

**Barriers to the Retention of Black African Students in Post Graduate
Psychology**

By

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master
of Social Sciences (Clinical Psychology)

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April 2009

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people without whom this dissertation would not have been possible.

To my supervisor, Michael Quayle, I would like to express my sincere thanks for his guidance throughout this project. His unwavering patience and consistent support through my doubtful moments made this project manageable.

A special thanks to Farina Karim and Khalil Goga for sharing their time and efforts.

I would also like to thank my Mother and Father, and sisters Farzana and Saaleha. They supported and encouraged me through this process and gave of their time and wisdom unreservedly. I would like to thank my husband, Mahomed, for believing in me and comforting me when I was frustrated. Finally, I would like to thank my son, Uthmaan, for sharing me with this project and keeping me motivated.

Declaration

I, Quraisha Baig declare that

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- Submitted in *partial(for coursework)* fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Masters of Social Sciences in the School of Psychology, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg.
- As the candidate's Supervisor I have approved this dissertation/thesis for submission

Signed:.....Date:.....

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INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

Education was used as a tool by the apartheid government to control the black majority economically, politically and socially (Lindsay, 1997). The architect of the apartheid policies was Hendrik Verwoerd, the first Prime Minister of the Republic of South Africa. His views on education were:

"There is no place for [the Bantu] in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour ... What is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice? That is quite absurd. Education must train people in accordance with their opportunities in life, according to the sphere in which they live." (Verwoerd, in Boddy-Evans, 2001).

These sentiments formed the basis of the nationalist party policy on education and continues to characterise the education system well after the demise of apartheid. This "Racially skewed access to education is one of the legacies of apartheid" (Veriava, 2000, p13) and has consistently served as a barrier to education and empowerment. As South Africa emerges from the depths of the apartheid legacy educational institutions recognise the need for transformation to undo these previous injustices.

The School of Psychology at the University of KwaZulu Natal Pietermaritzburg Campus acknowledges these injustices of the past and recognises the importance of the empowerment process and has taken an important step toward advocating change. They have shown concern at the low levels of black African students that are enrolling for post graduate education. This prompted the School of Psychology (SOP) to initiate a research study to investigate the causes of this phenomenon.

The aim of this study is an exploration into the barriers that exist which prevent the uptake of post graduate Psychology courses by black African students within the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN). By initiating a study of this nature, it is hoped that the information obtained can be used to create effective future interventions to encourage the uptake of post graduate Psychology courses by black African students.

History and Development of Higher Education

The progression of Higher Education has been a dynamic one that has been developing over the past few decades. The progression and growth in South Africa has been similar to other developing countries. In developing countries there has been a rapid growth of the uptake of studies at University level.

“Between 1960 and 1980 the gross enrolment ratios in the developing countries increased from 2.1. to 7.2. This ratio is determined by dividing the total higher education enrolment by the national population normally enrolled at this level (Fredriksen 1984, p 19).....In 1950 only 2.5 percent of young people in the age-group 18-23 in this region gained access to universities whereas in 1980 the percentage had risen to 11.1.” (Tedesco 1983, p9 in Bor and Shute, 1991, p1).

This statement demonstrates the historical increase in the numbers enrolling for tertiary education in other developing countries. The importance and relevance of higher education has become increasingly a priority for many people. Higher Education has developed and become the key or gate keeper to financial success and an awareness of this has begun to develop.

“ In 1960 institutions for tertiary education in Africa graduated approximately 1,200 degree and non-degree holders equivalent to one person trained at that level for each 168,000 inhabitants, the 70,600 graduates in 1983 presented a ratio of one per 5,800 inhabitants” (World bank 1988a, p70 in Bor and Shute, 1991, p1).

The economic growth rate in Africa has also shown considerable increase. The changes over this period can be seen as working in conjunction with the many social and economic changes of the time. With the change and development within South Africa toward a more urban society and considering the historical colonisation of many countries, formalised western education as well as Higher Education has become an important and recognised option for self advancement. . Previously traditional means placed more emphasis on community and social development rather than individual success. Colonial development that was

accompanied with political and financial power also implied that survival and success became dependent upon integration into the Colonial system and a western way of living.

Integration into the educational institutions was a crucial determinant of success. This was because the educational institutions of the time were developed and functioned according to the western model of teaching and learning (Stephen, 2007). This created a disadvantage for students that had not already been assimilated into this environment. Studies have shown that children from the higher socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to be “westernised” that is they may have attended previously white schools and have become accustomed to the method and manner of teaching and learning in those environments (Stephen, 2007). This places them at an advantage when attending institutions of learning that are modelled on the western culture of learning rather than on other traditional African methods of imparting knowledge.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The History of Education within the South African Context

“Since the introduction of Bantu Education in South Africa in 1953, there has been massive inequality in the schooling of blacks in relation to the ruling white minority.” Herman (1995, p. 266). The formal and legislated disparities in education began in 1905 with the Schools Board Act that established government schools for Whites only. By 1948, 20 times more was spent on White education than on black African education and, by 1981, five times more expenditure was still noted in favour of White students (Lindsay, 1997), which made up less than 20% of the population. Black Africans make up 79.6% of the population (Statistics SA, 2007).

Education was used as an effective tool to maintain oppression. As the struggle for democracy began, education was recognised as an empowering tool and its importance noted and emphasized in the struggle for freedom. At the Congress of the People held in Kliptown in 1955 a document known as the Freedom Charter was created which was later adopted as the policy document of the African National Congress (ANC). This document is acknowledged by the United Nations as a document that promoted understanding and appreciation of the struggle for democracy in South Africa (SA) (Reddy, 1985). A paragraph in the Freedom Charter acknowledges the importance of Education and states “The doors of learning and culture shall be open to all” (Freedom Charter 1955). This excerpt only serves as a confirmation of the subjective experience of the black African people of South Africa, in terms of education.

The South African school system was previously focused on:

“rote learning, memorisation and theoretical knowledge. Furthermore, the old ‘Bantu’ education system was notoriously poor quality with high pupil teacher ratios, large number of unqualified or under qualified teachers, poorly resourced schools, etc. Students coming from this Milieu into higher Education face tremendous learning problems, resulting in poor throughput rates.” (NCHE, 1996b, p 36 in Fourie, 1999, p282).

This problem was compounded by the fact that the medium of instruction at all levels of the education system was often the learner's second or third language.

The development of institutions was initially modelled on the colonising powers and only later came the recognition of the need for greater multiplicity more attuned to the regional demands (Bor and Shute, 1991). Similarly the development of Higher Education in South Africa followed the same path with the initial model being based on the colonial powers of the time, evident in Historically White Universities (HWU), and only more recently shifting toward a more incorporative stance that embodies diversity and holistic learning. This development of the South African education systems can be seen as running parallel to the political climate and change from the oppressive regime utilising Education as a tool to perpetuate oppression to the resistance against these systems and the need to rebel and attain empowerment.

“In South Africa the transformation of higher education is a part of the broad political and socio – economic transition to democracy characterising the country and its people” (Fourie, 1999, p276). This transformation process began with the resistance to the education systems implemented by the previous apartheid government which instituted policies such as the Bantu Education system which perpetuated segregation and provided no room for empowerment. The systems of the time provided an education system that had been designed for black Africans without their input and allowed for no flexibility. The teaching focus was to cover the syllabus without trying innovative methods. The emphasis was on exams and rote learning was advocated at the expense of critical thinking and problem solving. People recognised this as a part of the oppression evident at the time and made a commitment to change the education system of the time (Johnson, 1995).

The present South African government has placed an emphasis on making education more accessible to all South African citizens and not limiting this access to the financial elite. This newly elected democratic government has

established new policy development and frameworks for the education system and tabled its first White Paper on Education (Department of Education 1994 in Johnson, 1995). This document has been reviewed and edited to focus on inclusive education, outcomes based education and the abolishment of corporal punishment. There is now White Paper Six on Education which promotes a single, integrated system which is able to respond to the diverse needs of the learner population (Department of Education, 2005)

Government's attempts for accessibility and transformation in education were met with many obstacles and barriers in the form of basic social needs that were previously neglected. "Basic needs including housing, water, sanitation, security, health care, nutrition and social welfare amongst others" (Johnson, 1995, p132) were not available and accessing education in these areas is a much more complex task. Additional difficulties which still need addressing include imbalances in resource and service provision in the rural versus urban areas, the race and gender divide and the fact that the previously disadvantaged remain disadvantaged. While these obstacles have undoubtedly complicated the ideal aims of the new policies they are being addressed, and attempts made to implement interventions to overcome them. The adoption of this framework and determination to succeed with the implementation of policy has been adopted not only by government departments but also by the supportive institutions. This study is in itself evidence of this, with the acknowledgement of the existence of barriers to education and post graduate education and an attempt to make these evident and implement interventions to overcome them

Movement for Transformation of Higher Education in South Africa

Bearing the historical context of South African Education in mind, the need for transformation becomes clear. Prior to 1994 there was strong pressure for change which was aided by external groupings for example the academic boycott against South Africa (Fourie, 1999). Organisations such as the South African Students Organisation (SASO) of which Steve Biko was a founder member, started the agitation for a change in the

education system. This call was later taken up by the South African Students Congress (SASCO), the Pan African Students Organisations (PASO) as well as the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU) and Union of Democratic University Staff Associations (UDUSA) all of whom continued to agitate for change in higher education (Fourie, 1999). These pressures created the opportunity for the embracing of change within the new democratic government in South Africa. The Government of National Unity (GNU) adopted the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) which was intended to be an integrated approach to meet the basic needs of the people in all areas including education, health, housing, etc and to create economic empowerment in the country (Wolpe, 1995). In an attempt to fall in line with these policies, Higher Education departments engaged in various attempts to reposition themselves within this new framework. Most Higher Education institutions made this shift toward empowerment regardless of whether they were previously linked to the apartheid regime, previously distanced themselves against this regime or entered into political conflict with the apartheid regime (Wolpe, 1995).

The need to tackle the past imbalances with regard to the system of admission to universities was highlighted as one to be urgently addressed soon after the establishment of South Africa as a democracy. Recommendations of radical restructuring of higher education were made with the resultant establishment of the National Commission on Higher Education. The Commission was responsible for making recommendations for a well planned and integrated, high quality national system of higher education whose students and staff are increasingly representative of South African society (Johnson, 1995). This transformation has now become a force toward creating a more “open, relevant and non-discriminating higher education systems” (RSA DOE 1997, p1 in Fourie, 1999, p278). The present government has made this transformation a part of their agenda and have been crucial in establishing councils to manage this change (Fourie, 1997). Over the past 15 years this has been attempted with varying degrees of success. While there has definitely been an increase in enrolment of black African students within tertiary institutions, transformation has been more successful in undergraduate

programmes and there is a lack of continuity between undergraduate and post-graduate transformation.

Access to Education

Historical policies such as the Bantu Education system, served as tangible barriers to accessing education. When reviewing the social and educational history of South Africa, the economic divide that would result from such discrimination is clear. The perpetuation of policies that ensured oppression ensured that families of black African descent were limited in their access to education and in many instances could not afford this process.

“The end of apartheid signalled an end to a racially based education system that actively served to confine the African majority to an unskilled labor unit. This system ensured that blacks could not become scientists, engineers, architects, or have any significant technical expertise.” (Barbera Masakela in Loveland, 2007, p22)

At the end of apartheid qualified professionals were at a minimum within most Black communities and the idea of education in a western system was still considered with scepticism. In addition this had economic consequences of keeping black African people in unskilled labour roles and forcing them to be in an economically disadvantaged position.

Although in many other countries the education system may not have been used to oppress, the consequences of economic disadvantage is evident amongst socially disadvantaged groups. The social groups who were previously oppressed or disadvantages still find themselves in positions of trying to overcome their current social and financial circumstances. The United States of America (USA) is no exception.

In the USA, considered a highly developed democracy, it is acknowledged that in attempting to increase the number of African American students at universities many are still faced with the issue of affordability (Grier-Reed, Madyun and Buckley, 2008). In the many years of democracy in the USA, the economic progress in the African American community is limited. Universities in the USA are still faced with the low retention of

African American students and have attempted the implementation of many programmes to address this significant problem. At one particular Mid-Western University the graduation rate is 25% higher for white students than for African American students (Grier-Reed, Madyun and Buckley, 2008). The research done at this institution highlights some of the barriers that exist which prevent access to education including lack of knowledge about the college process, institutional racism, poor health and energy, social isolation, and family and economic problems (Arnold, 1993; D'Augelli & Hersberger, 1993 in Grier-Reed et al, 2008).

Policies on Education Change

In response to the changing education policy within the schooling context, the South African (SA) government acknowledges the presences of the potential barriers that exist at higher education levels as a result of previous education policies and have therefore set out core objectives which they would like to achieve in higher education. Barbara Masakela states that these include:

- To increase access and produce graduates with skills and competencies to meet South Africa's human resource needs;
- Promote equity of access and outcomes and redress past inequalities by ensuring that student and staff profiles reflect the demographic composition of the society;
- Ensure diversity in the institutional landscape through mission and programme differentiation to meet national and regional skills and knowledge needs; and
- Restructure and consolidate the institutional landscape to transcend fragmentation, inequalities, and inefficiencies caused by apartheid. (Loveland, 2007, p22)

The need for transformation that is highlighted by these statements is born out of the recognition that there were still vast discrepancies and inequalities that exist in the education system. With the aim of producing graduates to meet South Africa's human resource needs and to be representative of the society in which we live, there needs to be an increase in enrolment of black African students at higher institutions however, the

barriers that exist to prevent this are still unclear. However, at present some of the changes that are being introduced are working toward the long term goal of greater enrolment. These changes have been introduced in the various forms such as Curriculum 2005.

