncube (2008:79) and Riddell (2009:286) argue that CER is still rooted in a concern over oppression and inequality, with emancipation and practical actions a motivating goal. The goal for this research is thus important in the search for knowledge to increase awareness of reality within the HEI, thus promoting a shift in the balance of power for more equitable distribution. CER acknowledges complexity in construction of the human psyche, whereby consciousness and human behaviour are not only about cause and effect as a rationalistic process, but also consider exposure to empowering and emancipatory projects. To expand on the aforementioned notion, Mahlomaholo (2009:226) states that 'good' CER is empowering, changing people's lives and stations in life, liberating them from unhelpful practices and thoughts and meeting the needs of a real-life situation.

In CER, participants engage individually and collectively in the identification and definition of a problem, collection and analysis of data and dissemination of findings during the research process. By uncovering structures that underlie HEI, students' experiences and development of critical consciousness, new knowledge will inform the change in practices by identifying power and discourse and legitimate varied voices. In particular, I regard CER as congruent to the study as it enhances reflective practice and critical consciousness. I am interested in the theory that takes cognisance of giving voice to the silenced and that offers strategies that are emancipatory and empowering. Therefore, CER in this study is considered as a set of ideas that are used to construct a transformed student teacher who is amenable to work collaboratively with others in the development of critical and valued knowledge to conquer the oppressive status quo in HEI. Emancipatory enquiry challenges the inequalities and injustices that affect orphanhood in society. With the rise of orphanhood amongst children and young people, this research presents CER as the theoretical lens and consciousness raising position to agree with emancipatory goals that help them to improve peoples' life conditions as worthy citizens (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011:77; Fleming & Finnegan, 2010:3). From this perspective and understanding the prevalence of orphanhood internationally, CER was of significance in reinterpretation of the world of orphaned students from the forms of power.

Although this study seeks to find answers through the lens of CER, it acknowledges that there are some critiques of the theory. One critique of this critical approach is that CER has a deliberate political agenda, and the task of the researcher is not to have an agenda, but to be dispassionate, disinterested and objective (Cohen et al. 2011:35). This calls for the

researchers to transcend their own perspectives and empower participants to be researchers themselves by taking action. In so doing, both will engage in deep cognitive processes during the creation of knowledge.

Finlayson (2005:4) states that a theory does not need to describe the world but to change or transform it, being:

> …. practical, not just theoretical: that is, it should aim not just to bring about correct understanding, but to create social and political conditions more conducive to human flourishing than the present ones . . . The goal of the theory was not just to determine what was wrong with contemporary society at present, but, by identifying progressive aspects and tendencies within it, to help transform society.

This positive view recognises the rights and power of the researchers or leaves them unquestioned, extending them to participants as subjective decision-makers. Kelly (2006:373) argues that this violates the traditional objectivity of researchers. Generally, people who are empowered are able to realise their full potential, understand themselves and their roles and ultimately make a meaningful contribution as citizens in their countries. As a theoretical framework, Nkoane (2012:68) views the goal of CER as being "to help participants construct their own 'Knowing' in order to create 'Action' of their 'Plan' for a 'Better Future'. In my view, utilising CER with orphaned pre-service teachers in HEI exposed and challenged forces that prevent individuals and groups from discovering intervention strategies which are empowering and emancipatory for future teachers practising in their communities. This point serves as a source of encouragement that also acknowledges Steinberg and Kincheloe's (2010:143) belief that the attainment of critical emancipation "should allow for new forms of connectedness with others". In a reconceptualising of critical theory they endorsed the benefits of CER as it "demands an engagement with the suffering people of the lived world, with moral dilemmas that face us the complexity of everyday life. It was developed to disrupt, to challenge, and to promote moral action."

Engagement by stakeholders is essential for any intervention in challenging life experiences to initiate change. Mertens (2009:64 & 65) concurs with Steinberg and Kincheloe's contention above, but declares the following about the characteristics of a transformative paradigm: "… 'research as a responsibility' is answerable and obligated to the very persons and communities being in an inquiry". The nature of the relationship should be characterised by close collaboration and the participants' language being interactive and empowering. Self-awareness and cultural sensitivity are critical for the process of research in education. To lessen traces of oppression I used Merten's theory, coupled with awareness of the aims

of CER as some of the strategies that would help to improve the lives of the marginalised. Raising consciousness of contextual and historical factors while incorporating different theories, multiple approaches, methods and techniques make possible valuable results from rich data for just social transformation (Breuing, 2011:4&5 & Mertens, 2009:59).

2.5   TRANSFORMATIVE AND EMANCIPATORY PRINCIPLES

Freire's Transformative and Emancipatory principles are deemed best for the aims of the study. CER principles involve the development of critical consciousness and critical capabilities, but a second theory allied to CER as a lens in this study is communicative action, as the primacy of superstructure is based on learning (collective or individual) while solving social problems. Habermas stressed that social life problems or social conflict can be solved through rational discourse among people when the priority is on the speech act in a communication process (Mitrovic, 1999:221).

2.5.1   Principles of critical capabilities

Conceptually, I am informed by the Freierian methodologies (Oliver, 1995, 2002 & 2007 (a & b); Carlson, Engebretson & Chamberlain, 2006:837; Mohajer & Earnest, 2009:426), which acknowledge that individuals are producers and creators of knowledge, therefore their "subjectivity as opposed to "objectivity" should be raised through critical consciousness. Being able to act upon the world in a transforming way as the beginning of creation of knowledge is also acknowledged. According to McLaren (1995:54), Freire believed in love as the 'oxygen of revolution' that nourishes the historical memories and engenders encouragement to individuals that results in hope. He asserts that power generated from knowledge has a potential to initiate social or cultural action and the result of participant empowerment is through shared experiences. Based on Freire's notion I also believe that if orphaned students are unable to transform their challenging lived experiences into new knowledge that could be used in a process of unveiling covert knowledge, the possibility of vigorously participating in dialogue is limited. It is therefore critical (Freire1998:19) to create safe and trusting conditions that will apprentice orphaned students into the creation of a new body of knowledge utilising the relevant method of approaching the world.

2.5.1.1 The need for critical consciousness development

Freierian methodologies justify that theory should not be inseparable from practice. Critical theorists see individual empowerment and social change as forming the principles of transformative and emancipatory theory included in the frameworks used in this study (Watson, 2006:47; McLaren & Kincheloe, 2007:346; Parker, 1990:227). Freire's theory of Critical Consciousness (Freire, 1972; 1982; 2000; 2002), which forms an important component of the theoretical framework, falls within the critical paradigm. Concurring with Freire's thinking, critical researchers believe that interpretive social science is passive, even immoral, as it does not take a strong value position or encourage people to question, challenge and act on their reality in order to transform it. Hence, in contrast to critical social science, which is action-orientated, and with a clear purpose of changing the world, Freire believed that ignorance and lethargy of poor people are the cause of economic, social and political dominance (Fritze, n.d.). St. John (2009:35) indicates that theories of action should have a way of engaging people with their collective and individual aims openly in a discourse.

The role of the critical researcher is thus to construct a vision informed by that form of discourse. Freire (2000; 1994, 1973; 1970), cited in Carlson, Engebretson, and Chamberlain (2006:837), recognises and proposes that consciousness be viewed as taking place at three different levels, the lowest being when people view themselves as trapped by circumstances, not acting on the situation but silently accepting the status quo. At this level people are consumed with feelings of helplessness and inferiority attitudes. At the second level of consciousness, they are perceived and interpreted as naïve, tending to blame others for the social reality of their lives instead of addressing issues of injustice and corruption of which they are aware. The third level is the highest level of consciousness, on which individuals become aware of their own responsibility for choices that either maintain or change that reality.

The goal of critical consciousness is the development of critical awareness of personal dynamics in social and political situations (Freire, 1972, 1982, 1998), a process which opens paths for liberation from oppressive societal discourses, that is, breaking silences of orphaned youth in HEIs. This is affirmed by Mustakova-Possardt (1998:13), who claims that critical consciousness, according to Freire is:

…the ability of individuals to take perspectives on their immediate cultural, social, and political environment, to engage in critical dialogue with it, bringing to bear fundamental moral commitments including concerns for social justice and equity and to define their own space or place with respect to surrounding reality, constitutes an important human faculty"

The emphasis in McDonough (2009:528) and Diemer and Blustein (2005:220) demonstrate that while the process of critical consciousness is complex it favourably negates individual assumptions and is not context-based. In McDonough's study conducted in the USA on issues of race and inequity (Aliakbari & Faraji 2011:81), the conclusions emphasised that lack of contact with racial groups other than one's own perpetuated deficit thinking or perception. This is more so with issues of orphanhood in HEIs which are avoided or not openly discussed, as it is discriminatory. Engaging in critical consciousness, one of the aims of this study, brings awareness to students themselves, who in a way struggle to identify or associate themselves with others and are disempowered by ideological practices that further marginalise them. Perpetuation of marginalisation practices is illegitimate, and according to Freire (1972:19) the aim of critical consciousness is to bring back one's voice identity. McDonough (2009:529) postulates that the power of critical consciousness negates assumptions on issues of orphanhood in HEIs. Critical consciousness in this study is viewed as an empowering tool that embraces accountability as a guiding tool to deconstruct the deficit views that are frequently associated with orphanhood in communities. The aim of the development of critical consciousness is to create individuals who are aware of themselves as human beings in the world in a transforming way.

By developing critical consciousness students are helped to separate themselves from unconditional acceptance of the conditions of their own existence and hence assume more responsibility when power is distributed and shared. I therefore found critical consciousness as a tool of empowerment develops personal and collective learning experience and discoveries, and transcends the boundaries of dominant behaviour patterns of accepting things without question. Developing critical consciousness assists in building individuals who are responsive and appropriate role models, the latter being one of the characteristics or expectations for pre and in-service teachers. In general, orphanhood is a painful experience which when deliberated within any context links the experience to relationships in families. The engagement in HEI with pre-service teachers suggests development of self-awareness and understanding of how interdependent structures in society impact and/or shape who one is. These are also important in reminding students that as much as they are responsible for their transformation in HEI they are learning to become reflective practitioners, what Bolton

(2010:120) defines as "becoming aware of aspects of ourselves … to understand your role in your single-seeming self", and to draw consciously upon strong selves whilst finding strategies for dealing with negative life challenges. The main idea is to share life experiences with the awakening of deep personal experience and later create change. Through interaction with the environment and personal experiences people redefine their roles, extending knowledge and learning. Students must accept responsibility for their learning and actions.

Access to education and personal wellbeing for the orphaned in an HEI has long been a challenge, however some authors (Diemer, Kauffman, Koenig, Trahan and Hsieh, 2006:445; Diemer and Bluestein, 2006:221; Diemer, Wang, Moore, Gregory, Hatcher & Vought, 2010:619) suggest critical consciousness development as a form of a structured intervention that can contribute to the socialisation of enlightened, responsible and constructive critical citizens. On the other hand, Gay and Kirkland (2003:182) highlight challenges when analysing power dynamics and frequent questioning of the status quo in that this manifests in silence and guilt. Similarly, Schon (in Bleakley, 1999:317) echo the importance of critical consciousness development which they find empowering. This is affirmed in Gay and Kirkland (2003:186), who attest that engaging in real-life experiences through authentic creative activities has a potential to lessen chances of individuals being exposed to psychological, intellectual, emotional and social changes. According to Christens, Peterson and Speer (2011:589), empowerment is a mechanism, a social process which has various dimensions that can help individuals, groups and communities gain control over their lives. It fosters power to act on issues they define as important, such as transformation of individuals oppressed by dominant culture, values and language. In this study, empowerment is a possible framework for understanding and promotion of wellbeing among orphaned young people.

If critical theory is to transform oppressed people into subjects of their own autonomy and emancipation, Aliakbari and Faraji (2011:77) indicate that firstly they need to rethink their way of life, struggle for their own redemption and be exemplary. By setting a good example, Kincheloe (2004:89) states that it is necessary to 'make' and 'remake' oneself. Applied to orphaned pre-service teachers, they are in a position to question educational hegemony while listening to and learning from diverse discourses within the HEI. As Merriam (2009:62) recommends, regarding contextual and cultural experiences of orphaned students in HEI, these experiences through discursive engagements impact on how they are interpreted: "…..having an experience is not enough to affect change or transformation, what is valuable

is not the experience itself but intellectual growth that follows the process of reflecting on an experience."

Critical theorists are of the view that people should participate in their own learning, a combination of action and reflection termed "praxis" (Carlson et al. 2006:838). To emphasise the meaning of development of 'own learning', Walker, Gleaves, & Grey, (2006:348) argue that knowledge creation is based on an understanding of people's capabilities and relationships, and demonstration of how these can collaboratively contribute to the complex and dynamic understanding of empowerment activities. The key to students' ability is for them to think critically about their situation, which allows them to "recognise connections between their individual problems, experiences and social contexts in which they are embedded" (Donald et al., 2010:65). Participation in chronicling their experiences in HEI and finding relevant strategies to navigate challenges to discover an empowerment framework follows the same process of learning in dynamic contexts. Freire is best known for his anti-authoritarian views and development of an interactive approach by which individuals are supposed to make critical assessments of their lives and rediscover the air that surrounds them and waters in which they swim (Doughty, 2006:44). However, the key to Freire's (2002:68) views is not only about creating a better learning environment but also practicing a range of processes leading to a better understanding of the individual's world. This articulates that individuals and students in HEI are positioned to undertake responsibility for themselves and their diverse environments. If power is distributed amongst all stakeholders, which in the end will inculcate individual and collective intellectual growth, students become active participants in critical relationships (Walker et al., 2006:250). For this responsibility, empowerment is needed at an early stage when student access HEI, as it promotes students' autonomy.

Through developing critical consciousness among the orphaned students in HEI, the results may be twofold. Firstly, through self-awareness, re-defined identity and awareness of varied teacher roles the possibility is enhancement of critical thinking skills which consequently will pave the way to devising relevant strategies or frameworks to deal with social issues, especially orphanhood in diverse contexts. Secondly, working through critical consciousness students in an HEI are exposed to the opportunities and are subsequently, empowered to act in order to transform their own and others' situations. In the context of Freire's' objectives of the learning process (Martinez, 1993:11) the implication is to liberate the participants from their external and internal oppression to facilitate students in becoming capable of changing their lives and the society in which they live.

2.5.1.2 The need for a principle of reflective practice

According to Agoustinos and Walker (1995:33), "people are conceptualised first and foremost as social beings who derive a sense of who they are, how they should behave and what they should believe in on the basis of their group membership." In an HEI it is essential for pre-service teachers to understand the foundations of and principles underlying reflective practice in general. In a study by Gay and Kirkland (2003:180) it is argued that pre-service teachers often confuse reflection with describing issues, ideas, philosophical beliefs or summaries of statements and events. However, the most essential elements of self-reflection are the analytical introspection, continuous reconstruction of knowledge and recurring transformation of beliefs and skills. They identify the close relationship between self-reflection and critical consciousness as strengthening identity building, which is an important characteristic for pre-service teachers in this study who are marginalised such as orphans in an HEI (Gay & Kirkland, 2003:182; Dysthe & Engelson, 2008:116). One further example from a socio-cultural perspective is that reflection and critical awareness garner involved support of a number of orphaned pre-service teachers' experiences while practicing together, thus developing their own identities as confident selves and as future teachers of learners from diverse and in some cases challenging backgrounds, which is turning critical thoughts into transformative actions that can be replicated in future endeavours (Gay & Kirkland, 2003:186). In support of the above, Dunker and Parker (2009:54) and Makina (2012:100) refer to this as a process of collective discursive practices, considered as an expression of the interior voice of free and autonomous individuals.

Through self-reflection students in HEI are exposed to writing in order to identify different aspects of their lives. Bolton (2010:129) attests that, in a learning context, exposure to reflective practice for students in HE is an important innate value that enhances development of interpersonal relationships, to be aware of one's voice and critically listen to it. Competencies, skills and fully developed reflective abilities are needed by practitioners in fulfilling and communicating social positions and worth (Makina, 2012:101; Ginwright & James, 2001:28). Such a development facilitates achievement of autonomy, empowerment and taking control of situations, which is a goal within the critical emancipatory paradigm. Thus, to attain critical reflective practice for orphaned pre-service students in this study is not only about the consideration of the power of reflective activity but also the nature of reflection practiced individually and collectively in a verbal and written form (Plack & Greenberg, 2005: 1546; Lee & Barnett, 1994:17). For instance, the invitation to engage in reflective practice through reflective journals is asking for orphaned students in an HEI to explore and share their innermost emotions and to give assurance that they are entrusted with their deepest

thoughts. The importance of a reflective practice is further acknowledged by Plack and Greenberg (2005:1547):

> …reflection gives meaning to experiences; allows students to reframe problems; question their own assumptions, and to explore multiple perspectives while analysing their lived experiences….; …encourages trainees to find gaps in their own knowledge and to attend to their own learning needs.

The reflective activities facilitate reflective skills and provide personal learning opportunities which lead to transformation processes. Brookfield (1995:201), in his proposal of reflective journaling, states that it should be made more valuable and desirable for pre-service students. His view is that teachers need to hold onto their ideals and continue to "teach to change the world", a prospect for all pre-service students. Accordingly, I embarked upon a study of critical reflection conducted amongst graduate students' learning experiences on leadership (St. John, 2009:118), which proved that being exposed to action theories enabled them to "recognise the incongruity between how they believed they behaved and how they really behave"'. Bolton (2010:56) recommends reflective practice with students in HEIs:

> Effective reflective practice is critically active and dynamic; practitioners question and problematise themselves, their roles and those in authority over them, their political, social and professional situations. Reflective practice encourages action and questioning of appropriate aspects of the system; bring people from ignorance to knowledge.

Reflective practice involves people as individuals and as a collective, most importantly in action, critically thinking while solving the problems. One of the crucial points is that it addresses ethical practice in that unexpected emotional dilemmas could be raised. For example, information regarding the trustworthiness of those with whom one shares experiences is elicited through reflective processes enabled by reflective practitioners. According to Bolton (2010:47), reflective approaches are founded upon strong ethical principles which clearly highlight how reflective practice as an educational process might be of benefit and passed on or adopted by orphaned students in HEIs as one of the transformation tools.

Firstly, Bolton (2010:49) highlights 'trust' in the process of practice as allowing one to let go of barriers to life and be in a position to share those silenced emotions with others. It is generally considered that one cannot do something wrong about self, therefore, for experiences to be explored and expressed, no matter how sensitive or traumatic they might

be, it is necessary that an individual trusts him/herself. Secondly, the principle of 'self-respect' is one of the values that human beings uphold by maintaining their integrity. Therefore, through reflective writing one gains confidence to communicate, defined by Bolton (2010:51) as 'communicating respectfully', tapping into fears, doubts, and those voices of inner critics. The basic factor in reflexivity, as stated by Bleakley (2006:315), is that it is offered through language, which he views as transparently describing or re-inventing the reality. Taking full responsibility for one's actions enables one to gain freedom to understand, explore and experiment with inspired creativity. Thirdly, the principle of 'accountability' (responsibility) is an essential democratic responsibility of holding the powerful to account, integral in granting power and a reminder that there can be no rights without responsibilities, which is key to development in youth.

Central to reflexive practice is what Bleakley (2006:318) describes as autonomous ability to evaluate controversy and finally make professional decisions. If one practices the art of responsibility and appreciation and has a sense of anticipation and vision for the future one can change one's life and the lives of others. It is important to understand that in reflective writing one has full authority over what one writes, re-reads to oneself or shares with those whom one trusts. Rule and Modipa (2012:140) add that to be a reflective practitioner one exposes oneself to possibilities of being able to transform one's future practices and those of others, a powerful resource for orphaned students as citizens of the country.

According to Michael and Modell (2003:138,139), "knowing-in-action" or "knowing-in-practice" forms the basis of how professionals in different professions develop knowledge from repeated interactions with similar problems. However, they need to reflect on what has happened allowing for the possibility to alter that knowledge-in-action to achieve the desired outcomes for those challenges. The purpose as observed by Schon (1983, in Michael & Modell, 2003:139) is that when someone "reflects-in-action" he or she becomes a researcher in the context of practice. This happens while the professional is in the midst of interaction with the situation. Given these arguments, in the case of students in HEI, the supposition is to deal with challenges of orphanhood (power and inequality) whilst considering what needs to be done to transform themselves, their situation or circumstances. The central point is changing the situation by providing application of what one knows in order to deal with new life challenges, hence the need for thorough planning. I therefore perceive reflection as a research endeavour which sometimes takes place before the action, which is, planning to engage in a situation whilst at other times in the midst of an interaction and sometimes afterwards. As reflective participants are not passive the need to participate and to embrace the project processes is promoted. They begin to realise that they already know something

when reflecting about their own experiences. Through discourse, knowledge sharing occurs and there is development of intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships which are fundamental to self-awareness.

Bolton (2010:55 & 57) posits that such reflective practice leads to significant changes both in individuals and the organisation upon which they might act. It brings about change in people from ignorance to knowledge, from political passivity to effective action. Kim, Peng and Chiu (2008:114) and Chilisa and Preece (2005:168) assert that interaction through reflection is aimed at empowering and changing, helping to evaluate controversy in professional decision-making forming responsible practice.

2.5.1.3 Critical thinking as an individual and a collective endeavour

In the light of developing orphaned students who are aware of themselves as human beings in a transforming way, Facione (2013:1&2) argues that it is critical to teach people to make good decisions and by so doing equip them to improve their own future and become 'contributing members' of society, rather than 'burdens' on it. Facione (2013:1&2) makes an example of the address that was delivered to a graduating class of military officers on critical thinking:

> ... you would recall how you were inspired to think critically and to question without fear, to seek out radically different solutions and to voice them without reprisal, to read deeply and widely, and to examine without end and grow intellectually…. What I ask is this, pass it on.

Critical thinking can be an individual task as well as a collaborative endeavour. According to Freire (2002:16), people without knowledge do not exist, an adverse perception that pushes orphaned students to the margins. However, working together for the common goal in a non-competitive way, interpreting what something means and how to solve problems also requires orphaned students to be curious and to explore avenues that can lead to liberation. It is understandable that critical thinking transcends issues of cognitive development and encompasses students' sense of justice and their emotional and spiritual connectedness (Doughty, 2006:2; Gay & Kirkland, 2003:182; Gruenewald, 2003:6; Facione & Facione, 1996:131). The orphaned have frequently been perceived as burdens in many communities and societies, and exposure to reflective practice and raising critical consciousness is an opportunity for participants to develop critical thinking skills. Taking into account the meaning of critical thinking as defined and presented in Ruggiero's work (2004:82) as opposed to his

colleague Brookfield (1997:11), critical thinking, is associated with analysis, awareness, consciousness and reflection. It occurs in the everyday lives of both young and adult lives, equipping them to be ready for daily challenges.

2.5.2 Communicative action practice in CER

While a critical theory may be distinguished from a traditional theory as it seeks human emancipation it aims to liberate individuals from the circumstances that enslave them. Habermas founded the paradigm of communicative action, that is, of communication (Mitrovic, 1999:217-218), assuming postmodern transformation in a mind-created society. In other words, He held a strong belief in public participation, sharing information in a group while promoting cooperation, reaching consensus through dialogue to achieve one's personal goals rather than strategic action strictly in pursuit of one's own goals (St. John, 2009:219; Bolton, 2005:2; *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, 2011:39). Communicative action declares that language is a medium of communication with interaction coordinated through designated speech. The emphasis in Bolton (2005:8) about 'communicative action' is that "two or more actors establish a relationship and seek to reach an understanding about the action, situation and plans of action in order to coordinate their actions by way of agreement". Tsoukas (2009:3) views communicative action as 'dialogue', asserting that in a dialogue two or more speech partners alternate remove discomfort experienced by parties involved in speech and listening. By way of these definitions it is evident that one of the ways to liberate an individual or oneself is through communication and participation, a critical step to personal development or healthy wellbeing. In addition, the theory proposes that human beings become "producers of their social life in its totality" (Mitrovic, 1999:220) and coordinate their behaviours in a consensus framework. Communicative action is one of the precepts that Knapper (2006:4) sees as overlapping and operating conjointly as they evolve and change within the individual.

According to Singh (1999:390), Habermas, identifies the following categories of knowledge constitutive interests, that is, *technical* action research that serves the interests of exercising greater control over human behaviour to produce the desired outcomes; *practical* action research that and serves the interests of practical wisdom in discerning the right course of action in particular circumstances; *critical* action research that serves the interests of emancipating people from oppression. For the achievement of theoretical and methodological ends the critical theories unify various theories. The critical explanations have a preferred goal of social criticism of a society that fulfils the norm of human

emancipation. This consists of rationality that is epistemic, practical, and intersubjective. The emphasis in acquiring rationality is not only on what orphaned students in HEI possess but the particular knowledge of "how speaking and acting subjects is acquired and how knowledge is used" to become knowledgeable competent agents of change (*Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, 2011; Bolton, 2005:17; Habermas, 1970:360, 1989:76, 1984:11;). This practical attitude is referred to as "communicative action", which bases the theoretical framework on understanding social interaction and communicative practices through language. Wright (2012:339) highlights the role of the counsellor in dealing with suicides in youth, stressing how communication can help in the way individuals interpret and understand the world and their place in it, meaning the understanding of the self-in-society. Similarly, Nkoane (2012:100) argues that while language and communication in CER is important this might further be used to distort reality through dominant discourses. It requires pre-service orphaned students who do not conform to societal pressures or patterns of the world, but those who could be transformed to renew their minds to achieve freedom in life. A case in point is participation in the orphanhood discourses in order to analyse personal positions, question or confront dominant culture following the philosophy of active learning to acquire knowledge (Gay & Kirkland, 2003:184; Fairclough, 1999:71). For this reason, empiricism or practicality is classified as the basic means of acquiring knowledge for critical theorists followed by social interaction to acquire human understanding and/or phenomena focusing on power. Communicative action offers humane convivial and rational resources that result in reflexivity and discourse. Fairclough (1999) argues that critical awareness is a prerequisite for effective democratic citizenship, a need for educational resources for all students.

In CER, an observation of the differentiation of the critical paradigm from the positivist worldview is stressed and evident in the understanding and objectives of communicative action theory. The main difference that makes critical theory surpass positivism when obtaining the truth is that reality needs to be criticised through dialectical methods individually or socially. This dialectic process according to Peca (2000:46), in turn results in *'evolutionary development'* a process of emancipation which he argues maintains the attainment of the truth for critical theorists. In this view, the contradiction that Peca mentions in many ways depends on how other people observe character or behaviour and form impressions from what they see through dialogue (Bolton, 2005:5).

Having deliberated on the above it is evident that communicative action can promote collaborative action to achieve a common goal by group members through discursive practices. However, there is criticism of communicative action as a model, some

philosophers believing that the concern or emphasis on 'language' may be influenced by space and time, semantic analysis, socio-cultural background and emotional formations that lead to distorted communication or interpretation (Carr & Kemmis, 2005:350; Knapper, 2006:1). At this point Habermas's communication model is viewed as more congruent to people who are pushed to the margins of society, as with the orphaned students of this study. The interest in engaging orphaned participants is similar to that of emancipatory interests defined as promoting social emancipation, equality, democracy, individual and collective empowerment. Further proposed in the theory of communicative action is that knowledge should be represented appropriately and accordingly to differentiate it from the positivist paradigm by classifying the basic interests it serves.

CER is relevant in creating '*communicative action*' to orphaned pre-service teachers such that they become encouraged, enabled, sustained and made generative personally, socially and culturally. In particular, these processes break the barriers to communication within an organisation and enhance transformed and deeper knowledge creation, high levels of comprehension and critical consciousness development. Participants involved do not only see one side of operational principles and its dynamics, but through the communicative action they are also able to come to mutual understanding of what, when and how to do things. Effective personal communication is recognised as a fundamental skill, namely critical dialogue and its acquisition. This connectedness, according to MacMahon and Patton (2006:101), Watson (2006:52) and Arthur (2006:63), indicates that participants need to connect with their own orphanhood stories to understand their history, values, biases, beliefs, prejudices and socio-political systems.

Essentially, the critical emancipatory approaches strive to transcend what is observed, but the essence of the meanings that are used to describe orphaned students' experiences in an HEI, their world and that of others should be made distinctive (Dunker & Parker, 2009:54). It is noted that as people grow they develop differing thoughts, feelings and emotions with different motives. Interactive group discussion and communication is a critical tool for students to develop this increasing need to learn from other people's needs and perspectives. In critical qualitative research various data generating tools offer participants (orphaned students) opportunities to engage in complex topics and events to confront inaccurate and counterproductive stereotypes, for example, (re)constructing their identity. Acquiring and using effective communication skills are a need for the development of students' autonomy and active collaborative participation can be rewarding. On the other hand, during discussions and communication, listening skills are critical as a means of making connections between circumstances, beliefs, goals, values and individual or group

goals. Since this study is about lived experiences of an orphaned community of pre-service students the reality is that they are becoming teachers who will experience having to deal with many orphaned learners in their in-service practice. The goal for communicative action thus facilitates possibilities of learning to commit to advancement of individual and collective social life.

2.5.2.1 Communicative social relations

According to Freire (2000), a system of dominant social relations creates a culture of silence that instils a negative silenced and supressed self-image into the oppressed. In an attempt to understand the critical theorist views, it is important to have a good understanding of what silence means in issues pertaining to orphanhood. In general, silence can mean a lack of feedback to others, non-communication or the inability to disclose or keep overt or covert true feelings, emotions or scars. Issues associated with death are often suppressed due to the lack of emotional language and the inability to tap into and engage in discomfort through emotionally laden conversations. In speech and linguistic studies, as illustrated in Ephratt (2008:1910) in the 1970s, silence was associated with negativity, passivity, impotence and death. Francis, Muthukrishna and Ramsuran (2006:141) refer to silent voices as those that are in the lower social strata of society, whose language and literacy skills are not recognised, and whose sense of self is low or underdeveloped.

While Alvesson and Karreman (2011:21) highlight and critique the notion that traditionally language constitutes the object and results of study, where emphasis is on the ability to become reflective and to realise vocabularies other than preferred ones during the processes of research. The critical setting in research discourages and blurs the line between the researcher and the researched in CER (Schoorman & Bogotch, 2010:252). A safe, welcoming, trusting and collaborative environment that is engaging to all stakeholders at all stages of the research process is preferred when its goal is to facilitate opportunities for partnership, bringing to an end the divide between the researched and researchers. The rationale for the use of participatory methods incorporating reflections, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 4, is congruent with the contention that the use of this method has the possibility to facilitate access to students' knowledge and experiences, and can be used to examine not only what people think but also how and why they think in a certain way. However, this is only possible if critical thinking is practiced.

On the other hand, others enjoy and appreciate the small joys of life, which is a positive perspective. When one is alone in silence, it is one's own time of quiet reflection and it becomes a time of emotional empowerment and inspiration. Silence therefore can be misinterpreted to accepting and not being able to challenge or question the status quo, which is why Freire is against the view of seeing people as receiving objects when their critical thought and actions are controlled by others. However, he believes that if people are empowered to voice their thoughts and to act upon them, they can be transformed. One other positive aspect of silence in conversation is that in discourse analysis it is perceived as a way of taking turns, allocating opportunity for others to talk during discourse; or simply absence of speech, meaning or intention (Ephratt, 2008:1910). In a more detailed explanation, strong support is highlighted by Facione (2013:5-7) for communicative action as synonymous with core critical thinking skills, namely, interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference explanation and self-regulation.

By 'interpretation' the broader view would be "to comprehend and express the meaning or significance of a wide variety of experience". In this stage orphaned students are exposed to a setting in which they have a single one-on-one dialogue and small group interactions. Through the conceptualisation and reasoning processes a range of 'problems' can be diagnosed while gaining insight to facilitate remediation or intervention activities. When defining 'analysis', the view is on "identifying the intended and actual inferential relationships among statements, questions, concepts, descriptions or other forms of representation intended to express beliefs, judgement, experience, reasons information or opinion, evaluation and self-regulation". This highlights the importance of allowing individuals to learn mind-set by entering into a dialogue, therefore analysing the responses provided and sharing in those experiences. Questioning and interpretation utilising reflective practice becomes key to evaluation and self-regulation. 'Evaluation', on the other hand, means to "assess the credibility of statements or other representations which are accounts or descriptions of a person's perception, experience, situation, judgement, belief or opinion, and to assess the logical strength of the actual or intended inferential relationships among statements, descriptions, questions or other forms of representations". Lastly, 'inference' means to "identify and secure elements needed to draw reasonable conclusion; to query evidence and conjecturing alternatives".

Notable is the relationship between the development of critical consciousness, reflective and communicative practice, which brings about awareness to orphaned students that adoption of the culture of silence is created to oppress certain groups. However, the emphasis previously endorsed in Freire's views (this subsection, 2.5.2.1) is that individuals can

transform themselves and others or structures in any layer of the system only if empowered to do so. The emphasis of empowerment of students is congruent with those in the study who are pushed to the margins of society. Therefore, I draw from some of the principles of Freire's critical pedagogy as presented in the work of Kincheloe and Maclaren (2005:324) which have relevance to the study. The relevance is drawn following Freire's philosophy of education which endorses a creativist view of development, that is: "The word should speak to the world". According to Bhengu-Baloyi (2010:119), this suggests that the quality of knowledge acquired should reflect in the lives of the people, where a teacher (participant) is seen as a decolonising agent leading learners to authenticity. Therefore, from a pedagogical point of view, it is critical for orphaned student teachers to know themselves, find themselves and be able to kindle a spark in learners which is not possible if their life seems sparkless. In practice, this means that being open to new possibilities in life enables one to explore options more freely, increases language development and share with new people who have the potential to become true emotional support, which is a consequence of dealing with emotional issues and identifying the blocked feelings and beliefs that prevent one from enjoying full healthy wellbeing.

2.5.2.2 The role of socio-cultural influence

Dickens, Ngari and Enaneenane (2013:22) acknowledge the family as the cradle of a child's development, as it provides emotional and educational support, however, the high rates of orphanhood expose children and youth to risk of not accessing and pursuing their educational endeavours. Educational institutions are believed to be political systems. The basic principle in Freire's critical view is the development of programmes that promote and address cultural identity, beliefs, attitudes and values. A point put forward in Aliakbari and Faraji (2012:79) is that it is important first to understand the organisation (HEI) for political transformation to take place so that hidden political agendas are revealed. The recognition of systematic emotions is central for any dialogue to take place (Pocock, 2010:362), that is, emotional connectedness and cultural behaviour. There is a need to identify the choice of language or words suitable in context in order to be able to address or best describe the emotion demonstrated and act accordingly. In addition, communication and use of language which is not disabling to communities or does not reaffirm the segmentation of society is encouraged by critical theorists. Freire understood the crux of education as a close relationship between a knowledgeable, caring adult and a secure, motivated child. Loss of security, unwelcoming environments and demotivation are the experiences of most of the

orphaned students, thus the encouraging development of a supportive and empowering endeavour can enhance opportunities for holistic developmental processes.

Dealing with orphaned students in HEI is concerned with an individual's physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual, political and intellectual development and what resiliency or psychological coping resources should be drawn from. One other aspect of resilience highlighted in Mohajer and Earnest (2009:432) is the identification of the spirituality, morality, religion and faith as important development assets. I acknowledge that when death strikes one finds oneself asking many questions as to why this is happening or why at that particular time. What is the meaning of life if one has no one with whom to share the joys or successes or even painful experiences? For some individuals, experiencing trauma is the most crucial time to resort to faith and spirituality, which is one of the socio-cultural belief systems practiced in most South African communities. Manala (2005:988) and Markstrom (1999:205) state that these issues and others in this area of life are unquestionable and what is experienced is believed to have happened for a specific reason.

Taking into consideration, for example, Christianity as one of the religious beliefs in South Africa, one of the moral and ethical values articulated in Manala (2005:897) is offering prayers to those who are in need, caring actions of faith for people who have lost loved ones or are orphaned. This ministry takes an Afro-Christian approach which seeks to "integrate values from the African and Christian traditions that are meaningful and life-giving in service of the weak and marginalised people in their experiential needs" (Manala, 2005:988) especially the orphaned. The general belief is that Christian ministry should respond positively to the gospel for justice, transformation and liberation, a view pivotal and supported in CER. Accordingly, Markstrom (1999) believes that the development stage of youth is best suited for interrogation of some issues embedded in religion and in existential and transcendental realisms. For this reason, at this stage, youth in an HEI are in a position to make their own informed decisions as opposed to being part of what the family does, and thus feelings of self-worth are enhanced. Looking at religion from Erik Erikson's psychosocial perspective, Markstrom (1999:207), supported by Hamman and Hendricks (2005:45), believes that resiliency in orphanhood emanates from the eight stages of development. He reiterates that hope emerges from trust; will from autonomy, purpose from initiative, competence from industry, fidelity from identity, love from intimacy, care from generativity and wisdom from integrity. Deducing from these stages, the assumption is that for orphaned students to be autonomous and to be decision-makers in life they should know themselves, learn to trust and cooperatively work hard to be effective responsive teachers who possess love for themselves and others, and should possess integrity. Included are the development

and facilitation of values such as humility, joy, hope, love, generosity and caring for the efficacy of the development of self in society and critical recognition of interconnectedness within the systems.

In this study, the aim is not to create a better learning environment for orphaned students in HEIs only, but to examine issues of relational power in their communities. This suggests a change in the role of pre-service teachers from being passive objects to active, reflective and critical subjects in diverse contexts. Following the assertion of Schoorman and Bogotch (2010:252) in their critical study about the role of the researcher, the recognition is that research, like pedagogy, could be used for oppressive and emancipatory purposes, therefore the suggestion is that researchers need to engage in self-conscious criticism to avoid bias. In this critical research, orphaned pre-service teachers are engaged in order to expose the oppressive purposes and to transform them into emancipatory purposes through collective discourse practice.

Considering the growing argument stated in Chilisa and Preece (2005:21), that "minority groups might fail to participate fully in a research processes as most topics do not reflect or communicate in the language that connect to their experiences" HEI orphaned students are guided and empowered to shape the research and relationships with members of the community in which research is conducted. It must also be noted that the existence of social structures are what people create, within which critical theorists postulate the cause of human alienation and discrimination.

2.5.2.3 Engaging in role model and mentorship practices

Some people have a role model whom they wish to emulate or who inspires them, such as a teacher, parent, sibling, employer or friend. Professionalism requires that an individual should acquire personal and expert authority on the many domains, ranging from home, school, communities and society. van Leeuwen (2008:107) stresses the qualities of the role model, highlighting those that good teachers should follow, for example "wise" and "experienced", "cool" and "smart" colleagues. Role model theoretical foundations were laid down in the 1930s by a form of symbolic interactionism which focused on the way people "take on the attitudes of the people which they belong"; "significant others" in their immediate and broader cultural environment. Generally, a role model is perceived to be one of the responsibilities of the educated, where the suggestion is that one embraces mistakes and

moves forward, is excellent and speaks the truth, listens and is able to be listened to, and is a lifelong learner.

For pre-service students, whether orphaned or not, the task is to serve the community and develop the self and others in society. However, there are impersonal authorities with rules, laws, and regulations and conformity embedded in the community, some set down and answering to unspoken 'why' questions, resulting in some indispensable elementary form of legitimation. This is also practiced in cultures in which other practices and questions are not answered, and the questions will be such that one has to accept it, to 'conform' because it is a 'tradition', 'how things are done' or 'how we always do it'. The implicit message is that 'everybody does it, and so should you' with no further argument (van Leeuwen, 2008:109). Issues of death are also handled differently by different societies, communities and families and are culturally, historically, politically and ethically embedded. Research tends to recognise the role of a teacher as critical, in an effective meaningful teacher-student relationship and in creating a safe space for psycho-social development of individuals (Stojiljkovic, Djigic and Zlatkovic, 2012:962; Jarmai and Berces, 2012:746). One of the primary lessons about teachers which applies to specifically orphaned pre-service teachers is the exposure to diverse roles, one of which is to be a role model to their students. From the perspective of critical theory, teachers have the potential to be agents of change to challenging discriminatory and oppressive practices they experience in their socio-political, cultural contexts. Giroux (1988:23) and Giroux and McLaren (1992:7) note that one of the roles of teachers is to be transformative intellectuals who develop counter-hegemonic pedagogies that not only empower students by giving them the knowledge and social skills they will need to function in the larger society as critical agents, but also educate them for transformative action. For orphaned students at HEI this means that they are empowered to take risks, struggle for institutional change, and fight both against oppression and for democracy outside of HEI, in other oppositional public spheres and the wider social arena.

Individual and collaborative practice helps in the empowerment of pre-service students to foster skills needed to tackle complex and unforeseen social problems. Equally important and to extend the above view, Dysthe and Engelsen (2009:118) stress the importance of the quality of a teacher-student relationship arguing that: "Teacher education must provide students with basic disciplinary knowledge and teaching skills that enable them to function well as teachers in their first job …it should be more audacious in transferring responsibility and control to all students". The views stated about Freire and Illich (in Khan & Kellner, 2007:1) about change in social relations, corresponds to critically engaging orphaned pre-service students with the aim of providing individual citizens with the development of

capabilities and capacities for dialectically engaged participation. This aim is also illuminated in PAR, an approach that couches this study (refer to Chapter 4). Participants who are students in an HEI are therefore recognised for their contribution to this research process, a philosophy to be practiced that acknowledges each contribution.

Knapper's (2006:1) assessment of the nature of learning compares learning as a natural process that takes place before individuals are born and continues because of the curiosity and desire of humans to explore the environment. People as the human species only achieve knowledge construction through sharing, learning from others, and passing on knowledge acquired from other generations. It is an approach that aims to focus on openness and flexibility so that issues of power and inequalities in HEI and in communities are not perpetuated. This translates to the empowerment of pre-service teachers in HEI as co-researchers in the project in preparation for dealing with diverse communities of learners in schools and also for learners to be able to solve their own and others' life challenges. Consequently, discursive practice in HEI is framed on the basis of the philosophy that 'doing is more than just listening' and is about collaborative work, collegiality and reflective action (Spalding, Garcia & Braun, 2010:9).

Mentorship is a personal developmental relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person (DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn & Valentine 2011:57). However, true mentoring is more than just answering occasional questions or providing *ad hoc* help, regarded as informal social exchange, rather it is about a continuing relationship of learning, dialogue, and challenge. In their definition of mentoring, Bozeman and Feeney (2007:732) distinguish between formal and informal mentoring. Typically for them, whilst the former refers to mentoring relationships that are established, recognised, and managed by organisations and are not spontaneous, the latter engages in upward maintenance tactics of the relationship and places value on the transmission of knowledge, social capital and psychosocial support. According to Bolton (2010:193), this helps mentees transcend personal circumstances so that they can consider the challenges together. He identifies an important characteristic about mentors that they act as role models, enablers, teachers, encouragers, counsellors, befrienders, facilitators, coaches, confidantes and supporters in unlearning negative attitudes and behaviours, a view with which Mladenovic (2012:4) and Bozeman and Feeney (2007:733) concur. The latter differs in viewing mentoring as beneficial in improving organisational performance, providing practical findings relevant to individual and social needs.

Mentoring has the power to offer empathy, non-judgmental critique, reflection upon emotional, intellectual and behavioural content of issues (Mladenovic (2012:4) to orphans who, according to research, tend to suffer from a lack of self-worth. Clutterbuck and Megginson (1999), in Bolton (2010:193) state that mentors challenge behaviour not people, assumption not intellect, perceptions not judgement, and values not value. Considering that the study is about orphaned students' challenges and how to conquer those in HEI, Lunenberg, Korthagen and Swennen (2007:588) raised an important point about the uniqueness of education for pre-service teachers as compared to other professions. They gave an example of doctors' teaching and learning in medicine but not serving their students as role models in their actual practice. Conversely, teacher education as a practice, intentionally or unintentionally shapes pre-service teachers' beliefs and practices when the role is to promote professional support to their students so that they teach them not only about their teaching. The crux is for students to set goals and take action on issues that pose challenges in their lives.

Orphanhood in HEI could be an unwelcome topic that generates guilt and shame, hopelessness and fear, failure and success, and intense emotions for those who experience it. I thus saw this opportunity to empower students such that they consequently become role models themselves, socially responsible and venturing fearlessly into the future. They assume roles not only as teachers but also as community members who are geared for the transition from an HE student to an employee, adjusting to the diverse South African context and its challenges in the 21st century (Coetzee & Esterhuizen, 2010:1; Mladenovic, 2012:11). The focus of mentoring is to develop the whole person and so the techniques are broad and require wisdom in order to be used appropriately. Mentoring, according to Mladenovic (2012:13), enables a protégé to comprehend the community, internal relations and responsibility to the community and society in general. Crucial to mentoring is that the personal characteristics and capabilities of the protégé are considered for the success of the mentoring relationship. This kind of a relationship is needed in the development of trust during dyads in PAR as will be experienced in the methodology chapter. An overview of the Ecological Systems Theory and how it integrates with CER in understanding orphanhood in an HEI is demonstrated in the following section.

2.5.3 The principles of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

While prompted to employ CER as my theoretical lens I also included the principles of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (BEST). A Russian American Psychologist

known for the development of his Ecological Systems Theory and co-founder of Head Start program for disadvantaged pre-school children in the USA (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:11), Bronfenbrenner developed an ecosystemic perspective which according to Donald et al. (2010: 36-37) and Hay (2012:95) is a combination of ecological theory and systems theory. Patton and McMahon (2006:158) suggest that the aspects of the universe are interconnected and explain that it is not easy to separate figure from ground, subject from object and people from their environment. Using Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, orphanhood can be understood through a context of individuals, family, peers, the HEI and community. It situates individuals in a social system and refutes the idea that meaningful change can occur by intervening with an individual alone. The importance of the theory is that it advocates that "all" orphaned students are part of interrelated systems which affect the individuals. Its relevance also lies in connection of the individual psychological development to social and cultural context and the systems within it. As Addison (2007:204) notes, Bronfenbrenner provides a theoretical framework for understanding why the general challenges of development cannot be separated from the more specific issues addressing social issues, rather they are all inevitably interconnected.

BEST is used as the theoretical underpinning which appreciates cognisance of the continuing relationships between the individual's psychological development, social context and sub-systems within it. It purports that no human being develops in isolation, but rather there is a relationship between an individual and his or her context. The theory has been extended to a meta-theoretical framework for career counselling practice. Similarly, Hong, Cho, and Lee (2010:564) applied it to school violence, and endorsed it as ideal for integrating segmented parts into understandable pieces that allow for a more complete analysis of socio-environmental factors that impact on human behaviour.

Understanding that consequences of death bear a myriad of uncertainties and fears, this theory is thus utilised to facilitate investigations into instability and unpredictability of not only personal development but also effects of what previous policies have created emotionally, economically, politically, culturally and historically in HEIs. This consolidates what this theory adopts, that is, finding and questioning destructive forces perpetuated in society, and which become a barrier to the exploration of other facets of the environment. It is linked to the theory adopted in CER as the latter focuses on fighting ideologically destructive forces in contexts. Despite the interrelated relationships being emphasised in Bronfenbrenner's theory I concur with Henderson (1995:17) and Paquette and Ryan (2001:14) in their observation that society's responsibility is to lobby political and economic policies that support adults and their children's development. They stress the importance of fostering societal attitudes that

value work done through education at all levels, including school phases and tertiary or HEIs for the benefit of self and others. In this sense, the ecosystemic model illuminates how experiences of orphanhood by students in HEI are related to domestic or family experiences, the school, the community and members of society.

Theron (2011:10), Nxusa (2009:12) and Bronfenbrenner (1986:338) suggest that the model promotes healthy development and effective functioning and how these match the needs, demands and resources of a student's family or community in the surrounding environment. I thus see this model as suggesting that healthy development and effective functioning depend on the match between the needs and resources of orphaned students in HEI and the demands, support and resources offered by the surrounding environment. In support of the above view, which highlights the importance of relationship and ecologies, Mayaba, Theron and Wood (2012:228), in their study on 'young children and resiliency', underline the potential of social ecologies in the facilitation of positive adjustment to the adversity of the orphaned. The same point is made in Nxusa (2009:10), indicating that the ecological model represents a consolidation of what researchers are learning about the way different social environments and relationships influence human development. Johnson (2008:2) indicates how the interdependence and relationship between a developing individual and the environment changes throughout life:

> The ecology of human development is the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation throughout the life course between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives. [This] process is affected by the relations between these settings and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded.

Accordingly, Johnson (2008:2) highlights Bronfenbrenner's view about his initial theory (1989), in that the environment comprises four layers of systems which interact in complex ways and can both affect and be affected by the person's development. In this study's context, the ecological systems theory as identified and suggested by Bronfenbrenner (1986:725) considers students' developmental experiences prior to and mainly after the loss of parents. This theory has within the context of the systems relationships from immediate environment been recently re-named *bio-ecological* systems theory to emphasize individuals' own biology, the interaction between factors, immediate family/community environment and the societal landscape that fuels and steers development (Donald et al. 2010:38). This means that an individual's biology and environment cannot be separated when viewing the change and continuing development while recognising the effect of time.

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The implication is that changes or conflict or no changes in any one layer will ripple throughout the other layers.

The theory also emphasises the importance of understanding the meanings that individuals experience in their own social lives and how these influence or are influenced by how they act as they do. The context, history and culture also have great influence on development and when taking critical decisions. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1986:727) therefore focuses on understanding the quality of the interactions and change in different social contexts of a person's life. He is also concerned with the attitudes that people have towards those without power, such as the orphaned students in different communities, including in the HEI (Nxusa, 2009:27). The emphasis of Bronfenbrenner's model is that educating an individual takes cooperation, involvement and mutual interaction between different structures of society:

> Studies of children and adults in real-life settings with real-life complications are now commonplace in research literature on human development. Human development takes place through processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving bio-psychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:38-39*)*

In conceptualizing this theory, Holley (2009:67) concurs with Bronfenbrenner's assertion that people and systems are better viewed as part of multi-level, multi-structured and multi-determined social contexts. This theoretical view suggests that orphaned students' behaviour in HEIs is influenced by processes of interaction and ideologies at all the systems' levels. The influence of HEI culture, its values and beliefs to build and sustain supportive relationships and meaningful transformation for all is crucial**.** In particular, Bronfenbrenner illustrates the importance of interaction and interdependence of the social and physical environment in terms of a multiple set of structured layers of social relationships, namely, *microsystem, meso-system, exo-system, macro-systems* and *chronosystem* in an individual's existence. These, for example, include the family, friendships, neighbourhoods, organisations, culture and societies in a physical world, media influence as well as time (Hay, 2012:95; Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2010:40 & 2007:57; Shaffer & Kipp, 2010:63; Visser, 2007:64 ; Hadebe, 2007:123).

According to Nxusa (2009:4), in her study on *"Psychological wellbeing of learners affected with HIV/AIDS",* and drawing from Bronfenbrenner (1986:727), in the ecological systems theory the social context and the use of effective communication through language is significant in terms of the expressions of 'lived' experiences and alternative stories. It is

essential, however, to understand each system in order to identify what Bronfenbrenner explains as the "problem". He specifically suggests that there are questions that need to be answered in order to solve problems faced by individuals in society, for instance: Whose problem is it? Where is the problem? How is it going to be solved? Which intervention strategies need to be employed, by whom, in which system? Thus, the systems in Bronfenbrenner's theory have been identified to serve as resources that channel CER as a lens in order to understand orphanhood in the HEI context.

2.5.3.1 Microsystem as a resource

By way of definition, the microsystem, according to Viljoen & Eskell-Blokland (2007:58) refers to the individual, the family and interpersonal relationships. It is an immediate context in which there are nurturing and supportive family members. The family setting is where the most direct interactions with society take place, where the individual is not a passive recipient of experiences but rather helps to construct the settings. Shaffer and Kipp (2010:58) and Addison (1992:18), in interpreting Bronfenbrenner's (1994:40) notion about the microsystem, maintain that the successful journey of life of individuals to higher education (HE) and self-sufficient adulthood begins at home. It is in this family setting that research stresses background as determinant of the student's post-school choices (Branson, Leibbrandt & Zuze, 2009:8). Similarly, it is in this environment in which one exists and other people are made more vulnerable than others. In issues pertaining to orphanhood most events begin in the microsystem and for orphaned students most experiences of the emotional insecurity and anxiety manifest themselves there. However, the HEI also becomes the microsystem of students and the theory posits that instability and imbalance should be eliminated as these can bring about distortion about reality.

Of significance to this study is Bronfenbrenner's highlighting the activities that take place in the microsystem, with emphasis on interpersonal relationships, roles and patterns of activities. This is further evident in a study conducted by Hong et al. (2010:564) on violence in Virginia Technical College, applying Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory to understand risk factors and implications for prevention and intervention of violence in a school setting. They illustrated that the strong relationship formed in the microsystem seemed to be the basis or strong foundation of any healthy development or wellbeing of students. Since death is part of life it is in these situations that emotional or psychological vulnerability of an individual experiencing it becomes shaken. On experiencing loss,

especially of parents, individuals become affected in different ways and dealing with the consequences in the microsystem vary.

Johnson (2008:2) states that the framework extends from human development or behaviour to organisational development. In an HEI, for example, the microsystem may include students, parents or guardians, next of kin or family members, administrators, lecturers, support services, social clubs and the surrounding community. The HEI in this study is regarded as a social structure that has its own socio-political and cultural conditions that might influence the completion of pre-service teacher's degree or vice versa. It is within these structures that issues or practices of inequality, injustice, discrimination and oppression are embedded. However, another important factor which is not treated with much regard and urgency, yet is important in enhancing relationships and fostering supportive structures, is the role of family life, particularly with orphaned students in HEI. Bronfenbrenner's theory (1994) focuses mainly and initially on the actions that take place in the microsystem of the orphaned students, in this case a new family (extended or foster) at home and the HEI. For example, taking the HEI as a social environment for students it is expected to be the microsystem for collaborative work with the family in considering the capabilities brought from diverse backgrounds in order to offer relevant strategies which can promote critical and socially responsible citizens who are ready to contribute to the economy of the country. Therefore a microsystem as a resource in this study recognises the following (Bronfenbrenner, 1986:732):

> The role of the social environment is to allow and support children to unleash and actualise their innate potential. The potential and capabilities we bring with us when we are born in an embryonic form just like limbs. So are spontaneity, self-worth, creativity, authenticity, compassion the ability to love, yearning for truth and freedom. The social environment doesn't give us this but can either enhance or destroy these qualities.

Generally, an affirming atmosphere and environment allows for holistic growth and development whether socially, intellectually, spiritually, culturally, psychologically or emotionally. In order to create an environment that is conducive to growth of individuals, observing the democratic values such as human dignity, equality, social justice and freedom as construed in the South African Constitution Section 24 is critical. Consequently, Bronfenbrenner (1986:731) believes that the interaction that occurs among all levels of the environment are called 'bi-directional influences', strongest in the microsystem. Relationships with peers for youth are crucial, especially in stages of adulthood development. Chinyoka and Naidu (2013:273) concur with Donald et al. (2010:41), and Berk,

(2007:24) and Bergey and Kaplan (2010:199) in emphasising the effect of the groups and/or organisations' nature of relationship with the developing individual, whether destructive, encouraging or nurturing, as it determines how resilient or not the student might be when faced with social challenges. It is in the microsystem that the foundations for social support networks to deal with anger and loneliness in the future are likely to be provided. The importance is stressed in the microsystem to understand how the relationship influences or is influenced by the orphaned students in an HEI historical background in order to move forward and towards individual and social transformation.

2.5.3.2 Mesosystem as a resource

Bronfenbrenner (2005:12), Shaffer and Kipp (2010:68) stated that the mesosystem comprises the links between two or more microsystems in which relationships of the self-in society occur and are stressed. For example, for orphaned students, in whatever roles they play, interpersonal relationships or patterns of how activities turn out in their homes have a direct impact on what and how things happen in an HEI, and vice versa (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:42). There are some pressures in having to change or adapt to a new situation or environment, to be seen or appear to be coping with the situation (loss), simultaneously working towards realising the goal at the HEI (academic performance). In this level of the model, systems are interdependent while the relationships in the environments are seen holistically. Pressure is experienced by the students and by those who support them, emotionally and financially, in the microsystem. Apart from being an orphaned student in HEI, which is challenging, not being able to form effective social relations can be daunting, particularly if there is no one at home to turn to. Therefore, the microsystem in this study can be the home and background of the HEI students, as well as the HEI itself becoming a microsystem of the student. It is in this system that self-realisation determines the kind of a person a student is and determines the coping strategies he/she will develop. Critical are the relationships in the mesosystem, for example, pre-service teachers who are committed to transformation but lack strategies or are disempowered from dealing with contextual challenges.

2.5.3.3 Exosystem as a resource

The exosystem consists of interrelationships between two or more microsystems or settings with an individual contained in one (Bronfenbrenner, 1994:38). By way of definition, this

system encompasses events, policies and decisions over which a developing individual has no influence but with the people with proximal relationship in the microsystem (Donald et al. 2010:41). This includes norms and customs not only about an individual but also society as a whole, notably families, caregivers, places of safety, relatives and parents. The responsible individuals with whom orphaned students find refuge after the death of their parents, for example those in an HEI, are supposed to be the support structure dealing with physical, economic, political and emotional wellbeing. It is viewed as a larger social system that wields unidirectional (retreating) influence that affects the developing person directly or indirectly.

The HEI as an organisation encompasses events, contingencies, decisions and policies (Johnson 2008:3), as well as media in the exosystem, and all may in a way influence how students act, positively or negatively, to voice the perceived maltreatment or injustices done to them (Hong et al. 2010:567) by HEI. This, for example, has been experienced in most HEIs in which the impact of policies and insufficient support for students is demonstrated through strike actions and distribution of concerns and grievances reported in various media sources. (Mail and Guardian (SAPA), 26 January 2014; SABC News, 18 March, Monday 2013; Daily News, February 14)

2.5.3.4 The Macrosystem as a resource

The macrosystem, according to Bronfenbrenner (1994:38), is considered a cultural blueprint which determines the occurrence of social structures and activities in the immediate system levels. It is the large cultural context that affects all other environments, such as political, national, economic, and educational agencies, HEI board, professional associates, community and cultural influences, public and media opinion and legal mandates. The macrosystem in this study refers to cultural beliefs, opportunity structures, conflict and cultural barriers that affect the social and emotional wellbeing and access to support services of orphaned students in HEI (Patton & McMahon, 2006:157).

Bray et al. (2010), (cited in Chinyoka & Naidu 2013:272) describe the macrosystem as involving dominant social and economic structures, including beliefs, values, and other practices that influence social systems. Bronfenbrenner's perspective suggests that every system has its own beliefs, values and way of practice which are unique to that particular community or society. The culture and beliefs have a significant effect on building relationships or in solving societal challenges. Considering the critical theorists' point of view

and the implications of the ecological systems theory's macrosystem as a resource, the following questions need to be addressed:

Whose beliefs or values are considered and why?

Who is going to benefit and why?

How are the resources distributed in the society?

These questions are a reminder of Donald et al.'s (2010:44) caution that "culture is not static, it is continually ever changing, it develops and is not in a fixed form". Organisations such as HEIs are created by people and have no existence outside of them (Peca, 2000:37), but they have a tendency to alienate people who have no control over their resources. In practice, this translates to the significance of the *'culture'* of any system, which Bergey and Kaplan (2010:2) interpret as influencing students to learn, how they are empowered by facilitation of interaction with others in adjusting to each students' capabilities and the contribution in the process towards the construction of reality. Therefore, for pre-service teachers who are orphaned, the importance of engaging them in the construction of self in HEIs and the analysis of the larger socio-political world influences cognisance of diverse groups of people and respect of their rights (Visser, 2007:68; Mohajer & Earnest, 2009:432). However, if these actions are not heeded they become a barrier in different contexts and a hindrance to empowerment, equality and interdependence.

As mentioned above (see subsection 2.4.1), the effect of time is important in shaping the individual's life in a particular context. In HEIs, most students are at their late adolescent stage approaching adulthood (18 to 26, and in some cases 34 years of age), when deficiencies present themselves in the form of anti-social behaviour, lack of self-discipline, and inability to provide self-direction (Addison, 1992:12). It is critical to understand HEI students in this stage, despite all the negative factors presented in Addison (1992) above. On the other hand, Hamman and Hendricks (2005:74) believe that all the negative qualities are best experienced at this stage, as they help in psychosocial development, leading to confidence and enhanced self-esteem. These stages are viewed in Eric Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (1965, 1968, 1982) as part of a young person's life in which the emphasis is largely on searching for identity and developing relationships. Each stage is characterised by a challenge, or developmental tension between two opposites (Donald et al. 2007:75 & 78; Hamman & Hendricks, 2005:73), as during decision-making students incorporate many aspects of their identities from parents, peers and culture. This further translates to what Hamman and Hendricks (2005:72) regard as "the feeling of unity and sameness" and "maintenance of identity continuity in past, present and future".

In studies with Orphaned and Vulnerable Children it has been found that orphaned children are more vulnerable than other children within their environment, referred to in the theory as a "deficit model". Paquette & Ryan (2001:3) state that "…individuals usually declare themselves deficient in order to qualify for help in solving problems that may come about because of cultural values of independence." The contextual factors are interdependent, interacting with the individual system and bi-directional systems instead of linear cause and effect interaction. For example, if an orphaned student's family breaks down it might have dire implications to the orphaned students' personal wellbeing and impact on the educational goals.

2.5.3.5 Chronosystem as a resource

The chronosystem is explained in Puroila and Karila (2001:224) as encompassing the dimension of time as it relates to development in an environment, with changes or inconsistencies overtime not only in the characteristic of a person but also of the environment in which he or she lives. A useful example would be the changes over life course in a family structure, socio-economic status, employment, place of residence, or degree of robustness and ability in everyday life. This definition is relevant in the way the interconnectedness of the social system explains the relationship of orphaned students in HEIs in this study. The authors further contend that elements within this system can be external, such as timing of parents' death. Internal circumstances, on the other hand, can be factors such as physiological changes that occur with the development of an individual. The implications of this theory therefore suggest that orphaned students in HEIs might react differently to environmental challenges, depending on the stage of development. As some elements in the chronosystem can be externally or internally motivated, orphaned students in HEIs may be more determined and have an ability to find ways to deal with the changes in their lives, especially roles (child/youth-headed families) to realise their potential.

At this point, it is significant to acknowledge that this model recognises that human behaviour is more complex and ever-changing than direct causality in nature (cause and effect) which sometimes is regarded as linear within a human system. Therefore, the strengths of orphaned students in different contexts should be actively sought in order to empower them for self-actualisation and to transform themselves, others and in their social stations.

2.6 OBJECTIVES OF THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

The table below depicts the summary of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, that is, CER and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (BEST) that couches this study. Also highlighted are selected conceptual constructs from the critical theories (Freire and Herbamas) and the resources of BEST, which assists in understanding the phenomenon of orphanhood in an HEI; complicated interactions among the multiple interrelated systems with the understanding that power manifests itself in the layers of society as proposed in the CER and BEST (Ngai Sek Yum, 2013:473). To understand the relevance of the principles of BEST, resources aim at viewing contextual factors as interdependent, interacting with the individual system (Malkki, 2012:208).

Hay (2012:95), citing Kaplan (2009) argues that another objective is to understand how new reality is co-constructed through language when old challenges (experiences) become deconstructed and replaced by reframing meaning such that an original problem ceases to be a problem. Theoretical and conceptual frameworks in this study reinforce the notion that a person is a system and becomes a participant observer in every interaction. Consequently, the emphasis is on the development of a comprehensive framework through individual and collective participation in reversing power relations resulting in the empowerment of self, development of hope, social justice, peace, and personal and structural transformation for emancipation.

Table 2.1: Conceptualisation of objectives of theoretical and conceptual frameworks

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS		
CRITICAL EMANCIPATORY RESEARCH (CER)		**BRONFENBRENNER'S ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY(BEST)**
FREIRE'S TRANSFORM-ATIVE AND EMANCI-PATORY PRINCIPLES	**HERBAMAS'S THEORY OF COMMUNICATIVE ACTION**	
Critical consciousness Critical capabilities	Critical theory Communicative action	**GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF CER AND BEST**
PRINCIPLES OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK		*hope *empowerment *peace *equity *social justice * democracy *emancipation *transformation
Reflective practice Critical thinking Transformative and emancipatory principles	Social relations Socio-cultural Influence Deconstructing power	
GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF CER AND BEST		

Berg, Coman and Schensul (2009:348) interpret Bronfenbrenner's (1994:38) ecological systems theory utilised in conjunction with CER as providing an analytical framework with which to identify sources of influence, power and oppression. Govender (2012:108-109) endorses the view, putting emphasis on the aim of CER as being to deconstruct the presuppositions, norms and values underlying social practice, and so discover different understandings of reality and existing power relations within the ecosystemic perspective, because it specifically takes into account social context and ones' role as a human being.

2.6.1 The transforming principles of CER and BEST

Mahlomaholo (2009:224) suggests that the transformative principles in CER are characterised by abilities to respond to and vindicate one's own position in varied contexts. Therefore, the plan to utilise both theories is socially relevant when understanding the effects of orphanhood in a South African context. The significance of both theories, as Donald et al. (2007:8; 2005:21) affirm, is the social contexts and realities of people living and making life meaningful, deriving from diverse social, cultural, political and economic conditions which have important theoretical implications. Influenced by the views of McMahon and Patton (2009:104) on social issues, the ecological systems framework is ideally perceived as a link between complex interrelationships and the healthy wellbeing of orphaned students in HEIs and their diverse contexts and influences of social exclusion or discrimination, structural inequalities between individuals, families, communities and societal functioning.

Hay (2012:100, citing Donald et al. 2010) argues that how contextual categories, interpersonal difficulties and individual difficulties are addressed is important. Utilising both the critical and ecosystemic theories in the development of critical consciousness, empowerment and transformation of orphaned students in HEIs is justified through interactive language usage in communicative or discursive practices, with exposure to hidden practices between and within the system(s) being enhanced. While centralising the needs and concerns of the orphaned student community in an HEI, steps can be taken collaboratively to take action towards working for equity and transformation. Also affirmed in both theories is the position of working against the development of the attitude of helplessness and hopelessness, but notable is the enhancement of psychological strength to solve personal and social challenges. The development of young people and their subsequent life challenges in adulthood are a product of a complex set of interacting factors at individual, family, community and societal levels. As Galletta and Jones (2010:338) declare in findings of their study involving youth and teacher candidates in filming research

and PAR methodology, this framework and meaning-making allowed young people to participate in their education. They were also motivated to create changes their communities needed.

The key factors in this study are the experiences of orphaned students in HEIs and how they shape and are shaped by them at any given moment in their lives. Although it is understood that some perceptions and experiences may be tested inadequately and misinterpreted, methodologically both theories have the possibility of enhancing acknowledgement that orphaned students develop in society rather than in isolation. Hay and Weyers (2009:67) wrote that whilst the medical model's perspective on students demonstrating disabilities and deviant behaviour should be treated according to the diagnosis (cause and effect), the ecosystemic model on the other hand focuses on how the strengths of students can be actively enhanced to improve their lives or to free themselves from the bondage of powers in different environments, as also implied in the principles of CER.

The critical approach in this study suggests that in order for orphaned students in HEIs to be empowered and for emancipatory interests, the researcher should work with participants in exploring experiences and reflect on the provision of language and inter-subjectivity of individuals in a collaborative process. It is important for orphaned students in an HEI to transform and make meaning of the world (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2010:143), therefore the need for both CER and ecological systems theory is significant in this study. The notion of stability in ecological systems used in resilience studies facilitates description of the models of change in structure and functions of ecological systems (Walker, Andries, Kinzig & Ryan, 2006:1). In addition, ecological systems theory is utilised to understand how an HEI as a structure could become concerned by the disturbed wellbeing of orphaned students without shifting blame to different structures. Some factors, including death in the family, may cause orphaned students' environment to become unstable, unpredictable, and full of threatening factors and practices of injustice, whether physiological physical, intellectual, emotional, economic, social, historical or political. CER as a lens for self-actualisation and ecological systems theories therefore allows individuals to question the status quo, accept responsibility and develop self-confidence to rightfully justify choices of intervention strategies and to take their rightful place in society.

The possibility of self-determination depends on the individual's personality and personality traits. Some personality theorists argue that there is no definition of personality, yet Hurlock (1974, in Mwamwenda, 1995:319) refers to it as: "… the sum of what a person is the way he is, the way he appears and the way he is interpreted by others". To highlight the influence of an environment, emphasis is on the human personality and personality traits as influenced

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by environment and vice versa. There is a close link between CER and ecological systems theory in the understanding of orphaned students' behaviour in HEIs and how the different systems are interdependent during collaborative participation in the process of empowerment and emancipation.

One other close relationship to consider while viewing the critical theory from a pedagogic perspective is that, according to McLaren (in Roseboro 2008:97- 98) and Kilgore (2001:54), it is

> …not about teaching students to question only, but to situate social phenomena in broader structural relationships; to ask questions such as who benefit from these relationships; how unequal relationships being produced, and how do individuals interpret their situatedness in a system of unequal economic, racial, and gendered relations.

This supports BEST (see subsection 2.5.3), which highlights the crucial role of environment and the impact on the changing roles of student teachers in varied systems and points in time. In addition, Nkoane (2013:394) argues that critical approaches restore the quality of subjectivity to the researched as they are allowed to speak on their own behalf and are granted dignity regardless of their location in the web of reality (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2010:156). It is however for this reason that CER is used so that power relations are interrogated while transformation is initiated in multi-level structures of the differing systems or organisations.

2.6.2 Transforming interrelationships between CER, BEST and PAR principles

Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (2001:150 &153) specify that relational identities link to behaviour when groups are jointly participating in a figured world, with daily practices which position individuals relative to one another. This is relevant to what orphaned students in HEI might find themselves doing by taking positional identities to conform to what is happening in the figured world (HEI) and endorsing silenced positions. Thus, propagating and acquiring social positions for participants entails working collaboratively in activities, engaging in conversations and interaction leading to construction of their own social positions and social relations with one another, all of which pave the way to emancipation. As a consequence, participation in the interpretative processes that allows for sharing of different views helps in access to common knowledge, referred to in Boreham and Morgan's essay (2009:80), *"A Sociocultural Analysis of Organisational Learning',* as "a culture of

shared knowledge for the common good". In practical terms it is known that for any creation of knowledge, whether individually or collectively, language (speech) in a discursive process (action) should ensue.

Applied to the study, CER seeks to create the oppositional stance to orphaned pre-service teachers so that they reject the strategy of effacing themselves, not to accept situations of inferiority and subsequently acknowledge that together they can change themselves and the lives of others. Holland et al. (2001:155) describe how relational identities are publicly performed and sometimes perceived as a result of self-censoring or acceptance of what structures demand. Understanding how the systems in ecological systems theory function it becomes clear that people will ultimately develop different relational identities in different figured worlds because they are afforded different positions there and discover a need to advance the agenda for equity, social justice, freedom, peace, hope, honesty and emancipation (Mahlomaholo, 2009:228). The challenge of the connection between human and non-human in an ecological context is what Facione & Facione (1996:130) and Gruenewald (2003:5) claim should be explored to expand socio-cultural analysis and agendas of transformation. Furthermore, Gruenewald (2003) believes that whilst CER draws its moral authority to transform systems of human oppression, BEST posits that crisis in any context or environment (HEI) necessitates transformation of structures and individuals that should bring cultural stability.

Pre-service teachers, as scholars, work within constraining environments, promoting quality education which requires commitment of socially responsible individuals. A responsive community of the educated is a community of orphaned pre-service students who are best able to understand that the key is finding amicable resolutions to challenges to solve the problems of society or the community exposed to them (Peca, 2000:13), to change themselves and the society. Hong et al. (2010:63) argue that the ecological systems theory eschews the tendency to focus on youth's individual characteristics, but rather portrays 'orphanhood' as a consequence of interactions amongst a variety of factors directly or indirectly affecting pre-service teachers in an HEI. Similarly, understanding that education is the first step in psychological development and progression when trying to move on following loss of parents, beating the feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness, understanding how systems work and what opportunities are there to access education, how and where to navigate challenges, enhances reflective and critical thinking which eventually leads to resilience and hope.

Masten and Wright (2012:214) and Masten (2007:921) define resilience as the capacity to do well in life, despite significant adversity whether intrinsic or extrinsic, as in the case with

experiences of orphanhood. Theron (2011:1) states that firstly there must be a threat for a person which prohibits healthy and psychological development. Amongst the examples put forward about adversity, life challenges or conflict as mentioned in Habermas's communicative action theory, are orphanhood, poverty, social marginalisation and parental divorce. When the risks increase in diverse contexts there is a possibility of negative outcomes. Thus students who show promise, who maintain positive adaptation despite the occurrence of stressful events, or who attain good recovery from trauma are said to be resilient individuals (Masten & Wright, 2012:214; Theron, Cameron, Didkowsky, Lau, Liebenberg, & Ungar, 2011:801; Cicchetti, 2010:145; Ungar, 2010:2). Studies of resilience among black street youth (in Theron & Malindi, 2010:717) suggested that resilient youth could accept and/or tolerate their life experiences without blaming themselves or bearing grudges. Together with resiliency found amongst orphaned students and families coping successfully in high risks environments, intervention strategies need to be rectified to reach what Donald et al. (2010:37) refer to as *'ecological balance'* of the whole system. Quintessentially, in this theory social contexts are seen as systems in which the functioning of the whole is dependent on the dynamic interaction between all parts. However, Theron (2011:11) alerts especially the South African community to the significance of the transactional ecosystemic implications when conceptualising and promoting protective processes necessary to support changes in life trajectories from risk to adaptation.

In Bronfenbrenner's (2005) understanding, any immediate environment in which an individual lives determines the kind of relationships formed and the nature of interactions. Furthermore, how an individual acts or reacts to these people will affect how the individual is treated in return. Critical emancipatory theorists believe that problems can be solved within a specific context but solutions can be applied to other contexts (Anna Voce, November 2004:4) if the voices of the orphaned students in HEIs are/or were not heard before. Acknowledging and accepting diversity in different systems, respecting human rights and distinctively empowering students is congruent, especially in diverse communities in South Africa, so that the voices of the orphaned students in HEIs may be heard (Visser, 2007:12; Hadebe, 2007:133).

2.7   DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

The following concepts relate to the study and the definitions follow.

2.7.1 An orphan

Abebe (2009:71) notes that orphanhood refers to loss of parents, or inability of patriarchal families to provide care and support to children and youth who have fallen outside of the traditional safety net, as "a generic categorisation used mainly to describe social and cultural phenomenon as much as childhood can be defined of which both form social and economic construct". However, it is also noted that adults can be referred to as orphans or "adult orphans". Students in HEIs are mostly youth (18 years of age respectively and above) and therefore are perceived as young adults or adults. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary for English* (1992) defines *"adult"* as a mature grown up with fully well-developed powers of the body, thoughts and intentions" and an 'orphan' as:

> … a *child* bereaved permanently of his or her parents; a child who has been deprived of parental care (one or both) and has not been adopted". This definition encompasses the meaning of an orphan as referring to "a *minor* bereft through death or disappearance or abandonment or desertion by or separation or loss from both parents.

Consequently, for these different constructions, the implication of orphaned students in HEI as a concept refers to the development and the purpose of utilising the particular construction in this study. On the other hand, in some of the many studies on HIV and AIDS, an orphan is defined as "… an unaffected *child and youth to the age of 18* that have lost either one or both parents to AIDS" (Edstrom and Khan, 2009; Thiele, 2005:8 in Tissiman 2008; WHO, UNICEF and UNESCO, 2005; UNAIDS, 2008; The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989).

Noticeable is that these definitions are created and shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender-based forces that change over time globally. In my experience, observation and understanding, I do not believe in defining orphanhood as based on chronological age. Being orphaned does not cease in primary or high school, and I understand that in HEIs orphaned students also exist. I believe that loss of parent(s) through death is a painful and traumatic experience that changes one's life, whether as a child, adolescent or an adult. My concern is reflected in Chirwa's (2002:95) complaint that using chronological age excludes the many young people of 18 years of age or older. It may be argued that being a student in HEI is a more challenging transition from post-high school to HE. Students from varied contexts have to begin to adapt to a new HEI context with diverse culture and other emotional or psychological issues. Students in HEI have a goal of realising their potential and becoming independent graduates to change their and others'

circumstances, while contributing to the economy of the country as citizens (Walker, Gleaves & Grey, 2006:359). For this study I support the definition of an orphan by Nye and Bernardo (1973:615) and Statistics South African General Household Survey (2009; 2011 & 2013) as constructed and distinguished between three types, that is of "paternal orphans" and "maternal orphans", that is, those who have lost their fathers and mothers, respectively, mothers through death. For the purpose of this study, the definition used is *"an orphaned student"* as any student who has lost both parents and is identified as a *"double orphan",* the third type of the above*.* The definition, according to *Children on the Brink* (2004:6) acknowledges the same age group, that is, under 18, however, they identify another category of *"total orphans",* meaning those whose mothers and fathers have died, and lastly a category of "new orphans", whose parents have died in the previous year.

