Investigating barriers to participation in adult learning among adult learners at a University in Southern Africa

A Chain-of-Response Model

Agnes Fiina Felix

Student number: 3481304

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Supervisor: Prof Zelda Groener

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Participation

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Abstract

This study was prompted by the increase in the numbers of adult learners who registered for a Diploma in Secondary Education offered by a tertiary institution (university). The diploma is a one-year programme, offered over two years through distance mode of delivery and concentrates on offering professional educational courses similar to those provided in the Bachelor of Education degree at the university. The aim was to investigate the opportunity to participate in adult learning among adult learners and barriers that affect them at a university in Southern Africa. I chose a qualitative research method and the Chain-of-Response Model (CoR) as the conceptual framework of the study. The CoR Model was a lens through which I analysed adult learners' decision-making processes to participate in adult learning and to find the barriers affecting adult learners from actively participating in adult learning. The model is in the format of the cycle that has factors that influence the decision-making process of an individual. Following the logic of the CoR cycle, adult learners were selected to find out why they had participated in adult leaning and why others did not participate.

The site of this study was the northern campus of a university in Southern Africa. Twenty adult learners were selected through non-probability purposive sampling from the university database. All adult learners participated voluntarily. There were three (3) males and seventeen (17) females in the study; their age range was 20 to 40 years old. Two questions underpinned the study: what opportunities are available for participation in distance education study, and what barriers affect participation in distance education study. The study findings revealed that adult learners do have opportunities to study and their attitudes towards education were positive. The barriers identified by participants were as follows: limited network connectivity, limited supply of electricity, few schools to do teaching practice; lack of teaching experience, limited transportation, limited time to do assignments, few employment opportunities, lack of course information and lack of career guidance for participants.

The study recommends that the university improves among others, the dissemination of information to adult learners and to create teaching practice opportunities in partnerships with various stakeholders to address institutional barriers.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I just want to thank the Almighty God for being with me throughout this study. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to those who have exceptionally supported and encouraged me through my study. A very special thanks to my supervisor, Prof. Zelda Groener, for her perceptive feedback on all my work and her guidance that showed me the positive ways of thinking and overcoming my weaknesses during my study.

I would also like to extend words of appreciation to participants who gave me their time when I interviewed them and provided the data upon which this research paper is based and colleagues at the university for their support and encouragement during my study. Lastly, I would like to thank the university management for making funds available to fund my study as well as granting me study leave to attend to contact sessions and conduct research.

Thank you all for joining me in my education, making it easier for me to study and for being part of this important journey with me.
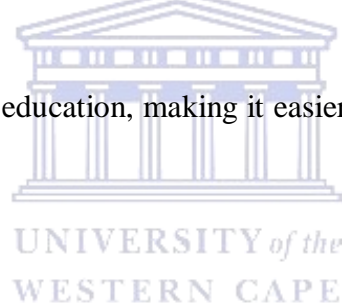
Dedication

I would like to dedicate this piece of writing to my late father, Julius Aron Naanda who wanted to see me complete this study and had been encouraging me to study even to his last days alive. My father passed away on the 14th August 2015 during the time I was busy with my course work. I also dedicate this project to my children (Esther, Agnes, Petrina, and grandson Conscious) for understanding the need to stay away and giving me room to study when I was doing online activities. Special appreciation goes to my husband, Nathanael Felix, who even though he was also studying on a fulltime mode and away from home, was always on my side, encouraging me not to give up on my study during the difficult time when I lost my father. Lastly, I dedicate this piece of writing to my Personal House Assistant, Irja Kristofina Shalongo, who has taken up the responsibility to take care of my children during the time of my study without any complaints. They have all played a pivotal role in my studies. They have been praying for me daily, ensuring that they setup alarms and making phone calls to wake me up to participate in online activities. I feel blessed to have such a wonderful family who care for my well-being and education.
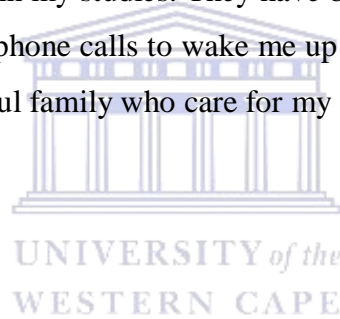
Declaration

I declare that investigating opportunities to participation in adult learning among adult learners at a university in Southern Africa submit in fulfilment of the Master Degree in Adult Learning and Global Change at the University of the Western Cape is a product of my own research and has not been submitted elsewhere for any purpose.

I have acknowledged all references from published and unpublished sources and quote in this research paper.

…………………….

Signature   Date: 22 May 2019

(Agnes Fiina Felix)

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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

In order to contextualize the study, I present the following in this section: background to the study, rationale, research problem, research aims, questions, limitations of the study and the outline of the research paper.