Education systems in South Africa previously worked on a Western model of education which was exclusionary in acknowledging the diversity in the process of learning. Curriculum 2005 attempts to address this by implementing a system that proposes to serve the interests of all South Africans in an equitable manner (Maharaj, 2006). This shift noted in Curriculum 2005 is the move away from the authoritarian and rote learning style toward a more interactive, engaging style that is aware of diverse needs of learners and responsive to these needs (Maharaj, 2006).

The presence of Curriculum 2005 is a positive change that will create some impact at both the primary and secondary level. However at the tertiary level this policy change is not sufficient. At a tertiary level the black African students who are eligible for post graduate education or who graduate with excellent marks are often exiting the education arena with bachelor's degrees. For some reason, these students are not taking up available educational opportunities at postgraduate levels. In order for transformation to take place, policy change is necessary but an understanding of the process at an individual level is just as necessary. It is therefore imperative that the decision making process of black African students be explored and better understood.

Theories of Decision Making

The factors discussed earlier may not independently affect the decision making process of students when considering Psychology as a profession but perhaps it is these factors together that contribute to the poor uptake of Psychology by black African students.

The field of decision making is focused on the way in which people and organizations combine desires and beliefs in order to choose a course of action (Hastie, 2001). The

conceptual template for decision making involves 3 components: a) courses of action including choices of options and alternatives b) beliefs about objective states and events in the world including outcomes and the means to achieve them, c) desires, values or utilities that describe the consequences associated with the outcomes of each action-event combination (Hastie, 2001). This can be visualized as a decision tree that is like a trunk with many different branches. One important consideration to bear in mind is that the areas of decision making and problem solving often overlap and share the same types of processes (Sharps & Martin, 2002). This is in part where the complexities around the research in decision making arise, making it an area that has become highly criticized in that theories and models are biased and influenced by many contextual factors.

In understanding a career, it can be considered to be a series of both work and non-work roles extended over a period of time wherein the individual experiences various forms of input that contribute to the direction in which the individual chooses for the career (Mihal, et al. 1984). Some of the contributors that have been recognised as influential in the career decision making process include expectancy of career satisfaction, stereotyped career roles, evaluation of current versus alternate roles, expectancy of role change, expectancy of role success, significant others, ones of beliefs, attitudes and values; organisational factors and the labour market (ibid).

Within the South African context, the principle of uBuntu is an intrinsic part of black African communities. This principle almost certainly additionally impacts on the career decision making process of black African students at a university. Therefore black African students hold not only their own personal aspirations but also hold those of the greater community striving for a greater good (Tutu, 2004). It may be assumed that part of this striving for a greater good for the community would include striving for the financial upliftment of the individual as well as the community as a whole. This would also imply that the career choice would include this financial consideration.

Within the South African context, it is not only the different cultures but the path of career decision making may have also been impacted on by our historical context and the

manipulation of education and many careers by the apartheid government. Psychology was one of the professions that played a role in constructing and perpetuating apartheid and its policies. Therefore understanding its history and development may shed some light on the impact that this has on the career decision making process as well as highlight possible barriers that have arisen from its historical development.

Historical Development of Psychology in South Africa

The development of Psychology as a profession within the South African context may have some relevance to the way in which Psychology as a career is viewed. Having briefly considered some of the possible obstacles and the battle already in existence for education in the South African context, we need to locate Psychology within this process and acknowledge the development of Psychology and the role it played in the previous apartheid regime that may in itself be an obstacle that Psychology faces.

In South Africa psychological development followed a pattern similar to that of the United States and Europe however there was one key distinction in that South African Psychology developed in an environment characterised by the unequal distribution of resources based on racial demarcations (Foxcroft and Roodt, 2001). The psychological development particularly psychological assessment methods reflected the racially biased environment from which they evolved. Classen (1997) in Foxcroft and Roodt says that “Testing in South Africa cannot be divorced from the country’s political, economic and social history” (2001, p22). Psychological development in South Africa was entrenched in the Apartheid regime particularly psychological assessment.

Psychology working together with Apartheid

One can argue that part of the popularity of Psychology lies in its assessment measures which were evident from as early as 1936 when Thorndike stated that “whatever exists at all exists in some amount” and “whatever exists in some amount, can be measured” (Foxcroft and Roodt, 2001, p16). The popularity of these psychological assessment measures fell into disrepute in the South African context when these very measures that

gained Psychology its popularity were used to perpetuate the inequality in South Africa (Foxcroft and Roodt, 2001).

“For example, during the 1930’s and 1940’s, when the government was grappling with the issue of establishing ‘Bantu Education’, (Fick, 1929), administered individual measures of motor and reasoning abilities, which had only been standardised for white children, to a large sample of black, coloured, Indian, and white school children. He found the mean score of black children was inferior to that of Indian and coloured children, with whites’ mean score superior to all groups. He remarked at the time that factors such as inferior schools and teaching methods along with black children’s unfamiliarity with the nature of the test tasks could have disadvantaged their performance on the measures. However, when he extended his research in 1939, he attributed the inferior performance of black children in comparison to that of white children to innate differences, or in his words, ‘difference in original ability; (p.53) between blacks and whites.’” (Foxcroft and Roodt, 2001, p 23).

It is this view and manipulation of Psychological assessment that played a distinct role in maintaining inequality in South Africa which is still trying to be rectified today. The historical trend of psychological assessment in South Africa can broadly be considered as maintaining its focus on standardising measures for whites only; misuse of measures by utilising them on population groups for which they were not appropriate or standardised; the misuse of test results to reach conclusions about population groups without considering all the relevant factors (Foxcroft and Roodt, 2001) and thereby perpetuating negative perceptions of black African people and thus inadvertently aiding the goals of the Apartheid regime.

Apartheid links damage the reputation of Psychology

Historically amongst black African, Coloured and Indian population groups, the awareness of Psychology as a profession was largely limited to this manipulated

exposure. Psychology as a profession then became synonymous with a part of the Apartheid governments arson of weapons to perpetuate segregation. This is a well documented and recognised (Cooper, Nicholas, Seedat & Statman, 1990; Dawes, 1985 in Pillay and Siyothula, 2008). Understanding this historical perspective, we can see where the negative perception of Psychology in South Africa arose. The possibility exists that although the awareness of the changes that have taken place within this profession are known, Psychology is still linked to apartheid in the minds of many South Africans.

The nature of the training programmes associated with the profession of Psychology did not help the already marred reputation. The initial training programmes available for psychologists in South Africa were limited to the white population due to the apartheid policies of the time (Pillay & Siyothula, 2008).

“As a direct result of apartheid policies, the tertiary institution training policies and the slow pace of transformation in professional Psychology, the country is currently faced with the situation of having a very small number of black clinical psychologists among the thousands registered as clinical psychologist within the Health Professionals Council of South Africa (HPCSA)” (Pillay & Siyothula, 2008).

This very small number of black African clinical psychologists has done little to change the already tainted reputation of the profession. This implies that a profession of approximately 90% English or Afrikaans speaking professionals are servicing a population in which 80% are African-Indigenous speakers language speaking (Pillay and Siyothula, 2008). This means that the majority of people who are receiving psychological services are receiving services in a second or third language thus markedly limiting any benefit they may derive from the paltry services on offer.

Further stigmatisation of Psychology

Not only does Psychology in South Africa face the difficulties of overcoming its legacy with apartheid, Psychology in South Africa is also prone to the stigmatisation that the profession experiences elsewhere in the world.

Numerous studies have found that the attitude toward mental health illness is poor and often involves social rejection (Read and Harre, 2001). Mental health professionals were not exempt from stigmatisation, surprisingly Physicians were found to be the least likely to support a mental health project in their neighbourhood (Read et al, 2001).

The stigma of the profession is well documented and has resulted in the many destigmatisation campaigns (ibid). These campaigns occurred in various countries and were run by many different organisations including The World Health Organisation, The Changing Minds Campaign by the Royal College of Psychiatrists in the United Kingdom, the PSYKE Campaign in Sweden and the national mental health charity SANE in Australia (Schulze, 2007). The destigmatisation campaigns were aimed at reducing the negative public attitude toward mental health. These campaigns have been developed on the premise that the stigmatisation is a result of the lack of awareness and education regarding mental health. The numerous programmes that were developed aimed to increase knowledge and awareness of mental health concerns and the available treatment options, to improve public attitudes and, to generate actions to eliminate discrimination and prejudice (Schulze, 2007). Many of these programmes achieved varying degrees of success (ibid). However it is unclear whether these campaigns have been successful in destigmatising the profession.

The profession of Psychology and Psychiatry has been vulnerable to negative portrayal of the profession in the media (Schulze, 2007). These portrayals seem to be a reflection of the public perception of the profession. This has contributed to the negative stereotypes about the profession and frequently

calls into question the worth of the profession, depicting it as a profession that requires little skill or expertise. The extent to which this public perception exists within the South African context is uncertain. However combined with the apartheid links which created a part of the poor reputation discussed earlier, these possibly serve as barriers to the uptake of or the interest in the profession of Psychology and society.

Effects of Lack of Transformation

Effects on Society

The slow process and rate of transformation in the profession of Psychology is not only a barrier to moving away from the stigmatisation created by apartheid but also serves to perpetuate the status quo in society. Acknowledging that education serves as a key to financial success the lack of enrolment of black African students or the lack of transformation in this area implies a lack of transformation in society as a whole. The perpetuation of inequality in the job market and financially does little to uplift society morale or faith in the transformation process as a whole. This negative impact extends to the individual careers as well, in this case, Psychology in particular.

Effects on the Profession

The field of Psychology will also experience a negative impact from the slow rate of transformation. Psychology understands human behaviour from a euro-centric perspective and the profession and literature is still in its infancy when considering African paradigms. With the slow rate of transformation, the conversion on this knowledge into practice as well as the addition of knowledge to this growing database slows down and creates a negative effect. The further knowledge that can be gained from practice of the profession in African languages is also impacted upon and creates a deficit in knowledge production. Additionally, the longer the profession remains dominated by whites, the less likely it is that psychological services will be respected or utilized by black South Africans, particularly outside of urban areas.

Effects of Service Delivery

As was briefly mentioned early, the lack of black African Psychologists has meant that the psychological services provided to the population has vast room for improvement. In order for services to be optimal, services need to be provided in a language that both the Psychologist and the client are proficient in. For reasons of sensitivity and confidentiality, the use of translators is not ideal. In addition to language, understanding of cultural practices and norms can be integrated into the understanding of behaviour and a greater African perspective that promotes healing and development in the African context.

While individually these effects seem to be only vaguely significant, it is the product of all these individual components that makes the negative effects of slow transformation evident. These effects massively impact of the ‘democratisation’ of the profession of Psychology. It is for these reasons, in conjunction with those mentioned earlier that this study was originally contrived.

Justification for the Research

“Despite opposition at various times and in different forms, both historically white and historically black universities are products of apartheid planning that were designed to essentially reproduce the apartheid order. Hence, all our universities need to be liberated from such a past and transformed to enable us to become South African and African institutions and to meet new goals.” (Badat, 2006, p6).

The University of KwaZulu Natal Pietermaritzburg has become aware that there are relatively few numbers of black African students enrolled in post graduate education in Psychology. A study done regarding enrolment of Psychology students in 2006, showed that Medunsa (now University of Limpopo) had the highest enrolment with UKZN forth on the list (Pillay and Siyothula, 2008).

Figure 1.1 below illustrates the discrepancies in enrolment from which the need for this study has arisen. National demographics suggest that the equitable proportion of enrolment would be 80% black African (Statistics SA, 2007).