Orphaned students or young adults who are deprived of love, guidance, care and support are likely to be vulnerable, exposed to social and psychological ills, for example, violence exploitation, health risks and discrimination (Skinner, Tsheko, Metro-Munyati, Segwabe, Chibatamoto, Mfecane, Chandiwana, Nkomo, Tlou & Chitiyo, 2004:8-9). There is thus still a gap between what is done to protect their rights and to ensure they are treated with dignity in HEIs. Through effective development, implementation of policies and support within all sectors and the leadership in HEI structures, the conceptualisation of orphanhood should be such that it brings about awareness, enhancing inclusion, and intervention strategies for care and support for all. In recognition of diversity in HEIs, this can be extended to the communities and societies improving the ways in which interventions are structured. One of the ways is to empower the pre-service students to enhance change within themselves, the structures of HEI and other social systems, and to effectively deal with challenges that deter their participation as citizens and be responsible role models who will effect sustainable change.

2.7.2   Higher Education Student

The *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (1992:1210) defines a *student* as "a person who is studying at a university or another place of higher education" (to become something); a person who makes a thorough study of a subject or follows a course of study in a school, college or university. However, in the *Oxford South African School Dictionary* (2010), the word "student" is defined as showing a difference between "school learners or pupils" and "college or university students". This is based on chronological age when a student is "one acquiring education at a university, or a university of technology after the age of 18". Notable

in all definitions is a distinction between undergraduate and postgraduate students, the former taking a course in higher education leading to their first or bachelor's degree. Similarly and in consideration of the students of this study, the definition in *The American Heritage Dictionary of Language* (2009) defines a student teacher as a college or university student pursuing a degree in 'education' who teaches in a classroom under the supervision of an experienced, certified teacher, also called a 'practice teacher'.

Considering how youth is conceptualised in a South African context (National Youth Commission Act (1996), there is relevance in that students in HEI are defined as all people between the ages of 14 and 35, simultaneously recognising that chronological age is utilised but is socially and structurally framed. HE students may be regarded as a learning society, offering a learning-intensive society a potential context for scenarios of tertiary education, and one way of bringing broader societal aspirations and policy imperatives into perspective. Succinctly, this scenario explores what life could be when the process of identity creation begins at the grassroots. One of the HEI pre-service teacher's roles is to be a scholar, researcher and lifelong learner (Norms and Standards for Educators, 2000). In this study, HEI students are exposed to methodologies that are essential for their professional growth and advancement; how to become critical thinkers and to build a theory while at the same time considering a major role (Mncube & Mafora, 2013:18; Shields, 2010:558). Pre-service students have the potential to (re)construct knowledge and improve development of democratic policies in varied contexts.

2.7.3 Higher Education Institution

While an 'institution' in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (1992:614) is defined as a large, important organisation that has a particular purpose, such as a bank, hospital, prison or school to employ people, an educational institution is designed for instruction, examinations or both for students in many branches of advanced learning conferring degrees in various faculties and often embodying colleges and similar institutions. Accordingly, a 'higher education institution' is any institution that provides higher education on a full-time, part-time or distance basis (Higher Education Act, 1997:8 & 9). In general, Higher Education means "all learning programmes leading to qualifications higher than grade 12 or its equivalent in terms of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) as contemplated in the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995 (Act 58 of 1995), and includes tertiary education as contemplated in Schedule 4 of the Constitution..."

The core function of Higher Education (HE), according to Bleakley (1999:315), is "developing critical thinkers", which in Paul and Elder (2006:4) is interpreted as those people who are self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored and self-corrective thinkers, an intellectual trait that needs cultivation in HE. Research continues to indicate that the changing nature of HE increases enrolment and brings new types of students in the institutions of higher learning (McCullough & Crook, 2008:53). Additionally, taking a critical theorist point of view, HE is regarded as a tool of elite domination and as an engine of capitalist development. The term "Higher Education Institution" is in most cases used interchangeably with the word "university", with the latter further defined as an organisation engaged with the advancement of knowledge, including creation, conservation, interpretation, transmission and application. At a university, students and staff undertake the scholarship of learning and research. Students who meet the standards and requirements of an approved programme of study are awarded the degree (*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 1992:1339).

Higher Education should not be a means for people to improve employability but rather should encompass work and reconnect learning to a wider purpose of citizenship. It is characteristic of valorising competence-based qualities to students that it is grounded in reflective practice as highlighted in the Higher Education Council Report, CR113 (2003) on Access to Quality Higher Education. HEI is according to the *American Heritage Dictionary* (2009:626 & 627) an organisation or foundation dedicated to high quality education, public service or culture. One of the conditions of quality education as observed in Yaylaci (2011:1762) is that pre-service teachers in HEI should be trained as intellectuals solving problems and should be able to learn as they teach. This facilitates the development of problem-solving skills.

I found understanding the concept of HEI best suits the study of the orphaned community of students. HEIs are based on a system of democratic principles guided by equality, efficiency and accessibility, and HE's major role is creating sustainable leaders and strategies for financial sustainability. While accessibility is open to every student who meets specific requirements an HEI as an organisation should operate such that it is a complete system that is not only affordable to students, and should not compromise quality or access.

2.8   CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter I began by conceptualizing the theoretical frameworks allied in this study. I discussed the conceptualisation of the CER and emancipatory paradigm and its objectives;

the constructs selected as relevant to the study, namely, Freire's Transformative and Emancipatory theory; Habermas's Critical Theory of Communicative Action and, the principles of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (BEST) and their relevance to the study. Lastly, the objective of utilising both the CER and Ecological Systems Theory is explained. The afore mentioned conceptual frameworks were also defined based on the purpose of the study, in order to better analyse and understand the phenomenon (orphanhood) in HEI in the South African context and clarified operational concepts for example, an orphan, Higher Education student and a Higher Education Institution.

The next chapter reviews literature on orphanhood, its consequences, which constitute a challenge globally and as experienced by HEIs, mostly in the South African context. Also, literature on the need, justification and evidence of application of the empowerment framework for orphaned HEI students is reviewed.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Having examined and deliberated on the relevant theoretical and conceptual frameworks underpinning this study in the preceding chapter, in this chapter I engage with literature reviewed on the challenge posed by the prevalence of orphanhood and its consequent needs as experienced by orphaned youth internationally, in sub-Saharan Africa and in South Africa. The reviewed literature highlights awareness of the impact of the escalating numbers of orphaned youth and consequences thereof. The relationships and gaps are identified in how experiences and vulnerabilities of orphaned children up to 18 years of age have a directly adverse impact. It also explores the effects of grief and bereavement processes as experienced by orphaned students, acquisition of coping resources for improved wellbeing and the needs and challenges for participation in the navigation of experienced challenges of orphanhood in an HEI.

3.2 PREVALENCE OF ORPHANHOOD AND ITS IMPACT ON HEIS

Critical questions in identifying silences and gaps in this study will be addressed by the reviewed literature. As noted in chapter one, internationally most studies on orphanhood have specifically concentrated on care and support of orphaned and vulnerable children[3] and only a few have taken interest in the empowerment of HE orphaned students. Globally, literature has indicated that most policies or frameworks developed are based on support for children and youth in schools and in communities[4]. However, while it is understood that South Africa has been, and continues to be subjected to socio-political and socio-economic challenges and changes the results show escalating numbers of orphaned students,

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[3] (Dickens, Ngari & Enaneenane, 2013: 21; Ganga & Maphalala, 2013:500; Novella, 2013:2; Ismayilova, Ssewamala, Mooers, Nabunya & Sheshadri, 2012: 2042, Wallis, Dukay & Mellins, 2010:509; Beegle, Filmer, Stokes & Tiererova, 2010:2; Mangoma, Chimbari & Dhlomo, 2008:120; Serumaga-Zake & Serumaga-Zake, 2006: 34; Chirwa, 2002:93)

[4] (Guidance for Orphans and Vulnerable Children Programming: The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, 2012; Comprehensive Care and Support for Orphans, Vulnerable Children and Youth {OVCY} in the Southern African Development Community: Strategic Framework and Programme of Action 2008-2015, 2008; Policy Framework for Orphans and Other Children made Vulnerable by HIV and AIDS South Africa: "Building a Caring Society Together", 2005; The Framework for the Protection, Care and Support of Orphans and Vulnerable Children Living in a World with HIV and AIDS, 2004).

therefore, understanding the plight of orphans in the South African context and the supportive structural frameworks serves as a basis for raising awareness of the plight of orphaned students or pre-service teachers in HEIs. The recognition and development of self-awareness is critical in finding ways of identifying needs and challenges for the orphaned students in HEI, strategies to navigate the experienced challenges and to enable student to take responsibilities for themselves and others in society. Creating and maintaining an empowerment processes play crucial roles in changing the personal, social and structural situations, therefore it is important to understand the prominence and consequences of orphanhood globally.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic has a serious impact on sub-Saharan Africa, with a growing orphaned population (Framework for the Protection, Care and Support of Orphans and Vulnerable Children Living in a World with HIV/AIDS, 2004; South African Child Gauge, 2004 & 2013; Mogotlane, Chauke, van Rensburg, Human, Kganakga, Nyamukapa & Gregson, 2004; *The African Leadership Initiative on OVCs in South Africa*, 2007; Kiggundu,& Oldewage-Theron, 2009). Some of the studies on orphanhood mainly conducted in Sub-Saharan countries (Awino, 2010:10; Skovdal & Campbell, 2009:20) suggest the growing numbers of orphans is caused, inter alia, by political violence, wars, widespread unemployment and, most importantly, the AIDS epidemic, crime and genocide, which in some cases result in widespread geographical and emotional dislocations of people (UNICEF, UNAIDS, WHO & UNFPA, 2008). As communities are faced with these challenges there is a need to find proper intervention strategies that serve as supportive structures for the orphaned students.

Studies have been and continue to be conducted highlighting OVC's wellbeing, support and intervention programmes in schools, communities and societies (OVC wellbeing Tool, 2009; Abebe, 2009(b); Report on Partnership to transform South African Education, 1986-2009; Goba, 2009; Byrne, 2001; Lesotho National Policy for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children. 2006; *Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education Building an Inclusive Education and Training System, 2001;* Ganga & Chinyoka, 2010; Mangoma, Chimbari & Dhlomo, 2007:120; Serumaga-Zake & Serumaga–Zake, 2006; Henderson, 2006; Byrne, 2004) but few qualitative studies have focussed on their experiences in HEIs. The prevalence of orphanhood in sub-Saharan Africa has been exacerbated by HIV/AIDS (Dickens, Ngari & Enaneenane, 2013:22) and according to Cluver and Gardner (2006:2) statistics show that the estimated number of orphans was expected to rise from 1.1 million in 2003, to 3.1 million by 2010, peaking at 5.7 million in 2015. This is supported by Statistics South Africa's General Household Survey (2009), which estimated nearly 1.6 million 'maternal orphans';

and nearly 1 million 'double orphans'. South Africa has been identified as hosting the highest number of persons known to be living with HIV globally (5.2 million) and therefore it is to be expected that it includes a number of orphaned youth. It has been estimated that by 2015 there will be 2.2 million maternal AIDS orphans in the country, many of whom will be cared for by elderly grandparents, child or youth-headed households, foster care or extended families and institutional care (Nyambedhla, Wandibba, Aagaard-Hansen 2003:304; Skinner, Tsheko, Mtero-Munyati, Segwabe, Chibatamoto, Mfecane, Chandiwana, Nkomo, Tlou & Chitiyo, 2004:2).

In the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) alone, where the study was conducted, it is noted that the province is mostly affected by the high number of orphans. The figures in Statistic South Africa and Census (2011) indicated that the province had 30% of South African orphans, that is, about 1,012,492, most of whom were double orphans and approximately 300,000 left to fend for themselves. After Mpumalanga and Eastern Cape provinces, KZN had the third highest in numbers of the orphaned in the country, indicating nationwide challenge, with concomitant impact on the number of orphaned HE students. The findings form Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey (2002-2012) and the EFA Country Progress Report: South Africa (2013:23) translated into an estimated number of 41,900 double orphans, with KZN province becoming the second with the highest proportion of orphans (19.4%), after the Eastern Cape (23.2%).

Sub-Saharan Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Zimbabwe, all of which border South Africa, saw the number of double orphans numbers triple from 2002 to 2010 (Abebe, 2009:71; Children on the Brink (2002); Edstrome & Khan, 2009; Wood, Chase & Aggleton, 2006:1924; Chirwa, 2002:106), a rise of 20-30% (The Strategic Framework for Care of orphans, children affected by HIV and AIDS and other Vulnerable Children, 2001). The impact is immeasurable for both children and youth as those without either parent are mostly the ones who suffer and should be given the highest priority. Bhargava and Bigombe (2003:1387) argue that if orphaned children are cared for by their adolescent siblings the latter should be the first to qualify for vocational training or higher education. This has led to many countries to define the concept of orphanhood more broadly (see also chapter 2 sub-sections 2.7.1).

In Zimbabwe, for example, Chirwa (2002:95) finds the conceptualization of orphanhood as a social and economic condition which goes beyond the biological situation. For instance, in Malawi he found it helpful to reject the use of chronological age (18 years and below) as it contributed to social exclusion. Socio-cultural categories are not necessarily relevant to other societies, for which orphanhood may or may not be the collective responsibility of a

community. In addition, in a study titled '*Enumeration of orphans, their problems and wishes*' conducted in Zimbabwe, Mangoma, Chimbari and Dhlomo (2008:120) highlighted the prevalence of orphans, estimated at 56% of the study population. In contrast, in another study conducted in Zimbabwe in the previous year by Kariwo (2007:49), the indication was that although the number of orphaned children had escalated there was a noticeable development of HE as the country moved from an 'elite' to a 'mass' education system, an important need to be considered for other sub-Saharan countries. Therefore, to meet the needs of orphaned youth, institutions must plan properly and target the orphaned and most vulnerable, taking new approaches to orphaned care, new understandings and reframing of the definition of orphanhood. Drawing on the findings of a study on the challenges of orphans in Malawi, Byrne (2004:128) concurs with Chirwa (2002:95) in that some are likely to fall into situational and structural isolation, have their rights violated in various ways, and not be presented with opportunities to rightfully participate in society as full citizens. He further notes that the alarming number of adult deaths affects not only the youth but also destitute old people, and simultaneously threatens, overstretches and overwhelms orphaned students with social challenges, which pose a threat to coping.

In England, Stevenson and Willot (2007:671) argued that homogenising the support needs of young refugees and other ethnic minority students was both inappropriate and insufficient. They raised awareness about continued conscious or unconscious practice of the exclusion of refugees, including orphaned youth, as perpetuating continued absence from the higher education system (Stevenson & Willot 2007:673).

3.2.1 Consequences of orphanhood

Globally, students who wish to gain access to higher education are increasingly coming from diverse educational, socio-economic, historical and socio-cultural backgrounds. The Africa's Orphaned Generations Report (2004:15) illustrates that in the past supporting the orphaned was an unquestioned action and orphanhood was not as common a phenomenon as in todays' generation. It was evident that strategies for ensuring safety and security, health and education for the orphaned with life challenges are a need for any nation., but the key factor highlighted by the South African Child Gauge (2013:30) is that while many youth and children in South Africa experience violence, abuse, neglect and the loss of parents and caregivers, there is a need for psycho-social support services to help them cope with grief, loss and trauma. In meeting the needs, and being conscious of the orphaned and vulnerable students in HEIs, studies in education in some universities in Sub-Saharan Africa are seen

as critical contributors to the development of their countries. For example, Kenya advocates the advancement of access to orphaned and vulnerable students in Kenyatta University (OVS Framework, 2000) as a priority for attainment of the UN MDGs as evident in their philosophy statement: "being sensitive and responsive to societal needs and rights of every person to knowledge" (OVS Scholarship Fund, 2000:1). They believe that if as a country they have growing numbers of OVCs in schools who are supported, these students also require assistance when they access HE. There is recognition of social challenges and responsive actions to solve the problems for the benefit not only for individuals but also the country.

> Similarly, HE is regarded as the structure that can increase the quality of education by providing students with knowledge of the world of work, to produce professionals who can contribute to society in positive ways and therefore impact positively on the economy. However, in South Africa this obligation has not been matched (South African Higher Education Act, 1997:2 & 3), and many orphaned students in HEI are struggling, especially those who are not fostered either formally or informally. Access to HE is mostly based on the financial status of parents, one of the eligibility requirements for acquiring financial assistance. In addition, historical inequalities in educational systems and imbalances of the past are a persistent challenge. The debated issue of orphaned children, youth or students, as defined in most literature worldwide, is a contextual one, the impact of which is a barrier to a country's stability and welfare.

According to Bray (2003:45), orphanhood "is widely regarded as one of the most serious consequences of the AIDS epidemic, with multiple social, economic and cultural consequences expected to result from the dramatic increase in numbers of orphans." In addition, it is considered to be a risk factor for poverty, leading to vulnerability which Byrne (2004:129) argues is not static as individuals are likely to move in and out of vulnerable states. Some studies have found that poverty is not the sole determinant of an orphan's school attendance, but rather the relationship between the orphan and the decision-making adult in the family or household is also critical. The important factor is to understand the different reasons that expose the students to vulnerable states so that relevant processes can be addressed as a form of engagement and intervention. Therefore, exploring experiences of students in HEI will not only be for understanding and explaining experiences but also for learning from those experiences and taking action through collaborative participation to transform themselves and others.

In North Wales orphan students face noticeable challenges in HEIs (Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adult Students in Deeside College), and similarly, in South Africa, Ganga and Maphalala (2013:499) found that they are exposed to cognitive and

psychosocial difficulties brought about by a host of challenges, ranging from living arrangements, poverty, discrimination and exclusion. In the Ukraine, Mascolini in Hillis, (Zapata, Robinson, Kissin, Skilpalska, Yorick, Finnerty, Marchbanks, & Jamieson, 2012:779) examined the effects of orphanhood in youth and concluded that it spirals through homelessness and vulnerability to drug use and contracting HIV. In Canada, Graffigna and Olson (2009:790) conducted psychosocial discourse analysis of change in interpersonal processes of negotiation, construction and deconstruction that underlie the process of psychological wellbeing, and found that applying the processes of inclusion, as emphasized in the South African education frameworks and policies (Education White Paper 6, 2001; Higher Education Act Number 101 of 1997) that inform the Inclusive Policy Guidelines (2002), can address many of the problems in education. In addition, the South African Schools' Act (SASA, Number 84 of 1996) promotes the idea that all learners should have access to education. With the understanding that HEIs are centres of education, to which equal access and participation for all should be provided, the enhancement of opportunities and empowerment through participation is critical to any transformative actions.

3.3   LACK OF PARTICIPATION AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Some studies on disability and inclusion in HEIs (Nkoane, 2007; Jali, 2009; Reid & Knight, 2006; Fuller, Bradley & Healy, 2004; Oliver, 2002 & 1992; Holloway, 2001;) have demonstrated the need for HEI and stakeholders to ensure inclusive settings by developing and implementing policies that do not adopt a positivist approach but rather enhance participation and are emancipatory in nature. These results are relevant to this study on explorations of experiences of orphaned students in HEI, in finding ways to navigate the challenges they face and to develop an empowering framework or model for overcoming them. An HEI should be a safe social space for students (different actors) to conveniently engage in dialogue about issues of orphanhood. A study conducted with New Guinean youth (Vaughan, 2014:184) investigated how participation in research could help youth to be critically engaged in the construction of safe social spaces. Consideration of one of the benefits of participation which enhanced physical, emotional and psychological safety is vital for production of new knowledge that informs action for change.

Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities calls for educational policies and settings to be designed to meet basic rights to education, but as Chataika, Mckenzie, Swart and Lyner-Cleophas (2012:385) argue, meeting the criteria is still challenging to most African countries. Oliver (1996) believes that a social model of disability

that paves the way for social action can be translated to orphaned people or students in HEIs and thus overcome barriers to participation and end exclusionary practices. Research suggests that although student engagement measures are used in the USA, Australia and New Zealand, for external accountability purposes, the greatest value of these lies in their promotion of critical, internal self-reflection or reflective accountability (McCormick, 2009:63). In order to participate in the transformation of their world in HEIs, orphaned students should be exposed to environments that allow them to regain a sense of humanity, in turn overcoming their condition as role-players in their own liberation. The views attributed to adult education, that students have something to contribute to the learning environment, have ways of reflecting and acting on their world.

The importance of an interrelationship which enhances trust whilst sharing and developing new critical knowledge is to be considered when dealing with pre-service teachers who are pushed to the margins of society. In this kind of relationship, effective communication provides students with quality knowledge development and changed attitudes towards life (Martinez, 1993:2). As claimed by Mohajer and Earnest (2009:109) and Diemer and Blustein (2007:230), this encourages formation of effective sustainable groups and strengthens group bonding in which there is a feeling of equality in participatory dialogue and transcending one's situation through action and reflection.

In Australia, the model based on youth empowerment developed by Mohajer and Earnest (2009:424) highlighted a gap in the relationship between the facilitator and participants, which they claim is an important factor in empowerment. They suggested that to enable marginalised groups, empowerment programmes should be based on theory and field experience, such that the process of developing an empowerment model would be engaging and rigorously evaluated to attain sustainability. It is noted that every project is planned with the objectives in place and the whole PAR process aims at realising those outcomes. It is through collaborative processes that the relationship between college and high school students improved. Galletta and Jones (2010:351) claim that positive interactive and collaborative participation provides students from diverse communities with an opportunity to respond to tensions that emerge during discursive processes. However, they postulate that a study should not only offer benefits on information gained but any successful empowerment project should impact on institutional policies and position students as agents of change using skills developed to strengthen the project (Galletta & Jones, 2010:353).

These findings are supported by a study conducted in England (Ochieng, 2010:1727; Camino, & Zeldin, 2010:212) that investigated the researcher-researched relationship and debates on insider and outsider perspectives. Young people are confronting stereotypes,

societal norms, policies and practices that assume they are unable or unwilling to participate in a full spectrum of civic activities that raise barriers to participation and distort public beliefs about them.

3.4   UNATTENDED GRIEF, BEREAVEMENT AND COPING RESOURCES

Feelings of loss and grief occur in most people's lives on losing someone or something they cares about. While working towards realising a goal, the provision of holistic development is vital, so the death of a parent is generally the most traumatic event that can happen to a child or adolescent, even an adult. Acknowledging that grief is a natural response to loss and is a highly individual experience, Hornby (2003:110) argues that when a parent dies one should come to terms with the reality of the death, adapt to the changes in the family and learn to cope with the permanent absence. Similarly, for orphaned students, it is important to understand that grieving is a personal experience and that people grieve differently, through specific phases, that is, anxiety, denial, anger, sadness and longing, bargaining and acceptance (Brown, 2006:5-9; Hornby, 2003:108; Sciarra, 2004:228). Another important aspect is that orphaned student teachers understand that every individual should be given a chance to realise their potential, and be single-minded about reaching theirs and encouraging others to do so Christens & Peterson, 2012:625.

Dane and Levine (1994:80) define bereavement as culturally bound, subjective and personal, and in many ways the cause of loss of self-esteem. Most societies have customs related to death and mourning when deprived of someone through death. Death can be timely, when expected survival and actual lifespan are approximately equal, while untimely death means unexpected or premature death, which translates as a traumatic experience. Mourning and grieving are associated with tears, leading in some cases to depression (Howard, Matinhure, McCurdy & Johnson, 2009:72), hence in some cases tears allow one to release sorrow and grief in a natural way, not a sign of weakness as perceived in other cultures. In view of HE students in this study, the possibility was that the group had different perceptions based on the experience of loss, time elapsed and responses to grief.

Generally, most students, on reaching adolescence or adulthood, are likely to have experienced or have been exposed to death. Similarly, the emotional responses and behaviours of students vary around time of loss, with different people reacting to bereavement in different ways. Corr & Corr (1994:12) argues that "the bereaved need and want to talk about loss including the most microscopic details connected to it and that

sharing diminishes it". Death of a parent may lead to unattended emotional and psychological support, in turn threaten the psycho-social development of the orphaned.

Morin and Welsh (1996:294) found the average age of awareness of the concept of death is 7.5 years, and there is consistency in the findings of a relationship between age group and the way adolescents react to physical and emotional changes through death of family members. For Gray (1987:56) and Morin and Welsh (1996:298), the concept of death may be influenced by different factors, for example, developmental stage, life experiences, family and cultural background or milieu, and varied environments. In most instances death and loss is experienced as an uncomfortable experience that can be an obstacle, if not effectively communicated and dealt with. These characteristics might cause students to encounter social, psychological and conflicting emotions. Self-esteem is also affected and the process of grieving process will be disturbed.

Nduna and Jewkes (2012:1026) advise that to reduce youth's distress, access to knowledge and legal processes and counselling advocacy services are essential, whilst Brid (2007:2) asserts that adults should be able to listen to orphaned youth, and accept their feelings as genuine and important. Adults should model openness in dialogues about issues of life and death as this helps youth to cope with loss and bereavement. In most HEIs, support services and counselling are provided as a resource that should benefit vulnerable students, but Wimpenny (2006:37) found that adolescents are not keen to access professional help at this stage of their development, preferring relatives and friends to talk to about their experiences. For some young adults, the losses experienced may have depressive symptoms, therefore it is helpful to find environments that allow for openness, support, understanding and acknowledgement of negative emotions, for example, anger, fear, sadness, guilt, and depression.

In his study, Manala (2005:902-906) sketches existential situations of people living with HIV/AIDS, finding them to have similar characteristics that are a result of orphanhood, namely: fear, identity crisis, emotional confusion, stigmatisation and struggle with guilt, and might negatively affect the students' academic performance in HEIs. Sciarra (2004:223) warns teachers to be aware that, when dealing with grief and bereavement, previous experiences with death can affect the student's current understanding of it. Worden (1991, as cited in Hornby, 2003:112) suggests ten major principles of grief counselling to be applied to children and youth who are bereaved:

1. Help the individual actualise the loss with tasks mainly on the acceptance of death

2. Help him or her to identify and express feelings by using different methodologies or strategies, such as reflective journals, drawings or exercises

3. Deal with the practical difficulties, that is, living without the deceased

4. Help the individual to reinvest emotional energy by maintaining the memory of lost parent/s

5. Provide time to grieve

6. Provide continuous support following death through bereavement support groups

7. Interpret normal behaviour, that is thoughts and feelings following death

8. Allow for individual differences

9. Examine defences and coping styles

10. Identify pathology and referring.

From a traumatic experience, orphaned students need to be empowered through supporting programmes to effect change for themselves and others and to provide them with abilities for self-actualisation (Brew, 2013:6). Grief after death causes some disruption in school and in the home environment of students, but it should not be constrained by time and place. It is maintained that the schools and HEIs as educational institutions can be made safe spaces for grieving orphaned students by identifying actions or programmes where they can participate in supporting each other. Lines (2007:135) and Sciarra (2004:225) highlight the importance of working in groups as critical in accepting that '*life goes on'* when dealing with pain after loss. This stage of grieving is marked by the first holidays after death, when family members meet for the first time without the member of the family who died during holidays or family gatherings. This stage is viewed as difficult but when family members collectively support each other they are able to prepare for it.

The notion of building and developing strategies to move ahead requires orphaned students to identify goals, therefore, to develop coping strategies for loss through death optimises the students' progress and amplifies the courage and maturity for sharing difficult issues around their experiences. This is a consequence of finding intervention strategies to transform themselves, others' lives and their contexts. Acknowledging that grief impacts on work in every practice or setting in which professionals help others, it is important they are prepared to deal with their own grief and loss and that of others. This directly applies to teachers and orphaned pre-service teachers as it is likely they will be faced with learners who experience unexpressed grief stemming from traumatic losses ranging from death of parents or a family member, divorce, or dislocation. In addition, preparation should begin with each individual to

enable student teachers to address grief in reaction to death during their practice, to assist and empower learners and intervene accordingly. In his book titled "Grief and Loss: Understanding the Journey" Freeman, (2004:122) establishes how the lack of support of professional training programmes to address issues of grief and loss in different professional institutions erodes confidence, and leaves professionals uncomfortable in discussing issues of death and loss.

There are benefits to being trained in grief and loss, line with caution by Lines (2007:135) and Wright (2012:340) about dangers of covering over grief from previous deaths or losses. Studies have demonstrated that usually most orphaned adolescents are vulnerable to unacceptable and maladaptive behaviours, such as substance abuse, dropping out of school or HEI, violence, unplanned pregnancies, and aggressiveness (Nduna & Jewkes, 2012:1018; Operario, Cluver, Rees, McPhail & Pettifor, 2008:174). Grief and loss may be a barrier to coping with loss and optimum functioning in different settings, and building resilience is easier for some individuals than for others. When defining coping or resiliency in a person, following an empowerment-based positive youth development model (Travis & Leech, 2013:1) builds personal and environmental strength, even when burdened by factors that increase negative outcomes in the face of risk.

Masten (2007:921) argues that resiliency is the process capacity for and outcome of successful adaption, despite challenging or threatening circumstances. Similarly, Luthar, Cicchetti and Becker (2000:343) view it as the exposure to significant threat or adversity, and on attainment of good outcomes despite exposure. All believe in the possibility of achieving successful outcomes despite any challenges. The loss of parents marks sudden change for ones' identity and how one is motivated to achieving a goal in life or in changing the challenging circumstances. Masten (2007:922) and Martinez, (1993:2), add that resiliency is common to millions of people and could be enhanced through learning and continuous dialogue as people begin to talk about their problems, plan actions and eventually liberate themselves from fatalism and internal oppression, if empowered to do so. However, people who experience major depressive episodes are likely to suffer profound sadness, a sense of hopelessness, and lack of energy and interest in life. Such experience may interfere with the conditions of the holistic development of an individual, and reduce self-esteem (Ticusan, 2012:1591).

Awareness that death is experienced differently in diverse social settings, there are chances of it leading to negative reactions for some individuals. As a result, issues of culture, values and norms of society, language and ethnicity require consideration, as such unresolved feelings of loss may be in conflict with the goal of bringing relief, empowerment and

restoration. Schenk, Ndhlovu, Tembo, Nsune, Nkhata, Walusiku and Watts (2008:894) concur with Theron (2011:10), Masten and Wright (2010: 223), Ungar (2008:22) and Boss (2008:109) in upholding that loss due to death is inevitable, unanticipated, sudden or illness-related. In a contextualist worldview, teachers are expected to be professional members of a caring community, an expected attribute for orphaned pre-service teachers. As Patton and MacMahon (2006:4) posit, such a perspective focuses on development as a continuing process of interaction between the individual and environment, as he or she interacts with simultaneously and continuously constructs and deconstructs meaning, referred to by Patton and MacMahon (2006:4,5) as a "forward and backward mechanism". The orphaned student teachers in HEI need to receive support in order to witness their own grief reactions in preparation for working effectively with learners and families in need of grief knowledge and adoption of resilience strategies.

Some types of death are associated with social stigma, cultural belief systems and discrimination, for example, deaths due to HIV/AIDS, violence, stillbirth or suicide (Cacciatore & Thieleman, 2012:557). Although a majority of individuals experience prolonged grief and traumatic bereavement, a few seek clinical attention in order to cope with loss. Bereavement-related difficulties are often classified under depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and therefore require psychotropic medication, but in some cultures seeking help from counsellors may be seen as a sign of weakness, thereby perpetuating the culture of silence in individuals who might require formal intervention after experiencing loss.

A South African study conducted by Theron (2011:9) on 'understanding the process of resilience in the context of poverty' with university students stressed that the relationship between culture and context, endorsing the importance placed on grandmothers and older siblings as sources of resilience to orphaned students when faced by challenging situations such as death and poverty (Theron, 2011:10). The gap is mostly left by Western ways of developing resiliency following parents' death, in identifying the value of cultural values, beliefs and practices, including the role of grandparents, strong spiritual belief (religious and ancestral), kinship, and other collective practices, as well as language used (Mkhize, 2006:184).

Ungar and Brown (2008:11) also identify a number of factors that promote youth's resiliency, namely, material resources, supportive relationships, development of personal identity, experiences of power and control, adherence to cultural traditions, experiences of social integrity, and a sense of cohesion with others. These are believed to facilitate ability in youth

to overcome trauma of loss, a sense of agency, empathy, shared experience and community connection, and a sense of growth and hope for the future.

3.5. THE INFLUENCE OF SHIFT IN FAMILY LIFE

The important shifts in the structure of families in society demonstrate that a family is the foundation for learning and development, forming the basic source of security and support in the holistic development of students (Leartham, 2005:47). The influence of parents within the family system is vital in that it fosters knowledge about beliefs, culture, norms and values security and development of language. This further extends to the schools until students complete their HE and become responsible citizens who may presumably add value to society. Cullen, Cullen and Lindsay (2013:303) claim that in addition to the family as a system, importance is attached to the relationships within the subsystems of the orphaned students, for example, parental involvement, student achievement and age. Nevertheless, from a critical point of view, this notion might be refuted.

Orphaned students, if empowered, are likely to perceive themselves as capable individuals who participate in changing their lives and altered circumstances following the death of parents. Marginalised youth, according to Hansen (2008:1), negotiate their transition to adulthood by encountering a range of obstacles, hence the emphasis is on the value of social support, especially those who experience transition as a deficit. However, like orphanhood, transition is viewed as movement from one state to another, from one situation to another, or from one outcome to another outcome over time. The emphasis is therefore on self-awareness, familial support and recognition of social support, underlined by research with marginalised youth.

The individual is seen as responsible towards the next stage, and for any problems in the continuing process of interaction between the individual and his/her environment. The utilisation of the critical approach (Patton & McMahon, 2006:3&4) in understanding the interconnectedness of people in a context or each part of the system brings about exploration of the social world, critique, and seeking of empowerment of the individuals to overcome problems in the social world. It has been observed that families are inextricably embedded within their larger socio-political contexts (Sengendo & Nambi, 1997:106; Hernandez, Almeida, Rhea & Dolan-Delvecchio, 2010:105), whilst human behaviour is influenced by context and time, thus the importance of the relationship.

International research has demonstrated that dramatic change in family life, for example, in the USA, 40 years ago nearly 90% of children grew up in homes with a mother and a father, only 6% being born to unmarried women. The importance of family as a system in America is emphasised by Keller (2001:2), who expresses concern that American traditional families have been taken for granted and have not been recognized sufficiently for the values, guidance, love, expectation and devotion to education in colleges and universities. This has a negative impact on some orphaned students who have no one to depend on for economic or emotional support. This is not a challenge for America alone but also for communities in Southern Africa. However, the current global concern is that these changing dynamics in the family system are also peculiar to national communities.

Conversely, in HEIs, there is neither emphasis on parental involvement nor direct communication with parents/guardians concerning the student's wellbeing, for example, in areas that have direct influence on academic performance, state of lecture attendance, absentia and even sustainability. Policies, policymakers and practices in HEIs somehow disregard this important but critical responsibility of the engagement by parents in HE, however, McLanahan and Sandefur (1998, in Keller, 2001) write that "family disruption continues to reduce students' school achievement even after high school". Also, the research of Kiernan (1992:213) of Britain's Family Policy Studies Centre, confirms McLanahan and Sandefur's findings, adding that students from disturbed family settings are less likely to access university or be retained if accepted without their self-esteem being dented.

In African countries there are varied negative consequences since the family forms the basis or foundation for effective development. The type of a family, size and the status or context also determines the kind of support the orphaned may experience, hence there is generally relevance in what society perceives as 'a right family' when compared with a single parent home, a child-headed home, foster home or orphanage. Turnbull, Friesen and Ramirez (1998:178) used a PAR model to study the re-conceptualisation of a family as two or more people who carry out the responsibilities and who regard themselves as a family regardless of whether they are married or not. However, they regard the definition as open-ended and honouring cultural and individual diversity, hence the following three types of family units.

3.5.1   Re-conceptualisation of a home or family unit

A number of studies worldwide on care and support of orphaned children and youth (Nduna & Jewkes, 2012:1018; Nowak-Fabrykowski, 2004:621**)** confirm that the escalating number of parental deaths lead to alternative care arrangements, such as fostering or kinship and instutitionalisation of orphaned, especially in some international and African communities. Likewise, Heymann and Kidman (n.d.:6) argue that communities play an important role in helping families and institutions fill extra caregiving burdens which are as a result of time, poverty and economic impoverishment. Importantly, wider communities and community-based organisations have a long tradition of providing material support to orphans and their families.

3.5.1.1 Child and youth-headed households

In the context of poverty and an increasing number of orphans, studies claim that it is now common that some orphaned children or youth choose to live alone in a child-headed household (CHH), youth-headed household (YHH) or other social groups (Mayaba, Theron & Wood, 2012:225; Ruiz-Casares, 2009:238; Ruiz-Casares, Thombs, & Rousseau, 2009:369; Mangoma, Chimbari & Dhlomo, 2008:120). There are many dilemmas associated with care of orphans, as caregivers, relatives or friends sometimes lack resources to foster orphans, leading to child-headed households (De Haan & van Dijk, 2008:1). Individuals are often identified positionally, leading to them being silenced within the figured world of the diverse institutions. This reduces opportunities for new families to function cohesively and thus contributes to distress. On a positive note, in Zambia, a study that used community-generated definitions to explore patterns of vulnerability of orphans and children (Schenk, Ndhlovu, Tembo, Nsune, Nkhata, Walusiku & Watts, 2008:901) indicated that the prevalence of CHHs does not necessarily indicate total abandonment by family members, but rather children not wanting to be split from siblings or sometimes to prevent property seizure. However, this choice by older children to care for their younger siblings is too much of a responsibility for orphaned youth having to cope with household decision-making. The results in the same study also indicated that in a CHH an older sister or brother experiences challenges ranging from lack of food and financial support, dropping out of school/HEI and in some cases engaging in risky behaviour and crime.

The crisis of CHH and YHH is also noted in Payne's study (2012:400), conducted in Zambia, reveals that this challenge should be corrected as it is perceived as everyday life, not

extraordinary but rather a struggle of coping and competency. In a study conducted in Rwanda, Thurman, Snider, Boris, Kalisa, Nkunda, Mugarira, Ntangarina and Brown (2006:221) examined the aftermath of the genocide in 1994, later massacres and HIV/AIDS. Rwanda bears the highest rate of double orphans, hence many YHH participated in their study, aged 13-24, confirming the importance of facilitating emotional and psychosocial support and challenges they face, including social marginalisation (Thurman, Snider, Boris, Kalisa, Nyirazinyoye, & Brown, 2008:1557; Thurman, Snider, Boris, Kalisa, & Chintando, 1998:1).

Double orphans appear to be at the highest risk, and as loss of a mother is traumatic it may prove more detrimental than loss of a father (Ansell &Young, 2004:3). In the study of YHHs in Rwanda, participants reported feelings that no one cared for them and that they were isolated from the community. Some felt the community would rather hurt than help them, others reporting stigmatisation or rejection by their community (Snider & Dawes, 2006:28). However, Skovdal and Campbell (2009:19&20) argue that most of the suffering and hardship experienced by double orphans in CHHs and YHHs was caused by lack of interventions on good quality support and care, and seeing orphans as passive victims. They found the promotion of identifying and utilising psychosocial resources or assets available in communities enabled orphaned communities of students to empower themselves (Myende 2014:172), thus enhancing development of coping strategies and resiliency skills.

3.5.1.2 Foster care

In Poland, the long-lasting foster care model of orphans created between World Wars 1 and 2 is still in existence, and has been adopted by many countries, albeit demonstrating some challenges (Nowak-Fabrykowski, 2004:623). Regardless of the provision of these homes, on exploration of the nature of interpersonal relationships, orphaned participants mentioned that they could not share their problems with anyone. There were experiences of insufficient warmth, lack of preparation for the future, unresolved emotional problems and poor education when living with extended families or relatives.

Traditionally, orphans in Africa have been absorbed within the extended family, but this is becoming more difficult due to the large number of young adults dying (Drew, Makufa & Forster, 1998:S9). Reports on relationships are different for some orphaned youth with close ties to relatives therefore changes demand not only financial support and change in structure of buildings but also preparation for orphaned students to develop them as individuals and prepare them to effectively deal with life challenges. Socially, orphaned students are often

isolated (Kirk, Lewis, Nilsen & Colvin, 2011:307), however, to be able to reduce discrimination and exclusion of the minority groups some spheres of culture have an enabling role in individual/collective engagement within the communities.

In Southern Africa, orphaned children have also been traditionally cared for by extended members of families. Transformation in education poses tremendous challenges not only for institutions alone but also for individuals wishing to respond constructively to socio-political changing societies worldwide. Students in HEI come from diverse social backgrounds and have different socio-economic status, a pattern described by Keller (2001:4) as being brought about what he refers to as "emigration patterns", which create the challenge of providing people from diverse races, classes, and backgrounds with the tools and competencies to enable them to succeed and participate in an increasingly complex and changing world. This situation relates to what Bronfenbrenner (1986:723) calls 'bi-directional influences', that is, the interaction of structures of society and within including families. These are key to influencing the future path of an individual, with recognition of change in contexts (family structure) requiring understanding of various dynamic complex aspects, approaches and changes in the family system that directly influence the students' identity and behaviour in HEIs.

3.6   PSYCHO-SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL EMPOWERMENT

Boiger and Mesquita (2012:221) argue that emotional events are socially constructed and emerge in interactions that take place in relationships. They are dynamic and situated in socio-cultural contexts, but on the other hand the best psychosocial care and support for the orphaned is understood to be critical for the health and development of individuals who experience parental death, recognised as the one of the most stressful life events a child or adolescent can endure (President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief-PEPFAR, 2012:32). Clinically, wellbeing is operationalised as the absence of negative conditions and feelings, resulting in adjustment and adaptation to a hazardous world. Similarly, psychological wellbeing, that is, "mental health", is explained by Sengendo and Nambi (1997:108) as having five major components, namely, affective wellbeing, competence, internal locus of control, aspiration and integrated functioning or adjustment. Equally important and similar in definition of youth is conceptualised by Travis and Leech (2013:2) as positive youth development through such factors as competence, confidence, connection, caring and character. The last, character, is about attitudinal and behavioural assessment in which lie morality, identity, attitudes about societal and cultural rules, a sense of right and wrong, all

key to development of orphaned youth. Human beings require those various aspects of a healthy life style (physical, psychological, social, emotional and spiritually) and they cannot function properly without these aspects working interdependently or in harmony.

In the absence of context with sufficient resources for psychological health of orphaned students, Thurman, Snider, Boris, Kalisa, Mugarira, Ntanganira and Brown (2006:220) stress that psychosocial support is the important resource available that can facilitate coping and resilience. However, Jennings, (2006:12) and Scott (2009:12) elucidate how personal wellbeing has proved to be central in enabling one to effectively engage with interpersonal relationships, community life and society, which Thurman et al. (2006:221) exemplify as social capital, meaning features of social relationships facilitating collective community engagement through action. This viewpoint is reinforced by Potenza, Mashinini, Slater and Wybourn (2006:120) as they define psychological health as thinking positively about oneself.

Loss of a parent (s) through death, as experienced by adolescents or young adults, is traumatic, leading to loss of emotional or psychological support which eventually threatens their social wellbeing. In order to be able to walk the journey of recovery or healing, young people need to understand their world better, their environment and the nature of relationships in which they are engaged. Snider and Dawes (2006:13) support the above statement and endorse peer relationship in youth from YHH as critical in fulfilling psychosocial development needs. In Rwanda, in the wake of both the 1994 genocide and the ongoing HIV/AIDS epidemic, Boris, Thurman, Snider, Spencer and Brown (2006:584) record that specific sociocultural factors supported the formation of YHHs, including psychosocial wellbeing.

Chitiyo, Changara and Chitiyo's findings (2008:384) in a study conducted in Zimbabwe on the impact of vulnerability on orphaned children's wellbeing highlighted the overwhelming increase of numbers documented by UNAIDS (2005), UNICEF (2007) and other organisations and writers, to be the barrier to effective psychosocial support for the orphaned. They pointed out not only signs of emotional needs but also a lagging behind in academic work after interventions based on psychosocial support, albeit some improvement emerged. Orphaned students were found to have varied emotions, ranging from hopelessness, unhappiness and frustration as the most prevalent. Lack of emotional support was key to the lack of academic performance. Another study conducted in Zimbabwe found that experiences of social inclusion and exclusion reflect lack of psychosocial wellbeing, resulting in stigma and discrimination when in some cases relatives exploit and abuse orphan children and youth (Snider & Dawes, 2006:15).

Since psychological problems are not always obvious, orphaned pre-service teachers with appropriate training, understanding of individual and group participation can facilitate transformation of themselves and others. Orphaned children and young adults are often not given enough emotional support as orphanhood in most communities is associated with negative effects, resulting in stigma, discrimination, isolation and alienation. The major challenges brought on by death or other challenging circumstances which orphaned students experience have the possibility of having an adverse impact on their psychological and emotional wellbeing, attendance and educational achievement (Education for All Report, 2010:26). These consequences further impact on the level of the development of knowledge, skills and values for constructive participation as members of society, and pose new demands and constraints. In their study on psychological effect of orphanhood with adolescent children in Rakai district in Uganda, Sengendo and Nambi (1977:107) concur with the above points but further state that if individuals fail to adapt to social changes, stress may develop and they are likely to show symptoms of confusion, anxiety, depression, and behavioural disorders. Failure to address these will aggravate psycho-social challenges

In South Africa a few studies have indicated the need for consideration of the relevance in the relationship between the context and the effects of the orphans' psychosocial wellbeing. For example, for an orphaned student in HEI, an overwhelming HEI environment coupled with the changed structure of family system is partially what Nduna and Jewkes (2012:1) discovered in their study of sources of distress. There was no single event that caused distress amongst young people but interconnections were found between structural factors, such as death, poverty, unemployment and gender injustice, negative home dynamics and worries over their inability to complete school. Similarly, stress and fear also affect social judgements, rewards and risks. To alleviate stress amongst orphaned youth, strengthening the family system, improving financial security and delivery and monitoring of policies are needed (Nduna and Jewkes, 2012:1018; Cluver, Gardner & Operario, 2009:732; Huselton, 2009:6; Operario, Cluver, Rees, McPhail & Pettifor, 2008:173; Cluver, Gardner & Operario, 2007:755; Howard, Matinhure, McCurdy & Johnson, 2006:71; Howard, Matinhure, McCurdy & Johnson, 2006:71; Cluver & Gardner, 2006:8).

Goswami (2008:19,20) writes that for successful learning to occur the context of the institution as well as the wider community interact with the emotions of an individual to be in a position to assess the value of information being received. Likewise, experiences of negative social change adversely produce feelings of helplessness, loss of hope and diminished willpower for certain individuals, all of which are costly to physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Brown (1999:85) argues that the HEI should provide support for

emotional wellbeing of all its students, otherwise some will live for the present and avoid investing their hope in the future, leading to emotional disempowerment and distress. For Goswami (2008:19), stress and fear affect social judgments, physiological and cognitive functioning (temperament and gender-specific hormones) and environment (socialisation by parents, peers, and culture). The impact of loss and absence of parents amplifies the culture of silence on issues related to death, resulting in the feeling of powerlessness.

A positive aspect of emotional wellbeing is that it influences the realities of the quality of life of students in HEI, prepares them to be employees and employers, leaders in their households and communities, as well as being parents themselves. Understanding that HE has the potential to promote socialisation, independence and self-reliance, it is safe to presume that a constructive and stimulating environment might enhance self-confidence, a sense of achievement and social skills.

In Uganda, Sengendo and Nambi (1977:105) examined the psychological effect of orphanhood, and pointed out that lack of information on how emotional support can be offered resulted in failed individual and group support. The important aspect stated in the study proved that depression occurring as a result of parental loss affects the identity of orphaned young people when they feel incomplete and bewildered. Similarly, Armsden and Greenberg (1987:445) observe that, while parent and peer attachments in late adolescence are related to wellbeing, the quality of attachment contributes to predicting adolescent depression and alienation. It thus appears that stressful life events are linked to the perceptions of family relationships, even for HEI populations, and thus emotional strength is vital for individuals to rediscover themselves and to minimise signs of unresolved grief. Since institutions of education facilitate access to learners and students, and further involve partnership of other communities, a relatively stable environment should be provided for psycho-social support of young people within varied contexts (Umthente Uhlaba Usamila National Risk Youth Behaviour Survey Report, 2002:8). A similar view is highlighted in Donald et al. (2007:107), that is, interventions for successful learning and development depend on the environment in which they take place and they should therefore be age-appropriate. The HEI as a setting has a duty to provide an enabling environment for wellbeing of all students, including the orphaned.

Chintando (1998:105), a phenomenologist, places much emphasis on the importance of cultivating respect for the integrity of the participants' feelings. That they are not 'inanimate objects' but 'fellow human beings' consolidates the relation between *'epoche'* and *'empathy'* in the development of critical awareness. There is much influence on how people's interpretations from 'outside' or practices in society impact on, endorse and reinforce

oppression emotionally on those who experience loss and are grieving. Chintando (1998:109) illustrated how burial as a culmination of a series of rituals (associated with death) common to communities could disregard an individual's emotions and in that way not be emancipatory. This cultural practice marks what Nduna and Jewkes (2012:3) regard as one of the factors which perpetuate effects of poverty that impact negatively on the emotions of the bereaved, resulting in increased sense of loss and silenced emotions.

Emotional transformation as explained by Potenza et al. (2006:120) determines mental wellness which is influenced by positive thinking and achievement. Therefore, given the plethora of challenges faced by students in HEI, I saw the need to engage students by employing critical theoretical principles to cultivate a critical attitude and inculcate questioning ideology (see 2.5.1.1). The emphasis is on the need for critical consciousness, which therefore remains crucial for liberation practices, balanced psycho-social wellbeing and for orphaned students to question challenging issues with the intention of being emotionally empowered and subsequently transformed in their practices. This can impact on individuals' academic performance or previously learnt strategies and skills for life. Socialising also is viewed as assisting in stress reduction, and enhances the possibilities of sharing and the ability to resolve conflicts. Notwithstanding that all decisions have consequences, it must be borne in mind that not all people around us have positive influence but can sometimes negatively affect choices and behaviour. While it is acknowledged that young people learn by experience and theory, to effectively deal with strong emotions and to be able to express them requires that they be treated as whole beings for positive responses. In a transforming society it is vital to consider the pivotal role of the social context in which students can discover themselves, learn as they participate and learn from each other as they share experiences.

3.6.1 The perception "self" in an HEI

Research internationally and in South Africa indicates that death is no stranger to children, adolescents and young adults (Hornby, 2003:107; Sciarra, 2004:218 & 221; Brown, 2006:28; Lines, 2007:138 & Wright, 2012:340-341), denoting that whilst youth are capable of understanding loss and death intellectually they vary in their actions to the experiences of loss which further contradicts their feelings. Scott (2009:12) writes of the importance of Psychology as a discipline, and Social Psychology as examining how the mind is shaped by its social context. While exploring emancipatory work of at-risk youth in Hong Kong, Ngai Sek Yum (2013:476) found that people can use what they refer to as "technologies of the

self" for testing power, thus devising emancipatory strategies. These findings indicated how setting of the outreach problem-oriented philosophy by government and social workers raised critical consciousness in youth. Participants were in a position to highlight their needs and challenges posed by government by perpetuating unjust practices which they felt was the opposite of what they referred to as "egalitarian relationship." The youths suggested that they were not alienated by the model of collaborative practice with community, other than individualistic counselling provided by social workers, reform of social structures, developing centres or organisations, or considering the use of language or names. Therefore, while self-concept is defined as '"what a person believes about himself, or a map that each person consults in order to understand him/herself during moment of crises and in situations where he makes a choice" (Zlatkovic, Stojilkovic, Djigic & Todorovic, 2012:378), engaging youth in HEIs has the potential to facilitate self-esteem and interactive communication.

Educational institutions as contexts have been bestowed with much responsibility, including the overall or holistic development of each student, realisation of the teaching process and beyond, cooperation with parents, local community, social organisation and societal engagement. Attainment of certain qualities and self-awareness to fulfil these responsibilities is critical, especially for effective social group relations. In a study on self-esteem conducted with teachers, Zlatkovic et al. (2012:379) found that most teachers with high self-esteem performed well and were successful professionally, determined also by their choice of activities. These findings further helped in dealing with gaps in studies on self-concept with pre-service and in-service teacher programmes. The suggestion was to include content that aims to develop teachers' self-concept. In many instances, when faced with a dilemma or life challenge, students turn to their peers or teachers for support. A comparison in age group or phases by Sengendo and Nambi (1997:106) concluded that children, unlike adolescence or adults, may not understand the finality of death although they are grieved by the loss of their parents. While a goal of most young people is to enjoy the sense of accomplishment, to tap into the world of opportunities that are embedded in acceptance, trust and doing well in what they do in an HEI is critical. It is not surprising to learn that experiences of negative circumstances sometimes become a barrier to the realisation of goals.

Students in HEIs are undergoing a critical stage of development, that is, transition from adolescence or late adolescence to early adulthood, characterised by various psychological challenges (Hammann & Hendricks, 2010:75). They have to balance a sense of 'who I am?' with a sense of 'how others see me?' and 'how do I connect with the larger picture?' (Donald et al. 2005:78), a view corroborated in Monacis, Mansueto, Sinatra, Traetta and de Palo's (2012:1183) definition of identity in their study on the effect of shyness in academic contexts

consider identity as "… structure that serves as personal frame of reference for interpreting experience and self-relevant information and answering questions about the meaning, significance and purpose of life".

A study in Ireland conducted by Fleming and Finnegan (2010:1) with HEI students found that they were less concerned with their status or prestige alone in an HEI than with recognition, which touches on both 'private' and 'public' sense of self. It is a stage at which biological endowment and intellectual processes have to meet the societal expectations, not forgetting recognition of uniqueness. These should match a 'suitable' display of adult functioning, the subsequent question being on the suitability of developmental needs, since identity is said to determine the kind of decisions to be taken and solutions to particular problems. The psycho-social development stages stress that 'intimacy versus isolation' (young adulthood) requires students to establish a trusting mutual relationship with another person. (Hamman & Hendricks, 2005:73). However, in the development stage, for young adults to reach all stages is a struggle, especially if the previous ones were not accomplished. Equally important, students usually have more doubts, questions of self-adequacy and experiences of loneliness and isolation when faced with traumatic and emotional challenges. This is more so when growing up in a South African context, with high prevalence of conditions of unemployment and poverty (Coetzee & Esterhuizen, 2010:1). This negative exposure or psychological stress-inducing experiences result in some orphaned students having to force or be forced by circumstances to grow fast, and assume adult roles and responsibilities prematurely, without adequate exploration for each stage, as suggested in Erikson's theory.

Inadequate psychosocial and interpersonal developments are often known to produce low self-esteem and heightened levels of depression when an individual is overwhelmed by loss of personal control, especially when faced with change owing to grief and bereavement (Lines, 2007:72, Ticusan, 2012:1590). It must be borne in mind that a sense of self includes both identifying oneself with beliefs about who one is as a person, consistency with one's past, present and future life, and judgments about value or worth and norms and values of the society. Ticusan (2012:1590) adds that self-esteem requires an individual to recognise his or her own qualities, strengths, weaknesses, abilities and talents, as these are resources to rely on. However, self-knowledge alone is not enough, but all the characteristics need to be changed or turned into actions as these determine who one is and what one lives for, that is, the desire to be 'master of one's environment'.

Powers and Allaman's (2012:2, 3-4) use of PAR to help youth development and social change found that involvement of youth in social change promote self-awareness and self-confidence. The success was observed in the Boston-Area through projects involving youth,

for example the Boston Youth Organising Project (BYOP) which held transportation more accountable to youth's educational, health and economic needs; Youth United for Change (YUC), in which youth in schools discussed their concerns and experiences and eventually became designers of their research and development of leadership skills.

In line with the above suggestions, young students in HEI should be involved in important projects that change their lives and societies, giving rise to enhanced self-esteem, developing creative, innovative individuals who are able to sustain participation in addressing, physical, social and economic and intellectual issues.

Children who are criticised, from divorced families, have parents or guardians who show discrimination between brothers/sisters led to their feeling not approved or integrated in society (Ticusan, 2012:1591 & Fleming & Finnegan, 2010:2). Accordingly, sometimes students who have lost their parents or are separated from them create a barrier to achieving confidence, good academic performance, and better quality of personal life. Lines (2007:70) on *'Low Self-esteem, Depression and Suicidal Thoughts'* concurs with Ticusan, giving an example that abused young people and those who are neglected usually suffer low self-esteem and may have poor social skills for relationship-building as a result of fear, lack of confidence and inadequate role models. Orphaned students may suffer invisible emotional scars, seen by Erickson (Hamman & Hendricks 2005:74) as aspects of identity. Some students, despite challenges and low self-esteem, thrive thanks to development of self-identity and are motivated to cope with HE life. A person without positive sense of identity feels out of place socially, unsure about him/herself and worthless, his/her views seemingly pointless. Erickson (in Hamman & Hendricks, 2005) specifies not only the negatives in the way he views psychosocial development of youth but also positive identity. Individuals may be susceptible to peer pressure, plan for the future, challenge adult authority, and be self-accepting. Well-developed identity in young adults after loss of parents is significant as it is largely needed for decision-making and commitments taken regarding personal and social responsibilities.

Lines (2007:71) postulates that when young people experience being loved and supported and are in harmony with their social and natural environment, they become less stressed. This claim highlights the importance of the relationship or interconnectedness of an individual with the social setting and how these dimensions influence each other. Other people also influence how other people regard themselves, for example, things one should do at a certain age, how one should behave if a member of a certain group in a particular context. For many students in HEI, Jackson (2003:342) states "...their identity as 'university students' is imbued with expectations about academic performance and academic

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competence. …there are shared ideas of what it is to be a student, of how a student will behave, even of what the student look like…"

To be a student is not solely about academic performance and competence or how one physically looks but also understanding of the plight of the orphaned in any institution, and how to navigate challenges faced in that context, transformed and empowered to actively engage in the process of self-transformation. Burns (1979:155) believes that this is still applicable in this twenty-first century:

> ...more needs to be done to prepare teachers who will be sensitive to others and who view teaching as a human process involving human relationships and human meanings. We need to introduce and expose teachers to sensitising processes and subtle complexities of personality structure.

Avoidance of assessing others, based on distortions of physiological and emotional needs, facilitation of positive self-attitude may affect the students positively, with confidence, trusted and worthy capable individuals or groups. This is also distinct in a study conducted on cooperative learning with two groups of emotionally disturbed students of normal intelligences by Slavin (1995:59). The findings indicated that students who interacted with their peers significantly showed improved task completion and less disruptive behaviour, highlighting that teamwork can overcome barriers to friendship and interaction between students enhancing self-esteem. To withstand the disappointments of life, to be confident decision-makers and happy and productive individuals, a strong sense of self is required as it paves way to assessment of future possibilities in life (Travis & Leech, 2013:2). According to Slavin (1995:60), critical in collaborative practice methods and effective components of students' self-esteem include feeling that they are liked by their peers, doing well academically and important because they have information that is indispensable to the other groups.

The above components and others can increase self-esteem in students, lessen anxiety and heighten intrinsic motivation. Conversely, as a warning, the same components can be a threat to one's development of self-esteem. There are a number of characteristics of group dynamics leading to accomplishment of the group goal, but the initial stage is with the self or self-awareness for self-esteem to grow. Topics or issues that surround death and loss are not easy to talk about, however, after development of self-awareness, people become motivated, confident, trusting and willing to share knowledge with the motive of changing their worldview. Slavin (1995:16) reaffirms the point: "When students work together as a

group to accomplish a group goal, they come to express norms in favour of doing whatever is necessary for the group to succeed."

Research shows that orphaned students, especially in HEIs, are found to have higher levels of psychological distress, some experiencing negative changes early in their lives, such as emotional neglect, discrimination, social isolation, exploitation and abuse (UNAIDS, UNICEF & USAIDS, 2004:9). These might have social, academic, political and economic ramifications and can impact negatively on emotional wellbeing, sense of self and belonging, consequently hindering cognitive and intellectual growth. Often theories view environmental factors as contributing to individual's negative view about self, the world and future, positing that everything is interrelated, that is, it is impossible to separate people from their environment (Watson, 2006:47). In spite of this, Markus and Kitayama (1999:224) postulate that people in different cultures have striking differences in constructing self, others and the interdependence or relationship between self and others. They further indicate an assumption that psychologists and anthropologists believe that such construal can be powerful and can influence and determine the nature of individual experience. The focal point in any individual experience is that self in relation to others is viewed as interdependent with the context. This claim suggests the possibility of orphaned students in HEI perceiving themselves as distinct physically or emotionally and separable from others.

One other aspect of 'self' is that it can be construed, framed and conceptualised in multiple ways. It therefore makes sense to acknowledge that as much as studies on non-Western views suggest the significance of connectedness of human beings the possibility of interdependent self cannot be properly represented. According to Markus and Kitayama (1999:227) interdependent 'self' changes structure as a result of or with the nature of the particular social context, however, preferred to independent self. In a study conducted by Jackson (2003:331& 335) on '*Gendered implications for Academic Self-concept in HEI in North England*', findings indicated that students from a relatively 'small pond' felt like fairly 'big fish', whereas in a larger pond, the HEI, they felt like 'smaller fish', affecting self-concept. Relating these findings and student's academic achievements suggest discrepancies and feeling of inadequacy for those who are minority groups. This strongly affects their self-concept, which consequently leads to negative impact academically. Significant gender differences emerged when men displayed higher self-concept levels than women in areas of problem-solving and general self-concept.

Having acknowledged that empowerment is incorporated into critical theory, participatory or action research and the educational theories, effective accessibility to well integrated student support services, including counselling and health services by HEIs, is crucial and beneficial

support for students' emotional and psychological wellbeing. In a study conducted with vulnerable adolescents, predominantly from America (Mohajer & Earnest, 1999:128), the main concern was with individual, personal or psychological empowerment and the development of assets or resilience. Linked to this study were the highlights of studies on depressive disorders leading to suicidal attempts in youth which showed some interchangeable relationship between vulnerability and resiliency, that nothing surpasses the interceding role of supportive family, community and societal connectedness (Wild, Flisher & Robertson, 2013:142; Theron, 2011:8; Theron, Cameron, Didkowsky, Lau, Liebenberg & Ungar, 2011:799; Ungar, 2008:218; Fergusson, Beautrais & Horwood, 2003:62; Mohajer & Earnest, 1999:432). Therefore, while resilience as a term is frequently associated with vulnerability in children, adolescence and youth and the orphaned, a line should be drawn behind which resiliency is perceived as a theory of behaviour, an inherent characteristic or attribute found in students in HEI.

Similarly, in the South African context, Goba's (2009:26) study on orphans in informal settlements links psychosocial problems to economic conditions, claiming that they are both inseparable. She further argues that all these psychosocial challenges give rise to stigma, discrimination, fear, trauma and low self-esteem, which negatively impact on development and acquisition of social skills. Orphaned students are likely to suffer damage to their cognitive and emotional development (Africa's Orphaned Generation Report, 2004; 2013). According to Sengedo and Nambi (1997:107), psychological problems are not always obvious. The concern is that failure of HEIs to identify the problem, offer emotional and social support, consequently exposes some orphaned students to vulnerability, physical and psychological risks. Sometimes, reliving or avoiding situations and thoughts which are reminders that trigger painful memories or experiences including loss of parents through death or disasters, is a natural human response.

Bronfenbrenner (1994:38) saw the meso-system as characterised by fear and tension as the five systems change and consequently the people in them. This may be through death, disability, disease, success and failure, poverty, unemployment, war and other social challenges that may require resiliency. For Masten (2007:922), resiliency is a general capability or a psychological strength used to deal successfully with stressful life situations and withstand risk factors, whilst Ebersohn and Elloff (2006:460) elaborate on resilience theory to recommend young people have access to resources to cope effectively with change or make the best of their choices regarding those things they cannot change. Therefore, as a tool for orphaned students' emancipation, it is important not to only change the context but also to involve individuals in their own transformation, socio-political

structures, and economic, and psychological wellbeing in order to cope better with diverse contexts whilst performing different roles.

In his program , John Chafee Foster Care program-Educating Youth in Foster Care, Chafee (2006:7) highlights the power of resiliency and uniqueness of orphaned students, claiming that despite risks some succeed in attaining educational goals and excel beyond their initial goals. For all former foster youth in the programme, both financial and socio-emotional assistance was a vital force in overcoming the barriers to achievement. Nonetheless, when expounding the important role of the relationship between the self (orphaned students) and setting/context (HEI), attention is shifted towards a constructivist points of view that there is no absolute truth, but rather it lies with individuals, how they derive meaning from their environment and their experiences with others.

Active agency is employed, as "individuals are actively engaged in constructing their lives" (Watson, 2006:47) in different settings and times. In HEI, as well as in the corporate world, the onus is mostly on the individuals to understand how the world of work fits with their lives. The adoption of this philosophical view emphasises that the development of self is embedded in social systems that surround the individual, and external frames of reference are crucially important in shaping the individual's self-concept (Jackson, 2003:342), requiring meaningful transitional action.

3.7   ORPHANHOOD AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

The remaining three years of secondary schooling form part of Further Education and Training (FET) but are not compulsory, the South African Constitution only obliging the State to make FET progressively accessible and available. Economic difficulties shape people's perceptions about the benefits of education, and as Kiggundu and Oldewage-Theron (2009:383) claim, communities are often consciously or unconsciously likely to discriminate against orphans and exclude them socially, despite being a part of all communities. This is of great concern and the hardship experienced is confirmed in a study conducted by Goba (2009) of the psychosocial needs of OVC, which found that after the loss of parents unfulfilled basic needs, such as shelter, food, clothing, health care and education, impacted negatively on students' development. The main concern is that it cuts across sectors, and is essentially a societal responsibility. The study further suggests that: "…they often depend on social networks for support, with friends or relatives helping out with material things…" This suggests that no single group or institution alone can solve this problem, and rather the

government, civil society, business, communities, individuals, media, academics, faith-based groups, students and children themselves all have to be involved (The African Leadership Initiative on OVCs in South Africa, 2007).

In the South African context, Naidoo (2009:158) points out that students have historically represented a more radical layer of youth in society which, during the anti-apartheid movements, saw themselves as members of collectives and communities, actively belonging to local civics. This structural build of society was accepted as a norm and left unquestioned by those who were powerless, whilst statistics in the study revealed that nearly two thirds of young people aged 18-34 years were unemployed, and 33% of South Africans had secondary education, of which 5.1% with tertiary qualifications were unemployed (Naidoo, 2009:166). According to South African Statistics (2011:49), the difference in the unemployment rate in Census 2011 proved to be the largest in KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Limpopo provinces and a challenge to HEIs as countries bank on graduates helping economic development. The concerns of increasingly high fees is a barrier for students' professional growth, resulting in their exclusion from poor families, including orphaned students. The historic structural circumstances and discrimination play a role in economic production within households and limit social and economic resources available or related to educational achievement. As previously mentioned, much educational attainment does not translate to economic success, and as Travis and Leech (2013:6) state, attitudes towards academic achievement and future economic productivity amplify the opportunity of resiliency amongst orphaned youth and are requirements for development of varied competences in life.

3.7.1 Implications of poverty

Zweig (2003:3) identified as barriers to education, and related to individual, family or neighbourhood, poverty, poor education, community, language, family and dropping out of school or HEI. According to Allsop and Thumbadoo (2002:17) poverty has:

> … a limiting effect on youth's ability to complete formal schooling and on the ability to access other training program. Taken together with more personal social and psychological effects of poverty on the development of a sense of mastery and independence, it is necessary to provide youth with a program that addresses both internal and external needs; to enable them escape a cycle of poverty.

This shows that poverty can be limiting to students' abilities, but it is a positive instigator of development of critical consciousness and raises awareness of HE students so that they use their resources to navigate personal, psycho-social, socio-economic and political poverty. In recent studies, findings confirmed that the impact of poverty on academic performance as one of the challenges faced by the orphaned and students from CHHs or YHHs (Chinyoka and Naidu, 2013:272; Ganga and Maphalala, 2013:51; Nxusa, 2009:11; Donald et al*.,* 2012:39 *&* 2007:48; Hong, Algood, Chiu & Lee, 2011:864; Johnson, 2008:2; Zweig, 2003:5). It is suggested by Patton and McMahon (2006:153) that the increasing levels of HIV/AIDS, poverty and other social ills represent the greatest challenge to sustainable development and higher education in South Africa. In a survey conducted in 2012, evidence was found that poverty had increased in the country, despite reported economic growth of 3.6% between 2002 and 2012. Notably, research by Rule and Modipa (2012:138) indicated the probability of orphaned students not attending school or HEI and dropping out because of poverty and discrimination. Studies found that orphaned children and youth experience different degrees of inclusion and exclusion in their host families (Abebe, 2009:74(a) & 2009:455(b); Nyambedhla, Wandibba & Aagaard-Hansen, 2003:302; Chirwa, 2002:94), associated with vulnerabilities, especially in low-resourced communities, all of which threaten their wellbeing.

To mitigate barriers caused by any kind of poverty, Mncube and Mafora (2013:13) highlight the importance of the need for greater democracy and social justice in education, both nationally and internationally, highlighting that these will enhance the possibility of equal access to resources. To this end, Shields' framework for overcoming pathologies of silence (2004:311) recommends engaging participants or leaders who are transformative and who have a strong relationship based on moral dialogue in contexts that are just and democratic.

It is noted that with the growing numbers of orphans some basic needs, for example, food, medical care, clothing and education go unmet. However, according to the Education for All Report (EFA) of (2010:8), education is regarded as the prerequisite for tackling poverty and promoting short- and long-term economic growth. The report further states that poverty and living standards are mainly based on gender, race, mortality, household contexts and expenditure, access to basic social services and education levels. Notably, HE strives to provide students with power to contribute towards the building of a new and better world, therefore, accessing HE is an opportunity for everyone to reflect on how and what actions are to be taken to contribute towards the poor state of individuals' environment and the world by doing what Bhengu Baloyi (2010:265) denotes as 'doing the right thing' in order to counter threats to a better life, and cause fewer problems. In general, evidence from studies

on poverty demonstrate that it causes negative cycles and poor educational conditions, resulting in students dropping out of school or HEI with no skills for coping with adult life. When considering poverty in South Africa, Lalthapersad-Pillay (2007:17) found that poor households are disadvantaged in terms of access to education, isolation from the community, food insecurity, overcrowding in homes, reliance on poorly paid jobs, splintered families and powerlessness to influence change.

> In addition, the effect of poverty goes beyond an individual, and results in greater contextual disadvantages that aggravate risk of a range of social problems. School drop-out rates have been identified as a continuing problem in in South Africa (Pandor, 2006, in Donald et al. 2010:175), with poverty a complex societal issue that cannot be looked at in isolation from community values and economic survival practices: "… orphans are most likely to fall into both situational and structural poverty; to have their rights violated in various ways and consequently, to less participate in the society they live" (Chirwa: 2002:42). From a human rights perspective, social protection for the orphaned includes social grants to help with basic sustenance, alleviating intergenerational poverty and adequate standard of living.

3.8   SOCIO-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING AND FRAMING OF ORPHANHOOD

In order to promote youth development, exposure coupled with understanding of diverse socio-cultural perspectives, engagement in discussions about societal issues and dilemmas, and actively involving them in service to others (social responsibilities) are central to transformation. Eckersley (2007:S54) claims that, as cultural beings, citizens require cultures to make their lives worth living, since socially isolated people are found to live less than those with strong family ties, friends and community:

> …are about how we think the world works: the language, knowledge, beliefs, assumptions and values that shape how we see the world and our place in it; give meaning to our experience; and are passed between individuals groups and generations.

In Botswana, Merriam and Ntseanes' study (2008:185) on perspectives of transformational learning and cultural contexts found that the cultural, historical and social contexts play an important role in transformation. Generally, different cultures foster different moral values, but most cultural groups recognise the importance of fairness, justice, and concern for others (Eckersley, 2007:S55). Equally important is the consideration that context, culture, and social interaction encompass crucial factors of meaningful experience. Merriam and Ntseane

(2008:191) emphasise the recognition of non-Western cultures in which individual identity is not separable from that of the larger community, hence collective responsibilities and relationships evolve. According to Sparkes (1991, in Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2005:145), culture refers to "ethos including the values and norms that are reflected in patterns of interaction in an institution". This comprises written and unwritten norms as practiced in a particular institution, also influenced by internal and external forces.

Increasing ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity requires that discourse with students be catered for in developing effective citizenship. It should be noted that culture is complex, dynamic, and changes with time in various contexts, including home, school, HEI, community and society. It is however clear that as orphaned students at an HEI (environment) form part of a minority group, the diversity of the group cultures needs to be accommodated. Therefore, it is identified also that the contextual backgrounds of orphaned students may have positive or negative impact on how they are perceived and identify themselves in an HEI. Acknowledging that each institution develops its own particular sets of values, norms and directions for their members, adaptation for orphaned students in HEI fostering supportive and non-discriminatory HEI culture through its policies and practices should be held in high esteem.

From a socio-cultural perspective, Boreham and Morgan (2008:72-73) state that learning is embedded in social and cultural contexts, and orphanhood is perceived in a similar way. Learning is viewed as occurring best when groups construct new working practices by reflecting collectively on historically determined contradictions in an activity system. Citizens require knowledge, attitude and skills to function in their cultural communities, to efficiently participate in the construction of just, morally acceptable and culturally responsive communities. Culturally, late adolescence and adulthood are both characterised by responsibility (Hamman & Hendricks, 2005:45), but to understand the socio-cultural need for participants, the main issues identified in Boreham and Morgan's study were (2008:74) participation of groups and individuals who collaboratively shared in solving their problems in a transformative process.

According to Eckersley (2007:S54), human health has multiple sources, material, social cultural and spiritual, the last of which represents the broadest and deepest form of connectedness in a web of relationships and interests that are sources of health and wellbeing, subtle yet powerful (Eckersley, 2007:S54). Also embedded in socio-cultural understanding of orphanhood is the revelation by participants in a study conducted in Malawi and the role played by religion on orphanhood in all research communities (Starting form Strengths: Community Care for Orphaned Children in Malawi: A Report submitted to the

International Development Research Centre, 19). Participants belonged to Christian or Muslim Communities and were involved in ensuring the welfare of orphaned youth by acting as socialising agents. This also characterises the Afro-Christian approach and its role in understanding orphanhood. Generally, culture has a tendency to silence people, however its values are embedded in the Christian characteristics, for example, kinship, mutuality, self-sacrifice, and belief in divine power of healing and support. In many instances the orphaned are caught between the two belief systems, especially when parents die. Manala (2005:900) writes that, for Africans, the spirit of *Ubuntu* is central, especially in issues around orphanhood, which consider group-belonging, interdependence and communalism. He illustrates what he refers to as the imperative for mutual support or solidarity which is the core of African life, citing Shorter (1978:27 & 29):

> African peoples always acted to fulfil a human need, their own and that of others; community members cooperated in support of the weaker members in particular, for example, the elderly, the orphans and the handicapped; and maximise love resulting in a strong sense of brotherhood and sisterhood as well as meaningful communication.

In general, the traditional structures provide community support, including schools and HEIs, health practitioners and traditional healers. In the study of orphaned students who are pre-service teachers, understanding these approaches is crucial as culture and belief system signify significant effects of interrelationships in diverse contexts. In all African communities and culturally, children and the death and funerals of their parents, bereavement and mourning and care are determined by adults, that is, community leaders, relatives and the broader community.

3.9   THE ROLE OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

According to Apple (2006:103), public institutions "are the defining features of a caring democratic society", and education is regarded as the most significant process. However, restructuring of these institutions and identities still require some transformation to accommodate all. Parker (1999:8) highlights the work of Paulo Freire in demonstrating how, in education, radical approaches of 'conscientisation' have provided awareness as an alternative model for child development, with emphasis on education that is not restricted to the child but an continuous processes through life linked to development of political awareness. The politicisation of education, according to Parker (1999:8), encourages new

ways of knowledge construction that required participation in action, thereby producing and reflecting upon knowledge which in Europe was regarded as the progressive perspective that served to inspire critical theorists. Complexity in HEIs is increasingly growing financially and organisationally, resulting in hardship for equal participation in education by all students. This challenge of access to education was presented in a study conducted with orphaned adolescents in high schools by Opalewski and Robertson (2007:97), most of whom eared for their future through not accessing Higher Education. The concern is echoed in the United Nations Children's Fund (2006) in that orphans are less likely to be in school and more likely to fall behind or drop out, limiting their abilities and prospects for a better life. For example, some studies report that not all students who need support services receive the financial aid offered in HEIs, as the funds usually cover only part of an applicant's additional needs. Most students in HEIs have to find their own personal, travel, meals and medical expenses.