Figure 1.1 Racial demographics for Psychology programmes in 2007 at UKZN Pmb

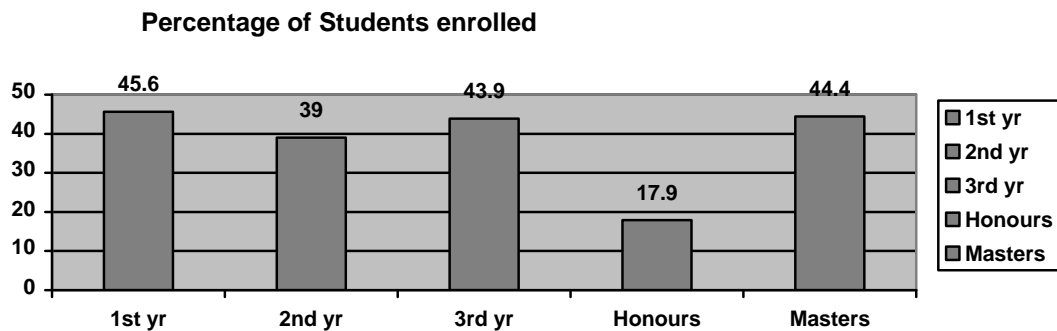
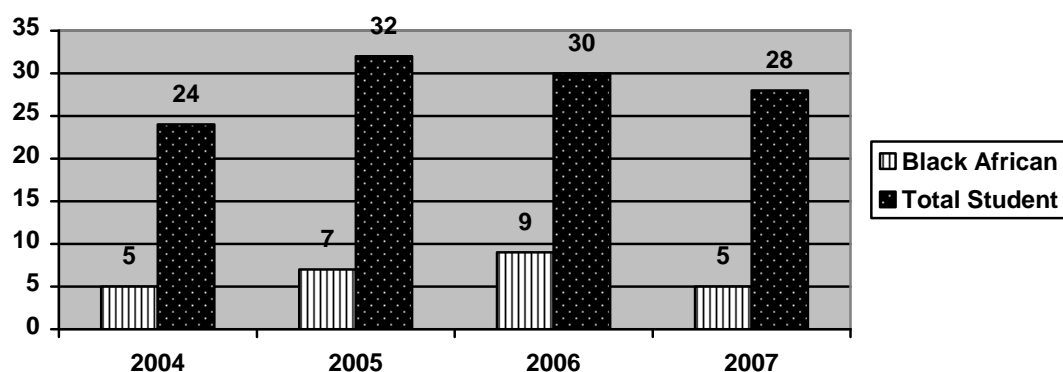


Figure 1.2 below illustrates the proportion of black African students enrolled in the Honours Psychology programme over the past 4 years. The information in figure 1.2 below is not available within the public domain. This information has been inserted with the permission of the Head of the School of Psychology Pietermaritzburg.

Figure 1.2 Number of Honours students at UKZN School of Psychology Pmb



The actual number of students registered in Psychology Honours for 2007 confirm that these disparities in numbers existed. In a class of 28 students, only 5 students are black African, which makes up 17.9% of the total class. In 2007 the 301 Psychology course shows that of 164 students, 74 are black African constituting 43.9% of the total of the

class. This clearly illustrates the decrease in the proportion of black African students from third year level to post-graduate level within the psychology department. This discrepancy can be better understood if we consider that the black African population makes up 79.0% of our total population in the country (Stats SA, 2008). The small pool of black African students at honours level is a massive bottleneck for selections at Masters level and the small number of black African students at Masters level is therefore a bottleneck in the transformation of Psychology in South Africa. It should be noted that in 2007, the Masters class has an unusually high representation in terms of black African students.

Although the figure 1.2 shows a gradual increase in enrolment from 24 black African students in 2004 up to 30 black African students 2006, a decline is again noted in 2007. It is important to note that this fluctuation could be random or as a result of possible systemic processes. However, this is an area of concern for the School of Psychology.

Higher education plays a significant role as a gatekeeper to the social elite and access to positions of power within the broader community. This highlights the urgency with which both the low proportion of black African enrolment and the slow rate of change need to be addressed in terms of empowerment. This empowerment is not only for the professionals themselves but the communities that they serve.

There are currently a number of black African students who qualify for positions within the post-graduate psychology programmes, however for some reason they do not apply or continue studying. Using the factors discussed to inform the research, this study will explore the barriers that black African students encounter when considering post-graduate psychology programmes.

Research Problems and Hypotheses

The UKZN School of Psychology has noted the trends of low enrolment of black African students within their post graduate programmes. In an effort to effect change, this study was initiated, and this study aims to be a part of a greater empowerment process. Some

barriers were briefly mentioned earlier. However in the absence of oppressive education policies and the context of a democracy, more exploration needs to be done within the South African context as to what constitute barriers to racial transformation of postgraduate education more than ten years after democracy.

The aim of this research project is to investigate barriers and perceptions that may be contributing to the low proportional enrolment of black African students in the post graduate Honours Psychology programmes in the School of Psychology, Pietermaritzburg, UKZN. This project was done with a view to increasing the retention of black African students in post graduate programmes within the School of Psychology Pietermaritzburg. The study will assess the need for interventions at a post graduate level and will provide some guidance to assist in the restructuring process.

If barriers to post graduate education can be identified by this study then a viable intervention can be constructed that attempts to limit the barriers that exist to post graduate education in Psychology for black African students. Even if no barriers are identified, this study addresses part of the problem in establishing that the areas covered by this study were not pertinent to the observed problem at the time it was completed.

Problems with race-based research

The history of Psychology in South Africa and the historical development of education in South Africa discussed earlier, highlighted the disparities that exist. In an attempt to redress some of the past wrongs, research needs to be conducted to determine what barriers exist that prevent the overcoming of past injustices. Empirical research needs to be conducted along ethnic and cultural lines. However there are some problems that arise when research is conducted in this manner (Organista, Chun, and Martin, 1998). Studies conducted, particularly in the Social Sciences, along ethnic lines usually assume that observed phenomena can be directly attributed to race. This assumption is often a generalisation which is not always correct. The observed phenomena may be attributed to other factors such as personality traits, family background, inherent characteristics or

other social factors (ibid). In the South African context where the black African community make up almost 80% of the population (Stats SA, 2007) the same concern applies. Studies conducted along ethnic or racial lines have to be careful not to assume that the findings are purely attributed to race and need to consider other contributing factors for the results.

This study will divide the population into groups of black African and white students. Not only does this division exacerbate current tensions at this level and place a strain on relationships but also might emphasize negative metastereotypes amongst black African students that might hinder rather than help their performance. In addition, students from a coloured and Indian background might be further marginalized, feeling as if they have been left out of a process and are once again, not recognized amongst a black African and white population. This study will utilise both a cross sectional questionnaire and a semi-structured questionnaire. The cross sectional questionnaire was used to provide a more database of general information and the semi-structured interviews were used to gain more in-depth information. By utilising this method and creating an opportunity for the areas to be mentioned that were not included in the cross sectional questionnaire, the tendency to generalise was intended to be diminished.

Research Question

Why are black African students under-represented at post graduate level when they are fairly well represented in undergraduate studies?

In order to answer the research question, the following areas were considered in this study:

- a) Is there an awareness amongst black African students of the post-graduate psychology courses offered within the School of Psychology Pietermaritzburg?
- b) How do black African students perceive Psychology as a career choice in general, but specifically in terms of status and earning potential?

- c) What barriers prevent black African students from applying to psychology post-graduate programmes?
- d) What are black African Students' perceptions of the School of Psychology Pietermaritzburg and what can the School of Psychology Pietermaritzburg do to make their post-graduate programmes more attractive and attainable for black African graduates?

METHODOLOGY

Overview of Methodology

This study used a mixed methodology approach. It used both quantitative and qualitative research instruments to obtain the information required to conduct the study. In order to ascertain what perceived barriers exist to post graduate education, a quantitative cross sectional questionnaire was administered to the third year psychology population in order to obtain a base line of data for comparison. One-on-one interviews were then conducted with students identified as eligible for the study to obtain more specific information regarding the black African student population.

Research Design

The mixed methodology approach has become increasingly popular because of the way in which it can enrich the results of a study by creating generalisable results while gaining a deeper understanding of the phenomena of interest (Hanson, Creswell, Creswell, Plano and Petska, 2005). Johnson and Turner suggest that “using mixed methods in research and evaluation offers methodological and practical advantages. Methodologically, mixed methods research and evaluation combine quantitative and qualitative methods, approaches, and concepts that have complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses” (in Sng and Gribovaskaya, 2008). For these reasons, this method was chosen to enhance the applicability of the information gained from this exploratory study.

The quantitative portion of this study utilised the survey method (Haslam & McGarty, 2003). The exploratory nature of this study indicated a need for a design that was able to obtain information about a number of variables and identify a possible link between those variables, Haslam and McGarty identify the survey method for this purpose (2003). This study was conducted using both a quantitative questionnaire and a qualitative interview.

The quantitative cross sectional questionnaire was administered to all third year psychology students and proved to be cost effective and time efficient. The researcher aimed to provide baseline data for third year psychology students across all race groups.

The data analysis of the cross sectional study was focused around ascertaining the perceptions of psychology as a profession including financial feasibility, respect fulfilment, financial and material constraints currently experienced, information sources currently used to make decisions, factors influencing the decision making process and the perceptions of the School of Psychology.

The qualitative semi-structured interview was administered to a purposefully selected group of black African third year psychology students whose academic results made them eligible for Honours in Psychology. This method allowed for a view of the academic environment and social world as constructed by the participant thereby providing rich data for later analysis (Todd, Nerlich, Mckeown and Clarke, 2004). The data analysis of the qualitative semi-structured interviews was a thematic analysis identifying emergent themes of possible barriers to the uptake of post graduate studies within the School of Psychology.

Initially as part of the qualitative aspect, the researcher aimed to conduct a longitudinal study which tracked the decision making of those identified to participate in the qualitative arm of the study. The longitudinal study was intended to be a weekly response to an email sent out by the researcher as a discussion forum or if the participant preferred as a private email (See Appendix D for proposed questions). In addition it would have been recommended that a diary be kept to track part of the process of decision making. However this was unsuccessful as no volunteers were forthcoming. The possible contributors to this reluctance to participate will be explored in more detail when discussing the research process.

Research Sample

Sample Frame

For the quantitative cross sectional questionnaires, a purposive sample of psychology students in their third year at the University of KwaZulu Natal was obtained. The sample was taken from the Psychology 301 course. This course is a third year course which also contains a number of second year students who enrol for this class at the University of

KwaZulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus. Since the study aimed at identifying barriers to the retention of black African students in post graduate psychology programmes within the University of KwaZulu-Natal, it was deemed useful to create a baseline of data gathered from amongst the entire third year population to ascertain general perceptions regarding psychology and to be able to have data for the different groups to be used as comparative data. The third year 301 course contained a number of second year students which can be considered an advantage in that it provides information about the development of the decision making process earlier on. However using the 301 course could have also been a disadvantage in that it potentially already excluded some third year students who may have already made the decision not to continue with Psychology, a number of these third year students that were excluded could have been from the target population. To increase the probability of responses, the questionnaire was administered during compulsory tutorials for a course which is compulsory for student's majoring in psychology, although students were informed that their participation was voluntary. In addition an incentive in the form of a raffle in which one participant could win a R100.00 gift voucher was provided. This was done due to the anticipated poor response to the questionnaire following the lack of response to the email diaries mentioned previously.

The sample for the qualitative semi-structured interviews was taken from within the third year psychology students enrolled at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus. The students from the target population were identified as eligible for the study based on two criteria: their self-selected status as black African as recorded in the University administration system, and their eligibility for a psychology honours degree on the basis of marks obtained throughout the year for Psychology. Twenty five black African students were identified whose marks all averaged no less than 65%, thereby making them eligible for inclusion to the Honours course in Psychology. Once again to increase the number of respondents, an incentive was provided.

Quantitative sub-study: procedure and measures

All research participants were asked to sign an Informed Consent which had details of the study provided (see Appendix A and Appendix C). For the quantitative data, a structured

questionnaire was used (see Appendix B). This instrument had been developed by Supervisor of the study Mr M. Quayle. Due to the lack of previous research in this field, the research instrument was designed specifically for this study.

The instrument began by first addressing demographic questions that included age, gender, race, language, finances, year of study and the participants registered majors at the university. The questionnaire was then further divided and asked questions broadly based on themes of the perception of psychology as a profession by the students as well as within the community; the perception of the earning capacity of psychology; perceived job satisfaction of psychologists; the knowledge of post graduate psychology; students' perceptions of the school of psychology and family support if psychology was chosen as a profession. The respondents were asked to provide information on what they believe would be their own objective states after considering the outcome of being a psychologist. The questionnaire aimed to elicit responses of the general perceptions of Psychology amongst all third year Psychology students. The scales derived for usage in the questionnaire were created after consideration of literature that suggests the different factors that contribute to career decision making are: a) courses of action including choices of options and alternatives b) beliefs about objective states and events in the world including outcomes and the means to achieve them, c) desires, values or utilities that describe the consequences associated with the outcomes of each action-event combination (Hastie, 2001).

Qualitative sub-study: procedure and interview schedule

The semi-structured interview (See Appendix) was broadly constructed by supervisor of the study Mr M. Quayle. The interviews were conducted by the researcher and elaborated upon. The interviews began with basic demographics questions regarding age, language, funding of studies. Thereafter the interviews approached reasons for choice of Psychology as a profession; problems experienced during the undergraduate degrees; benefits of an undergraduate Psychology degree; problems experienced with the School of Psychology; future plans following graduation; information sources used to decided on post graduate opportunities; factors influencing the choice of what to do following

graduation and provided the opportunity for students to make recommendations to the School of Psychology. This semi-structured interview aimed to provide the opportunity to explore pertinent topics that had come up in the structured questionnaire as well as relevant topics within the interview. The researcher also aimed to establish a good rapport with participants enabling them to express barriers and obstacles that the researcher had perhaps failed to identify.

Initially this study had intended to track students in their decision making process by tracking their thoughts on an email diary. However this had to be abandoned as there were no respondents to the emails sent out. The poor response rate noted may be an indication that these students may have been contacted at a difficult time when their concentration was focused elsewhere. Another possibility is that these students had already made their decision and were therefore not interested in participating in a study to track the decision making process.

Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

The study conducted was a descriptive one that adopted an inductive approach. The School of Psychology within the University of KwaZulu Natal had made observation that there were a low number of black African students applying for post graduate studies. From this observation, the study took on the attempt to try and ascertain what barriers if any exist that prevent black African students from applying for post graduate studies. The study aimed to clearly identify these barriers in order to inform a possible restructuring process so that some practical changes can be made.

The data obtained through the qualitative interviews and the quantitative questionnaire allowed for an in depth exploration into the experience of research participants. This data was the subjective opinion of the research participants. These participants were reassured of confidential responses and no adverse or positive effects resulting from the interviews. The research participants were therefore protected and had no motivation to provide false data. Within the context of an inductive study, validity refers to the degree to which the

information gained is “believable” to the researcher, participants and readers of the study (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999). This data can be therefore considered valid. The initial design that allowed for an in depth observation over a period of time was not followed for operational reasons. This data would have provided a more in-depth understanding of the decision making process. The lack of this data does not impact on the validity of the study.

Reliability broadly refers to the degree to which the results obtained in a given study are repeatable (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999). Interpretive and Constructionist researchers acknowledge the variability in social reality and its dynamic nature and therefore acknowledge that they do not necessarily find the same results repeatedly and therefore consider the dependability of the results (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999).

“Dependability refers to the degree to which the reader can be convinced that the findings did indeed occur as the researcher says they did.

Dependability is achieved through rich and detailed descriptions that shows how certain actions and opinions are rooted in and develop out of contextual interaction” (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999. p64).

This study is an exploratory one and although the data has limitations, these limitations are considered acceptable as there is no previous data available in this field. Should the demographics of that population change in the coming year, the validity of the data may come into question. Currently the data is considered reliable and valid as an initial description of observable phenomena. It may be used as a starting point upon which future research can be based.

Procedure

The research proposal was submitted to the University of KwaZulu Natal for approval to conduct research within the Pietermaritzburg Campus, specifically within the School of Psychology. An application to the Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu Natal was also submitted to ensure that no ethical considerations were being transgressed.

All students who registered for a third year Psychology course, which is compulsory for a major in psychology, were identified as candidates for the research. Some of these candidates were still in their second year of study but had selected the third year psychology course as an elective. All these students were provided with the questionnaire during a compulsory tutorial. Being aware that not all students attend lectures, the questionnaire was provided in a forum that demands compulsory attendance, in an attempt to increase the number of responses to the questionnaire. An informed consent form was attached and students were informed that their participation was voluntary (see Appendix A). An incentive was provided in the form of an opportunity to win a R100 voucher for the nearest shopping mall in the area. Raffle slips were attached to each questionnaire and collected separately to ensure anonymity. Again, this was done in an attempt to increase the number of responses to the questionnaire. The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire independently without any input from other parties. The questionnaires were submitted with the tutorial. Any questions for clarification were asked to be directed to the researcher or the supervisor of the study in the event that the researcher was not available. Telephone numbers and email addresses were provided for this purpose.

The qualitative interviews as mentioned earlier were based on a semi-structured basis, where the researcher explored issues as they arose. The qualitative interviews were conducted on a sample of black African participants that had been identified as eligible for postgraduate study in psychology based on their marks obtained in the third year Psychology courses (an average mark of 65% or greater for third-year psychology courses). The marks and students lists were perused by the supervisor of the study and only the relevant information was provided to the researcher in the study, thereby ensuring confidentiality.

The students that were deemed eligible for the study were contacted telephonically to set up an interview. The aim of the research was briefly explained and an incentive provided to increase the responses. On the day of the interview each student was given more information about the research and given the opportunity to ask questions if necessary,

they were also asked to sign an Informed Consent form and informed that their participation was voluntary. The researcher also ensured their confidentiality as well as reassuring the participants that their responses would not impact on their application for post graduate studies in Psychology or any study related matters within the School of Psychology. Each interview lasted between 35 to 50 minutes.

Statistical Analysis

The data gathered through the cross sectional questionnaire was captured and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Individual items on the questionnaire were grouped into scales based on the themes which they aimed to address. The reliability of these scales was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha. Descriptive statistics were done on the calculated scales to explore the existence of possible relationships. T- tests were used to explore significance. With some scales, correlations were done. These will be described in more detail when addressing the results.

Qualitative Analysis

The main research question concerned was to ascertain what barriers exist among black African students that prevent the uptake of post graduate Psychology courses. The data gathered through the semi-structured interviews were transcribed and then a thematic analysis done to draw out themes in this regard. The content of the transcribed interviews was largely about the experience of the study of Psychology at an undergraduate level; difficulties encountered at an undergraduate level; the benefits of the study of undergraduate psychology; the participants financial status and its impact of future studies; perceptions of Psychology both by the participant and their family and their personal barriers or choices regarding post graduate Psychology.

The main steps involved in this analysis included:

1. the selection of broad categories from the research material.
2. the identification of themes and sub-themes
3. the exploration of these themes to assess what evidence might contribute toward their existence or occurrence.

Research Process

During the research process, there were a few obstacles or which the study had to be adapted. These obstacles mainly included the lack of response from research participants. The proposed email diaries received no response and were therefore terminated after three attempts at trying to initiate these emails. This created a problem for the study in that excluded the opportunity to follow the research participants in their decision making process and be aware of extraneous variables that impacted on this process.

Another obstacle which resulted in the implementation of the incentive for data collection was the initial lack of interest by research participants when contacted for the semi-structured interviews. Even with the incentive, the researcher was still only able to conduct five interviews out of a possible twenty five students identified for the study. The participants identified for the study were the top black African students in the third year class. The data collection was conducted toward the end of the year when students were concluding exams. All interview appointments were set up for after the exam period or at the convenience of the participant. The researcher attempted to contact students telephonically and in many cases was unsuccessful. The students identified for the study were students who achieved well and were academically focused, many of these students would have been studying for exams at this time and may not have been answering telephone calls. Alternatively the students may have already begun to engage in a 'holiday mood' and not be interested in engaging with anything academic. The results gained from the respondents of these interviews may be different from those who did not respond. Those who did not respond would have already concluded their decision making process and may have decided against Psychology as an option. Their decided lack of interest in Psychology may have resulted in poor response.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical codes of conduct outline four basic principles involved in ethical practice. The first principle is autonomy which includes respect for the persons involved this would include confidentiality and informed consent. The second principle is non-maleficence which includes acknowledging the needs of the participants first and to avoid

dual roles. The third principle is beneficence which includes the competence of the study and its benefit. The fourth principle is that of justice or fairness which includes the transparency in reporting and honesty in answering all questions or concerns posed (Canadian code of ethics, 2000).

Autonomy

In both the qualitative and quantitative aspects participants were provided with an informed consent form (Appendix A and C) which assured them of confidentiality if they agreed to participate. The participants were also informed that their participation would not bear any positive or negative consequences. The intention was to ensure that all participants did not feel coerced to participate in the study. These efforts were made in order to respect the autonomy of all the participants.

Non-maleficence

The quantitative questionnaire was distributed through a tutorial and participants were asked to complete them at their own convenience. The qualitative interviews were arranged such that the participants were met when it was convenient for them. Provision was made at the beginning of the interview for clarification of any questions and to ensure that the participants were comfortable being participants in the study. In the case of the email diaries, there was no response from the students, after three attempts to contact students via email, the email diaries were abandoned. In adopting this approach, it was hoped that the researched was acting in a non-malevolent manner.

Beneficence

The study acknowledges many injustices that resulted from the oppressive education system that was present during the apartheid era. In acknowledgment of this oppression and in recognition of the restructuring process that is ongoing at higher education institutions, the study was conducted. It was chosen and conducted for its potential benefit in increasing the number of black African students at post graduate level in the School of Psychology. This increase at post graduate level could potentially increase the

number of registered Psychologists and increase service delivery particularly in the African-Indigenous languages.

Justice

The participants involved in the study were informed that the results would be used by the School of Psychology to design an intervention to increase the retention of black African students at post graduate level. The information regarding the study and the intended use of the data was also outlined in the informed consent (see Appendix A and C). The information was provided in a written format so that it was clear and transparent. In addition, contact details for the co-ordinator of the study were provided to address and further queries.

By complying with these four principles outlined for ethical conduct, the study aimed to achieve its results in a non-malevolent manner, ethical manner.

RESULTS

The results begin with the presentation of the demographics from the study sample followed by a description of the research process, thereafter descriptive statistics from the quantitative survey administered to the Psychology 301 class. Then the presentation of data from the qualitative interviews conducted.

Sample Demographics

In the cross sectional questionnaire, which identified all psychology students registered for a third-year module in psychology (specifically Psychology 301, a compulsory research methods and statistics course) as eligible for inclusion in the research, of the 165 students enrolled in the 301 psychology class, there were 128 respondents. The age range of the 128 respondents was between 19 and 41 years. Of the students that responded, 87 were female, 37 were male and 4 did not complete the gender question. In terms of race, of the 128 respondents, 61 were black African, 38 were White, 18 were Indian, 6 were coloured, 2 identified themselves as other and 3 did not complete the race question. All the students who participated in the cross sectional questionnaire identified Psychology as one of their majors.

Table 4.1 Age range of research participants in the cross sectional questionnaire

		Number of Respondents	Percent
Age	19 – 22	105	82
	23 – 26	12	9.5
	27 – 30	2	1.6
	31 – 33	0	0
	34 – 36	1	0.8
	37 – 40	0	0
	41 – 43	1	0.8
	Total	122	95.3
Missing values		6	4.7
Total		128	100.0

Table 4.2 Demographics of research participants in cross sectional questionnaire

		Female	Male	Total
Race	Black African	39	22	61
	White	29	9	38
	Coloured	4	2	6
	Indian	15	3	18
	Other	0	1	2
	Missing Values			4
Total		87	37	128
Percentage		68.0	28.9	

In terms of finances, of the 128 participants for the study, 10 were receiving bursaries or scholarships from various organisations, 22 were receiving university financial aid, 14 were using a bank student loan, 3 received a loan from family or a friend, 70 were being funded by family which was not a loan, 2 students listed other forms of finance but did not provide details, 1 student was receiving a combination of both a scholarship and family funding and 1 student was receiving a bank loan and other forms of finance. 4 students did not provide details of financial information.

The finances among the different racial groups were divided as follows: in the black African group, 21 participants were receiving financing from university financial aid, 8 were receiving a bursary or scholarship, 4 were using a bank student loan and 2 were funded by other mean. In the black African race group, none of the participants were funded by a family member. The remainder of participants in this group did not complete the details regarding how their studies were being financed. Amongst the white participants, 10 were using a bank student loan, 2 were receiving a bursary or scholarship and 1 was funded by a family member. None of the white participants were receiving university financial aid. Among the coloured participants, none completed the section detailing the nature of the financing of their studies. Among the Indian participants, 1 participant indicated that they were receiving university financial aid and 1 indicated that they were funded by a family member. The remainder of the participants did not complete the details of how their studies were being financed. The data is tabulated below.

Table 4.3 Financial descriptors of participants in cross sectional questionnaire

		Race				
		Black African	White	Coloured	Indian	Other
Financing studies	Bursary or scholarship	8	2	0	0	0
	University financial aid	21	0	0	1	0
	Bank student loan	4	10	0	0	0
	Funded by family (not a loan)	0	1	0	1	1
	Other	2	0	0	0	0

The study sample identified 12 language groups. These language groups included Afrikaans, Chinese, English, German, IsiZulu, Norwegian, Sesotho, Shona, Siswati, Tsonga, Tswana and Xhosa. However due to the difficulty in classifying these for statistical analysis, these language groups were collapsed into 2 scales that are English/Afrikaans/European and African-Indigenous.

Selecting a category for between-groups comparisons

Since the aim of the study is to identify barriers to the retention of black African students in post graduate psychology, the group of most interest are those black African students who were previously disadvantaged. During preliminary data analysis it was noted that 61 participants classified themselves as black African, but only 57 reported speaking an African-Indigenous language as a first language. These four black African students who classified themselves as black African but list their first language as English are likely to be different in important ways from black African participants who speak an indigenous African other tongue, such as nationality (they are possibly non-African foreigners), educational background, group identification and so on.

Additionally, the postgraduate enrolment of Indian students (who comprise 26% of the UKZN student body) has not been noted as problematic by the UKZN School of Psychology. It therefore does not make sense to classify Indian students as 'black' for the purposes of this analysis, although this would be the case for many affirmative action or equity programs in South Africa.

For these reasons, language was collapsed into two categories (African-Indigenous speakers and English/Afrikaans speakers) and used as a proxy for race in this analysis. As discussed above, this procedure provided a reasonable way to: a) exclude non-African black students; b) include white and Indian students in a meaningful category. Since race and language (when collapsed to binary categories) correlate almost perfectly ($r = .917$), this coding decision does not have a large effect on the results.

Table 4.4 Table of race and language categorisation

	White/Indian/Coloured/Other	Black African
English/Afrikaans speakers	61	4
African-Indigenous language	0	57

Using language as a proxy for race has advantages in that students are identified according to a classification that they have chosen but also has disadvantages in that students who may consider themselves as previously disadvantaged such as some black African, Indian and Coloured students are being excluded from consideration.

Table 4.5 Language distribution of participants in the cross sectional questionnaire

<i>Groups</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
English/Afrikaans speakers	65	50.8
African-Indigenous speakers	57	44.5
Other	3	2.3
Total	125	97.7
Missing response	3	2.3
Total	128	100.0

Quantitative Data Analysis Procedure

Before the analysis of the quantitative data could be done, the data was captured in a computer program called the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This computer programme enables quick, efficient, accurate and cost effective data analysis of information.