Despite several studies of the impact of orphanhood on education having reached different and at times divergent findings, some trends in HEIs are still emerging, since they are currently providing access to student population from diverse, challenging economic and social backgrounds. Notable is the existence of disparities and much remains to be done to unravel the structural ideologies that are oppressive to orphaned students. One of the points in the policy of OVS in Kenya (2000:1) was that a scholarship fund was started because the statistics revealed a large number of orphaned and vulnerable students in that year who could not be supported by financial aid. The same challenge was exposed in the application procedures for the Student Funding Centre in an HEI in KZN, "There is never sufficient funding for all applicants and in the year 2006, for example, we awarded financial aid loans to 6,500 students and bursaries to 582 students out of an approximate 8,500 financial aid applicants at this University" (Student Funding Policy, 2010).

Referring to student funding and the statistics above, one can deduce how policies in different institution are developed and the tendency for stereotyping students rather than considering them as unique individuals from diverse community backgrounds, capable of contributing to social change as an alternative to oppressive and disempowering traditions (Parker, 1999:11). In most instances, orphaned students are left behind and at risk of dropping out in HEIs. Parker (1999) reported that in the North America the introduction of a critical psychology model led to campaigns and critical reflection as psychologists participated in dismantling mysterious medical experiences as they engaged in more practical deconstruction of psychological knowledge. Therefore, to ensure that the wellbeing and inclusion of orphaned students in an HEI is being promoted in response to the need for additional support, not only support services are necessary (DoE, 1997 & 2001) but also

interactive engagement to explore experiences of orphanhood in an HEI. This is seen as the contribution to interrelationship between theory and practice in education, and Dunker and Parker (2009:56) see the natural health process occurring when an individual fulfils his or her desires through healthily sharing experiences with others.

There is a strong relationship between academic performance results and poverty. For example, generally schools and HEIs in South Africa exist in hierarchies in which poverty explains the variance in students' achievement. Lack of accountability might overtly perpetuate inequality, divisions, discrimination and treating people as "able", "less worthy", "different" or "others", exacerbated by those with power in the institutions. Students in HEIs, including orphans, are regarded as adults or young adults as well as 'independent students', yet they are not independent as they will require some kind of assistance for their holistic development and realisation of life goals. It is acknowledged that HEIs provide financial support through grants, loans, scholarships and bursaries, however these have proved not to be sufficient to accommodate all demands for advanced academic development or training. Under these circumstances it is critical that educational support pays particular attention to handling issues in promoting policies that accommodate all students without tampering with the confidence and hopes for their future.

Taking into account social change and HE, Johnsson (2010:394-395) reports on how traditional models of social work in India have been affected by global characteristics of modernity, a colonial past and post-colonial present. He purports that the elites in non-Western countries are highly influenced by Westernized ideas of development, by which people are perceived as waiting for salvation; an oppressive and disempowering tradition of development. On the promotion of social change, development of self-help projects Inglis (1997:4, in Johnson, 2010:397) writes: "…empowerment involves people developing capacities to act successfully within the existing system and structures of power, while emancipation means critically analysing resisting and challenging structures of power…" The main aim was to reinforce social change, which is linked to collective social activities. The successful implementation of this model demonstrated improved security of people, enhanced practices of social justice, collective learning, greater political and social equality, and improved the lives of those at the margins, introducing networking projects. Although this model worked well for the community of social workers, there were some negative results that emerged, for example, structural barriers, poor economic status and level of literacy, gender differences, power relations which all were perceived as limiting to individuals' participation and power of influence in society.

It is believed that education empowers students to participate actively in society and to exercise their civil and political rights as citizens. The basic Human Rights Policies (Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights, 1996) illustrates that access to education for all provides '*all students'* with opportunities to improve their life, however, Chilisa and Preece (2005:10) report that while policies are in place they do not automatically make education equally available to all of the population. There are those who have to be creative in benefitting from distribution of resources, whilst a study by Gilborn and Youdell, as cited in Apple (2006:184), found that students are not passive but can ask and interpret questions, and sometimes resist structural tendencies while learning. It is believed that unquestionable tendencies result in experiences that are silencing, disempowering and demotivating in solving social and educational challenges.

If empowerment strategies seek to have emancipatory effects on people who are marginalised and discriminated against, like orphaned students in HEI (Johnsson, 2010:404; Brew, 2003:5) progressive policies and practices should provide for critical, supportive, and collective programmes using language to re(de)construct knowledge or engage in discourses. Malkki (2012:216) believes education should be about rectifying the states' political and cultural construction of orphaned students in HEIs and advancement of new realty and, in South Africa, basic education is declared as constitutional right and compulsory for learners. However, as stated, although FET should be made progressively available to all students it is not clearly spelt out how these constitutional obligations in HEI are to be addressed or enforced as stated in policies, national goals, documents and HE education programmes, especially to cater for the educational requirements of orphaned students.

It is understood that supportive environments provide for strong emotional psychosocial strength which influences interrelationships between all stakeholders in HEI and enhances strengthened partnerships. This kind of relationship is conducive to students sharing personal experiences, resulting in the development of coping strategies in which stress is minimal but confidence enhanced. As Brown (1999:96) argues, "In good institutions people have time for each other amidst the hustle and bustle of activity….Sharing responsibilities with colleagues provides for an opportunity for continuity of care as well as protection from stress and burn out…"

Engaging students as educational decision-makers is a practice of actively teaching young people responsibility for their own education and wellbeing, and that of others known or unknown to them. Thlabi highlights how generosity and gratitude could create hope for the hopeless following on philanthropist philosophy. She articulates the following to consider

when recognising human beings and devising strategies to intervene for support and empowerment:

> … many of us as people have forgotten our roots and humble beginnings, to work as a family that strives to improve the lifestyle and living conditions of the poor. …A family took a look at the socio-economic status or circumstances of their fellow countrymen and women remembered their roots, remembered the time when they had nothing and decided to make a difference. (*Sunday Times, Review,* February 3, 2013:2).

Education is indispensable for equipping citizens with the abilities and skills to engage critically and act responsibly. Social justice, equality, democracy and equity (Banks, 2004:296) are highlighted because, while the South African Constitution (1996) grants inalienable rights to freedom of expression and choice, this is congruent to true emancipation and attainment of freedom from the material straits of poverty. Access to education is perceived to be the most important resource in addressing poverty, and for sustainability in life it is a powerful catalyst for a just, secure society, rich with potential and possibilities. Drawing from '*Education for Critical Consciousness',* Morris (2007:33) endorses Freire's view that "Education is an act of love", and only people who are interested in what happens in and around the world collaboratively engage in discursive practices to create and (re)create the world. Therefore, those who are keen to participate in discussions about education are emotional beings and true agents of change.

Generally, in many societies, orphaned students are viewed as vulnerable to societal and life challenges. Hence, research is increasingly highlighting the influence of school contexts on processes and student achievement as well as the impact of socio-economic status (Wood, Ntaote & Theron, 2012:428; Cluver & Gardner, 2006:2). There is also a close link between a school, educational attainment and the engagement with a student's family. Behr (1986:*28*) support this view, by explaining the importance of the role of teaches in the education system: "Teachers play the role of parents while children are in their care. They should note that the 'whole child' comes to school. That is, he comes from the family, a community, a society, and a deep understanding of what he is up to that point in time is very important."

Wood, Ntaote and Theron (2012:429) conducted a study in Lesotho schools on resilience and orphanhood crisis using a Resilience Educator Intervention Programme. The findings indicated that "…teachers are teaching children who are distressed and often grieving..."

They were informed by the Lesotho National Policy for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (UNICEF, 2006:12) which states:

> …teachers are the key persons in addressing issues related to OVC. Teachers should be able to offer psycho-social support… possess basic counselling skill; be knowledgeable about the rights of children; …facilitate dialogue between parents and children about death, illness and future planning; facilitate the progression of grieving through all stages; involve communities….render personal, emotional and practical support…

Both Behr (1986) and Wood and Ntaote (2012) acknowledge the complex roles of a teacher, as also pronounced in the DoE's (2000) *Norms and Standards for Educators*. In an age where orphanhood is on the rise, a fully equipped teacher armed with coping strategies to successfully teach the whole child must possess skills which might be difficult for HEI pre-service orphaned students. Similarly, in South Africa, Buanews (*South African Government News Service* 28 September, 2012:8) writes that although the quality of education at the basic level is improving there are still barriers that impact on equal access: *"*The proportion of girls attending primary, secondary and tertiary education is improving significantly. The government school nutrition programme feeds more than eight-million children in more than 20 000 schools, increasing their performance in class".

To this point, the observation and research shows that the South African government is working hard to address shortcomings but there is still the need to achieve the goal of universal access to education, including in HE. These are some of the successes of the government in education which assist and facilitate preparation for students in schools to perform better and readily suitable for the HEI access, besides some challenges.

3.9.1   Implications of policies on access and participation in an HEI

The South African Education for All (EFA) policy (2010) and the 2013 EFA Country Progress Report stipulate the following:

> …despite immense effort and many real achievements the system is not yet serving the needs of the majority of the poor and the vulnerable members of South African society in a convincing manner. The road to the goal may be long but the government is determined to accelerate the pace of progress towards a more equitable, efficient and high quality education for all*…*

The promise and progress is noted and achievement recognised, however, although in South Africa primary school education is compulsory to all learners, and in many instances free to those struggling socio-economically, post-school learners still struggle to access HE. Those who manage to, including those from poor socio-economic backgrounds, are eventually left behind. A good example to enhance access of OVC used in HEI Kenya (Kenyatta University) was to develop a scholarship fund (Vulnerable Student Policy, 2000), the objective being to invest in humanity by helping them accomplish their life ambitions through HE.

Supporting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) acknowledges and postulates that children's rights are being violated, Bothma, Botha and Le Roux (2004:73-74) put forward what they regard as two critical goals of National Plan for Higher Education: "to redress past inequalities and to transform the higher education system to serve social order, to meet pressing national needs, and to respond to new realities and opportunities". Emphasis is also on students themselves and how they are portrayed by the HE structures in that: "…the students' profiles should progressively reflect the demographic realities of South African society".

Conversely, in HEIs, violation of the rights of orphaned students, those with special needs, and all communities who are regarded as on the margins or discriminated, the right to equal participation to voice opinions and practice beliefs, and the right not to suffer consciously or unconsciously, prevails, thus the need to be addressed as a way to respond to the realisation of MDGs (Bothma, Botha & Le Roux: 2004:74). The goals and purpose of an HEI or any other institution or organisation are shaped by global, national and regional policies, thus each influences a particular way of interactions within and with other systems, the structure of the system, the patterns through which interactions occur and how people in that system function, are reflected or determined. Sparks (1999:56) refers to this as the "culture of the institution", some of the international and national policies and programmes being to put the children and youth at the centre of every decision making (UNCRC, 1989; Children's Act 38 of 2005; UNICEF, 2009; The South African Child Gauge, 2009/2010). However, they seem to be as far from reaching to orphaned students in HEI (micro level versus macro level and global contexts).

I argue that for development and relationships within any institution, including HEIs, policies need to be recognised and addressed based on the broader understanding social issues, context and time for the communities they serve. These should involve challenging power relations, dynamics of race, social class, gender and other areas of exploitation or

oppression as these might relate to the effect of past or present policies. The history of South Africa translates into political and social dynamics that relate to the heritage of inequality, fragmentation and conflict of an apartheid past (Donald et al. 2010:56), therefore, for any development or transformative intervention strategies within any effective system, consideration of both the people and the structures is necessary as these affect each other and are key to the functionality of stakeholders.

In a study conducted in Zimbabwe, Kariwo (2007:45) postulates that as a way forward, the goal for improving efficiency and effectiveness in African HE lies in transparent formulae for allocation of resources that rewards performance, notwithstanding public funding. This analytical evidence highlights the link of what most HEIs experience in funding and access. For stability in any HEI a suggestion is the development of strong policy frameworks that cater for all students equally. However, other policies exclude more than socially include. Social exclusion has been an important aspect of critical discourse analysis. Van Leeuwen (2008:28) showed one classic example about exclusion and inclusion in the representation of social practices that involve social actors. In this example he demonstrates how precedence can exclude others, people who are a "branded group" and those who cannot voice legitimate fears about their circumstances. On the contrary, some of the exclusions may be "innocent" in a way that perpetuates restricted access of certain groups (orphaned students) to social benefits and other aspects of community life which deny them respect for human rights and dignity, a privilege for all citizens enshrined in the Constitution. Act No.108 of 1996 stipulates clearly that the government is obliged to do all in its power to "protect, respect, promote and fulfil" the rights of the children and citizens of its country, as this will enhance humanity, social values and equity (Nkoane, 2012:98).

The issue of power of those who hold positions is critical in order to effectively intervene as a result of person-environmental positive change to succeed. Davidoff and Lazarus (2003:78), concur and further state that institutions are open systems which are influenced by the social systems; structured and function with the goal shaped by their own policies, norms and own values. Therefore, for an HEI that promotes inclusive, supportive and non-discriminatory culture for all students including participation of orphaned students, commitment should be embodied in its policies and be practiced.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) has inspired National and International efforts to promote protect human rights and enhance the practice of fundamental freedom as a basic right for every human being. The South African Human Rights Act, (Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights, 1996), on the other hand, brings about a cultural change which balances individual's rights against those of the wider community by involving all the structures

concerned. Equally important, in pursuit of inclusivity in education and challenging inequality experienced by youth in South Africa, the following rationale is included in the South African National Youth Policy:

> Disadvantaged youth must be empowered to overcome conditions which disadvantaged them. In the same manner, marginalised youth and those that have fallen out of the educational, social and economic mainstream must be re-integrated through second-chance measures and other supportive actions. (South African National Youth Policy (2008-2013:8)

Educational institutions are regarded as important environments that provide access and retention of students in those contexts. Following the introduction of an inclusive education system (DoE, Education White Paper Number 6 of 2001), HEIs are not yet geared to catering for, recognising, engaging, or empowering orphaned students as responsible citizens. The majority of orphaned students, whether in HEIs or not, face major social challenges which call for their entitlement for special protection in all areas of their physical, mental and social wellbeing, including the basic right to education.

HEIs attract students from diverse communities, which can therefore mean that policymakers should be informed or guided by the awareness of diverse constructions of the communities of students for proper implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policy frameworks supporting education for diverse communities of HE students. Inclusive policies should accommodate critical evaluation and implementation within institutions, resulting in rendering voices to those who are underrepresented or minority group and marginalised; qualify for equal access to basic resources such as education and support services; contribute to policy development and decision-making (May & Bridger, 2010:2); and be treated as full citizens. Inequality and social exclusion, as in orphanhood, is viewed as a dynamic phenomenon rather than a static one, in that individuals or groups suffer at different times and in different environments or settings. The collaborative intervention strategies by which students in HEI are actively engaged experience the phenomenon for the betterment of their lives.

The Equality Act (Equality Act, No. 4 of 2000) attempts to facilitate movement towards a democratic society that is united in its diversity and guided by the principles of equality, fairness, equity, social progress, justice, human dignity and freedom. It places a positive responsibility on the state, NGOs, community-based organisations, traditional institutions and all persons to promote equality. Equality in education means that not only must all South Africans have access to education but the access must be equal. None may be unfairly

discriminated against. Beyond that, the value of equality and the practice of non-discrimination means not only understanding one's rights, as pedagogue or student, but that others having them as well. While most countries have such policies in place, Henderson *(*2011:249) observed what he refers to as "Systemic Silences", *an* impact that liberalization of the teaching profession has on the wellbeing of children/students. This to him and others revealed a gap between policy and reality, with excessive emphasis on the universal rights of children.

This observation echoed in Henderson (2011:249) is similar to the South African policies on access to HEIs. The emphasis should enhance comprehension of the difference between treating everyone as equals and their being equal. While the laws are expected to uphold all structures in society, in HEIs the policies for granting aid and support for students do not clearly differentiate between poor, non-poor and orphaned students. The Children's Act (2005), Ebersohn and Eloff (2006:458) and recently Myende (2014:173) stress that even though equality for all is practiced, institutions and communities are cautioned that orphaned students are not simply a passive, targeted group to be aided, but capable actors and an important resource to engage in community solutions. Structures and programmes that can enhance participation in changing the perception may assist in the empowerment of student to free themselves.

While the intention of policies is acknowledged, there is still some indication of the existence of challenges of inequality, inclusion and diversity within varied groups in communities. In support of the above statement, Oliver (2002:2), in his argument on the utilisation of emancipatory methodologies in disability, states that research has failed to capture and reflect the experiences of disability from the perspective of the disabled people themselves. This is also true of the experiences of orphaned students in HEIs, so there is a need to take control of the resources and agendas that position them as inferior to those who control and own power, and less important than the rest of the student community.

In an article published in the *Sundays Times, Business Times Section* (4th February 2013:6), Marias commented about a flexible wage policy, complaining that South African policies prevented effective ways of dealing with unemployment, citing Ann Bernstein's words, Executive Director of the Centre for Development and Enterprise who said: "What we need are policies that suit the population we have, not the population we wish we had". This affirmed the criticism by Chilisa and Preece (2005:35) that, of many research-driven policies, the argument is that psychological and sociological theories were developed for white males by other males and did not cater for the needs of all marginalised communities. HEIs, like all other institutions, have policies, however, taking into consideration the abovementioned

point and understanding that in most HEIs research-driven policies are drawn up and developed by a group of people, the question arises as to whom they are developed. Do these policies in HEIs address or cater for the needs of all students, in particular orphaned students? Do all the policies in place promote social justice, are they democratically developed and do they represent all members of the HE community equally without discriminating and disempowering others?

3.10. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter reviewed the relevant international, sub-Saharan Africa and South Africa literature, presented and discussed orphanhood in general and how it impacts on orphaned HE students who are pre-service teachers. The impact of dealing with grief and bereavement leading to the development of poor self-image, accelerated rates of poverty, vulnerability because of the change of family structure, new roles and identity, relationship between poverty, academic performance and drop-out rates were also discussed. The chapter explored the empowerment strategies needed and offered in HEI for orphaned student teachers to rise above adversity and become socially responsible citizens.

The following chapter discusses and presents the research design and methodology utilised in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1   INTRODUCTION

Having reviewed the literature in the previous chapter, this chapter discusses the research design and the qualitative approach operationalised in the study. Informed by a critical emancipatory framework, I provide reasons how my philosophical, theoretical and methodological foundations in interpreting the world impact on the development of the empowerment framework about orphanhood in an HEI. I indicate how Critical Emancipatory Research (CER) procedures are integrated within Participatory Action Research (PAR) and justification. Participants are also profiled highlighting the roles of their involvement as team members, access issues and triangulation and ethical issues. In PAR it is the responsibility of the participants to analyse and make sense of the data generated to answer the research questions. I also present a detailed discussion on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), how its principles and stages of analysis are used to interpret generated data. Finally, the conclusion sums up the procedures from research design and methodology to give meaning to data collected and its analysis in Chapter Five.

4.2   RESEARCH DESIGN

A research project begins with a research premise, which in turn influences the design of the study (Gitchel & Mpofu, 2012:59), defined by De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2012:507-513) as 'building blocks of science', which include concepts, statements, conceptual frameworks and paradigms fundamental to understanding the research process. A distinction between models and theories (2012:511-512) is also identified, however there is a thin line observed between models and theories as defined by De Vos, Strydom, Schulze and Patel (2012:40), the former springing from a theory and the latter comparatively expressed or defined in quantitative and qualitative research. This understanding, informed a careful choice of my design, including the paradigm and methodological approach while recognising the sensitive nature of this study. Babbie and Mouton (2001:74) and Seabi (2012:82) argue that often researchers confuse 'research design' and 'research methodology', and distinguish them as different dimensions in research, the former a 'plan or blueprint' of how one intends to conduct the research and that encompasses the entire

process from problem statement, research questions, data generation tools, data analysis, design coherence and writing of report (Morgan & Sklar, 2012:70; Nieuwenhuis, 2012:70; Durrheim, 2006:37). At the same time, given that little is known of the effects of experiences of orphaned students in a Higher Education Institution (HEI), a carefully thought out "detailed plan of action" (Fouche & Schurink 2012:307-308) of the adequacy of the research design was considered and planned.

This study utilises a descriptive and exploratory case study design (Nieuwenhuis, 2012:75; Babbie, 2001:76), to help know the cases well, what and who it was and what it does, and how it does it, in that way emphasising uniqueness rather than generalisation. Accordingly, Nieuwenhuis (2012:76) and Fouche and Schurink (2012:318) refer to a case study approach as "a systemic inquiry into an event or a set of related events which aim to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest, implying that a case study research method aims to answerer 'how' and 'why' questions". An employment of open, flexible, and inductive approach to research was attempted while looking for new insights into orphanhood in an HEI. The descriptive goal of the research aimed to describe phenomena by using accurate observations of participants and formulating rich descriptions of human phenomena (Durrheim, 1996:45). In addition, I considered the same view of a case study as clarified in Fouche and Schurink (2012:323):

> …if one places a study within the research design means that one situates it within a specific framework with interrelated concepts, assumptions, values and practices that comprise the way one thinks how reality should be viewed (ontology) and studied (epistemology)… when choosing a design the focus should be on the research questions and appropriateness of design to clarify the research purpose and perspective...

However, for the purpose of this study the case study approach or style best fitted the objectives of this study. In choosing a single case study I considered one of the strengths of the approach highlighted by Nieuwenhuis (2012:75), that it uses multiple resources in gathering data. In getting the essence of underlying meanings of experiences of participants various research instruments were used, including one-on-one meetings, reflective journals and focus group discussions (FGDs). According to Morgan and Sklar (2012:75), using a case study approach paves the way to purposive sampling, and thence understanding people's behaviour, beliefs, interactions and an institution or organisation. The plan also accommodated laborious search of relevant literature which assisted with acquiring knowledge prior to accessing the field. This process, according to Theron and Malindi (2012:97), enhances the quality of generated and analysed data and yields resourceful

answers to critical questions. Furthermore, this choice of a qualitative case study had potential to understand, explain, describe and define the problem through interlinked critical questions that formed the objectives of the study (Sklar, 2012:75; Alvesson & Karreman, 2011:1; Merriam 2009:12). In addition, the choice of a single case study was advantageous since the study dealt with a naturally occurring phenomenon (orphanhood) in an HEI rather than an artificial phenomenon. Ferreira (2012:35) and Kelly (2006:297) claim that a case study is a strong design for addressing questions which require thick descriptions and essential for designing a framework or model suitable for empowerment. The case study was deemed applicable in working with PAR approaches (see 4.3.2 below) in which monitoring and evaluation of the framework could be enhanced. However, there are concerns with regard to using a case study since it is believed to be lacking representativeness of the wider population.

4.2.1 Qualitative research operationalisation

As this study utilises the critical emancipatory paradigm as a frame of reference I had to focus on examining the epistemology, ontology and methodology of this qualitative research (Ferreira, 2012:35; Bowen, 2005:211). According to Gitchel and Mpofu (2012:59), there are two predominant approaches in social science research, namely, qualitative and quantitative research, hence this qualitative study and it was important for me to understand this disparity. Golafshani (2003:600) posits that qualitative research is a way of gathering data that seeks to answer the questions of why things are as opposed to simply quantifying the information collected by means of statistical procedures. For Morgan and Sklar (2012:72), Fouche, Delport and de Vos (2012:144) the qualitative paradigm is more difficult to define than the quantitative paradigm, which includes categories of experiments, surveys and content analysis. However, Merriam (2009:5) stipulates that a qualitative paradigm is useful in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their world, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences. Qualitative researchers create the strategy and design best suited to their research (Fouche & Schurink, 2012:312) and use language marked by words such as 'exploration', 'meaning', 'naturalistic', 'thematic', 'understanding', in different aspects of the processes.

In the light of the above, I sought to understand in detail complex human behaviour and systems in a natural setting without intentionally manipulating the environment to disclose the lived experiences of orphaned students (Neuman, 2014:3; McDonald, 2012:35; Savenye & Robinson, 2008:1046; Durrheim, 2006:48). According to Fouche and Schurink (2012:308)

and Kelly (2006:282), in qualitative paradigms, individuals or groups are studied within their own environments in an attempt to experience reality from the participants' frame of reference. This perspective, according to Savenye and Robinson (2008:1050), stresses an allowance for "multiple or shared realities", given that people's beliefs and responses to the 'why' and 'what' questions are also subjective and understood by close interactions through discourses using language (dialectic understanding). Similarly, McDonald (2012:37) maintains that qualitative researchers are motivated to uncover the world through another's eyes in a discovery and exploratory process, but importantly acknowledged is that throughout the process the researcher has no control, manipulation or influence over participants. This view is corroborated by Walliman (2009:247) and Creswell (2009:4) who claim that qualitative research stresses the importance of contextual and holistic understanding and commitment to seeing through the eyes of the people studied.

Taking into consideration the point of Babbie and Mouton (2011:273) and Denzin & Lincoln, 2008:316), that qualitative research is interdisciplinary, trans-disciplinary, counter-disciplinary, and takes the interpretivist approach, I felt it congruent to the nature of this study in order to gain the participants' trust and to establish rapport. Participants as pre-service teachers were allowed to participate as co-theorists and co-researchers in the construction of knowledge, wherein the research context, meaning given to events and structure were regarded as powerful determinants of behaviour. In qualitative research it is often argued that human experiences cannot be understood without taking cognisance of social, cultural, linguistic and historical characteristics that shape those experiences (Sandelowski, 2000:336). My role was to acquire insights while getting closer to in-depth data in order to understand participants' points of view and description of the depth of a phenomenon (orphanhood) to obtain social knowledge.

Generally, human experience is dynamic and methodologies to be used when studying people without voice, such as the orphaned students in HEIs, should be human and render respect as they are not treated as objects but rather their subjectivity is enhanced. Theron and Malindi (2012:103) emphasise the importance of listening as a qualitative skill when they affirm that in qualitative research the participant's voice is paramount. It was important for me to have researchable key research questions that were scientifically believable and unambiguous. Nieuwenhuis (2010:89) and Gitchel and Mpofu (2012:56) confirm that well-structured research questions strengthen the study and direct methodological choices. Therefore, a qualitative study addressed the questions, issues and the phenomenon in the study, and allowed me to explore how and why desirable outcomes could be achieved. However, the choice of various qualitative research methodologies deemed relevant to the

study yielded collection of data that was resonant, fertile and allowed for the emergence of social constructs, concepts and theories (Walliman, 2009:247). The strength and richness of data generated and analysed required special consideration since, as a qualitative researcher, I preferred to understand the participants' actions, events and processes in their context (Babbie & Mouton, 2011:272).

4.2.2 Aims and objectives of the study

As observed and reiterated by Paltridge and Starfield (2007:119), to understand the perspectives of participants, explore the meaning they give to a phenomenon (orphanhood), or observe the process of research in depth, participation is the key. Exploring a number of unique students' experiences was not going to be enough but finding how the orphaned students were shaped by experiences and environment was central. Generally, the key was to come to understand how orphaned students in this HEI navigated the challenges of orphanhood and to collaboratively devise or develop an empowerment framework after having identified supportive HEI policies, if any. The main aim was to creatively, actively and critically engage orphaned students as capable beings to liberate themselves .

4.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The qualitative approach, as Lichtman, (2011:240), Denzin and Lincoln (2008:33), Terre-Blanche, Kelly and Durrheim (2006:274) postulate, allows the qualitative researcher to interpret the phenomenon according to the meanings people bring to them, that is, in human terms and investigate human experiences and realities collaboratively in their natural settings. On the other hand, Kumar (2005:95) as cited in Fouche and Delport (2012:109) posit that the researcher should include all logistical procedures to be followed in the execution of the study design, including methodology.

A research methodology, according to Paltridge and Starfield (2007:118), is a theoretical paradigm or position adopted by the researcher, and the qualification of choice of research methods allied to the study. In my position as a qualitative researcher I adopt CER as the underpinning of this study for greater emphasis on participation and socially constructed knowledge which allowed me to research 'with' and 'for' participants rather than 'on them'. In this way the suggestion is that true knowledge can be obtained through interactive and empowering relationship to those without power, using the participants' language of choice

(Mthiyane, 2014:89). According to Mertens (1998:20) social reality in this paradigm is historically bound and transformative, depending on political, social, cultural and power-based factors. Methodologically, the emancipatory paradigm addresses the politics in research by confronting social oppression and going beyond power-sharing, thus enhancing empowering transformative strategies (Mertens.1998:15). It informs the choice of methods considering historical and contextual factors and how generated data is analysed. Research methodology revolves around yielding data that will answer questions of the study and improve social action (Somekh & Zeichner, 2009:15).

4.3.1 Participatory Action Research

In understanding Participatory Action Research (PAR) I draw on how Bhana (2006:432, 439) underlines the importance of the methodology, explaining that: "successful PAR projects result not only in solutions to immediate problems but also in more far-reaching changes to the balance of power; PAR is about democratising the knowledge–making process". Initially Action Research (AR) began with an idea attributed to social psychologist Kurt Lewin in the 1940s, on community action programs in the USA. However, approaches to AR in community development date back to 20th century and later in education, following publication of Lewin's work. A second generation of AR began in Britain in the 1970s, after which Australia, in the 1980s, recognised the "practical" character of AR and advocated a more explicitly "critical and emancipatory action research". This development was paralleled by similar advocacies in Europe and marked the third generation of CER. By way of definition, Strydom (2012:491) regards PAR as a "model", which is a representation of reality mostly utilised in helping professions to solve problems, for example, in social work and by social psychologists as it is practice-based.

PAR, according to Vaughan (2014:185), Gonzalez, Lejano, Vadales, Conner, Kidokoro, Fazeli and Cabrales (2007:78), Schensul and Berg (2004:78) and Pain and Francis (2003: 47), is activist-orientated and aims to address and resolve social problems, thus enhancing individual and group competencies and skills. PAR emerged from Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968) and has been adapted by Robert Chambers (Freire, 1970) as one of the viable options for conducting research from grassroots level (Oosthuizen, du Toit, Lubbe & Klopper, 2012:218). However, Jordan (2003:187) views that origin and development of PAR as complex in that it is "a blend of approaches that include forms of participatory research, action research and popular education initiatives."

At this point, I was aware that it was not enough merely to choose a methodology from the various qualitative methodological approaches, but understanding of assumptions and methods for evaluation procedures was necessary. I therefore used PAR motivated by Dworski-Riggs and Langhout' (2010:215); Somekh and Zeichner (2009:6), as a way to promote social justice by creating conditions that foster empowerment; to move participants and their lived experiences of struggle and survival from the margins of reality to the centre (Jordan, 2003:187). In addition, PAR is considered in McDonald (2012:34) as a distinct qualitative approach which is democratic, equitable, liberating and life-enhancing. Dworski-Riggs and Langhout (2010:215) define PAR as one of the methodologies preferred by community psychologists since it promotes empowerment and puts research into practice. As Worthen, McKay, Veale and Wessells (2010:149) state, it privileges local knowledge and participants' views and situations as individuals. Therefore, by employing PAR the focus was on how it could be used to disable power imbalances and forge partnerships between the researcher and the participants Ochieng (2010:1725). After having read and understood the strengths of PAR and principles of CER, I revisited my role as researcher and as a facilitator, so as to be an enabler who shared expertise rather than impose it and hence perpetuate power imbalances.

Strydom (2012:491) states that PAR focuses on the involvement and participation of all role-players in a particular research project in solving concrete problems. All stakeholders collaboratively have a voice in the process of decision-making, problem definition, problem assessment, intervention planning, implementation and evaluation. Manning (2006:85) writes of the importance of finding a balance between possibilities and realities when devising a strategy for a project in an organisation. He views both strategy and leadership as a process not a plan, so intervention strategies in PAR process should lead to change or transformation, with these strategies acting as building blocks in effective and practical ways of posing critical questions. Kemmis and Taggart (2006:270) add that during the PAR process the result may be transformative only if during the strategic conversations a leader (coordinator) reminds and keeps the participants focused so that the purpose of larger goals are kept in mind. This possibility for Kemmis and Taggart (2006:280) and Manning (2006:93) is presented in the following questions: (1) What do people know? (2) How do people interact with the world and with others? (3) What do people mean and what do they value? (4) What/which are the discourses in which people understand and interpret their world? These questions and others will best be answered by employing Critical Discourses Analysis (CDA) as demonstrated in Chapter Five.

Importantly, PAR involves identifying and breaking the boundaries that limit stakeholders' opportunities to engage in engineering the strategies and implementing a plan about organisations in different institutions or in the HEI (Botha, van der Merwe, Bester & Albertyn. 2007:10). For example, it entails identification and definition of a problem, problem assessment, implementation and evaluation, as different individuals and groups view the world from different positions and within different institutions they are structured such that some are assumed to have more power than others. PAR enhances collaborative engagements in a learning process of (re)constructing new knowledge. In practice, Strydom (2012:493) considers PAR as a participative, bottom-up approach in which the investigated become investigators and there are opportunities for individuals and collectives to see themselves beyond the present and the past, and to be able to project into the future what may be possible (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2010:79).

Orphaned student teachers in HEI are often characterised by a sense of isolation, discrimination, helplessness and in many ways hopelessness in their communities (family, neighbourhood, schools, HE institutions), so may through PAR find ways to work collaboratively to identify and transform their situation. PAR endeavours to recognise individual social, economic, technological, political, cultural emotional and spiritual wellbeing in their communities. As a critical researcher, it is therefore important to look at the ways in which research benefits the participants. Brew (2003:3 in Sydney, Somekh and Zeichner, 2010:10) found PAR to be the best tool for universities in the USA as it enhanced the relationship between teaching (knowledge transmission) and research (knowledge generation). PAR is described as placing more emphasis on the participation of orphaned students and realisation of the objectives (outcomes), specifically knowledge production (Pain & Francis, 2003:47; Dysthe & Engelsen, 2004:107). Within PAR approaches, individuals and collectives engage to better understand the subtle and overt manifestations of oppression, and this understanding leads to more control of their lives through collective action (Merriam, 2009:36) and increased awareness of power relations (Dworski-Riggs & Langhout, 2010:216).

It is noted that when a critical theorist's dialogue is conducted in non-manipulative manner with oppressed social groups about their experiences, themes common to group members emerge in an intervention strategy. PAR recognises that participation of young people can effectively bring change to complex issues or situations affecting their lives and the society at large. The emphasis is on active participation as partners by giving exposure to new ways of thinking about issues and solutions to social problems, thus creating a body of knowledge. The belief of a critical emancipatory researcher is that the relationship with the participants

should be interactive and empowering. Knowledge created utilising PAR methodologies can be changed into practice or action, and produce results that are emancipatory to those who experience injustices, discrimination or exploitation (Ribisi, Steckler, Linnan, Patterson, Pevzner, Markatos, Goldstein, McGloin & Peterson, 2004:600). In a dialogic environment quality of interaction is important, and should render respect to participants to genuinely be in a position to share meanings whilst being open to diversity of views and opinion. In this sense, when utilising PAR methodologies (Dworski-Riggs & Langhout, 2010:217; Galletta & Jones, 2010:342; Smith, Rosenzweig & Schmidt, 2010:1133) there is a possibility that PAR can transform rather than maintain those structures that alienate all stakeholders. Neither researchers nor the community can remain static in this process, rather the power structures of each need to be critically assessed and altered in order to create a more participatory and socially just world.

PAR as a resource may lead to enhancement of self-realisation amongst participants, which is key to planning and exploration of processes in project management. The definition by Rahman (1993:20-21) in Strydom (2012:494) endorses how self-reliance as culture energises community or a group:

> *Self-reliance is a driving force for creative activity that requires an awareness of one's creative assets, confidence in one's ability to solve life problems, the courage to take on challenging tasks and the stamina to make sustained efforts to accomplish them. …mobilisation of community refers the simultaneous involvement and engagements of all the members of the community in order to attain the agreed collective objective of the project [research].*

Dworki-Riggs and Langhout (2010:348) and Mertens (2009:218) contend that challenging differences and boundaries in power relations should not be seen as barriers to participation but as an existence of power shift and development of social change. Participatory methods move away from the positivist framework in which stakeholders assume a passive role, but work towards shifting the boundaries to participation to be more egalitarian.

While understanding that human beings are meaning-makers who (re)create, reflect and interpret their own worlds based on lived experiences, suitable planning for emancipatory interventions that are influenced by social, historical and cultural contexts are vital (Babbie & Mouton, 2011:314). To achieve this, Nieuwenhuis (2012:62) upholds the value attributed to 'questioning', to never accept situations as they are made or understood to be. However, Parker (2009:5) emphasises that language in a dialogue is mostly influenced by social, historical and cultural contexts, a collective process ideal when participatory actions are employed in "bringing experience" into the equation without reducing it.

PAR opens communicative space between participants through discursive practices in meetings or discussions and in writing (reflective practice). In this process of active participation, partnerships are formed with those affected by the same knowledge with the purpose of improving their social, educational and material conditions (Bhana, 2006:420). The process of PAR allows for mutual agreement and working together collectively, and individually towards achieving the common goals. In a sense, people engaged in PAR projects achieve together whilst learning from each other in the construction and (de)construction of new knowledge to change the circumstances and finding appropriate ways to act in the world. In line with Gonzalez, Lejano, Vadales, Conner, Kidokoro, Fazeli and Cabrales (2007:79), in PAR projects the emphasis is on empowerment, whereby participants, researchers and other collaborators share decision-making strategies in the design, implementation, interpretation, and dissemination of data. Further stated is that emancipatory researchers are pluralistic and evolving in their methodologies. In this study, participants were given an opportunity to actively participate in a way that was emancipatory with authority and were given time to learn to share while thinking critically about solutions to their own and others' problems.

Through PAR, data is generated and analysed by participants fostering creativity, accountability and responsibility in the whole emancipatory process. Equally important is the enhancement of opportunities for intellectual social growth and sense of urgency in action towards social change. PAR is concerned with problem-solving by linking knowledge to action. In the study on employability of youth, Marock (2008:7) comments that problem-solving is one of the key capabilities of employability:

> *Developing creative innovative and practical solutions; showing independence and initiative in identifying problems and solving them; solving problems in teams; applying a range of strategies to problem-solving; using Mathematics and budgeting and financial management in solving problems; applying problem-solving strategies across a range of areas; testing assumptions, taking the context of data and circumstances into account; and, resolving consumer concerns in relation to complex project issues.*

In order to apply all strategies to solving a problem depends on teamwork with a leader who is visionary, hence PAR and teamwork are perceived to be dependent on good leadership and experience and one of the qualities of the teachers is to be a good leader. In this study, teamwork was encouraged by giving all team members leadership roles throughout the research process. Therefore, true knowledge in HEI is informed by participants' frames of reference in context of improving their lives and those of other people, as they are the ones

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experiencing the phenomenon. A study that demonstrated the value of PAR as an approach and efficient teamwork (Bristowe, Siassakos, Hambly, Angouri, Yelland, Draycott & Fox 2012:1383) found participants describing a good leader as one who communicates objectives clearly and allocates critical tasks, including communication with groups or individuals. PAR was envisaged as empowering each participant to take a leading role and to eventually acquire good organisational skills. This is more so because PAR upholds the values of CER, such as equity, social justice, freedom, peace and hope.

Given that participants have little or no knowledge of PAR processes prior to implementation, opportunities for planned workshops (Smith, Rosenzweig & Schmidt, 2010:1134) and learn from each other's experiences through collaborative discourses are invaluable. I believed that cultural complexities of participants in an HEI could give rise to critical-consciousness by involving participants in one-on-one and focus groups discussions, reflective journals, and follow-up group discussions. According to Pain and Francis (2003:48), one of the critiques for participation is that it remains a buzzword that is rarely fully employed. PAR is a better suited methodology as participants owned the problem and became partners in carrying it through. They were knowledgeable about orphanhood as a phenomenon that they had experienced first-hand. While it yielded good results, especially in facilitating collaborative work, I was aware of one of its disadvantages, which I felt affected our involvement (Nieuwenhuis, 2012:75), that I became attached to the participants. However, I made a point after completion of the process not to show feelings of desertion to participants.

The study was critical, emancipatory, reflective, participatory, practical and collaborative and is a social process. PAR originated as a challenging force to positivist research paradigm. Students in HEIs are a population of youth and understandably with all the vicious cycles of social ills, involving escalating numbers of orphaned population I saw the need to extend it to explore their experiences. However, Berg and Allaman (2012:3) and McDonald (2012:35) suggest that involving youth should promote the use of the experiences to ensure that voices often left out of substantive conversations about "orphanhood in HEI" are heard in an equitable and organised way. For challenging situations that affect youth to change, they need to be developed with the hope that knowledge gained during the process is stretched to others who are pushed to margins in communities. I chose this methodology because it was emancipatory to both the researcher and the participants. The emphasis is on action and knowledge production, in which Eruera (2010:8) suggests *'action'* is researched, changed and re-researched in progressive cycles. In practice, students in HEI (adult education) use experiential learning and PAR as 'learning by doing', using a cyclic process

of reflection, planning, action and observation. In support of this notion, Suleiman, Soleimanpour and London (2006:125) agree that such participation in social action may contribute to healthier and more just communities, leading to power sharing amongst participants. PAR includes periodic communication of findings between participants and between researchers and participants (Hertz- Lazarowitz, Zelniker & Azaiza, 2010:270).

In consequence, the understanding that orphanhood is a complex social issue, and in addressing it knowledge development in devising solutions requires empowering processes by participating communities. Acknowledging concerns of Kemmis (2011:12) and Kemmis and McTaggarts (2007:474), about how challenging is it to execute PAR and achieve its processes from a university–based setting, Suleiman, Soleimanpour and London (2006:126) claim that the process should involve youth participation in evaluation of social issues that affect their lives. However, for young people to create meaningful change in their communities, efforts should be such that programmes consequently expand their knowledge, skills and capacity to engage in decision-making action employed in a non-hierarchical, bottom-up way (Pain & Francis 2003:47).

Utilising PAR clarifies contradictions about self-conflict that in most cases, if faced by individuals who are critically dealing with life challenges, make life meaningful in different contexts, including traumatic loss of parents. While the definition of empowerment, according to Worthen et al. (2010:147), places emphasis on participation and decision-making, they cite Rowlands' argument (1997:113; 129-130) that it "… should involve undoing negative social constructions for people so as to see themselves capable and having the rights to influence decisions". The process offers empowerment to all participants through sharing of stories and decision-making about strategies to navigate individual and community challenges.

My position as an employee in the institution was to guide other team members to collectively plan and devise desired outcomes of the project that were believable and could be implemented for change. Through PAR the participants were positioned as agents of change (Babbie & Mouton, 2011:126) and as co-researchers their ample knowledge of the phenomenon (orphanhood) was equal to or greater than that of specialists in the field. Through collaboration McDonald (2012:38) notes that the development of skills, recognition of individual and collective viewpoints, and the awarded opportunity to communicate in a supportive environment throughout the process, play pivotal roles in negotiating meanings and raising critical consciousness.

At this point the exploration processes involved in implementing and maintaining PAR took into cognisance that it is a political process that supports 'community action' and 'social justice' to challenge structural inequalities (Wheeler, 2001, in Eruera, 2010:2; Suleiman, Soleimanpour & London, 2006:128). The view of Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011:37) and Creswell (2009:98) is that CER is based on equality and democracy for all members of society, aiming to redress inequality and promote individual freedom and transformation through group action. In terms of PAR as a social process, Eruera (2010:5) identifies principles that it shares with CER, that is, emancipation, self-determining communities, effecting social change, acknowledging and transforming participants' expertise into solutions, meaningful participation, community development and capacity building, collaboration and ownership. As a consequence, constructed from the worldview of orphanhood, PAR was perceived as having the potential to explore the relationship between what Habermas (1970:362) and Kemmis and McTaggart (2007:280) regard as the processes of individuation and socialization, as "no individuation is possible without socialization, and no socialization is possible without individuation".

Considering that orphanhood in HEIs is a complex social and diverse issue, PAR seemed appropriate when focussing on the understanding that action research groups are stimulated towards social reconstruction processes (Eruera, 2010:5; McTaggart, 1989:5). While Babbie and Mouton (2011:7) Blanche, Kelly and Durrheim (2009:227) and Mahlomaholo (2009:225) state that reality is socially constructed, not fixed or intrinsic but rather relative, the emphasis is on how language is used to understand, explain and (re)construct knowledge, and the actions taken in challenging circumstances in life. Orphaned student's experiences highlighted challenges, however, in instilling power to actively deal with structural powers to further liberate themselves and others in and outside the HEI.

Often people pushed to the margins find themselves incapable of questioning issues and not empowered to develop critical consciousness within their contexts. PAR endorses individual and group strengths and thus fosters active participation, which Ochieng (2010:1725); Galletta and Jones (2010:355) and van der Velde, Williamson and Ogilvie (2009:1293) suggest as a gateway into PAR projects that stimulate attainment of knowledge, empowerment and continued participation. Kinsler (2010:172) concurs with Kemmis and McTaggart (2007:287) that PAR "…can gradually lead to independence, equality and cooperation". Action research is participatory in character, democratic and makes a simultaneous contribution to social science and social change. In line with the above, Spalding, Garcia and Braun (2010:177) add that reflection goes hand in hand with becoming

an action researcher as data is collected for the purpose of solving practical problems in a genuine way.

PAR as an approach seeks to understand and interpret meanings of data that are linked to human action. The suitability in finding ways to emancipate or change contexts is possible in processes and organisation of reconstructive actions provided by critical communicative action (McKernan, 2006:173; Herbamas, 1984:267 & 369). One of the critical factors mentioned in the National Youth Policy (2000:15), Suleiman, Soleimanpour and London (2006:126) states that youth are powerful change agents and while their needs are diverse and unique, interventions should address them. The encouragement was a positive stimulus to produce people who are:

> …empowered to realise their full potential; understand their roles and responsibilities as pre-service teachers in HEI and make meaningful contribution to their own individual and collective development, their families, communities and that of the country (NYDP, 2000:15-16).

In pursuit of the goal of empowerment to participants the intention was to firstly realise that the participants are unique and that they have knowledge by acknowledging and not refuting Murphy and Alexander's (1997:64) notion of 'knowledge principles':

> Students' knowledge is as unique as their fingerprints; is also shaped by time and place; guides their views of and interactions with the world; is always social and cultural in nature; and, students' existing knowledge is a powerful determiner of what they will learn in future.

This highlights that the development of self-awareness by participants eventually brings some kind of transformation as this paradigm seeks to question rather than to accept existing situations and misconceptions. The view is endorsed in Kinsler (2010:172), for whom PAR is based on the principles that lead gradually to independence, equality, and cooperation' a contribution to social change.

PAR also addresses the experiences of marginalised groups from a perspective of access to appropriate services or resources and the strengthening of bonds and assets among them (Mertens, 2009:188; Giles, 2001:51; Gonzalez et al., 2007:79). Participants increase emancipatory knowledge during the interactive setting and reflective practice while exposing the power dynamics. Accordingly, the critical theorists' view is that PAR moves people towards emancipation, self-empowerment, self-development and evolutionary process of

attaining higher levels of knowledge (Strydom, 2012:496; Peca, 2000:36,) and critical decision-making (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007:482 in Denzin & Lincoln (2007).

Since PAR uses conventional tools of social research, qualitative paradigms were used to acknowledge the value of thoughts and voices of participants to meet its objectives, as Kemmis and McTaggart (2007:275) further highlight that PAR is committed and responsive to social, economic and political needs of people. However, the importance of a trustworthy relationship between participants is mandatory to refute the challenges of power imbalances. For instance, in order for orphaned students in an HEI to co-construct knowledge, effective discursive environments that are comfortable and safe were provided. The basis of understanding that our interpretation of what we see and hear is different and in some cases become personal, even though we share common experience, is challenging and creates bias. To avoid this, multiple data-gathering tools were used to enhance cross-checking of results. A second strategy employed was recognition of the language spoken by participants, allowing them to use the language with which they were comfortable (IsiZulu), and/or code switch.

Spalding, Garcia and Braun (2010:64), Lunenberg, Korthagen and Swennen (2007:586-587) and Kohonen (2004:17) state that the way we use our languages also depends on our experiences, gender, stages of development and age. If this critical point is not considered, it will constitute a source of confusion and miscommunication. It helped me to understand the orphaned students' perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and values by involving them throughout the interactive discourse. Carr and Kemmis (2005:355) argue that for narratives, stories and life histories to be shared collaboratively and used to problematise issues that have been taken for granted, language understood by participants should be used.

PAR endeavours to enforce respect for the rights of others but also extends to responsibilities that accompany them. Orphaned student teachers in an HEI were going to challenge the situations that affected them and reinforce awareness of others in different communities. Theron and Malindi (2012:104) assert that being responsible for the rights of others is to be alert to non-verbal messages which are a good quality of an effective qualitative researcher in the discourse platform set in PAR. The skill helps a qualitative researcher to be culturally competent and understand those non-verbal messages. However, understanding that dealing with issues of loss might conjure up sensitive feelings the choice of one-on-one meetings provided me with an opportunity to learn from participants' body language, interaction between me (researcher) and participants and with others in different settings. In PAR projects, planning should accommodate short-term and long-term goals (Galletta & Jones, 2010:339).

The findings of a study conducted by Galletta and Jones (2010:342) stressed that the aims of PAR should not be taken for granted, therefore, this study was found to have a possibility to expose orphaned students with different roles, including leadership opportunities, mentoring, and foster transformative opportunities at an individual level, amongst the community of students within and between different systems. Worthen, McKay, Veale and Wessells (2010:150) write that PAR is privileging 'local knowledge' as it situates the participant as the expert with respect to his or her situation. In this study it is used to stretch critical thinking among students around issues of orphanhood in HEI. The attainment of these skills whilst engaged as a team prepare pre-service teachers to amicably face and deal with challenging social issues as socially responsible citizens. As a consequence, PAR empowers orphaned HE students to act effectively to improve the quality of their lives by accessing information thus regaining power. The complexity of orphanhood in an HEI requires redefinition and careful examination of the impact it has on individuals and at systems' levels. Therefore, it was important to plan the whole cyclical research process considering the partners and the value they brought to the project and the context.

4.3.2 Cycle One

In this section I begin by elucidating the initial processes leading to the selection of participants of the study. Considering the nature and sensitivity of the study I felt it was important to share my challenges and struggle to access/recruit research participants, a journey following the formation of the team members and other stakeholders in an HEI, their roles or responsibilities, need value for participation difficulties in recruitment and how these challenges were navigated.

This study is divided into three cycles of PAR which are further deliberated on in details in the following sub-topics. The initial stage in this cycle is informed by Freierian methodologies as outlined in Martinez (1993:4), where as a researcher I needed to know the participants outside the problem (orphanhood), their student life and issues they are faced with in daily life (Schenk, Ndhlovu, Tembo, Nsune, Nkhata, Walusiku & Watts, 2008:895).

Cohen, et al. (2011:166) state that when investigating sensitive topics such as death or loss, researchers have to be perceptive and understand that it is difficult to share emotions and to be trusting. I was aware that the choice of participants needed to be accurate since death invokes sensitivity, stigma, discrimination, silences and a series of ethical issues. I was aware that to initiate or to be engaged in any project one begins by identifying, gathering

relevant information and resources for the possibility of successful implementation. I also acknowledged that for people to see the need to participate they should know the possibilities of changing and seizing possibilities for futures. However, I needed to find ways to identify or recruit participants suitable for the study in an HEI. As Sohng (1995:5) explains: "PAR views knowledge production as a dynamic process of "engagement, education, communication, action and reflection", and I was aware that whist we shared jokes, laughed together and sometimes suffered or cried 'with them', we did not act to change 'their' situation or circumstances. It is the use of the pronouns 'them' and 'their' that translates to orphaned students as 'objects' rather than respected human beings, thus prompting the urgent need to collaborate as a team working for their own and others' liberation from the ideologically distorted realities in the HEI .

Acknowledging that knowledge exists within daily lives, I needed to understand more about the situation and circumstances that define the orphaned students and the challenges faced individually and as a group in this HEI. However, HOW can orphaned students be identified or reached as they are positioned such that they are either *invisible or not known* in an HEI. I also knew that until people, including me, do something about any situation or move into action and learn, we consciously or unconsciously perpetuate alienation and powerlessness, thereby creating a barrier to personal and structural changes. Manning (2001:47) explains that to "review and revise" one needs to pause and reflect on where one has been, what happened and what might have been or needed to be practiced. I was encouraged to consider what I had been exposed to with regards to orphaned students in an HEI and based on my perception concluded that orphaned students in HEIs are silenced and have accepted circumstances in different difficult contexts (Vaughan, 2014:184). I felt that interventions for these circumstances were necessary so I had to find stakeholders who would join forces with their ideas throughout the stages of the research process, from its design to the interpretation and dissemination of the results.

While pondering how to select participants for this project, I had a visit from a third-year registered student in the HEI, well known on campus and apparently happy, vibrant and possessed of a good sense of humour. He was addressed by his surname which in African culture is sufficient. His hairstyle was unique and distinctive. Whilst registered in the modules that I offered in previous years he would check his assessments and request a chance to re-submit to better his marks if underperformance was demonstrated. This attitude from a student prompts a teacher to know more. In this year (2012) he was not in any of my modules but he made a social call and to find out about possible part-time employment. We engaged in a long discussion and at the same time I was using this opportunity to search for

participants. I still needed to understand the structures in the HEI and how they function from the students' perspectives. I was also surprised in the middle of our discussion to learn that this young man was indeed a double-orphaned student. However, and surprisingly, though his parents had died he did not regard himself as an orphan, especially now that he was in an HEI. He elaborated on his experiences in a HEI, his challenges and strategies of survival thus far.

This kind of response confirmed my belief, understanding, observation and awareness about how orphaned students sometimes perceive and speak about themselves and their circumstances. This encouraged me to continue with my search for participants, that is, orphaned students in HEI for this project. This visit was an encouragement and paved the way to try and fulfil what were the preconceived objectives of the study. I had to visit different structures within HEI administration offices, funding offices, housing offices, disability unit, counselling services, health services and some academic leaders who were lecturers, some of which I did not know existed. I made appointments with different individuals and organisations and spent two months securing meetings with different structures and people within the HEI structure. As a researcher and a committed participant, the purpose was to learn about the group of orphaned students through records, interviews, observations, HE meetings and other avenues.

4.3.2.1. Selection of research partners and the research context

Participants selection was guided by the ethical considerations of research as explained in detail in Strydom (2012:115-126). Having been granted permission to conduct the study in the HEI, participants were identified. In this study, purposive and snowballing sampling were utilised to identify orphaned students participants in one South African HEI in the Faculty of Education. Purposive sampling, according to Strydom and Delport (2012:392), is composed of elements most characteristic, representative and attributes of the population and site that best suit and inform the understanding of the research problem of the study. Snowball sampling, on the other hand, according to Nieuwenhuis (2012:81), is referred to as a chain referral method where the already participating members of this 'hidden population' of orphaned students in HEI were used to recruit others to join a group, or as Babbie and Mouton (2011:167) suggest a process of accumulation as each located subject suggests other subjects. One reason for utilising both purposive and snowballing sampling methods, for Strydom and Delport (2012:393), is that snowballing is focused on the identification of 'hard-to-reach' individuals.

All student participants were studying towards their Bachelor of Education (BEd) undergraduate degree and are referred to as student teachers or pre-service teachers in this study. They were registered in their first to fourth years of study. Initially, the aim had been to exclude first-year students as they had less experience but their eventual inclusion added value to the study. They had an opportunity to take the project further to following circles compared to the fourth-year students who were graduating the following year. All student participants were double orphans, with some newly orphaned students (see Chapter 2 subsection 2.6.1). Out of the 13 orphaned students with whom I engaged in informal one-to-one meetings, four voluntarily withdrew, leaving nine. All were black South Africans (Zulu nation), five male (three purposively selected and for the two snowballing method) and four female (two purposively selected and for the other two snowball method). Out of the nine prospective student participants, shortly before the scheduled formal one-on-one meeting one female voluntarily withdrew for health reasons. For debriefing purposes and follow up I tried to make contact with her but in vain, since she had changed her telephone number.

The team thus consisted of me, as research coordinator and eight orphaned student participants. Other than orphaned students, the number of participants included the support structure personnel or officers consisting of the University psychologist/counsellor and co-ordinator of students at risk programme (STAR) and teaching practice officer (TPO) whose participation immensely added value to the research process by sharing their experiences as support staff when working with students and the services they provide. I regarded this identified number of participants as adequate and better suited to this critical qualitative study. This gave me enough time to focus on and effectively engage with issues of orphaned participants within this single context and consequently yielded in-depth data. The participants were allocated codes, as show in the table below.

Table 4.1: Codes for participants

Name	M/F	Age Group	Single/Double Orphan	Funding or bursary	Level of study	No in family	Guardian
Jabs	M	18-25	Double	NSFAS (Sept)	1st year	10	Grandmother
Lasts	M	18-25	Double	NSFAS (Sept)	4th year	16	Extended family
Hosy	M	26-30	Double	NSFAS (Sept)	4th year	5	Relative
Sane	F	18-25	Double	NSFAS (Sept)	2nd year	7	Grandmother
Matu	F	18-25	Double	NSFAS (Sept)	2nd year	5	Aunt & uncle
Mxo	M	18-25	Double	NSFAS (2013 Sept)	1nd year	7	None
Lungs	M	18-25	Double	NSFAS (2012 Feb)	1nd year	10	Uncle
Kazy	F	18-25	Double	NSFAS (Sept)	2nd year	12	Grandmother
Maty	M	26 -30	Although he is a double orphan, Maty said he is not, he is himself. Therefore the other information is not relevant and his perception was respected. However, he verbally consented to sharing information about his experiences when needed.				
Volunteering invited guests							
Ms Ngu HEI Counselling Psychologist	F	Female, mother, professional Psychologist (PhD). She is in charge of all health and psychological wellbeing of students in an HEI.					
Teaching Practice Officer (TPO)	F	Female, single mother – deals with all students' teaching practice related matters. She also works closely with the two guests and lecturers (on an informal position/basis).					
Ms Musa STAR Program Coordinator (Students At Risk)	F	Female, single mother: coordinate supportive program of students who are at risk of not completing the degree on time and career counselling services					

A short profile of the participants, with pseudonyms, follows.

Jabs

Jabs was a male student between 18 and 20 years of age, from the KZN South Coast, studying towards a BEd degree in the first year of study. He became orphaned during his matric in 2010. He could not further his studies the following year and in 2011 was living at his grandmother's house or homeless prior to accessing HE in 2012. During university breaks and TP sessions he lived at his grandmother's house. His experience and resiliency in high school years of hardship and in this HEI added value to data generated and contributed much to the study.

Lasts

Lasts was a male student from the KZN Midlands, studying towards a BEd degree in the fourth year of his study in this HEI. His mother died when during his second year in this HEI. He was in his third year in 2013, a 'double orphan' and a 'new orphan', from a large extended family. He was still grieving the loss of his mother and had not met his father or asked about him. He expressed no wish to find out about him but had an idea that he had died on or after his mother's death. He had interesting experiences about being on the verge of dropping out in his first and second year and how he navigated those challenges. During university breaks and TP sessions he went home, where there were members of the extended family. His experiences added value to data and contributed immensely to the study.

Hosy

Hosy was a male in his 30s from Northern KZN, studying towards a BEd degree in the second year, but registered with the university for the previous four. The next year would be his third year of study but not yet the final year for his BEd degree. Firstly, he came to pursue another degree in the same HEI but on a different campus. He realised that the choice of Mathematics and Sciences was not informed and he was not suited for that type of a degree. At the same time he received no funding as he performed very badly academically. The following year he was accepted in the Faculty for Education and received a bursary from the DoE. In that year he was involved in the car accident and had to miss that one year recovering from head injuries. He was employed by a company for several years and was now paying his fees. The year lost without either employment or study left him with financial problems. He was orphaned and homeless. During university vacations and TP sessions he went to friends' houses. His experiences added value to data collected and contributed much to the study.

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Sane

Sane was a female in her early 20s from a deep rural area of KZN. She was doing her BEd degree in the second year, and described herself as shy. She had lost both parents when in High school Grade 10 and had to move to her grandmother's house. She said that life was not easy as they suddenly became absorbed in a large family with aunts and cousins. She also felt the separation of siblings and the stepfather who shortly died after her mother. She had enjoyed a good relationship with her stepfather and his family. Her grandmother became her formal foster parent and saved money for her, which helped on registration for her first year in this HEI. We learned much from the wise and noble deeds of her grandmother and how she valued her. During University breaks and TP sessions she stayed at her grandmothers' house, which she regarded as home. Her experiences added value to data collected and contributed positively to the study.

Matu

Matu was a female student in her early 20s from a township in KZN, north of Durban. She lived with her foster parents (relatives, aunt and uncle) who took her in immediately after her parents died. In our engagements she seemed satisfied in her new context. She frequently visited home at weekends and in some cases during the week, as it was close by. She was also exposed to challenges experienced by most students in the study, ranging from personal (basic needs), residential and financial. She was strong-willed and liked to involve herself in projects in the community and HEI. She was on the executive committee of one other project initiated by them and the coordinator of which was a lecturer. Her knowledge of how organisations operate and responsibilities added value to data collected while contributing much to the study.

Later participants

The following participants (Mxo, Lungs and Kazi) joined the team after the first FGD utilising snowballing method as indicated above (see subsection 4.3.2.1.2).

Mxo

Mxo was a young man living in Northern KZN in his first year in the BEd programme. He lost his mother in 2012, which made him a new orphan and did not know the whereabouts of his father, who he had not known. He said he had not asked her mother about him. His mothers' two sisters died, leaving their children with his mother as a guardian (three teenage girls,

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one elder than him) and his two younger sisters from another father. On the death of his mother he had to assume the role of the head of family. He had to be the one who decided what should happen because relatives left them immediately after the funeral. His mother was a nurse and nominated him as her beneficiary in all policies. In his absence while in the HEI he left his sisters at home. The younger sisters were placed with their fathers' families. Mxo related experience of his ways of navigating challenges of loss and being in a child-headed home. He also shared with team members his challenges of feeding the family from nothing and at the same time living with residential challenges in the HEI. He deliberated on how an environment which did not recognise or observe democratic dignity, equality and freedom was not conducive to human empowerment or freedom (Bhengu-Baloyi, 2010:50).

Lungs

Lungs was a male in his early late teens from KZN Midlands in the Pietermaritzburg surrounding area. He was studying towards a BEd degree in the first year but had been added to the group through snowballing. A young man who was determined and a staunch member of a church, he was approaching his second year. He was a double orphan and had experienced taking care and support of a sick mother for a long time, enduring his substance-abusing stepfather while in High School doing Grades 11 and 12. He had experienced first-hand rejection and discrimination by family and community members, but confidently said:

> *"… the whole rollercoaster kind of relationship I had with my parents made me strong as a young man… I had to do it for my mother; I would fight her battles, challenge "that father" and in some instances fight him….. as he would get grant and fight her because she was weak ("edakelwa kumama ngoba esephelelwe amandla…). This made me grow up and became 'a man' and to learn very fast to stand up for myself".*

Instead of becoming homeless after his mother's death he decided to look for his biological father and was accepted, but the following year his father died and he was left with his stepmother and uncles. His participation added value to data generated. In addition, team members learnt much from his resilience and capabilities which transpired as we were sharing in a collaborative process. During University breaks and TP sessions he stayed at his uncle's house, a place he called his new home.

Kazy

Kazy was a female orphaned student in her late teens from KZN South Coast. She was studying towards a BEd degree in her second year. She received funding but had struggled

before it started late in September of her first year. She had been informally adopted by her aunt after the death of her mother. Her father died when she was very young. She got along very well with the foster family members and her younger cousins:

> "I am so thankful to God about this family who took me in. They made it easier for me to move forward after my mum's passing on. My cousins….especially the younger ones [aged 22 and 25] are like my real [biological] sisters and they understand that I am at the university. Although I must indicate that is not easy when you're at the university and being orphaned… as much as I now do get that financial assistance but as a girl or young female student, you always have those special needs monthly that needs you to ask for financial assistance even if you do not want to".

She said she tried by all means to look good so that people could not identify her as an orphan. In an HEI she always pretended everything was going well. She was determined to finish her degree and teach. During University breaks and TP sessions she went to her aunt's house which has become her home. Her experience added value to data collected while contributing much to the study, as she was fostered by a supportive family. Her contributions assisted in understanding how the effects of her socialisation shaped her in HEI as an orphaned student.

Maty

Maty was a young male student in his late twenties. He was in his fourth year (BEd) but still had to register for the outstanding modules in the first semester of the following year (2013). He had been applying for financial aid since joining the HEI in the past two years of his study. In the year (2012) he was granted a study loan which covered residence costs. He sometimes had part-time employment with odd jobs in town. He was a young father of one and lived with her girlfriend. Sharing his experiences with the participants brought insight into how he navigated challenges of being an orphan in an HEI. Also, how these experiences shaped his life and the actions he had taken to change and transform his life. It was interesting to understand how he challenged power relations and people around him. The way he had navigated the challenges in the three years spent at this HEI was illuminating, especially to first-year students. He was a resilient and motivated student but doubted that if his parents were alive he would have been as strong or motivated. He stated clearly that he did not regard himself as an orphan but could assist without being part of the study. I include his biography here because he volunteered to share his experiences and suggested some other ways orphaned students could be resilient while in an HEI.

VOLUNTEERING GUESTS

The following participants formed part of the team and volunteered to participate in selected meetings during the PAR process. Their expertise as professional coordinators working with diverse community of students within the HEI added much value to the PAR process of the study.

The psychologist

A professional service provider, Ms Nga, the University psychologist and counsellor, was a member of student support services, a structure in HEI. Holding a PhD in Psychology, she reported to a senior Counsellor whose offices were not onsite but on one of the campuses of this HEI. A mother of two, she had a full schedule as the only counselling psychologist on this campus, attending meetings and taking workshops as the office was left with part-time Psychology master's students to look after the administrative work. She also reported to faculty or school board term meetings. Her office was small and the environment noisy for consultation, but work continued. On my arrival for our first meeting she was welcoming but thought I had come for consultation as we had not previously met. I reminded her about the email I had sent her to secure an appointment and introduced myself again, explaining the aim of the visit. I tried to find out if she had names of students who were orphaned. Understanding her duties and consideration of the code of ethics I recalled the confidentiality clause but did invite her to be part of the study and be on standby to intervene should there be a crisis with participants during meetings, to which she gladly agreed.

Teaching practice officer

The teaching practice officer was a widower and single mother of three adolescents, employed full time by the Professional Practice structure of the University. She mainly dealt with schools and placement of students for Teaching Practice assessment and evaluations. Teaching Practice is a practical part of the curriculum for BEd and PGCE students in the Faculty of Education, and the TPO is involved in a number of programmes that promote social justice within the community of students and support staff. Much of her involvement in these structures was humanitarian, notably volunteering in all the duties with which she was involved. For example, she was involved in the collection of formal and semi-formal clothing for students during teaching practice and collected food for students awaiting their funding and residence. She was sensitive to issues pertaining to death and suffering through loss, including orphaned students, perhaps as a result of her personal experience. She was popular with students and regarded by some as 'mother'. I realised that she could help the

needy, a part of her personality. On the day of our secured appointment we met in her office and she walked me into the staff kitchen which was quiet and convenient. There were two female students drinking tea and eating bread, who she told to finish as we needed the venue. They were amongst 202 students who had not had a meal for the past three days, most being orphaned and vulnerable. They had come to her as they heard from others about 'Mum TPO' and she was prompted to buy a loaf of bread whilst others helped with jam and tea in their staff kitchen. They had no funding, and could not return to their deep rural Zululand homes because they lacked the transport fare. Her role in the presentation was to empower and motivate participants to act for themselves and for others. Her experience with students who are needy was going to help us to think carefully of the structure of the framework as an intervention strategy to transform the structures of the HEI and to support other students.

STAR- Programme Organiser

Ms Musa was employed by the HEI on a fixed-term annual contract. A mother of two adolescents and a widower, Ms Musa had worked as an HEI in the USA for a few years, where she completed her master's degree on gifted students. She was a registered PhD student in this institution and still collecting data. The focus of her current study was on underperforming students. This knowledge and engagement with students in HEI working in the two opposite programmes had a potential to help team members realise the objectives of the study. In addition, and as part of her work, she trained mentors (students) to work in the STAR programme. The appointment to see her was made telephonically. On arrival, she welcomed me and we talked about the aims of the study, with all ethical considerations followed. A date was set for us to meet, with the aim of understanding the programme, her role as a coordinator, who were the beneficiaries and how it functioned to avoid duplication and give me an idea on how we would structure our empowerment framework. On the day of the meeting we had a long discussion and she answered all my and the team members' questions with satisfaction, explaining that the programme assisted those students at risk of not finishing their degrees on time for various reasons, for example underperformance in academic work. The programme had different designed projects, and meetings scheduled for students and their progress was monitored. This meeting enlightened me and I trusted that Ms Musa's expertise and experience in designing development programmes for students might help empower us and give direction in the intervention phases. After the report to the team of participants she was given an invitation to attend one of our meetings, which she accepted. The team shared ideas and asked questions in the discussion, with the information shaping our plan and strategies for the development of the framework. Since we

were both from a Psychology background we talked about many issues common to our projects.

4.3.2.2 Research Context

Generally, any enquiry takes place in a certain or specific context. In a qualitative study, attitudes and behaviour of people are best understood within their natural setting, therefore, this study was conducted in an HEI in the mostly rural province of KZN, ravaged by HIV/AIDS that had left many OVC (UNAIDS, 2009). It borders other provinces and countries, notably Mpumalanga province, Mozambique, Swaziland and Lesotho, all which also have high rates of orphaned children and youth. Geographically, the campus was situated in Pinetown, South of Durban, a rapidly growing urban area which is ethnically diverse with culturally mixed beliefs and traditions. This HEI provided initial, postgraduate and in-service teacher education, with financial assistance, residence and transport services for pre-service teachers who met certain requirements to qualify. Student support structures offered free services to students, for example, a disability unit with a dedicated counsellor, psychologist, health clinic and nurse. One of the quality assurance points in this institution is based on "the existence of policies that facilitate access for potential students from "educationally disadvantaged backgrounds" (Undergraduate Prospectus, 2011, 2012, 2013).

This location or context seemed appropriate as a choice for exploring experiences of orphaned students who had managed to access higher education from the surrounding diverse communities, including rural settings. Wassenaar (2006:67) suggests that researchers and research methods be sensitive to the values, cultural traditions, and practices of the community. As a researcher and employee in this HEI I was aware of some of the structural functions within this community and of the challenges faced by some of the student community, ranging from personal, financial, psychological, academic, political and issues concerning their wellbeing. There was little difficulty in accessing the site. For the students it was not hard to access the venue, or become lost in the environment with which they are familiar. At weekends transport was scarce, therefore I had to make arrangements to ferry three participants who lived more than 20 kilometres from campus for our meetings.

4.3.3 Cycle Two

This cycle follows profiling the participants and formation of the team. Attention is paid to the intervention and implementation of the empowerment framework for orphans in HEI. Since PAR methodology requires collaborative interaction it was important for me to get to know each individual, gain their trust and build rapport before seating for FGDs. The details of our initial meetings is also highlighted, profiling participants and volunteering guests.

4.3.3.1 Information sessions

As a starting point I had to establish a recognised structure for stakeholders. After having been granted permission to conduct research on the site, appointments were scheduled with participants. Invitations for the meetings were given telephonically and later reminders were sent through text messages. In these sessions introductions were made and the purpose, aims, value and the process of the study outlined. All ethical issues were highlighted since in qualitative research a trusting discursive setting between the researcher and participants is important (Elias & Theron, 2012:150). Individual and group meetings were conducted with participants to discuss the strategic plan.

(i) Informal one-on-one meetings

In the first informal one-on-one meetings with prospective participants the objective was "getting to know each other", which Lee Sohng (1995:9) refers to as "an initial organising phase". I was a resource and facilitator, as we began by making introductions and understanding the referral procedures (how I knew about each one of them). A brief explanation of the purpose, objectives and procedures of the study were highlighted. It was critical to explain briefly the conditions of PAR as a methodology and reflective practice utilised in this research, as well as observation of all ethical consideration. As this was a critical qualitative study, underpinned by the principles of CER and PAR approach, informal one-on-one meetings seemed valuable, considering the sensitivity of the study. Mainly, they-were used to evaluate whether prospective participants were suited for the emotional challenge of the planned activities and what they were likely to experience during discussions. They sought and negotiated participants' consents and awareness that the research process was a collaborative group process (teamwork). The schedule of days and times were negotiated with participants over the telephone and by text messages. Each

individual meeting with orphaned students lasted for 45 minutes, held throughout the second week of September, 2012. It was interesting to notice how orphaned student gradually became interested and encouraged to share their stories, which I experienced as positive in highlighting the need for participation. I tried to conduct our first meetings as politely and briefly as possible.

The second phase of meetings was to follow and appointments for the formal one-on-one meetings with prospective participants were secured. Before the end of the meeting I gave each participant a homework in which they were expected to reflect on what orphanhood meant to them or in the HEI. Those reflections would form a basis for the discussion in our next formal on-on-one meeting, scheduled on that day with each participant. The following meetings (formal one-on-one) were scheduled for Saturdays and Sundays, with all student participants. However, meetings with the HEI's support personnel were scheduled by arrangement on dates with which I was provided during the week.

(ii) Formal one-on-one meetings

As mentioned above, the first formal meeting was negotiated during the informal one-on-one meetings with each participant. All participants in this study were informed about the research goals, the processes and the outcomes. Since this study utilised PAR and CER, with emphasis on action and empowerment and the possibility to transform, the participants were going to be co-researchers in all research processes. My position and status as a lecturer in this HEI was not used to benefit my goals as a researcher, but as a member of the research team. Ethical issues were followed, permission to record the meeting was sought and we went over, clarified and signed the consent forms. It was at this stage that participants poured out their understandings and experiences of orphanhood in different settings. Each meeting was scheduled for 45 minutes but to my surprise and considering the nature of the study, discussions with some participants went beyond an hour.

Noticeably, some participants were overcome with emotions while narrating their experiences. I observed, as emotionally liberating in these meetings, that this turned to be a safe venting space for participants in which listening took place. In my capacity as a researcher and a lecturer with a Psychology background, and a Life Orientation (LO) teacher/counsellor for many years in schools and in an HEI, I managed to assist in facilitating confidence in participants and maintained heightened emotional episodes calmly. I provided a safe space for participants to open up or disclose the "blocked or locked and silenced" past emotions, which seemed critical as we were moving forward with the study.

As this study adopt CER and PAR, it was considered that listening and narrating stories was not enough, so participants were led to the questions through the use of Meulenberg-Buskens' FAI technique (Mahlomaholo, 2009:228), to initiate discussion and probe further questions. This technique has a possibility to instil interest for participants as their opinions were valued in PAR approaches. In agreement with all participants the next and first focus group meeting was set and secured and reminders were done telephonically and through text messages. The tentative agenda for the next and first focus group discussion (FGD) was also discussed so that participants would come prepared.

(iii) Focus group discussions

For the focus group discussion (FGD) I was thoroughly prepared and had a strategy to keep team members informed, involved and encouraged to speak their minds with ease, which was largely informed by nature of communication. Greeff (2012:361) defines an FGD as a research tool that collects data through group interaction. Participants are selected according to common characteristics they possess in relation to the topic or phenomenon. However, discussions on the issues of death, loss and emotions are difficult to predict. The first group meeting which I coordinated was held on the last week of September 2012, introductory in nature in which team members were meeting for the first time. The programme presented an agenda of aims and processes of the project, the workshop on PAR as an approach, questions and answers, activities, reflections and evaluations and the proposed programme.

The meeting was divided into one a half hour sessions (morning and day) with the morning session separated by a 15-minute tea break (refer to Appendix D). Firstly, in this first session participants were led to discussions ranging from the homework that was given to each of the participants in the formal and informal one-on-one meetings , on what orphanhood (in HEI) meant to each participant. Further explored was the background and deliberations on perception, what each member had (not) contributed to changing the situation as an orphaned student in diverse contexts, including the HEI and how they experienced it as an institution. These questions were rigorous and followed by probing leading to respectful debates amongst team members while trying to understand one another. In the initial stages of discussions team members seemed to be reserved and were reluctant to talk freely. This did not come as a surprise to me as I was the only one who had spent some time with each in one-to-one meetings that had enhanced their confidence and development of trust.