In order to analyse the data obtained from the questionnaires, the items were grouped into scales based on the themes which they addressed. In order to address whether the items grouped together into a scale where measuring the same construct, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated. Cronbach's Alpha is a measure of internal consistency or a coefficient of reliability. The guideline for Cronbach's Alpha is that usually a value of 0.70 or more would be considered to represent adequate reliability (Bland and Altman, 1997). Because this study is an exploratory study, Cronbach's Alpha was used as a guideline and values between 0.60 and 0.70 were considered acceptable, particularly for short scales. Where necessary items were reverse coded before statistical analysis. The following scales were identified.

1. Scale one considered the perceived status and reward of Psychology as a profession. For the 5 items grouped into this scale, Cronbach's Alpha measured 0.699. The items included were :
 - a. If I become a Psychologist my parents will be proud
 - b. If I become a Psychologist I will be respected by my community
 - c. If I become a Psychologist I will earn a good salary.
 - d. If I become a Psychologist I will enjoy high job satisfaction
 - e. I want to become a Psychologist.
2. Scale two considered the perceived support received by friends and family if the participant pursued Psychology as a career. Cronbach's Alpha on this scale measured 0.743. This scale included 4 items namely:
 - a. My parents support my career plans
 - b. My friends support my career plans
 - c. My family will support me if I want to study further
 - d. My friends will support me if I want to study further
3. Scale three considered the information and knowledge the participant has with regard to Psychology and post graduate education. Cronbach's Alpha on this scale measured 0.660. This scale included 8 items namely:
 - a. I know what you have to do to become a Psychologist
 - b. I know what an Honours degree is
 - c. I know what a Masters degree is

- d. I know what a PhD is
 - e. I look for information about jobs on the internet
 - f. I look for information about post graduate degrees and courses
 - g. I go to lecturers for help or advice about career planning
 - h. I look for information about courses and jobs in the library
4. Scale four looked at the whether the participant spent time considering future plans. Cronbach's Alpha on this scale measured 0.590. Although these items appear to be measuring future time orientation of the students, there was inconsistency in responses which resulted in a low Cronbach's Alpha. The items in this scale were slightly ambiguous and perhaps not distinct enough. This scale included 3 items namely:
- a. I think about my future
 - b. I talk to my friends about my future
 - c. I talk to parents and family about my future
5. Scale five considered the perceived difficulty to access post graduate psychology courses. Cronbach's Alpha on this scale measured 0.630. This scale included the following items:
- a. It is difficult to get into the Psychology Honours programme
 - b. It is difficult to get into the Psychology Masters programme
 - c. It is not worth applying for Psychology Honours because I won't get in anyway
 - d. I will not cope academically in a post graduate degree
6. Scale six looked at the financial demands experienced by students. Cronbach's Alpha on this scale measured 0.694. This scale included the following items:
- a. I want to start earning a salary as soon as possible
 - b. It is too expensive to continue studying
 - c. I will not apply for a post graduate degree because I will not get funding
 - d. Earning potential (money) is the most important factor in choosing a career
 - e. I will need to provide financially for family members once I graduate
 - f. I worry about how I will fund my studies

g. I worry about my family's financial welfare.

7. Scale seven was a scale that included items that considered the community awareness of Psychology and post graduate education. Cronbach's Alpha on this scale measured 0.796. This scale included the following items:

- a. People close to me know what Psychology is
- b. People in my extended family have a university degree
- c. People in my community have a university degree
- d. People in my family know what an Honours degree is
- e. People in my community know what an Honours degree is

8. Scale eight considered the perceived approachability of the School of Psychology. Cronbach's Alpha on this scale measured 0.713. This scale included the following items:

- a. The School of Psychology is unfriendly
- b. I am scared to approach staff in the School of Psychology for advice

The item "The School of Psychology is a good department compared to others" was removed from this scale as it decreased Cronbach's Alpha indicating that these items were not measuring the same criteria although on face value they appeared to measure the same. This resulted in a 2 item scale.

The following items were considered distinct enough to be treated alone. These items were considered to provide information that is pertinent to the study and yet did not fit in with other items on the questionnaire. These items were

1. The School of Psychology is racist
2. UKZN has a good Psychology programme
3. The School of Psychology is a good department compared to others

The following items were initially considered as one scale, however when Cronbach's Alpha was computed for this scale it was very low. These items appeared to measure the value of post graduate education in Psychology. These items were considered important

information and therefore were considered distinct enough to be treated as individual items.

4. Psychology Honours is for people who want to become Psychologists
5. An Honours degree in Psychology will help me to succeed in the job market
6. If I get an Honours degree in Psychology but not a Masters degree then I have wasted my time.
7. University degrees do not prepare you for the real world

The following items were initially included in the study and grouped together as one scale. They initially appeared to measure decisiveness about careers. However when Cronbach's Alpha was computed for this scale, it was very low. These items did not fit into any other scale and were therefore dropped. These items appeared to be ambiguous and were therefore not considered distinct enough to be treated alone. The items that were dropped are:

- a. I am sure about what to do next year
- b. I have several options for things to do next year
- c. I go to student counselling for help or advice about career planning

One item in the questionnaire was dropped due to a grammatical error which was not noticed or corrected before the questionnaire was distributed. The question was ambiguous and therefore not useful to interpret. The item was:

- a. I am that language will be a barrier in Psychology

Procedure for Analysis

First descriptive statistics were done. Once the scales were grouped and internal consistency established, *t*-tests were used to assess between group differences on the relevant scales. *T*-tests distribution enables a comparison between 2 groups thereby implying a difference between the two groups (Haslam and McGarty, 2003). In cases where the assumptions of the *t*-test did not hold, Mann-Whitney tests were used. "The Mann-Whitney is a distribution-free test that is usually used to compare the central tendency of two independent groups. In this regards it is the distribution free analogue of

a between subjects *t*-test” (Haslam & McGarty, 2003, p340). For larger sample sizes, the distribution of *U* approaches the normal curve and *U* is interpreted using the *Z* statistic. *Z* scores of less than 1.96 indicate that the two samples come from the same underlying distribution, at the $p=.05$ significance level. Cohen’s *d* was calculated to establish the effect of the variables on the two language groups. *d* of 0.25 and above are considered as acceptable effect size for the behavioural sciences (Cohen in Valentine and Cooper, 2003).

Results

Before the identified scales were addressed and interpreted, the questions that had been laid out in demographic section were considered for interpretation. All scales and questions that were interpreted were viewed in terms of the two groups of students identified based on the language differences namely English/Afrikaans speakers and African-Indigenous speakers. Where items were scaled differently, values were recoded or reverse coded as applicable.

The first consideration was the amount of money borrowed and the difference in this amount for the 2 groups of students namely English/Afrikaans speakers and African-Indigenous speakers. A *t*-test was done and had to be ignored because the assumption of homogeneity of variance was violated therefore a non-parametric test, namely a Mann-Whitney test, was performed and this approached significance ($z = -1.881$; $p = 0.060$) suggesting that there is systematic differences in the amount of indebtedness between English/Afrikaans speakers and African-Indigenous speaking students. Due to the high zero value, that is a large number of students that did not borrow money, no other statistics will be reported upon. Many students in the English/Afrikaans speaking language group have a nil indebtedness compared to participants in the African-Indigenous speaker’s language group. The table below indicates that respondents within the African-Indigenous speaker’s language group on average owe almost twice as much as students from the English/Afrikaans speaker’s language group.

Table 4.6 Mean amount borrowed within the different groups (in Rands)

<i>Group</i>	<i>Mean</i>
English/Afrikaans speakers	12 800.00
African-Indigenous speakers	25 320.40

The next consideration was the reporting of the highest psychology mark achieved for the year. Once again the *t-test* is not reported because the homogeneity of variance is violated. A Mann-Whitney was performed ($z = -3.241$; $p = 0.001$) which was highly significant and shows a difference in the reporting of marks between the English/Afrikaans speakers and African-Indigenous speakers language groups.

Table 4.7 Table of highest Psychology mark reported

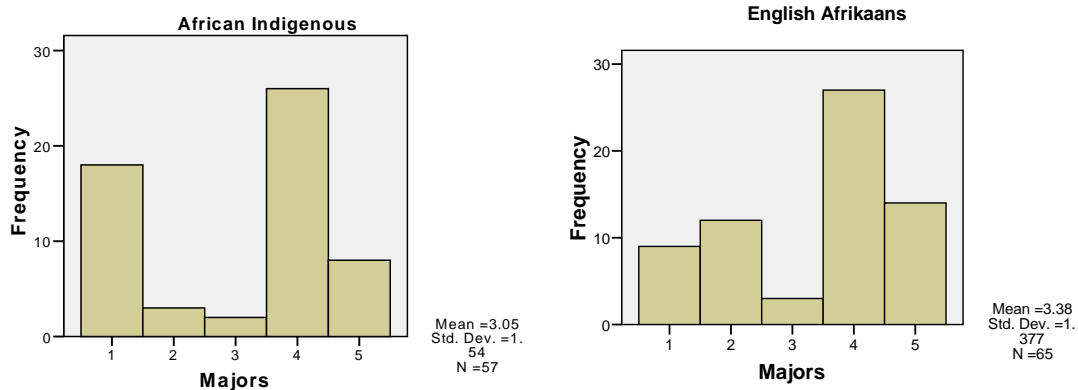
<i>Group</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Std Deviation</i>
English/Afrikaans speakers	75.48	75.00	7.708
African-Indigenous speakers	66.45	68.00	19.026

All students that completed the questionnaire listed Psychology as one of their major subjects, and most students were registered for 2 majors. The dispersion of students and their registered majors is represented in table 4.7. The groupings were broadly categorised rather than by specific subjects.

Table 4.8 Distribution of Majors of the respondent groups

<i>Group</i>	<i>humanities</i>	<i>Arts</i>	<i>Science</i>	<i>Management</i>	<i>Psychology Only</i>
English/Afrikaans speakers	9	12	3	27	14
African-Indigenous speakers	18	3	2	26	8

Chart 4.1 Chart of distribution of majors



Statistical analysis of the scales and independent items follow. For these scales and items, a *t-test* was done but the assumption of homogeneity of variance was violated, a Mann-Whitney was then performed. To establish the relevance of the results, effect size was then calculated. The family wise error rate was then calculated to establish whether these results are acceptable or whether the results could have been wrongly attributed to a given hypothesis. The familywise error rate is the probability of rejecting at least one null hypothesis when it is true in a set of (family) of comparisons. To control for family wise error rate, post hoc corrections such as Bonferroni's correction can be done, these allow for a lower chance of making a type I error. In this study due to the large number of comparisons, the familywise error rate was calculated to be 0.5367. Therefore the chance of a type I error is unacceptably high for the purposes of generalization, and the statistical results should be used for flagging items that were most important for the students in this specific sample. Almost all psychology majors in a single cohort were sampled, meaning

that significant results are still useful for flagging issues that are important to this cohort even though generalisability is impaired.

Table 4.9 Table of scales which yielded significant comparisons between English/Afrikaans speakers and African-Indigenous speakers language groups:

Scale or Item	Z score	Significance (p)	Mean	Effect size (<i>d</i>)
Scale 7 - level of community awareness of Psychology and post graduate education	-4.163	p < 0.001	EA – 2.3469 AI – 3.0289	0.81900
Scale 2 – perceived support received by friends and family if respondent continues with Psychology	-3.112	0.024	EA – 4.4936 AI – 4.0175	0.685484
Scale 1- perceived status and reward of Psychology as a profession	-2.258	0.024	EA – 3.8446 AI – 4.1219	0.45653
Scale 6 - financial difficulties experienced by respondents	-2.559	0.100	EA – 2.9436 AI – 3.2871	0.45411
Scale 8 - approachability of the staff of the School of Psychology	-2.358	0.018	EA – 2.4000 AI – 2.0000	0.418841
Psychology Honours is for people who want to be Psychologists	-1.957	0.050	EA – 3.5100 AI – 3.9500	0.39450
UKZN has a good psychology programme	-1.883	0.060	EA – 4.2300 AI – 3.8800	0.383732

EA – English/Afrikaans speakers; AI – African-Indigenous speakers

The scales mentioned in the table above yielded statistically significant results. However when looking at results statistical significance alone is not sufficient, because it may possibly confound two independent pieces of information that is, the magnitude of the interventions effect and the size of the sample (Valentine and Cooper, 2003). Statistical significance therefore does not provide sufficient information about the practical impact and should not be used as a stand alone measure. To overcome this, it is suggested that standardised effect sizes are used. One such standardized measure is the calculation of Cohen's *d*. This calculation will result in the measure of difference between two group means expressed in terms of their common standard deviation (ibid). A *d* value of 0.25 indicates an acceptable effect in the behavioural sciences (Cohen in Valentine and Cooper, 2003).

These results indicate that the greatest difference between the language groups is the level of community awareness of Psychology and post graduate education. The community of English/Afrikaans speaker's language group is more aware of Psychology and post graduate education than the community of the African-Indigenous speaker's language group. If students within the African-Indigenous speaker's language group feel that their community is not aware of Psychology or the options available within post graduate psychology, then it could possibly help to explain why there is a lack of uptake of post graduate education. The results indicate the students within the English/Afrikaans speakers language group feel there is more awareness and sustainability and therefore a greater enrolment in post graduate education amongst this group.

In keeping with the initial result regarding the lack of community awareness of Psychology, the next result was that of perceived support received by family and friends if the respondent continues with Psychology. This scale revealed that students in the English/Afrikaans speaker's language group would receive greater support than those in the African-Indigenous speaker's language group. For the students in the African-Indigenous speakers there is a lack of community awareness of Psychology as a profession which may possibly result in less support from family and friends. This scale was included under the assumption that support from family and friends is one of the factors in career decision making and perhaps the lack of support from family and friends for students in the African-Indigenous speakers language group acts as a barrier to the uptake of post graduate education. In addition lack of support from family and friends may be a precursor to indicating that there may be a lack of financial support from the greater community thereby making it a profession that may not be financially viable. With the acknowledgment of financial demands that need to be met, this would then become a barrier to the uptake of post graduate education in Psychology.

It is interesting to note that the next difference in the result is that of the perceived status and reward of Psychology as a profession. The respondents in the English/Afrikaans speaker's language group perceive the status and reward of Psychology as being less than the respondents in the African-Indigenous speaker's language group. If there is a lack of

community awareness amongst students in the African-Indigenous speaker's language group, then it is almost expected that these students would consider Psychology as less prestigious. However the study reveals that the converse is true. Perhaps it is the lack of knowledge regarding Psychology and post-graduate education that makes it more elusive and therefore more prestigious. In addition, if for many students in the African-Indigenous speaker's language group due to financial concerns or demands, there is a lack of uptake of post graduate education, there may be a greater understanding and appreciation of the sacrifices that are required for post graduate education and therefore giving it greater status and a perception of greater reward.

The last scale which yielded statistically significant results was scale six which considered the financial difficulties experienced by respondents. This indicated that students in the English/Afrikaans speaker's language experience significantly less financial difficulty than students in the African-Indigenous speaker's language group. One question in the questionnaire was the amount owing by students, it was found that students in the African-Indigenous speaker's language group owe twice as much as students in the English-Afrikaans language group. The students in the African-Indigenous speaker's language group may experience their financial demands as a barrier to the uptake of post graduate education. This result was corroborated in the qualitative interviews.

The next result that showed a difference was that of the approachability of the staff in the School of Psychology. The English/Afrikaans speaker's language group perceives the School of Psychology as more approachable than the students in the African-Indigenous speaker's language group. From the first result it is evident that there is a lack of community awareness of Psychology and post graduate education amongst the African-Indigenous speakers language group, this could be compounded by the perception amongst African-Indigenous speakers language students that staff in the School of Psychology are not approachable. Staff within the School of Psychology may be an easily accessible information source, but if they are not perceived as approachable by students within the African-Indigenous speakers language group, then these students would find

themselves in a disadvantaged position when trying to access information regarding Psychology which would enable them to educate others.

Psychology Honours is for people who want to become Psychologists was the next most significant result and it indicated that students in the African-Indigenous speaker's language group agree more with this statement. This may again go back to the initial result regarding the lack of community awareness of Psychology and post-graduate education. This result may reflect that students in the English/Afrikaans speaker's language group consider post graduate education more beneficial and not only for those who want to become Psychologists. The students in the English/Afrikaans speaker's language group see some benefit to post graduate education and not simply as a step on a path to becoming a Psychologist.

Another scale that was revealed as significant were the responses to the item UKZN has a good Psychology programme. The responses to this item indicated that students within the English/Afrikaans speaker's language group agree significantly more with this statement than students in the African-Indigenous speaker's language group. This reflects that the uptake of post graduate education by students in the African-Indigenous speakers language group may be poor at UKZN, but may be better at other institutions, such as at University of Limpopo Medunsa. A study done regarding enrolment of Psychology students in 2006, showed that University of Limpopo Medunsa had the highest enrolment with UKZN forth on the list (Pillay and Siyothula, 2008).

Table 4.10 Table of scales or items which yielded insignificant results:

Scale or Item	Z score	Significance (p)	Effect size (d)
Scale 3 - information and knowledge the participant has with regard to Psychology and post graduate education	-0.10	0.992	0.043735
University degrees do not prepare you for the real world	0.15	0.876	0.127266
School of Psychology is racist	0.207	0.836	0.019046
Scale 5 - perceived difficulty differences in access to post graduate education	-0.307	0.759	0.024999
School of Psychology is a good department compared to others	-0.449	0.655	0.122457
Honours degree in Psychology will help me to succeed in the job market	0.839	0.655	0.080740
If I get an Honours degree in Psychology but not a Masters degree then I have wasted my time	-0.506	0.613	0.033007
Scale 4 - time considering future plans	0.817	0.414	0.091958

The scales and items listed in the table above yielded insignificant results. It is interesting to note that scale 3 which looked at the information and knowledge that the participant has with regard to Psychology and post graduate education was the least significant. This indicates that whilst students that are already involved in undergraduate Psychology believe that they have a good knowledge and understanding of what Psychology entails. In relation to the significant difference in community awareness of psychology reported above, it is perhaps specifically within the greater community particularly the African-Indigenous speakers communities that there is a lack of awareness and knowledge. This may be important in identifying a primary area of intervention.

Although these results are insignificant, it is their insignificance that substantiates or gives direction and greater meaning to the significant results. The next insignificant result was regarding University degrees, from this result we can see that it is not the lack of appreciation of tertiary education that is a concern. There is a recognition and appreciation of University degrees and their contribution in preparation for the “real world”.

The item the School of Psychology is racist yielded insignificant results but also results which indicate the lowest effect size, this is an important recognition. While students in

the African-Indigenous speaker's language group perceive difficulty in the approachability of the staff of the School of Psychology, they do not attribute this difficulty to an issue of racism. This indicates that there may be another factor that makes African-Indigenous speakers language speakers perceive the staff in the School of Psychology as unapproachable.

The remainder of the items and scales that yielded insignificant differences amongst the respondent groups, indicate that the School of Psychology is considered a good department by most students, that there is no real difference in the perceived access of post graduate education and that there is perceived to be benefit by students to continuing with post graduate education.

To provide a better understanding of the results listed discussed above, included is a list of the respondents that completed the questionnaire the following are the distribution of applications for post graduate education.

Table 4.11 Number of respondents within each language group and the post graduate programme applied for.

<i>Group</i>	<i>Humanities</i>	<i>Arts</i>	<i>Science</i>	<i>Management</i>	<i>Psychology Only</i>	<i>Other or undecided</i>
English/Afrikaans speakers	9.1%	12.1%	4.5%	16.7%	42.2%	15.2%
African Indigenous speakers	5.2%	12.1%	0	24.1%	50%	8.6%

Of the total respondent group 46.8% had applied for Psychology post graduate education only. 11.9% are uncertain or undecided regarding plans for post graduate education and 41.3% have applied other faculties for post graduate education.

The respondent groups indicated the following reasons for not applying to post graduate education in Psychology

Table 4.12 Frequency table of reasons indicated for not applying to Psychology post graduate programmes

<i>Reason</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>
English/Afrikaans speakers	24.6%	0	0	3.3%	3.3%	2.6%	8.2%	8.2%	50.8%
African-Indigenous speakers	9%	1.5%	1.5%	9%	9%	3%	6%	10.4%	50.7%

Key 1 = not interested in taking Psychology further

2 = not aware of Psychology Honours

3 = not interested in post graduate study

4 = too expensive to continue

5 = it will take too much time to

6 = age

7 = can't stay in Pietermaritzburg

8 = Other

9 = applied or considering applying.

This table indicates that within the respondent groups, most students have applied for or are considering applying for Psychology Honours or post graduate programmes. The other reasons presented could support already growing knowledge regarding some of the barriers that exist to post graduate education.

The respondents identified their future plans for the coming year. Below is a table that lists the future plans of the respondents within the two demarcated language groups.

Table 4.13 Table of future plans of the respondent groups

<i>Group</i>	<i>Work</i>	<i>travel</i>	<i>study further</i>	<i>gap year</i>	<i>other</i>
English/Afrikaans speakers	33.3%	14.9%	48.3%	2.3%	1.1%
African-Indigenous speakers	36.1%	3.3%	57.4%	1.6%	1.6%

Note that although these item totals may exceed the number of respondents, this is due to some respondents indicating more than one choice for the coming year. One student noted on the questionnaire that she intended to work part time and study part time. The

omission of a part time study or work option resulted in respondents completing more than one category.

Qualitative Data Analysis Procedure

The interviews from the semi-structured interviews were first transcribed, thereafter a thematic analysis done. The qualitative data was reviewed in a realistic way and were interpreted at face value using a realistic or interpretive framework. Five semi-structured interviews were conducted.

The qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted on the five recruited black African participants. One participant was African American and although interviewed due to the poor response rate, the information obtained was speculative and was therefore not analysed. The participants for the qualitative interviews were chosen from a list of black African students who achieved above 65% for Psychology thereby making them eligible for Honours. All five students were female. Two of these students had finance from family members that were not in the form of a loan. The other three students were receiving scholarships and/or bursaries to study.

Table 4.14 Table of demographics of participants for semi-structured interviews

	Male	Female	Total
Funded by Family	0	2	2
Scholarship or Bursary	0	3	3
Total			5

Analysis and Results of Semi-Structured Interviews

The semi-structured interview broadly looked at a brief personal background, family background and some educational history. The interview then moved onto to discuss the participants experience as an undergraduate psychology student, their perceptions of the School of Psychology and Psychology as a profession. The interview then focused on future plans, career decision making and factors that contributed to career decision

making. The participants were then asked for their personal reasons for not continuing with post graduate education as well as any information they may have on reasons why friends may not be continuing with post graduate education. A series of brief questions were asked to establish rapport with the respondent and encourage conversation. These will not be discussed as their content is not relevant to the study at an interpretive level.

Qualitative Analysis Procedure

With the consent of the participant, the qualitative interviews were recorded. The recording of the interviews made them easily accessible at a later stage and allowed the interviewer to concentrate on the interview process. The interviews conducted were semi-structured and allowed for the interviewer to listen carefully in an interpretive manner attempting to track emergent themes and explore them during the interview process. In doing so the researcher was able to validate the emergent themes with the participant as they emerged. Other themes that were picked up during the transcription stage were not validated with participants as they were not available to be contacted via email and some of them were no longer on the university email system as they had completed their degrees.

The interviews were later transcribed. During this process, the repeated listening to the audio recordings allowed for the familiarisation with the data. The data was read and reread in an inductive manner looking for identifiable themes and patterns that emerged. Illustrative quotes were collected to substantiate and provide examples of the emergent themes. Once themes were identified, the data was reviewed again to ensure that all the themes were included and that all instances of the themes occurrence were recorded. Once saturation of the data was reached, the themes were then combined and catalogued into relevant categories.

The themes that emerged were then catalogued and reviewed. These themes will be reported. The themes presented include the barriers that each respondent identified that prevent the uptake of post graduate education.

Qualitative Data Results

Table 4.15 Table of barriers to post graduate education identified in qualitative semi-structured interviews.

Identified Barrier to Post-Graduate Psychology	Number of participants mentioning theme
Limited or no access to finances	4
Stigma or lack of awareness of Psychology as a profession and what it entails	3
Insufficient information regarding post graduate education requirements	2
Racist attitude or racism	2

Limited or no access to finances

The main theme identified by 4 respondents was that the key barrier to post graduate education was the limited or unavailable finances.

The first respondent felt that her financial concerns were two tiered, on one level her father the financial provider did not see the need for further education or for continuing to provide financially for an extended period of time and on another level this respondents father did not approve of her taking financial aid. The father of this respondent did not believe in taking money that you haven't worked for. She therefore considered options that allowed for her to consider part time employment in order to find additional ways to fund her studies as well as considered options that allowed for part time studying such as enrolment at UNISA. She states *"He will pay for it but he is tired now. He is paying for years now. I have to have these Honours now but I'm thinking UNISA is a good option because the fees are not that high."* She also mentions *"it's not like he doesn't have money but he doesn't understand why he must pay twice (for Honours)."* The latter statement refers to the lack of benefit or recognition by the extended family of post graduate education.

The second respondent also identified the limited finances available to her. She experienced difficulty with her finances in the beginning of the year which significantly impaired her ability to concentrate and perform academically, she therefore feels that this

would be a barrier in considering post graduate studies. In addition her search for scholarships or bursaries has revealed that there are a limited number available to Psychology students and the vast majority available are aimed at the Economics, Commerce or Science faculties. This student faces another obstacle in that their family is classified as middle class and she therefore does not qualify for financial aid, however her family is financially stretched and cannot afford post graduate education. She jokes “*I need my dad to lose his job before I can apply for a bursary (laughs). I applied for a loan.*” She later states that even a loan is of concern as her mother had difficulty paying off a loan and that experience has made her hesitant.

Another respondent felt that her financial demands were greater than she could manage, especially being a single parent and therefore she did not have the luxury to entertain the possibility of post graduate education.

Another respondent felt that her main barrier to post graduate education was accessibility of finances. Her studies were financed by her parents but they could not continue to do so. In attempts to access other financial assistance, she discovered that bursaries available are in a large part for Engineering and other Sciences and states that there is insufficient information regarding financial aid available for Psychology students. Due to the financial reasons identified, her family discouraged her from pursuing post graduate education in Psychology. She felt that if finances were more easily accessible she would pursue post graduate education as she does identify a desire to continue with Psychology.