It was interesting to observe during discussions that most participants seemed to direct their responses to me, confirming my suspicion of how I was perceived as lecturer, although I had clearly declared my position in this project. In order to break the boundaries and to discourage the tendency of me as possessing power I engaged participants in an activity in which they were prompted to share their identity with the rest of the team, as the first step of working collaboratively and towards self-awareness (Martinez, 1993:1). In this activity I had to introduce myself as well and my thoughts about the projects and the lessons I wished to learn as a person, a researcher, and a teacher.

The short tea break after introductions allowed team members to mingle and get to know each other. I observed how they communicated and how the walls of silence, distrust and discomfort that surrounded each one slowly diffused leading to the second session, which was perceived to be promising and slightly flexible. I also got an opportunity to talk with team members casually outside of a tense emotional first group session. The second part of the session resumed and my observation was that the house began to be slightly noisy as individuals willingly changed their seats. This was a good sign of interrelationship development and team members were invited to understand both the wider context and finer details of the projects. They were also reminded about ethical issues, that their participation was voluntary and they had the right to withdraw at any stage, however, participation to the end of the project was encouraged (Kelly, 2007:24). It was encouraging to notice how participants' awareness was stimulated and the change of attitude that was demonstrated by ownership of the outcomes of the project being at the centre. This prompted me to think of a 'strategy' of Manning (2001:31) to highlight objectives of the project and their importance, in this case orphaned pre-service teacher or student participants and co-researchers: "...when involving a group of people in a change process, their participation equips them to perform. There is no way to make up for the learning that takes place when people work together on an important task".

It was imperative and clear to team members that in order to address the needs and challenges of orphanhood in an HEI, and to find strategies to deal or cope with those challenges, a common vision and mission statement and policy for the research team needed to be put together or drawn up. All team members had to initiate their own common goals and action steps, put methodologies in place, be responsible and accountable for participants from the assessment to the planning stage, development, implementation and evaluation of the proposed programme.

4.3.3.2. Development of the mission and vision for research team

The student participants felt it more important for the group to have an identifiable name than to be referred to as team members or orphaned students. They felt the latter was impersonal and discriminatory for individuals in a mission to change their and others' situations. Therefore, this session began with brainstorming of the name by development of the mission and vision of the team.

(i) It was decided that the vision of the research team would be to: provide excellent organisational infrastructure, address physical and psychosocial development of students in HEI, provide orphaned (and vulnerable) students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds with opportunities to participate in the transformation of self and others by having greater access to resources, services and equality needed to reach specific goals regarding higher education. As pre-service teachers we would use collaborative activities as empowerment strategies to understand ourselves and contexts first. Our vision would be to acknowledge and be sensitive to issues of oppression, discrimination, cultural and inequity in an HEI, and to promote hope, justice for all, democracy, emancipation, equality, transformation peace and equity.

(ii) The Mission Statement of the research team: We, the research team for the orphaned student organisation (OSO) believe in utilising knowledge skills, values and attitudes through PAR to assist us (orphaned students) and (vulnerable students) in challenging needs in an HEI; and in addressing challenges that disempower us in HEI and in our communities. We believe that through guidance and in promoting collective creative thinking there will be development of critical consciousness, appropriate environment and space for effective discursive practice and social action in changing our lives in an HEI community. After completion of the mission and vision of the team, the guiding principles in a form of a policy were formulated in the next session.

4.3.3.3 Policy for research team

In school communities it is easy to access student information and policies pertaining to learner issues that are mostly developed by other people, leaving out those who directly experience the phenomenon. It was important for the team to become involved in the initial stage and have a feeling of the seriousness of the procedures of the project and rules that will govern the organisation in order to achieve positive outcomes, which was the main goal. Participants therefore, as young adults, had to brainstorm the contents of the team's policy.

The main objective of the research team was specifically to provide current and prospective orphaned students with opportunities to realise their individual capabilities for physical, social, emotional, spiritual and academic development through full participation.

Equally important was to set this structure officially, therefore it was important that all members should:

- understand and adhere to the confidentiality clause

- honour appointments, times and meetings

- be on time and be able to work collaboratively with others responsibly until the end of each session

- respect the dignity of others and be in a position to listen in order to be listened to

- maintain safety of environment in which all people can participate

- promote effective communication and interpersonal relationships

- report when late-coming and incidents of absenteeism

- be honest and carry all duties assigned (individually, as pairs and as a group)

- make reflective entries in journals as per requirement or as expected

- cooperate and collaborate (work in partnership) with other networking institutions (schools) or organisation (in an HEI and in communities).

These points served as a basis with others to follow, depending on the nature of activities for the day and the progression of the research process. Composition and terms of membership are detailed in Appendix E.

 All members were ready to become involved in the formulation of the strategic plan, however SWOT analysis was the first step towards prioritisation of activities. Gao and Peng (2011) cited in Tsotetsi (2013:156) posit that the objective of SWOT analysis is to build strategies against its strengths, eliminate its weaknesses, and exploit its opportunities or use them to counter the threats. The study was intended to change the participants' lives and consideration of ethical issues, especially in one-on-one meetings and throughout the research process was provided. For the SWOT the sensitivity of the study (reliving sensitive emotions) compelled consideration of one-on-one in preparation for team meetings to

capitalise on individual strengths and opportunities in an interactive collaborative sharing process. In order to execute our collaborative plan and work towards accomplishing the goals of the study, we had to engage in the exercise of identifying the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and strengths of the team and how we could navigate challenges.

(i) Strengths

Since the research site was one of the HEIs in which participants were registered in the KZN province, and thus acquainted with the environment and surroundings, *accessibility to the site* seemed ideal. Delays in meetings and transport arrangement did not impact negatively on the planned schedule for the programmes, all of which counted as strengths in making the strategy work. The initial informal and formal one-on-one meetings improved *understanding of the backgrounds* of each participant and the value this method brought in achievement the objectives of the study. The official language in KZN, IsiZulu was the mother tongue for all participants, undergraduate students in a HEI. Also conversant in English, language did not impede comprehension throughout the process and they were free to code switch. These were pre-service teachers and from time to time they took a break for teaching practice (TP) sessions, therefore most had an understanding of a typical South African school and classroom context, with diversity of diverse school communities, learners, backgrounds, cultures and races. Exposed to experiential learning and teaching strategies and how they would apply the kind of experience to orphaned and vulnerable learners in school communities, they gained experience on how schools provide for care and support programmes for the learners which might be of use in the development of a support programme for orphaned students in an HEI. They had all demonstrated coping strategies and resiliency prior to HEI access and in their first and second year of study. Participants were all accommodated in residence and therefore were aware of others who might be orphaned or even vulnerable in different circumstances. Lastly, there were support structures in this HEI, two of whom were part of the study as volunteers.

(ii) Weaknesses

The main concern is that 'orphanhood' is generally and commonly associated with poverty, leading to a distorted sense of self or low self-esteem in orphaned students which posed a threat to continued participation. In South Africa, especially in the province of KZN, many children and youth have lost their parents due to HIV and AIDS, and the stigma persisted, despite many global initiatives and initiatives by the government and various NGOs to provide health and educational support to the infected and affected. Acknowledging that the

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study utilises emancipatory methodologies, which position research participants as co-researchers in the whole research process, the choice of one-on-one data gathering method seemed to be perceived as a weakness in this critical emancipatory study. However, this concern was addressed and justified as its importance and value to the study proved to exceed the deficit positivist approach of engagements as compared to the principles of CER that underpins the study. As much as precautions against harm were minimised by having support services readily available and in place, chances to guarantee if participants or the researcher might not be affected, especially emotionally or psychologically, were minimal.

(iii) Opportunities

In one-on-one meetings and FGD I observed that orphaned students wanted to share their stories, were eager to be listened to and, most importantly, were prepared to move forward with their lives. The element of an opened communicative space seemed possible, an 'opportunity' for individual self-awareness. Application of active participation in all meetings enabled development or formation of new relationships among participants. Issues that concern death conjure up uncomfortable emotions and psychological discomfort, as a result, the opportune role and involvement of an HEI psychologist as part of the team and a support resource person in times of crisis strengthened the value of participation, and helped understand better the services offered by the programme in an HEI. As the researcher, this kind of readily available assurance of professional support helped flexibility and to some extent ease while working with participants, knowing that should a crisis arise I would have back-up for us as a team and as individuals, and continued professional individual or group support throughout the research process and beyond. Value was added by the opportunity to be involved in developing a framework from the name of organisation, mission statement and vision, policy and learning from team members who were executive members in different Church organisation and humanitarian NGOs on and off the campus. The planned workshop and frequency enlightened participants, which paved the way to planning and implementation of the strategy.

(iv) Threats

The participants were registered as orphaned pre-service student teachers in an HEI so it was important to consider threats while preparing for implementation. One of the major challenges was time management, notably of the HEI's schedule of assignments, tests, examinations and teaching practice (TP) sessions. Strike actions in the same year and following years worsened the situation, keeping students away from the HEI. From a personal point of view, experiences and perceptions about death are unique for individuals,

some developing feelings of embarrassment leading to being labelled 'different' and/or 'rejected' by other students. Also, in most communities being 'orphaned' or to be an 'orphan' has negative connotation, associated with being a 'burden to others' or 'poor'. I anticipated students' withdrawal from the project before its completion so ethical issues (anonymity and confidentiality) in the consent forms were clearly explained to participants before the process began. This alleviated feelings of uncertainty, although other concerns were not completely guaranteed as explained above (subsection 4.6).

In practice, CER and PAR projects, by way of definition, view participants as co-researchers in a project (Jordan, 2003:186; Songh, 1995:2), therefore it is acknowledged that some ethical clauses could not be totally guaranteed as data is collected and analysed by all team members in the project. Two other threats identified by student participants were fears about possible chances of suspected dropping out of the project, which could be brought about by the unpredictable financial situation in this HEI. In order to circumvent the threats, negotiated times for meetings were planned, not necessarily following the initial schedule when meetings were supposed to be held every second week of the month. The plan was negotiated around the HEI academic sessional plan, dates and students' schedule.

4.3.4 Cycle Three

The day of the session was divided into two sessions, each lasting an hour. Matu, a student participant, facilitated the first session while I took notes of what was observed. All members present arrived on time, except for one male who reported sick on that day. The team members were reminded that we all owned the process, therefore the introductory session of this phase was about oral reflections. All team members were aware of the agenda and what they had to reflect upon. It was very encouraging to notice that participants embarked on the reflections fully and there was evidence that they understood the principles of PAR and the value of a reflective practice. The oral reflections enhanced collaboration amongst team members and this was an open floor session, providing for clarifications, questions and answers, concerns, suggestions shaping and reshaping of goals and objectives of the study. It gave a platform to share with relevant people or have them listen and be listened to with understanding, and ask follow-up questions for better understanding.

In the SWOT analysis section reported on above, questions for the action plan needed to be answered step by step. All team members were engaged in the identification and prioritisation of the needs followed by an action plan, which explained the activities to be

undertaken, with the person responsible, resources or framework design for that activity, monitoring and evaluation. We were propelled by the notion that critical self-conscious HEI students who are committed to reflective action and empowered to do so are likely to transform their situations and to become competent community of the educated (McCormick, 2009:105) In the action plan we identified areas of concern and listed the following priorities on how the orphaned in HEI could be empowered to become responsive teachers, how this model could be used to win the support of stakeholders in an HEI and further inform its policies.

4.3.4.1 Setting the priorities, activities and a strategic plan

In this stage team members individually were left with the feeling of the need to change. Firstly they wished to understand who they were in an HEI, what they were doing and the processes they had to undergo. Manning (2006:68) suggests questions that one needs to answer in making it possible for a framework to be implemented with success, and these guided team members to think about the strategy and to set the PAR process in motion. The diagram from the following strategy (adopted in Manning, 2006), formed a basis of what needed to be explained in assessing and planning of the strategy.

1. Why do we exist? - - - - - - - - - >   < - - - - - - Purpose of the framework for the organisation

2. How do we make decisions or changes? - - - - - >   < - - - - - - Creating the framework values

3. What kind of an organisation - - - >   < - - - - - - The framework and organisational character

4. What must we do and how will make it happen? - - - - >   < - - - Goals/priorities and actions

5. How will we win the support of our stakeholders? - - >   < - - Collaborations with strategic people e.g. SRC or business conversations or networking etc.
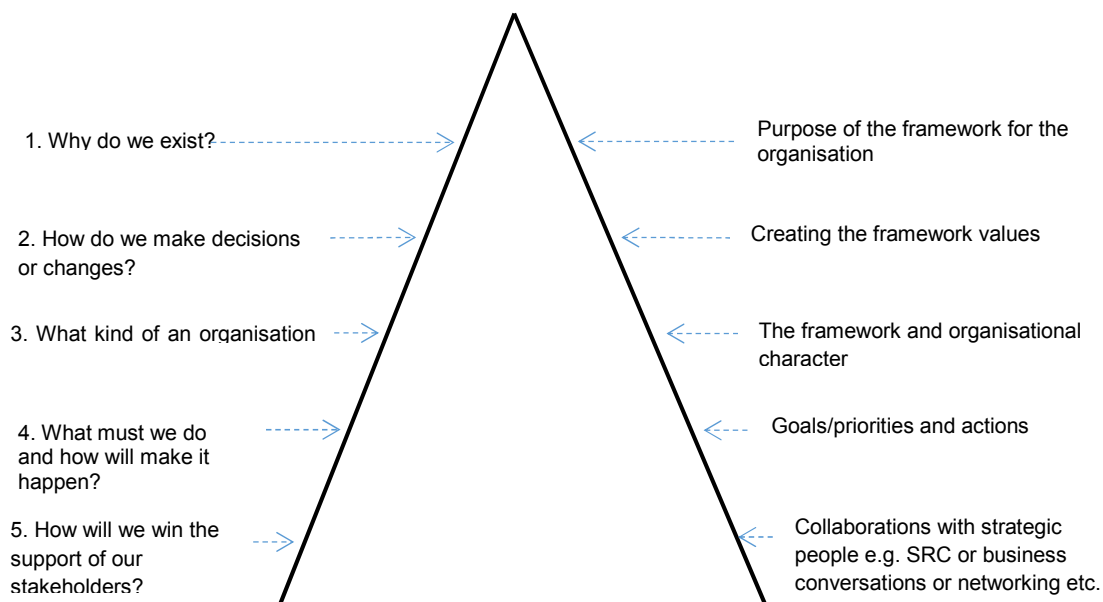
Figure 4.1: Five questions giving a framework for thinking about the strategy.
      (Adapted from _Manning, 2006:68_)

Although this project required us to work as a team, as a lead researcher/coordinator I was aware of the warnings in Manning (2001:85), that is, "when one is embarking on a research project, it is imperative that one devises a strategy, like in leadership, *a strategy is a process"*. In PAR processes, design, implementation and analysis are combined in one single cyclical process that happens in a community (Bhana, 2006:433; Kemmis and McTaggart, 2007:567; Worthen, McKay, Veale and Wessells, 2010:152; Sohng, 1995:5). This was going to be only possible by following the above-mentioned steps, with my role being to help participants turn the unarticulated felt consequences of "orphanhood" in an HEI and raise awareness of an identifiable topic through collective investigation.

In addition, I considered and agree with Sohng's (2005:5) warning that:

> …researchers need to take responsibility developing critical view of the daily realities surrounding research issues and that they should be knowledgeable about the specific substantive content areas of a research topic, cultures and life experiences of those whose lives will be the focus of research.

The strategy of inviting people who are programme coordinators for supportive structures dealing with student issues within this HIE became a motivation and an eye-opener to the whole team. This made me realise how much working together yielded beneficial outcomes to others and how networking possibly enhances sharing of information and access to varied assets or resources available in HEI. We then concluded by formulating an action plan detailing priorities, activities to be performed, action dates and responsible persons, resources needed, timeframe and monitoring.

Priority number one was a personal one to all participants of this study in that they had to first develop "critical self-awareness". Literature indicates that the key to taking action is to know oneself better with the possibility of knowing others to a certain extent (Dimaggio, Lysaker, Carcione, Nicolo & Semarari, 2008:778; Thomasson, 2006:1). For the orphaned students the self-identification stage was important (Who is an orphan in HEI?). In the beginning it became evident that the challenges faced in HEI are not experienced by orphaned students only, but there were a number of students who were suffering as much as some of the orphaned students. Therefore, in this stage 'an orphan or orphanhood' as opposed to "disadvantaged students" in HEI needed to be re-defined and explained. One other important reason for critical awareness was to understand the challenges of the phenomenon and to learn decision-making skills and personal support in an HEI. People responsible for the monitoring were myself, the TPO and all student members who were sub-divided in two groups and had two representatives in each group. Two groups had to

come up with the name which they felt was not discriminatory and comfortable to identify with. Matu had to monitor that aspect. Each aspect or activity took one to two hours, with sessions including reporting and verbal reflections. After reflections it was felt and agreed that those who were known to them as not orphaned but suffering or vulnerable were going to be recruited to join the team as their contribution would be beneficial.

Priority number two focused on the psychosocial support and empowerment of the orphaned in HEI. The psychologist presented what the HEI structure offers and how the emotional wellbeing and psychological support in HEI was accessed by relevant students. Participants had an opportunity to ask questions and to select whatever they felt was there as a supportive initiative by HEI to them, but felt the service was still too far from them to reach. That information and discussion served as basis used to formulate the personalised strategy for the orphaned psycho-social empowerment framework. Participants had an idea of what they required as relevant psychosocial supportive needs for them as orphaned students. They felt that if they had their support structure it would do justice to their needs. Two student participants were responsible for drawing and monitoring the psychosocial support plan for the orphaned and vulnerable and its implementation strategy.

Priority number three was based on the access of resources and services in HEI. Discussions around the issue of finances became a very sensitive issue which affected most of the students. The whole group was responsible for devising strategies on how to navigate challenges facing the large community of students, which is worse with orphaned and vulnerable students. They made suggestions on how funds could be accessed by those who most deserved it and how psycho-social needs should be encouraged by actions of social responsibility, and networking with other communities. It was evident that the effects of socio-economic issues had an impact on the holistic development of orphaned HE students. The co-ordinator for a STAR programme was going to be partially responsible for harnessing academic performance and access of finance of orphaned students. Two other student participants were going to work with the coordinator be liaisons of the student community and to monitor referrals, follow up, assessment and evaluation for those attending the programme.

4.3.4.2 Develop activities and identification of enabling conditions and challenges

In practice, it was important to know as much as possible about the context (HEI) in order for the project to progress, that is, 'to understand the world you will operate in' as corroborated by Manning (2001:64). One integral part of the research process was to capacitate the

research team in order to become informed about the processes of PAR and the principles of CER. I had planned and facilitated workshops to empower the participant student research team, ranging from critical consciousness and self-awareness development, CER and BEST principles (theoretical frameworks) and PAR as an approach, reflective practice and critical thinking skills and CDA as an analysis tool. Some of the workshops were conducted before the initiation of the strategy which strengthen the insights of the research process for participating HEI students as co-researchers. The following three topics enabled participants to gain satisfactory knowledge as co-researchers in this project.

1. Reflective practice/ A reflective pre-service teacher/ How to keep a reflective journal?

2. What is an orphan in HEI? What is your understanding of orphanhood?

3. What is PAR approach/methodology, its principles and relevance to the study?

Team members worked in groups, in pairs and individually depending on the nature of the activity. They were aware of their roles as well as my role as a researcher coordinator and PAR in motion being guided by CER and BEST that couched this study. Therefore, this broadened their insights and served as an encouragement, especially in verbal and written reflections and the value of collaborative practice. The role of teacher, which all participants were to become, was perceived in a more complex way. This exposed the importance placed on development of self-awareness, reflective skills and the need to become a psychologically resourced multi-tasking/skilled teacher, whether orphaned or non-orphaned.

Throughout the process, verbal and written reflections were made, which Leitch and Day (2000:180) note are to deliberate purposefully on the process or an action that is central to developing practices and this is associated with problem-solving. Having this theoretical framework in mind about reflective practice in the second step led to the final step of this phase, that communicates the objectives and allocation of tasks to individual members for the subsequent meetings (Bristowe, Siassakos, Hambly, Angouri, Yelland, Draycott & Fox 2012:1390). In ensuring that everybody understood the technicalities of the entire PAR process I had reflected on the one-on-one meetings that I convened with all participants based on my thoughts about our first group meeting. As a teacher and a "role model" (sub section 2.4.3, Chapter 2), I had to practically demonstrate how to reflect and how reflections are carried out, and therefore I used part of my reflection activity as an exemplar. In this way participants had a clear understanding of keeping a reflective journal. Each of the participants was provided with a well-prepared reflection journal and a pen. A few guiding questions were highlighted and participants were tasked to reflect on them, the process from

one-to-one, the meeting of the day and how they saw themselves and the HEI in future as a team and individually. Some optional activities were also left for individuals. By this time of the day everybody seemed excited about the whole learning process. In the beginning of each session participants were invited to table their expectations and at the end of each workshop session to fill in evaluation forms.

4.3.4.3 Identify components for the framework

The procedure for this study followed PAR processes and was cyclical. The goal was to develop and implement a proposed psycho-social empowerment framework for the orphaned in an HEI. The plan ran for six months, that is, from September 2012 to July 2013, and stretched beyond owing to burgeoning of certain priorities in 2014. I ensured that there was a match between the research topic, focus and objectives; design, methodology and procedures; findings and conclusions and that they were clearly communicated. This qualitative critical research study is more concerned with gaining in-depth insight and subjective meaning-making offered by participants about orphanhood in an HEI. This study was underpinned by the philosophy that: *'emancipatory critical consciousness combined with collaborative commitment as the key to personal and social transformation where people continue to learn from each other throughout their lives'.* Furthermore, it is committed to equality, social justice, democracy, emancipation and social transformation and contributes to HE community context. Further details about ground rules or elements of the framework including eligibility, composition and time frames are found in the policy.

It should be noted that most participants were orphaned 'pre-service teachers' and in some months they had to go for Teaching Practice evaluations/assessments, in some cases in their home town schools. In the second semester (November) and in the first semester (May) examinations were conducted in this HEI, so I tried to avoid any distraction while they were preparing for examinations and supplementary examinations. During the whole process I made it a point to demonstrate my vulnerabilities as a person as I had to continuously explain that although a confidentiality clause was observed it could not be totally guaranteed, depending on how our project was going to develop. At this point I also felt that I needed to be honest with myself and to team members by acknowledging that it is usually in human nature that when things become tough people are discouraged, especially in cases which entail painful emotions. This illustrates this: most people are reluctant to re-visit traumatic memories. To minimise the risks of finding team members demotivated, training workshops were conducted and get-togethers arranged so that full participation was

maintained in line with PAR processes, and to keep the momentum going towards the finality of the research process. Additionally, having in mind the aims of the project, that is, the choice of PAR as methodology, I hoped to enhance participants' capacity to engage in critical reflective process, not only about the study but as part of their personal development.

The framework included suggestion of activities by students which most felt necessary for the purpose of developing and implementing a series of workshops. These activities involved understanding the structures of the HEI, increasing self-esteem and confidence, negotiation with the school communities to understand the phenomenon of the day using another lens. Experienced as teachers this time, not learners, they gained understanding of a policy and how the HEI affected them, dealing with administrative, curricular, financial and residential issues that influenced the in HEI. Lastly and important were issues of social responsibilities.

4.3.4.4 Monitoring of the framework

In ensuring that the intervention envisaged materialised, monitoring was built in the programme. A monitoring schedule involved drawing of timeframes and rescheduling, activities and people responsible reporting back. Student participants had to find a definition of orphaned students in HEI through brainstorming sessions which were facilitated by one member who happened to be in the executive committee of an organisation within the institution. In essence, monitoring was a responsibility for each member of the team as per allocated tasks. I had to make sure that all priorities of the programme and implementation were honoured. We had to meet fortnightly on Thursdays during the college hour for reports, assessments and evaluation of the progress of priorities about the framework, revisiting and employing SWOT stages.

4.4   DATA GENERATION PROCEDURES

Acknowledging that the phenomenon of "orphanhood in an HEI" might pose some emotional challenges in discursive settings, utilising a variety of research tools was necessary to accommodate exploration of the relived emotions and to expose hidden reality about orphanhood in varied contexts, including HEI. The variety of data generation tools were used to cross-check generated data and strengthen data analysis and meaning thereof. All conversations in this qualitative study exploring the human behaviour of (orphaned students) experiences in an HEI in a natural setting, where language and culture was considered. The four data generation tools, that is, one-on-one discussions, FGDs, that also included group workshops and reflective journals entries, are discussed below.

4.4.1 Informal one-on-one meetings

When planning the design I considered that each person's experience is unique, therefore one-on-one discussions were chosen as one of the instruments to generate data and to get insights into the participants from their own words. I also understood that feelings of uneasiness in responses when participants were sharing interpersonal feelings, therefore a welcoming and trustful relationship and context needed to be established for successful interactive engagements. Acknowledging that social meanings are complex (Opie, 2004:66) a space that encourages flexibility of thoughts in a discursive context is required, and thus I felt that there was a need to build trust and establish rapport with participants. I considered the power relations that exist during one-on-one encounters. The main objective was to build a relationship that is trusting at the same time briefly explain the objectives of the study and PAR methodology. This, according to Land (2010:47), is a strategy that helps to abolish the boundaries of power and instead bring participants to the level of understanding the value of teamwork in the study. Also, as we got into a contractual agreement to be working as a team to challenge the injustices and power relations within the socio-political contexts, ethical issues, namely, voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity, were highlighted. The duration of each discussion session was 45-60 minutes.

All discussions were held with permission from participants, audio-taped for translation and transcription. In order to build rapport they wrote a biographical narrative about "who they are" at HEI, which would give me an idea of who the participants were before group discussions. Following these discussions, data was translated into English, transcribed and later returned to read for correctness and misinterpretations, because data collection and analysis is handled by participants in CER. Kelly (2006:305) warns PAR researchers that sometimes sensitive research may take the life of its own ethically problematic territory, where meetings become almost like psychotherapy sessions. In these one-on-one sessions I made it a point that participants were comfortable with the level of exploration. Informal one-to-one paved the way for an environment of openness, trust and knowing participants intimately. The discursive or dialogue process facilitated the understanding of how participants used language and the choice of linguistic patterns.

4.4.2 Formal one-on-one discussions

In accordance with the principles of promoting the best interest of participants, ethical issues were highlighted and adhered to. Cohen et al. (2011:435) assert that minority and

marginalised people 'those on the edge of society', including the orphaned students, are ignored in educational research. Formal one-on-one discussions were chosen as the suitable method to address concerns of orphaned students in an HEI. The audio-taped discussions (with permission) were held with all participants and guests. At this point our membership was clear and therefore it was safe to alert team members. These one-on-one meetings were of great assistance in uncovering and exploring the meanings that shape and support students' lives, routines, behaviours, and feelings in an HEI.

4.4.3 Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions (FGDs) were a resource for data collection and analysis in team meetings and workshops or training programmes throughout the project process. According to Marshall and Rossman (2006:89), focus groups are considered as a socially orientated process and a "form of group interview that capitalises on communication between group participants in order to generate data". Conversely, McDonald (2012:41) acknowledges that in a PAR project, FGDs as compared to interviews are used when the topic of discussion is left to the focus group, whilst the facilitator provides structure. In practice, an FGD is constituted of a group of people who share a similar type of experience but are not naturally constituted as an existing social group. The FGDs occurred within the natural settings while language and culture was considered, hence this qualitative study exploring the human behaviour of orphaned students' experiences in an HEI.

The most important role of an FDG stressed in Cohen et al. (2011:436) and Greeff (2012:361) is for participants simultaneously to generate data on a specific issue, unlike individual face-to-face interviews. In these meetings and planned sessions team members interacted with one another to accomplish a common goal, the solution to orphanhood challenges in an HEI. I was also aware that the FGD sessions were influenced by the physical environment in which it occurred (Michael & Modell, 2003: 92) and the way in which these interactions were managed. Therefore, shifting practice would require leadership and capacity building to equip student participants with skills to communicate with each other, alleviate distress and actively become involved in decision-making (Hernandez, et al., 2005:107).

Michael and Modell (2003:61) note that in group discussion sessions participants should 'know the rules of the game', that is, understand what they are supposed to do in a particular setting. The most important point is the explicit communication and provision of safe and

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trusting relationships in discussion sessions. Through FGDs, team members as students felt that their contribution to a discussion was not only expected but also valued. We worked together and individual participants were helped to turn the felt unspoken problem around orphanhood into an HEI into perceptible topic. Achieving this relied on understanding that knowledge is part of one's life, and can be derived from sharing life-world of common experience, tradition, history and culture.

One other skill that is developed in FGDs is the development of critical use of language in which the focus is on interaction within the group, producing a collective rather than the predominance of individual views. Participants were engaged in discussions, reflections, debates and interactional problem-solving activities (Greef, 2012:370) to create uniqueness in each participant's experiences as a source of data, through active interactive engagement and sharing of opinions and experiences, while the development of critical consciousness was enhanced. Nieuwenhuis (2012:91) argues that this strategy is based on an assumption that group interactions widen a range of responses and details of forgotten details of experience, but on the hand they can be negative when participants' responses are to discourage disclosure by other participants. I therefore made sure that participants understand emancipatory principles of PAR. As a team member and participant, the main objective of involving myself in these interactive group sessions was to gain access to a particular socio-cultural group, raising unexpected issues for exploration. Kelly (2006:304) refers to such a process as "informal scoping process" and notes that it involves getting to know the situation, meeting and speaking to people involved and spending time with them, liaising with knowledgeable people about context and identifying criteria.

4.4.4 Reflective journals

Keeping a reflective journal is useful in searching out evidence, reflecting on it while trying to find out meaning, drawing conclusions about that evidence; being constructive and making changes for improvement (Nieuwenhuis, 2012:80 & 86). Considering the sensitive nature of this project, reflective journals were viewed as a supportive instrument for meaning–making which usually provides an opportunity to think critically about people do and why. The experiences reflected upon are believed to produce self-transformation as they are cognately valuable. Larrain and Haye (2012:17) assert that human beings tend to use external dialogue when speaking to others, but also hold internal dialogues. In practice, this highlights the complexity of discursive and communicative practice, hence the inclusion of reflective journals in this study, aimed at enhancing knowledge generation. This results in

self-understanding and questioning of ideologies through discursive, interpretative and engagement with written and verbal textual analysis. The possibility to master reflective practice is through empowerment so using a reflective journal helped in establishing the challenges of participants and finding strategies to intervene accordingly. This prompted the justification of urgency in holding workshops on PAR, and briefly on CER. The reflective practices that underpinned the processes were a priority for the information session, as demonstrated in phase two of this chapter.

In the reflective journals the participants were involved in exercising internal dialogues on their actions, for example, critically thinking back at themselves, their identity, different people, situations, relationships, place, timing, chronology, causality, connections, value systems and how these impacted on others, culture, social structures and many other angles (Donald et al. 2010:56; Bolton, 2010:11; Bleakley, 2006:320; Janks, 2006:340). Having been empowered to reflect in their journals in writing and verbally during FGD sessions, they were able to re-define their capabilities and sharpened their thinking skills. It is acknowledged that some experiences may be difficult to be understood and explained fully in verbal discussions or interviews. As an alternative, to enhance discursive processes, Zepke and Leach (2010:171) regard a reflective journal as a tool for self-determination that enhances the existence of supportive social-contextual conditions to promote feelings of competence or self-efficacy, encouraging self-direction and feeling of autonomy.

Through self-reflection powerful emotions sometimes arise, as what Bolton (2010:37) refers to as "an indicator of ethical values". However, Phan (2009:943) warns that a student's reflection and critical thinking require dedication, time, responsibility and astuteness to question and explore different alternatives, particularly when engaged in PAR projects. Keeping off reflective journals in this study was an opportunity for participants with abilities to scrutinise valuable emotions that might have been pushed aside. Also, engaging in PAR, critical self-reflection, and critical collective reflection facilitated actions to describe, interpret, and explain what transpired in all processes of data collection meetings, thus generating rich data.

The reflective process is viewed as being automatically linked to empowerment, emancipation and autonomy, all transparently valuable goals. They were utilised with the understanding that within the critical emancipatory paradigm, reflective practice valorises intrinsic consciousness and is used to review one's mental life. Importantly, critical reflective practice assisted in re-defining issues about orphanhood and the research journal facilitated creativity, critical thinking, and innovative discovery as an audit trial Jasper (2005 cited in Bolton, 2010:130). I found it encouraging and empowering that the above skills are beneficial

in knowledge creation, opening up and discover new selves in the participants. It is not an easy decision to consent to exposing one's emotional vulnerabilities in front of others, but reflective journals became what Bolton (2010:89-91) refers to as a "think book" of past and present events, a safe space for self-disclosure and self-analysis in writing:

> ...finding the voice in writing means that you can get your own feeling into your own words and that your own words that the feel of you about them. A voice is like a fingerprint, possessing a constant unique signature and that can be recorded and employed for identification.

This provided an opportunity to practice self-reflection and engage in reflective cycles during critical conversation or dialogue using linguistic expression in writing. Importantly, reflective journaling gave participants a therapeutic space in which to explore emotions, whether bad or good, in their journey of becoming socially responsible teachers. According to Bolton (2010:13), reflexivity means "finding strategies to question our attitudes, thoughts, processes, values, assumptions, prejudices and habitual actions to strive to understand our complex roles in relation to others".

4.4.5   Data capturing instruments

Research documents indicate that recording, whether in observations, taking notes, attending meetings, tape- and video-recording, or taking photographs can be intimidating in a research context (Paltridge & Starfield, 2007:122), therefore I ensured that the context became as safe as possible for all participants. Building rapport with all participants through informal one-on-one meetings, I also adhered to ethical guidelines in seeking permission to audio-record our discussions from formal one-on-one meetings to FGDs. I made use of an effective, scientific and user-friendly interview technique formulated by Meulenberg-Buskens (2011:1), known as free attitude interview (FAI). This instrument of collecting data and technique was used to probe with clarifying questions to develop from only one question that had initiated a conversation (Mahlomaholo, 2009:228; Mahlomaholo & Nkoane, 2002:74). This method worked effectively in FGDs as participants interactively shared their knowledge and the conversation was followed by reflective written and verbal summaries.

During discussions, participants were listened to, redirected with respect from deviations from the objectives of the study or topic at hand, following the principles of CER. In most participants' responses deviations from the questions occurred, suggesting that they were talking about experiences of parental loss for the first time. In FAI, according to Tsotetsi

(2013:161), participants are free to intervene and the researcher can respond in a flexible manner. The observation of non-verbal cues enhanced the understanding of recorded data, especially in one-on-one discussions and the first FGD, as illustrated in some extracts in Chapters Five and Six. When participants were unsure of responses and actions a suggestion to use real-life experiences as a strategy worked well.

4.5   DATA ANALYSIS PROCESSES

Analysis of data is an essential part of the qualitative research process as it involves organising, accounting for and explaining data. It is also imperative to understand the process of analysis chosen for the study, since it leads to interpretation and making meaning (Schurink, Fouche & de Vos, 2012:403; Cohen et al. 2011:537) of generated data.

4.5.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

Having generated large amounts of data I felt that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was an appropriate method of analysis, as was paying attention to the aspect of epistemological underpinnings of the study and the methodological implications (Breeze, 2011:499, Kelly, 2007:31). Qualitative data analysis in critical emancipatory approaches is not a mechanical or restricted process but an open engagement with text throughout the enquiry as employed strategically in this framework (Kelly, 2006:347). For example, a well thought choice of data collection instruments and tools was utilised to generate in-depth qualitative data which visibly presented evidence of voluminous data collected from written (text) and verbal (talk) social conversations throughout the research process in a specific context.

In PAR projects, participants are learning formally and informally in an approach which Ziegler, Paulus and Woodside (2014:64) claim uses language to create rather than represent lived experiences between the interviewer and interviewee. However, in this study, to systematically analyse the generated verbal and written data, CDA was deemed suitable for this qualitative participatory study since it foregrounds links between social practice and language, and how social processes connect with the properties of texts (Fairclough, 1995:90). According to Fairclough (2012:453-454):

> … firstly discourse in an abstract sense designates the broadly *semiotics* elements of social life, which he refers to as "semiosis". Secondly, designates representing particular aspects of social life. The reality in this sense is that social structures and

social events form part of social reality. … the social reality depends on the nature of relationships between social structures and social events to form what he refers to as social practice. Social practice, therefore include elements like activities, social relations, objects and instruments, time and place, social subjects, with beliefs, knowledge attitudes and values, and semiosis, which are all dialectically related.

Further illuminating the meaning of discourse (language-in-use) in CDA, Gee (2004:69), claims that a discourse community is more than a group of participants communicating, but rather a combination of factors such as saying, doing, being, valuing and believing. An important point to be made of this definition is that discourse is known to be a socially acceptable use of language that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a group or signal of playing a socially meaningful role (Gee, 2004:68; Gee & Green, 1998:122).

Fairclough (1992:13) claims that, within linguistics, 'discourse' is used to refer to extended samples of either spoken or written language, while 'text' is regarded as one dimension of discourse. CDA is concerned with studying and analysing written texts and spoken words to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality, and bias and how these are initiated, maintained, reproduced and transformed within specific social, economic, political and historical contexts (Van Dijk, 1993:249). Therefore, by unmasking such practises researchers who utilise CDA aim to support victims of oppression and encourage them to resist and transform their lives. Fairclough (2003:170) points out that different discourses are associated with different positions. In detail, a text is a record of an event in which something was communicated and involves the presentation of information and beliefs, often ideological, the construction of identities of participants discussed in the communication, and strategies to frame the content of the message. Discursive practice refers to rules, norms, and mental models of socially acceptable behaviour in specific roles or relationships used to produce, receive, and interpret the message. They are the spoken and unspoken rules and conventions that govern how individuals learn to think, act, and speak in all the social positions they occupy in life. The social context comprises distinct settings in which discourse occurs (marketplace, classroom, playground, church, conferences), each with a set of conventions that determine rights and obligations, what each is allowed and expected to do (how words are used in a particular context).

By way of definition, and as illuminated in Fulcher (2012:1), it is helpful to note that discourse analysis is a complex process in which many elements of social life, from texts, language and socio-political aspects in a social practice are considered. For example, data generation methodology depends on the objectives of the study, as in discourse analysis a particular nature of linguistics and semiotics forms the basis of analysis. Practically, discursive practice

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(Fairclough, 2012:458 & 459) includes representation of how things are and have been, and visions of how things might, could or should be, whether new ways of being or new identities. It is noted that one usually engages in dialogue because of a recognition of the social and not merely individualistic character of the process of knowing. Whilst discourse is about the production of knowledge through language, analysis involves bringing meaning to the data obtained collectively. As Marshall and Rossman (1999:152) write, "...the researcher should use the preliminary research questions and the related literature developed earlier in the proposal to provide guidelines for data analysis", thus obviating the necessity to recognise CDA as a suitable approach to answer questions about the relationship between language and society, how it is used or not used to perpetuate and reveal overt workings in the field of study

Considering that orphaned pre-service students access an HEI for the first time following their post-secondary school education, it was necessary to engage all participants in dialogical interactions. The choice of CDA allowed participants to focus on what they regard as relevant in their talk and acknowledge learning that happens concurrently while dealing with varied challenges and understandings of the world from a new perspective. The choice of CDA also had a goal of enabling participants to undergo the processes of deconstruction while interpreting and analysing data, as demonstrated in Nkoane (2010:324-325, citing Appignanesi & Garratt, 1994:79-80), and accepting what Cohen et al. (2011:538) refer to as 'the principle of fitness for purpose', believing that "…deconstruction is to peel away like in onion layers of constructed meanings. It is a strategy for revealing the under-layers of meanings in a text that were suppressed or assumed in order for it to take its actual for-in particular the assumptions of presence…"

CDA enables individuals to interpret the text and dialogue, understand the hidden motivations and meanings behind them, or the choice of words. Therefore, by engaging orphaned students in this type of dialogue, the aim was firstly to understand the conditions behind specific challenges with which they are faced in their varied systems and contexts, including an HEI. Secondly, it was to explore how the perceptions and understandings of orphanhood shape who they are, what they make of their experiences, and how they navigate the challenges while transforming their lives and those of others.

Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Kelly (2006:320) emphasise the importance of language, interpretation and meaning. Accordingly, discourse analysis is an approach that has been developed by social constructionists, who have strong belief that knowledge is socially constructed (Martens, 2005:198). As previously stated, my position as a critical emancipatory researcher (see sub-section 4.3) and as guided by PAR principles, CDA

assisted in the (re)construction of all forms of communication in which language signalises the understanding of who we are, where we are and what kind of situation we are in (Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hui & O'Garro, 2005:365). As this study is couched by the Critical Emancipatory framework and Ecosystemic theory it made sense to utilise CDA as an analytical tool to answer questions on the relationship between language and society, how it is used or not used to perpetuate and reveal overt workings in an HEI to which orphaned pre-service teachers are exposed. According to Fairclough (1995:132, as cited in Sourershjani, 2012:4), CDA attracted a number of scholars, significantly in his works of the 1980s. In understanding the conceptualisation of CDA as aiming:

> … to systematically explore opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and text and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations, and processes to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony.

The theoretical position of employing CDA is its influence on the community of the educated from a principle of Habermas to have conversations and interaction, and to understand the issues of power relations in society will bring about change (1975:114). As an analytical tool it led to the unmasking or uncovering of distorted practices, ideological manipulation and power relations. Throughout the process of analysis, hegemony is scrutinised, and attitudes and opinions evaluated to eliminate bias (Breeze, 2011:507). This is possible because CDA is an interdisciplinary approach to textual analysis and its aim is to illuminate power in circulated texts through analysis of linguistic and semiotic details in diverse socio-political contexts (Fairclough, 1995:201).

Fairclough (1995:204), supported in van Dijk (1993:250), warns: "…power is not an explicit top down relationship, but is found to be subtle, indirect hence dominating while at the same time produces groups that are persuade to dominance in a natural way and therefore believed to be legitimate". Applied in qualitative approaches, CDA accentuates that it is not enough for people to understand text or spoken word, but what is done to these in conjunction with resources drawn on in these social practices is crucial. The choice of words speakers choose is acknowledged with the understanding that they convey how people perceive themselves, their identity, knowledge, values and beliefs. They are consciously or unconsciously politicised and are used to reflect interests of those who speak.

In deliberating, Fairclough (2003:28) maintains that this approach works on a trans-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary level (Huckin, Andrus & Clary-Lemon, 2012:107) through dialogue with other disciplines and theories to address contemporary processes of social change. The aim he postulates is to identify the particular linguistic, semiotic and inter-discursive features of text which are part of social change through analysis (Fairclough, 2012:453). While Rahimi and Sahragard (2006:4) admit that the general diversity between objectives of CDA and their specific aims, van Dijk (2006:364), regarded as one of the key figures and proponents of CDA, writes that "CDA intends to focus on the ways social dominance is secured, sustained and or reproduced through the manipulation and construction of particular discourse structures… finding the relationship".

Understanding the critiques of CDA, for example, there is no guarantee of it being a reliable methodology since distortion and misinterpretation of text is possible, as are bias and the position that the researcher might bring with different meanings attached to text-based data. I therefore acknowledged these challenges and handled them with caution, however, some literature (Rahimi & Sahragard, 2006:3; Huckin, Andrus & Clary-Lemon, 2012:108; van Dijk, 1998:4) posits that in most instances misinterpretation of text or spoken words depend on perceptions, motivations, expectations, ideological standpoints, context and time.

CDA as a qualitative research approach was relevant as it encompasses a challenge about different views in thinking about reality in the context, that is, orphanhood which is a social issue, orphaned students (class/group) and their perspectives (issues of power, domination or discrimination) and practices in HEIs (social structure and ideology) and action leading to change (how to transform the situation and that others). As a qualitative researcher, I analysed data following research questions and types of data (Walliman, 2009:301), based on the philosophical approach underlying the study.

4.5.2 Objectives of Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is defined as an approach to the study of text and talk emerging from a socio-politically conscious and oppositional way of investigating language, discourse and communication (van Dijk, 2008:85; Fairclough, 2012:452). The emphasis is on exploring how sources of social power abuse, dominance, bias and inequality are propagated and resisted in written or spoken language within the social and political context. CDA is concerned with the critical role played by researchers in society against dominant formal paradigms that are anti-social in nature. It facilitates methods of uncovering the

hidden ideological assumptions by describing, interpreting and analysing social life experiences reflected on and contained in the discourse to demonstrate resistance of social inequalities (Breeze, 2011:499; van Dijk, 2009:362; Singh, 2009:390; McGregor, 2003:5; Rahimi & Sahragard, 2006:1; Janks, 2006: 329; Morley, 2004:21). Generally, orphanhood is viewed as a phenomenon that is created and shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender-based forces that change over time globally. Therefore, in this study the central attribute to CDA and utilising it involves the use of language that is transparent or reflective, the meanings of which are (re)created and changed to answer questions about the relationship between language and the society. This is also a reminder of the emphasis placed on language as it is mediated in discursive relationships, not neutral but rather cultural, historical and political, as it serves the interest of those who use it either verbally or in written form, in legitimising discourses (Breeze, 2011:495).

As such, discourses have underlying meanings, depending on the social, political and historical context. Critical discourse analysts usually take a position to raise critical awareness about how oppressed can emancipate themselves and others and transform social structures. From the critical emancipatory point of view, CDA helped both myself (researcher) and the participants to understand the spoken and written messages they are sending to themselves and to others. In other words, CDA assisted in understanding orphaned students' thoughts, beliefs, and actions which brought insights to challenge injustices, oppression and marginalisation collaboratively by critically analysing text.

Moreover, the purpose of CDA is to identify and discredit false binaries that structure a communication or discourse, that is, to challenge the assertions of what is to be included or excluded as normal, right, or good (Watson & Watson, 2011:63). Simply put, in a discourse, meanings of words are hidden yet used in an everyday context for knowledge construction and determination of power relations. McGregor (2003:8) cautions that "our words are never neutral and different readers may interpret the text differently", a view confirmed by Nkoane (2012:98) that in critical discourse analytic research the status of human beings as dynamic and/or fluid subjects is recognised. In addition, McGregor's (2003:6) emphasis is on how orphaned students' words convey the way they perceive themselves or are perceived as professionals (pre-service teachers in an HEI), how they are portrayed in HEI, their identity, knowledge, values, beliefs and truths. Therefore, in the case of orphaned students in an HEI who are an oppressed minority group, applying CDA (Nieuwenhuis, 2012:102; Huckin, Andrus & Clary-Lemon, 2012:114) helped in critically analysing texts and spoken words to reveal non-transparent relationships, sources of power, domination, inequality, bias and how these sources are maintained and reproduced.

McGregor (2003:7) views CDA as a legitimate theory and methodology by making an example of how unmasking overt and hidden meaning in a written word can bring about different perspectives and deeper understanding of whose interest is being served. I endorse the choice of CDA as congruent to this study since it allowed for the demonstration of how subjectivity of participants was recognised and enhanced, which is in line with what is proposed in the description of one of the principles of PAR (Worthen, McKay, Veale and Wessells, 2010:152). However, these naturally occurring discourses are shaped by language and culture within the social interaction settings, therefore, in understanding the issues of orphanhood in HEIs, how the orphaned students construct their own meaning of their status or identity as well as how they are perceived or constructed by other people, CDA was best suited. Orphaned students had to find ways to challenge and unravel the unbalanced power relations which are made by discourse and language in HEI to be seen as common sense, normal and natural.

4.5.3 Levels of analysis

Without a unitary framework or methodology, CDA does however have common ground with critical approaches (Breeze, 2011:494; Rahimi and Sahragard, 2006:1), which Kendall (2007:7) claims is the interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary theoretical approach. It takes interest in analysing relationships between language and power. This study, besides being a collaborative process of learning, sharing knowledge in discursive engagements, used CDA so that participants could construct their own versions of reality, leading to new insights and shared choices of action. Janks (1997:329, citing Fairclough, 1989, 1995) posits that it consists of three interrelated processes of analysis tied to three interrelated dimensions of discourse, namely, the object of analysis, the process by which the object is produced and received by human subjects and the socio-historical conditions that govern these processes.

4.5.3.1 Three interconnected levels of critical discourse analysis

With the understanding that discourse is shaped and constrained by social structure and by culture, the words and language we use help shape and constrain our identities, relationships, and systems of knowledge and beliefs is enhanced. As mentioned above (subsection 4.5.3), CDA tries to unite and determine the relationship between three levels of analysis: (a) the actual text; (b) the discursive practices (that is the process involved in creating, writing, speaking, reading, and hearing); and (c) the larger social context that bears

upon the text and the discursive practices (Fairclough, 2012:458). Data generation and analysis occurred concurrently until all information was uncovered following methods utilised. In addition, data was analysed refer to as "…on what people do in and with the talk and how events and phenomena are discursively constructed in collaborative engagements and contexts..." (Graffigna & Olson, 2012:792). To affirm the above view on the ownership as a data analysis method (de Beaugrande, 2006:38), CDA focussed on how the discourse was structured, and contributed to changed attitudes and behaviour by orphaned students in an HEI. It also suggests that change in behaviour has a possibility to influence a changed action of how participants talk about an issue at hand. In this study both the principles of Fairclough (2012) and van Dijk (2006) were adopted. The CDA levels used to analyse data and relationship between them are demonstrated below.

4.5.3.1.1 Level one of analysis in CDA: the actual text

Firstly, text was read in an uncritical manner '*engagement without estrangement'* and followed by reading it in a critical manner, revisiting the text at different levels, raising questions about it, imagining different constructions and comparing it to related text in mind (Graffigna & Olson, 2012:792). By so doing I wanted to locate social reality that is visibly constructed through text and talk rather than invisible individual mind (Ziegler, Paulus, & Woodside, 2014:64). Acknowledging that textual analysis is more concerned with what is in the text and not than what is excluded (critique), CDA was utilised to analyse discourse, that is, how the verbal text (words, sentences and phrases from verbal constructs and transcriptions), written discourse in the reflective journals, in discussions and in minutes of the meetings during workshop sessions of the study were used to portray orphanhood in an HEI and to pave the way of the intervention and structure of the framework. Analysis at this level included a combination of inter-discursive analysis of texts, linguistic and other forms of semiotic analysis (Fulcher, 2012:7), with focus was on the content (accounts), features, form (choice of words), function (constructing a motive), reinterpretation, shift of dialogue from self to other, and how participants were positioned. On the discourse level, text is analysed based on the theoretical, methodological, historical, contextual and political factors.

4.5.3.1.2 Level two of analysis in CDA: discursive social practice

The acknowledgement of and respect for individual beliefs, values and cultural values within the processes of challenging unequal power relations for the betterment of self and that of

others is picked up in the discursive practice. Further, Wodak and Kendall (2007:4) claim that there is link between discourse and social action, which in this study means that participation by orphaned students, questioning and revealing hidden agendas through discursive practices not only changes how the world is viewed but also provokes interpretations by both researchers and participants. (D)discourses are seen as systems of representation or as objects of power, however, the discursive practice (process involved in creating, writing, speaking, reading and hearing) provides interpretation of the relationship between the discursive practice or interaction and the text (Sourershjani, 2012:2). On this level, social control and social domination is negotiated and resisted through the use of text.

4.5.3.1.3 Level three of analysis in CDA

Since CDA enhances chances of unmasking hidden meanings in discursive practices by using several data generation techniques in perspective, that is, being presented in language and through analysing sentences, phrases and words in the discourse and how they have been used to convey meaning (textual analysis), it is intended to analyse contextual and situational interpretation. Brown (2006:5) confirms that when dealing with the grief process individuals need language which is straightforward and easily understood in different contexts. Therefore, data generated through discussions, minutes of the meetings and reflective journal entries with participants and the nature of interactive processes, for example, displaying such structures as one's speech emphasis, non-verbal cues, metaphors, and choice of words were analysed and presented verbatim. Also, language creates social and ideological misconceptions by producing, reproducing or transforming social structures, relations and identities and redefinitions of social relationships. This means that analysis in this phase mediates connection between language, social practice and larger social context, (bearing upon text and discursive practice.

4.6   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Wassenaar (2006:63, 69) "research participants' dignity and welfare are more important than the research; and therefore the researchers and the research methods should be sensitive to the values, cultural traditions, and practices of the community". For Reynolds (1979), as cited in Robison (2002:1063), ethics as the rules of conduct, code of principles and guidelines in research must guard against possible dilemmas. The UFS Code of Research Ethics and Belmont Report (April 18, 1979) were adhered to and prior to the

research I submitted a full proposal for my study. Permission was granted with several layers of consent from participants from the other HEIs (Appendix B-E). Permission from the Head of School (HoS) in the Faculty of Education where this study was conducted was sought and given (see attached Appendix A). Significantly, as a critical emancipatory researcher, I was aware of my position in this research relationship therefore I embraced the human moral responsibility towards all participants, as recommended in Opie (2004:30).

Thomas (2002) cited in Mkhonta (2008:25) writes that research into the lives of people is a privilege not a right and thus individuals and communities being researched should be treated with respect and dignity. In this way consideration of '*autonomy and respect of dignity*' of participants was provided with the knowledge that consideration of human rights are required (Creswell, 2009:165). According to Babbie and Mouton (2011:523) and Walliman (2009:354), the researcher must guarantee participants '*confidentiality, anonymity, non-traceability and the fact that they can withdraw at any time*'. This was assured before they consented and frequently during and after contact sessions (Strydom, 2012:119). However, since this study employed PAR approach, and that issues on grief and bereavement processes were sensitive, I maintained '*privacy*' by ensuring that the identity (names, gender, age, ethnic group) was not divulged, using pseudonyms for reference, and not referring to them as "case one" or "case two" or participant A/B/C (Mthiyane 2012:86)

My responsibility was to protect orphaned students from emotional harm during and after the study. Babbie (2007 & 2001) as cited in Strydom (2012:116), explain the risks of exposing participants to harmful experiences, such as those involving family life, relationships and employment. I was therefore cautious with participants' behaviour from the start, during and after the completion of data generation processes. I indicated the availability of the HEI's support services provided by social worker, psychologist and counsellor, should there be a need. Also, participants were told they had to opportunity to withdraw from or continue with the study without feeling obliged at any point in the process, albeit the main objectives and benefits of the study were stressed and participation encouraged. The registered professional university psychologist raised awareness of the aftermath of the research in '*debriefing' sessions*' which according to Strydom (2012:122) allow participants to work through their experience and have questions answered or misconceptions removed. In order to minimise '*emotional outbursts*' in one-on-one meetings and FGDs measures were organised and arranged with the HEI psychologist to be on standby for any crisis management or intervention.

In addition, participants were alerted that there was no financial benefit from the project but that participation promised personal empowerment and exposure to research methodologies

for participants as pre-service teachers. The principle of beneficence refers to the obligation on the part of the researcher to maximize benefits for the individual participant and/or society, while minimising risk of harm to the individual (Strydom, 2012:116). Participants were going to benefit from the project and the results were going inform the other structures in HEIs as well as policymakers on issues regarding orphaned students or orphanhood. Wassenaar (2006:67) explains the principle of beneficence by mentioning that benefits should be direct, for example, participants' skills as researchers was enhanced and better knowledge in topics and issues concerning orphanhood was achieved.

The 'actions and competence of research and plagiarism' were demonstrated. Mouton (2001:241) states that plagiarism refers to any source that has been consulted, either directly or indirectly, and that has made a significant contribution to one's work, without the necessary acknowledgement. I made it my responsibility to ensure that ideas presented utilising words and work of others in this study was appropriately acknowledged. Moreover, understanding the nature of study and my position in this critical emancipatory paradigm.

4.6.1 THE RESEARCHER'S ROLE AND REFLECTIONS ON ACTION CYCLES TO EVALUATE THE IMPACT OF STUDY

Kelly (2006:373) claims that one of the steps towards critical enquiry for the qualitative researcher is to project one's own beliefs and prejudices onto the world, discovering them throughout the context of the vicious circularity of understanding. From the initial stage of the research process I made it a point to keep my own reflective journal throughout the whole process, accounting for what and why things were done in a certain manner and all changes made as a form of interventions or to remedy the situation. As a qualitative researcher I saw myself as a research instrument, and prompted by Nieuwenhuis (2012:79) saw the researcher's involvement as being to record data of changes that happen during and sometimes after the research. I focussed on how utilisation of participatory methods disable power imbalances and forge partnership between me as a researcher and participants (researched) throughout the research process. The same view is supported and confirmed by Diemer and Bluestein (2006:230), who explain reflexivity in that it involves reflecting critically on the research process itself. While understanding that reflexivity is an awareness of the researcher's contribution to the (re)construction of meanings throughout the research process and an acknowledgement of the impossibility of remaining outside of one's subject matter while conducting research, Phun (2009) and Danielewiez (2001) in Gay and Kirkland (2003:155-156) explicate the following: "Reflexivity is an act of self-conscious consideration

that can lead people to deepen understanding of themselves and others not in the abstract but in relation to a specific social environment".

The notion of reflection in essence meant careful consideration of any of my beliefs, doubts, hesitations, perplexity and examining all possible outcomes before coming to a conclusion (Phan, 2009:931). As Fulcher (n.d.:6) states, in the reflexivity process the researcher acknowledges personal bias and position on the issue to understand power relationships, yielding a more transformed person in society, whilst Simon and Cassels (2012:73) posit that reflexivity is "the researcher's role in the practice of research to acknowledge how the researcher influence both research and outcomes; a process by which research turns back upon and takes account of itself". Nevertheless, it was important to have this mirror image which afforded me an opportunity to engage in observation of our ways of doing things and active practice so we could improve on them to intentionally or unintentionally bring change to the individuals as well as the HEI community. This whole process required that I become conscious and attentive to whatever transpired in the whole research process. I was conscious that even though we were partners and worked as a team with participants, I had to guard against using my position as a principal researcher and a lecturer. Instead, I considered a sense of moral and ethical responsibility by making it a point that participants as pre-service students would benefit from the relationship of knowledge and power and remain actively and critically involved, even after leaving university (Richter & Tyeku, 2006:407). Initially, I was agitated about participants withdrawing at an early stage, but I soon experienced individuals transforming and demonstrating high levels of persistence, as confirmed by Phan's (2009:931) view that active persistent and careful consideration of any assumptions in consciousness leads to critical thinking, involving us becoming more aware of why we perceive things the way we do, the choice of our actions and how we resolve our doubts, settle and resolve the perplexity.

I witnessed the tears that were observed in the first individual meetings with most participants, especially the new orphans, diminished as members got to know each other and focus on the project. I also noticed the high level of growth in interpersonal relationship between members, resulting in their finding a sense of belonging in this group. Surprisingly, even when there was no meeting scheduled for the group to me, they would ask to work together and the echo of loud laughter was evident. Sometimes I would question my perception that the participants were emotionally transforming, aware of all that was happening. Campbell-Page and Shaw-Ridley (2013:485) warn that conducting research with marginalised and vulnerable people requires frequent reflection, and I was careful to build on the trust that developed between us.

While reflexivity is perceived to be more complex and involves thinking about our own experience and questioning our ways of doing things, I was also faced with a dilemma during the data analysis stage. Each time I was reading the reflective journals of the participants I would be consumed by emotions to an extent that I would have to discontinue for several times in some instances. I began to understand the participants as individuals, their predicament in many different ways and the problems of being an orphan in an HEI. I was reminded of Kellner's (2001) claim that disturbance in a family have negative impact on school achievement, and Bronfenbrenner's assertion that the intensity of individual experiences will present challenges. The orphaned students led me to a realisation that the transition from parental love to loss through death was a sombre one.

The reflection was brought home in the month of June 2013, in the midst of data analysis, by the death of my mother and hospitalisation of my father. Trauma and pain disrupted my progress and escalated such that I sought psychological help, accompanied by questioning myself as to who I thought I was and what my abilities were. I considered the imbalance in my system but was encouraged to continuously re-examine myself and my roles in the research process, particularly in relationship to those of the participants. New reality emerged about what orphanhood meant and how the orphaned experience the phenomenon, importantly on the development of skills of decision-making that followed loss. I had to devise a strategy and action plan as expected in PAR processes (see subsection 4.3.2.3.1). This was one of the integral lessons learned, and as Coffey (1999 in Ochieng, 2010:1727) argue, in "understanding the cycle of research, one can become a different self over the course of a research project and beyond".

We had developed a strong relationship, almost a new kind of a family at work or in action with a strong sense of trust and interdependency for emotional support. It was now easier to talk to all the participants and their past experience made me respect them even more. They felt their advice and opinions were valued as we were somehow 'even' or 'equal', the 'same' and from then onwards we talked the 'exact same language'. Something related to the saying: "the feeling is mutual". They empathised with me in many ways and for others the pain I was undergoing induced their lived or past experienced pain once more. As an adult participant and researcher, reflexivity emphasised the importance of self-awareness, political and cultural consciousness and ownership of one's perspectives. I found solace in the 'new culture' of our team as a result of the degree of trust and rapport, but was conscious of not losing the objective of the study and analysis (Ochieng, 2010:1727).

Acknowledging that being reflective involves self-questioning and self-understanding, in some meetings I would struggle to be strong in front of team members but, remembering

that I was an adult and my role, I had to show bravery, appear as if I was coping and be perceived that way. As an adult, socio-politically and culturally, the belief is that I was expected to provide support, especially for those faced by adversity. Thus, to contain my vulnerabilities I hid my feelings in our discursive settings and dealt with my emotions after the meetings. When this was not possible I disclosed my vulnerabilities and was heartened by the participants' responses regarding the grieving process.

Reflexivity is understood to be an undertaking of continuing examination of what one knows and how it is known (Graham, Harris & Troid 1998:21). I struggled with the conceptions that an adult is not an orphan (see 2.7.1) and could not agree with that assertion. My belief had not accorded with definitions of orphanhood based on chronological age, but not I felt the loss of my mother qualified me as a maternal orphan. I felt painful emptiness and sometimes anger, and realised that only people who have experienced loss of a parent(s) can understand the experience as expressed by the participants in discussions. I also understood better their circumstances and need for a framework in an HEI. The experience made me realise why our guests who are serving in the support structures in this HEI had keen interest in involving themselves in this project and the other projects they were coordinating, as stated in the profiling of participants.

Overall, our planning and aim of the project, recording of conversations and taking notes of the observed actions assisted in validating the interpretations monitored. All participants were Africans (IsiZulu speakers) from diverse communities, ranging from rural to township background, and therefore my interpretation might have been inaccurate, but I found being flexible, adjusting the order, and pacing the length of our interactions with respect strengthened our relationship, thus improving the element of trust (Strydom (2012:491), one of the advantages of PAR.

4.7   CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter Four has presented how qualitative approaches and PAR as a methodology and choice of data generation instruments were utilised and how these helped to minimise distortion in the interpretation and analysis of data utilising CDA. Attention was also paid to the intervention, profiling of participants and the value they brought to enhance in-depth-data collection. The choice of utilising CDA as a methodology for data analysis demonstrated the possibilities of interpreting the text in different ways, depending on motivations, expectations, avoidance of discomforts or familiarity in use of verbal and written text. I also displayed how

PAR as an approach to critical inquiry was used and the justification. We were made aware that through interpretation of data utilising CDA it becomes subjective, with different conversations emerging within the natural settings. These involved the orphaned students and their everyday life experiences, to be presented in the next chapter

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS: NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter described the research design and methodology of the study. This chapter focuses on the analysis of data generated by attempting to draw attention and unpacking issues related to the key critical questions interrogated through theoretical frameworks and literature review. However, because of the voluminous nature of data generated, analysis and discussion of findings section is subdivided into two chapters, that is, Chapter Five and Chapter Six. In this chapter, the objectives of the study are discussed and expounded to illustrate identified fragments of the needs and challenges. The analysis of generated data was employed drawing from the principles and levels of Fairclough (1995:98) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), (van Dijk, 1993:249) from the audio-recorded one-on-one meetings, focus group discussions (FGDs) and individual written and verbal reflective journal entries until I arrived in the conclusions (4.12.2 & 4.12.2). Throughout this chapter I observe how themes and sub-themes on opportunities (needs and challenges) emerged and how they came together in order to make sense of the findings of this study.

5.2   INITIALISING THE DISCUSSION AND UNDERSTANDING PARTICIPANTS

Firstly, as a critical researcher and member of the research team I was aware of ethical issues, therefore I had to protect the participants' identity as detailed in the previous chapter (4.13.1- 4.13.8). In the same subsection I also referred to and highlighted diagrammatically the profile of participants with pseudonyms. The objective was not to maintain confidentiality and a sense of living people who graciously offered their stories for this study (4.3.2.2.5). The main aim of the study was to explore the experiences of orphaned students in this HEI and, to find out how those experiences shape who participants are in HEI. It was for participants to find ways to act on those experiences while navigating challenges after being empowered to do so, and to develop a psycho-social empowerment framework that might lead to emancipation of participants and others. In presenting generated data, analysis and discussion, I used verbatim extracts to capture precise voices of the participants which

Savenye and Robinson (2008:1062) refer to as 'thick descriptions' or 'liberal use of verbatim quotations'. Translation (from isiZulu t0 English) was used to give meaning to participants' utterances.

Different experiences are established and explored, with the importance and relevance of the impact of the context on shaping HEI students' lives as highlighted by the principles of Ecological Systems Theory demonstrated. Bronfenbrenner maintains that different socio-environments and relationships influence a healthy development or wellbeing of students, hence the understanding of how loss through death is consequential to one's emotional or psychological vulnerability. This theory requires careful choice of methods for gathering data, using one-on-one discussions, focus groups and reflective journals, all of which served as supportive tools for meaning-making to participants (4.41; 4.4.2; 4.4.3; 4.4.4).

At the same time I took into cognisance the value of past experiences and recognised that these form a basis for shaping the present and future experiences, including informed decision-making strategies for individuals. Therefore, to possibly reach the objectives of the study I felt that participants as team members needed not to be rushed throughout the research journey which involved the interrogation of a very sensitive phenomenon (orphanhood). I believed it was important to consider the effects of reliving sensitive emotions to which participants were exposed and the possibility of reversed consequences thereof. In the informal and formal one-on-one meetings orphaned students began by describing their personality and how they understood orphanhood or what it meant for each one of them. I noticed that the first meetings were tense and sensed a level of mistrust. However, I was aware that for this study to progress I had to gain trust and confidence of the participants. Importantly, as we were going to work together as team members, it was critical to recognise what is emphasised in Participatory Action Research (PAR) principles that participation involves identifying and breaking the boundaries that limit stakeholders' opportunities to engage in in a discursive practice. CDA helped in the analysis and understanding of social problems, in this case orphanhood in HEI, the emphasis being on illuminating ways in which written or spoken words and discursive practices could be unmasked to support those who are marginalised by sources of power, dominance, inequality, and in some cases bias.

The background and life experiences that participants brought to the study were important in paving the way to understanding the identity of orphaned students in HEI and the impact of the HEI. In the one-on-one discussions several responses were made to the question: *Who are you and what did orphanhood in general (and in an HEI) mean to you?* Most gave a detailed series of events leading to them becoming orphaned, all describing themselves with

name and surname before moving quickly to describe in detail how they became orphaned and the events thereafter. For example, the following participants said:

> *Hosy: I am from Ladysmith but was originally from Johannesburg [Gauteng province] living with a "single parent", "my mum'. When my mother passed on in nineteen ninety eight I was in Standard Five… then my father's family felt that I had [to move] down to KwaZulu-Natal province [KZN] in December of the same year where I lived with dad and stepmother and my siblings [half brothers and sisters] for the first time in my life. Two years later dad passed on in September two thousand and one when I was doing Standard Eight…. then "things changed"…'*

> *Lasts: Lasts, the one you see, is from Ladysmith emakhaya (rural areas. Ngihlale nomndeni ovulelekile (extended family) noma ngingasenaye [umzali, my mother, a single parent] and we are three (3) kumama. My mother passed on (two years ago) when I was here at the university doing my second year [sighed…. and quiet for some time…, silence and continues holding tears, started knocking/banging the table underneath softly with fingers and with no eye contact in the most part of the discussions pertaining this question].*"…the situation changed… a lot" (…zashintsha kakhulu izinto nesimo sempilo yami nje… kakhulu madam…)*

> *Sane: Ngingathi mina ngingumuntu onamahloni kakhulu. Ekhaya kule emakhaya KwaZulu, KwaNgwanase. Ngihlale nomama 'nobaba wami' … kwasekuthi 'ubaba wami' yena washona ngonyaka ka two thousand (I can say that I am a kind of a very shy person… [laughing softly] I have lived with mum and 'my father' …and then 'my father', 'he' passed on in the year two thousand. After some time, my mum stayed with another man (ngingathi nje wazwana nomunye ubaba) and I lived together with them for some time and my half-brother….Then my mother passed on in two thousand and seven, I was doing Grade Eleven then they said we [her brother and her] had "to move" to [her] granny's place (mum's side)… and my half- brother "was taken" by his father's family… "things changed for us all…"*

I noticed and portrayed from the above responses the accuracy and detail in the capturing of dates, exact days and in some cases times (hours and minutes) of incidents leading to death of the participants' mothers. In response to the question, four descriptive words were used, that is, "type of context, type of family, gender of a parent". To further illustrate this, Lasts began by declaring the context in which he resided, as '*rural areas in Ladysmith*' followed by Sane who said '*kule emakhaya', eNgwavuma* (deep rural area far away in Zululand) and, Hosy stated from Gauteng province to KZN province. A rural area as a context is associated

with troubled, disadvantaged and under-resourced conditions, which sometimes hinders the holistic development of individuals and suitable social wellbeing. In general, unwelcoming environments are demotivating and as a result there is lack of security from those who experience it. Declaring the context first drew attention to a disadvantaged status, confirming the influence space/context in the literature and principles of BEST (2.5.2.2, 2.5.3) that proper environment should be supportive and empowering. The change of physical space or context (new or extended families, homelessness) meant that some had to assume new identity and roles in their lives as adolescents and young adults respectively. For example, Hosy mentioned that he had to '*move'* from Gauteng to KZN, that is, from a more urban to rural province. The language spoken in both is not similar, thus presenting a challenge for this participant to adjust. The report of "*moving from one family to another"* and *"to be told to move*", with no proper engagements and opportunities to air one's views on the matter, seemed to be the worst experience for most participants.

In contrast to what other participants regarded as priority, that is, the context and environment, Lasts and Hosy underlined the type of the family, that is, the single parent and extended family, as key factors. To some extent communication and relationship in these two types is negative or non-existent, compared to a traditional nuclear family which is marked by close network and connectedness, trust, friendship and working together for mutual support. For Hosy, as an only child of a single parent (his mother), not used to sharing material things and parental affection is sometimes associated with the possibility becoming a 'spoilt brat'. However, this was not the case as he claims that *"things changed"…'*. In the extended family, the perception is since there are insufficient resources and lack of support, experiences around issues of distrust, animosity, fear, maltreatment, oppression, discrimination, alienation, and favouritism are bound to arise. This view is supported by Nowak-Fabrykowski, (2004:623) who found the nature of interpersonal relationships in extended families to be negative, such that they could not share their problems with anyone, and experienced insufficient warmth, lack of preparation for the future; unresolved emotional problems and poor exposure to opportunities and education.

Sane, on the other hand, began by stating her personality as a 'shy' person and much interest was on magnifying the death of "*my father*". Unlike most male participants, who associated orphanhood with the loss of their mothers, Sane's perspective, as a female, was different. Surprisingly, in her response the word 'mother' did not feature as frequently did 'father'. In her explanation she did not elaborate in detail on the life spent with her mother, mention of whom was made in reporting that after her father's death her mother had struck up a relationship with another man.

Following her explanation of events, Sane continued to use the possessive pronoun, as in "*my* father" (ubaba wami), which suggested a strong bond and good relationship with him. In practice and in isiZulu, the noun "*ubaba*" is used to address 'father' or 'dad', which is understandably correct or proper in a normal conversation or response. What is noticed is that when "my" (*wami*) is used together with the noun (subject) "*ubaba wami*", there is evidence of possession and egocentrism, suggesting a special kind of relationship, connectedness, love, sense of belonging, and indication of inclusion. In the case of Sane's reference to her father, it further explains the father/daughter identity or the kind of relationship meant while representing a sign of respect between the child and a parent. Conversely, the "otherness" appeared in her exclusion of the stepfather from the rest of the family: "*wathandana nomunye ubaba*" (fell in love with some other man). Therefore, it is probable that with the kind of attitude to the relationship uncomfortable actions were displayed, albeit a situation difficult to change, intervene in or voice ideas and wishes about. This kind of experience emphasises the need for individuals to be able to take actions themselves, to challenge any form of perceived and practical alienation, inequality, domination, subordination and marginalisation. The view is supported in literature in which critical theorists (Hill, 2010:8; Walmsley, 2001:188; Oliver, 1995:107;), explain how culture is produced and reproduced, how individuals struggle with meanings which shape their socialisation, and how power, or a lack of it, affects this production and reproduction of culture.

Compared to Sane, in Lasts' responses there is no mention of his father, however his orphanhood was related in the following manner: "*….noma ngingasenaye umzali, my mother, a single parent".* He avoided articulating plural for "parents" or "father" in his description, hence the use of a singular form in the choice of words such as "*umzali*" and not "parents". Lasts also amplified "single parent" and "my mother", which indicated that in his experience of events leading to orphanhood there had been no connection, hence the exclusion in his life of a parent. In addition, the consistency demonstrated by the participants, and which he managed to highlight from the initial stage, was an indication that for him '*he []his father] did not exist*'. The only connection he had was with "*my [his] mother*", his siblings and to a large extent extended family. The absence of his father seemed to pain him, as when he was describing the network of people whom he regarded as his family. Some non-verbal cues emerged (banging the table… silences and visible holding of tears…) which later diminished as engagement deepened and fears and reservations eased. This observation is supported in literature, as grief is a natural response to loss and is a highly individual experience. As McGregor (2003:11) point out, "the bereaved need and want to talk

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about loss including the most microscopic details connected to it and that sharing diminishes [grief]".

It emerged that when utilising CER and PAR, participants as co-theorists and co-researchers in the research context began to give meanings to events leading to death and following the parental loss. This was a determinant of participants' behavioural patterns and revelation of their personality as orphaned students in an HEI. As Sandelowski (2000:336) states: "In qualitative research it is often argued that human experiences can never be understood without taking cognisance of social, cultural, linguistic and historical characteristics that shape those experiences".

5.2.1 The impact of shift in family life

In most communities, and socio-culturally, there is silence around issues of death. Children and youth are deemed voiceless prior and after the events of a funeral. This is also evident in the participants' responses above, in which the use of "*we had to move" 'they said",* and *'they felt*" highlights what was experienced by most orphaned participants, namely an instruction from adults in authority and power directed without consultation and unquestioned. This action marked the first change of life after their parents' death and they all agreed that "*things or situation changed*". This demonstrates a situation in which they had to succumb to authority, without questioning or asking for further clarification, only behaving and acting accordingly. It runs counter to the aims of CER to disrupt the status quo, as posited by Merriam (2009:34) and McLaren and Kincheloe (2007:36), leaving self-destructive or counterproductive actions unchallenged.

Some orphaned students reiterated challenges posed by the shift of family life, that is, "*separation from the siblings*" which according to Bronfenbrenner disturbs interrelationships in the family as a microsystem that connects the individual's psychological development to social context and other sub-systems (2.5.3). This was witnessed in Lasts's text identifying the death of his mother as not having an impact on the close network he had with his extended family members *"nanoma … nomndeni ovulekile" (even though…extended)*. Lasts's feelings of consolation based on the behaviour of family members are supported in BEST, which acknowledges that no human being develops in isolation, but rather there is a relationship between an individual and his/her context (2.5.3). Bronfenbrenner and CER note that in the microsystem individuals should not be treated as passive recipient of experiences, but as people who help to construct the settings (family). This is also supported by Branson,

Leibbrandt and Zuze (2009:8), who state that in such an environment some people are made more vulnerable than others (2.5.3.1). For orphaned students (participants) in general, experiences of the emotional insecurity and anxiety manifested themselves in the microsystem as represented in the response: *"They said, I was told, they felt, we had to"*. Here adults as responsible for the wellbeing of the orphaned participants are constructed in a way Janks (1997:337) refers to as 'predominant material and verbal processes' in his definition of transitivity processes in CDA.

Further noticed in one-on-one discussions with participants was a very detailed yet meandering journey of orphanhood and chronology of events which were orderly presented in reflecting on challenges brought about change after loss, hence "*movement*". Unlike the other participants, Jabs had a lot much to communicate and was hysterical in his introduction:

> *"UJabs uqhamuka (Jabs resides) from uMgababa. He had a problem (inkinga) while in Grade Eleven in two thousand and nine August when his mother passed away after only two days of being unwell [*some moments of silence and breathing hard…holding tears…but continues with a trembling voice…finally tears rolled down the face but no sound of crying, a series of short breaks].