Stigma or lack of awareness of Psychology as a profession and what it entails

A consideration highlighted by one respondent is the perception of Psychology as a profession in the respondent’s community. There appears to be a perception that Psychology is for the elite and not applicable in rural communities. The applicant noted “*I might be stuck after if I go the Psychology way. They really don’t understand how Psychology is gonna help us.*” In addition the participant stated that she would like to go back to her home town and being a Psychologist would not allow this possibility. She

stated *“I tell everyone that I’m studying Psychology and what what, everyone will start looking at me, it just that we don’t get Psychologists that side.”* She also stated *“I ended up thinking on the economics side ‘cos at least I’ll get work in the bank. You get me? Cos it’s not like I’m gonna stay here the rest of my life. I’m gonna go back. So if I do Honours in Psychology, what am I gonna do?”* This also addresses the perception that there is insufficient need for Psychological services in the rural areas. The perception appears to be that Psychology is a service that can only be afforded financially in the urban area.

Another respondent also highlights the lack of awareness about the nature of Psychology as a profession and what it entails. She states that amongst her peer group people have often reduced the profession to one statement *“how does it make you feel?”* She highlights that this reductionist perspective has created a devaluing of the profession in her community. This respondent notes that the cause of this outlook of Psychology is the lack of information that people have about Psychology.

Another barrier identified by a respondent was the lack of awareness and information about Psychology and what it entails as a profession. She mentions that *“When I said I’m doing psychology they thought I was going to go crazy cos they thought all Psychologists are crazy and can read minds. I think that people back home think when you do Psychology all you can do is read minds or tell what people are thinking. So they don’t fully understand what’s its about..... It is stigmatized. Many people don’t know what it is or what it entails.”* This lack of community awareness and the stigma associated with Psychology appears to be a barrier that the respondent identifies for the black African community.

Insufficient information regarding post graduate education requirements

One respondent noted that there is limited information regarding post graduate education and the possibilities that exist. In addition there is the lack of knowledge about the path that is required to become a Psychologist and the general lack of information regarding post graduate education. She notes *“its only recently that people have realized that black people can have post grads. Even when people are in school and ask you in third year,*

second year, wow you gonna graduate and start earning some money, it's a big deal, there is no 'so did you apply for Honours? I'm gonna apply for masters,' there is none of that. And even amongst friends, they are all planning about working." In addition to this lack of awareness by the respondent, of the respondent's friends few were aware of post graduate education.

Another respondent stated that marks were problematic and that obtaining the marks required to gain entry into the post graduate program are difficult. She states that the poor uptake thus far has been attributed to two causes mainly the presence of a latent racist attitude within the department and therefore the inability of black African students to achieve marks to be considered for Honours in Psychology. She specifically states "*In Psych there is racism. And there is limited places plus racism. I actually don't think they (black students) are getting the 90's that's how I justify it."*

Racist attitude or racism

Two of the respondents made reference to the presence of a racist attitude within the School of Psychology. The one respondent quoted earlier as saying "*In Psych there is racism. And there is limited places plus racism"* and another respondent stated "*that there is a perception amongst some students that some of the lecturers in the School of Psychology are prejudicial toward black students."* These respondents perception of the presence of a racist attitude within the School of Psychology has been a deterrent to continue studying psychology.

Discussion

From the combination of both the quantitative and qualitative results, a more meaningful picture emerges. Both sets of data clearly point to a lack of community awareness of Psychology as a profession and what it entails as well as the presence of stigmatisation of Psychology as a profession. The stigmatisation of and prejudice that exists toward mental health patients has been extensively documented (Sayce in Read and Harre, 2001), social rejection by acquaintances, friends and families is also well documented (Read et al, 2001). Health and mental health professionals were not exempt from this stigmatisation,

surprisingly Physicians were found to be the least likely to support a mental health project in their neighbourhood (Read et al, 2001). Although many people would view the stigmatisation of the mental health profession as something archaic, this study appears to indicate that it is still present in communities today. The extent of stigmatisation and whether or not it is linked to the history of Psychology in the South African and its close ties with the apartheid regime is unclear.

Mental health professionals are caught up in the stigmatisation process and are often associated recipients of stigma (Schulze, 2007). The stigmatisation of both mental health patients and professionals has been closely linked to the poor lack of understanding by community members that arise in the stigmatisation (Schulze, 2007). The information sources including the media and other professionals have not contributed positively to the accumulation of a positive professional image (Schulze, 2007). Students tend to enrol in courses that offer an exciting and substantial learning and growth experience particularly if they can relate this to future development and success (Stephen, 2007). With the lack of information and knowledge in extended rural communities or extended African-Indigenous speaker's communities, there may be little perceived possibility of future development or success in Psychology. The negative perception of the Psychology may be one that acts as a barrier to accessing appropriate information and contributes to its stigmatisation.

The stigmatisation and lack of acceptance of the profession that arises out of improper or inadequate knowledge of the profession, results in poor family support of career. Due to the many obstacles that African-Indigenous speaking students face, in order for them to be successful at a tertiary institution these students require functional support structures (Stephen, 2007). Often these support structures occur in the form of family, friends or the greater community. The lack thereof not only inhibits success but can also be considered by students as a marker of financial viability of the profession. Knowing the disparities that exist in the socio-economic status amongst the different race groups in South Africa, perhaps more emphasis is placed on financial viability of a profession amongst African-

Indigenous speaker's communities rather than in English/Afrikaans speakers communities as opposed to career choice made for reasons of self fulfilment.

In addition to family support, financial viability is an important marker in career decision making. It is clear that the students polled from the African-Indigenous speaker's language group face financial difficulty indicating that they owe twice as much as their fellow students in the English/Afrikaans speaker's language group. The emphasis on education, particularly post graduate education must therefore be a secondary concern. "Basic needs including housing, water, sanitation, security, health care, nutrition and social welfare amongst others" (Johnson, 1995, p132) were not available and in these areas made accessing education a more complex task. Studies that have been done in the United States regarding the decline in student enrolment rates in African American communities due to previous financial disadvantage show a significant decline in numbers at a tertiary levels as an increase in tuition fees is noted (Heller, 1997). This study seems to indicate the situation in South Africa is not different. We may be seeing a picture that indicates that race may be a proxy for income. If students of one race tend to be at one end or the other of the national income distribution as a group, they would have higher education demand curves that are similar to those of a given income group as a whole (Heller, 1997) .As the financial demands increase and the cost of tuition rises the fewer students chose to enrol in post graduate education. In the face of the global economic recession at present, this may on its own be a distinct barrier to post graduate education in Psychology. The uncertainty in the current economic climate demands that students make choices that are more focused on financial viability.

One contradiction which arose out of the data was that despite the lack of knowledge that exists in the greater communities of African-Indigenous speakers and the associated stigma of the profession, these students still perceived Psychology to be a profession with good status are reward. The inaccessibility of post graduate education could contribute to the perception of status. This study is in itself proof that post graduate education is possibly unattainable for many students from the African-Indigenous speaker's language group. In addition, historically, many parents of the students from the African-Indigenous

speaker's language group were not provided with the opportunity to attempt post graduate education. The apartheid policies on education made basic education inaccessible for the black African community and tertiary education even more elusive (Johnson, 2005), therefore the consideration of post graduate education would have previously been a rare occurrence. Yet another consideration is that the students that are aware of Psychology are aware of the limited number of seats available for a Masters degree in Psychology and it may well be that this contributes to the increased prestige that the students perceive. The reasoning for this distinction in perceived status is unclear, however one can hypothesize that perhaps English/Afrikaans speaking students have been more exposed to post graduate education and therefore do not consider post graduate education as prestigious.

CONCLUSION

Remnants of Oppression

The apartheid era left behind a legacy of oppression and inequality that we, as a nation, have only been able to marginally overcome in the past 15 years. The legacy of apartheid includes the alienation that it created amongst the different race groups. This is evident in many sectors of our society, one of them being the education sector. The demolishing of many obstructions to previously inaccessible education has resulted in significant numbers of black African students, many from lower class, third world environments enrolling in previously white institutions. This process was previously alien to both parties. The process of integration resulted in a number of stresses which were exacerbated by the lower the socio-economic status of the student. (McEwn, Roper, Bryant and Langa, 1990 in Stephen, 2007).

A recent study indicated that as many as 56.9% of the black African population is unemployed (Stats SA, 2008). The number of these rural families that live below the financial breadline is overwhelming. When faced with concern over daily survival or focusing on possible long term gain around which there is great uncertainty of success, many of these parents for reasons of survival are more supportive of a concrete, tangible option. In addition an awareness of the fact that the unemployment rate for people with tertiary qualifications is 4.7% (Stats SA, 2008), the risk of financial stress and no reward may not be worth it for many families. The financial strain placed on many Black African families implies that finances ultimately dictate their everyday and long term decision making. A justification for these families may well be that only 23.3% of people who are formally employed have attained a tertiary qualification (Stats SA, 2008). The importance of education is then called into question – particularly for professions such as psychology that offer lower future rewards per year of study compared to other career avenues such as commerce or medicine.

Inadequate Facilities

The inadequacies created by the apartheid government means that today we are still faced with massive differences in the type of facilities and the way they are resourced in rural

and urban areas, as well as in previous black and white areas (Stephen, 2007). Poorly resourced schools do not help the perception of education as necessary or beneficial and if this is overcome then these facilities do not help to prepare students for the environment or expectations within the tertiary education arena. This deficiency only results in ill-prepared students that underperformed. The lack of support and assistance meant that the transition to this new environment was overwhelming for many students and resulted in a large rate of non-completion of degrees. It is because of such factors that we now see an inequity in the number of professionals qualifying be it in Psychology or other fields of study (Pillay and Siyothula, 2008). Many parents of students from rural areas appear to reject the need for further education and some have even expressed that high school may be a waste of time (Stephen, 2007). It may be that to these parents due to financial constraints paid employment is a more viable option.

Culture Clash

The environmental strains were encountered by both students and staff alike especially when black African students felt that they were being forced to comply with a culture that was completely alien to them (Nettes et al, 1986 in Stephen, 2007). Whilst the university culture may have meant that other students resolved this difficulty in integration by going for counselling, the idea of counselling for many black African students was a foreign concept and the services were rarely made use of. White counsellors were often not trusted and there is a widely held perception anyone that goes for counselling is “crazy” (Stephen, 2007). The stigmatisation of the counselling process is evident at the student level as well as the larger society as a whole. The stigmatisation is not limited to those who attend the counselling process but often also extends to the professionals working within this context (Schulze, 2007). How much this stigmatisation specifically in South Africa is linked to the contamination of the profession by the previous apartheid is unclear.

Limitations of the Study

The results gained from this study are valid for the time in which they were collected, however with the qualitative data the results are not generalisable to the entire population

of students as the students interviewed were all female. This implies that a valuable source of information that could be gained from black African male students was not accessible. In future studies this could be corrected by contacting male students and enrolling for the study. Similarly in the quantitative data there was a high familywise error value implying that the results may not be generalisable either. These results would need to be replicated before being considered generalisable.

One of the aims of the study was to conduct email diaries over a period of time to track the decision making process of black African students. Although this was attempted, this method was unsuccessful. The timing of the attempts was the middle of the second semester which was perhaps poor timing for the target group who may have felt that their time would have been better focused on more academic tasks. For future studies, perhaps this method could still yield valuable data but could be better timed in order to obtain data.

There was a poor response to the semi-structured interviews that were conducted. Once again this could have been as a result of the timing of the study. While it would be beneficial to conduct the study in the second semester while students are considering applying for post graduate course, it would perhaps be better to attract students to the study well before the exam period so that the interviews are not viewed as a distraction from studying.

Also the sample for the one on one interviews consisted of students that had already achieved the results necessary to make them eligible for the post graduate courses available. This failed to take into account the students whose results were poorer as a result of already being confronted with barriers that exist, for example consider the language barrier as an obstacle in achieving the required results or the difficult transition from secondary school to university (Stephen, 2007).

While language is an easily identifiable obstacle, it is also possible that the differences noted in the analysis are related to previous disadvantages than to language *per se*. Many

students that arrive at University from the rural areas are the first to do so in their community and carry with them a great expectation to succeed. These students are faced with an entirely different and foreign environment that functions from a euro-centric perspective. These students are expected to achieve well and function in at an optimal level in this foreign environment. This is often an enormous task for these students who have to overcome many obstacles of which language is one. Many other barriers may exist that these students themselves are not able to address or are not able to freely discuss in the manner in which this study attempted to do so. It is possible that establishing a longer standing and more supportive relationship for these students may yield more data that identifies barriers in a more approachable forum.

These limitations need to be kept in mind when considering the future research studies in this area. More appropriate timing of future studies could yield more in depth and meaningful results. In addition further studies could aim at a broader student base in order to attract more students and yield more results at a greater level.

Recommendations

For the School of Psychology

It is clear from the study that there is a lack of information regarding Psychology as a profession in the extended communities. How much the School of Psychology can contribute toward changing this in the greater communities is uncertain. Amongst the students enrolled in Psychology courses, the School of Psychology is renowned for its 'open door' policy which involves the lectures being available for student queries in an approachable and friendly manner. One step could be to continue with the 'open door' policy that the School of Psychology at the University of KwaZulu Natal Pietermaritzburg Campus is reputed for. In addition the lecturers who are involved in community work can be a source of information and their continued work could prove beneficial in providing information that can be used positively.

The lack of awareness amongst students regarding financial aid available for post graduate students can be addressed by providing this information to students. Additional bursaries and scholarships available or electronic links to these resources can be posted on the School of Psychology website for students to peruse if interested.

For Psychologists and the profession of Psychology

Stigmatisation associated with the profession can be addressed in a similar fashion. While campaigns to address this may show varying degrees of success another possible successful intervention could be that successful change in this regard will come from interactions with people in the profession. It is very important for people to adopt a professional manner in dealing with the general public to change or at the very least challenge the perception and stigmatisation associated with Psychology particularly in inter racial interactions.

The use of psychological tests still needs to be strictly managed and monitored so that the misuse evident in the apartheid era is not repeated. These repeated efforts and care with the tests may help to heal some of the previous damage that was inflicted. Where possible, Psychology should be a part of the restructuring process of our society to help the emergence of a population that has been healed rather than depleted by the previous atrocities.

For those students that overcome or are not overwhelmed by the stigmatisation and are aware of the profession may face financial woes that cause them to look for other alternatives that are easily financeable. The financial viability of the profession of Psychology could also be advertised in order to attract the attention of students whose primary goal is financial gain. This advertising could potentially also gain the interest and support of parents whose primary concern is the financial stability and viability of a career. While Psychology may not be a career that attracts large financial gain, it is still a profession that can provide a reliable source of income if managed properly.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A

Informed Consent Form (cross-sectional survey)

Research Project: How do students choose what to apply for after their undergrad degree?

Dear Student

This study is being run by the UKZN School of Psychology (PMB) to investigate how and why students make the decision to apply for post-graduate degrees in Psychology and to explore barriers that prevent students from applying to post-graduate studies. The information gained will be valuable to make necessary changes to make these post-graduate psychology programmes more accessible.

Please sign below if you:

- Are willing to participate in this study by answering this questionnaire.

Please be aware that:

- Your participation is completely voluntary.
- You have the right to withdraw at any time without any adverse consequences.
- All information will be confidential and your identity will not be recorded on any raw data.

The benefits of this research include:

- Contributing to the School of Psychology's understanding of Psychology students.
- Possible making post-graduate Psychology courses more accessible in the long term.

Please feel free to ask the researcher questions if anything is unclear.

Please note that this study has been ethically approved by the UKZN Research Office.

If you have any queries or complaints after you have completed your questionnaire, please feel free to contact Mike Quayle (quaylem@ukzn.ac.za; 033 260 5016) who is coordinating the study.

If you agree to participate in this study, understand the terms and have had the opportunity to ask questions, please sign below*.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

*(Please note that, although you sign your name on this form, it will be stored separately from your questionnaire so that your answers will be anonymous. We will not know who answered any individual questionnaire.)

Appendix B

Sample questions for Cross-Sectional Questionnaire

1. Please fill in the following demographic information:

Age: _____

Race:

Black African _____
White _____
Coloured _____
Indian _____
Other (please specify) _____

Sex:

Female: _____
Male: _____

Home Language: _____

2. What is your year of Study e.g. Third year

3. What are your majors?

4. When do you expect to graduate?

5. How are you financing your studies? (Tick all that Apply)

Bursary or Scholarship _____
University Financial Aid _____
Bank Student Loan _____
Loan from family or friend _____
Funded by family (not a loan) _____
Part-time job _____
Other (please specify) _____

6. How much borrowed money will you have to pay back once you have finished your degree? _____

7. Who will you have to pay it back to (e.g. Bank, UKZN, family etc. – please list all that apply): _____

8. What is the highest mark you have achieved for a module in psychology?

For the following questions, please decide HOW MUCH YOU AGREE:

	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neutral	4 agree	5 strongly agree
If I become a psychologist my parents will be proud of me					
If I become a psychologist I will be respected by my community					
If I become a psychologist I will earn a good salary					
If I become a psychologist I will enjoy high job satisfaction					
I want to become a psychologist					
I know what you have to do to become a psychologist					
My parents support my career plans					
My friends support my career plans					
Psychology honours is for people who want to become psychologists					
An honours degree in Psychology will help me to succeed in the job market					
If I get an honours degree in psychology but not a masters degree then I have wasted my time					
It is difficult to get into the psychology honours programme					
It is difficult to get into the psychology masters programme					
It is not worth applying for psychology honours because I won't get in anyway					
I want to start earning a salary as soon as possible					
It is too expensive to continue studying					
There is no point in getting a post-graduate degree					
I will not apply for a post-graduate degree because I will not get funding					
I am tired of studying					
The School of Psychology Pietermaritzburg is unfriendly					
The School of Psychology Pietermaritzburg is racist					
The School of Psychology Pietermaritzburg is a good department compared to other subjects					
Psychology is too European					
I am scared to approach staff in the School of Psychology Pietermaritzburg for advice					
I am sure about what I want to do next year					
I have several options for things to do next year					
UKZN has a good Psychology programme					
I am that language will be a barrier in Psychology					
Earning potential (money) is the most important factor in choosing a career					

I will need to provide financially for family members once I graduate					
I will not cope academically in a post-graduate degree					
I know what an honours degree is					
I know what a masters degree is					
I know what a PhD is					
University degrees do not prepare you for the real world					

For the following questions, please decide HOW OFTEN:

	1 Very Often	2 Sometimes	3 Seldom	4 Never or almost never
I think about my future				
I talk to friends about my future				
I talk to parents and family about my future				
I look for information about jobs on the internet				
I look for information about post-graduate degrees and courses				
I go to lecturers for help or advice about career planning				
I go to student counselling for help or advice about career planning				
I look for information about courses and jobs in the library				
I worry about how I will fund my studies				
I worry about my family's financial welfare				

For the following questions, please decide HOW MANY:

	1 Almost All	2 Many	3 Some	4 A few	5 Almost None
My friends want to study further in Psychology					
People close to me know what psychology is					
My friends will support me if I want to study further					
My family will support me if I want to study further					
People in my extended family have a university degree					
People in my community have a university degree					
People in my family know what an honours degree is					
People in my community know what an honours degree is					

9. What post-graduate courses diplomas or degrees do you plan to apply for?

10. If you are not planning to apply for Psychology honours, can you give a reason?

- Not interested in taking psychology further ____
- Not aware of psychology honours ____
- Not interested in post-graduate studying ____
- Too expensive ____
- It will take too much time ____

Age _____
Can't stay in Pietermaritzburg _____
Other (please specify) _____

11. What are your plans for the coming year after graduation?

Work _____
Travel _____
Study further _____
Gap year/holiday _____
Other (please specify) _____

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form (longitudinal sample)

Research Project: How do students choose what to apply for after their undergrad degree?

Dear Student,

This study is being run by the UKZN School of Psychology (PMB) to investigate how and why students make the decision to apply for post-graduate degrees in Psychology and to explore barriers that prevent students from applying to post-graduate studies. We are concerned that very few black African students choose to do post-graduate degrees in Psychology and we want to understand the reasons in more detail so that we can make our post-graduate programmes more accessible. Your participation may therefore help future black African students to take their Psychology studies further.

We want to understand the process of deciding what to do after undergraduate studies in great detail, so participating in the study will involve a couple of brief individual interviews with a researcher, responding to regular emails during the semester (but the replies can be very short if you wish), keeping a regular diary of your decision-making process and possibly participating in a group interview if you are willing. The research will be undertaken by post-graduate students supervised by the staff of the School of Psychology Pietermaritzburg and your responses will be made anonymous before anyone other than the researcher and her supervisor has access to them.

Please be aware that:

- Your participation is completely voluntary.
- You have the right to withdraw at any time without any adverse consequences.
- All information will be confidential and your identity will not be recorded on any raw data.
- Nothing you say in this study will impact on your relationship with the School of Psychology Pietermaritzburg and nor will it affect your chances of being accepted for post-graduate studies

The benefits of this research include:

- Contributing to the School of Psychology's understanding of Psychology students.
- Possibly making post-graduate Psychology courses more accessible in the long term.

Please tick the boxes that you agree with:

Remember that even if you tick these boxes you can change your mind at any time during the study.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I am willing to participate in individual interviews with a researcher. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I am willing to receive and reply to emails from a researcher during the course of the semester. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | I am willing to participate in a focus-group interview and am willing for other participants to know who I am. |

Please feel free to ask the researcher questions if anything is unclear.

If you have any queries or complaints you can contact the Researcher or please feel free to contact Mike Quayle, the coordinator of the study, at quaylem@ukzn.ac.za or 033 260 5016.

Please note that this study has been ethically approved by the UKZN Research Office.

If you agree to participate in this study, understand the procedure, and have had the opportunity to ask questions, please sign below*.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

*(Please remember that, although you sign your name on this form, it will be stored separately from your questionnaire so that your responses will be anonymous.)

Appendix D

Sample topics to be considered in emails

The following questions have been developed as a starting point. More questions will be generated in response to the findings of the quantitative survey and in response to participants' comments as our understanding of participants' views evolves.

Subject: Quick question

Hi Guys

The question for today is:

What is the value of psychology honours?

Any response will be appreciated!

Thanks!

PS: If you want only the researcher to see your reply click "reply to sender" but if you want your reply to be seen by other participants in the study select "Reply to all".

Subject: Quick question

Hi Guys

The question for today is:

What do your family and friends back home know about honours degrees? What would they think if you decided to do an honours degree?

Any response will be appreciated!

Thanks!

PS: If you want only the researcher to see your reply click "reply to sender" but if you want your reply to be seen by other participants in the study select "Reply to all".

Subject: Quick question

Hi Guys

The question for today is:

What would stop you from wanting to do post-graduate studies in Psychology?

Any response will be appreciated!

Thanks! PS: If you want only the researcher to see your reply click "reply to sender" but if you want your reply to be seen by other participants in the study select "Reply to all".

Subject: Quick question

Hi Guys

The question for today is:

What are the requirements for getting into Psychology honours?

Any response will be appreciated!

Thanks!

PS: If you want only the researcher to see your reply click "reply to sender" but if you want your reply to be seen by other participants in the study select "Reply to all".

Subject: Quick question

Hi Guys

The question for today is:

What is most important for you when you're looking for a career? (E.g. status & respect, money, job satisfaction etc.)

Any response will be appreciated!

Thanks!

PS: If you want only the researcher to see your reply click "reply to sender" but if you want your reply to be seen by other participants in the study select "Reply to all".

Subject: Quick question

Hi Guys

The question for today is:

Are your friends thinking of doing post-graduate studies? (How many; what are they interested in etc.)

Any response will be appreciated!

Thanks!

PS: If you want only the researcher to see your reply click "reply to sender" but if you want your reply to be seen by other participants in the study select "Reply to all".

Subject: Quick question

Hi Guys

The question for today is:

What careers can you get into with post-graduate degrees in psychology like Psychology honours?

Any response will be appreciated!

Thanks!

PS: If you want only the researcher to see your reply click "reply to sender" but if you want your reply to be seen by other participants in the study select "Reply to all".

Subject: Quick question

Hi Guys

The question for today is:

What do your family and friends back home know about honours degrees?

Any response will be appreciated!

Thanks!

PS: If you want only the researcher to see your reply click "reply to sender" but if you want your reply to be seen by other participants in the study select "Reply to all".

Appendix E

Topics to be addressed in open-ended interviews

The following topics have been developed as a starting point.

Individual Interview

Please tell me about your background. Where are you from, your family and so on.

How did you end up at University?

What are your hopes and plans for the future?

What has University been like for you?

Have there been any major challenges?

What have you got out of studying here for your undergraduate degree? What's really stood out for you?

How have the finances been?

Can you tell me the story of getting the finances together for University?

In your interactions with different departments, which has been the best and worst?

What has made these departments good or bad?

Tell me about your experiences with the School of Psychology.

Without mentioning names, have you had any bad experiences with lecturers in the School of Psychology?

Have you had any good experiences?

Which Psychology module has been your favourite and why?

What do you expect a Psychology Honours degree would be like?

Do you know anyone who has done a post-graduate psychology degree? What is their relationship to you?

What was their experience like?

Is there anything that attracts you to post-graduate studies in the School of Psychology?

Is there anything that puts you off?

What are the biggest barriers against taking your studies further?

Why do you think we have such low numbers of black African students going on to do honours degrees?

What could the School of Psychology Pietermaritzburg do to make their post-graduate degrees more attractive to black African students?

Appendix F

Instructions for Decision-Making Diaries

As part of the study we are very interested in the process you are going through in order to decide what to do once you finish your undergrad degree. To help us understand, it will be very useful if you can keep a record of what you're thinking about, who you're talking to and where you're going to get this information.

We are giving you a small diary to use to record your thoughts and activities. Please try to write in it every day, even if you only write down "Nothing today".

We suggest that you quickly do it at a regular time each day, such as just before you go to sleep at night.

These are the types of things we want you to write down regarding your decision-making process:

- ☐ Did you feel emotions about the future today? (E.g. worry, excitement, anger etc.)
- ☐ Did you do anything specific to make plans for next year?
- ☐ Did you talk to friends about the future today?
- ☐ Did you search for information today? How – the Internet, the Library, the phone, other people etc.

Please also write down anything else that you think would help us to understand your decision-making process.

Thanks for your time and commitment!