During the initial one-on-one discussions with Jabs it was interesting that he referred to himself in the third person approach, which suggests distance between himself and the person he was supposedly talking about. This distance seemed to be a luring kind of distance which persuades and allowed other people entry to his most sensitive emotional space, facilitating opportunities for disclosure. He thus portrayed himself as 'the other', 'listening together to the experiences of this individual [Jabs]'. As he narrated his experiences it was with the hope that sharing the load could enhance expression, hence depersonalising himself. In contrast, in reflective journals, findings show no consistency with how Jabs structured his responses, and he comfortably used "I" when writing. This further suggests that in one-on-one discussions and meetings there are issues that are not easy to talk about openly. Reflective practice allows for collective discursive practices, in which there is an expression of the interior voice of free and autonomous individuals bring up experiences, thus enhancing development of own identities as confident selves.

Drawing from Jabs' responses and congruent with the above finding, for some people sensitive topics that pertain to issues of loss through death are uncomfortable to discuss and therefore for others using a third person strategy may open a space for the individual to 'distance' him/herself. Discussions about emotional issues become less personal, more

engaging and easier to share while focusing on factors that might be relevant in that discursive practice to ameliorate the situation. Psychologically and psycho-socially, this intervention strategy, according to Hornby (2003:112), suggests one of the major principles of grief counselling applied to the bereaved, that is, to be given an opportunity to participate and take an active part in the discussions. In view of participants in this study, a point put forward in *Children on the Brink* (2004:6) confirms the observation that at this time Jabs fell under the "new orphans" category (2.7.1) and he was overwhelmed with grief caused by a series of deaths in the family that followed the loss of his mother. Initially, in the one-on-one discussions, his experience was accompanied by episodes of emotion and tears.

However, it was observed that even when Jabs was given some moments to sob his pain away or suggestion to stop or postpone a meeting, he was determined to continue sharing experienced emotional stories:

> *My mum passed on Saturday the ninth of August two thousand and nine on my hands… helping my aunt to dress and bathe her [cries and cries for some time]; the funeral… on the following Saturday the sixteenth; … on Monday the eighteenth I didn't go to school and on the nineteenth, Tuesday my mother's sister passed on…, followed by my dad's brother two months later; three months later my dad's sister followed; four months later my sister who comes after me and three months later my dad's sister again… On the twelfth of August two thousand and ten then dad died and I heard learned about it two days after the funeral…*

Watson and Watson (2011:63) also emphasise that from a critical emancipatory point of view, reflective journal entries, individual and group discussions were deemed necessary since participants' spoken and written messages need to be understood by all. For example, CDA assisted in understanding orphaned student's thoughts, beliefs, and actions which brought insights to challenge injustices, oppression and marginalisation collaboratively by critically analysing text. To concur with Watson and Watson (2011:67), Bronfenbrenner (1986:725) in his ecosystemic theory supports the view that the focal point is on understanding the quality of the interactions and change in different social contexts of a person's life. The change and quality of interaction seemed to improve from the initial informal one-on-one discussions to more flexible focus group discussions marked with development of self-confidence and improved interpersonal relationship between team members.

Notably, engagements with some participants, especially in one-on-one discussions, dismantled social relations or family relationships evoked sensitive emotions that led to

observable tears. This observation confirms Howard, Matinhure, McCurdy and Johnson's (2009) assertion that mourning and grieving are associated with tears, which in some cases lead to depression. Importantly, tears sometimes allow one to release sorrow and grief in a natural way and are not a sign of weakness, as perceived in some cultures. Therefore, allowing Jabs a space for tears (for the first time, as he stated) meant that there was an understanding about them alleviating sorrow, softening grief, reinvesting emotional energy, bringing acceptance of the death and eventually leading to joy (3.4).

He related:

> *After her passing on [they] took the kids (two younger siblings) and were [moved] to live with my grandmother's in Portsheptone two weeks after the funeral... I was [left behind] to live at home with my not so good and not supportive father who would drink from Sunday to Sunday…"*

The unstable kind of life of '*being moved*' and '*taken*" by several families without proper support and irresponsible behaviour on the part of the surviving parent for Jabs seem to be the greatest challenge, as he points out: *"not so good, irresponsible, not supportive"* father. To be left behind with a person possessing irresponsible characteristics substantiates the claim about type of relationship he had with his father. It is not surprising to learn about the reports that things did not work out between them, and that made him feel like an 'object' or 'a burden' to other people.

> *"… the relatives at Umlazi took me in … ended up being emotionally abused… …moved back to dad's house… left moved to other relatives… then to my friend's house … situation was very bad… moved to one family where the school organised me a place to stay… there were problems again …another family was organised by the school …. the situation went bad as well as in all these places my dad would not support me and the kids that side…*

The similar response came from Lungs and he said:

> "…*wadlula umama emhlabeni "[bathi] lapha ekhaya angihambe" ngayohlala nobaba* (biological father) *nestepmother*. Hmmm…life was not at all easy…that I can say. However, *impilo engasengiyiphiliswe* ekhaya yayisingenze (the difficult kind of life I had lived at home) '*ngaba strong ngingasamnaki umuntu'* (ignored some of the situations addressed to me)

The participants further added:

> *Surprisingly and with "my determination" I managed to finish and pass my matric. In two thousand and eleven, due to the lack of finances I stayed home the whole year at my grandmothers' house…".*

> "...ngaze *ngaqeda uGrade twelve*"ngazimisela" *ngokufunda ngosizo lothisha nga-aplaya and naku lapha ngikhona manje...'(In the end I finished and passed my Grade twelve and kept motivated and here I am now…).*

This lack of support further highlights the isolation felt and acknowledged by most of participants. Literature confirms that orphaned students or young adults who are deprived of love, guidance, care and support are likely to be vulnerable; exposed to social and psychological ills, for example, violence exploitation, health risks and discrimination (Skinner, Tsheko, Metro-Munyati, Segwabe, Chibatamoto, Mfecane, Chandiwana, Nkomo, Tlou & Chitiyo, 2004:8). In his closing statement, Jabs use of the word "*surprisingly*" suggests a mission accomplished unexpectedly, resilience and perseverance and a sense of hope for the future which kept him going in the HEI. One would have thought because of the challenges faced and vulnerabilities to which Jabs and Lungs and other participants were exposed, they would not have passed or performed well in matric (Grade 12) and would not have accessed an HEI. Lungs, on the other hand, did not have to move from his home but experienced challenges in the yard, where eventually he moved to his stepmother's house and with assistance from teachers in school managed to access the HEI. For both participants, accessing and surviving the HEI meant that they had almost achieved their goal and were proud of the road, with its hindrances, they have travelled.

The effect of the situation was well expressed by Lungs: *"…lesisimo sangenza ngaba indoda"* (I became a man), suggesting that from the suffering he changed and became stronger than before, not just physically but also, importantly, intellectually. To a large extent the findings expressed growth from boyhood to manhood and the emphasis is on transformation and resiliency by which the two participants embraced challenges and learnt from them. Socio-culturally, it is understood that a young boy who exceeds his expected roles and excels in given activities is regarded as 'a man'. Some strong women who do well, are powerful, have financial power, and supersede other women and males of their age, are also regarded as 'a man', that is 'a woman acting like a man'. Likewise, and drawing on Jabs and Lungs responses, it shows that they accepted hardship but, because they experienced death while in high school, they were motivated to work with determination towards realising their goals in HEI. From the literature, Theron (2011:18) illustrates this as reliance, where

acceptance of penury as an interim condition was a driving force for a hope and better future.

To most students in this study, accessing an HEI confirms that each student has capabilities and ability to contribute in the process towards the construction of reality. Visser (2007:68) and Mohajer and Earnest (2009:432) found that involving pre-service teachers who are orphaned in this study was important as it encouraged engagement in the construction of self in HEIs and analysis of a larger socio-political world that influences cognisance of diverse groups of people, and respects the rights and promotion of empowerment, equality and interdependence of all. This was a further motivation for participants for collaborative practice in the development of the psycho-social empowerment framework, however, the emphasis is on the influence of context on the individual, and as Freire (2000:19) notes in his theory of critical consciousness, to uncover or unveil covert knowledge, provision of safe and trusting environmental conditions is critical as it yields the possibility for orphaned students to vigorously participate in dialogues and to transform their challenging lived experiences. The above detailed responses from participants placed emphasis on the changing circumstances, which as a result of moving around had an impact on the wellbeing of orphaned students.

In contrast was the 'love' accredited to mothers, displayed in the form of a special bond, mutual understandings and interdependent relationships, as compared to the relationship developed with fathers. Likewise, it is in the microsystem that the individual, the family and interpersonal relationships begin or manifest themselves. It is interesting to understand the way in which Shaffer and Kipp (2010:58) and Addison (1992:18) interpret Bronfenbrenner's' notion about the microsystem in which they mentioned: "The successful journey of life of a student to HE and to self-sufficient adulthood begins at home…" The following show how positively some of the participants regarded their mothers and the kind of relationship they had:

> *Jabs: I don't know how to define or describe my relationship with my mother. She was 'everything to me' and we had a very good relationship, we were 'like this'* [showing/putting pointer fingers for both hands closely together] implying togetherness.

> *Lasts: Eyshie…! Umama wayeyiqhawe, useyilo namanje kimi (a hero, she still is to me)…, eyihard worker (esebenza kanzima), ehlala ekhona ngasosonke isikhathi (always there for us), eyikokonke kimi (everything to me). She provided me with everything ngingashodi ngalutho…she supported me and 'respected my decisions'.*

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We were so tight…; engethemba, eziqhenya ngami (she loved and trusted me and she was very proud of me)…

MXO: I don't know my father, my whole life I had my mother doing everything for me, my siblings and her sister's children who passed away(my aunt). After her death in May this year I was just left alone…. I am not sure even now how to pick up the pieces and how she did it…how she managed…!

Literature confirms and stresses the influence of parents within the family system and how vital it is as it fosters knowledge about beliefs, culture and norms, and values security and development of language. Therefore, when one loses a parent the expectation would be to lose the basic source of security and support for holistic development and emotional wellbeing (Leartham, 2005). Jabs described his mother *'everything to me, togetherness and trust',* whereas Lasts felt his mother was a *'hero…she still is to me, eyihard worker, ehlala ekhona ngasosonke (always there), everything to me".* This suggests unconditional trust and usually it is mothers of participants who had this. The isiZulu proverb *"Intandane enhle umakhothwa ngunina (The best orphan is the one who still has a mother)"* affirms the attribute, which transpired in the descriptions participants presented on the kind of relationships they had with their mothers. In general all felt a need for true and profound love, evident in the role played by their mothers. MXO seemed to be overwhelmed by how his mother managed a role which was now relinquished entirely to him, as he resided in a YHH.

Jabs' dislike of the father's behaviour was shared by Lungs and Lasts (all male participants) about their fathers, but with emphasis on the unfair treatment rendered to their weak, vulnerable and sick mothers. The resentment was displayed in the one-on-one discussions, for example by Lungs:

'*Umama wagula kakhulu ephethwe 'ilesisifo'… "…lomuntu" ayethandana naye engamnakile, ezidlela utshwala, emshaya egula umama, nezihlobo egcekeni zingayingeni...Kwangihlukumeza kakhulu loko even namanje angikukhohlwa. I had to bathe, cook, feed and protect her from "lobaba". It was hard very hard….*

Lungs felt comfortable disclosing his mother's disease and status but could not mention its name, referred only to "ilesisifo (this disease)", yet he seemed to be informed about it. In the early days of the havoc caused by the spread HIV & AIDS, it became a common social practice to euphemise "this illness/disease", because of the stigma and discrimination associated with the virus. For communities who are educated and informed about the

disease one would have expected Lungs' family to be supportive of their sick daughter and her responsible eldest son. In South Africa, the government has made it a priority to educate all communities about the pros and corns of HIV & AIDS, whether teachers, students or members of the community.

In Lungs' words: *"lobaba, lomuntu, izihlobo egcekeni zingayingeni, bathi angihambe, ngaba strong ngingasamnaki umuntu"* (*this/that man, this/that person, relatives don't even care, they said I must go, I became strong, I didn't bother about a person)*, showing 'a distance apart' in interpersonal relationships, mutual disregard, unstable family relations and breakdown in communication between Lungs and his mother's partner, as well as his extended family in the yard. This suggest that for Lungs to cope he was developing 'a thick skin' and ignoring them, but eventually something good came out of all the suffering, "emotional and physical strength" to face the challenges in his microsystem. This view is echoed in Hosy's and Mxo's findings. Much emphasis was placed in accepting the situation and moving on.

Additionally, from Lungs' text and his choice of words the evidence is that he did not approve of 'this man' to be given a title of *"a father" or "a real man"* in particular, just "that person" (*lomuntu*) or "that man". His character and behaviour aggravated feelings of resentment and helplessness as he found the lack of support from the adult family members oppressive and unwelcoming, a kind of action that could not rescue their daughter (his mother), attend to his mother's vulnerabilities, or intervene in abusive relationship and sickness (HIV & AIDS) which led to both of them being discriminated against. He felt that he needed to fight and be responsible for rendering care and support to his mother, even if it meant he was resented by all the family. In this way Lungs' experiences of pain gave him a chance to gain emotional and spiritual strength and learn to live a self-reliant kind of life, even in an HEI. Crucially, the participants found that the experience facilitated rapid growth and was an encouragement, teaching them to fight for the powerless, voiceless and oppressed by circumstance and context. They had to make a decision not to give up, hence the interest in participating in this study. Participation seemed to be an enabler to open up.

5.2.2 An opportunity to "unblock" silenced emotions

I have included unlocking or unblocking silenced emotions under this sub-topic of understanding participants because every individual experiences emotions, whether young or adult. Emotions can be either pleasant or unpleasant, but silenced emotions have a

tendency to be triggered by certain circumstances in life. It is acknowledged that people wish to be listened to, valued and respected at some point in life. The value and respect of the views narrated by participants and understanding of emotional weaknesses and strengths presented during collaborative engagements formed the basis of self-awareness. For instance, I felt my decision was informed more by the important points elevated in Bolton (2010:31) about lived experiences, in that:

> …our stories are [*inextricably*] intertwined with themselves and with those of others where people tell and retell their experiences through stories but sometimes treat their own stories unimportant because they trust that important things are for those who are well known or powerful.

Messages carried in stories told re-told about individuals and others eventually shape perceived existence in different contexts, influencing identity and not in isolation but "*inextricably intertwined*" with others. They have the power to shape perceptions and experiences and many aspects of life that need to be considered, often the result of shared experiences.

A common tendency is mistakenly to believe one has worse experiences than others, especially if traumatic and painful, however, the power of collaborative practice and what Michael and Modell (2003:138 &139) refer to as "knowing-in-action" or "knowing-in-practice" formed a basis of how participants developed knowledge from repeated interactions with people with similar problems becoming a researcher in the context of practice. This happens while the professional is in the midst of interaction with the situation. Hosy and Sane agreed on this in their responses:

> *Hosy: … sometimes you think you're the only person who has a problem or maybe experience emotional, physical and financial challenges whereas there are people out there who are having MORE than yours.*

> *Sane:… but this group has helped me realise that other people have more problems that are far greater than mine.*

The use of the degrees of comparison in '*more than yours*' and '*far greater than mine*' suggests the realisation participants attested to had been brought about by reflective practice, critical thinking and self-realisation.

The view is also affirmed in the caution discussed in Chapter 4 about emancipatory research where it is stated that "…sometimes sensitive research may take the life of its own, ethically

problematic territory, where meeting turns to become almost like psychotherapy session…" (Cohen et al. 2011:166). This warning forms an integral part of CER, BEST and PAR, the investigation being on lived experiences and connectedness. When a person losses someone, for MacMahon and Patton (2006:101), Watson (2006:52) and Arthur (2006:63), people need to connect with their own orphanhood stories if they are to understand their own history, values, biases, beliefs, prejudices and socio-political systems. One other consideration is the knowledge of the critical role of a relationship between an individual and his/her context.

This thinking is more informed by socio-cultural practices, because in most communities orphaned individuals, especially children, adolescents and youth, are not supposed to talk about the dead, have no one to talk to or space to voice their feelings about their loss. The literature has demonstrated that different people react to bereavement in different ways, and that some of the bereaved would wish to talk about loss, down to the most minute details in a belief that sharing will diminishes it (see Corr & Corr, 1994:18; Leartham, 2005, in 3.4 and 3.5). Death of a parent may lead to unattended emotional and psychological support and in turn threaten psychosocial development of the orphaned.

Generally, and in summary, at some time, and when faced with challenging experiences, people need to be given care and support, unconditional love, reassurance of hope for the future, courage and motivation. Nevertheless, as a point of departure and in trying possibilities for the facilitation of self-awareness, it was important to understand participants first. This view is affirmed in literature, where self-concept is understood to mean what a person believes about him/herself, or a map that each person consults during moment of crisis and in situations requiring choice (3.6.1). Similarly, for most participants it was evident that active participation and collaborative engagement assisted in the attainment of certain qualities and self-awareness, then in turn the fulfilment of individual responsibilities for effective social relations.

From the findings in this subsection it has emerged that a family and relationships within the subsystems impact on how individuals (re)shape and are (re)shaped in diverse contexts, including HEI.

5.3   (RE)CLAIMING AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

Having demonstrated that emotional experiences aroused a realisation for a need to participate, this subsection examines opportunities and motivation as used in most of the

verbal and written responses of participants. I also draw on Bhengu-Baloyi (2010:218): "Through contemplation, people become thoughtful about themselves and as they become thoughtful about themselves, they also become more thoughtful about others." (Anonymous). This is supported in Bolton (2010:129) and Dunker and Parker (2009:54), who suggest that the process of exposure to reflective practice is an important innate value, a chance to increase awareness and ability to listen critically and freely express one's voice.

5.3.1 The effect of isolation and the possibility to change

During one-on-one discussions most participants confirmed that an opportunity to talk about the loss of their parents through death had not availed itself:

> *"…I have never talked about the death of my parents…";*

> *"…nobody has ever 'taken interest to listen' to how the death of my parents has affected me…"*

> *"Ngiyaqala ngqa ukukhuluma ngami nemizwa yami, eqinisweni nangebhadi angikhulumi ngami mina... (It's the first time for me to talk about me and my emotions, the truth and the unfortunate part is that I don't talk about myself)"*

> *"…actually this is the first time for me to talk about 'this issue' and in fact I don't want to…."*

The words *'never', 'ever', 'ngiyaqala ngqa' (first time); 'angikhulumi ngami mina (I [me] don't talk)'* illustrate how participants wanted to be perceived and what this kind of construction meant to them: "the what I prefer as a person". The use of "I", "mina" or "me" revealed the kind of persons they were and what their beliefs were. It suggests a position of "distance" "isolation" and a sense of "if it happens with other people, it doesn't with me", demonstrating resistance and claiming a position of "this is who I am and no compromises". It further illustrates the 'who am I?' that cannot be changed, interfered with, questioned or altered, and 'why now?' These words and statements portray a decided position and some finality of events in which the emphasis is on not challenging the situation but accepting it as it is: *"I have never talked… and I do not want to",* a position which the principles of CER and PAR oppose since they reject the strategy of effacing themselves. Working together s individuals can change their lives and those of others (Holland et al. 2001:155).

The statements were suggestive of '*an already taken decision'* by participants, a certain stance which to them superseded their consenting to participate in the study. It meant that as much as they had consented to participate there was '*no hope'* that something positive would transpire out of their contribution if they decided not to share their experiences as orphaned students in HEI. That much of the evil in the world could be ascribed to a lack of participation and involvement in issues that directly affect individuals psychosocially, participation meant avoiding sinking into depressive, fearful and negative attitudes. It suggested changing from 'warning*/refusal'* and some *'doubt'* in participating, and convey an atmosphere of gloom and pessimism. Critical theorists declare that for emancipatory purposes to gain satisfaction the outcome should come from empowering and enabling transformation of lives and conditions (2.3). For instance, Merriam (2009:34) recommends that students take actions themselves to challenge any form of discrimination, inequality, domination, oppression, subordination or marginalisation.

The last participant expressed an unwillingness to share his feelings and experiences, and referred to orphanhood as "*this issue*". I suspect this signals 'confusion' and 'not seeing agency' to deal with "this issue" which sounded unimportant at the time. On observation, in the first informal one-on-one meeting with the same participant it was evident that he was still bitter and in pain about the death of his mother. His responses were accompanied by intervals of tears and lengthy emotional silences (observable behaviours). The dramatic change in behaviour and interactive practice developed as narrated details of his suffering in his two last years prior to and first year at an HEI. Literature indicates that it is important to provide youth with clear detailed information at the time of a death or to involve them in funeral arrangements, as this acknowledges inclusion.

To be part of the close family members who give directions, taking decisions is important in closing the chapter or paying respects to loved ones, which Brid (2007:2) believes helps in their grief. Therefore, it is not surprising to learn that even though participants confirmed that they were not involved in the funeral of their mothers that marked unattended grief which they needed to tap on. For example, one participant expressed concern: "*nobody has ever taken any interest to listen to me…",* but this time it was said in a positive and promising way and he felt important and valued. The same viewpoint of engaging participants in an active and collaborative participation is found in Worthen, McKay, Veale and Wessells (2010:149), whilst McDonald (2012:34) highlights PAR as a qualitative methodology that respects participants' views and situations as individuals, and as a collective to promote social justice and creation of conditions to foster empowerment. Engagement for participants was

considered a tool which is democratic, equitable, liberating, life-enhancing and appreciated or valued.

At this stage it was time for the participants to relinquish a hold on wrongs committed against them as they would be inclined to miss this opportunity to voice their experiences and come up with a noble discourse about life in general. All deliberated on the opportunities to which they felt participation exposed them and ventilate their thoughts and emotions in varied ways. This justified their decision to seize the opportunity and others did not avail themselves (4.3.2.1.1; 4.3.2.1.2 & 4.3.2.1.3) when presented to them. As mentioned above (4.7), that discourse was analysed following the interrelated dimensions of Fairclough (1995), which highlights the socially and discursively embedded nature of any text.

The following discourses were drawn from participants' reflective journal entries, one-on-one meetings transcripts and some FGDs, about why they consented to participate in this study. What they hoped to achieve, as well as the relevance of the word 'opportunity' was a common factor for all participants (emphasis mine):

> *Hosy: An **'opportunity'** to 'work with a small group', 'sharing the emotional stories' that affected me and to know how to handle or solve such matters. ... so this project have made and provided me an **'opportunity'** to 'gain respect and support' from group members* (male participant).

> *Lungs: I see this group as going to help us to be 'able to share'. But from what I hear as the goals of the group and what has happened in the past group meetings….I think this is **"an opportunity"** for me to 'learn to share' and 'having other people listening to my decisions and my thoughts' (male participant).*

> *MXO: Unfortunately one did not get the **opportunity** earlier on. From what I hear this is one group that is going to help us deal with the 'challenges that we normally and individually' face…. Now it seems better because of '**this opportunity,** I feel that am able to 'speak out' about my problems with the goal to 'find solutions'. Being part of the group is **'an opportunity'** for me to learn more and 'understand complexities of life' as this will 'enable' me to free myself from internal/inner troubles … (male participant).*

> *Lasts: Engaging and participation in 'this group' I see it giving me '**an opportunity….** 'our group' is going to help us to 'work together' as next year I know for sure that there will be students who would come and face challenges and decide to throw the towel like I nearly did when I first came here,...I was helped by my friends (peers) to*

change my mind…..and come to put my thoughts with others and work collaboratively with others to 'help ourselves and others' (male participant).

Jabs: I hope to learn more from the group…. 'an opportunity' for me to 'talk about issues' to 'understand myself and others' better. I would also like to thank the group for showing courage and grabbing the opportunity and for 'US' all to having chosen education where individually we could have made different choices… (male participant).

Matu: An 'opportunity' to be 'an agent for change' since I have learnt from this project that being an orphan cannot be a barrier/obstruction in a way for success or in order to make a bright future for yourself (female participant).

Sane: "... being part of the group have given me 'an opportunity' to 'meet with people' whom I did not think I would have met in this context" … I foresee the project (framework) prospering in the future…. (female participant).

TPO: Ngiyajabula ukuthola "lelithuba elingandile" lokuthi ngikhulume ngalesihloko 'esithinta inhliziyo yami' kakhulu ngalababantwana engikhathazekayo ngabo yonke iminyaka. Mhlawumbe kukhona okuhle okuzoqhamuka ngalegroup yenu and ngibonga nokuzunikela kwenu ukuthi nifise ukuzisiza ukuze kusizakale nabanye abezayo eminyakeni ezayo. [I am thankful of this rare opportunity of meeting with the group which I'm always worried about all years. Your goals of changing your lives and that of others while working towards the development of a framework have my full support and am hopeful something very good will come out of this meeting] (female guest) .

In these responses it emerged that participants' aspirations supported their engagement in this collaborative study and marked the beginning of critical consciousness, which Freire (in Mustakova-Possardt, 1998:13) claims is "…the ability of individuals to take perspectives on their immediate cultural, social, and political environment, to engage in critical dialogue…. to define their own space or place with respect to surrounding reality".

I am aware that CDA is aimed at illuminating ways in which the dominant forces in the society construct versions of orphanhood, favouring their interests and used to uncover distorted realities hidden in written and verbal discourses (Nieuwenhuis, 2012:102; Locke, 2004:42). For example, participants personified and saw an opportunity to participate as an *'enabler', 'a giver or provider of something they have been denied of', 'a helper', 'a teacher',* and contextually as *'a means of communication' and 'a space for sharing'.* In short, they

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embraced an opportunity which enhanced working together for their own benefit first and for others as well.

In the above voiced experiences demonstrated in all the participants' responses it was noticed that the word *"opportunity(ies)"* resonated from the initial meetings, in the informal and formal one-on-one meetings, in written reflective journal entries, verbal reflections as well as FGDs. The realisation of the importance and value of consenting to participate in this study was amplified in the utterances of all team members and in the word *"opportunity"* throughout the process of research. An "opportunity" is a favourable appropriate time which is believed that once missed is not regained, and providing one requires that being selected [from many or others], though one has to strive to reach positive outcomes or to make it beneficial or worth taking. It is however acknowledged that the outcome might take two divergent directions, therefore one has to deal with the consequences, whether positive or negative. It is indeed difficult to seize an opportunity as it may involve taking a chance.

From the participants' utterances an opportunity presented to them yielded some positive results that led to unsettled feelings being reduced or minimised during participation. It has been noted (2.3 & 3.4) that emotional and psychological support assists the psychological development of the individual. Critical theory proposes that to bring about a more just and changed society participants have to work against self-destruction to enhance the principles of democracy. Some indicated what participation meant to them:

> *an opportunity to gain respect and support from group members;*

> *an opportunity to work collaboratively with others to help ourselves and others*

> *is an opportunity for me to learn more*

> *an opportunity to meet with people*

> *an opportunity to be an agent for change*

> *… this rare opportunity*

Inter-textual analysis and interpretation in the above participants' voices participation meant 'an opportunity' suggested a "valuable chance" afforded to them which was hoped would bring about change in their lives and in an HEI. By way of definition, this gesture (taking an opportunity) felt more than just taking a chance, a case of winning or losing, but participants felt it was time for them as orphan students to fight for the democratic value in HEI and in their communities. If the opportunity was to bring about transformation, "respect of human

dignity", "being valued", "trusted", "recognition of one's opinion as important and counting", "being treated like a human beings and "not being perceived as less important than others" all needed to be recognised. Some participants who initially presented feelings and signs of 'doubt' or 'being unsure', brought some change in differing ways. Notwithstanding that this exposure of choosing to participate, seizing the opportunity, was also a risk-taking venture, they opted to 'take a chance' anyway, by creatively putting an action into practice and patiently awaited the outcomes. Further shown is that some viewed the opportunity to participate as 'enabling and enhancing critical consciousness', for example:

"…'enable' me to 'free myself from 'internal/inner troubles'";

"…to talk about issues to 'understand myself and others' better";

"…to help us 'deal with the challenges' that we 'normally and individually' face..."

"…able to speak out' about my problems… with the goal to find solutions".

The choice of words "*enable, free myself, inner troubles, understand myself better, deal with my challenges, able to speak out*" are indicative of prior emotional disempowerment, living in emotional bondage, oppression, domination, subordination or marginalisation and this was a cry for psychosocial support that could bring about liberation. A point acknowledged by participants and which is corroborated by PAR principles and CDA is that collaborative work enables participants to use their capabilities and strengths while developing critical consciousness. McMahon and Patton (2009:103), Aliakbari and Faraji (2012:78) and Merriam (2009:36) write that CER presents contextual interrelationships, the aspect of 'agency' which refers to the participants' capacity to "act for and speak on their behalf fostering greater links between theory and practice".

In general, *c*onsenting to participation was viewed as having paid off, '*an opportunity not to be missed'* for most participants. It also transpired and was appreciated by participants that the whole person is a critical thinker who possesses decision-making skills. Accredited to CER is that it affects self, others, context and structures and influences a chance to do something about varied circumstances. Similarly, and in practice, people need support, reassurance and courage when faced with challenging experiences. Critical theorists believe that an environment should recognise and observe democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom, as construed in the South African constitution. Therefore, this opportunity to deal with issues that touched participants directly (orphanhood) and to solve their and others' problems, marked the beginning of empowered people working towards emancipation for a more just society.

Literature confirms that HE has the possibility of promoting socialisation, independence and self-reliance. It is safe to assume that a constructive and stimulating environment might enhance self-confidence, a sense of achievement and promotion of effective social skills. Attainment of certain qualities and self-awareness to fulfil these responsibilities are critical, especially for effective social group relations (3.6.1). This includes an understanding that a chance can have either positive or negative outcomes, left entirely to participants to make a decision. Decision-making (2.3) in the case of orphaned students confirms critical theory in that it transforms and empowers minorities pushed to the margins of the society.

Since participation was voluntary, it also aimed at bringing about a more just and changed community of student or individual who work against the self-destructive and counterproductive behaviour. From the responses above, this opportunity for participants resulted in transition from a sense of *"isolation, helplessness and discrimination"* to a more changed person, *"respected by others; work with others; support from others; meet with people; work collaboratively."* As indicated in PAR principles (4.3.1), PAR promotes social justice, therefore this opportunity became a condition that fostered empowerment to participants where they felt their views and situations as individuals and as a collective were respected. The same responses included "*sharing, working together, meeting others, talk about issues, speak out",* which signalled significant values of collaborative work.

Noticeable from participants' choice of words is not only speaking out and sharing, but also a goal of coming up with solutions, developing skills, listening and being listened to whilst devising problems-solving intervention strategies. Notably and demonstrated in the above phrases is how participants' discourses are framed and evolved during the discourse.

5.3.2 An opportunity to become representative for change

Gleaned from most of the participants' voices about claiming an opportunity was that for them it seemed like a second chance and they had to make the best of it. While there is an indication of declared deficit in standing up for oneself and suffering or struggling in silence or in isolation, in some of the participants' views they all valued the opportunity. On the other hand, it was evident that the opportunity availed them with possibilities to change in their thinking and in practice about the issue (orphanhood), as well to face the challenging situation and become "agents of change". As one of the participants said:

> *An 'opportunity' to be 'an agent for change' since I have learnt from this project that being an orphan cannot be a barrier/obstruction in a way for success or in order to make a bright future for yourself…*

The above corroborates Mahlomaholo's (2009:226) endorsement of CER as empowering, changing people's lives and stations, and liberating from unhelpful practices and thoughts. It further acknowledges the complexities in construction of the human psyche and behaviour, and considers exposure to emancipatory opportunities. What needed to be realised and accepted by participants is that to be a go-between is challenging and requires hard work. Steinberg and Kincheloe (2010:14 validate the benefits of CER as follows: "Critical theory demands an engagement with the suffering people of the lived world, with moral dilemmas that face us the complexity of everyday life. It was developed to disrupt, to challenge, and to promote moral action."

To affirm the above notion, for some participant's acknowledgement of experienced challenges, silenced voices and emotional poverty meant that participation was going to bring about the following:

> *"… for me to learn to share and having other people listening to my decisions and my thoughts..";*

> *"…help raise awareness to the students who would come and face challenges and decide to throw the towel like 'I' nearly did when 'I' first came here (HEI)…";*

These responses show the importance of 'raising awareness', that is, sharing information and being prepared for what one is likely to experience. The suggestion is that being prepared and knowing where to go gives direction in acquiring skills and having options ready for whatever occurs. To be in the forefront of change meant to learn to share and be listened to, an empowering skill to be acquired for emotional strength to be enhanced. Currently and owing to contextual shifts, in some cultures seeking help from counsellors and talking about emotions is perceived as a Western culture and sometimes a sign of weakness, thereby perpetuating the culture of silence to individuals who might require formal intervention followed by experiences of loss through death. As stated in literature (3.6), adolescent orphans who are suffering are understood as not keen or do not see the need to acquire professional help, but mostly seek advice from relatives and peers/friends. It was found that collaborative work instilled teamwork and allowed for a space for openness, support, understanding and acknowledgement of student's emotions, for example, anger,

fear, sadness, guilt, and depression, which were important to consider since life is complex: *"… an opportunity to learn more and understand complexities of life…"*.

Notably from the above text by two participants, the element of "foregrounding" is amplified in how the participants decided to expose that which most believed were positive consequences, brought about by consenting to and grabbing the opportunity to participate in the research process. The element of omission is identified, which in CDA is also known as 'backgrounding' (Huckin et al., 2012:91). These appeared to be *"wishes"* that participants felt they should have been aware of, and which might have led to a different situation in their lives, with positive outcomes, for example, in the first, omission of *"the wish to be listened to", "the ability to share own stories with others", and "respect of decisions and own thoughts by others".* In the second, text language is used to show omission of a wish and warning, at the same time "raising awareness" by using 'I' as an example, highlighting the value of information sharing with other students before they even access HEI, or reaching out through dissemination of information so that they do not become quitters in life. In the last extract the wish *"to learn more through sharing", "realisation that life is complex"* and a wish to *"resolve emotional challenges"*. From these omissions, the intensity of their need and challenges is revealed.

Although the responses represented challenges, there was an indication of willingness on their part to move from owning and embracing their problems, to seeing this participatory engagement as a possibility for change. The same view is upheld in communicative action in CER (2.5.2; 4.3.1), in line with what CER proposes, that is, to work against the positivist paradigm, to see themselves as struggling and dependent individuals following their deficiency (orphanhood), whilst promoting empowerment and putting research into practice. The word '*presupposition*' appears when they acknowledged their challenges, the argument being that while there was a 'feeling of doubt' before consenting to participation and during the research process, the process of communicative action served to break barriers of communication and perceptions about self and others gradually changed. This is a goal of communicative action (Dunker & Parker, 2009:54; Tsoukas, 2009:3). The growing need for awareness brought about participation and resulted in transformation of individuals into new capable selves and their situations. The past and probably the present experiences of participants were an encouragement to develop what CER emphasises, that is, dialogical relationship. This is evident in Sane's response about an opportunity: *"... being part of the group have given me 'an opportunity' to meet with people whom I did not think I would have met in this context…"* On the other hand, she uses the following expression when

realising that her belief and thoughts were different from the reality, in support of the value of collaborative work and sharing, as it creates new meaning and new perception about life:

> *I had thought my life or background was the hardest than any other students and coming from the deep rural KwaZulu-Natal, but this group has helped me realise that other people have more problems that are far greater than mine.*

From the *textual analysis* above the words *'hardest', 'more problems', and 'far greater'* represented degrees of comparison which suggests "the before and after" communicative action, leading to the change of Sane's own beliefs. The words '*hardest life*' indicate a kind of life that is not comparable to anyone's, the third and last level of comparison. It represents a unique but isolated kind of life in which one believes his/her suffering is more painful than others. At same time there is a change of thought as a result of participation and sharing of knowledge hence Sane's' indication, '*I had thought.., but...'.*

5.3.3 The impact of discourse and socio-cultural practice

The sentence in Sane's utterances: "*I had thought life in… realise that other people had more problems that are far greater than mine".* Research indicates that it is not easy to share emotional feelings or issues pertaining death (3.3) since experiences of death through loss are sensitive and traumatic in nature. For example, MXO expressed this about participation: "*to free myself from internal/inner troubles…".* Therefore, and clearly, participation meant that participants were more ready to be participators in changing their lives than to be enslaved by circumstances.

This demonstrates the acknowledgement of differences in society as explained in Dworki-Riggs and Langhout (2010:348), namely that people are structured such that they are not at the same level and do not possess the same power, yet the 'simultaneous involvement and engagements' of all the members of the community in order to attain the agreed collective objective of the project (research) is beneficial. Furthermore, for participants the challenging differences and boundaries in power relations suggested that these should not be seen as barriers to participation but as a power shift and development of social change.

In essence, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory proposes that each person is a system unto himself or herself, a point affirmed in the way participants acknowledged the importance of the interdependent nature of people in diverse contexts and the development of relationships. They agreed that to be an active team member and to seize the opportunity

meant *"recognition"*, *"to be respected"*, *"important"*, *"regard"* and *"trusted"* to effect change for self and for others. The implication is that while it is understood that human lives are inherently complex, and the realisation that people do not exist in isolation, the opportunity exposed participants to working together, to *"change their lives and that of others"* whether physically, emotionally, psychologically, socially, economically, historically, culturally or politically. A point put forward by Sane and Lasts denotes how the context might influence who you are or how one can be influenced by it; or how it influences one's believe about how others perceive him/her and they said: "… *coming from the deep rural KwaZulu-Natal….";* *"…Ngiqhamuka le emakhaya eMnambithi".*

Sane and Lungs and other participants felt relieved to understand how important their participation was, since the principles of the groupwork have no bounds about where one comes from, but participation meant that they were all the same working towards a common goal. Therefore, whatever knowledge brought and shared collaboratively added value to the study, no matter where one resided or was located in the web of society. It is also noticed how powerful the context can shape who one is and the way one views reality. In general, rural environments have scarce resources so individuals from these contexts have a tendency to doubt themselves, see themselves as inferior to those from urban environments.

This is a reminder that CER posits that it helps to disrupt different kinds of oppression by blending action and personal voice through reflective practice in order to reach others. During PAR sessions participants had to get to know one another, enhanced through training workshops and mentoring (2.4.3; 4.10.1.2.1). Reflective practice also proved to participants that sometimes thoughts and perceptions can be self-destructive, marginalising by building hierarchies between students, hence Sane's thinking: "…*I thought my background was the hardest than any other students"*, yet through positive thoughts, hierarchies were destroyed by putting an action into practice. This is perceived as one of the liberating tools, as endorsed in Freire's lowest levels of critical consciousness principles (2.4.2.2.1).

This qualitative study considered contextual factors and holistic understanding of participants which eventually added commitment to seeing through the eyes of the people who are directly affected to working towards the betterment of their circumstances, that is, orphaned students in HEI. One of the participants confirmed the value of social interactions, openness, and democratic engagement he experienced in participation: *"this group has helped me realise that other people had more problems that are far greater than mine …to meet with people whom I did not think I would have met in this context (HEI)…".*

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The same point is supported in qualitative approaches when the researchers' roles are to uncover the world through another's eyes in a discovery and exploratory process, as explained by MacDonald (2012:35). A highlight for me was the realisation by participants themselves that I had no control, manipulation or influence over them, however drawing from the principles of PAR, the CER and BEST allowed them to assess what they believed in, at the same time working together towards a definition of potential solutions to their needs and challenges associated with orphanhood in HEI. Berg and Allaman (2012:3) and MacDonald (2012:35) suggest, that involving youth should promote the use of the experiences to ensure that voices often left out of substantive conversations about "orphanhood in HEI" are heard in an equitable and organised way, which meant working with others in the production of knowledge. Thus was echoed in MXO's response:

> *"… deal with the challenges that we normally and individually face…; …able to speak out about my problems … to learn more and understand complexities of life as this will enable me to free myself from internal/inner troubles…"*

MXO's words, *"normally and individually"* show that for the orphaned it is normal practice not to share or to accept the status quo without question. Also, to face challenges "alone" or not sharing is an indication of defeat on his part, perpetuating silenced voices and silenced emotion. However, even though MXO acknowledges the complexities of life, through participation the belief of the possibility of transformed self was probable. In addition, the opportunity for participation imparted some light in the way things work if people work collaboratively in the (de)construction of knowledge and to understand others better whilst learning from their experiences. The prospect to which most participants were looking forward was transformation of self and others, which is also stressed and acknowledged in CER (2.3.1), as participants are viewed as inseparable from what they know. One other view of relevance is the choice to utilise purposive sampling, which clearly endorsed inclusion as a sampling method of the study and yielded collection of data that was resonant, fertile and accurate in relation to experiences by participants.

The same evidence is affirmed in Matu's response on what participation meant for her: *"… an 'opportunity' to be an agent for change…"*, which called for repositioning, an undertaking of leadership roles, and to be in the forefront for change processes. In other words, the importance mentioned previously (5.3) is repeatedly emphasised and marked by embraced responsibility, accountability and transparency on their part as agents for change in the HEI context. The participants' responses suggest that, even though orphaned, they are less important than the rest of the student community. They possess capabilities and psychological strength (2.3), and a new insight that was evoked in them was as a result of

participation, making some realise that as much as they were orphaned students in HEI faced by a myriad of challenges, they were in a way better off than the other group of the student community who suffered like them, or even worse yet they still survived with parents:

> *Jabs: …even here in HEI I think we are far better as orphaned students because we know that it's just 'you alone all the way'. It would be very sad if your mum was still alive and cannot help after having worked so hard….*

> *Lasts: It is better to suffer now for me because I know what mum did when she was alive and healthy up until such time (death) came (silent for some time). I only suffered after she passed on and for me it is better that way for us and others in this group. We all know that painful as it is but "it is done to us" than a person who have parents but they are sick or unemployed and cannot provide…."That situation kills….angiyifisi (I don't dare experiencing it)*

I had an opportunity to collaborate with HE students on different levels, as an employee in this HEI as well as an active participant. Such an opportunity, according to critical theorists, allows a researcher and the researched an inextricable interaction about what is known to them, through the use of language resulting in shared reality (2.3; 2.3.1). Moreover, since the study is guided by the principles of a transformative paradigm (CER) and PAR methodology, this was an opportunity for me to build trust and to allow participants to know more about myself. It was important for me to get to know them better whilst at the same time the emphasis was on understanding the goals and importance of the study. Literature has also demonstrated that in HEI the culture is different from that of school. Each institution is guided by its principles and own culture.

Accordingly, participants echoed that the engagement and participatory action in this project was a rare opportunity for them, giving them a platform that no one has previously presented them with, that is, to talk about themselves, their emotions, perceive and reflect about issues and circumstances critically. They are sharing and creating knowledge, making and sharing their decision collectively and, most of all, coming up with a empowering orphaned students' framework that identified silences and gaps in the (re)construction of an orphaned student in HEI. An interesting observation was their satisfaction of learning that students will be meeting with other orphaned students and the keen interest in sharing their experiences of being orphaned. Attention is clearly drawn and underlines the two distinct modes of action, namely *"work"* and *"action"*, supported by Karr and Kemmis (2005:350). The emphasis in critical approaches in HEI is to consider that the pre-service teachers had double roles, as teachers and researchers in ttheir own experience.

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The process of analysis for Fulcher (2012:2) is concerned with how language is used by individuals to construct versions of their experiences, drawing on cultural and linguistic resources in order to construct their talk in certain ways and to have "certain effect" in a particular society. A strong emphasis set forth in Ziegler, Paulus, and Woodside (2014) is that language creates rather than represents lived experience. The extracts below show how engaging in the group for the three participants created some change from the way reality meant to them. Participation in a group brought a shift from isolation and individualistic behaviour to a more accommodative way of perceiving the situation:

> Hosy: …'an opportunity' to put my thoughts with 'others' and work collaboratively with 'others' to help ourselves and 'others'

> Jabs: I hope to learn more from the group…. 'an opportunity' for me 'to talk about issues' to 'understand myself' and 'others' better.

> Mxo: "…this is [one group] that is going to help us 'deal with the challenges' that we normally and individually face… Ngicabanga ukuthi ngizokwazi ngizokwazi ukuphumela obala ngezinkinga zami ngethemba lokuthola izixazululo (I feel that I am going to be able 'to speak out' about my problems with the goal to find solutions)"

The accommodating side of the views of following participation is mainly indicated in the word "*others*", which brought new meaning that life is not about 'the me' only but allowing others into ones' thoughts, and shifts the focus from self into a better understood self and understanding of others. This confirms PAR on knowledge, that it is best obtained through interactive and empowering relationships with the emphasis being on using the participants' language of choice. This is supported in Somekh and Zeichner's (2009:6) presentations that PAR proved to be a facilitating methodology which allowed participants to move from the margins of society to the centre, and participants put action into practice collaboratively while promoting social justice through creating conditions that foster empowerment. The emphasis is highlighted in Jabs and MXO's responses "*talk about issues", "deal with challenges*" and '*speak out*". By speaking out they are committing to disclosure about personal issues, feelings and challenges which require thorough decision-making and resiliency on the part of the participants. Literature (Masten, 2007:92; Martinez, 1993:2) confirms that resiliency is a common attribute to most people which is enhanced through learning, continuous dialogue where people begin to talk about their problems, plan some actions about those challenges and eventually liberate themselves from fatalism and internal oppression if empowered to do so. Therefore, PAR as distinct qualitative approach which is democratic, equitable, liberating

and life-enhancing (4.3.1) seemed to be a tool for self-actualisation by participants and most importantly had the possibility of enhancing development of improved self-esteem.

Additionally, MXO's words, *"this is one group"* and *"normally and individually"* suggests critical consciousness that has developed, based on reflection on events leading to the individual internal oppression which is as a result of not sharing with the purpose of learning. This representation through language indicates some of the issues that are not mentioned but which are interpreted as a common practice that is normal for individuals to do, say or behave. Firstly, MXO points out by reflecting on many other groups in which one could become involved for assistance, but participation in this research process seemed to bring some hope for the future, emancipation and participants to see themselves beyond the present and the past, but ultimately able to project into a future that it is possible to (re)created and (re)build in this HEI.

5.4   DISCOURSES OF ORPHANHOOD: FROM DESPAIR TO HOPEFULNESS

According to Abebe (2010:461), orphans are variably found in different societies and are most likely to fall into both situational and structural poverty, to have their rights violated in various ways and, consequently, to participate less in the society in which they live. This statement suggests that HEI students as participants, when empowered, have a major role in the (re)construction of knowledge and improving democratic policies (2.7.2). This affirmation indicates that the use of students' voices in this research enhanced creative critical thinking, dialogue and reflective practice.

Confessions made by participants on the question of how they understood orphanhood and coping strategies they used to fight orphanhood challenges were generated and noted as opposing words (opposites) and transformed selves. Imagining what manifests in one's mind if such a question is posed is consequential to the realisation of destructive and negative ways of using 'actual words' associated with orphanhood and orphan. The following choice of words illustrated in participants' responses described their feelings with a list of words used in different contexts to answer varied questions. For example, in general, orphanhood for most participants was initially associated with despair and loss of hope:

> List A: *"…poor, poverty, burden, unhappy, nobody, isolation, discrimination, begging, suffering, unfortunate, abused, loneliness, hunger, liar, fend for yourself, hopelessness and helplessness; dependent, hardship….". angiyinto yalutho;*

> *ngibukeleka phansi; anginabani; ngiyisihlupheki; ngiwumthwalo; ngiyisilambi; intandane…"*

The extent of negativity associated with orphanhood is clearly exhibited. I was aware of the weakness of using words in a text as highlighted by Janks (2006:330), that in CDA sometimes words cannot be used as a whole but they follow one after another to give meaning. Using or uttering one- or two-word phrases, participants highlighted how they perceived themselves as orphaned students and how they felt they were perceived socially.

As I was working with them I felt that there was much negativity underlined in these meanings and shaped the way they felt as people who had no one, hence the use of the word "*anginabani*"(I have no one to take care of me). " Becoming aware of how these words are used demonstrates the effects of power relations, personal and impersonal relations. For example, Lungs' '*actions*' displayed that he recognised actions of discrimination from family members, stating *"umuntu akeneliseki"(you can never satisfy a person nomatter what and how much you do),* however he believes that he (un)consciously chose to become self-destructive by accepting things the way they are, as a way out which, according to critical thinkers, eventually reinforces unequal distribution of power. In a way, this was further picked up and confirmed in his further statements, that: *"people (abantu) expect you to beg as an orphan, sometimes you're forced to do without; to take decisions whether you like it or not…"* This and other of Lungs' remarks demonstrated and confirmed his suspicions about the perceptions and treatment of orphaned students by some members of the community. Conversely, the following words in list B represented the opposite of negatives experiences or perceived by participants.

> List B:"… *strong, trying hard, can do it attitude, hopeful, resilient, strong believer, a man; strive for excellence, perseverance, adapt easily, adjust easily, independent; grow quickly/fast, think for others, decision-maker…"*

Accordingly, in list A, words used by participants suggested some form of deficiency, emotional scarcity or poverty connected to negative nuance. The severity of negativity was further demonstrated in participants' responses, identifying the meanings which indicated two contrasting understandings of what they believed discourses on orphanhood meant.

Taking the impact of textual and socio-cultural practice, for instance, meanings in both lists suggest a form of transformation in how they perceived orphanhood or a shift from the level of despair to one of hopefulness. This view is supported by Janks (2006), as he mentions transformation as a point or shift from uncertainty to certainty. How these meanings are

articulated and received by others in diverse contexts also influences the kind of evidence from the interpretations. For example, Sane and Kazi stated that in their residence they felt isolated and discriminated, believing as orphaned students who received no funding from the HEI this implicated them as culprits for any missing or lost items (in a fridge or cupboards) by fellow resident, a persistently oppressive feeling of being a suspect. As an orphan one is perceived as a *'liar'* and hence the use of the words *"hunger, dependent"* because *"ngiyisihlupheki, ngiwumthwalo, ngiyisilambi" (poor, burden, hunger).* Lungs and Kazi also concurred with the perception but extended it to how extended family members made them feel they had to beg for assistance while in the HEI, every day. Most participants said they were made to feel like a "burden or charity case", therefore the framework was perceived by them as a transformative tool which was empowering, influencing the kind of vocabulary that shows a positive attitude towards change and self-confidence. This was affirmed by Jabs, as he stressed in his ideas about the framework that they should exercise the "*we can do it attitude*" and not be seen to accept "*handouts*", even from the structures of the HEI.

Concurrent with the above point, were concerns about my position, as a researcher and employee in the HEI in which the study was conducted. Most participants wondered how their participation would benefit them, even though they were aware of the goals of the study. The following demonstrated how the "perceived selves" and the "preconceived others" suggested the influence of the discursive practice or belief about orphanhood in society. Views from CER suggest that participatory approaches challenge conventional dichotomies between researcher and researched and place emphasis on the need to conduct research *with* and *for* participants rather than *on* them (2.3). These reflective responses were uttered by participants during the second group meeting based on the first one-to-one meetings, and their views about the goals of the project as a whole demonstrated an interplay between pre-conceived perceptions, confusion, fear and gradual changes, alterations and growth towards positive transformation in their perceptions. As demonstrated in Lasts' text, this is what CDA suggests happens when one text privileges ones another:

> Lasts: In the beginning I had that *'fear'*…The topic gradually led to *'her'* starting to ask me about my background and then I thought now I don't have parents. Oh! I was like *"this person"* wants to send me back emotionally. I thought that after she was *'done with me or her research'*, she would *'leave me suffering in pain 'alone'*, but I discovered that *'she was not like that'*.

Although this participant had consented to participation in the study, there seemed to be uncertainty about my position and my objectives, hence the use of words: "*this person", "her research",* and *"suffer alone…"* in his text. This interpretation represents feelings of

powerlessness versus power, uncertainty versus certainty, individuality versus teamwork. In Lasts' text there are concerns about issues of unequal power relations, the kind of experience considered a lesson by critical theorists who caution against collaborative research adopting emancipatory paradigms that yield no changes in one's interpretation of the world. The implication of utilising critical theories is that power is relegated and shared amongst all participants (2.3), a notion that CER and participatory approaches challenge conventional dichotomies between researcher and researched and promote interrelationship in dialogues, and promote teamwork in which individuals learn to understand themselves and others better. Each participant had preconceived ideas about the study, as exemplified by Sane:

> I was 'confused' as to what the *'lecturer'* wants *'from me'*….? I wondered why is she *'bothered by us'* because she has *'her own money and her own things'*, why does she *'care about us'*? But when I met her and as we continued working with her I found that '*she was very kind and unomoya omuhle'*.

Initially the confession was based on how she felt from the invitation to participate in the study as she did not believe the set objectives put forward were real, thinking the lecturer held some covert motives. It was not surprising to sense an element of trust shaken from doubt followed by fear, confusion and later surprise in her response. The demonstration of the existence of power relations was intensified in the use of *"lecturer versus students (us) maintaining feelings of "superiority and inferiority"; "importance and unimportant", "haves versus have nots"* (Marx's views, 2.2); and *"bothered about us versus not bothered".* All these contrasting ways of seeing as an orphan led to interpretation in the text by one participant in list B above: '*I am nothing', 'I have no one', 'I am poor'*. These opposite meanings show a great divide and barrier that needed to be dismantled for the process to effectively progress and to concede expected outcomes.

The main concern for most participants was '*fear of reliving the past and be[ing] left wounded'*. In other words, there was a sense of "otherness" and they all agreed that they felt it proper for them to be part of the team, the feeling mainly based on the question "who am I (an orphan) as compared to a person who has everything (lecturer)". They thought their contribution was considered unimportant to those with power: "powerless and voiceless". Hosy concurred with the other participants:

> *Ok, I or me too was extremely 'surprised' when I was recruited to be involved in this study. I had lots and lots of questions… I thought that this project was going 'to evoke feelings that have been placed aside' because I don't have parents and all that stuff...*

I was also aware and wary about participants reliving their emotional past experiences, hence the debriefing sessions to deal with the aftermath of the research findings (4.6)

Setting the goals of the project clearly and being mindful that in qualitative research participants' voices are important, so the methodology utilised recognised that participants were human and they were treated with respect, not as objects, with their subjectivity enhanced timeously as affirmed in (4.2.1). This interestingly and quickly revealed that while a person in context is pushed by circumstances to the margins of the society, if critically and actively engaged in the process and empowered to do so, with close collaboration and sharing of knowledge, transformation is possible. In the above, participants' demonstrations of some change of attitude and perception about the "other" made it appear that the principles of PAR and CER had enhance the possibility for transformation. This exhibited evidence in the selected text and certain words highlight that at some point one's thoughts and beliefs might seem real and valid. However, when presented with an opportunity to reflect about the situation, change in point of view might influence change of perception or attitude, as represented in "list A" towards or to eventually reach "list B", as proposed in a transformative paradigm. The implication is that for any challenging life experience and everyday life complexities, exposure to supportive and relevant strategies to deal with the situation means deeper and more complex understanding of self, which further lead to changes, growth and alterations (2.3.1).

On the other hand, it must be noted that the effect for change and growth begins with self-realisation and development of critical consciousness. This realisation was maintained in a discourse of two participants: *'….but I discovered that 'she was not like that' and …. 'but when I met her and as we continued working with her I found that 'she was very kind and unomoya omuhle'.* It was noticed that being exposed to reflective practice participants' responses raised hopes about their commitment to the project and a sense of ownership, leading to perceiving themselves in a transformed way. The evidence of the shift gradually improved from when engaged in the informal and formal one-to-one meetings to the first group meetings and the other meetings that followed.

The positive transforming selves drawn from the text became an important tool in assisting in the intervention processes when working towards changing their circumstances and those of others and the HEI context. To elaborate on the observation, one of the participants, Jabs, in his response through both verbal and written reflections indicated that as orphans they needed assistance, so it must be understood that they did not want *"handouts"*, reflecting a feeling with which all participants concurred. He felt that the practice of being given material things is an act of oppression in which an individual has to wait for others for any assistance

instead of being given resources, and thus gain knowledge which should be shared with others instead of individualistic assistance.

This view was supported by one other participant who claimed that awaiting for and accepting *'handouts'* is consequential to one losing his/her voice and having no choices. The practice gives or perpetuates more power to those who have power and the others are in a way oppressed as much is decided for individuals. It shows that one loses oneself as a person and is treated and taken as an object, *'the other',* with no power and on the margins or receiving end. Participants' responses call for people in power to provide those in need with what Jabs referred to as a *'kick-start'* which would pave the way for a realisation of one's goals, especially if one has 'managed against all odds' to access HEI. Therefore, they are afforded an opportunity to work together and face challenges that affect them directly, the beginning of understanding themselves better.

Highlighting the importance of the value of the project and showing understanding of the complexities of orphanhood, Matu's reflective response stated that:

> *"It is important for me to engage in this project. 'I was made to think that being an orphan means that I'm different from others' ….I have learnt that being an orphan cannot be a barrier on the way to success or in order to make your bright future"*

The socio-cultural practice and social discourses position on an orphan as needy, vulnerable and a burden, is in line with what Matu believed in. Further stated is how some people are viewed as more vulnerable than others, which in the end bring about distortion of reality. The following participants made reference to Matu's statements, but further brought in the element of accepting hardship and challenges and fighting against dropping out of school and HEI, which suggested that they cherished their dreams, needing to realise their goals of a better future by putting education first, despite unfavourable conditions:

> *Hosy:…it is where life started to be tough. I had 'to fend for myself' …ngangingasatholi okufana nokwabanye. I remember one 'teacher bothered' himself and bought me new school shoes … even though… 'I tried to focus on my studies'.*

> *Jabs:…I took a decision yokuthi ngihambe ngiyohlala nesinye isihlobo eMgababa….wangixoshisa khona ubaba….I therefore took a decision to drop out of school as I had no place to live….but at school "othisha bangizamela" indawo yokuhlala eSphingo komunye nje umuzi….inkinga yesondlo yalidela ekutheni inhlalo ingabe isabayinhle, ngahamba…baphinda bangitholela enye indawo kwaShabalala 'ngaze ngaqeda isikole u grade twelve. (I took a decision to move in with a relative at*

uMgababa… dad plotted that they must chase me back…. "…the teachers tried to find a one family where I was placed at iSipingo. The problem was lack of financial support and that led to unwelcoming treatment by members of this family…"

The above responses confirm how the implications of the principles of the ecological systems theory and CER are represented. Critical theorists (2.2; 2.3, 2.3.1) believe that participants should not be denied a voice to speak about their own situation and the emphasis is on people taking actions themselves to challenge any form of discrimination, inequality, subordination and domination in any context. The options and actions by participants highlight persistence for the attainment of the goal. It is understood that if in a system the situation changes (not stable) that has a ripple effect on other systems. As Hosy states *"ngangingasatholi okufana nokwabanye" (I was discriminated from others),* while for Jabs his challenges in all the settings he was moved to were mainly about lack of finances to support him and he said*: "…inkinga yesondlo yalidela ekutheni inhlalo ingabe isabayinhle…" (The problem was lack of financial support and that led to unwelcoming treatment by members of this family…")*

Responses indicated how participants rose above oppressive past family backgrounds, the importance of striving for mutating and reinterpreting orphaned students' lives and the possibility for emancipation preceding some stability in HEI. The affirmation by participants' responses shows the terrifying consequences of death of parents, converting their environment into unstable, unpredictable, threatening factors and injustices, whether physiological, emotional, economic, cultural or political. Moreover, an encouragement in the ending statements of participants: *"…naku lapha ngikhona manje…" "…ngaze ngaqeda ugrade twelve" (here I am now and completed my matric)* and *"I tried to focus on my studies"* were indicative of a strong sense of self. Commitment by all to one goal to access HE and hopefulness to change their lives seemed possible and that embedded firmness to acknowledge that *"here am I and I will make it".*

To this end, and in elaborating on the meaning each of the participants generated, the power of reflective practice surfaced and proved to be a powerful point of departure that was encouraging to other participants. It must be borne in mind that even understanding that the question was about each participant as an individual, the reality remains that each individual develops in society and not in isolation. Therefore, in any collective discursive practice responses to questions is not about a single individual but requires close collaborative relationships and consideration of the context and time. This is corroborated the principles of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (2.5 - 2.6). Participants had different views on how the effect of interrelationships, instability, unpredictability within the systems and sub-

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systems should be maintained. Subsequent to that was what previous policies have emotionally, economically, politically, culturally and historically created and that affected the way they as orphaned students perceived themselves and their wellbeing in an HEI.

Importantly, the emphasis in the theory is on the importance of the interrelationships in a family which forms the foundation for all learning and development, and also what Cullen, Cullen and Lindsay (2013:303) attest to (3.4). In the microsystem (family) Bronfenbrenner believes the successful journey of life of individuals to and being self-sufficient adults who may add value to society begins. In explaining and defining themselves, some of the participants confirmed how relationships in the family brought about emotional insecurities and anxieties, or how the insecurities could either make or break a person.

In summary, from a theoretical perspective, critical theorists propose that the goal of the theory is to transform and empower minorities pushed to the margins of society. It can be said that critical research understands society (not what is going on) and the way things are in that society, with the hope of bringing about a more just society, changing from despair to hopefulness.

5.5   SHARED EXPERIENCES OF OVERCOMING BEREAVEMENT AND GRIEF

Literature confirms that bereavement is culturally bound, subjective and personal, and in many ways results in loss of self-esteem, as defined by Dane and Levine (1994:80) (3.4). The above definition highlights that if most societies have customs related to death and mourning, others feel deprived of mourning someone who has died because some individuals influence how others regard themselves. In general, in the South African context, currently and in the past, this is perpetuated by historical and political events that are designed to maintain an illusion that some people are superior to others, depending on where they are located in the web of the society. However, it is noticed that when people know their position, understand and conform to their socio-cultural values and beliefs, they thrive. Notably is that the young adults (orphaned students) in this study had their actions restricted by chronological age, position and status in the (extended) families, hence decisions were taken for them (Donald et al. 2005) (3.7). In the case of participants having to clarify their understanding and the influence of culture and its implication on orphanhood, mourning and grieving, varied perceptions came to light:

> *Jabs: I did not grieve the loss of my mother…things happened so quickly and everything was decided for us and my siblings.*

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Lungs: '… I felt so angry, I am still angry… I don't want to talk about it…/ …nobody bothered to find out how I felt and what I wanted to do and how…'

Mxo: '…all the members of the family left immediately after the funeral and I was left alone with my younger siblings… just alone…'

Sane: We were all told to move to stay with my grandmother… and that was it…

Participants felt obliged to conform and were expected to follow what culture requires of them, not to question things, including the impact of the context and time which all supported how things happened the way they did. In some cultures, issues of death, mourning, grief and bereavement are not shared with younger children or young adults. They are excluded from such discourses, with only adults are at liberty to make decisions, for example, *"I[We] were told"; "I was left"* and *"nobody bothered…how I felt or what do"; "…left… just alone"*. Participating in this study promised to bring about some element of transformation in how participants perceived themselves in their diverse worlds. The development and enhancement of critical consciousness paved the way to understanding what was expected of participants as critical theorists and co-researchers in a PAR project.

Most members of this group believed that reflective practice and sharing stories for grieving was the first step to self-realisation and a tool to weigh how much each participant still carried emotional baggage. Some participants' feelings were: *"I felt so angry…" "I'm still angry"; "things happened so quickly, that was it"; "I don't want to talk about",* which made them realise how important it was for them as pre-service teachers to participate in this study, which they felt was an opportunity for them to offload with and to relevant people. The felt emotions by participants were in line with literature (Christens, Peterson, & Speer, 2011; Cluver & Gardner 2006; Ruus, Veisson, Leino, Ots, Pallas, Sarv & Veisson, 2007). "…experiences of negative social changes adversely produce feelings of helplessness, loss of hope and diminished willpower for certain individuals which are all costly to physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing".

Understanding that life can suddenly be filled with problems of various kinds, grieving for a loved one is important. If not allowed to happen there is a possibility of affecting a suffering individual, no matter in which stage of development and in which context a person might find him/herself. It is important to make a space in which positive interactive and collaborative participation should provide participants with an opportunity to respond to tensions that emerge during discursive processes (3.3). As experienced in the responses of participants above, it was evident that most had been denied an opportunity to grieve and therefore

being involved in this empowerment programme helped to facilitate engagement, and was rigorously evaluated as a sign of sustainability in HEI.

In addition, as practising teachers they also felt the experience prepared and empowered them with strengthened willpower to help learners who might be in the same position as they were in schools during TP sessions and after graduation as practicing teachers. Participants were aware of how, for example, orphanhood is perceived by societies and communities, therefore, the engrossed perception seemed to be a barrier to critical thinking. However, as mentioned (3.7) there is much which orphaned students can understand and learn about written and unwritten norms as practiced in diverse institutions or systems, confirming Bronfenbrenner's theory on systems, the mesosystem (2.5.2) and Habermas' communicative action theory (2.4.1.1). The argument is that any knowledge creation practice, language (speech) used in a discursive process can be either an oppressive or transformative tool, oppressive in a sense that no chance is given to voice one's opinions or to question the status quo, transformative in a sense that if one is left alone one begins to learn to think critically and quickly, to be a decision-maker, to listen in order to be listened to, and to change one's self for one's and others' benefit.

In support of Lungs response, "*nobody cared or wanted to listen…*", MXO, "a new" orphan from a YHH said:

> *…my one was the same because ukushona kukamama (cishe ngo May this year) ngangiloku ngifonela izihlobo ngagcina ngingasahluphi muntu ngoba vele akekho ongikhathalele. I was independent… (After my mum's passing away I would call the relatives … I ended up not bothering them as no one really cared…)*

In CER the importance of language and communication is stressed, yet it is acknowledged that it can sometimes be used to distort reality through dominant discourse. The distorted reality eventually becomes the cause of fear, identity crisis, emotional confusion, stigmatisation and struggle, with guilt which is associated with orphanhood (Sciarra 2004: 223; Hornby 2003:112). In MXO's response, *"ngagcina ngingasahluphi muntu (ended up not bothering anyone…independent)",* the indication is that something different happened to them as orphaned from what generally is practiced by wider family or community members when parents die. In MXO's case, after his mother's funeral all relatives left and there was no decision taken about their wellbeing, even when he telephoned them.

While most participants were concerned about the situation in which decisions about their fate were decided upon by adults without their involvement or consultation, MXO awaited the

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opportunity for one adult to give him and his siblings a direction, but he as scared and worried that after the funeral he was supposed to return to university and prepare for end of first semester examinations. He testifies that, for him, being an orphan meant "*no one have interest of me*". However, he was also used to being "independent", but this independence was not the kind one would wish for when disempowered and having no skills for taking informed critical decisions. He said that if this empowerment group was effective he would have shared with members, but he had to break the news slowly and not give all details to his roommate, who took him in to his university residence and still shared with him. Initially, the following participants had the following preconceived feelings about collaborative practice and sharing emotional stories:

> MXO: *I don't talk about…. It's the first time… it is still new and does not sink or feel real to me even to accept that I am really orphaned… I have been sharing with the people at the residence only … in fact Lungs only, of which I fear sometimes that I'm overloading him with my own problems.*

> Lungs: *Ngebhadi angikhulumi (Unfortunately I don't talk about…) … (sternly…and participants bursting with laugh) ngiyaqala ngga…excerpt for when it was with the teachers in high school.*

This first participant seemed to distance himself from others and mistrusted his capabilities to collaboratively work with others in striving for emancipation and changing his life circumstances, hence "sharing… *in fact Lungs only*". It is understandable because he had just arrived in HEI and was in his first six months of the first year. It was still a long way for him to transform despair into hopes and sorrow into joy. Moreover, both gave evidence of participating for the first time: "*ngiqala ngqa*" or "*it's the first time*". Similarly, it is acknowledged that sometimes people manage to fake happiness while trying to suppress uncomfortable emotions. The way Lungs began with his sentence in his response left the team laughing, which suggested that while having a sense of humour as his own coping strategy, in this particular instance it also served to ease tension amongst team members and brings to light the power of language and its impact on how it is used. It is only when one engages with a person in a dialogue or when collaboratively sharing knowledge that true emotions surface. The important action is to be empowered to effectively deal with such emotions for healthy wellbeing, otherwise chances of exposure to psychological, intellectual, emotional and social changes are heightened.

It is interesting to note that actions of some participants proved what is corroborated in literature in that issues associated with death are often suppressed due to lack of emotional

language and the inability to tap into and engage in discomfort through emotionally laden conversations. As Ephratt (2008:1910) illustrates, silence is associated with negativity, passivity, powerlessness and death, low sense of self and belonging in individuals form the low social strata, a point also confirmed by Francis, Muthukrishna and Ramsuran (2006:141). The experiences were the same as those to which I was exposed when I embarked on my initial journey of the selection of research participants (4.7, 4.7.1).

The action one takes requires careful thinking on how one is going to benefit from such behaviour, whether physically, emotionally economically, culturally and politically, but what is critical is that one does not have to fight against negative feelings and emotions. While collaborative interaction amongst participants occurs, self-awareness and knowing one's position is important for informed decision-making while navigating challenges that shape who one is and how one influences one's context. Jabs and Lungs associated their personality with the nature of the environment which they believed best explained who they were. This perception is supported in the literature which states that in order for orphaned students to participate in the transformation of their world (HEI) they need to be exposed to environments that allow them to gain a sense of humanity in their liberation (2.4, 2.2, 2.4.2.2.1).

Participants stressed the role played by some of their teachers in the school context in shaping who they are, assisting in re-defining their roles and how to extend that knowledge by actively dealing with negative life challenges.

> *"One teacher bothered herself and bought me a pair of shoes as I was different from others walking barefooted…"*

> *"The teachers organised a place for me to stay following being chased away my dad…"*

> *"I asked from my Grade Twelve teachers about how can I further my studies and they assisted me with application and ideas …all the way…"*

The above responses from three participants affirm literature (Masten (2007:922; Martinez, 1993:2) on resiliency being common to millions of people and likely to be enhanced through learning, continuous dialogue in which people begin to talk about their problems, plan and take actions about challenges that affect them, and eventually liberate themselves from fatalism and internal oppression, if empowered to do so. In support of, and highlighting the impact of the teachers' role in the life of orphaned students, Wood, Ntaote and Theron's

(2012:429) findings from their study indicated that "...teachers are teaching children who are distressed and often grieving...", whilst Behr et al. (1986:*28*) added that:

> Teachers play the role of parents while children are in their care. They should note that the 'whole child' comes to school. That is, he comes from the family, a community, a society, and a deep understanding of what he is up to that point in time is very important.

A similar comment in Wood et al. (2012:429) about the key roles and tasks of teachers states that:

> " …teachers are the key persons in addressing issues related to OVC. Teachers should be able to offer psycho-social support… possess basic counselling skills; be knowledgeable about the rights of children; …facilitate dialogue between parents and children about death, illness and future planning; facilitate the progression of grieving through all stages; involve communities….render personal, emotional and practical support…..

The literature highlighted how critical is it for participants and pre-service teachers (who are orphaned) to be emotionally empowered first. This, they confirmed, is a first step to self-realisation in HEI. However, creation of an appropriate environment to promote effective communication and interpersonal relationships within the HEI systems seemed to be a priority. The emphasis in literature about teacher capabilities and ability to perform different roles, including that of being a parent and provision of a safe space, especially to orphaned learners, was a priority. This raised awareness to participants of the importance of finding effective ways to effectively assist learners in future as teachers. The need to commit to the several roles that await them in supporting others in their communities was acknowledged.

One of the ways was to access support resources available in the HEI, but they claimed this was not easily accessible for various reasons. For example, when asked about some support structures in HEI they said:

> *…I have never heard of such a supportive structure (STAR programme in our institution?). …Not at all.*

> *Counselling services?... Jaa…jaa…! it is not easy to just go there and talk about your problems and it takes time to wait in a list for your next appointment….*

> *… there is not enough help that one gets there …you go there expose all your troubles and in the end everything is left to you to decide…*

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The concerns highlighted above suggest inadequate support, especially for orphaned students. Literature indicates that a person grieves differently and in different phases. The implication therefore is that with one counsellor attending to all psychosocial challenges for students in an HEI, the chances of undergoing all stages of grieving are minimal. Further noted by most participants in one FGD was the power entrusted to other students (students' organisations) by the structures in an HEI which they felt were barriers to equal distribution of resources and access by all. The Students' Representative Council (SRC) is one of the organisation that students with problems approach to act on their behalf. Matters pertaining to accommodation in residences, finances in terms of tuition fees, residence fees, financial aids schemes and bursaries are some of the issues they handle. A concern expressed was that *"…members of the SRC are entrusted with much power than it should be and there is too much unequal treatment and favouritism..."*

The feeling reiterated by most participants was that it was not easy for them as orphaned students to present a sensitive case to fellow students or declare that they were orphaned, because orphaned adolescents or youth do not like to be seen differently by their peers or people pitying them. However, they were aware of the social construction of an orphan and perceptions about orphanhood. They felt that in order to avoid incidents of discrimination, silence becomes the best remedy in order to feel accepted by the student community.

On the other hand, as HE students they needed resources to navigate personal, psycho-social, socio-economic and political challenges brought mainly by poverty. To illustrate the concern further, one participant expressed a similar sentiment but brought in an element of the insensitive way of handling issues on orphanhood and other fellow students' concerns. He stated that sometimes members of the SRC responded to questions on assistance rhetorically: *Why did you come to the university if you don't have money?* This was confirmed by one female participant explaining her experiences with the SRC on seeking assistance. She declared the behaviour of the one male member of the student organisation in attendance:

> *"Musa ukudlala ngathi sisi wena ugqoke kahle kanje wenze nekhanda elibizayo unanephone enhle uthi awunabani? (You are not an orphan, you're kidding, you are well dressed and have nice expensive hair style and you own a cell phone… it is impossible… there are people who really deserve than you do)*

The participant was supported by others:

Does it mean (Ingabe kusho ukuthi) uma uyintandane kufanele ugqoke kabi ugunde nekhanda noma ungalinaki, ubukeke kabi nje ugqoke nezimpahla ezigugile khona kuzobonakala ukuthi uhlupheke kangakanani? Ibuhlungu lento eyenzeka la eyuniversity and usuke ungenandawo ozobika kuyo…. Ukuze izinto zakho zilunge usemseni wabo laba abaphethe kokunye ugcine ukuwaiting list unyaka wonke njengoba kwenzeka nakuthina" (Does it mean if you're orphaned you have to dress badly with torn clothing or shave your hair or leave it untidy which will show to people that yes this is indeed an orphan and she/he is very poor therefore she is going to be the first to be provided with help. Unfortunately one has no other place or structure to report to therefore if you want things to happen for you, you must accept that you're at the mercy of the powerful student community…)

Drawing from the responses of the two participants, these events and experiences were some of the challenges that reinforced silence around the effects of loss, thus further promoting forms of alienation and discrimination as barriers to overcoming bereavement and grief while in an HEI.

Socio-culturally, orphaned students are perceived as and believed to be a group of individuals who are in need. Literature (Merriam, 2009:34) confirms that power in combination with hegemonic social structures result in the marginalisation and oppression of those without power. However, the critical theorists are of the view that this culture of marginalisation and oppression is produced and reproduced by how individuals struggle with meanings which shape their socialisation, and how power or lack of it affects this production and reproduction of culture (Hill, 2010:8). Crucially, for all participants, the knowledge shared during CER and PAR workshops was an encouragement to learn how to disrupt beliefs and challenge the status quo, an action which kindled a spark of hope despite challenges. Participants suggested that, in their organisation, the challenges of the orphaned and vulnerable would be dealt with collectively and presented to the SRC by representatives who are living the experience of orphanhood in HEI. Members would support each other and collection of evidence will help avoid victimisation.

These and other experiences give a sense of how distorted understandings of orphanhood in an HEI might negatively affect the students' academic performance in an HEI. In essence, participation in the psychosocial empowerment framework for participants created awareness of how dealing with previous experiences of grief and bereavement brought to light the way they perceived it differently from the current understanding of death. Most participants agreed that having support and being surrounded by people who had the same

experience enhanced possibilities to effectively deal with the practical difficulties of living without the deceased, and this it provided one with an opportunity and time to grieve.

Given that the IsiZulu language, which was the mother tongue for all participants of this study, the belief is that only plants and animals, not people, "die", an aspect of presenting a person as a subject instead of an object. This suggests that the respect ushered to a person who is alive should be passed on to the spiritual memory of that person. In all meetings participants indicated that the memory of their parents kept them going and remains as a guide to do what would make their parents proud, even while in an HEI. The feeling was that it might be regarded as disrespectful and having no regard for the dead to say "*ufile*" (died), rather the use of the following isiZulu language words emerged, all of which described death of a parent: "*ushonile*" "*akasekho*", "*udlulie emhlabeni*" or "*usishiyile*", "*uhambile*", "*ugodukile*". The emotion of the lesser degree of severity of emotional feeling following loss felt by Jabs and Lasts on the death of their fathers is displayed in a surprisingly unexpected way of response. Instead of having directed the responses to the question about their fathers, both participants focused on the date of the death of their mothers as a prelude to the question:

> *Jabs: I had a problem when 'my mum left me' in fifth of August two thousand and nine…..*

> *Lasts: My mum passed on last year on the 18*[th] *of February 2012 because she had stroke…..*

The strategy of deviation from answers that emerged in the above introductory sentences suggest intensified feeling, high regard and high priority compared to how the feeling was with the life shared with fathers. The possibility of dialectic processes is, according to Habermas (2.5.2) in Singh (1990:360) embedded in individual and social evolutionary process of emancipation. Working intensively in groups in FGDs reshaped understanding of the role of language throughout the interactions facilitated and the creation of new meanings and social relations. Discourse shapes people and vice versa. Literature has continuously demonstrated how particular knowledge of "how speaking and acting subjects is acquired and how knowledge is used" to become knowledgeable competent agents of change.

For example, the practical verbal and written reflective practice and activities performed by participants during workshops and FGDs ensured that participants realised that to have critical understanding of social interaction and communicative practices is through language (2.5.1.2; 2.5.2; 2.5.2.1). The same view is reinforced in BEST (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana,

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2010:40, 2007:57) by which the different systems, for instance, the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem are interrelated and interdependent for the orphaned to endure the uncertainties, fears, instability and unpredictability brought about by the consequences of parental death.

That an individual is influenced by and also influences the environment, challenged participants to critically question or examine concepts, beliefs, and values that guide actions through communicative action. A good example is an action that was undertaken by Jabs to exercise his rights as construed in the South African Constitution, Section 2 of the Bill of Rights, and national and international policies on care and support of orphaned and vulnerable children and youth (3.2.1 & 3.9.1). He was forced to succumb to oppressive societal pressures or patterns of the world. As in all discriminative practices and practices that are unjust and not democratic, Jabs' actions are interpreted as disrespectful as he sought legal support for his father to own up to his responsibilities to him and siblings. His justified action alienated, discriminated and excluded him even more and he felt resented by family and community members about it. In a way, this kind of action perpetuates what the critical theorists and thinkers are against and regard as reinforcement and redistribution of unequal power which result in the marginalisation and oppression as stated in Merriam, McLaren and Kincheloe, and others (2.3 & 2.3.1). While in Jabs' actions the objective was to expose and question the produced unequal relationships, how he interpreted his being situated in a system of unequal economic and gendered relations with his parent was apparent. It was evident that this exercise of unequal power relations prompted Jabs' father to exercise his power, thus propagating feelings of superiority against inferiority, as revealed in the following: "Dad *'ordered me'* to do blood test and *'threatened me'* and *'told me'* that I'm not his son and he is not my father". This action by a parent seemed to be destructive in a sense that it resulted in this participant being left without any hope for life, disowned without any identity or with a questionable identity and feelings of painful immediate *"double loss"*. This indicated a situation which was confused and confusing. I was also surprisingly engulfed by deep painful emotions that I did not know I had during our one-on-one discussions. For most participants, the death of their mothers marked the commencement of orphanhood, of hardship and of suffering, as witnessed in word categories A and B (5.2.1) of this chapter.

Unlike Jabs, for two other participants who survived with their fathers after the death of their mothers (Lungs and Hosy), they were not concerned by the existence and not surprisingly the death of their fathers as well. It appeared the absentee fathers had an adverse effect on

the lives of the two participants. Last and Lungs testified to the following about the death of their fathers:

"I didn't question anything about my father (sighs and brief silence). I was complete… I didn't even bother looking for or ask about my father's whereabouts…..I heard that he died last year and I don't know when and how….But what I know is that wayeyiloluhlobo lomuntu olungaziphethe kahle impilo yakhe yonke (He lived very recklessly all his life).

This response is twofold. Firstly, the indication was an 'I don't care' or I don't need you in my life' attitude, hence his description "I was complete". Secondly, from a cultural point of view, findings show that participants perceived that, as a child (whether adolescent or young adult), especially in African black culture, one is not allowed to question adults or talk back, but rather one must '*do as you are told'* and nothing more, which is a sign of "respect". What the adult says goes. In some cases the instruction from adults would be "*… in this house/family we do not do things like this or we do things like this"* which leaves one feeling one must not reply, irrespective of the rights or wrongs of the issue hand. From the perspective of critical theory, participants felt that the challenging discriminatory and oppressive practices they experienced in their socio-political and cultural contexts were an encouragement to collaboratively develop what Giroux (1992:7) refers to as 'transformative intellectuals' who would possibly develop counter-hegemonic programmes in HEI.

This is confirmation of research findings that if young adults are deprived of love, guidance, care and support they are likely to be vulnerable and can be exposed to all psycho-social ills. Ansell and Young (2004) endorse claims that differences in the severity of feelings of loss between mother and father experienced by orphaned students found the loss of the mother to be more detrimental. However, for Hosy it was different:

Hosy: 'My problems started when my father passed on and I was left to live with my stepmother…'

Hosy's situation was different because after his mother's death he moved in with his father and new family, but things changed when his father died. I was prompted to find out about the relationships of participants with their fathers which exposed signs of resentment, and there was neither a close relationship/bond nor emotional connection in the way the two male participants responded:

Jabs: "He was nothing without mum, very irresponsible, jealous and a very abusive man. I had no relationship with him…"

Lungs: My biological father got married to another woman… My mom had another man whom they shared her house in my family's yard of which they didn't approve of my mother's living arrangements at home. He further said:

Lowamuntu angimazi wayenjani… ehlukumeza umama, engasebenzi, emshaya egula, engamazi nokuthi ungubani, distant when my mother needed him the most, very irresponsible (silence for some time) *...isidakwa esidakelwa kumama! He deserted umama emdinga kakhulu egula [my mum when she needed him the most as she was sick]…* [all these words were harshly uttered and accompanied by signs of anger!]

As understood when death strikes, some major and critical changes happen and cause tensions which people involved are required to work on/around, adjust and adapt to new situations and conditions. These responses highlight how much the male participants had become emotionally attached to their mothers. In addition, the importance of having fathers as role models seemed to be bleak to these participants because of a lack of participation and involvement in their lives.

Understandably, when death occurs closure is essential, however, for MXO and Lasts that was not possible as they had absent fathers. MXO confessed that he still wished to have closure, as the struggle of being the head of the house tormented him and left him feeling emotionally exhausted. As a double new orphan (3.4.1.1) it did not matter that he had spent most of his year living with his mother, but he felt a void and apprehension about meeting his father:

> MXO: *I still need my father. The girls at home do not respect me. They expect me to do everything for them. Going back home during holidays is a problem. Sometimes I wonder if they have eaten when I am here, it is hard.*

Unlike MXO, Lasts showed no concern about his father and felt that her mother fulfilled the role of a parent. There is demonstration of satisfaction in his utterances about the nature of the relationship, the strong bond or close collaboration that is interactive and empowering they developed: *"I did not bother finding or questioning umama ngobaba…..ngizwe this year ngomunye ukuthi usashona and jaa… that's it. I didn't feel the void or anything…"*

Experiencing sudden death is traumatic and as responses highlight, participants were provided with insights into their experience of the world, in the reflective journals (written/verbal) and individual one-to-one meetings they deliberated on the intense emotions of loss and the events leading to death. There is also use of "I" which denotes a sense of

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responsibility, importance and the opportunity that presented itself to JABS with long lasting memories. There was emphasis on the involvement of events prior to his mother's death:

> *"I noticed'* change in her body weight… ... it was a problem, *'I was there'* with my mum and *'I talked to her'*…, *'I begged her'* to go to hospital. While getting ready her sister called me to help her… (cries and some silence) and she *'passed on'* while *'I was holding her'* (long silence and crying). It was on a Monday and Saturday was a funeral".

The sequence of events are clear when he points out clearly the beginning or initial stages of events, the final hour and the end of his mother's life, which all happened in a week. The "I" suggests engagement and participation in the final events, denoting some pride in his contributions, confidence that he ("I") was there, with some satisfaction. Events of loss bring about some doubts and need for approval. Psychologically, to lose a parent *'while holding her'* was traumatic to the participant and he still sobbed about it, but in the eagerness to tell his story he wanted to be listened to. As the hope had turned into hopelessness, the "I" seemed to be the key to denote his importance to the entire encounter.

This is more so for people in a discursive practice, that is, knowledge is constructed through sharing, by listening to others stories, learning from them and having a skill to listen so that one can be listened to. Lasts, on the other hand, had a different perspective about his experience. He resented the last day of his mother's death as he did not expect it, so it was additionally traumatic. He was doing his third year in the HEI and had just returned from a visit home the previous day. In his narrative the findings indicate that he 'felt robbed' of the opportunity to be there with his mother in her last hours or days. This affected him greatly and he even thought of dropping out of the HEI. The feelings of doubt or concerns pervaded his thoughts and made him question whether things could have turned out differently.

Common to the two participants was the trauma of sudden death and double loss of their absent fathers. Therefore, based on the needs of psychological strength and coping it was evident that this emotion kept these participants and others in bondage and fear of reliving the emotional trauma. They had not passed the stage of grief, let alone having an opportunity to share their experience with people who would understand their feelings. While I listened and read about the traumatic experiences of most, I was impressed by their level of resilience. I noticed that for some (MXO, Jabs and Lasts) the experience was still recent and emotionally it was not easy for them to contain their feelings. They had also declared that it was the first time they had talked about their experiences of loss but they had much hope that participation in this study was going to be an opportunity for change.

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The contributions of experiences of sudden death and effects of participation confirmed that whatever we were planning to accomplish in the framework, our active participation in devising solutions to immediate and long-term problems was important, as highlighted in the principles of PAR. The emphasis was on the promotion of social justice by creating conditions that foster empowerment (4.4). While participating in the events of any project, one needs find intervention strategies and put them into practice or action. To acknowledge that the key to effective transformation of any situation is to remain focussed on the larger goals of the future. From the narratives it is conceded that neither participants had foreseen the sudden death of their mothers, but they stayed focused and were advocates of education, hence HEI orphaned pre-service students. That is where 'resiliency' emerges as a source of coping or thriving despite adversity.

In summarising this subtopic, it is interesting to note the question posed (3.5.1.1) about why other young people thrive despite adversity whilst others do not. It explicitly describes the special way most participants felt about the special relationships with their mothers, a special bond that kept them going in HEI in all the things they did in their lives. The influence of mothers served as an as encouragement to actively engage in issues that pertain to themselves and others. Participation in a collaborative action research created a conducive and trustworthy space to attend to grief and bereavement.

5.6   CHALLENGES OF SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS

All the participants managed to describe themselves but with much confusion for some knowing the societal construction of "an orphan". The categorising of orphans based on chronological age as documented in most international studies and policies, as well as in South African policies (2.7) confused HEI orphaned students. As much as reality dictates that if one had lost one or both parents one is an orphan, whether a child or an adult (3.4.1), participants realised that they had to be mature, honest and open-minded about their identity. This view is corroborated by the definitions of 'orphan' and university students (2.7.1, 2.7.2).

Participants acknowledged and understood what loss meant to them intellectually; however, actions to their experiences contradicted their feelings, which predicted the sign of not having dealt healthily with their loss, a process essential for their psychosocial development and wellbeing. Apart from descriptions which surfaced from participants, an orphaned university student is youth and one of the characteristics of youth as stated by Erikson

(3.4.1) is that there should be a balanced sense of who one is, with a sense of how others see one and how one connects with others.

Some participants were of the view that one's identity is not separable from the larger community, hence collective responsibility and relationships. A decision endorsed by most participants was that some of the socio-cultural values and characteristics that needed to be included in their framework were hard work, responsibility and motivation. This is in line with what Neuman (2014:3), MacDonald (2012:35), Savenye and Robinson (2008:1046); Durrheim (2006:48), Fouche and Schurink (2012:308) and Kelly (2006:282) state is endorsed in integrated procedures for PAR and the qualitative research, to understand in details and to have deeper insight into complex human behaviours and systems in a natural setting (orphaned pre-service teachers in an HEI). This perspective is also stressed by Savenye and Robinson (2008:1050) (4.2.1, 4.3.1)

Similarly, in the first FGD meeting participants were supposed to develop a mission statement and vision for the empowerment programme. The definition of an orphan and as understood socio-culturally posed problems to move forward, and they agreed that they had to re-define the phenomenon (an orphaned student in HEI). Informally, a few participants were arguing amongst themselves about the meaning of orphanhood to them and the confusion it caused:

> *"…guys ayi-bo have you ever heard of an adult orphan? How do we define that? Ayi-bo mina I am not an orphan, I am old enough now. (they laughed),,,,/.. [jokingly] …just tell us-ke … are you not an orphan? Do you have parents?/ the truth of the matter guys we are orphans whether we like it or not it's a fact.*

> *"...What we need to do is to redefine this phenomenon… who is an orphaned university student? Let us define ourselves in our policy/framework …let it talk to us …"*

The above informal conversation seemed to be important and is an indication of how through the reflective practice, communicative action, critical consciousness and critical thinking, it dawned on the participants that they could re-define their perceptions about who they were and their contexts. By "re-define", they agreed that it was time for them to raise their voice with confidence, slowly shift from the lower social strata (accepting things as they are) and use shared knowledge utilising language, literacy skills and critical capabilities needed for their own and others in transformation in the HEI. The strategy to allow participants to mingle in the first activity of the planning session was important. They managed to think allowed

about the phenomenon and all agreed that this activity acted as an icebreaker and space in which to learn more about themselves.

What emerged in the informal voices of participants revealed that they were aware of how in most official international and national official documents and policies 'an orphan' is described. These findings are aligned to Abebe's (2009:71) views on orphanhood, which he believes is not only about parental loss but also "…a generic categorisation used mainly to describe social and cultural phenomenon as much as childhood can be defined of which both form social and economic construct". Eckersley (2007:S54) claims that as cultural beings we require cultures to make our lives worth living since socially isolated people are found to live less than those with strong family ties, friends and community. He adds that the cultural, historical and social contexts play an important role in transformation. This was important to understand as each institution or organisation has its own culture and it is binding for all members.

On the questions of the participants' belief systems about dead person(s) and how that would be accommodated in the framework of the organisation to practice tolerance, most of the participants were not direct in their responses. Instead, they firstly wanted to explain the interpersonal relationships with their parents, especially what their mother meant to them. The tension between ancestral and Christian belief systems in my own evaluation of the situation was bound to arise. Instead of dealing with the question, Lasts circumvented it:

> *My belief about a dead person? (silence…) Mhmmm…(shaking head) my mum was a hard worker…. All people knew her…. She was responsible. I had everything and others would think she had money but I knew she was a hard worker and very responsible…*

He persisted validating his mother's good qualities "*hard worker*", "*responsible person*", "*known by everyone*", characteristics and behaviour of an individual or a group in different contexts. Donald et al. (2012) claim that culture is not static, therefore participants needed to be sensitive to the dynamics of social structures and cultural beliefs to be in a position to build relationships for discourses with different stakeholders. Eventually, Lasts response to the question was:

> *At home we believe in ancestors but two months before my mother passed on, she changed and joined one church and became saved. Her life changed…she became a different person strongly religious too.* She was stressed "ekhandlekile", *I believe that she went somewhere (in heaven) as a 'hero'. She was a 'hero'.*

I'm not saved. I can say "my belief system is complicated" for now. I believe in ancestors and its ok; that's how we were raised. But my mother meant everything to me and she died a changed woman… "born again" and she seemed to know and believed in what she was doing….. (went on and on describing her mother)

In short, this reasoning highlighted the influence parents have on their children, which somehow shapes who one believes in or who he/she is, as observed in Bronfenbrenner (2.5.3.1, 2.5.3.2, 2.5.3.3, 2.5.3.4). The above response clearly positions Lasts and other participants in a dilemma as they were raised to follow the traditional ancestral belief system, but the last days of Last's mother took another turn. It was important for participants to have a dialogue on the topic that pertains to a cultural belief system, since their framework needed to be specified. As pre-service teachers who were going to be involved with diverse community of learners in school communities, and in this HEI, democracy, non-discriminatory practices and tolerance needed to be accommodated.

Lasts asserted that *"my belief system is complicated",* which is supported in literature with the emphasis mainly on instances of the orphaned being caught between either the Western or non-Western cultural practices and belief systems, that is, an Afro-Christianity (3.8). Manala (2005:900) argues that although culture has a tendency to silence people, Christian characteristics, for example, kinship, mutuality, self-sacrifice, and belief in the power of healing and support of a divine being ('God'), are embedded in it, which confirms what Lasts specified about his mother's change of belief system, since she became ill: "*She changed, her life changed, strongly religious, knew and believed in what she was doing, went somewhere as a hero".* Importantly, the observation revealed changed cultural belief system and behaviour which led to changed way of life. This however bears "a sense of hope" and relief to those left behind hence the belief that Lasts mother went *"somewhere"*. The word 'somewhere' expresses 'uncertainty', which confirms the effect of being caught between two cultural belief systems.

Drawing on Eckersley's (2007:S54) claim that as cultural beings we require cultures to make our lives worth living, socially isolated people may be found to live less enjoyable times than those with strong family ties, friends, community and society. This requirement is exposed in the use of the words "as a hero", which suggest high regard, value and contribution his mother brought at home as a parent, in the community and in society. It emerged that "as a hero" changed to "she was a hero" and was further proceeded by "stressed (ekhandlekile)". As such, it is amplified in these statements that a person who, besides suffering and ill-health, continued to conquer negative circumstances and was recognised by people in the wider community. Bronfenbrenner's (1994:42) illustration of the links between two or more

microsystems in the mesosystem (2.5.3.2) has implications for how the roles orphaned students in an HEI should be, such that the patterns of interpersonal relationships and diverse cultural belief systems should be engaging in activities to influence how these experiences are extended to enhance accommodation and tolerance of diverse group cultures in HEIs, including minority groups.

Sometimes death brings uncertainty about why things happen to some people but not others. At the same time, cultural practices comprise ways in which people deal with certain cultures at a given time. When considering the connection between death and the spirits, most participants felt the importance of honouring their mothers by remembering their advice with the hope of keeping their lost mothers happy, wherever they are. This suggested that for them it did not matter whether the parent was dead, but rather living life respectfully was critical. That spiritual belief kept participants living and striving hard to realise their potential.

In most of the participants' responses, there seemed to be avoidance of the use of the word "orphan" or "*intandane*" in isiZulu. They preferred the euphemisms: "when my parents 'left me'…"; "...the 'passing on' of my parents" and "my mum 'passed away'…", "… knowing that I 'have no parents'". In f the above the conscious choice of words indicated great respect for the elderly, of a parent, of a loved one, of a dignified human being whose spirit was still living and with much hope of meeting the person in future. Only an animal dies and is not put to rest, grieved or mourned in the same way as are human beings. This is partly because a cat or dog can be replaced. This connotation has *cultural and historical* understandings. For example, some animals are usually kept alive in order to serve the owner, that is, the existence or life of a cow depends on what and how much it provides, as milk, meat, skin, fertiliser, a name for the traditionalist head of the family and/or dung.

The empowerment framework appropriated the requisite factors to deal with the challenges of truly accepting who one is in order to move forward with life. Confusion caused by discourses in the society commanding "expected" types of behaviours by certain groups has a tendency to silence people. This was demonstrated in the example where for most orphaned students prospects of their lives were decided upon by those in possession of power. Accepting to be treated like objects does not end. For most orphaned participants, after having accepted the placement, challenges to dealing with loss and adaptation to new homes was usually not monitored. When they "feel alone" and have no prospects of sharing emotions some participants revealed the agony they faced, in various contexts:

> *Kazy: …you get so many instructions from different people …; …the way in which language is used is so demoralising…; She further indicated that while her aunt was*

talking to the other said: "…it's so difficult to stay with (ingane yomuntu), somebody else child; mina angeke nje ngakwazi… ziyahlupha izingane zabantu..."

The use of the word "child" and "children" (somebody else's child and izingane zabantu) stresses how an orphan is perceived by most in the community, that is, orphans are unruly, disrespectful, abuse drugs, steal, talk anyhow and many other characteristics which silences them. The CER principles and those of Bronfenbrenner's' Ecological Systems theory are both against the notion of describing individuals as in possession of the same characteristics. For KAZI and I support her thoughts and how she experience language for example she stated "the way in which language is used is so demoralising".

Equally important, one other participant in the one-to-one meeting indicated concern that how people address an individual can affect how he or she values the self:

Sane: At home and in community when I make a mistake I'm called by my mum's child (ingane kaKhanyisile) but when I've done well or what is expected at that point in time, then I'm somebody's child whom is still alive - my daughter (ntomb'yami) (uma wenze kahle kukhulunywa kahle nawe uma kungagculisi loko bese ubizwa ngengane kabani for example "ingane kaKhanyisile" yenze ukuthi nokuthi…).

Sane felt bad about how language was used to minimise her mother's spirit existence. On the contrary, one participant's way of ignoring what and how people addressed him had taught him to take a different attitude to life:

Lungs: 'Umuntu' akanqeni ukuthi athi yenza loku ukwenza, aphinde athi yenza loku bese ebeka nesizathu sokuthi bona besebancane babethunywa bengaphenduli bethunywa ende indlela le bese umane uzithulela nje wenze loko okushiwoyo. Khona ungacomplaina who is going to listen to you? Umuntu akaneliseki, unakana nawe nibe nigcwele igceke kodwa. ('A person' doesn't hesitate to run you around and justifies his or her doing stating what they used to do at your age. Complaining doesn't help as people can apply discrimination in day light and [you, as an orphan] has nowhere to turn to).

The above displays how orphaned students experienced discrimination, how they felt (un)important and how they experienced unfair treatment, which influence what becomes an order of the day. Once more, what is noticed here is the use of the words "*ingane yomuntu*", "*ingane kabani*" and *umuntu*" (so and so's child, and a person) as accentuated by participants.

The same assertion confirms that psychologically dialogue about each other's loss help to relieve the tension and unresolved emotions and grief. This also ratifies the impact of what happens in the microsystem, the roles, the patterns relationships that shape one's development and choices in life. Lasts expresses his mother's characteristics by defining her as a hero. He also believed in changing for the good pays off when referring to the switch of belief systems her mother made before she died. This suggests that change places one somewhere high up in life as long as one works hard, is responsible and works for a good cause.

The critical view is that this practice of using language to overpower others not only promotes a culture of silence amongst youth, but further strips people psychologically while perpetuating a distorted reality about life. My perception about this kind of social practice supports what CER claims, that is, to reinforce unequal distribution of power, leading to marginalisation and oppression of those without power. That has been repeatedly demonstrated in participants' responses as they highlight their experiences. For example, the reinforcement of the abuse of power and demonstration of power imbalance was constantly noted in Jabs' father's actions:

> "….though [I was left] with my dad, he was not supporting me and my siblings who were at my granny's house. We [argued a lot] and [I decided to move] to the relative's house… He came and [instructed] them in this family to [throw me out] claiming that 'I am disrespectful' of which they did... My relatives and my cousins were [all against me] I felt alone and looked for another place… my friends' house…"

The use of '*I was left'; 'not supporting'; 'argue a lot'*, display a kind of dissatisfaction and negativity on the part of affected participant students. The other meanings drawn from this choice of words suggest that Jabs felt '*ignored, not worthy, unimportant, not listened to, an object, discriminated and oppressed'* by the circumstances and the situation, inability to question or voice his opinions or views. There is also an element of comparison of how the other person (his mother) used to handle the situation at home which seemed to have changed, that is, in equitably and in a justified manner. This kind of actions reinforces discriminatory feelings by which one is left to suffer alone or left to fend for him/herself psychosocially. The decision to be left behind and not even to be given a choice while others were moved to his grandmother's house prompted the development of creative thinking followed by informed decision making skills hence moving out.

Collaborative work and interrelationships in communication are based on respect, regard for one another and responsibility as well as accountability. Significantly, and from this

experience, most participants realised how much they needed to understand PAR principles and to have qualities congruent to the process in developing their own framework. One of the characteristics of parents or an adult is to support and care for your children, however, once there is lack of support demonstrated, arguments and disrespectful behaviours emerge, especially when people are still grieving. Literature confirms that people grieve differently through specific phases, that is, anxiety, denial, anger, sadness and longing, bargaining and acceptance (Hornby, 2003:108; Sciarra, 2004:228; Brown, 2006:5-9). It might be possible that the behaviour shown by Jabs' dad (drinking, abuse, not being supportive) could have been a reaction to grieving after losing a wife. The same emotional outburst felt directed to Jabs as he was left alone to stay with his father, showing how true it is that people react differently to different situations, including loss through death.

In summarising this sub-topic, one of the key findings that emerged was the reality of the pain of reliving the loss and circumstances leading to the death of parents. Participants testified that participation motivated them to understand and take an action as endorsed in CER that was practical, transformative and empowering. In the journey of exploring experiences of parental loss and how their lives are shaped by those experiences, they felt encouraged, able to be changed persons in their context (the HEI) and were able to own their problems and provide solutions.

5.7   CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has established how meaning from the participants' extracts (verbal and written) that were presented, analysed and discussed utilising three levels of analysis of CDA. Textual and intertextual presentations were discussed, following research questions and drawing from both literature review and the theoretical frameworks. Drawing from the subtopics that were presented and discussed in this chapter, data revealed how the environment impacted on the emotional behaviour and identity of an individual in different context. Further highlighted was the realisation of how much the past influences the present and possibly the future, however, it depends on the individual to seek strategies that could lead to empowerment, which further transforms the person and the structures.

The next chapter further discusses findings that place emphasis on how the proposed framework could, in spite of circumstances, enhance critical consciousness, critical thinking and empowerment to take actions that lead to solving their own and others' orphanhood challenges in varied contexts.

CHAPTER SIX

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS: POSSIBILITIES AND SUSTAINABILITY OF A PSYCHOSOCIAL EMPOWERMENT FRAMEWORK

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter dealt with analysis and interpretation of data, presentation and discussion of findings that emerged from the study. These included initialising the discussion and understanding participants; the impact of shift in family life; an opportunity to "unblock" silenced emotions; (re)claiming an opportunity for change – a need for participation; an opportunity to becoming representative for change; discourses of orphanhood: from despair to hopefulness and shared experiences for overcoming bereavement and grief. This Chapter, like the previous one, deals with discussion of findings that emerged from study. The main focus included the following subtopics: socio-emotional empowerment of HEI orphaned students; possibilities for empowerment of HEI orphaned students; impact of shared vision and implementation of the framework and the sustainability of the psychosocial empowerment framework through social responsibility actions.

6.2 SOCIO-EMOTIONAL EMPOWERMENT OF HEI ORPHANED STUDENTS

By way of definition it may be helpful to revisit the meaning of wellbeing as defined in literature (3.5). I had to concur with these studies which propose that wellbeing is closely synonymous with resiliency, but the difference is that with wellbeing the effect of emotions or feelings is stressed. For any student, whether orphaned or not, if he/she is to succeed academically it is necessary to develop emotional strength and have the ability to adapt socially and make informed decisions, all of which are a key to mental health. As argued in literature (Chapters 2 & 3), orphaned participants in this study needed to change their attitude and behaviour in order to withstand the HE environment. To sustain and survive in the challenging environment requires commitment not only in HEIs but also beyond. Generally, it is understood that relationships within the subsystems that are influenced by or which influence orphaned students, have the possibility to enhance psychosocial growth, destroy or negatively affect the wellbeing of participants. For example, when parents are involved in the education of their children, students' achievement is likely to be either

negatively or positively affected, depending on the students' age group and level of motivation. For instance, findings confirmed this, as indicated by Lasts' responses, further supported in literature and in line with the principles of the Ecological Systems Theory (3.3 and 2.5): *"When my mother passed on, I had no reason to continue with my studies. I wanted to drop out of the university … I had lost hope and wanted to go back home…"*

What the participant attested to is also confirmed in studies which demonstrate that subsequent to lack of support or loss of hope, some orphaned adolescents become vulnerable to developing unacceptable and maladaptive behaviours, such as dropping out of school/HEI, violence and aggressiveness (Nduna & Jewkes, 2012:1018; Operario, Cluver, Rees, McPhail & Pettifor, 2008:174). However, on a positive note, Lasts reported how the influence of his connections or network of peers prevented him from dropping out of the HEI. He said that if it was not for his peers who rescued him he would not have made it to fourth year, leading to the completion of his degree in HEI: *"My friends assisted in changing my attitude and behaviour about the HEI and I'm not going back anymore, I am looking forward to completing this degree"*.

Relationships with peers for youth are crucial, especially in stages of adulthood development (Chinyoka & Naidu, 2013:273; Donald et al., 2010:41; Berk, 2007:24, 2006:27) and therefore were seen as one of the actions that needed strengthening. Throughout the conversation with Lasts he showed signs of improved self-confidence and great hope for the future. The same view is aligned to the importance of development of relationships as supported by CER, with the emphasis on the quality of interactive relationships utilising language in a continuous dialogue. Closely related to Lasts' response is supported in Zweig's (2003:3) claim about how youth experiencing economic and psychosocial hardship often disconnect from society. The lack of interactive discourse and disconnection from society suggests that in order for participants to survive in the twenty first century, engagements in critical discourses to acquire adequate skills for accessing resources to realise their goals, that is, education, is pivotal. Some of these resources, according to the Freierian methodologies, acknowledge individuals as producers and creators of knowledge (Freire1993:19). The implication therefore is that engaging orphaned participants in a trusting discursive practice would facilitate achievement of autonomy, empowerment and taking control of situations as a goal within the critical emancipatory paradigm. Similarly, engaging in a creative collaborative process and exposure to safe and trusting conditions, helps apprentice orphaned students acquire a new body of knowledge, utilising the relevant method of approaching the world and venture into new situations.

The message from the expression and an action considered by the participant above "*I'm not going back anymore, I am looking forward…*", endorses some level of 'a shift' and 'self-realisation', and suggests attainment of a deepened level of emotional growth, maintenance of internal locus control and positive aspirations about the future. When hope is lost and one is consumed with emotional and psychological oppression or confusion, interventions should enforce an ability to see the situation differently. Lasts' statement transmits the reality which is corroborated by one of the advantages of qualitative research and PAR approach which recognises that participation should effectively bring change to complex issues or situations affecting individual lives (2.5.1.2, 4.3.1.2). A possible approach is through exposure to new ways of thinking about issues and solutions to social problems, including orphanhood in HEI.

Participants believed that sharing experiences in a collaborative process suggested promotion of social justice by which conditions that foster empowerment are created. To move participants from their lived experiences of struggle and survival from the margins of reality to the centre of realisation, varied ways of transformation were facilitated, drawing from theories that couch the study and PAR approach, hence Lasts' statements, *"change my attitude and behaviour… and not going back anymore".* This endorsement is a sign of critical consciousness development and learning from the past experience to shape the future.

Understandably, and affirmed by studies on orphaned children (3.5), loss of parents means loss of emotional and psychosocial support, which threatens social wellbeing. The studies also highlight lack of emotional support as the strongest cause of students or learners to be found lacking in academic performance. Again, Jabs refutes this idea and shows how resiliency can keep one focused, especially if one knows who one is (self-awareness). After he was faced with enormous challenges in his first year as a registered student at the HEI but not having secured residence, he said:

> *"I used to commute from Portsheptone [130 kilometres] to the HEI and back….that was the greatest challenge. I wanted to attend and do well in my academic work… but it wasn't easy…." I was paying in a region of a hundred and twenty rand a day. I had to make ends meet as long as I attended and not miss the lectures.*

In order for an individual to achieve academically he or she needs to be motivated, responsible, accountable and greatly committed. Importantly, Jabs had a goal in life to finish what he had started with the hope to be liberated.

Concuring with the above, the findings of Thurman, Snider, Boris Kalisa, Mugarira and Brown (2006) show that behaviour and attitude caused by the absence of welcoming psychological context with supportive resources is not a choice for everyone faced by traumatic experience. Some orphaned students, like Jabs, had to fight and work hard in trying circumstances, and as the general view specifies, such a sacrifice breeds positive outcomes. Participants' responses indicate the importance of understanding emotional or psychological problems, but they are not always obvious, not easy to identify and the only way to recovery is to understand your world better, your environment and the nature of relationship you engage in.

Loss through death is uncomfortable and traumatic, which is described as an obstacle if not effectively communicated and dealt with as everyone needs support, reassurance and courage when faced with challenging experiences (Morin & Welsh, 1996:298). The same view is further underlined in BEST, where an overwhelming HEI environment along with changed structure of family emerges as the causes of distress for young adults. The latter theory (BEST) highlights the importance of relationship or interconnectedness within the systems and how these influence each other or the individual. Hosy, a homeless orphaned HEI student was affected by financial constraints but managed to rise above his adversity, explained:

> *… I failed my first year because of my informed choice of modules and the type of degree I wanted to do. No one was financially supporting me therefore I had to work for two years [as an unqualified teacher]. After that… I was involved in a car accident and had to drop out of HEI that year again. But here I am now doing my fourth year although it's the sixth year in a university….*

Additionally, in one-on-one discussion with Hosy it appeared that his struggle was mainly about the lack of information and uninformed decisions or choices:

> *After having taught for some time and my going back to HEI, all that became a threat to my life at home and eventually I became homeless. …there is this one family 'who took me in'. I had difficulty going back home. My new family just treated me like their own and they still do.*

The above highlights how Hosy's journey of psychosocial struggles was different in both systems, that is, at home and in an HEI, which are immediate structures supposed to be supportive of his choices. Firstly, the family's negative perspective following his resignation from the temporal job he held and his focus on education alienated him, yet he felt the need

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to become a qualified professional teacher to be financially secured, which is likely to result in poverty alleviation. This action seemed to be aligned to one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, see Chapter 1) which consider Higher Education as a major player in eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, environmental sustainability and establishment of a global partnership for development (Millennium Development Goals Report, 2002 & 2009). Secondly, and compared to family economic issues, Hosy believed that lack of information and support in an HEI contributed to his challenges. It appears that the without psycho-emotional support Hosy began to question his conflicting choices, however he was strongly motivated. Literature supports this view and it is argued that motivated people have a great need to achieve (Behr, 1986:23), which is an attitude and behaviour that helped Hosy to pursue his study, and not to succumb to deficit, even if it meant sacrifices and spending six years on a four-year degree.

In addition, the above extract suggests and confirms what Zweig mentioned in Chapter 3 (3.7.1) about homeless youth being a group who are less likely to access or engage in societal and public system. There is also evidence that discourses on issues associated with death are often a result of a lack of emotional dialect, an inability to tap into and engage with discomfort or emotionally-laden discourses. However, it was evident in the meetings with orphaned pre-service students and exposure to reflective practice that sharing life experiences brought new understandings of reality about orphanhood and perceptions in many communities and societies. This realisation served as an opportunity for participants to develop critical thinking skills and raised critical consciousness to understand that being open to new possibilities in life enables one to explore options more freely enables and share with new people who have the potential of becoming true emotional supports (2.5.2.1).

While most participants in the microsystem (home) had their wellbeing decided upon by elders or relatives (5.2, 5.3), adult relatives had to decide for them either to move in with new families or be left to fend for themselves. A different turn of events following loss of both parents that left Hosy becoming homeless while in HEI, MXO suddenly found himself as the head of the family in a Youth-Headed Household, indicating that circumstances brought the situation to him and confirms that he was still overwhelmed by his position in his family.

From literature (Schenk, Ndhlovu, Tembo, Nsune, Nkhata, Walusiku & Watts, 2008:901) the practice of older children caring for their younger siblings is too great a responsibility to enable orphaned youth to cope with household decision-making abilities. As such, Jabs, Lasts, Hosy and MXO highlighted that even though challenges faced by the orphaned range from personal to psycho-social, including lack of food and financial support, dropping out of

school/HEI and in some cases engaging in risky behaviour and crime, worked against their socio-cultural beliefs. As portrayed in media and studies about orphaned youth (Beegle, De Weerdt, & Dercon, 2010; Berg, Coman, Schensul, 2009; Wood, Ntaote & Theron, 2012; Zweig, 2003) orphans are perceived to emulate these bad practices, but rather from the extract in reflective journals of above participants it showed that these participants had a goal in mind, and were motivated to finish the school and HE.

> Jabs said: "*I had to make ends meet as long as I attended and not miss the lectures*";

> Hosy: *"But here I am now doing my fourth year though it's the sixth year in a university…."*

> Lasts: *"…I was about to drop out… I'm not going back anymore, I am looking forward to completing this degree".*

The suggestion is that each wanted to move forward with 'education' as this shows understanding and value of education as a liberating a tool which allows individuals to accept responsibilities instead of blaming others for the situation, but it is as a result of the development of self-confidence. Decision-making is one of the positive skills associated with strong self-confidence, a requirement for pre-service teachers signalling a well-developed identity. Lines (2007) underlines that when young people experience being loved and supported, and are in harmony with their social and natural environment, they become less stressed. However, threats to the academic performance of some participants included distress amongst young people; interconnections between structural factors such as death, poverty, unemployment and gender injustice; negative home dynamics and worries over their inability to complete school. Nduna and Jewkes (2012:1018) emphasise that stress and fear also affect social judgements, rewards and risks. To a large extent, findings from one-on-one and group discussions expressed by participants regarding doing it for oneself are in line with Rahman (1993:20-21, in Strydom, 2012:494):

> Self-reliance is a driving force for creative activity that requires an awareness of one's creative assets, confidence in one's ability to solve life problems, the courage to take on challenging tasks and the stamina to make sustained efforts to accomplish them. …mobilisation of community refers the simultaneous involvement and engagements of all the members of the community in order to attain the agreed collective objective of the project (research).

Crucially, all participants, after having undergone empowerment workshops on PAR, CER and reflective practice, realised the importance of the vision and the meaning of self-

reliance, which as a culture energises community or a group to take an action as a collective. Contemplating with some of the actions taken by one of the participants (Jabs), I gathered that he believed that stress pushed him into taking unpalatable actions against his father: *"I took a decision… ngokuhluthuka kwenhliziyo ngamubopha ubaba ngimubophela isondlo"*.

His actions seemed to rightfully and lawfully consider what critical approaches advocate in that participants need to be able to speak on their behalf and be granted dignity, regardless of their location in the web of the society (2.6). Also, he was determined to take a decision and believed it was an informed one considering that, by law, parents are supposed to provide for their children. He suddenly doubted his belief system and began to the blame his actions to "stress" which he felt pushed him to seek legal actions against his father with the social workers concerning custody. The response suggests that doing the right thing brings about guilt, especially if that action is taken against an adult, which implies internalised discrimination and oppression by most orphaned students. However, participants felt that to stick to the vision and mission of the framework guided them towards the effective implementation of psychosocial empowerment frameworks. Crucially underlined and highlighted as empowering were the workshops that were held on PAR, CER, and reflective practice. These workshops, as indicated by participants, were engaging and flexible yet informative and empowering.

In contrast to actions above, it was established in an FGD in Kazy's response that the demonstration of feelings of unpleasantness about how power of destructive words demoralised her, when she would be called "*ingane yomuntu… or izingane zabantu ziyahlupha*" (It is difficult to raise another person's child because they are unruly) without any words of warning or being shouted at, reprimanded or corrected, as parents are inclined to do. For her, and in the way text is organise, her parents were "*placed at a distance, not attached to her, did not raise her correctly, non-existent, not important, never mattered, and so is she*". She believed that she needed a space in which to keep her parents special and in her own world, as she believed they had done a great job in raising her, in contrast to the way her foster family members perceived them. The comments gave rise to identification of stereotyping, attributed to a social belief or common knowledge in societies that '*it is not easy to raise the orphaned'.* In similar vein, Sane spoke about how she would be addressed based on how and what she had done at her grandmother's house: "u*ma ngenze kahle they will call me mtanami or ntombazana uma ngingenzile kahle bazothi ingane kaKhanyisile…."* (If I have performed well they will use nice words like my child or my girl, however if it's the opposite they will call me using my mother's name [Khanyisile's child])

Concurring in view about how the effects of destructive words can shape who one is, Sane's experiences of feeling anguished about how community associated her mistakes in not doing what people approve of with her mother... (*ingane kaKhanyisile* or Khanyisile's child). She questioned and disliked the association of her wrongdoings with her mother by those in power, finding this disrespectful to her and her mother as she felt this view positioned her mother unjustly and as not a good person. I felt the pain she experienced and that had led to her struggling to please others so as to let her mother rest in peace and to keep her spirit living in her thoughts. Most participants agreed in view with Sane's experience, and what that meant to them. This presented '*conditional acceptance*' of the way things are and is a form of oppressive practice which most participants agreed were all affected by it. This kind of lived experienced with relatives and for other community members is a mirror of most participants' expectations about HEI structures following the status and their position as orphaned students in an HEI. The learned helplessness that most orphaned carry stops them from wanting and seeing the need to voice their emotions and thoughts as the fear to be judged is high. Therefore, the development and implementation of the framework for most participants seemed to be empowering and also a lesson that they needed to accept and believe in themselves first in order to be accepted by those in power.

To this point I support the creativist view of development which states that "The word should speak to the world". In other words empowerment for orphaned students suggests that the quality of knowledge acquired reflects in their lives when they would be seen as decolonising agents leading others to democracy and possible emancipation in HEI and beyond (Bhengu-Baloyi (2010:119). It cannot be ignored that, generally, some of the orphaned are left to fend for themselves with no one to give direction which can be consequential to destructive behaviour for others or growth for others. In the same vein, the CER promises to be empowering and liberating to people engaged from the not-so-useful practices and thoughts and meeting the needs of real life situations, for example orphanhood in HEI. Findings further reveal that the exposure and engagement in empowering and emancipatory projects has a possibility of overriding and changing most socio-emotional feelings of isolation and discrimination.

In summarising this subtheme, the key findings to emerge were that understanding emotional events as socially constructed, dynamic interactions which take place in relationships and are situated in socio-cultural contexts is key to healthy wellbeing. For orphaned students, emotional events require that human being function properly in order to work interdependently and in harmony with others. The implication, as endorsed by Thurman, Snider, Boris, Kalisa, Mugarira, Ntanganira and Brown (2006:220), is that for a

healthy lifestyle in HEIs, psychosocial support is an important resource that can facilitate coping and resilience, which participants felt was key in the vision and mission statement in the development of the psychosocial empowerment framework. Moreover, the emphasis is on facilitating emotional and psychosocial support for the homeless and CHH/YHH to deal with challenges they face, including social marginalisation.

6.3   POSSIBILITIES FOR EMPOWERMENT OF HEI ORPHANED STUDENTS

It was important for participants to understand the HEI structures in order to become part of the system. By way of definition, an HEI (Chapters 1 & 2) is based on a system of democratic principles guided by equality, efficiency and accessibility. Research continues to indicate that the changing nature of higher education (HE) increases enrolment and brings new types of students to institutions of higher learning (McCullough & Crook, 2008:293), hence orphaned students from diverse communities with different backgrounds. Participants realised that although there were structures in place at HEI, much awareness about the diverse community of students needed to change.

From the findings on the one-on-one discussions, Lasts commented on how stereotyping is maintained in the university where students are regarded as the same and their background not acknowledged or purposely ignored:

> *Things do not change in this institution…. Orphanhood is rife in our communities and we will have first years coming in next year and they will suffer like we all did. This should be stopped….something needs to be done…. We are different and come from different backgrounds…not just students.*

Lasts' view was supported by all participants and each highlighted different experiences of stereotyping practice in HEI. The meanings attached to texts and some words proposed that through workshops on and practical reflective practice, understanding of PAR approach, theoretical perspectives proposed in CER and BEST, both of which couch this study, critical consciousness had developed. The findings contained in the responses: *"…things do not change"* and "o*rphanhood is rife in our communities…"*

The above statements validate Bolton's (2010) view of reflective practice as involving people as individuals and as a collective, but most importantly in action, critically thinking while solving the problems and addressing ethical practice. The feeling of seeing the urge to change and transform structures in HEI for the benefit of all equally was the key. When

acknowledging that they are *"different….from different background"* and *"not just students"* confirmed what is strengthened by literature in that loss through death brings about a myriad of uncertainties and fears, and therefore utilisation of BEST facilitate investigations into instability and unpredictability of not only personal development but also effects of what previous policies have created emotionally, economically, politically, culturally and historically in HEIs.

This view was also expressed by TPO:

> *They don't know where to go …they are scared to expose their vulnerability to be known by other students that they are poor and have no one….I end up having these kids [students] here in my office; they don't have residence and food to eat… When it is time for Teaching Practice sessions they come to me for clothing (formal dressing suitable for a student teacher) transport to schools and something to it. …it is not easy….*

This reveals a gap between how much is/not done for orphaned students to protect their rights so as to be treated with respect and dignity in an HEI and in their communities, and as revealed in TPO's text and the STAR programme officers (support service staff of this institution) and how they manage to deal with the students in need:

> *TPO: Ngiyajabula ukuthola **"lelithuba elingandile"** lokuthi ngikhulume ngalesihloko 'esithinta inhliziyo yami' kakhulu ngalababantwana engikhathazekayo ngabo yonke iminyaka.* (I am happy for this rare opportunity to talk about this touchy topic about these children [HEI students] which worries me all the years of my career in this institution)

> *STAR Cord: On identification of the programme… We are tapping into the real issues we structure each every workshop on time management personal or home problems. they have to attend …"*

It is acknowledged that all institutions develop their own particular sets of values, norms and directions for their members, as does the HEI. For the orphaned students in an HEI, fostering supportive and non-discriminatory culture through its policies and practices needed to be held in high esteem. TPO said *"abantwana abangikhathazayo minyaka yonke"* (I worry about these students each and every year) suggesting that the programme had a possibility to bring some hope to HEI students. She was worried about the orphaned students and confirmed their existence, but owing to difficulty in accessing resources and emotional support the system has silenced them, leaving them voiceless and not heard, with no

platform on which to present their case. She also represented a parent to them and they referred to her as 'Mam' uT' who acknowledged their existence 'every year' but had not explored ways to involve them in dealing with their challenges through empowerment programmes, only seeking donations for them.

Importantly, her information journey made orphaned students realise how they needed knowledge, attitude and skills to function in their cultural communities, to efficiently participate in the construction of the just, democratic, morally acceptable and culturally responsive community. Most participants indicated that the information from the programme officers above enlightened them and shaped the way their psychosocial empowerment framework looked. It also paved the way to understanding that networking plays an important part and collaboratively they felt that would sustain the programme. Ms M and the STAR programme information was an eye-opener to participants and heightened the need for and value of sharing. A highlight of the STAR programme was that, like our psychosocial empowerment programme, the confidentiality clause was enforced, which justified why students did not know the programme. Participants felt that this identified with what they believed in, unlike the counselling services.

From the perspective of literature, Freire (2002) claims that people without knowledge do not exist, however, this was a motivation and proof that there are many structures, including support services in HEIs, which might have benefitted students, but that lack of knowledge and unequal access of resource silenced orphaned students. Nevertheless, there was a realisation that working together for the common goal in a non-competitive way required that participants assess the situation in HEI, interpret it with the aim of solving problems and explore avenues leading to liberation poverty and a myriad of contextual factors, as said by TPO: *"…where to go"; "scared to be exposed"; "residence and food to eat… "clothing… transport…"*

According to Fritze (2009:6) and John (2009:35), Freire believed that ignorance and lethargy of poor people are the cause for economic, social and political dominance, and so theories of action should have a way of engaging people about their collective and individual aims openly in a discourse. Comparing TPO's struggles to assist orphaned and vulnerable students in HEI who approached her, the STAR programme organiser/coordinator on the other hand brought in an element of hope and structured support of what their organisation provides. Surprisingly, this information seemed to be new to the student community in the study, but did serve as an encouragement and motivation for the development of their psychosocial empowerment framework. TPO said:

Our organisation is very confidential as it comes with a stigma and caters for different challenges. We go through classes and tell them that we tell them about the program. Research proves that most of the underperforming students are less likely to seek help. …ours is very confidential and deals with those individuals … through SMS's, emails or phone… (de-stigmatise the programme and self-referral if you need help… and mentorship programme)….if you're in the programme. We also do refer for funding (…stand a chance to get bursaries), curriculum issues and psycho-social problems…

All participants felt that the information brought by these officers was enlightening. In a differing view they felt that this seemed too good to be believed and once more the barrier to accessing this service was due to lack of information. Certain words, 'stigma' and 'confidentiality' were used to justify the secrecy around accessibility and a similar critique by participants revealed the difference between the two structures, as from TPO's experience, *"students come to her office"* while STAR organiser mentioned that "…r*esearch proves that most of the underperforming students are less likely to seek help*". From the two responses the issues of 'power versus the powerless' persisted, and 'personal versus impersonal feelings' and 'subjects versus objects treatment" were displayed. In addition, in the one-on-one meetings the emphasis was on importance of understanding one's contexts and the activities that happen around or within the different systems and subsystems of the HEI, as confirmed in the theoretical and literature perspective.

Literature suggests that both CER and BEST assist in understanding the phenomenon of orphanhood in an HEI and the complicated interactions among the multiple interrelated systems causing power to manifest itself in the layers of society (Ngai Sek Yum, 2013:473; Malkki, 2012:208). The negative way of the use of '*confidentiality and stigma'* and the ways devised to 'de-stigmatise the programme' while maintaining confidentiality for those who needed to freely access the space and seize assistance suggested that a continuous process of PAR cycle was maintained to assist wider community of students and to extend *ubuntu* practices that embody the concept of mutual understanding, active appreciation of the value of human difference, interrelationships and interdependence for the benefit of all (3.8). On the other hand, TPO officer seemed to be accessible to students in need, which suggests that as a mother figure to all students and not attached to any organisation she manages to converse in a language which seems to be understood by students, and so allows for the development of a mother-child relationship. The findings also confirmed that there were many students who needed to be psychosocially empowered in order to cope in HEI and realise their goal, however HEI did not know about them. Participants felt that the

information from the two officers brought awareness. It became clear that the phenomenon that was explored seemed to be bigger than what participants anticipated, but they were motivated to tackle it where the emphasis was on changing the situation.

6.3.1 The effect of unstable environment

The state of *"moving around"* or assuming *"new homes or families"* seemed to have exposed most participants to vulnerability, holistically, after the death of their parents. This more so because it meant dismantling the family unit, making new adjustments, has to adapt to a new culture and better understanding the new microsystem and other related systems. Most participants further highlighted that as students from diverse communities with different backgrounds, an HEI as a new environment was intimidating and challenging. This is more so because suddenly, as a student in an HEI, one has to be on his/her own and adapt, learn quickly and be in a position to make decisions when faced with challenges. To illustrate this further, Lungs said: *"when you're gone from home you're gone….there is no one to call back and say I am faced with A, B or C here [HEI]…one has to fend for himself [oneself] here…"* However, on reflection, some of the participants felt the painful forceful movement from their homes without consultation [by adults] after the loss of parents was different from the experiences of the unstable HEI environment. In HEI they were goal-oriented and that required responsibility of self, gaining of strength to resist challenges to become responsive contributors to change. Therefore, it was evident that orientation into the HEI was not enough, and participants had to seek relationships to talk about issues that affected them, as shown in these statements: *"ngazwana nabantu abazimisele ukuqhubeka' (people who are motivated to move forward with life), 'nabantu esikwilevel efanayo nabo' (people whom we are at the same level/ same).*

This also is a reminder and confirmation of Bronfenbrenner (1994:40) on how context, history and culture influence critical decision-making, and the importance of the quality of interactions that take place in the microsystem and different social contexts of a person's life. Research stresses that the background of an individual determines his/her successful journey to self-sufficient adulthood (Branson, Leibbrandt & Zuze, 2009:8). Most importantly, for participant orphans the immediate family is regarded as the subsystem in which healthy interpersonal relationships begin, along with engagement with nurturing and supportive family members, however, in the absence of supportive family members one needs to seek other supportive resources in one's current environment. In an HEI, and after participating in a series of dialogues with participants, it was not surprising to learn that TPO's findings and

concerns about the students who come to her lacking self-confidence: "…*fear, not willing to expose their vulnerability to be known by other students that they are poor …*"

This view affirms that creation of an atmosphere and environment that allows for holistic growth and development either socially, intellectually, spiritually, culturally, psychologically or emotionally is what these students required in an HEI. At the same time, drawing from the STAR programme officer and aware of the nature of the programme's characteristics, she confirmed that students who perform badly academically because of different challenges in an HEI, including orphanhood or family problems, are reluctant to seek help. Similarly, in Armsden and Greenberg (1987:445), stressful life events are linked with the perceptions of unstable family relationships even for HEI-aged populations. This confirmation has been observed in all the subtopics of this study, which suggests how much one is shaped by environment and vice versa.

This highlights the importance of stable interrelationships required for optimal development, hence development of emotional strength is vital for every individual in order to rediscover oneself and minimise signs of psychosocial disempowerment. Participants felt the knowledge gained from the representative of the three of the HEI support structures formed a basis of what they needed to structure their framework. The feeling about gained knowledge to develop and implement a strategy for accessibility to the student community concerned seemed to enhance a changed attitude, leading to individual and group empowerment. This information and discussion, including the emotional stories from both community and HEI, concur with Armsden and Greenberg's (1987) claims above.

It should be noted that in life people have to put up with others who are different in many aspects and acknowledge their uniqueness as individuals, yet devote to the spirit of *ubuntu*. It is therefore acknowledged that creating and maintaining an empowerment processes play a crucial role in changing the personal, social and structural situation (3.2), as shown by the feelings of participants about what needed to be included in the framework and how that could enhance actions of social responsibility as future teachers, role models and mentors.

Of significance here was how MXO, Jabs and Lasts, who according to the definition of an orphan were regarded as new orphaned students, differed in the way they were experiencing orphanhood in HEI, compared to Matu, Kazi, Lungs and Hosy. The latter experienced loss of parents at a younger age and more observable behaviour was displayed than the new orphans. Lapse in time brought some healing as they had gone through the stage of deep, severe or critical grieving, which proved to be an advantageous condition that influenced bonding time for members and an understanding of how interrelationships within

systems work. This corroborated Nxusa (2009), albeit she highlighted an element of the "quality" of the interactions and change in different social contexts of a person's life.

The experiences brought by participants form a basis for the possibility of empowerment processes in an HEI and successful collaborative practice. Given an HEI is a microsystem for students, the following orphaned students said the following about their experiences there and lessons learnt on accessing it:

> *Lungs: Ukukhulela ekhaya lapho ungancengwa khona. …ngamanye amazwi …akuphume ukuthi ngiyintandane ekhanda lami…; (to grow up in a home where you're not treated with empathy or even sympathy for you (self-pity)….. forced me to scrap it in my mind that I am an orphan… and moved on).*

> *MXO: Isimo sikunika iexperience yokukwazi nokubhekana nanoma siphi isimo noma ngabe ubhekana naso ekhaya noma isemphakathini. (This situation gives you experience and teach you how to handle/deal with whichever situation whether at home or in the community)*

The above the message conveyed by participants touches on the interdependence of microsystem and mesosystem and how the challenging relationships in these contexts change attitude in a positive manner. The indicated 'mind-shift' from participants was brought about by circumstances whereby the actions taken resulted in "redefining of identity and assuming of new positions and new roles". In other words, the realisation that emerged in Lungs' text was that '*akuphume ekhanda lami ukuthi ngiyintandane'* meaning that there was no time to entertain or accommodate the pain of loss as an orphan. There was not even a slight chance to reflect on the feelings or death, but immediate action had to be taken, thus a strategy was to "scrap" or 'forget' about the incident of loss. In saying "…*and move on*" the experience brought immediate independence, avoidance of self-pity, and an acquired ability to do things for himself and for those who depend on him as they are powerless.

Importantly, the message conveyed to team members was firstly, *"… to learn to trust yourself for your own benefit and that of others'*, and secondly *"taking an action"* and making it work. It should start with each individual, therefore for participants, and as the literature found, individuals are born with potential and capabilities, including spontaneity, self-worth, creativity, authenticity, compassion and yearning for truth and freedom (Bhengu-Baloyi, 2010:49). Findings that emerged from the text suggest that suffering and difficulty can become a powerful source of good.

Lungs reported how the influence of the negative context, "*ekhaya lapho ungancengwa khona*" influenced his decision-making skills, however this kind of treatment could be beneficial in strengthening one's areas of resilience. MXO concurred with Lungs: *"lesisimo"* and *"handle any situation whether at home or in the community"*. Both participants indicated how difficulties experienced in different contexts (home or community) influenced how they dealt with the present circumstances, yet the emphasis lay on taking action and devising possible and feasible intervention strategies, which according to MXO was a lesson, a vital experience and a sign of holistic growth.

The findings that emerged, and as contemplated in these two participants' views, are in line with the literature that confirms working together as being likely to shape lives in varied contexts, including an HEI, and as also defined in participatory development theories (UNDP, 1993:1) which posit that participatory processes are the actions that shape lives. Similarly, this emphasis is also hinted at in the maxim "…experience is the best teacher", so that if participants collaboratively bring together their experiences an empowering psychosocial framework in HEI might preserve sustainability.

All participants felt that, as an orphan, one sometimes feels isolated and when actions of unequal power distribution exist or are practiced, especially within the system(s), for example by students to other students in HEI, it is an unpleasant experience. Again, it is in the microsystem that the most direct interactions with society take place, where the individual is supposed not to be a passive recipient of experiences but to assist in the construction of the setting(s). However, in an FGD, participants raised some concerns about historical and political practices in the HEI:

> *The situation in this HEI … It doesn't change in this institution. Last year you had to see for yourself what to eat and where to stay on arrival (orientation week and while on the waiting list). To sort my problems I had to apply for REC* [an application for concession to arrange payment of outstanding fees by instalments in order to proceed the following year] *and took the letter as I was my mothers' beneficiary as proof that I will pay what I owed after the proceeds were finalised. I had to think quickly so that I do not drop out of school… Otherwise I would have…*

As stated by Habermas (2.4.1.1), communication and participation through discursive practice is understood to help individuals interpret and understand the world and their position in it, that is, the self-in-society. As Angoustinos and Walker (1995:33) argued, "people are conceptualised first and foremost as social beings who derive a sense of who they are, how they should behave and what they should believe in on the basis of their

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group membership." Participants felt that identification was a need for the framework to be known and be recognised by the University community and structures, otherwise dropping out becomes an unavoidable choice. Meetings with students and engaging in activities were a result of the belief that empowerment in HEI values empowerment in schools, a philosophy favoured in the education system. The courageous dialogues for some participants in FGD enable them to examine deeper inequitable social practices. It was evident also that new and exciting dimensions in collaborative engagement as a resource were possible, if group members agreed that they were for the first time working as a group and for a purpose.

Participants were agreed that having support kept them motivated prior to the HEI and once in it. For example, for others, care and support ranged from extended family members, teachers in schools, members of the community and peers, as affirmed by Sane:

> *…however, ugogo nje wangenzela yonke into ungisizile kakhulu. Ingabe angikwazanga ukuregister ngakwazi ukuhlala noma kunzima ingabe mhlampe ngadropa out…yaa ungisizile kakhulu.* (My [her] grandmother came through for me [her] in an immeasurable way to register in a HEI and that encouraged me to persevere and resist hardship. It was hard, I could have dropped out but …yes she helped me a lot).

This is one of the most noticeable and brave decisions taken by Sane's grandmother as an informal foster parent to access resources (foster grant) through the South African Social Development Department. The savings helped her to realise her goal, a commitment to care and support which all participants felt extended family members and guardians should be empowered with, as this action for the orphaned could open doors to seize any opportunity in life. Similarly, in meetings and FGDs I gathered that all participants acknowledged the value of the development of a communicative practice that promised to be a lesson to take home. However, the message encapsulated in this argument is that while some students had to find their way through the HEI and fend for themselves, others commanded support from different community members. For example, Sane identified her grandmother, Jabs his wider family and relatives in his community, Kazi, Matu, Lasts and Lungs, their extended family members, Lasts and MXO their peers and friends, whilst Lungs, Hosy and Jabs acknowledged the influence and good actions of teachers in schools. Consequently, participants' message shows that support from teachers in schools is the crux of the matter, which stresses how much participants needed this framework in order to gain confidence to deal with similar situations in their schools of employment and placements during teaching practice (TP).

The participants commended this action and it was a lesson for them as pre-service teachers in financial management. In particular, what was realised in participants' actions was the possibility of change and all depended on interaction at that time. For most participants sharing ideas was the apex of social practice in HEI, considering it was the first time they had been involved in discursive practices about their experiences of death. Meeussen, Delvaux and Phalet (2013:1, see 2.3) also confirm this implication of active engagement in that it enabled students in HEIs to see themselves as *"able persons"* with *"psychological strength"* in the social contexts, and in assuming relationships that are appropriately engaging. I also suggest that after having been conscientised by Freire's critical consciousness principles, CER and Ecosystemic theory, the world of the orphaned students affected or re/shaped who they were in the HEI. The framework proved to bring participants together and make them aware of what needed to be challenged emotionally, psycho-socially, historically and structurally. In a discursive practice individuals create their own knowledge. They define their own existence in a communication-centred manner within varied contexts, and the application of CER allows them to act together towards their own autonomy in an HEI.

In the context of social justice there was a realisation that 'own autonomy' is sufficient, however the priority on consideration of 'other' needed to be extended to the wider community and society for an emancipatory cause to be accomplished. Matu and Hosy even shared their stories on how the effects of changing others' lives changes one's attitude and increases a sense of gratification and self-actualisation. Therefore, a joint participatory activity was extended to all participating members. The two participants' empowering experiences were expressed in this way:

> *Matu: I am in this organisation, CDA; we visit schools in the surrounding area once in a while. We visit schoolchildren. I have so much experience about what it means 'to have nothing'. As much as we agree on adopting one child for starters but 'those' kids are destitute. I believe though like we have all agreed that we are going to make a change in the lives of a few we are adopting… bring hope to them…*

> *Hosy: I joined the church organisation and in my initial years they 'made me feel at home' ….but I must say I have never talked to anyone there about my feeling and my experiences of loss through death in this group. However, here, in this group I have 'become a changed man' in a sense that I can see that I can change any situation around if working with people who understand who 'really' I am…"*

Considering that 'an action taken collectively while learning from each other by sharing experiences is resultant in [sic] transformation of lives in social contexts' (McGregor, 2003 in Hlalele, 2014:104), in this social context, participants felt that effective communication through language was significant in terms of the expressions of 'lived' experiences and alternative stories. It is however essential to understand each system in order to identify what Bronfenbrenner explains as the "problem". In the framework, one of the principles that participants believed to be key to their emancipation and psychosocial wellbeing was to learn to forgive. Hosy noted how acceptance in a church organisation in the HEI changed him and his perception of 'self', 'into a 'changed man' and at ease 'feel at home'. This is proof that some people may not be fortunate enough to enjoy the warmth of family life, but can find solace from others. From a spiritual point of view, and to further appraise Hosy's assertion, the reality conveyed is that there are spiritual, emotional and social reserves which one could draw on for an enlightened sense of hope and purpose.

I find it helpful to distinguish between the latter and the PAR approach as it advocates creation of appropriate environments for people to express their needs in order to effectively deal with challenges while working towards achieving their goals (Mohan, 2001:2). Participants were prompted through reflective practice to think of social responsibility processes and results in their lives at an HEI. Some of the minor and major things taken for granted in life could change others' lives, so it was important for participants to match the needs, demands and resources of family and community offered by the surrounding environment, as recommended in literature (Nxusa, 2009:12; Bronfenbrenner, 1986:338). They saw the model as suggesting that healthy development and effective functioning depend on a match between the needs and resources of orphaned students in HEI and the demands, support and resources offered by the HEI.

I realised that as participants we would not have reached any stage of moving forward if opportunities to work together and sharing of experiences were not offered. The narratives have demonstrated that there is much more to the lives of the orphaned students than catering for academic performance, therefore I regard CER as congruent to the study as it embraces critical consciousness and utilises PAR approaches, gives voice to the silenced and offers strategies that are emancipatory and empowering to conquer the oppressive status core. The findings suggested the need for a framework that would eliminate the kind of negative feelings of most participants that have shaped or continue to shape their lives, their choices to keep quiet and not question the status quo, which is against what critical theorists and the principles of CER. For participants to be emancipated, following McGregor (2003) and Yum (2013) on the provision of guidance and recognition that power manifests

itself in the layers of the society, behaviour should be shaped by its social context. Thus, for attainment of good qualities and self-awareness, working collaboratively with the aim of enhancement of self-esteem is a basic requirement. This manifests itself in day-to-day and contextual interrelationships on all levels. The confirmation is evident in the definition of 'self-concept' (3.4.1) as: "…what a person believes about himself, or a map that each person consults in order to understand himself during moment of crises and in situations where he makes a choice." This is congruent with the theoretical perspectives (BEST) and doing away with dominative social contexts emphasised in CER, wherein people are expected to take action with the possibility of disrupting and challenging any form of discrimination, domination, oppression, subordination, inequality and marginalisation and unjust practices. The emphasis denotes that where there is power there is necessarily resistance, and CER highlights capacities possessed by participants where they could 'act and speak' on their behalf. Participants were motivated to work together and this was a sign of self-awareness and development of trust. In addition, what was learnt from sharing experiences about who they were lay in participants recognising each other's strengths and weaknesses and how they together utilised each other's knowledge in developing a framework that seemed to highlight urgency. Other attributes were improved confidence, self-awareness, and enhanced self-esteem, increasingly understanding that community issues play a role in research and knowledge production.

In summarising this subsection, the key findings that emerged were understanding that information acquired served as a motivation and encouragement to all participants and acknowledgment that people who are motivated are strong-willed and can withstand life challenges. It is therefore evident that systems need to change and to fight for stability in order to sustain effective change. In support of the above, and drawing from the literature perspective (Breuing, 2011:4&5; Mertens, 2009:59), the indication is that raising consciousness of contextual and historical factors while incorporating different theories, multiple approaches, methods and techniques, raisers possibilities for empowerment of HEI orphaned students and realising a just social transformation.

6.4   IMPACT OF SHARED VISION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK

The goal for this research was important for orphaned students to be empowered through engagement to control their own lives for the collective, egalitarian good. The view is affirmed in literature which states that the principles of CER seek to enable students in HEIs and view individuals as *"able persons"* who have *"psychological strength"*, who should cope

in diverse social contexts and form appropriately engaging relationships. The strength (coping and resilience) possessed by each individual has been established in this chapter, and participants felt that since it is shown that orphanhood is a social challenge for all communities, a shared vision about the psychosocial framework needs to be implemented. However, as noted in Bronfenbrenner's ecosystemic theory, regarding what needs to be regarded as the "problem" (2.5.3), the critical view is that it is essential to understand each system in order to identify it, where it is or whose it is. By so doing participants confirmed what is outlined as transformative action which further gives rise to transformative empowerment. In addition, as highlighted above, amongst participants who are orphaned students in the HEI, orphanhood was experienced as early as primary or high school, whilst others were orphaned while in the HEI. For Matu, Sane and Lasts, the confirmation of shared vision and implementation was voiced in the FGD session: *"I have realised that we need to be committed. It is easy to talk but when it comes to action [writing down…] is not easy".*

While Matu was concerned about the level of commitment and warned others about how cheap talk might sound compared to acting on a planned activity, Sane's response suggested a level of developed confidence she had with the team, brought about through collaborative practice: *"Mina ngibona ukuthi iteamwork helps a lot. From the work we have done so far today…. I think we can do this bafowethu (guys/ brothers and sisters)…"*

Drawing on the above utterances of these two selected participants during FGDs, there were signs of development of positive attitude towards the common goals as a result of shared vision by team members. In Matu's text *"I have realised"*, there is an indication of a transformed way of viewing reality as a result of her observations and participation in the research process, hence the collaborative development of a framework. In the literature this process is what Bolton (2010:129) refers to as 'reflective practice', with the emphasis on acknowledging one's innate voice and critically listening to it while developing interpersonal relationships (2.5.1.2). Participants came to realise that PAR:

> *… focuses on the involvement and participation of all role players in a particular research project in solving concrete problems where they collaboratively have a voice in the process of decision-making, problem definition, problem assessment, intervention planning, implementation, and evaluation is conducted.*

When projecting on the statement, which was an observation and experience for Matu, she said that *"… it is easy to talk but when it comes to action [writing down] is not easy".* This statement highlights what commitment should mean to all participants, especially

implementation of the framework and accomplishing planned activities to maintain sustainability of the project. There was an understanding that even after much deliberation from planning up until the implementation and evaluation stages, this was going to be a lengthy process that required dedication, responsibility, accountability, motivation and commitment on the part of all role-players. The understanding and acknowledgement of a lengthy process ahead of team members was also evident in Sane's mentioning of that day's accomplishment. This framework was planned accordingly and drawing from the strategy adopted from Manning (2006:68) (4.3.2.3.1).

To elucidate, "commitment" as highlighted in Matu's response indicated a strong wish for active and creative realisation of the objectives by all members. When one is committed to something it is possible to enhance gratification and encouragement, a feeling shared by most participants. This changed perception is therefore transferred to the value expected in the lives of all team members, other students in the HEI as well as the University structures. In addition, the emphasis of a shared vision is corroborated in Sane's response*: "mina … iteamwork helps a lot"* which acknowledges the sharing of one's own experiences with others and the realisation that this enhances learning from each other. In this way, the emphasis is on the transformation of self (on a personal level) and the power of connection (collaborative work and networking), especially during meetings and group discussions which further led to participants to feeling respected, heard, affirmed and validated.

For participants at this point getting things done from the initial process to the point where they were seemed to have brought about a feeling of having a great opportunity to announce '*I can do it'/ 'we can do it'*. The great measure of teamwork is that when committed the 'I" gradually changes into "we", an encouragement of trusting each other's strengths and learning certain skills, such as appreciation, listening, tolerance and perseverance, which are some of the necessary skills required for pre-service and teachers. The *'we'* evokes Freire's critical view that developing programmes would promote and address cultural identity, beliefs, attitudes and values that form basis of all knowledge (re)creation; the development of secure, welcoming environments and motivated students. Participants believed that in order to acquire such skills everything needed to start with *"them"*, to further transfer that to future endeavours and become knowledgeable, caring adults for secured, motivated learners.

Participants confirmed the views of Slavin (1995:59 &60), Travis and Leech (2013:2) that interaction with peers shows improved task management, less disruptive behaviour and emphasis on teamwork improving barriers to friendship and enhancement of self-esteem to students. Therefore, such new ways of knowing (sharing) led to the development of self-

awareness and enabled individuals to receive inspiration from each other: *'we can do it bafowethu'; 'we need to be committed'.* To a large extent the findings above were sufficient to interpret participants' understanding of the kind of relationship they had formed as a group, but, understanding that achieving one's purpose in life depends on the relationship one has with self and others (4.3.1.1) was core. In addition, PAR recognises that participation of young people can effectively bring change to complex issues or situations affecting their lives and in the society at large (2.4), which were the views included in Matu's and Sane's statements. They believed that because of the kind of the relationship that had developed amongst themselves, a sense of 'friendship' and brotherhood/sisterhood (*bafowethu*) had strengthened their courage to develop the HEI psychosocial framework.

On the other hand, Lasts, like most participants, had a positive attitude and good feeling about the development of the framework, having worked with the vision and mission statement and the planned activities for implementation of framework. Compared to others, he was exceedingly confident about the outcomes: *"This framework 'obviously' will change the culture of this university. The stereotyping sense of treating students as just students… from this work, there are those who are going to notice…'* This suggests that he felt that to ignore the diversity of the student community, whether physically, emotionally, spiritually, economically, politically or historically, would be to deny them the voice and opportunity to access resources and growth and so fulfil their potential. In addition, the closing sentence '*…there are those who can listen to us'* also highlights recognition of the influence of the different contexts and structures, while acknowledging that change is a process, therefore the possibility for the framework to appeal to all structures and community of the HEI was going to take place gradually*.*

Since in CER and in PAR, collaborative work is encouraged and subjectivity enhanced (2.5.2; 4.3.1), the words '*stereotyping'; 'students as just students'* suggest a type of treatment which students equated to objects. This affirms the argument of Steinberg and Kincheloe (2010:143) that critical theory serves in the attainment of critical emancipation and "should allow for new forms of connectedness with others". Similarly, literature and the theoretical perspectives are congruent with Lasts' beliefs, albeit in his perception he alerts other participants that powerful structures and people have a tendency to ignore important issues and other marginalised groups. He said that while the objective and the focus of the study was on students' experiences in an HEI, the team's framework extended to the community of students who were also in need of this empowerment programme. To a great extent, Lasts' point of view is supported by Kelly (2009:373), for whom participants as subjective decision-makers are sometimes deemed to be violating the traditional objectivity

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of researchers, hence they are empowered to realise their full potential, understand themselves and their roles and ultimately be empowered to contribute meaningfully as citizens in their countries.

At this stage all participants were clear about what needed to be done and what each member should contribute for effective implementation. The findings from the reflective journals also support what literature proposes on the development of critical consciousness, in which it is stated that new knowledge has a possibility to inform change in practices by identifying power through discourse to legitimise varied voices. The findings further suggest that reflections helped to generate data from planning, analysis and implementation of the framework by participants, a third level of consciousness (Carlson, Engebretson, & Chamberlain, 2006:837).

Crucially, most participants highlighted that achieving one's purpose in life depends on the relationship one has with self and others. As discussed (4.3.1.1), PAR recognises that participation of young people can effectively bring change to complex issues or situations affecting their lives and in society at large (2.4 & 2.), a view supported in Matu's and Sane's statements, where because of the kind of the relationship that had developed a sense of 'friendship' and brotherhood/sisterhood (*bafowethu*) had strengthened courage. In addition this highlights the importance of understanding that active participation has the possibility of exposing one to new ways of thinking about issues and solutions to social problems. Participants' feelings were to move from thoughts and concepts to the implementation phase, a realisation affirmed in Slavin (1995:16): "When students work together as a group to accomplish a group goal, they come to express norms in favour of doing whatever is necessary for the group to succeed."

While other participants stressed the importance of 'commitment and teamwork' for the shared vision to be realised, Hosy evoked the critical consciousness proposed by Freire (1970) in bringing back voice identity and breaking the perpetuation of marginalisation and illegitimate practices that is disempowering to students:

> *I have never been involved in developing a framework but this has (working as a team) shown me ukuthi sometimes uthola ukuthi loku bengingakunakile naloko bengingakunakile… bese kusa ngokunye […that I just took for granted this and that or I wasn't aware about this or that… but working together and thinking critically about the situation has enlightened my reasoning].*

This supports what most participants experienced when collaboratively working towards a common goal, a new insight about reality as a result of interpersonal interaction. The above findings were associated with CER, which purports that critical thinkers reject acceptance of a self-destructive or counterproductive behaviour but retain the ability to disrupt, question and challenge the status quo, propagating the principles of democracy (2.4, 2.5.1.1) (Nkoane, 2012: 99; Radebe 2010:69; Kincheloe, 2008:4&6). This suggests the value of understanding that orphanhood is a socio-cultural and challenging issue, and that for certain communities to emancipate or liberate human beings from an ideologically distorted conception of reality requires a shared vision and collaborative work. Lasts acknowledges and concurs with Hill's (2010:8) statement that critical theorists attempt to explain how culture is produced and reproduced, how individuals struggle with meanings which shape their socialization, and how power, or a lack of power, affects this production and reproduction of culture.

In view of the orphaned pre-service participants the opportunity to develop the psychosocial empowerment framework was welcome. The framework for participants was a tool that aimed to transform individuals in HEI and the HEI culture for the common good. The emphasis was on the recognition of and respect for individual differences, hence avoiding stereotyping behaviours. The optimism demonstrated by participants is also corroborated in literature as well as within the principles of critical capabilities, BEST and PAR (2.5.1.1, 2.5.1.2, 2.5.1.3, 2.5.2, 2.5.3, 4.3.1.1; 4.3.1.3).

The feeling was that if they were to be recognised or heard equally they needed a collective voice and identifiable name so that what they said and did as a collective could assist in the just practices of the HEI community and in society. Thus, participants in an FGD voiced the following about the choice of the name of their group: "*Hosy: Asenze kube elesiNgisi ngoba elesiZulu kubuye kube naleyonto nje…. maybe …how about Orphaned Students Association (OSA)?"* They all agreed that compared to isiZulu an English name seemed to sound polite, easy to identify with and not discriminatory. Hosy said "…elesiZulu kubuye kube naleyonto nje" (the isiZulu name sometimes has 'that thing')". In terms of "that thing" the meaning was about the 'stigma' associated with orphanhood in the society which participants felt was not different in the HEI either.

As in cases mentioned previously, of what participants felt orphanhood meant to them (5.3), it was evident that while they were moving with the process of developing psychosocial empowerment framework, reflecting-in-action also took place. This further allowed the possibility to alter that knowledge-in-action into achieving desired outcomes after solving the challenges in those transformational contexts. Generally, language is defined as a

communicative action in verbal and non-verbal discourse. It is well to say that, for participants, language and the choice of the name for their framework confirmed that oppressive societal discourses could be dismantled in a non-manipulative manner while participating collaboratively in dialogue to change lives, as clearly adopted in CER and PAR methodologies (4.4).This led to the following views about the name: *Matu: We need to have a name that show togetherness something like 'brothers and sisters" izinto ezikanjalo (things like that).*

After long discussions over the name, all participants were happy about the suggested name "OSA", which seemed to be catchy and special. Hosy stated "*asenze*" (let us) and Matu said "we need"… "togetherness… brothers and sisters", which indicated a shift from an individualistic way of perceiving things to working together, hence "us and we". In addition brotherhood and sisterhood indicate a sense of a strong bond participants had developed and the confirmed common vision they had about the framework. The ownership of the tasks and collaborative understanding activities brought about by shared communication emerged as proposed in PAR principles, in this study employed to evaluate the level of participation by all role players in addressing orphanhood and thereby stretching critical thinking among students around issues of orphanhood in HEI (4.3.1.3).

In PAR the development of the framework as a social practice by participants did not mean the end of the process of the study. Although all participants were enthusiastic to come up with the name of the organisation, it was important as one of the creative ways to design or have a name as a team that was going to be identifiable as it was felt there much in the name. Therefore, Lasts, Hosy and Matu felt it was important to think carefully about the name of their organisation and objectives of the framework. Participants argued that a name alone has the possibility of developing or destroying their collective work or reinforcing marginalisation. It was noticed that they assumed leadership roles and demonstration of positive attitude as pioneers of the project, as expressed in the FGD:

> *We do not want the name that will in the end make people feel as if they are inferior, be looked down upon by others (bathi 'lezozintandane' – [those orphans]) and not want to be associated with the group. Phela we must remember that inhloso yethu ukuthi bonke "labantu abafana nathi" bakwazi ukuzosizakala la kuleliqembu lethu; bazizwe "impilo yabo iba ncono lapha enyuvesi". Babe nabantu abazoxoxa nabo ngale kokubazwela nokuthi babajaje sengathi bahlupheka kunabobonke abanye abantu ezweni. Igama kumele lihehe kodwa libe neqiniso lokwenzeka ngaphakathi (*Our aim is that we want people who are orphaned like us to feel at home in this organisation, have people to share such that their life in a HEI change for the better*).*

Thina sesiright although it wasn't easy in the beginning but now we want others to be like us …, to be happy and feel important and respected no matter what. And most of all to have hope in life...

To all team members it was important to have the name of an organisation that should be empowering and easy to identify with. This was one of the ways participants felt facilitated in engaging with the HEI structures as a confident collective with one voice, so that their views would be shared with stakeholders and with strong hope of being heard. The main objective was to share their framework and its practices with the hope that interpretation by policymakers would find it a good idea to enact it, provided enough resources were acquired and the whole idea feasible. The same view by participants is supported in the study by Ball, Maguire, Braun and Hoskins (2011:630), claiming that the role of enthusiasts and interpreters of policies is to translate the text into actions, things to be done in real situations as meaningful manageable issues. Further affirmation by critical theorists (2.2.4) is emphasised in communicative action and the use of language, where it is claimed that these should not be used such that segmentation of society is reaffirmed. For this reason, I found the theory as permitting for students to explore inescapable political and historical agendas, where participants firstly felt that the term "an orphan" in the HEI needed to be redefined.

As an action to participate in the transformation of their own world in the HEI, orphaned students felt that exposure to environments that allowed them to regain a sense of humanity were conducive to overcoming most unfavourable condition as role-players in their own possible liberation. These concerning views by most participants about sustainability of any action taken to facilitate changes in view of the structures of an HEI were outlined and supported in literature (Mohajer & Earnest, 2009:109; Diemer & Blustein, 2007:230). These scholars contend that it is vital to encourage formation of effective sustainable groups, with strengthened group bonds and a feeling of equality in participatory dialogues which eventually transcends one's situation through action and reflection.

In summarising this subtheme, the key findings that emerged highlighted the vital needs leading to development of the framework. Participation in this study became an encouragement as students were empowered to work collaboratively and to share knowledge with a possibility of freeing themselves from domination. In the HEI, and while faced with a number of challenges, working towards the common goal shapes participants to fight dependency following deficiency with support from understanding what emancipatory theories testify, that is, motivating people to action, empowering them to own the problem, process and provide solutions (2.3).

6.5 TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PSYCHOSOCIAL EMPOWERMENT FRAMEWORK THROUGH SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ACTIONS

Participants felt that the organisation should involve a wider community of orphaned students. Compounding Bronfenbrenner's concern about the attitudes people have towards those without power in different communities including (Nxusa, 2009:27), participants felt they had to re-organise themselves to promote the quality of close interaction in transforming social structures that perpetuate inequality, oppression and discrimination, and encourage participation in critical decision-making. Lungs' statement is in line with Nxusa's perspective above and stressed the importance of acquiring a critical decision-making skill, not as orphaned students only but also as pre-service teachers. He noted the following drawing from his experience:

> *Kunezimo okufanele uzitshele ukuthi abantu bayoqhamuka nezinto ezihlukene eziyezeluleko okumele wena uzicabangele ukuthi kumele wenzeni ngalesosimo ukwazi ukukhetha loko ocabanga ukuthi uzokumela kuzokuyisa phambili. Kodwa kumele wazi ukuthi ufunani emplweni kuqala… (There are situations where people will come up with many differing opinions or ideas about certain situations that affect your life. At that point it is at your own discretion to decide critically as to what you will do about the situation. But I think self-awareness is critical and knowing your goal in life)*

In support of the above viewpoint, Matu also made mention of an example of how she experienced difficulty pulling off activities for the organisation of which she was part in the HEI. She stated they had to adopt orphaned and vulnerable children and felt it was important to share that with all team members in order for the framework to be sustainable:

> *Sometimes words do help but the reality is that it's not like that. They are in need, real need. I was exposed to one who had nothing…. really nothing and 'as a student-teacher, I couldn't ignore that. I had to go home and to neighbours and request for clothing for this young boy especially the school shirts a shorts ….mhmmm….no one could have ignored that but it happened…*

Her experience made all participants understand how the importance of acquiring emotional empowerment first, before taking positions of becoming leaders, helped others in HEI as well as leaders of learners in schools living a dignified life construed in the South African Constitution. Likewise, participants needed to demonstrate awareness and understanding of the roles and characteristics of teachers as they had chosen teaching as their career.

Notably, HE strives to provide students with power to contribute towards the building of a new and better world. From the literature, Bhengu-Baloyi (2010:265) indicates that accessing HE is an opportunity for everyone which denotes '*doing the right thing*' in order to prevent a threatened future to a better life with fewer problems. Bleakley (1999:315), on the other hand, stresses "developing critical thinkers" who are self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored and self-corrective thinkers, an intellectual trait who needs cultivation of HE.

Matu's actions are supported in the literature above "*as a student I couldn't ignore that*". Firstly she mentioned "*as a student (in a HEI)*". These findings suggest the value of creative critical thinking, whether one is a pre-service student or an in-service teacher. Subsequent to critical awareness or thinking is the attribute mentioned, that is, to be *self-corrective.* In order to demonstrate elements of being *self-directed* and possibly be *self-disciplined* for Matu implied that the situation to which she was exposed forced her to do something about it: "*I had to go from door to door requesting for school uniform*". I was convinced at this stage that participants were realising that sometimes actions of social responsibility confirm that each of us has some capabilities and strengths to act upon any challenging situation and once accomplished it is self-fulfilling.

In addition, one of the requirements or expectation that is underlined in literature (2.7.2) is that HEI students are exposed to methodologies that are essential for their professional growth and advancement, with the potential to (re)construct knowledge and expose it to self-monitoring processes to improve development of democratic policies in varied contexts. The same processes emerge as exemplars to orphaned HEI students and motivation that for the sustainability of the framework monitoring and evaluation had to be maintained. When parents die, the evidence for some of the orphaned participants results in a growing realisation that the world which will not be the same again, however, participation in the study showed some prospects and ability of change the situation and which participant felt profoundly helpful. This, for participants, created the possibility of becoming socially responsible citizens, not as participants only but as pre-service teacher as well. For some, the only family memory they had to maintain was the newly found laughter and connectedness with team members and the initial reasons for making education and teaching their career choice:

> '…*ukuthi ngiyakuthanda ukusebenza nomphakathi and I am against clubbing, drugs and alcohol. Ngiyacabanga ukuthi kwa-education ilapho ukwazi ukufinyelela khona kubantwana besebancane ngoba mina angiphuzi angibhemi but ngiyalidlala ibhola, ngenza konke okwenziwa abantu abasha but ….am….I'm not into fashion [Jabs]."(a*

career in education is best because one can reach children and youth since I don't smoke and drink alcohol, I play soccer and all what young people do…)

PAR and CER purport that participants always have something to contribute to the environment. When considering education, it is apparently an issue of concern that practitioners themselves have to understand the relationship between theory and practice. Similarly, engaging in PAR helped in the collaborative production of knowledge that is emancipatory and liberating to orphaned students in HEI.

Findings from studies about poverty demonstrate that it causes negative cycles and poor educational conditions, resulting in students dropping out of school or HEI with no skills for adult life. Some felt that the culture of treating orphaned and vulnerable students was experienced as overwhelmingly impersonal in the HEI, which differs greatly from the school context and results in lack of confidence and self-esteem, lack of interpersonal relationship between lecturers and students and student-to-student relationship. The important question is what students do about the situation and how that could be changed. Matu commented:

> *…The relationship with lecturers is not …lecturers do not have ibackground of all students. We don't expect that. Amanye amaklasi makhulu anamastudent ako 100/200 (In some classes numbers of students exceed one hundred or two hundred). Lecturers should try to accommodate everyone. Culture and belief system also is different. But I think there is no solution to this one.*

I suspect this was a challenge that affected most participants but it was evident that this needed participants to take action. Drawing from the STAR programme this seemed to be key in solving academic challenges. On reflection, participants realise that this should not be blamed on lectures entirely, but they acknowledged that they was also a 'baggage' they had inherited from their schools and backgrounds as students in an HEI. However, they could not ignore some structural practices when the classes were too large and sometimes students sat outside or classes were too full that it became noisy. This is not conducive for effective learning. Participants highlighted that their organisation was going to attend to such issues and that they were going to organise themselves and seek support from other structures.

The power of decision-making and commitment was highlighted as important and Lungs further cautioned others about the choice of decisions as some might lead to unpopularity. The participating team should commit itself and not allow distractions; however, his view is further affirmed in literature as an alternative view in understanding the importance placed on how pre-service teachers in an HEI should be viewed:

"…..their identity as 'university students' is imbued with expectations about academic performance and academic competence. …. there are shared ideas of what it is to be a student, of how a student will behave, even of what the student should look like…." (Burns, 1979:155)

Generosity is one other valued principle which requires setting time aside for one's own and professional development. However, individual agency can be constrained by social structure which perpetuates the status quo and oppression. However, as part the common vision shared by participants, all agreed that actions of generosity were shared on their experiences in different organisations, and that they had membership with by choice in the HEI.

Hosy: "In two thousand and nine there was a group that used to visit orphaned centres on Fridays. I suggest that we adopt one child (Adopt a child) so that we can do justice to others which is something most of us didn't experience here..."

Sane: My greatest concern is that if from the list ten orphans maybe we need to think how we can avoid issues of discrimination ... I don't know how.

Lasts: Uma kungenzeka we can be role models to two or three. To me ayikho into edlula ukukhonjiswa ukubaluleka (nothing surpasses to be valued). …encourage them… they need to understand ababodwa (are not isolated) … we felt that kind of loss they are feeling in schools.

The findings on planned activities are congruent with literature (Ngai Sang Yum (2013) in 3.6.1) as he supports what participants' highlighting what seemed to be an important lesson. Participants managed to prioritise their needs and challenges posed by societal and structural practices which they felt perpetuated unjust practices which are a barrier to self-actualisation. This realisation led to the understanding that as orphaned students, and in order to thrive in their psychological worlds in an HEI, they needed to collaboratively develop a psychosocial empowerment framework. Orphaned students felt the possibility of empowerment as a result of the whole process, raising the possibility that they could be transformed and gain the ability to solve social problems which affected them directly, then extend this to others. Furthermore, they did not refute the notion that as orphaned students in HEI have social problems they are also challenged to think critically while solving problems posed and by so doing contribute to social change.

Of interest in the above extracts is that participants *"…need to understand that ababodwa not alone)… we also felt that loss they are feeling in schools",* and this suggested that the

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framework of collaborative practice should be extended to benefiting the community of learners in schools as a form of social responsibility and contribution to social change as agents of change. This also confirms the notion of balancing theory and practice as highlighted in PAR principles.

Participants further stressed the role played by their teachers in the school system in shaping who they are, which also assisted in them redefining the roles and extending knowledge while actively dealing with negative life challenges. Thus, the discourse about HEI for participants suggests that if the HEI is a system and other stakeholders should be structured such that they are recognised for their hard work or contribution. Their strengths and capabilities, challenges and weaknesses are acknowledged so that environments help positively in the building of pre-service teachers who are responsive role models and mentors for others. This is why, according to Diemer and Blustein (2005), emphasis is placed on the development of critical consciousness which enables analysis of the trying situation or context, suggesting possible strategies to challenge and possibly transform it into a positive resource. This is supported by Lungs' belief that challenges he had as an orphaned adolescent with an abused sick mother had changed him for the better and eventually the experience taught him endurance and to embrace the opportunity presented to him to face any challenge even in an HE: *"Lesisimo sangikhulisa ngokushesha sangifundisa ukuba indoda kunanoma isiphi isimo sempilo engihlangabezana naso (this situation and turn of things forced me to grow very fast and to man up for any challenges I come across in life and even in HEI").*

The observation was that when planning was complete, for all team members the whole process was no longer about each of them, but most of the time all discourse evolved around the other orphaned students in the HEI, and those who were still in high schools. It is noted that with the growing numbers of orphans in some families, some basic needs, for example, food, medical care, clothing and education, went unmet. Therefore the practice of active participation and self-determination, while becoming sensitive to dynamics of social structures and cultural contexts that oppress orphaned students, meant building relationships for discourses with all stakeholders. The orphaned students in HEI were of the opinion that they needed to move from domination by structures since they then comprehended that organisations are created by people and have no existence without them (Peca, 2000:37). This therefore implied doing away with top-down programmes which they felt to be insensitive to local context and needs of orphaned and vulnerable student community in an HEI. Some of the ways they suggested in FDGs were:

> *….Other students are going to like the framework and the things we are doing*

> *…. Form our own supportive group ….refer those whom we cannot help when we are discussing about our fears. We don't want to knock at the door… it must be known and accessible*

> *Sometimes you become right by just listening when sharing. We can have our get togethers supporting each other …not 'that kind of counselling' [like that of a formal therapy session with a psychologist] We need to network with others…understand each other better.*

Bronfenbrenner's theory recognises an important level of understanding the effects of transformation and connectedness of these complex nested systems or structures. Therefore, acknowledging that the world is pictured differently by people on certain levels of the society, engaging orphaned students in the processes of emancipation can extend from the micro-system to the macro-levels.

Orphaned students in the HEI believed that through this framework they were exposed to the awareness of opportunities and resources to help themselves and others. In concurring that before and on access of the HEI there were doubts, questions of self-adequacy and self-sacrifice, experiences of loneliness and isolation, knowing and sticking to one's objectives is critical and eventually breeds success. Jabs, Lungs and Hosy stressed that it is important how young adults resolve challenges as the experience will shape their relative ability to form and maintain a close relationship and commit to a relationship with another in life. However, research conducted by Rule and Modipa (2012:138) indicated the probability of orphaned students not attending school or HEI and dropping out because of poverty and discrimination. Concurring with the view, Pandor (2006, in Donald et al., 2012:175) contend that the drop-out rate beyond compulsory schooling has been observed and identified as a continuing problem in in South Africa. Hosy expressed a similar view:

> *I was homeless and …I have spent six years doing my first degree… After dropping out I am finally graduating next year hopefully…*

Despite adverse conditions, both literature and the above participant's statement shows confirmation which is at the same time associated with what the CER highlights, in that orphaned participants gained power over social conditions and were able to develop a sustainable project that promised to bring about social and cultural change. At this point the student participants felt qualified to participate in the socio-political world and decision-making in the HEI community and in their communities as citizens of the country. This was the proof of an action which Freire (1993) refers to as moving from being objects of

oppression to subjects that act upon their socio-political environment. This is viewed as an environment, believed in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory as focusing mainly on understanding the quality of the interactions and change in different social contexts of a person's life (Bronfenbrenner, 1986:725).

The qualitative data analysis indicated that participants perceived life in an HEI as less challenging after gaining access to financial aid, which they all confirmed was a struggle. The importance of meeting the educational and economic needs of orphaned (vulnerable) pre-service teacher was perceived as adding to a lack of power which limits the success of empowerment framework. In addition, a supportive extended family network, peer friendships, positive HEI experiences, opportunities to engage in social HEI life (including pro-social organisations and a religious faith community) adds to a better life and if strengthened can help improvement of self-esteem, confidence and academic achievement.

On describing the worst experience experienced in life and in HEI, and how challenges following that experience were navigated and possible solutions found for the future for orphaned student community in HEI, several views emerged. The worst experience that emerged and which most participants attested to related to socio-economic challenges in an HEI. The lack of finances was an issue which all participants experienced and was found to have ripple effects in all systems and subsystems of pre-service students. According to Bray (2003), poverty is the principle vehicle orphanhood works to further disadvantage number students following plausible reasons. However, it is sometimes the lack of material resource that lead to hiding of wounds or emotional suffering of orphaned students.

To mitigate the above, Freire points out the importance of collaborative commitment of all stakeholders involved by understanding that the essence of education is to facilitate measures leading to a close relationship between a knowledgeable, caring adult and secure, motivated students. Therefore, participants felt that activities to fight poverty and to network with other organisations were key features for sustainability of the framework. Different ways to access resources were identified, and added to form part of the activities which participants had to do for themselves, including suggestions for the structure and explicit information in the administration offices (administrator) or application forms. Students felt that access to resources needed to be prioritised and monitored since needs and challenges were not the same for all students. To support the above view, the following were expressed:

> *Kazi: Although I must indicate that is not easy when you're at the university and being orphaned… as much as I now do get that financial assistance but as a girl or young*

female student, you always have those special needs monthly that needs you to ask for financial assistance even if you do not want to".

TPO: … Iningi labo abanabani…ngihambe ngibacelela usizo… ukudla…indawo yokulala…izinto zokugqoka ….itransport to schools during TP.

To alleviate stress amongst orphaned youth, suggestions about strengthening the family system, improving financial security and delivery and monitoring of policies are needed. After having gone into detail with each participant through one-on-one discussions and FGDs, all had reiterated the fears of not having a place to stay. Also, highlighted in findings was the perceived deceitful way of wording in the application forms for prospective students. From an administrative point of view, information is represented covertly, where the instruction is to tick the box if funding and residence is required. Participants testify that they all place ticks, but on arrival man find they have not been allocated them and this is perceived as an empty promise by the HEI, with hopes raised and then shattered. For participants this information is distorted and not explicit, reminding them of being treated with disrespect by those in power and why most of the destitute students end up with nothing to eat, no place to sleep and no one to support them. Most end up with TPO but this is not their role to protect students who she claims are mostly orphaned (*abanabani, ukudla izinto zokugqoka itransport).*

One other crucial issue was that these were pre-service teachers, and thus during teaching practice (TP) they become exposed as they were expected by schools to dress formally and presentably, like teachers. Another challenge was transport fares from the HEI to placement TP schools during the whole TP sessions. Schools have their own culture and their own expectations, for example, student teachers are not allowed to be absent from schools where they are placed. Participants indicated that anxiety heightens when it is TP season. All these challenges were supposed to bring the possibility of improvement to the lives of those in need. Kazi mentioned that "*as a girl or young female student; special needs monthly"* the highlighted needs for orphaned were not taken care of.

Therefore, if orphaned students are not funded, the possibility of dropping out or resorting to bad behaviours is possible. This affects psycho-social wellbeing of students and academic performance. Goba (2009) is confirmed by Kazi's views on financial challenges in that after the loss of parents, serious consequences including access to basic needs such as shelter, food, clothing, health care and education impact negatively on students' development

Throughout the conversation with participants, in the planning session and implementation of the few activities of the framework, participants realised how wide the gap was between

those in power and the powerless. One other wish supported by most participants was acknowledgement of a role played by role models or mentors in their lives, performing a social responsible act in each one's life. The reality conveyed by Kazi and other participants was that education is regarded as a prerequisite for tackling poverty and promoting short- and long-term economic growth, with *a*ccess to basic social services and education levels. Fortunately for all participants they understood the importance of education and that it should be instilled in the younger generation.

In summarising this sub-section, although the study explored needs and challenges experienced by orphaned students, understanding alone was not enough and intervention strategies have to be effected for the possibilities of a sustained framework. The impact of poverty for the orphaned was the crux of most challenges. Thus, reflective and communicative action practice, creative critical thinking skills formed a foundation for possibilities and change of attitude in all participants. The coping strategies and resiliency resources in navigation of orphanhood prior and in the first two years of HEI, served as an encouragement and hope for the future. The premise thus is that participants learnt a lot from sharing with others a feeling which was a motivation for other students to emulate these good practises for their own possible emancipation.

6.6   CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter I have integrated literature and theoretical frameworks utilising CDA to show how emerged findings included a combination of inter-discursive analysis of texts, linguistic and other forms of semiotic analysis. The findings included the following subtopics: socio-emotional empowerment of HEI orphaned students; possibilities for empowerment of HEI orphaned students; impact of shared vision and implementation of the framework; and the sustainability of the psychosocial empowerment framework through the social responsibility actions. In order for orphaned students to respond to their needs and challenges, the chapter demonstrated the need for development and maintenance of strengths and capabilities in environments that could contribute positively in shaping pre-service teachers who are responsive role models and mentors for others.

The concluding chapter presents summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

7.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter dealt with analysis and interpretation of data, presentation and discussion of findings that emerged from the study. The findings of this study from both the literature and the data generated utilising tools were used to analyse, interpret and make sense of it, employing CDA. In this chapter I reiterate the aim and objectives of the study and the justification for application highlighting contributions based on the outcomes supported by literature and the findings from Chapters 5 and 6. After careful consideration, a summary of the study is presented. The following issues are addressed, that is, conclusions and recommendations for further research on issues pertaining to orphanhood, the implementation of the psychosocial framework and implications thereof in HEI.

7.2   AIM AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was first to understand orphanhood in an HEI and further explore the needs and challenges faced by orphaned HEI students in varied related contexts. Based on the experiences which impact on the holistic development and wellbeing of the orphaned in an HEI, the study aimed to explore the impact of the context in the construction of orphanhood in an HEI and how orphaned pre-service teachers influence and are influenced by the diverse environments in the navigation of their challenges, if any. This was attained by developing critical consciousness through engagements utilising and informed by PAR approach, emancipatory methodologies and theoretical frameworks that frame this study. This possibility exists and is demonstrated in Eruera (2010:5), noting that PAR is a social process which has principles it shares with CER, namely emancipation, self-determining communities, effecting social change, acknowledging and transforming participants expertise into solutions, meaningful participation, community development and capacity building, collaboration and ownership. Importantly, the objectives of this study are based on what Galletta and Jones (2010:353) recommend for any participatory study in that it should render benefits on information gained and at the same time impact on institutional policies. The study has therefore demonstrated that although institutions of higher learning have policies

that guide them as a support system for students, still lacking are effective implementation, evaluation and monitoring to curb inequalities and access to resources. The study also presented how application of CER, BEST and PAR gave rise to students' realisation that they have capabilities which structures of the HEI are made to be aware of when students are positioned as agents of change, using skills developed to solve their own problems in a way that benefits them and others in their communities, and to strengthen the empowerment framework developed. For this reason, this critical qualitative study and collaborative practice also explored, and how the HEI policies, HEI support structures and different stakeholders as well as activities in an HEI are experienced by the fraternity of orphaned students as future leaders in diverse environments (Makina, 2012:99).

The study aimed to acknowledge that understanding and exploration of experiences is not enough, but confirmed that taking action on access by all stakeholders in different systems, including the HEI, would empower youth as constructors of knowledge with the ability to question and weigh evidence during interaction, using language, a tool for self-expression. This is only possible if individuals are empowered to do so and therefore the study further aimed to equip orphaned students in an HEI with the ability to become creative critical decision-makers and effectively engage in discourses while challenging current psycho-social issues, internal and external forms of power that are a barrier to participation by youth at the margins of the society. Analysis of the data following three levels of CDA posited by Fairclough and van Dijk illustrates how much value is placed on the relationships and interdependence of past experiences to inform the present, and (re)shape the future in a just and democratic society to graduate competent and successful adults. Reflections and conclusion of the study follow.

7.3   REFLECTIONS

The study explored the experiences of students in an HEI, how these shape them utilising a qualitative participatory design. It further proposed a psychosocial empowerment framework aimed at facilitating the possibility to effectively meeting challenges faced by orphaned students in interrelated contexts, while considering policies that guide the HEI. The study revealed a multitude of challenges facing orphaned pre-service teachers in an HEI but suggested ways or possible strategies to mitigate these challenges. The study has explored the experiences of orphaned students in an HEI, how these shape who they are in diverse contexts to enhance success by making critical, reflected decisions. The study showed that understanding of orphanhood challenges in an HEI could only be reached through self-

realisation, therefore PAR and CER as emancipatory methodologies were used to allow for a discursive environment that ensures safe and trusting interrelationships, opportunities to share knowledge and meaningful participation to develop (Table 2.1).

On reflection, the study succeeded in showing that through participative and critical reflections, putting participants at the centre of the participatory research process and moving beyond understanding the plight of orphans in an HEI, may improve levels of individual empowerment. Participant students had no difficulty in the choice of language to use in the research process, however I felt that presenting responses and allowing them to engage in their indigenous language (IsiZulu) in discourses was more liberating, resulting in comfortable and trusting relationships. In support of the above and from a critical point of view, Breeze (2011) attests to language and CDA as tool for data analysis. CDA assisted both myself (researcher) and the participants (co-researchers) to understand the spoken and written messages during discussions and in their reflective journals. Critical understanding of orphaned student's thoughts, beliefs, and actions brought insights to challenge injustices, oppression and marginalisation collaboratively in context. Findings revealed that the experience of choice of words and language used towards the orphaned as impacting negatively on their lives which brought concerns about how they are framed in society.

Viljoen and Eskell-Blokland (2007:58) believed direct interactions within society takes place, and individuals are recognised not as passive recipient of experiences but as helping construct the settings. Understanding that for orphaned students issues pertaining to orphanhood begin in the microsystem and most experiences of the emotional insecurity and anxiety manifest there, emancipatory methods to collect data were utilised and justification given. These methods included verbal and written reflective practice, critical thinking, collaborative discourses and one-on-one discussions. I found this choice to be a platform to showcase different roles that students played, patterns of different activities planned and implemented and a strong foundation for healthy wellbeing of orphaned students in an HEI.

In this study emphasis was on the effects of the environment or context that allows for holistic growth and development either psychologically, socially, intellectually, spiritually, culturally, emotionally, economically, politically and historically. I also acknowledge what Riddell (2009:286) and Mahlomaholo (2009:226) stress as good CER, which they feel should first recognise the complexity in the construction of the human psyche then consider exposure to empowering and emancipatory projects. Considering that issues on orphanhood evoke sensitive emotions and are characterised by scarcity of emotional language, perpetuating silence, collaborative and communicative practice proved to be a first step to possible psychosocial empowerment. The following conclusions therefore emerged.

7.3.1 The implications of using the "technologies of the self" for challenging the "technologies of power"

Having considered the evidence for a high scale of orphanhood in HEIs, I return to the research question posed at the onset of this thesis: What are the experiences of orphaned students in an HEI? As I argued in Chapter 1, orphaned students are faced with a myriad of challenges, ranging from the personal, social, emotional and historical to the political, however, it is acknowledged that in the context of paucity of literature and orphaned students' empowerment programmes in HEIs, provision of collaborative engagements is required. The plight of orphans became the central priority in understanding and exploring ways to mitigate lived experiences, needs and challenges in an HEI. When an appropriate and safe space to share is provided to orphaned students, healing is possible.

The issues explored in the findings indicated that participants needed to develop technologies of the self in order to come up with their emancipatory strategies. This briefly means providing exposure to new ways of thinking about issues and a solution to social problems, thus creating body of knowledge (4.3.1.1) in the features of PAR principles. The belief of a critical emancipatory researcher is that the relationship with the participants should be interactive and empowering to those without power or alienated.

Acknowledging that death is part of life it is not surprising that it is the cause of emotional or psychological vulnerability to individuals experiencing bereavement. This shaken emotional state affects individuals differently, in the way they deal with the consequences in different contexts. Oppression, discrimination and feelings of powerlessness by orphaned students in an HEI are likely to perpetuate feelings of being pushed to the margins of the society and to be silenced. In this study, participatory methods were utilised because they have a goal of moving away from the positivist framework towards shifting the boundaries to be more egalitarian participation.

Participants have a clear understanding that career qualification promises to empower them and emancipate them from the confines of poverty, manifested in different dimensions. Allsop and Thumbadoo's (2002:17) suggestion that for psychological sense of mastery and independence, programmes that address both internal and external needs are necessary to enhance emancipation of orphaned against poverty was echoed in a notion of emotional poverty expounded by Dworki-Riggs and Langhout (2010) and Mertens (2009), who challenged differences and boundaries in power relations, not as barriers to participation but an existence of a power shift and development of social change.

The study showed the effects of the relationship between poverty and orphanhood in an HEI and how these perpetuate silence, a barrier for orphaned students, so they could escape the and access available resources previously denied them. The development of critical consciousness in the study is viewed as an empowering and guiding tool that embraces accountability to deconstruct the deficit views that are frequently associated with orphanhood in communities. The aim, as McDonough (2009) postulates, is to create orphaned individuals who are aware of themselves as human beings in the world in a transforming way.

Extracting from the analysis based on the *socio-cultural practice* and *social discourses,* the orphaned are generally presupposed, positioned or constructed by society as needy, vulnerable and a burden (5.3). In response, Matu, a female participant, felt that this construction was oppressive and a distortion of reality. Most of the participants were in agreement with Matu's statements but highlighted the element of strength which enabled them to accept hardship, challenges and to fight against dropping out of school and an HEI. This suggests having a goal in mind, to cherish one's ambitions and have the strength of putting education first, despite unfavourable conditions;, a position of using the "technologies of the self" to challenge the "technologies of power". The emphasis here is on self-identification and clarification using some of the experiences they are faced with, similar to those students who are not orphans but from poor, sick or unemployed families. Therefore the justification and construction of orphans at this stage, and as experienced by students in HEI, needed to be re-defined and explained.

Through individual and group empowerment, critical thinking and critical consciousness, the power used through language to define experiences of orphanhood in a HEI , formed the basis of interrogating orphanhood and the platform for participating students to take action based on their knowledge leading to insightful explorations,

7.3.2   Challenging complexities of self-confidence and decision-making skills

Firstly, from the findings, the vision and mission statement that participants put together served as a basis for giving voice and power to actively deal with orphanhood challenges and as pre-service teachers to be recognised by university structures. However, it emerged again that in order for the community of students to reach any stage of change, whether personal or structural, required issues of feeling inferior, powerless and as objects, to be confronted. In Merriam (2009), issues of how self-destructive power could be and how struggling people are made to be dependent following their deficiency (Oliver, 1995:107; Walmsley, 2001:188) have been seen as perpetuating low self-confidence and silenced

emotions. However, Meeussen, Delvaux and Phalet (2013:1) confirm that CER and participatory methodologies utilised in the study worked towards enabling students in HEIs to view themselves as *"able persons"* who have *"psychological strength",* likely to cope in the diverse social contexts and form appropriately engaging relationships. In this study the aim is to enhance development of self-confidence in orphaned students in a democratically formed organisation which accommodates rather that not discriminates against 'others', benefitting equally from the resources in order to cope in the University environment and a context of social justice.

To take further the silenced emotions, it emerged that unstable interrelationships and interdependence within systems and subsystems propagated lack of emotional power which hinders psychosocial empowerment. This is evident in participants' voices, in that they do not talk about their emotions, and it was the first time for them to tell their emotional stories. It was observed that the provision of a safe communicative environment which do not enslave allowed participant students to re/deconstruct their identities as observed in Mitrovic (1999:217-218).

It is also noticed that orphaned students internalised their subordination as a learned silenced emotional behaviour, indicated in most of the treatment they received from adults. The belief portrayed by scholars about orphans, the policy documents on orphanhood, extends to how other students in the HEI community think of the minority disadvantaged groups. The way orphanhood is described and how orphans are positioned remains a challenge for PAR and emancipatory approaches, however, participants after having been exposed to reflective practice and critical thinking (2.4; 2.5.1; 2.5.1.1; 2.5.1.2; 2.5.1.3, 5.3.1 & 5.3.2) realised their capabilities and understood the importance of their skills for improved self-awareness and holistic development. Following on from this, Rowland (1997:113,129-130) argued that "…empowerment should involve undoing negative social constructions …for as capable people who have the rights to influence decisions".

This awareness facilitates development of strategies for finding ways to challenge issues that prevent or hinder meaningful contribution by participants as citizens of the country. As Steinberg and Kincheloe (2010:145) concur, distortion of power and the inability of dominant culture to deal with difference can be destroyed if people become 'aware of who they are'. In Chapter Five, participants were cited as stating that they felt discrimination, injustice and unequal treatment in their communities and new homes which distorted the way they perceived themselves. They were made to feel unimportant and disrespected and their views not recognised, which was no worse than the way they felt about this HEI's treatment. Most of the student participants (chapter 6) noted that orphanhood in HEI was not

(re)defined, and stereotyping of HEI students was what defines individual. Therefore, activities aimed at exposing participants to reflective practice (Bolton, 2010) raise awareness of their own voice while learning to critically listen to it and maintaining sustainable and meaningful actions in discourses. Such a development, according to Makina (2012:101), Ginwright and James (2001:28) facilitates achievement of autonomy, empowerment and taking control of situations, which is a goal within the critical emancipatory paradigm. Much dissatisfaction is repeatedly expressed by participants when they felt they were not being listened to, nor given an opportunity to voice their decisions or to be told what and how to deal with their loss. This signalled disrespect, as though they were unimportant and less capable of thinking critically about own situation. Participatory methodologies for participants therefore positioned them not as passive recipients of support (Skovdal & Campbell, 2009:20) but rather as enabling, giving, provider of freedom, understanding and dealing with inner self-formation of relationships (5.3.1 & 5.3.2).

Finally, and adding to the issue of self-confidence and decision-making, participants indicated in their responses that language brought reality about understanding communicative action as a process in which nothing was left as it was or was not. The possibility dawned when the participants were exposed to critical reflection between team members which enhances closeness and interaction in exploration of negative memories, thoughts and feelings, and expression of positive feelings which consequentially are likely to be life-changing.

7.3.3   Socio-economic challenges and support structures

On the basis of what transpired in the findings from FGDs it is evident that all participants experienced socio-economic hardship, and not much understanding was given to how or to what effect this challenge had on the personal wellbeing of students in an HEI. The burgeoning gravity of economic hardship has been highlighted as one of the factors that affect not only the personal wellbeing but also the family interrelationships and sustained academic performance. It is understood that when parental death occurs, instability within family systems follows, as some of the members of family are left with the feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, especially the orphaned. For example, some of the participants struggled alone to deal and cope with the changes in their family lives but prided themselves on the strength they gained to fight barriers to access HEI.

While traditionally, especially in the Black African communities, orphans were placed with extended family and not seen as a burden. The current escalating numbers of orphans and lack of enough resource to support families has caused this practice to break down.

From the findings it was evident that the first and second year of an HEI is the hardest for all participants (6.2), however, it transpired that this was not an experience for only the orphaned but the situation of financial scarcity was heightened for orphaned student participants since they lack family support. This financial strain is what most orphaned fear, and the decision is made for survival while making it a point that academic performance is not negatively affected by the situation. Drawing from PAR and in support of what Bhana (2009:432 & 439) explains as important about the PAR approach in that it results not only in solutions to immediate problems but also in more far-reaching changes to the balance of power, and is about democratising the knowledge-making process. Therefore, PAR in this study was used to demonstrate that sustainable socio-economic solutions needed to come from orphaned participants themselves and not be imposed on them.

Insufficient financial support resulting from lack of personal needs such as food, clothing and academic needs, and most of all not knowing how to navigate these challenges, was a great barrier to psychosocial wellbeing. The gap between the home and HEI makes life difficult for the orphaned as they are left to fend for themselves. Lungs, Hosy and MXO from YHHs, had to feed their siblings at home with the financial assistance they received in the HEI. This was confirmed as one of TPO's factors that impede psychosocial development and wellbeing in HEI (6.2).

While access to education is perceived as the most important resource in addressing poverty, participants' responses in this study suggest that they all had a goal in life, a reality which kept them going in an HEI to realise their potential. It is not denied that most orphaned students had learned certain strategies to cope with orphanhood challenges which in some cases were informed and driven by inappropriate assumptions that orphans are passive recipients of support. However, this notion after participation in a collaborative process seemed to have changed, as underlined in the responses following a question on what the opportunity to participate in this study meant to them (5.3), with powerful words such as " to be an agent for change,; to listen and be listened to; to share emotional feelings and learn from sharing with others" were cited. Hosy, a homeless orphaned student in an HEI, reveals how his challenging student life including having no home, consistently making him realise the importance of being educated in order to realise his goal. One critical decision he had to make following poverty caused by adult unemployment in his family was for him to take a break for two years of his study, seek employment, work and save some money before

resuming his studies in this HEI, a lesson of resiliency and strong character from which students who are disadvantaged could learn. This is what Theron, Theron and Malindi (2010:67) refer to as resiliency on the part of youth, demonstrating capabilities to accept and/or tolerate life experiences without blaming themselves or bearing grudges, and to find *'ecological balance'* of the whole system, for example, seeking education in order to curb cycles of poverty (Donald et al. 2012:37). The important factor is the ability to prioritise needs and to access resources sparingly whilst realising one's potential. I found that effective communication and positive interrelationships form the basis of all knowledge constructions and decision-making processes. The connection between the family and the HEI, as highlighted in Bronfenbrenner's ecosystemic theory (1994) system, bears evidence to the HEI as a social environment for students, expected to collaboratively work with the family of the students by considering they come from diverse backgrounds. This can facilitate approaches to offer relevant strategies of support for students to develop as critical thinkers and socially responsible citizens, ready to contribute to the economy of the country, thus improving their lives and those of the citizens in the communities.

Education is indispensable in equipping citizens with the abilities and skills to engage critically and act responsibly for social justice, equality, democracy and equity (Banks, 2010:296). The same view is supported in the South African Constitution (1996), which grants inalienable rights to freedom of expression and choice, congruent with true emancipation of individuals and attainment of freedom from the material straits of poverty. Therefore, the study suggests that for sustainability in life, education should be considered a powerful catalyst for a secured society a point that prompts support for Morris's (2007:33) endorsement of Freire's view that *"Education is an act of love",* which suggests that only people who are interested with what happens in and around the world of students collaboratively engage in discursive practices to create and (re)create the transformative world. One of the ways to empower students in HEI is to engage them in emancipatory discourses about challenges in education as emotional beings to be true agents of change. It was therefore concluded from the findings that the HEI structures should do away with stereotyping and recognise diversity of financial background of students and their socio-economic challenges for sustained support and economic growth to fight poverty.

7.3.4 Effective ways to navigate psychosocial challenges and improved academic performance

Literature reviewed has confirmed that orphaned students are exposed to cognitive and psychosocial difficulties brought about by a host of challenges, ranging from living

arrangements, poverty, discrimination and different forms of exclusion (Ganga & Maphalala, 2013:499; Zapata, Robinson, Kissin, Skilpalska, Yorick, Finnerty, Marchbanks, & Jamieson, 2012:105; Hong et al. 2010:564). The application of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory to understand risk factors and implications for prevention and intervention strategies illustrated that the strong relationship formed in the microsystem formed the basis or strong foundation for healthy development or wellbeing of students in any systems. Most orphaned student participants' concern is the imbalance of the microsystem caused by the death of their parents. For example, as participants shared their experiences in a series of discourses, the above view is confirmed in their statements: *"the situation changed" (sashintsha isimo)* (5.2; 5.3). Most participants were greatly affected by the change brought about by "movement"; changing homes and families, with ripple effects on the kind of life they have in an HEI.

The choice of emancipatory framework was critical in having participants critically think about what needed to be done about themselves as individuals and as a group to transform themselves and the situation in the HEI context. Exposure to emancipatory methodologies, for example, developing critical consciousness, helped pre-service student teachers develop consciousness of freedom, create knowledge and power to participate in constructive and creative actions to transform their lives and those of others. This change was noted by Sane, one of the participants (chapter 5): "*I had thought my life or background was the hardest than any other students and coming from the deep rural KwaZulu-Natal, but this group has helped me realise that other people have more problems that are far greater than mine.*"

This is an example of the value that is placed on emancipatory approaches and communicative practices. Clonan (2004) endorses their use in the navigation of psychosocial challenges and states that theory without practice is sterile whilst the converse is blind. The role of workshops in which the participants were engaged enhanced empowerment of students' reflective practice and communicative skills, affirming the importance of relationship and ecologies highlighted in Mayaba, Theron and Wood (2012:228), and supporting possibilities in the facilitation of positive adjustment to the adversity of the orphaned.

Throughout the study there has been a demonstration of how different social environments and relationships influence human development. This confirms the reasons, during discussions, participants moved back to their homes and how this affected their existence in the HEI, confirming Johnson (2008:2) in showing how the interdependence and relationship between a developing individual and the environment changes throughout life.

7.3.5 Empowerment for all potential contributors

The findings show that apart from extending awareness to bring hope for orphaned students in an HEI, the critical issue was that of learning to do things for themselves. However, the priority was creation of a conducive environment that requires participants to be recognised by the university community and structures. This included equipping orphaned students with appropriate skills, and removing the barriers that might constrain their participation. Literature on orphanhood in Chapter 3 (Dickens, Ngari & Enaneenane, 2013: 21; Ganga & Maphalala, 2013:500; Novella, 2013:2; 2042, Wallis, Dukay & Mellins, 2010:509; Beegle, Filmer, Stokes & Tiererova, 2010:2; Mangoma, Chimbari & Dhlomo, 2008:120; Chirwa, 2002:93) shows that most of the challenges are experienced as a result of such issues as:

- Lack of understanding of the phenomenon (orphanhood) and the nature of severity of vulnerability of orphaned students in HEI

- Unequal access of resources, including social and economic support

- Initialising (ir)relevant intervention strategies to respond to orphanhood challenges, including psychosocial wellbeing.

Deliberating on orphanhood issues, most participants enthusiastically addressed the above issues overtly and covertly in discursive practice, presenting their views using well thought choice of words to illustrate their perceptions about orphanhood in HEI (5.3 - lists A & B) and how an action to navigate challenges faced is negotiated through team effort. I found this choice of words congruent to the value of developing a safe, welcoming, trusting and interactive environment that is engaging to all stakeholders in all stages of the research process (4.3.2.3.1 – [*Priority Number 1]*).

For me, the rationale for the use of participatory methods incorporating reflections (Chapters 2 & 4) facilitates the possibility of accessing students' knowledge and experiences and vice versa. I am aware that issues on loss through death are emotionally laden and evoke sensitive feelings, however, I support Ephratt (2008:1910) and Francis, Muthukrishna & Ramsuran (2006:141) in their view that a silenced voice is associated with negativity, passivity, impotence and emotional death. In seeking to transform attitudes the first step was to prioritise activities starting from (re)definition of orphanhood in an HEI, a new meaning by orphaned students themselves proved possible a possible contributor to social change and enhancement of improving social justice within the HEI structure. This reminds one of

Bhengu-Baloyi's (2010:182) warning about depending on the influence of others' challenges on one's life: "Change has to begin with self; a drastic inner change leads to external change".

Findings also elucidated that the divide manifested between the community of students themselves and lack of empowerment programmes from the HEI management had a negative influence on the capacitation of different structures of leadership, including the participants' perceptions of the SRC's leadership skills, a concern highlighted in Chapter 6. As much as the emphasis is on leadership qualities, participants indicated that they felt discriminated against as orphaned students. In another statement they were greatly concerned about the power entrusted to SRC members, an endorsement that participation made them realise that the possibility of managing to mobilise support in different systems is what propels the stages of the research process. This suggests that understanding the value PAR cycles and engaging in a process brings about critical consciousness as proof of perceived weaknesses in the leadership strategies of some members of structures in HEI.

It was evident that many empowerment programmes were required to function if they were effectively to serve the community of 'all' students equally, democratically, and in a non-discriminatory way, and to provide justice for all. This is more so because, traditionally, orphans have been portrayed in frameworks of victimisation, as burdens to the society, passive objects of the favour of others. At least one participant, Jabs, felt strongly that these perceptions needed to be abolished, and that should "start with them" in the HEI. In Chapter 5, he is quoted: *"We do not want hand-outs….", "….they (powers in an HEI structure) needs to provide us with a kick-start".* The practice perpetuates power in those who have it and the 'other' remain oppressed with significant aspects of their lives decided for them.

In order to replace a deficit-based approach with a strength-based one, and in meeting the needs and development of individual capabilities, workshops were used to empower students on reflective and communicative practice. Initially they voiced concern that they were not keen to talk about what affected them, but as they were creatively engaged in collaborative interactions, most eventually were confident to share their stories for the benefit of others and embraced interpersonal relationships. All were of the opinion that participation in the project had changed the self-destructive way of perceiving themselves (5.3.1).

Participants came up with several initiatives which ensured that participation in the development of the psychosocial empowerment framework would bear strong evidence of a sense of personal and group/team responsibility and accountability following collaborative work. The HEI in this study is regarded as a social structure with its own socio-political and

cultural conditions that might positively or negatively influence timeous completion of a pre-service teacher's degree. It is within these structures that issues or practices of inequality, injustice, discrimination and oppression are embedded. The extent to which societal transformation could emerge depends on recognition of inclusion versus exclusion because people are connected and interdependent within diverse contexts.

It emerged in the study that the inferior status attached to orphanhood is made worse by the rural context. However, considering what mentoring entails and Mladenovic's (2012:3) claims for its powerful impact, it enables a protégé to comprehend their community, internal relations and responsibility to the community and society in general. Participation in focus group discussions seemed to be empowering and an interesting experience. They developed friendships, liked sharing their stories with people they never thought they would have met, and trusted in the HEI. Understanding that CER troubles issues of the day, for example, orphanhood, which is a social issue, participatory methodologies brought realisation that local issues require responsibility by all stakeholders in different systems as these are interconnected. These include the family, friendships, neighbourhoods, organisations, culture and societies in a physical world, media influence as well as time. Bronfenbrenner's (2004) claims for the relevance of the relationship between the social context and individuals as highlighted in the ecological systems theory is possible through effective communication and language that interrogate issues relating to orphaned participants themselves, and in terms of the expressions of 'lived' experiences and alternative stories.

7.3.6 Action of social responsibility

The action plan involved an invitation to all orphaned students which participating members felt necessary for the success of the development of an effective framework, along with the support of group effort. Drawing from the principles of CER, the feeling was that the empowerment strategy was not only for the participant orphaned students' benefit but for the benefit of others as well. Therefore, as it was hoped that participation in the research process would consequently enable participating members of the team with communicative skills and understanding of language to explain themselves and express their needs, opinions, and ideas about situations which affect them, they gained strengths and enhanced levels of self-confidence. The change from seeing themselves as needy or as a priority, and as the 'other; began to be replaced by being more appreciative of the skills learnt. In short, a discourse about social responsibility actions was the sign of participants' acknowledgement

of feeling empowered and privileged to understand better the plight of others. The suggestion and action they agreed upon led to sub-committees being formed, after which the team dedicated itself to implementing a psychosocial empowerment programme. This is in line with what participants summarised as the aims of the vision of the framework:

> "Our focus is to more positive: bring hope to learners from primary and high schools about access in HEI even are orphaned. To help orphaned students financially, emotionally, physically, socially. To provide our own supportive and counselling structures so that we perform well academically… avoid dropping out…"

Prior to participating in this research, orphaned pre-service teachers in the HEI had not received formal preparation or any relevant strategies to cope with challenges in a responsive manner. The above aims are complex and cannot be achieved in one PAR cycle, however, workshops proved to be the only tool for developing skills and creation of new knowledge needed for empowerment processes. Further highlighted in findings is that participants had not been exposed to participatory methodologies and reflective practice to equip them with action of doing things for themselves. The same emancipatory strategies effected in the research process seemed not to have equipped them for justification of its results only. The approach is beneficial as a teaching strategy in classroom practice and to deal with orphanhood challenges in varied contexts.

What also emerged on reflection about the stories of social responsibility actions experienced by most participants is viewed as one of the valuable roles that each teacher is supposed to hold. For example, in Chapter three (3.9) teachers are portrayed in Behr (1986:86) and Wood, Ntaote and Theron (2012:1924) as:

> …teachers are the key persons in addressing issues related to OVC. Teachers should be able to offer psycho-social support… possess basic counselling skills; be knowledgeable about the rights of children; …facilitate dialogue between parents and children about death, illness and future planning; facilitate the progression of grieving through all stages; involve communities….render personal, emotional and practical support…

It is encouraging to realise how much exposure to PAR and CER and BEST encouraged participants to apparently realise what it meant for them to be teachers. It is not about the career choice and the love of working with people, for as Jabs explained: *"….I love to work with people… I like kids".* The main task of drawing from a social responsibility action is the key responsibility that they are called to contribute to the environment, thus effecting the life

of others for a better future. Similarly, engaging in PAR helped in the production of knowledge collaboratively that is emancipatory and liberating to orphaned students in an HEI. In addition, the above characteristics influenced participants as part of community engagement to add the aspect of social responsibility action as one of the activities in the proposed psychosocial framework.

They felt if it took participatory engagement to realise possibilities to feel empowered to free themselves from bitter innermost struggles and poverty, so younger people should be helped to deal with their emotions effectively. The first step to psychosocial emancipation for them was to negotiate networks with schools to render this action practically. The suggestion in the framework proved to be a success when a school was identified and each participant adopted one orphaned learner. In one of the meetings, and as based on *Priority Number Three* (4.3.2.3.1), participants were hopeful that the relationship they were going to develop with these learners would have a possibility to change the way they perceived themselves as orphaned learners and fears about access in HEI.

The findings demonstrated that some factors, including death in the family, might be traumatic and cause the orphaned students' environment to become unstable, unpredictable, and full of threatening factors. Creation of an environment that is conducive to the growth of individuals, observing the democratic values such as human dignity, equality, social justice and freedom (South African Constitution Section 24) was the obligation each one took, namely to be a teacher, counsellor friend, and mentor to one child through accessing university. The workshops and discourses conducted with participants and other stake holders enhanced development of self-awareness (Martinez, 1993:1), aimed at liberation of participants from their external and internal oppression. As MXO said: "… *Being part of the group is 'an opportunity' for me to learn more and 'understand complexities of life' as this will 'enable' me to free myself from internal/inner troubles … (male participant). This and others contributions* from data generated (emphasis mine) (5.3.1) and chapter 6 (6.4 & 6.5) assisted in the development of a psychosocial empowerment framework and implementation of the few activities, which was the main objective of the study.

In summary, the study has managed to enable orphaned students in an HEI to talk about their emotions and (re)position themselves as capable independent individuals who have power to influence and expose hidden realities in HE structures for equality, just and democratic society as responsive pre-service teachers.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS OFFERED BY THE STUDY

This section presents and discusses recommendations based on findings and conclusions of this study.

7.4.1 Pre-service training programmes on psychosocial development

From literature reviewed and in my observation, the number of orphans internationally continues to grow, therefore the state needs to look closely at the needs of families so as to intervene accordingly. However, as the study found, the participants, as orphaned pre-service teachers in an HEI needed more in their training to deal with their own challenges first as well as those of orphaned learners in schools. In Chapter 2 (2.7.2) a definition of an HE student is given in which Mncube and Mafora (2013:18) further highlight how HEI students should be exposed to methodologies that are essential for their professional growth and advancement. I concur with the suggestion expounded that since HE pre-service teachers have the potential to (re)construct knowledge, participatory and emancipatory methodologies to improve development of democratic community need to be considered and employed. For pre-service teachers, improvement of their life circumstances and those of the community through collaborative practice and participatory engagement in discursive practices encourages (de)construction of knowledge, which is a goal of CER (Nkoane, 2012:68). In my view, there is relevance since if students are exposed to challenges, finding solutions forces them and groups to discover intervention strategies which are empowering and emancipatory to effectively deal with further future challenges affecting them and others. This further develops leadership skills and reconsidering leadership opportunities for promotion of socio-political development. The promotion of young orphaned students' participation provides them with expertise in dealing with the wider community's issues that matter to them. If orientated and well empowered the predicament experienced by Jabs would not have been a burden or impact on his emotional wellbeing as a source for bitterness. For example, he stated that he would not forget the insensitivity his father imposed on him immediately after his mother's death: "Dad *'ordered me'* to do blood test and *'threatened me'* and *'told me'* that '*I am not his son*' and he is not my father".

Participatory methodologies are emancipatory and empowering (subsection 4.3.1), and as suggested in Bleakley (1999:315) the core function of Higher Education (HE) is about "developing critical thinkers", and participants as co-researchers seized the opportunity to work as individuals and as collectives., thus utilising these methods in HEI with HE students

has a benefit in positioning them beyond the present and the past whilst enabling them to project into the future (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:9).

7.4.2 Possibilities for additional research

The study demonstrated a number of needs and challenges of experiences of orphaned students in an HEI. This led to the need for development of the psycho-social empowerment framework for the orphaned in an HEI. In any context, social wellbeing is important for optimal development for each individual. This would suggest that while the study highlights strategies for the implementation of the framework, a number of activities, ranging from the physical to psychological and structural were proposed, and only a few were evaluated and monitored as proposed in a cyclical PAR process.

I have also observed that for the holistic development of HEI students, there is a gap in what should be done for or with them to improve their lives in an HEI and in different contexts as pre-service teachers. Studies demonstrate empowerment frameworks and some participatory programmes that have been conducted with youth in different communities. As indicated in Chapter one, there is scarcity of literature on orphanhood in HEIs, hence studies conducted with orphaned students. Therefore, as I illustrate, the study has proved that there are orphaned students in HEI. I therefore suggest that much research needs to be conducted around this social issue to understand and create awareness about the phenomenon. Otherwise, HEIs are continuously going to face challenges in balancing the access and throughput results.

Studies on the experiences of first year students in HEI (Chapter 3) indicate a myriad of needs and challenges for the students, which some of these experiences are noted to resemble, particularly as faced by the orphaned students prior to and on access to an HEI. However, the difference is that the latter, compared to the non-orphaned students, have no one to turn to in times of happiness and need. The findings suggest that collaborative work is key to the formation of or development strong bonds and friendships between students. Therefore, programmes that involve a number of stakeholders in which the orphaned and vulnerable students themselves are involved is a concern for HEIs. This pressing need flows from the programmes or organisations, as students are afforded an opportunity to form meaningful relationships, share information and learn from each other.

From the methodological perspective, the realisation of how emancipatory and participatory methodologies facilitate self-awareness, which is an encouragement for orphaned students

to know themselves better and to embrace their capabilities, is seen as a basis for psychosocial empowerment. In this way the study has also highlighted significant possible changes in the lives of participants following engagement in transformative and participatory methods. These practices, as Graffigna and Olson (2012:790) claim in the psychosocial discourses of their study, provide an opportunity to consider interpersonal processes of negotiation, construction and deconstruction which should give meanings that underlie the process of psychological wellbeing. Studies on issues of care and support for orphaned students advocate a well-balanced teacher to provide for all learners' lives equally for optimal development, and justice for all. However, this ability has to start with a person him/herself while considering the fluidity of culture and contexts through collaboration in acquiring of knowledge, development of decision-making and problem-solving skills, attitudes and values.

Finally, one other pressing need for further research that is suggested following findings in this study is with regards to the positioning and (re)construction of the term(s) of orphaned and vulnerable students and disadvantaged students in HEI. In terms of transformation and understanding orphanhood challenges faced by pre-service students in an HEI who are becoming teachers, the findings from the study repeatedly highlight how issues of orphanhood, economic challenges and poverty are embedded in how these impact on academic performance, curricular needs and approaches relevant for pre-service teachers of the twenty first century. Thus, in order for the orphaned in HEIs to meet the demands in HEIs and in the school communities, the interrelationship between structures and student communities requires improvement. As Bronfenbrenner (1986:725) argues, the context, history and culture have great influence on development of individuals and when taking critical decisions.

The findings from the study also indicate that there are not enough strategies applied to assess the acceptability, accessibility of the services rendered by support services to the student community, especially for the orphaned to improve their lives in HEI for optimal development. Studies on strategies for the effectiveness of interrelationship practices within the support services using PAR need to involve engagement with the orphaned students themselves. Therefore, I suggest further studies be conducted on the application, monitoring and evaluation of the strategies for care and support of the orphaned in an HEI, and how these could be linked to and applied utilising participatory approaches (PAR) to improve the lives of orphaned in the years spent in HEI, for improved rates of input and output.

7.5   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The first limitation of the study is that the strategy implemented only produced results of two activities that were partially implemented and tested on the ground. The evidence in this study, as demonstrated in Chapters five and six, shows that since PAR is a cyclical process (4.3.1.3), movement from one to another phase of the circle was influenced by the activities in an HEI context (Kemmis & Taggart, (2007:270). It is acknowledged that time constraints and years spent in an HEI to complete a degree, the nature or type of the orphaned students, culture and activities in an HEI were barriers in the timely implementation of the framework. As Galletta and Jones (2010:339) note, in PAR, projects planning should accommodate short-term goals and long-term goals, to implement all phases in a few months of one or two years with the same participants. This was not possible considering the contextual challenges set duration and term in the planning session. This limitation was however accommodated in the two types of sampling that were utilised, with a greater number of first-year student participants included through snowballing.

PAR, like all research is a cyclical process, takes place in a community (Bhana, 2006:433; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007:27; Worthen, McKay, Veale & Wessells, 2010:152; Sohng, 1995:5). This imposed a challenge in ensuring levels of motivation, dedication, responsibility and perseverance in collaborative engagements. I therefore contend that since the study was conducted in one HEI in one province in South Africa, that is, KwaZulu-Natal province, characterised by its own unique and particular challenges (4.3.2.1.4), the aim was not to generalise the findings but for it to be helpful when applied in similar contexts.

It is also acknowledged that whilst the methodological strategies applied in the study may answer questions while navigating challenges and needs of orphaned students in HEI, exposure to emotional empowerment following traumatic experiences was no better way to guarantee psychosocial wellbeing and assurance that all participants were at the same level of possible growth and transformation. I am cautious about claiming that "all participant orphaned students" on implementation of a few activities in the first cycle of PAR were empowered psychosocially, because in this study the literature and findings (Hornby, 2003:108; Sciarra, 2004:228; Brown, 2006:5-9) accentuate that grieving is a personal experience and that people grieve differently through specific phases, that is, anxiety, denial, anger, sadness and longing, bargaining and acceptance.

One other limitation of this study is that although it is emancipatory, centred on emancipation, it does not amplify the needs of orphaned students as if they are a different particular group, which might be perceived as reinforcing discrimination. However, it seeks to

question and challenge practices that reinforce unequal distribution of power, hence the justification of the need to utilise informal and formal one-on-one discussions. I am aware that this action and choice of data-gathering method is against critical researchers' beliefs that participatory approaches challenge conventional dichotomies between researcher and researched, and place emphasis on the need to do research with and for participants rather than on them (Silva, 2007:171). The kind of a strategy used was to generate data mainly from orphaned students and to understand them better, to closely manage some ethical dilemmas and to build trust and rapport with individual participants. The same method proved helpful when engaging with the support service structures who served as guests. Their information was useful in discursive practices and in devising strategies to develop a psychosocial empowerment framework.

Research studies on orphaned students are likely to evoke sensitive emotions that have been put to rest or are still fresh in the minds of the orphaned, a threatening factor to the participants. However, to get closer to experiences I needed to utilise reflective strategies and measures in place, should crises arise, and I had hoped that participants were sufficiently prepared. There was no financial gain in the participation but the knowledge gained proved to be an immeasurable asset for life. Finally, the study excluded the involvement of guardians, relatives, foster parents and lecturers, considering the developmental stage or age group of the participants (late adolescents to early adulthood) in an HEI. The involvement of these somehow have shaped and contributed much in conceptualising orphanhood in HEI.

7.6   IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study had the following implications.

7.6.1 Review of HE policies: accessibility and relevancy

Consciously or unconsciously, HEI support service policies exist but drawing from the findings they are too far from reach or are not accessible to students who need them. This supports the notion that, in HEIs, social structures consciously or unconsciously exert power relations, therefore, PAR is employed to evaluate the level of participation by all role-players in addressing issues of power, injustice, inequality, isolation, discrimination and oppression when dealing with orphanhood in an HEI. The proposal therefore is that HEI policies should be developed in consultation with people whom they are to serve, or with people in mind and not in isolation. In addition, considering that culture is fluid and not static, and there is a

relationship between culture and context (Theron, 2011:10), therefore review, monitoring and evaluation of policies is critical to ensure relevancy to the needs and demands of people or groups at that particular time.

Working towards the development of a framework proved that this collaborative practice is a process and takes time. I support Strydom's (2012:493) consideration of the process as a participative, bottom-up one in which the investigated become investigators and empowered to see themselves beyond the present and the past, and to be able to project into the future what may be possible are created (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012:78). Best policies work well if they are engaging and follow SWOT analysis processes. This study is linked to the above point on accessibility of HEI policies by relevant stakeholders, and suggests that in creating sustainable futures for students closing the gap or lack of interconnectedness that exists, HEI should consider collaboratively engaging students. This provides leadership opportunities, an implication for existing HEI policies. The policymakers should value student input, taking into cognisance what Powers and Allaman (2012:4) emphasise, that everyone's knowledge counts in assessment, design, process and implementation of such policies.

7.6.2 Review of HE policies on academic support

As we engaged in dialogue in (Chapters 5 and 6), it became evident that it affected not only orphaned participating students but also the entire HEI student community, and to some extent teaching personnel. Some factors observed from findings and structural practices have implications for HEI policies in a sense that confirmed incidents of limited spaces in some classes or venues (capacity) to accommodate the number of registered students in a module. For example, Matu, stated that *"some students have to be seated outside by the door of the lecture room… and those impacts on the academic performance…., one have to rush out from one class before the lesson is ended to find space in the next class"* (see Chapter 6 subsection 6.5). I also observed this kind of unfair and inconsiderate treatment in this HEI, and attendance of Life Orientation classes was huge. These findings amplify the urgent need for review of HEI policies (lecturer-student ratio or size of classes/venues to meet official capacity standards).

One further suggestion from the study relates to development of self-awareness and how PAR has the possibility of being used to solve immediate challenges, plans for intermediate and long terms, and, as depicted in the PAR cycle, a pattern or approach HEIs could promote education for sustainable psychosocial living. The complexities in educational

institutions have cultural, historical and political implications. I am therefore in support of Freire's critical view of the development of programmes being used to promote and address cultural identity, beliefs, attitudes and values. His statement is in line with the principles of BEST which is to achieve understanding of interconnectedness, interdependence, critical thinking and decision-making systematically. Therefore, the study proposes recognition of participating pre-service students as capable beings who can develop a framework following action research stages if empowered to do so. In support of recognition of HE students, I concur with Steinberg and Kincheloe's (2010:156) emphasis on critical approaches, that they restore the quality of subjectivity to the researched; allow them to speak on their own behalf; are granted dignity regardless of their location in the web of society; and reject the strategy of effacing them. They are against acceptance of feelings of inferiority and subsequently acknowledge that together they can change themselves, their lives and those of others.

As a result, the implication is that if policies are to be relevant, they should address the needs and challenges of the affected communities and should be structured such that the lives of the people who experience them eventually change. Activities towards empowerment of participant orphaned students brought realisation of the importance of developing a policy that talks to their need and was intended to benefit them.

Considering the collaborative theoretical discourses, and to put it into action in the study, as Danielewiez (2001:13) notes, determines that identification for the framework should be recognised by the university community and structures as this was going to facilitate students' retention in HEIs instead of dropping out, though an unavoidable choice. Giving voice to becoming teachers means involvement of the construction of the self, of identities and new roles which change with time as actions produced through participation in discourse. Further demonstrated in Chapters 1 and 3, cultural effects are important in determining personality (Smith, 2004:167). Understanding that the study was not set to find out the importance or use of language in an HEI, I found its prominence as forming a basis for the findings and highlighting sensitivity on how it is experienced in international and national policies, HEI policies and documents, societies and communities about orphanhood. Participants' concern included feelings of the use of language in a way that discriminates, alienates, oppresses and in some cases is defamatory. In participatory emancipatory studies, language is used such that it should liberate the concerned person. The same is emphasised in CDA levels of analysis, where in this study it appeared that participants learned to share all because of the comfortable language they used to reflect and think critically about their experiences and what needs to be done to transform self and society.

7.6.3 Creation of ongoing support and mentoring programmes

It should be noted that the positive atmosphere and environment allows for holistic growth and development socially, intellectually, spiritually, culturally, psychologically or emotionally as a priority. Firstly, when including mentoring in the programme it is important to understand what it entails, as clearly set in Mladenovic (2012:3), who posits that monitoring enables a protégé to comprehend their community, internal relations and their own responsibility to the community and society in general (2.5.2.). In order to create an environment that is conducive to growth of individuals, it is important to observe democratic values, such as human dignity, equality, social justice and freedom for all (South African Constitution Section 24). What emerged in most of the participants' responses was that it was the first time they had talked about the loss of their parents. Sharing experiences and feelings about mothers brought new form of self-realisation, an opportunity for possible redemption, to listen and to be listened to. One participant confirms this, stating that participation for him meant: *'to learn more from the group and 'understand complexities of life' as this will 'enable' me to free myself from internal/inner troubles'*

Therefore, support groups allowed for the development of varied traits and skills. These include trusting, sharing, listening, creative critical thinking, reflective practice, decision-making and problem-solving. For behavioural and emotional challenges, ongoing support and workshops are needed in which each of the abovementioned skills would be practiced and enforced, with the rest of the orphaned and vulnerable fraternity of students. Based on the findings of a study conducted in Rwanda, which confirmed the importance of facilitating emotional and psychosocial support for YHH and challenges they face, including social marginalisation (Thurman, Snider, Boris, Kalisa, Nyirazinyoye, & Brown, 2008:1557; Thurman, Snider, Boris, Kalisa, & Chintando, 1998:1), the framework considered this aspect of psychosocial empowerment of orphaned students in an HEI. Collaborative work and mentorship enhances trust and close interpersonal relationships, both requirements for emotional growth.

Workshops to deal with and enhance inner strength and resiliency following adversity are areas in personal growth and developed emotional strength needed by all. Acknowledging positive personal relationships as important, it is argued that an HEI should be a safe social space for all students (different actors) to conveniently allow engagement in an open dialogue about issues that concern them, including orphanhood as a social issue. As stated in Chapter 3, universities should "create settings that responds to specific needs of diverse students and that also ensures that no student is left behind…". Therefore, the framework considered a counselling service with which they could share their own common challenges

and resolve each other's problems. One of the actions that was felt could enhance "quality" interactive relationship as part of the framework was to have entertainment activities planned for the team, for example, getting together and conducting sports days for relaxation and entertainment. This felt like a platform for relaxation and to distress, a comfortable way of opening up and learning from others in an informal way.

In conclusion, in Chapter 3, findings from the studies indicated that when analysing the plight of orphans some are likely to fall into situational and structural isolation. They might have their rights violated in various ways, and are not presented with opportunities to rightfully participate in society as full citizens (Byrne, 2004 &1999; Chirwa, 2002). This has an implication for the development of a framework that is empowering and transformative, which enables orphaned students to be involved empowering activities and creative interventions in a socially stable and accommodating environment for optimum development. This view is in line with what Bronfenbrenner (1986:732) proposes:

> The role of the social environment is to allow and support children to unleash and actualise their innate potential. The potential and capabilities we bring with us when we are born in an embryonic form just like limbs. The social environment doesn't give us this but can either enhance or destroy these qualities.

I have also observed that poor academic performance in HEIs does not necessarily affect only orphaned student or those from disadvantaged communities or impoverished communities, but is mostly a challenge for all students who experience psychosocial challenges. A study of this nature, which empowers students to creatively act on their challenges to transform their situation, could also be an important lesson for pre-service orphaned students to effectively deal with orphaned learners in schools. I therefore believe that this emancipatory engaging study creates a platform for change in students to be the agents of change for others in different communities. This framework, proposed and incompletely implemented, would finally be improved such that it influences other support services and supportive programmes provided in an HEI to accommodate the real needs, while considering the backgrounds of students where their participation and engagement of students themselves is prioritised. Gruenewald (2003:1) concludes by suggesting that it is best for HEI to identify what needs to be conserved, and distributes equally to benefit those who need it most. Students have capabilities and change the way they approach things to being more participatory, collaborative or interactive, to influence holistic development, enhance acquiring of skills, knowledge and attitudes and environment to become lifelong learners (1993:15).

7.7   CHAPTER SUMMARY

The above recommendations indicate the importance of the implications of structural changes within context, the recognition of interdependent systems and sub-systems and the effect these have on personal transformation. An important attribute of emancipatory paradigm is that it seeks to bring about independence from the innermost and outer influences from the individual. It reveals some unjustified assumptions about new understanding and interpretation of experiences and therefore it is evident that a non-threatening environment is best for creative and holistic development of students in HEIs, whether orphaned or non-orphaned. A psychosocial empowerment framework should empower students to develop psychosocial skill, and to become socially responsible citizens. It could creatively lead them to independence, equality and cooperation.

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APPENDIX: A

PERMISSION LETTER FOR THE HEAD OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION AND DECLARATION

P.O. Box 852
New Germany
3620
10 May 2011

The Head of Social Science Education
University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus)
Private Bag x03
Ashwood
3605

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Ncamisile P. Mthiyane, a PhD student and a lecturer in the School of Social Science Education at the Universty of KawZulu-Natal. I am required to conduct research as part of my degree requirements. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research with students in this higher education institution. The title of my study is: **(Chonicles of the experiences of orphaned students in a Higher Education Institution in KwaZulu-Natal).**

This study aims to explore the expeiences of orphaned students in a Higher Education Institution (HEI) and how these influence them and their behaviour as orphaned students in facilitating access and equality. The study will further explore how orphaned students navigate needs and challenges they are faced with in their lives and in a HEI to realise their goals.
Furthermore, the study also aims to seek the possibility of development of a framework which will possibly actively engage orphaned students in finding ways to transform themselves in diverse contexts (HEI) as prospective responsive teachers.

Based on the knowledge that issues of loss and death are traumatic, very sensitive and can invoke intense emotions, provision of the intervention by the University Counselling services with University Psychologist will be arranged. Data will be collected utilising one-on-one interviews, reflection journals and focus group discussions. Anonymity will be ensured, that is, ficticious names will be used. The

information obtained will be treated with confidentiality. I also undertake to observe stipulated ethical considerations pertaining to researching with human subjects.

For further information on this research project, please contact my supervisor, Dr. M. M. Nkoane on 0514012377 or email: nkoanemm@ufs.ac.za.

In addition, should you have any quiries please feel free to contact me using the following contact details: N.P. Mthiyane on 0312603424 or email: mthiyanen1@ukzn.ac.za

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours sincerely

Ncamisile P. Mthiyane (Mrs)

DECLARATION

I……………………………………………… (Full name of School Head) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: **Chonicles of the experiences of orphaned students in a Higher Education Institution in KwaZulu-Natal.**

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me.

Signature of HoS: _____ Date:_____

Signature of witness: _____ Date: _____

Thank you.

Ncamisile P Mthiyane (Mrs)

_____

APPENDIX: B

PERMISSION LETTER AND DECLARATION FOR THE HEI PSYCHOLOGIST

P.O. Box 852

New Germany

3620

10 May 2011

The Head of Social Science Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus)

Private Bag x03

Ashwood

3605

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Ncamisile P. Mthiyane, a PhD student and a lecturer in the School of Social Science Education at the Universty of KawZulu-Natal. I am required to conduct research as part of my degree requirements. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research with students in this higher education institution. The title of my study is: **(Chonicles of the experiences of orphaned students in a Higher Education Institution in KwaZulu-Natal).**

This study aims to explore the expeiences of orphaned students in a Higher Education Institution (HEI) and how these influence them and their behaviour as orphaned students in facilitating access and equality. The study will further explore how orphaned students navigate needs and challenges they are faced with in their lives and in a HEI to realise their goals.

Furthermore, the study also aims to seek the possibility of development of a framework which will possibly actively engage orphaned students in finding ways to transform themselves in diverse contexts (HEI) as prospective responsive teachers. Anonymity will be ensured, that is, ficticious names will be used. Data will be collected utilising one-on-one interviews, reflection journals and focus group discussions. The information obtained will be treated with confidentiality. I also undertake to observe stipulated ethical considerations pertaining to researching with human subjects.

Based on the knowledge that issues of loss and death are traumatic, very sensitive and can invoke intense emotions, I therefore request that should need arises, the participants of this study be referred to you for further psychological assessment, debriefing during and after completion of study and any other relevant interventions.

For further information on this research project, please contact my supervisor, Dr. M. M. Nkoane on 0514012377 or email: nkoanemm@ufs.ac.za.

In addition, should you have any quiries please feel free to contact me using the following contact details: N.P. Mthiyane on 0312603424 or email: mthiyanen1@ukzn.ac.za

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours sincerely

Ncamisile P. Mthiyane (Mrs)

DECLARATION

I……………………………………………… (Full name of HEI Psychologist) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: **Chonicles of the experiences of orphaned students in a Higher Education Institution in KwaZulu-Natal.**

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me.

Signature of Psychologist: _____   Date:_____

Signature of witness: _____   Date: _____

Thank you.

Ncamisile P Mthiyane (Mrs)

_____

APPENDIX: C

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT AND DECLARATION
FOR STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

You are kindly invited to participate in this research project which forms part of degree requirements of a study conducted by Ncamisile Mthiyane, a PhD student at UFS and a lecturer in the School of Social Science Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The research result of this study will be made public in the form of a PhD dissertation.

You were purposively selected as a participant in this study because you are an orphaned students in a Higher Education Institution (HEI), which is a required category for inclusion in this study. The title of my study is: **Chonicles of the experiences of orphaned students in a Higher Education Institution in KwaZulu-Natal.**

This study aims to explore the experiences of orphaned students in a HEI. The main objectives of the research to be undertaken are:

- understand and describe the experiences of orphaned students in a HEIs.

- explore how experiences of orphaned students shape their lives in a HEI.

- explore how orphaned students navigate the needs and challenges of orphanhood in an HEI.

- find if there are HEI policies that support orphaned students and how they experience these.

- explore possibilities of engaging HEI orphaned communities in the development of an empowerment framework

Based on the knowledge that issues of loss and death are traumatic, very sensitive and can invoke intense emotions, provision of the intervention by HEI psychologist and counselling services will be arranged. As participants in this study you will be referred to these centres, should need arise.

Please take note of the following procedures:
- The study will utilise the following data collection tools: one-on-one (semi-structured) and group discussions and reflection journals
- There will be no financial benefits that participants may receive as part of their participation in this project. However, the research the research output may inform the development of policies that will possibly accommodate orphaned students' needs and challenges in a HEI.
- Your identity will not be divulged under any circurmstances (except with your permission, in case where there will be a need for the involvement of professional (psychological and ounselling services).

- Any information obtained inconnection with the study and that can be identified with you will remain strictly confidential and will be disclosed ony with your permission or as required by law. In addition, anonymity will be ensured, that is, ficticious names will be used to represent your names.

- Participation is voluntary in that you may withdraw at any time without consequence of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any any questions that you don't want to but can still remain in the study. The researcher may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so without incurring any negative or undesirable consequences/penalty on your part.

- Any digitally recorded or transcribed can be reviewed by participants at any stage during research process. These recordings will be kept in a secure locked file cabinets. Data will be kept for three years until data analysis and report writing is completed.

- You will be contacted in time about the meetings/discussion

For further information on this research project, please contact my supervisor, Dr. M. M. Nkoane on 0514012377 or email: nkoanemm@ufs.ac.za. In addition, should you have any quiries please feel free to contact me using the following contact details: N.P. Mthiyane on 0312603424 or email: mthiyanen1@ukzn.ac.za

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.
Yours sincerely.
Ncamisile P. Mthiyane (Mrs)
_____

DECLARATION

I……………………………………………. (Full name of the student participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: **Chonicles of the experiences of orphaned students in a Higher Education Institution in KwaZulu-Natal.**

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me.

Signature of HEI student : _____   Date:_____

DECLARATION FOR COUNSELLING SERVICES
(STAR PROGRAMME ORGANISER)

I……………………………………… (Full name ofof the HEI counsellor- STAR programme co-ordinator) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: **Chonicles of the experiences of orphaned students in a Higher Education Institution in KwaZulu-Natal.**

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me.

Signature of HEI counsellor : _____   Date:_____

Signature of witness: _____   Date: _____

Thank you.

Ncamisile P. Mthiyane (Mrs)

_____

APPENDIX: E

DECLARATION BY TEACHING PRACTICE OFFICER (TPO)

I…………………………………………. (Full name of Teaching Practice Officer) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: **Chonicles of the experiences of orphaned students in a Higher Education Institution in KwaZulu-Natal.**

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me.

Signature of TPO: _____   Date:_____

Signature of witness: _____   Date: _____

Thank you.

Ncamisile P Mthiyane (Mrs)

_____

APPENDIX: F

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

NAME:_____

AGE GROUP: | A: 18-25 | B: 26-30 | C: 31& above |

GENDER: | MALE | | FEMALE |

YEAR/LEVEL OF STUDY: | 1ST | 2nd | 3rd | 4th |

RESIDENCE AT HEI:_____

CONTACT NUMBERS & E-MAIL:_____

NO. IN FAMILY: _____

HOME TOWN: _____

GUARDIAN/CAREGIVER:_____

FUNDING/BURSARY:_____

APPENDIX: G

ONE-ON-ONE MEETING(S) SCHEDULE FOR STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

This schedule was used as a guide with the orphaned students in a Higher Education Institution (HEI). It is designed to ***chronicle (explore) the experiences of orphaned students in a Higher Education Institution and how these experiences shape their lives and how they navigate challenges in a Higher Education Institution.***

1. Biographical Information of the orphaned students at a HEI. (See Appendix:F)

2. Participant's background and understanding of orphanhood

    2.1.   Can you tell me about yourself and your family?

    2.2.   Where is your home town? Where are your siblings and other members of your family?

    2.3.   How often do you go home? How do you get home? Why do you go home?

    2.4.   How would you describe your personality?

    2.5.   Tell me about any possible behavioural changes that you may have experienced as a result of your loss with the death of your parents.

    2.6.   How did you become orphaned, in other words, what happened to your parents? How did you feel then? How do you feel now as a pre-service teacher in the South African context?

    2.7.   Do you find it helpful to share feelings of loss? Explain.

    2.8.   What is your religious/cultural belief about death and orphanhood?

    2.9.   Where do you personally stand on this issue?

3. Challenges of orphanhood in a HEI and how orphaned students navigate them.

    3.1. How did you get to know about this HEI?

    3.2. Why in particular did you choose to study here?

    3.3. What have been your challenges as an orphaned student in adapting to

the following:

   3.3.1. The gap between post-secondary school and the university context?

   3.3.2. Applying for admission and registration? Sorting out funding?

   3.3.3. Accommodation, transport and meals?

   3.3.4. Lecture venues, lectures and projects?

   3.3.5. Adjusting to and coping with academic demands?

   3.3.6. Relationship with others (peers, lecturers, management, administrative personnel and the broader university community)?

   3.3.6.1.   Any other factors or issues (e.g. issues of power, discrimination, empowerment, transformation)?

3.4.   How do you feel being an orphaned student amongst the diverse community of students in this HEI? Do you see yourself as different from them? If so, how? Please explain.

3.5.   Do you know of any other orphaned students in this institution? If you were to be introduced to them, would you like to share your experiences with them? Motivate your answer.

3.6.   How have the experiences as an orphaned student, which you have described so far, shaped your life in this HEI?

3.7.   What are your plans for your future?

3.8.   How do you hope to overcome the challenges you mentioned previously in order to realize your future?

4. HEI structures and Policies:

4.1 Do you feel that this HEI is a caring, supportive and a student – centred environment? Motivate your answer.

   4.1.1. Which support structures or services specifically for orphaned students are provided by this institution? Could you also explain how they work and have you ever made use of them?

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4.2 How do you think that poverty which is often associated with orphanhood, influences orphaned student access to tertiary education? How do you think this poverty could possibly also impact on the throughput rate?

4.3 Do you feel that this HEI has prepared you and/or is currently preparing you sufficiently to effectively deal with the challenges presented by orphanhood in school communities?

5. **Conclusion**: is there anything else that you, as an orphaned student have experienced, that you would like to share?

A GUIDE FOR (OPTIONAL) QUESTIONS FOR VERBAL & WRITTEN REFLECTION JOURNALS

1. About the future
Why did you choose to become a teacher and why this institution/university?
- What makes you a good student besides any challenges faced?
- What is it that will make you a good and socially responsible teacher?
- What is your goal in life or in the next 5years?
- What motivates you? What coping resources do you use in order to fulfil your goals as an orphan in a HEI
- Is the university fulfilling your wishes so far and how?

2. Social challenge
Orphanhood is a challenging issue especially for youth worldwide and in our country. What is your opinion on this issue as a responsible pre- service teacher? What actions can you take to face this challenge in a HEI?

3. Social responsibility
We have very special people in our lives (maybe other than our parents). Tell us about that important person (s) in your life whom has (ve) made it possible for you to be where you are (University) and still keeping on going on? What can you say (do) to them?

4. Changing lives
- One thing you would change about you as a person and (in HEI). What have you done so far?
- One (more) things you would change in this institution for your benefit and that of others?

5. Collaborative process: agents of change
What have you learn from participating in this project so far? Do you still feel it is important to actively engage in the finalising the action plan developed? Any other suggestions for future about the project.

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION JOURNALS AND
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

1. Tapping into our emotions
1. What has been your worst experience that reminded you that you are an

orphan or happens(ed) to you just because you're orphaned.
- In the family or a place you call home (relatives or people taking care of you)
- In the community (school, neighbours, church, etc.)

- At the university (directed to you or others and structural practices)

2. What are you doing /did you do about it? How do you navigate challenges of orphanhood? (Individually /group)

3. What has been the good experience that has ever happened to you which reminded you that "I'm an orphan" but……here I am.
   - At home and here at the university.

2. Understanding orphanhood (reflections and focus group discussions

1. What is your feeling about orphanhood/loosing people you love or parents? Is or should be categorised according to age as it is documented (0-18)?

2. How important is development of psychosocial support after loss (Ukwelapheka ngokomphefumulo)?

3. Who are the best people to provide that especially in HEI?

4. What are the activities that orphaned students in HEI should do to empower themselves and to transform the way orphanhood is perceived in HEIs.

5. What are the resources needed for change and what are the coping strategies required to support the orphaned and vulnerable students in a HEI

MEETING MINUTES OF THE FIRST GROUP MEETING

Date: 10 September 2012   Time: 13 h00

Venue: Room F209   Secretary for the day: Matu

Members present, NP Mthiyane, Lungs, Matu, Kazi, MXO, Lasts, Hosy and Sane

Reported: Jabs- sick

Actions	By whom and activities (Due date)
Welcome	NPM- chairperson
Silent prayer	All members
Introductions	Verbal introductions by each member to the group
Purpose of the meeting and Agenda • Meeting for the first time as a group- getting to know each other • Purpose of the project and discussions: Orphanhood in a HEI • Principles of PAR and CER explained briefly explained	All members engaged in discussions and question and answers
Planning activities for the next group meeting and roles swapped	Workshop on reflections, PAR and understanding of HEI Policies
Verbal reflections and homework	What participation means to each one of the team members. What needs to be done in HEI to navigate challenges of orphanhood
Next meeting on Thursday Agenda drawn	All members of the group

Signatures: _____

   _____

   _____

FORMAL ONE-ON-ONE MEETING WITH STUDENT PARTICIPANT(S)
(transcription)

Date: September 2012   Time:12h00

Venue: Room CF132

NPM: Thank you once more Hosy for this opportunity and for you to avail yourself this Saturday afternoon. As we previously talked telephonically we are going to be discussing issues of orphanhood especially in a HEI. Therefore feel free to stop me and ask questions where necessary and siyaxoxa lapha (we're just getting to know each other more before we can work as a group) Hosy it is not an interview as such. Our meeting is scheduled for 45minutes to 60 minutes the latest. As explained in the previous meeting and for the purpose of generating data, analysis and accuracy I kindly request that our meeting be recorded. Thank you.

Hosy: Eee… andithi nje ngiyabonga Miss. I'm ⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛ from Ladysmith. Previously when I was a child I used to live JHB (Gauteng Province) with my mother. Isizathu ukuthi my parents were never married and he [my father] got married to another woman and their home was in KZN in Ladysmith. In this way I spent all my childhood years with my single mother. I therefore attended my primary and secondary school there. Ngingathi-nje umama wadlula emhlabeni ngo October ka1998 and I was with her in JHB at that time. I was doing grade seven. One of my mother's relatives rendered help for me wangithatha since I was the only child ngabe sengisala ngedwa okwangempela ngaze ngaqda ngaphasela ugrade eight. Afterwhich my father took me to his home in Ladysmith to stay with my stepmother as well as their children [my half brothers and sisters]. At first it was quite a nice experience for me to meet new family members then I continued schooling there in the years 1999 and 2000. Unfortunately in 2001 my father "passed away' [wadlula emhlabeni] and that's when life began to change…it was tough.

NPM: Ok so now you were left with your stepmother?

Hosy: Yes. Life was not easy then. For example, when it was the time to buy school uniform and other stuff, mina ngangingasatholi okufanayo nokwabanye futhi nendlela ababengiphatha kabi ngayo yayixaka I really felt like an outsider and I was. I remember when I was doing grade eleven one of my teachers wazihlupha ngokungithengela new shoes because the ones I had were no longer in a good condition. My step mother was angry about that because she was thinking that I'm telling other people about family

problems. Only to find that I wasn't sharing family problems with other people but it was a favour from him… he [the teacher] felt for me. Even though the situation wasn't good at home I tried by all means to focus on my studies until I finished Matric (grade twelve). After matriculating I applied at Westville Campus (University ███████████) and fortunately they accepted my application but unfortunately I didn't receive financial aid (NSFAS) a place to reside. When I got there in the University they said there were no residences as well as the financial aid. Since I was coming from poor background I decided to quit and stayed at home the whole year. Kwase kwathi the following year I got a job to work as an unqualified teacher where my salary paid by the school governing body not the Department of Education (SGB appointment).

NPM: Ok. And then what happened? How did you get here at this HEI?

Hosy: I worked there for almost two years from 2004 to 2005. In the beginning of 2006 I was involved in a car accident and it took me some time to recover. The principal decided to get another person to replace me while I was recuperating. Therefore I became unemployed and I lost that job in that way. Loosing that job cost me a lot in life: a home because as I was no longer providing [financial support] at home my step mother said in so many ways that I was no longer welcome in her house [supposedly my home too]. Later in October of the same year my friend's mother took me to her home at Umlazi, Durban South. The most important aim was for me to look for jobs as the city is believed to have better job opportunities than where I was from in rural areas of Ladysmith. While I was looking for jobs I applied again here at at this HEI [████████ Campus] fortunately I was accepted for admission. I started doing my first year in 2007 and I got financial assistance through a bursary from Department of Education (DoE). The bursary only paid for tuition and therefore I continued staying with this family (provided shelter for me since I was homeless) at Umlazi not in a HEI residence. Infact I was supposed to get residence according to what the bursary offered but due to logistic problems between University and DoE I couldn't. Fortunately in the second semester a vacant space was available at the HEI residence and I had to move. From then onwards things seemed to take shape up until two thousand and nine (2009) when unfortunately things started to take a different direction when I developed very serious ill-health issues….., zashintsha kakhulu izinto ngaqala ngagula the stitches (from the old accident I was involved) started bleeding and I had consistent very severe headaches which made it unbearable for me to continue with my studies.

NPM: Kwase kwanzekalani?. Hawu! Manje wayeka total ukufunda?

Hosy: No I came for first semester because ngaqala ukugula ngo March ngaqhubeka nginethemba lokuthi ngizoba ncono kwanhlanga zimuka nomoya kwacaca ukuthi ngizogcina ngidrope out.

NPM: Ngabe ukugula kwakusukela kwi-accident yini oke wayibalula yini? Ake ungilandise ngokugula kwakho nokuthi kwagcina kwenzakalani lapha eNyuvesi. Okungichazayo nengikuthandayo ngawe ubukeka uqhubeka noma kunzima uyaphikelela. Wenza kanjani? Yini lena ekumotivathayo ukuthi uqhubeke nezifundo zakho kangaka?

Hosy: Yes mam, because those bleeding stitches I would sometimes feel very dizzy. Ngaqhubeka ngafunda ngihamba nakho ukugula ngidla itreatment ngethemba lokuthi ngizoba ncono. Ngafunda the first semester ngaze ngaya ku Teaching Practice (beginning of 2nd semester) and situation became very serious but I managed ngaze ngayiqeda I TP session. Ngaqhubeka with my treatment kwangathi ngiba ncono ngaba ncono kwathi ngabo September kwaqala phansi ukugula ngavele ngayeka ngabuyela back eMlazi lapho bengithola ukunakekelwa ngayo yonke into khona ngoba ngangingasenakhaya [totally homeless]. Kwaqhubeka ukugula ngangabhala ngo2009 futhi ngangakwazi nokuthi ngibuye ngo2010 kungixinile ukugula but ngiloku nginethemba ukuthi ngizobuyela e- University. Ngize ngabuya last year (2011) lapho sengisalele emuva kakhulu ngezifundo zami. One other challenge I was faced with was that when I came back to the university ngangingasenayo ibursary le ye DoE. It was terminated because of my ill-health so ngaqala phansi ngazama uxhaso kwezezimali. Back then it was easy for me to apply for NSFAS unlike in my first years where I didn't know where to go. When you are a first year student uma ufike la e-university usuke ulahlekile ngendlela emangalisayo; awazi nokuthi kufanele ungene kwimiphi iminyango to access financial assistance. Ngaya ku SRC office ngabeka udaba lwami bangithatha saqonda kwa Funding office bangilungisela inkinga yami kanjalo nje. It was easy as that ngendlela engangingayilindele kwamina uma ngiqhathanisa nendlela osekwenzeka ngayo manje. Kunzima kakhulu manje.

NPM: Eish!! Ngiyezwa it has indeed been a long journey of struggles Hosy. Last year then you were sorted out and this year?

Hosy: Oh! yes Miss Mthiyane, from last year and even this year I'm still funded by NSFAS, yes, mam. But what I can highlight is that it is not easy when you're orphaned and have no one to support you and yet you know you want to realise your goal. For me it was imperative that I get this degree because I had experienced to be an unqualified teacher and how that kind of employment is unsecured.

NPM: And health wise are you alright manje noma kubuye kubuy?. Sikuphazamise kangakanani lesisimo sempilo nezinkinga ezixhantele lapho zihlanganisa nalezo zokuphelelwa indawo ekhaya? What happened to your goals/plans? Unasiphi iseluleko ongasinika omunye osezinkingeni in a HEI?

Hosy: No, but miss I can highlight that linginikezile izinkinga lelikhanda and ngaphazamiseka kakhulu. But since last year after being funded by NSFAS as from last year everything is fine. Importantly is that since last year I have not been taking any

medication….which of course is a good sign for recovery. Bekuke kube khona ukwesaba ukuthi eyi uma kungenzeka kubuye ukugula kodwa-ke ngathuka lapho uphela golokoqo odlule (last year) without signs of that severe headaches ngaqeda last year.

NPM: That's great then if your life has improved. People always say there is no place like home, how is the relationship between you and your stepmother now? I know it has been long time you last connected, as you were still very young in the time.

Hosy: Kudala kwakukuhle we Miss… Kakhulu nje. Sasiphila kamnandi engenzela yonke into engangiyidingayo ngaleso sikhathi. I can say I really felt warmth at that that time. I had a family to identify with and acceptance though my mother had died. Izinto zaqala ukushintsha uma sengibuya eLadysmith nakhona zaqala ukushintsha emuva kokushona kukababa ngoba yize ngifunda njengamanje umama [stepmother]. Kuyimanje akangazi nokuthi ngilala nini, kuphi nokuthi kodwa ngenza ngani lapha e-university ngo she is aware that I am a student now not working. Yena kulowomzuzu uyaqhubeka uyahola ezimbili zikababa. But it is fine I am pushing forward with this NSFAS assistance, ngizoqeda madam kona ukuthi ngilala ngidlile nom cha angibonwa muntu. Angisenabani manje and no place to call a home engikubongayo isihe engasenzelwa ilomndeni waseMlazi owangipha ikhaya singahlobene nhlobo.

NPM: Tell me more about your relationship now with your family. Ngabe niyazwana noma kukhona ukungaboni ngasolinye? How does that affect/ not affect your studies here at a HEI?

Hosy: Cha asikaze sihilane kodwa if ngifika ekhaya they usually expect something from me njenganokuthi nje ngingafiki ngingaphethe lutho even though ngingakasebenzi. Eqinisweni nje ubudlelwane abukho buhle phakathi kwethu….yebo angikhululeki nje uma ngifika ekhaya kuba sengathi ngivakashile. Kuze kube ncono uma ngiye eMlazi kumama kamngani wami ilapho ngikhululeka khona ngoba ngiphathiswa okwengane yakhona. Ububudlelwano bethu buhle ngalendlela exakayo ey…!

NPM: Nitholana kuph kanjani nomngani wakho kanye nomndeni wakhe?

Hosy: Umngani wami lo sisuka naye eLadysmith emakhaya. Kwanaye umama wakhe owangalena eLadysmith. Kushuthi isimo sami sempilo uyasazi kusukela phansi vele.

NPM: Hmmm….

Hosy: Yebo uyasazi sonke ingakho nje angithatha wathi mangize ngzohlala naye wathi ngingakhathazeki ngokudla nangayo yonke into. Ngafike ngahlala ngafana nezingane zakhe uma siphiwa imali siphiwa imali efanayo sonke sibe singahlobene ngisho nakancane ukuthi ngingumngani wengane yakhe nje. Okusho ukuthi yena wasebenzisa ubudlelwane phakathi kwami nomngani ngaleyondlela. Akangicwasi umama lona.

NPM: Kodwa mhlampe kukhona akubonayo ku personality yakho. Uma uzichaza wena ungathi ungumuntu onjani? Your personality…?

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Hosy: Ngingumuntu ohloniphayo omamazisayo umuntu omdala futhi okwaziyo ukunika omunye umuntu indawo yakhe. Angisheshi ukucanuka noma ngicanukile angikuvezi ngaphandle. Nginonembeza ngoba ngyakwazi ukuzisola kanduba ngibeke omunye umuntu icala futhi ngyawamukela amaphutha engiwenzayo ukuze ngilungiseke ngiqhubkele phambili. Angilwisani nabanye abantu. Isibonelo: njengoba sasihlala nomngani wami kubo ngezinye insuku wayezithathela imali kamama wakhe bese sithethiswa sonke kodwa mina bengisamukela isimo njengoba sinjalo.

NPM: Yini eyayenza ukuba wamukele?

Hosy: Ingoba ngangiba nolwazi lokuthi kungenzeka noma angithi ngangazi kuthi babengasola mina ngoba ngingayena owakhona.

NPM: I haven't experience step parenting…how is that kind of life in a family basing on your experiences? .Ngabe kunjani ukuba kuleso simo? How do you escape the interrelationship in the family system?

Hosy: Eish! Ukuthi mina ngaba nenhlanhla-ke ngazofunda futhi ngathola indawo eMlazi so kwabalula kanjalo-ke ukuphuma kuleso simo. Asimnandi sona ubona idiscrimination ehamba ngezinyawo. Enye into ukuthi umakuvalwe izikole ngiyaya ekhaya ngyobabona mhlampe leloviki elilodwa ngisheshe ngbuye.It doesn't feel like home and I don't get that warth.

NPM: Izihlobo zababa wakho niyazwana nazo? Kukubeka kuphi loko njenganomuntu wesilisa okuzodingeka aqale owakhe umuzi in future?

Hosy: Yebo siyezwana nje ngaleyondlala…ukuthi nje njengoba sekwasala umama abusekho ubudlelwane njengakuqala kusakhona ubaba. Uumama uthanda ukuzimela futhi okunye okubuqeda nya ubudlelwano ukuthi umama akazihambeli izihlobo ngish ngabe kunemicimbi kuzona manje nazo azisezi ke ekhaya. Ngakhoke ngishiya kanjalo nami okwamanje ngoba ngiyabonana ukuthi uma ngingake ngithi ngyabuzama ubuhlobo ngingagcina sengisele ngedwa ngoba kuba kubi kumama if ezwile ukuthi bengiyezihlotsheni Eish! Into engingazihluphi ngokucabanga ngayo okwamanje yiyo leyo yokuthi ngiyakhula futhi ngizogcina nginomndeni uozodinga ukuthi ngizimele empilweni. Yaa…kunzimam. Kodwake nginaye ubaba omncane ozalwa nobaba noma bezalwa ngabazali abahlukene. Uyena umuntu esinokukhuluma naye izindaba zomndeni noma kunzima ngoba ngyafihla uma ngiya kuye because umama akathandi [step mother] .

NPM: as a double orphaned student, who is your father figure and why that person? Ubaba wawukwazi ukukhuluma naye?

Hosy: Njengamanje akekho ngoba naye ubaba omncane siyakhuluma kodwa asijuli ngokwenkulumo yethu. To tell you the truth ubaba ngangingakwazi ukukhuluma naye ngoba ngangisemncane ngesikhathi esaphila futhi kwakungekho nkinga empilweni ngoba ngisho nomama (stepmother) she was treated us equally by then. Nami ngangizizwa ngisekhaya nginomama nobaba kodwa iinkinga yaqala lapho sekushone ubaba..

NPM: Ngakubo kamama ngabe bukhona yini ubudlelwane phakathi kwakho kanye nezihlobo noma kwavele kwaphela kanjalo ngemuva kokushona kwakhe?

Hosy: Cha abukho njengoba babungekho kwasekuqaleni ngisho umama esaphiila nje kodwa umuntu engaikwazi ukuthi ngixhumane naye ugogo udade kamakamama [my mother's mum's siter]. Kodwa nakhona ubudlelwane bethu abuqinile ngaleyo ndlela ngoba uyinzalo yamakhaladi (coloureds) manje impilo ayiphilayo ayijabulisi ngoba uyaphuza futhi uyabhema akenzisi komuntu omdala .Manje uma ngifikile nakuye akubi mnandi ngizizwe ngisekhaya .

NPM: Oh! Umama wakho uzalwa namakhaladi noma naye uyikhaladi?

Hosy :Umndeni wakuboo ungamakhaladi nje wonke ukuthi nje wasuke watholana nomuntu omnyama okungubaba.

NPM: Usufikile ke lana enyuvesi ngabe watholakanjani ukuthi uma ufuna ukuthola izinto ezaziyinqinamba kuwe ungena yiphi iminyango noma uxhumana nabaphi abantu ukuze uthole ukusizakala ?

Hosy: Eish! Isimo nenhlalo yase HEI ihluke futhi ijule kakhulu. Izinto ezifana nalezo ziba inkinga kakhulu kodwa mina ngasizwa ukuthi ngijoyine iqembu lesonto iLCF kuyilapho ngathola khona odadewethu nabafowethu ababengisiza uma nginezinkinga lapha nalaphaya.Isikhathi esiningi bengihlezi nginabo uma ngikhala ngikhale kubo bese bona bengisiza ngaleyo ndlela angiwahambanga kakhulu amahhovisi.

NPM: Ungasho nje ukuthi ukusebenza nalelo qembu kwakusiza? Ngaphandle kwalelo qembu uyawazi lawa amanye ama support structures okufuka ndawonye njengo STAR programme, Counselling namanye ama NGO projects run by individuals in HEI? Ngabe abanjani abaya lapho? Usuke wawasebenzisa yini amaservices abo?

Hosy: Yebo, kwangisiza kakhulu ngoba namanje ngisasebenzisana nalo iqembu le NGO. Lawa Amanye njengo STAR programme cha bandla angiwazi. Icounsellor/HEI psychologist yona ngiyayazi kodwa angikaze ngiyisebenzise. Ngikengibone emnyango yakhona imibhalo yabantu abadingakalayo. Isikhathi esiningi ilabo abangenzi kahle ezifundwenni zabo kanye nalabo abanezinkinga emakhaya abahanjiswa phambili ukuze bezothola iziyalo kanye namasu okuqhubekela phambili nempilo.

NPM: Disability Unit awuzange yini uyisebenzise njengoba wagulela lapha eyunivesithi?

Hosy: Cha angizange. Kona amahhovis amaningi ngiyawazi kodwa inkinga ukuthi ngiyaye ngingazi ukuthi asebenza kanjani ngoba abakho nabantu abasichazelayo ukuthi asebenza kanjani ngigcina ngokubona imibhalo nje emnyango nayo engapheleliswango ngokuchaza.

NPM: Ok kepha nayo iyasiza noma ngingazi kuthi basebenza kanjani kodwa ibhekelele kakhulu abantu abagulayo lana eYunivesity ukuze izinto zabo zihambe ngendlela .Kwesinye isikhathi the HEI izitshela ukuthi niyazibona zonke izinto ku UKZN website.

Hosy: Yebo uqinisile kona kuma WEBSITE izinto ezigqanyiswe kakhulu Student Central nokunye lokhu okuphatheleni nokufunda.Noma kungaba khona inkinga ukuthi thina njengaba fundi ngeke sakwazi ukukubheka ngoba sijaha lokhu okuthinta ukufunda ngaleso sikathi.

NPM: Uma ucabanga wena njengomuntu oyintandane ngabe kukuhlukumezile yini lokho empilweni yakho? Laphake- eHEI?

Hosy: Yebo kwangihlukumeza kodwa hhayi kakhulu ngoba ngasheshe ngathola umuntu owangisondeza eduze kwakhe ezama ukuvala isikhala sabazali bami. Ngeke ngiqambe amanga yena uyasivala isikhala yize umzali kuyohlezi kungumzali kodwa ngizizwa ngisekhaya uma nginaye ngengoba engithatha njengengane yakhe. It is very painful to be homeless… its like you don't deserve to be in this world.

NPM: Ungasho ukuthi umama kamnganewakho unendima enkulu ayidlalayo empilweni yakho?

Hosy: Yebo inkulu kakhulu ngoba ngisho nokufunda lokhu ngagqugquzelwa uyena ukuthi ngizame ukuthola isikole kwakungeke kufane naseLadysmith ngoba wayengekho ongigqugquzelayo ngesikole futhi benganandaba nami. Namanje n gengoba ngifunda ekhaya abangifoneli ukubuza impilo kuze kube yimi ofonela bona ukuze ngibuze impilo kodwa umama kamngani uyangifonela abauze impilo nokuthi izifundo zihamba kanjani nokuthii ngishoda ngani. Uma nginenkinga uyakwazi ukuthi ahlale name phansi angibonise njengengane. Lokhu okungigqugquzelayo ukuthi ngithathe impilo njengento ebaluleki ngoba kukhona abantu abangikhathalelayo.

NPM: Uma ucabanga umama wakho wayoyokwenza konke lokhu okwenziwa umama kamngani wakho kuwe?

Hosy: Yebo ngisho ukuthi wayengakwenza ngokubuka izinto ayengenzela zona, impatho kanye nezandla ezifudumele ayengiphethe ngazo futhi nokwakungenzeka ukuthi ingoba ngangizelwe ngingedwa kuye. Ngikhumbula esikoleni kwakungekho engangishoda ngakho waze washona. Wayengumama oqotho

NPM: Ok. Manje uthe wawuthanda ukwenza Computer Science kodwa wagcina usuwenza Teching. Ngabe kwenzeka kanjani? Yini oyithandile ngeteaching profession and why?

Hosy: Ngesikhathi ngifuna isikhala sokufunda ngangiyifakile nayo iTeaching ohlwini lezinto engangifuna ukuzenza kodwa bangitha kuComputer Science.

NPM: Ngabe wawuyithanda yini iTeaching?

Hosy: Yebo kakhulu ngaqala ukuyitha esikoleni ngoba ngangibuye ngisize abanye abafundi ngezibalo noma uthisha engizungena eklasin wayevame ukubiza mina ngizosiza iklasi lonke ngilifundise.Kwaqala lapho ukuthi ngithande ukufundisa futhi ngahamba ngayosebenza oLundi nakhona ngafike ngabona ukuthi ngiyafaneleka ukuba uthisha umsebenzi ngiwenza ngendlela kuyilapho ke ngathatha khona isinqumo sokuthi ngifundele ukuba

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uthisha.Nangesikhai ngifuna isikhala sokufunda ngafaka ubuthishela kuphela kwifomu lami lokucela isikhala kodwa ngangiyifake ezikhungweni ezahlukene zokufunda .Ngenhlanhla bangithatha lana eUKZN.

NPM: Njengoba uzoba uthisha kusasa uzothola uzobheka nezinselelo ezahlukene uzothola ukuthi ekilasini lakho inxeye eningi yabafundi bakho bayizintandane.Wena njengothisha odlulile kulesi simo yini ongabahlomisa ngayo ukuze baqhubeke nokufuna?

Hosy: Ngabe usho emabangeni aphansi noma phezulu?

NPM: Noma kumaphi amabanga yini ongamuhlomisa ngayo umfundi nokufundile endleleni yakho usakhula uze uyotholwa umuntu akuthathe akunakekele ugcine ulapha?

Hosy: Kuayaye kube lula ukuthi umuntu osenkingeni alalele uma eboniswa umuntu osake wadlula kuyo leyonkinga. Mina ngizobanika abafundi iziyalo ngibe ngenza isibonela ngami noma ngempilo yami ngibakhuthaze ukuthi bengayeki noma zikhona inking kuyahambeka futhi izinkinga izina ezanza umuntu aqine empilweni. Ngibatshele futhi ukuthi mabaxhumane nothisha babo ikakhulu labo abafundisa iLife Orientation ukuze babacebise ngolwazi olunzulu lokubhekana nezinkinga empilweni nabanye othisha noma basiphi isifundo bangabasabi mabakhulume nabo.

NPM: Yes but that's true… besides Life Orientation teachers they can even consult their role models since nawe ungasizwanga othisa kuphele but wasizwa umama owayekubona ukuthi ungumfana ophilayo onobuntu. Ngicabanga ukuthi singethembele kakhulu kothisha abafundisa Life Orientation ngoba kuyenzeka ukuthi bahlulwa ngothisha abafundisa ezinye izifundo uma kuziwa ngasekusizeni izingane nezinkinga.Nawe ungakubukeli phansi ukusebenzisa wena njengesibonelo kubafundi ngoba wathol a usizo futhi manje unekhaya lapha eMlazi. Ngyabonga ukuthi uziveze kanye nezimo osudlule kuzona njengoba ngike ngasho ekuqaleni ukuthi my experiences and your experiences can help other people njengokuthi umuntu ozofika ngonyaka ozayo sengaqkwazi ukusizakala through your experiences.

Hosy: Impela mama ukusebenzisana kwabantu bendawonye akufani nokusebenza komuntu oyedwa they can share experiences and come with something new that help others. Like experiences ubunzima baqala kudala kimi kodwa ngaloku ngidabula ezinkingeni but I'm glad now because I am counting months to be reach my destination.

NPM: Ngiyakholwa ukuthi mhlampe uma ukusebenzisa lokhu kungashintsha abafundi, abantu osebenza nabo kanye nomphakathi imbala. Ubona kanjani wena?

Hosy: Yebo kuyasiza ukufunda ngalendlela ngoba nami kukhona engabasisa ngemuva kokuthi sengisizakele. Kwathi 2007 ngaphathela abanye abafowethu nodadewethu amafomu ukuze bazofunda nabo ababengenalo ulwazi lokungena enyuvesi abanye babo kade bethatha iziqu zabo ngonyaka ophelile. Abanye basafunda namanje kodwa angimile ngokusiza abantu ngalokhu okuncane engikwaziyo ngoba baningi engibasizayo lana

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eskoleni futhi ngihlezi ngibatshela ukuthi noma inini uma bengibona bangasabi ukukhuluma nami ngizobasiza. Uma belambile abanye ngiyaye ngihambe nabo siye endlini yami sidle sincengisane kulokho okukhona uma kungekho akukho ngoba nami ngiyasazi isimo sokuswela ungenabani ozokhala kuye. Abaningi sebathola izindawo zokuhlala kanye nemali yokufunda ngami ngiphuma ngingena emahhovisi.

NPM: Kuhle lokho ngiyakuthanda ingakho kumele singawazibi ama experiences ethu ngoba uma sisizwa nathi siyathanda ukuthi sisize abanye abanezikinga ezifana nezethu ngaleyondlela impilo iyaqhubeka futhi kuba noshintsho olwenzakalayo. Ingakho nginalelo ithemba lokuthi uma sisebenza kanjena kuzokuba khona ushintsho noma lungasenzekanga kithi kodwa kwabanye njengoba uke wabalula.

Hosy: Yebo. Ngiyabonga kakhulu mama.

NPM: Ingabe usuwamukela ngokwanele ukuthi washiywa ngabazali noma kusasele lokho? Ubhekana kanjani nezinkinga ezihambisana nokuba intandane enyuvesi?

Hosy: Yebo ngingasho kuthi sengemukela ngoba ngiwumuntu osheshe amukele. Kufana noma ngigula angizitotosi ngize ngilale phansi kodwa ngihamba nakho ngesimo sokuthi ngiba nethemba lokuthi ngizoba ncono. Ngikholelwa ekutheni okwenzeka kimi noma empilweni yami kuzodlula ngoba okwesikhashana. Njengoba ngangizoqala iDegree yami nganginethemba lokuthi ngelinye ilanga ngizoyiqeda ukuthi noma kanjani kodwa ngzoyiqeda buka namhlanje kusele izinyanga ezimbalwa ngiphothule. Kodwa ukwamukela kuya ngabantu njengami ngafunda ngisemncane ukwamukela ngendlela izinto ezazenzenga ngayo ekhaya ngikhula .

NPM: Uhlala nobani endlini yakho? Ezifundweni kuhamba kahle kodwa?

Hosy: Ngihlala ngedwa. Eh…ngingathi yebo kuhamba kahle noma kubuye kube nezinkinga ezincane kodwa kubuye kusize ukuthi uma sinezinkinga sixhumane nama lectures alezo zifundo ukuze sithole usizo. Akululu noko. Impilo yaleyikhaya ihluke kakhulu kuneyasezikoleni. Isikhathi esiningi lapha Miss uyazibonela wena uzifunele nosizo qobo lwakho.

NPM: Kodwa awukaze ungithinte mina nje? *[laughter].* Ngiyesabeka yini sengiyazibuzela nje we █████?

Hosy: Inkinga ukuthi sibuye sinesabe singabafundi ukuzonithinta kunaleyonto nje Miss nawe uyazi. Ngingathi nje kuba khona nokungazethembi nokuxakeka-nje. Cha angazi nami ngoba lokhu kusaba akuyona indaba yamanje ngoba sesilana enyuvesi kwaqala esikoleni noma othisha besitshela ukuthi size kubo uma kukhona esingakuzwanga noma sinenkinga kodwa kwakuba nzima, umuntu abe manqikangika nje. Kuba yilelo dlanzana nje eliya kothisha.

NPM: Kwenzakalani ngempilo yakho ngesikhathi se Teaching Practice lapho kubhekeke ukuthi ube nguthisha eklasini ezinganeni eziqhamuka emiphakathini ehlukahlukene nokuthi

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kumele ugqoke njengo thisha from ekhanda kuze kuyoshaya ezinyaweni? Uxhumana kanjani nabafundi. Uyakwazi yini ukubhekana nesimo nezinkinga zabafundii.

Hosy: Abafundi bayafana nje njengoba nathi sisasesikoleni. NgeTP ngiyapatanisa okokuqgoka okwangempela ngihlale nalomndeni waseMlazi. Angikaze nginothise any difference in the behavioural and other social challenge faced by learners different. Ngiye ngibone kufana nje eklasini zincane ebeziza kimi zizobuza, ziningi eziyizintandane nezintulayo .

NPM: Ngicabanga ukuthi nisuke nisaba ukuthi nizovela obala kuthi anazi noma ukuthi nizimisele bese ozakwenu balindele imiphumela emihle kuwe. Noma ukuthi usaba ukuthi bazokubuza okunye bese udideka kakhulu.

Hosy: Yebo kona kucishe kube kanjalo [*ehleka*].

NPM: Sesizoqeda nje, do you think the University is preparing you enough to be teachers? To be socially responsible teachers? What do you wish could be done differently or can be changed?

Hosy: Yebo kodwa kokunye cha ngoba sike sithole ukuthi kwezinye izifundo sishoda ngezinsiza zokufunda njengezincwadi ezithengwayo futhi ziyabiza kanti ining lethu liyahluleka ukuzithenga. Lokhu kuholela ekutheni sigcine singabi nalo ulwazi olwanele lokuthi esiyolipha izingane ngaphandle. Ngicabanga ukuthi uma wonke umfundi engathola ibursary ngonyaka wakhe wokuqala kungaba kuhle lokho ukuze bethenge zonke izinsiza sokufunda kungabi abakhethiweyo ababa nezinsiza futhi lokho kudala uqhekekho phakathi kwethu singafundi ukuthi khona abancono kunabanye.

NPM: Ok, so meaning support is there but it is not equally accessed?

Hosy: Yebo it not, it is so discriminatory and kugcina kusafarisha people who need most assistance. When it comes to books and academic assistance and support I can say there are enough library books ezisezingeni ngoba siyaluthola lonke ulwazi kanye nezindawo zama computer. Yize lukhona ulwazi lonke elibrary kodwa abafundi abayisebenzisi ngokufanele ngoba uyaye uyithole ingenamuntu.

NPM: Wena uyayisebenzisa nje?

Hosy: Cha ngiyayisebenzisa kakhulu kodwa hhayi njalo ngoba ngiyisebenzisa uma nginomsebenzi othile kuphela .

NPM: Ngokuqonda kwakho and with the experience as an orphan ingabe indlala kanye nobuntandane buyahambisana yini?

Hosy: Yebo kodwa njengalana enyuvesi akumele ukuveze lokho ngoba uthola abantu sebekuzwela noma sesingekho isingo . Isimo sakho kuye kuba ukusigcina kuwe ngaphakathi

NPM: Singakunqanda kanjani ukuzwela kwezintandana ukuze umuntu aphile njengabanye abantu ngaphandle kuzwelwa?

Hosy: Kuncike kakhulu kumuntu ukuthi uyakwazi yini ukwamukela isimo adlulise aqhubeke ngempilo. I found that uma ungadlulisi ungamela ndawonye nempilo ugcine usuzwelwa ngaphanangapha. Ngike ngenza isibonelo ngami ukuthi uma wazi ukuthi awunaso isishebo kumele ukwamukele lokho udle ipapa lodwa ngethemba lokuthi kuzokusa uzosithola isishebo. Okunye okusizayo ukuze ungabi esimweni sokuzwelwa ukubheka abantu ozihlanganisanabo. Isibonelo ngami ukuthi mina uma ngifika lapha ngazihlanganisa nabantu basesontweni angihambanga ngatshela wonke umuntu inking yami .

NPM: Ngokucabanga kwakho kungasiza yini ukuthi kube khona iqembu labantwana abangenabo abazali abasizanayo njengoba uyingxenye yanjengaleli qembu lasesontweni?

Hosy: Yebo kungasiza kakhulu. Kodwa akukona ukuthi njalo abantwana abanengenabo abazali abahlezi benezinkinga kodwa nalabo abanabo abazali bayaba nezinkinga. Ngoba abanye bayithola yonke into abayidingayo kodwa bahluleke ukufunda.

NPM: Uqinisile kuyaye kuye ngomuntu ukuthi uyazazi yini ukuthi ungubani futhi ufunani ngoba kungenzeka nentandane ithole yonke into kodwa ihluleke ukufunda uma ingazazi ukuthi ifunana empilweni ngekusasa layo.

Hosy: Yebo kuyiqiniso kakhulu loko madam.

NPM: Sinezinkinga eziningi esihlangana nazo emilweni yethu, uma ucabanga ukuthi kungaba lula yini kuwe to share your challenges or experiences of orphanhood with other epleinkinga ukukhuluma inking yakho nomunye umuntu kuyasiletha yini isixazululo?

Hosy: Yebo kuyasiza kakhulu ngoba uma uyigcina ngaphakathi kuwe ingagcina ikudalele inkinga enkulu.Kumele ubheke ukuthi ukhuluma nobani nini kuphi khona.

NPM: Sesixoxile kabanzi nawe …do you think to have a team of orphaned students where they can share their needs and challenges is possible and necessary in this institution? How so?

Hosy: I think such a group is necessary. We need to work together as a collective. I would like to be engaged in such a group and become one of the contributors to working together with others and to learn from each other. There are so many things which happen/not happen in this institution that need to be addressed by people whom these matter to them.

NPM: Sesiqeda uma ucabanga ukuhlangana kwethu sesisonke kungawenza yini umehluko futhi kulethe usizo ezinganeni (students) eziseza ukuzofunda kanye nezifundayo njengamanje nakunyuvesi uqobo lwayo? Lapho sibheka izingane ngokuhlukana kwazo kanye nezinkinga zazo.

Hosy: Yebo kungawenza umehluko omkhulu ngoba besesishilo ukuthi uma abantu abaningi besho ngazwilinye kuyaye kuzwakale akufani noma umuntu ezama ukuveza imizwa nemicabango yakhe eyedwa kubantu abaningi kuyaye kungazwakali. Siqhamuka ezindaweni ezahlukene sinemibono engafani uma sihlanganisa amakhanda kungaba

nomphumela owakhayo oya phambili noma sesingasenzeli thina kodwa abanye abezayo bangahlupheki njengathi uma befika la e-University.

NPM: Ngiyabonga kakhulu ukuba nawe ████. Ngizocela ukuthi sakhe-ke uhlelo lokuthi sizophinde sibonane nini since after this meeting I know exactly ukuthi ngikhuluma nobani nawe usungazi kancono not in my class only as your LO lecturer (*laughter…!*). Once more thank for allowing me into your emotional world. I will notify you of our first group meeting. Meeting adjourned.

STUDENT FORMAL ONE-ON-ONE MEETING (transcription)

Date: September 2012

Time: 14h00

Venue: Room CF132

Introduction: Thank you once more ▓▓▓ for this opportunity and for you to avail yourself this Saturday afternoon. As we previously talked telephonically we are going to be discussing issues of orphanhood especially in a HEI. Therefore feel free to stop me and ask questions whwere necessary and siyaxoxa lapha Jabs its not an interview as such.Our meeting is scheduled for 45mins-60 mins the latest. As explained in the previous meeting and for the purpose of generating data , analysis and accuracy I kindly request that our meeting be recorded' Thank you.

NPM: Okokuqala nje ungachaza uthi ungubani uJabs?

NS: Ngingu ▓▓▓▓▓▓ ngangihlala eMgababa with my parents and two brothers. *UJabs uqhamuka (Jabs resides) from uMgababa. He had a problem (inkinga) while in grade eleven in two thousand and on the 9ᵗʰ of August when his mother passed away after only two days of being unwell [*some moments of silence and breathing hard…holding tears…but continues with a trembling voice…finally tears rolled down the face but no sound of crying, a series of short breaks]. Ngafunda St Francis primary school from the year two thousand and one untill two thousand and five ngase ngayoqhubeka eReunion Secondary school ngaqeda ngo-2010 ugrade twelve. Ngaba nenkinga empilwena yami lapho ngashiywa khona umama ngifunda ugrade 11 mhlaka 10 August 2009. Umama wagula two days wadlula emhlabeni sasala nobaba. Ekhaya babuka isimo sempilo kababa ukuthi ngeke akwazi ukusinakekela ngendlela ayephuza ngayo bathatha izingane bazisa kwagogo kubo kamama. Mina ngaqhubeka ngahlala nobaba kodwa saba nenkinga zangithatha izihlobo zaseMlazi.

NPM: Ubufunda bani ngaleso sikhathi? I understand umama ushone 2009 and the following year zahamba ingane? Kwama kanjani kwenzakalani ngawe?

NS: Bengifunda ugrade eleven. Cha izingane zahamba two years after umngcwabo kamama. Mina ngasala isikhashana nobaba kwaba nezinkingana sangezwani ngahamba Ekhaya. Kwathi sengihlala eMlazi kwaba nezinkinga futhi ngoba ubaba wayengangondli futhi engazondli nengane zakwethu le kwagogo.

NPM: Wayebenza kodwa ubaba? Kwakubangelwa yini ukuthi ningezwani angabe esanondla futhi?

NS: Ubaba wayesebenza kahle kahulu. Ukungasondli kwakhe kwadala ezinye izinkinga ngoba eMlazi base bekhiya ama fridge bekhulumela nokudla lokhu okwakungihlukumeza kakhulu engqondweni. Kwabe sekuphuma izwi elithi angibuyele ekhaya ngoba ubaba uyehluleka ukungondla nami angichithanga sikhathi ngabuyela. Ngosuku lwami lwesibili ngibuyile saxabana nomzala wami wathi mina angimuhloniphi ubaba futhi naye ubaba wamesekela kulokho. Ngabe ngabe sengithatha isinqumo sokuthi ngihambe ngiyohlala kwezinye izihlobo eziseMgababa. Akenamanga nokho ubaba ngalesosenzo kwathi ngebhadi wezwa ukuthi sengihlala khona, wafika ezongibheka wangithola ngingekho emini wabatshela ukuthi mabangixoshe nebala benza njengoba wayebatshelile. Ngabona ukuthi uma ngiphikelela ngihlala ngizodala uqhekeko emndenini kodwa ngahlala kwaze kwavula izikole ngo2010. Ngosuku lokuqala zivuliwe izikole angiyanga esikoleni ngatshela umngani wami inkinga yami ukuthi ngizosiyeka isikole [drop out] ngoba anginayo indawo yokuhlala naye wafika wayethula kothisha. Esikoleni bayithathela phezulu wabuya umngani wathi kuthiwa mangize esikoleni. Esikoleni bangizamela indawo yokuhlala eSpingo ngahlala komunye umuzi kodwa kwaba nenkinga ekuhambeni kwesikhathi ngoba umndeni wabamba umhlangano ubuza ukuthi ngihamba nini. Ngafike ngalwethula udala kothisha ukuthi indawo isingiphelele baphinda bangitholela enye indawo eseduze nesikole kwaShabalala lapho ngahlala khona ngaze ngaqeda isikole (Matric). Ubaba wayengangondli sonke leso sikhathi Kwathi ngokuhluthuka kwenhliziyo ngamubopha ngimubophela isondlo wabe esethi asihambe siyohlola igazi (blood test). Ngempela saya ukuyohlola imiphumela yabuya yathi akuyena ubaba wami. Ngemuva kwemiphumela wayengifonela engichomela ukuthi yena unezimali zakhe ngeke ngimenze lutho yena. Kwathi ngo2010 August wadlula emhlabeni.

NPM: Was he aware of the results? And how did this make you feel then and now?

NS: Kwathi esezodlula emhlabeni wangifonela wangitshela ukuthi wathenga udokotela. I am angry and sometimes in pain that I had to lose my mother because of this man. Akumunandi ukungazazi ukuthi what really is your identity; who are you; my mother was no longer there to clarify this odeal for me. Wangitshela nokuthi uzongikhipha emafeni nangempela akangifakanga kodwa wafaka umama wakhe kanye nezingane zakhe zonke okungabafana ababili bakamama kanye nama girls amabili awathola ngaphandle. Namanje ngisebuhlungu ngiyafisa ukwazi ukuthi kwakwenzekeni ngami.

NPM: Mhmm… ngiyezwa NS. Abafana ababili ilaba abahlala nogogo?

NS: Yebo kwathi lapho esebanikile amafa kwathiwa umama wakhe ngeke akwazi ukuthola imali ngoba usemdala yonke yanikwa izingane. Usisi wami olama mina washona kulowo nyaka kwasala abafana ababili nentombazane encane. Mina ngahlala kwagogo unyaka wonke 2011 ngingafundi ngoba imali yayingekho yokuqhubeka futhi wayengekho umuntu

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osebenzayo siphila ngemali yempesheni kanye nekamalume owashayiswa imoto (igrant yokugula). Kwathi kulowo nyaka ka-2011 ngazama isikhala sokufunda lana kwenye yamauniversity eKZN kwathi ngenhlanhla ngingalindele naming, ngasithola. Ngathi uma ngifika lana e ▆▆▆ ngaba nenkinga nakhona yendawo yokuhlala kodwa ngazama ukukhuluma no president weSRC yakhona lana eskoleni wangizamela indlu yokuhlala. Kwathi lapho sengiyitholile indawo yokuhlala ngaba nenkinga yemali yokufunda kanye neyokudla kodwa ngabekezela ngafunda kodwa ekuhambeni kwesikhathi bangikhipha endlini engafakwa kuyo bathi ama 1st years awahlali ngaphakathi. Ngaphuma ngoba kwasekukhona nokuhilizisana bangifaka eBedford. Ngesikhathi sekusondele ukuthi sihlolwe ngaya ema office ngiyobuza ukuthi ngizokwazi yini ukubhala ngoba ngingakhokhile bafike basho ukuthi ngizokwazi. Ngemuva kwalokho bangibuza ukuthi ikuphi inkinga yami ngoba ngingakhokhi nje, ngabe sengiyabandlalela udaba lwami njengoba lunjalo kubo. Bangibizela umama u ▆▆▆ ngamuchazela usizi lwami yena waphendula ngokuthi uyaluzwa kodwa sebeqedile ukunika abantu istudent funding (uNSFAS). Kodwa waphetha ngokuthi bazongicuphisa ngoba lubucayi udaba lwami banginika ama forms ngawagcwalisa ngawabuyisa. Ngayithola kanjalo ifanacial aid noma ingakaphumi njengoba kunguSeptember nje.

NPM: From the beggining of the year uyantanta nje? Wenza kanjani? Ubani okunika imali?

Jabs: Yes up until now but ngizama ngalokhu engizama ngakho. Ngiyayithola imali ekhaya some times kujwayele ukuba R500 engiwuzanyelwa ugogo ethatha emalini yezingane ahlanganise neyakhe yempesheni. Nanoma ngingamazi kahle iminyaka yakhe yena kodwa usemdala ngoba useyahola.

NPM: Ok so how was the relationship with your parents/mother? Wayesebenza yena. Wawusizakala kanjani kuye?

NS: Angazi ngingachaza kanjani ngoba wayeyiyo yonke into kimi umama through the way society society shape us as children there was that pressure to my friends and mate. Uma umuntu bemuthengele into enhle wawuyihalela kodwa mina ngokuqonda isimo sikamama I was ignoring that pressure. Wayesebenza kudala <u>kodwa ngomona kababa wamushiyisa phansi umsebenzi</u> wathi ngeke umakoti wakhe asebenzele amanye amadoda wayeka kanjalo-ke emsebenzini. Umama wayephuma emndenini omkhulu ovulelekile futhi ohlwempu wayesebenzela wona yonke leminyaka ayeyisebenza engakayekiswa ubaba ngaleyo ndlela akakwazanga ukulondoloza imali. Kwathi ngo two thousand and six (2006) wabuyela ukuyosebenza kodwa esesebenza emakhishini wayeseqala ukuyibeka imali, eyibekela thina ukuze isisize uma sesikhulile, wagula kancane washona manjalo.

NPM: Ngiyezwa Jabs, kwakuwumqondo omuhle lowo ohlangothini lokwenza kukamama. In other words umama wayeyizinto zonke kukwe futhi nobudlelwane benu bubuhle kakhulu .

NS: Yebo mama kwakunjalo[*prolonged silences and cries for sometime*].

NPM: Mhmm…Ngiyezwa Njabulo. Ngokuzwa kwami ukushona kwakhe kwaba into esheshayo ngoba akagulanga isikhathi eside. Kwakuphatha kanjani loko futhi kunamphumela muni kuhlobo lwempilo oyiphilayo engasekho nalapha in a HEI?

NS: Yebo ngoba kwakunguLwesihlanu kumele ayongena ngoMgqibelo. Mina kwakumele ngihambisele usisi wakhe umuthi emakhaya eMthwalume ngoba wayegula. Wafika kimi umama ebusuku wangilayela imali yokugibela kanye nomuthi ukuthi kukephi wabe esethi uzongibona ngibuya. Ngahlala eMthwalume ngangabuya ngosuku engangilindelwe ngalo ukuthi ngizobuya ngalo. Ekuseni kwangena ucingo luvela ku-aunt ethi angiphuthume ngizosala nezingane ngoba bona basaphuthuma esibhedla. Ngavuma futhi kwangangethusa lokho ngoba ngangithi mhlampe kugula omunye wezihlobo zami eMlazi. Ngathi uma ngifika ekhaya ngafika izingane zingekho mnandi kahle ekhaya zabe sezingitshela ukuthi umama uyagula useze wadluliselwa esibhedla. Wabuya umama esibhedlela wathi abamenzanga lutho uma echaza u-aunt wathi bahlala ubusuku bonke umama ekhala ngezinhlungu nangokuthi uzokufa ashiye abantwana bakhe besebancane.

NPM: Kwakuphatha kanjani ukugula isigubhukane kwakhe? Wayephethwe yini umama *[uma ungathanda ukuphendula lowombuzo kodwa*]?

NS: Wayephethwe i-Pepsmear am not sure yini… Kodwa into eyangixaka ukuthi wabuye esenciphe ngendlela eyisimanga ekubeni wahamba ngayizolo egcwele emzimbeni. Usuku nosuku wancipha futhi wayengadli lutho lokhu okwakungibangela ubuhlungu. NgoMsombuluko nganginemadlana encane ngazama ukumthengela izithelo kanye nokokubuyisa amandla okuphuzwayo kodwa wayephuza kuphela engadli. Ngathumela ucingo eMthwalume ngoba babefihleliwe nabo baphendula ngokushesha ngoba bathumela udade wabo omncane ukuthi akazomubheka. Kwathi lapho udade wabo engakafiki ekhaya sizihlalele kwangena ucingo lovela kumngani kamama wakudala ayebenza naye baxoxa isikhathi eside wambuza nokuthi kungani efona emva kwesikhathi esingaka wamphendula ngokuthi umkhumbule. Ngemuva kokukhuluma nocingo ngamcela umama ukuthi akaye esibhedlela ngoba nezingane zase ziphatheka kabi kanye nami kodwa wanqaba. Ngaphinda ngamncenga ngamuncengisisa wathi uyezwa ngoba esetshelwa yimi ingane yakhe wathi wenzela thina wabe eseyavuma. Udadewabo wamgeza ekamelweni ngezwa esengimemeza ethi ngizombambisa. Wayengibizela ukuthi ngizombambisa umama ngoba wayephelelwa ngamandla, ngafika ngambamba ngamlalisa ngambhekisa phezulu kodwa wayesethule udadewabo wangitshela ukuthi uthe asigade {look after us} njengezingane zakhe.

NPM: Mhmm!! Ncese mfana wami.

NS: Ngafonela udade wabo omdala ohlala eMthwalume ngoba yena uyabazi abantu abanezimoto endaweni nangempela wayicela imoto yafika.Yamthatha imoto bahamba naye ubaba wemoto no-aunt bemusa esibhedlela. Wabuya u –aunt wangitshela ukuthi umama akasekho emhlabeni. Washona ngomsmbuluko ezongcwatshwa ngoMgqibelo.

NPM: Ubaba wayekuphi ngenkathi edlula umama?

NS: Wayengekho kwakukhona mina nodadewabo kamama ngoba nezingane zazingekho. Wangcwatshwa ngoMgqibelo kwasekuthi ngoMsombuluko ngangaya esikoleni, kwathi ngoLwesibili ngaya esikoleni ngathi uma ngibuya esikoleni ngezwa ukuth udade wabo kamama engangimhambisele umuthi ushonile.

NPM: Yebo lona owawumuhambisele umuthi?

NS: Yebo. Bakhipha ingane esiswini kwangahi ngoba wayekhulelwe kwangathi ubancono. Kwasekuthi ngalalelo sonto saya eMthwalume emngcwabeni. Kwadlula inyanga kwashona ubaba omncane umfowabo kababa, kwadlula izinyanga ezintathu kwashona u-aunt udadewabo kababa, kwadlula izinye ezine kwashona ingane kababa intombazane lena engilamayo.

NPM: Hawu! Kwakuyisikhathi esingesihle kuwe.

NS: Kwadlula ezinye ezine kwashona udade wabo kababa omunye. Kwase kuphilwa leyompilo nje kodwa kwagcina ngaye ke u-aunt ngoba kusathulekile manje.

NPM: Konke lokhu kwenzeka ngonyaka odlule?

NS: Cha kwenzeka uma unyaka uqala maybe January kushone ababili ngonyaka olandelayo kushone ababili futhi. Lapho kwashona khona ubaba kwashona yena yedwa kwathi ngonyaka olandelayo kwashona ubhuti wakhe, kwalandela udade wethu kwagcina u-aunt.

NPM: Oh! Kambe uthe ubaba naye sewashona? Nini?

NS: Yena umama washona mhlaka 9 August 2009 ubaba washona mhlaka 12 August 2010. Naye ubaba asizange sitshelwe ukuthi ushonile.

NPM: Oh! Kambe naningasahlali naye? Kwakuphatha kanjani ukudlula kwakhe?

NS: Yebo sasingasahlai ndawonye. Nami udaba lokushona kwakhe ngalutshelwa umngani wami nakhona two days later bengasitshelile ekhaya. Ngaya emngcwabeni wakhe kwadlula. Ngaqhubeka nokufunda u-matric ngaqeda ngase ngabuye la ekhaya eMthwalume ngafike ngahlala ngo-2011 ngingafundi ngaze ngazongena lana e ▮▮▮▮ ngo-2012.

NPM: Eish! Kunzima ▮▮▮▮▮ siyafika leso sikhthi empilweni. Uma ubheka usinqobe kanjani?

NS: Ngaphandle kwemfundo bengingeke ngikwazi ukusinqoba.

NPM: Oh! Iyona ekuqoqayo? Uqondeni ngemfundo?

NS: Yebo because iyona engikwazi ukuthi ngithi focus kuyo. Ngo-2010 ngangigula nginekhanda elingapheli kodwa uma ngsesikoleni beliba ncono. Uma kungulesihlanu bengibikelwa nje ukuthi ngizogula impela sonto yonke ngoba esikoleni ilapho bengikwazi uku focus khona ngibe umuntu phakathi kwabantu.

NPM: U-focusa kanjani ube ugula uphethwe ikhanda? Uke wathola ukululekwa like I Counselling?

NS: Ikhanda belingiphatha uma ngihlezi ngedwa ngoba bengicabanga kakhulu. Ngo-2011 ngangigula kakhulu kwaze kwashiwo ukuthi ngiphethwe i-stress ngoba ngangingafundi ngalowo nyaka. Isikole isona esingisizayo ukuthi ngingacabangi kakhulu. Angikaze ngilulekwe muntu. Eqinisweni angikaze ngikhulume namuntu ngezinginga zami.

NPM: Ubudlelwano phakathi kukababa nawe babunjani nikhula nje kungakashoni umama ngoba sengizwile ukuthi between you and your mother there was that firm bond.

NS: It was that good nje noma kwakubuye kube nezinkinga phakathi kwabo benomama kodwa wayekwazi nokuthi angivakashise nasemsebenzini wakhe.

NPM: Oh …Babengahlali ndawonye nobaba?

NS: Saqala sangahlala ndawonye emva kokuba kuzalwe mina ubaba wathola omunye umuntu. Babengashadile ubaba nomama. Bashada 2000, but ngenkathi kutholakala mina babengakashadi. Abafowethu laba abeza emuva kwami batholakala sebeshadile. Kwathi makushona umama bahamba bayohlala kugogo.

NPM: Yini eyenza ukuthi ubaba ashintshe uma ucabanga ingoba wabona ukuthi uzohluleka ukubhekana nezinselelo zokuba ubaba umamam engasekho?

NS: Ubaba wayengalutho ngaphandle kwamama so ukugula kukamama nokushona kwakhe wahluleka ukuthatha iresponsibility ngoba yena waye provider ngokudla kuphela and asikaze silithole ithuba lokuhlala naye njengobaba phansi siwumndeni. Wayephuma ngabo 6 emsebenzini kodwa afike nona izintatha kusa ekhaya. Wayefika engaphethe lutho yini njengobaba wekhaya ukuze akhe ukuxhumana phakathi kwakhe nomndeni wakhe, mina angikaze ngithole ithuba lokukhuluma naye njengobaba nendodana ingabe nginamanga. Lalikhona kudala ngiseyingane angazi noma kwakwenziwa ukuthi ngisemncane yini kodwa sengifunda isikole nje angikaze ngempela. Bengilifisa kakhulu ngoba bekukhona izinto ebengifuna ukuzikhuluma futhi ngizazi njengamasiko asekhaya. Ubengumuntu ongakhulumi nje ngoba nomkhulu wami ozala yena ubaba ngamazi ngoba ebiza igama lakhe mhlazane ephuzile kanye nomfowakubo ngamazi through umama.

NPM: Isibongo sakaSosibo esakubo kababa wakho? Abakubo bona banjani kunina?

NS: Bathenga i-part emuva kokuba ubaba ethe asambe siyokwenza i-blood test.

NPM :Oh! Okusho ukuthi wena nomama naningabantu ababi kubo kwakuncono laba basemshadweni.

NS: Yebo but even though mina nobaba besiyinto eyodwa ngoba uma ubona mina ubona ubaba ngisho umphakathi wawukhala ngendlela esifana ngayo. Ngisho ngoba nangosuku lokwenza i-blood test kwakhala osisi basenkantolo bathi siyenzelani i-blood test ngoba sifana lendlela exakayo kodwa kwala yona ke indaba yamalungelo.Namanje umphakathi wakhala ngoba awuyiphasisanga leyo even though kwakhe sekwahlala abantu kodwa i-canceller lathi uma sengibuya bayokhishwa labo.

NPM: Manje uzoyithini lento yomndeni ngoba kodingakala i-way foward ukuze kube nezinto ezenzakalayo.

NS: Umndeni mina anginankinga nawo uma bengafika kimi becele usizo mhlazane ngiphumelele ngiyobenzela ngoba ayikho into engizoyenza yize noma bona benganginiki usizo uma ngiludinga.

NPM: Oh! Kukhona okunye okubhalwe phansi njengama result e-blood test nalokhu ayekukhuluma. Injani realationship yenu nogogo wasemakhaya umama kamama wakho?

NS: Yinhle kakhulu ngoba usengumzali omkhulu kimi ngoba konke enginakho nginakho through yena kodwa yena usekhulile kakhulu uma kungase kuthule yena kungonakala izinto ngoba akusiko thina kuphela esingenabo abazali, izingane zo-aunt nazo azinabazali manje nayeke akasebenzi usibheka ngemali yempesheni.

NPM: Saze sasebenza isalukazi, esangakababa sona?

NS: Ugogo ozala ubaba uya-pretender futhi abangenzelilutho abazi nalopho ngihamba khona even though bethanda lezi ezinye izingane kodwa mina indaba yami ayikhulunywa ngoba abazi nakuthi ngihlalaphi futhi ngilala ngidleni. Uyapretender ngoba uma kukhona abantu wenza engathi uyangithanda ngoba wanginika imali ngiphuma emngcwabeni kababa kugcwele abantu endlini waze washo wathi niyabona ukuthi ngiyamnika imali etshela abantu ababegcwele indlu.

NPM: Kukwenza uphatheke kanjani lokho?

NS: Yebo futhi yangiphatha kabi leyonto ukuthi ugogo sengaze akhulume kanjena.

NS: Sengabakhipha mina enqondweni yami akusekho lokho ukuthi nginomndeni - nginomndeni ngegama kodwa uma bengaqhamuka bacele usizo ngingabanika .

NPM: Ngiyacabanga ukuthi kuhamba kuhambe kube yinto ebuhlungwana ngoba wonke umuntu uyathanda ukuthi a-identify ukuthi this is where I belong so ngyacabanga nakuwe kuyaye kube nzinyana ukuthi uzozi identifier nobani.

NS: Yebo ngoba kuzoba khona izikhathi lapho ngizodinga khona amasiko so angazi ngizoshisa impepho kobani ngoba ukuqhubeka kwesakhathi nami ngizoba nomuzi ubenomndeni wami; kuyoba nzima ngoba angifundiswanga lutho.

NPM: Ugcine ungakwazanga ukungichazela i-personality yakho.Ungathi ungumuntu onjani uma uzichaza ?

NS: Ngingumuntu onama jokes ngoba ngithanda ukuthi lapho ngihlezi khona abantu bahleke.

NPM: *[laughter both]* Unama jokes awungishaye ngelilodwa phela.

NS: *[laughs]* Angiyena umuntu owashoyo kodwa abakhona enkulumeni because ngiyathanda ukubona abantu behleka kodwa into engiyithanda kakhulu isikole ngithanda ukuthi ngifunde ngihambe ngiyofundisa ukuze ngizo supporter abafana basekhaya kanye nomndeni wakaLushaba owakubo kamama ngoba yiwo ongibhekile.

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NPM: Kulemizi lena owawuhlala kuyona usafunda wawutholelwe abantu esikoleni?

NS: Ngaqale ngahlala eMlazi kubomngani wani sengisikhohliwe isibongo ngavele ngakhuluma naye nje kodwa umama wakhe wayesebenza esikoleni kodwa yena umngani wami wayengahlali nomama wakhe ngoba umama wakhe wayehlala nomunye umkhwenyane. Ngahlala u-January khona ngase ngasuka ngayohlala kaMkhize ngoba usisi wakhona naye wayesebenza esikoleni so babe ngabangani nomama kamngani wami. Babengithanda because nothisha babengithanda nabo since ngiwenza umsebenzi futhi ngihlonipha. Ngahlala kaMkhize kodwa angixoshwanga ngahanjiswa izinkulumo engazizwazi zivela kumama wakhona ethunywe ngabafana bakhona bebuza ukuthi ngihamba nini manje ubaba wakhona wayenesithembu uyena owayethi ngingahambi ngabona ukuthi ngizoqhatha umndeni ngashiya. Ngasuka ngayohlala kaShabalala lapho ngafika ngahlala unyaka wonke ngaze ngaqeda u-matric. Ngenhlanhla ubaba wakhona wayengu principal umama enguthisha ngenxa yokuthi isikole ngangisithanda futhi ngihlonipha ngahlala kamnandi.

NPM: Uma usuza lana e-university wazikanjani ukuthi kumele uthathathe miphi imigudu futhi imaphi amaqhinga owawasebenzisa? Yini eyenza ukuthi ufune ukuzofunda lanakwa-education e-███████ Campus.

NS: Ngasizwa isihlobo sami sakaMadlala esinguthisha ngokuthi vele u-Lushaba basuka kude noMadlala so wayengisiza ngi applier bangithatha layikhaya.Kwathi labo sengifikile sekufuneka uR3500 woku register ngamfonela ngabonga ngosizo anginika lona bese kamchazela ukuthi sengihlulekile ngoba anginayo lemali abayifunayo. Wathi mangibachazele bazongisiza kodwa ngenhlanhla noma kwaba yibhadi ngakwazi ukungena ngaphandle kwawo ngoba engikukhumbula ukuthi ngakhokha uR500 woku accepta i-offer. Kodwa ngiyacabanga ke ukuthi ngoba sengiyitholile i-funding izokhokhela zonke izikweletu enginazo.

NPM: Ok, kwabancono ke ngoba yabakhona indawo yokuhlala. I just want to know when it comes to kulendaba yezindawo zokuhlala ukuthi kuyenzeka bakuthathe ekubeni ungenayo indawo yokuhlala nokuthi ukhuluma nobani ukuze ukwazi ukuyithola? Ngezwa kuthiwa abanye basikwatile? Kuba nayiphi imithelela ukungabi nayo indawo ungumfundi enyuvesi?

NS: Yebo kwabancono. Ngizwa kuthiwa emnyakeni edlule bekuthathwa abafundi abangu 600 kodwa kulonaka kuthathwa 900 abanikezwe i-residence. Sase siba baningi kakhulu which led to i-strike sokufuna wona ama residence. For university structures and management kwabaluleka ukuthi bawafune ngoba sasibaningi esingenawo akufani noma uwedwa nje kodwa khona namanje abasathwele kanzima ngoba bahlala emzini womuntu futhi nomgwaqo wakhona mubi. Nonyaka usuyaphela manje so ngaba nenhlanhla ngempela mina ngaya eBedford. …yebo ngenxa ye-strike kungakho alunga ama-residence kodwa

abanye baya traveller basuka emakubo ngoba ngiyacabanga nje ukuthi uma kungathiwa nabo bafuna ama residence kungaphinde kube omunye umsebenzi ngooba baningi nabo

NPM: Ngamanye amazwi uyakwazi ukuthi uthathwe kaw-academic kodwa ungathathiwe kwa-housing? Kodwa ngeke uthathwe kwa Housing ungathathiwe kwa-academic.

NS: Layikhaya uthathwa ekufundeni kuqala. Okulandelayo uyazibonela Konke okunye kulunga ngendlela uma kulunga ongaphela utwo years kungalunganga mhlampe. Lana ngifunde ukuzimela ngoba akukho thisha ozolokhu ekulandelela efuna umsebenzi so you have to be on your toes and be disciplined.

NPM: Yes, baningi abahlala ngaphandle ngoba khona omunye ebengikhuluma naye nje uya-traveller every day uhlala e-Pietermarirtzbug wenza in his fourth year level. I must say I was real shocked ukuthi uma ungenamuntu okuxhasayo financially wenzenjani ngempela ngoba khona umsebenzi ofuna ukuthi uwusebenze late kanye nama class antambama ngo 4:30. Umsebenzi wesikole usawuthole unjani ke lana esikoleni usufikile?Indaba yokuba orphaned ayiaffect yo studies or your well being la eyuniversity?

> **NS:** Yebo kunjalo zining izinkinga kodwa kuyafundeka since i-education ichallenge yayo ngiyijwayele ngoba iyona engikhipha busy. But the issue of funding and not having money in the whole first year of your study is a great challenge and it is worse for those orphaned and with unemployed or sick parents. It is not easy….
>
> **NPM:** Yini eyenza ukuthi uthande ukuba uthisha?
>
> **NS:** Ukuthi ngiyathanda ukusebenza ngomphakathi futhi I'm against clubing drugs and alcohol so ngiyacabanga ukuthi lana kwa education ilapho ukwazi khona ukufinyelela kubantwana besebancane ngoba mina angiphuzi angibhemi but ngiyalidlala ibhola ngenza futhi konke okwenziwa abantu abayiyouth but m Im not into fashion. One other thing is that in my high school years people who renderd assistance and advised me are teachers and those connected to the school in their line of business.
>
> **NPM:** Mhmm… ngiyezwa and I understand why isikole sibaluleke kangaka kuwe. Ama demands academically in a HEI anjani compared to high school futhi wena ubuye waba ne break yonyaka wonke, how do you manage at a HEI?

NS: It is still manageable here but very different from school situation ngoba ngenza umsebenzi okumele ngiwu-submit ngendlela even though lana usukwenye i-level it just a challenge because ngiyiphasile i-1st semester. I am planning to maintain it that way …try by all means to work hard and pass ngoba angikaze <u>ngifeyile empilweni and I don't wish to</u>.

NPM: Nama assessment ubuwenza kahle? Usizwa ubani uma ungatholanga kahle eklasini ngoba akufani nasesisikoleni lapho obukwazi khona ukuthi uyocela othisha bakusize noma uyaye usebenze nalabo ofunda nabo ngabe wenzenjani?

NS: Ngiyilomuntu ozifundela yedwa but if kukhona umuntu ofuna usizo or ngifuna usizo ngiyaya kubantu esifunda nabo futhi nami anginakinga nokusiza abanye.

NPM: Ukuyiphi i-phase? What are your majors?

NS: FET, History and English. Asiphiwanga ngokufana mina ngikwazi ukubamba uma umfundisi efundisa I don't read the books at all but ngiyaye ngidlulise amhlo nje uma kukhona engikufunayo. Eklasini ilapho ngikwazi uku-concentrator khona ngibuze imibuzo bangichazele futhi angikaze ngithole i-lecturer eyake yagoloza ukuchaza ithi angiyofunda incwadi.

NPM: Akufani nje lana nasesikoleni there is a lot of work compared to high school futhi akwanele kona okuthola ngomuntu okufundisayo kufanele uyofuna information kwezinye izincwadi ngoba lokhu okusuke kushiwo lecturer is not only for assessment. I-university is about academic and research so ungakubona kanjalo from the 1st year level but as uqhubeka kuzoba noshintsho. Uzoke uthole isihloko kuthiwe hamba uyobhala ngaso and do research.

NS: Luckly leyonto ngayifunda kuHistory eskoleni but I'm not saying kulula ngozama kuya khona.

NPM: Ubukeka njengumunto o-right owaziyo ukuthi ufunani empilweni ngiyakuthanda loko ▓▓▓▓ uqhubeke njalo so uma ubuka ngabe i-University iyazibhekelela yini izintandane kanye nalabo abaphuma emindenini entulayo?

NS: Ngingasho ukuthi inazo ngoba ngike ngabona uma umuntu ebhala ukuthi akanabo abazali noma unabo kodwa beswele futhi kutholakale isiqiniseko salokho bayayithola ifunding. Even though I think there is not much control in administration ngoba ibuye itholwe abantu abangaswele bese beshodelwa labo abayidinga kakhulu.

NPM: Abanye bayithola besebenza benjalo.

NS: Yebo okubuhlungu bayithola besebenza benjalo futhi abanye baze bashintshe ama busary azabe ngu-3 khona omunye engimaziyo waqale wathola NSFAS, FUNZA manje useno DoE thina singenalutho so funding ibuye itholwe ngezinye izindlela and kubuhlungu.

NPM: Yes ibuye ilimaze especially if you need money and you're desparate besekuba khona abanye abantu abadlala ngayo because I know khona abathola ama busary and the abuse that financial assistance wrongly. Wonke umuntu uyabuzwa ukuthi uyayidinga yini imali kodwa akukho criteria esetshenziswayo ukuthi kubhekwe ngampela abantu abayidinga mina ngithi kuncono kube ikhona.

NS: Ngabe kuncono ukube amanye ama packages awayi kuSRC kube khona abantu abaqashelwe lowo msebenzi ngabe kuncono.

NPM: I-SRC iyabazi yini abantu abayidingayo imali.

NS: Iyabazi kodwa mostly uFunza utholwa abangani ngoba uma ungamazi umuntu osesikhundleni ngeke uwuthole.

NPM: Mhmm…This is s not alright. What are your plans for the future?

NS: Ngizoqeda i-degree yami kodwa ngeke kuphele lapho ngoba ngifuna ukuba u-proffesor weHistory, ngoba imfundo awusoze wayiqeda futhi ayikhulelwa.

NPM: Im happy because you know that ayipheli nje. What have you learnt from your experiences since usanabazali bakho until now.

NS: I learned to love, respect besakhona abazali but sebengekho I have to be my own parent, a parent of my brothers and other siblings as well. Kunzima but there is nothing we can do to change the past. One has to find means to go on.

NPM: Yes. How?

NS: Even though kubuhlungu but life goes on.

NPM: Yes it goes on…. So, what best can you do for children in schools since you have been through this way uyintandane uze ufike lapha. Uyothola ukuthi bakhona abasesimeni esifana nesakho noma okunye kuyokwenzeka uzibonela wena kungeka ukuthi kuyobe kungu half weklasi noma abayidlanzana esikoleni so through your experiences what best you can do for those children.

NS: Ngizobanika i-guidance ngoba ayikho into edlula yona kuyobe sekuba kuye umuntu ukuthi wenzenjani futhi bafundise nokuzimela because ama free bees... nama handouts awasebenzi. It better to teach umuntu ukudoba kunokuthi umudobele ngoba uma usungekho uzobathathaphi o-fish so it better ukuthi ufundise umuntu into ezomusiza for longterm than shorterm.

[We had to take a break as the discussions were too long and the initial stage was bumpy since the participant was very emotional and had episode of tears but wanted us to continue with the talk].