Background of the study

I have been employed for 15 years as an Administrative Coordinator at a university in Southern Africa. My responsibilities include enrolment and selection of adult learners who apply to study distance education programmes, as well as to maintain the university database. The participants in the study are adult learners who obtained their first degrees from other universities and found themselves without employment. Their ages range from 20 to 40 years old. Adult learners expressed that they found themselves being challenged to find employment, due to a competitive job market relative to their field of study. They therefore took up employment as inexperienced school teachers, as the education sector lacks qualified teachers. The university introduced a Diploma in Secondary Education to train and provide adult learners in appropriate school subjects to be professional teachers. The diploma is a one-year programme, offered over two years through distance mode of delivery. The diploma concentrates on offering professional educational courses similar to those provided in the Bachelor of Education degree at the university. The teaching skills the students acquire in this programme, together with the subject knowledge they had acquired in their undergraduate studies, will equip them with sufficient knowledge and skills necessary for becoming competent teachers at secondary school level.

Enrolment in the Diploma in Secondary Education has shown steady growth, increasing from 79 in 2015 to 166 in 2016. The majority of the adult learners enrolled in the programme were between 24 to 31 years old. The literature concerning adult learners is pivotal to studying particpation in respect of adult learners enrolled in the programme. Malhotra, Shapero, Sizoo, and Munro (2007) conclude that needs and expectations motivate adult learners to participate in educational activities. Ginsberg and Wlodkowski (2010) state that adult learners participate in adult learning for both career and job related reasons. These adult learners enrolled in the education programme to acquire

new skills, teaching experience and meet expectations to obtain education qualifications in order to find employment.

Rationale for the study

Likando (2008) investigated the perspectives of adult learners regarding the programmes for adult literacy being offered in the Zambezi Region. However, his study did not investigate the barriers that affect adults' participation in adult learning. In other words, barriers for participation in adult learning and the significance of study programmes in the lives of adult learners were not examined in his study.

Mbukusa (2009) states that "Every distance learning institution extends support to its learners, which comprises of a cluster of facilities and activities that are intended to make the teaching/ learning process easier and more interesting for the learners" (p. 41). Therefore, it is vital for the university to pay attention to programmes offered, as well as to render support services in order to reduce barriers to participation in adult learning. This should assist in attaining the mission and vision of making quality higher education more accessible in the country.
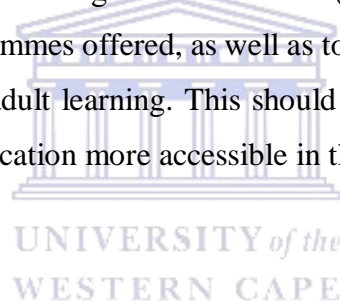
Research aims

(1) To investigate the opportunities to participation in adult learning among adult learners.

(2) To investigate the barriers that affect adult learners.

(3) To generate new theoretical insights that could inform new strategies that can be utilised to increase the participation of adult learners in the distance education programme.

Research questions

Main questions

1. What opportunities are available for participation in distance education programmes?

    What barriers affect participation in distance education programmes?

Sub-question

What support should be provided to make participation possible in distance education programmes?

Outline of research paper

The research paper comprises of the following sections:

Section 1

This section provides a general contextual overview of the research study and covers the background and rationale of the study, as well as its aims, research questions and limitations of the study.

Section 2

In this section, I present a review of the literature and the conceptual framework of the study. The literature that was explored mainly focused on participation in adult learning and barriers to participation among adult learners.

Section 3

This section presents the research design and research approach and sampling strategies (purposeful sampling) which were adopted in the study. In this study, the participants are mature students who are registered at a university for a Distance Education Programme. The data were collected by means of semi-structured face-to-face interviews. In addition, this section also presents issues of data collection and analysis and ethical issues which were considered in the study.

Section 4

Section 4 presents the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered during semi-structured interviews with the participants using an interview guide.

Section 5

Section 5 covers the summary of the findings, theoretical insights, recommendations and conclusion.

SECTION TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

In this section, I review relevant literature which pertains to the participation of adults in relation to adult learning and outline the conceptual framework derived from Cross's (1981) Chain-of-Response Model. However, as this study is limited to a research paper, my focus is on investigating the opportunities and barriers to participation.

Participation in adult learning

Adult learners have a wide variety of reasons for pursuing part-time studies at open and distance learning institutions to complete their courses. Conger (1989) claimed that at the individual level, empowerment has been associated with personal development and further described it as act of strengthening an individual's belief in his or her sense of effectiveness. Therefore, in most cases, the acquisition of new knowledge, self-actualisation and innovative methods is at the heart of their participation in open and distance learning. They participate in various types of educational activities in order to acquire new knowledge and to learn basic skills. In most cases, adult learners need qualifications that are job-relevant and try to meet the employment requirement by acquiring tertiary certificates, diplomas, or degrees. However, adult learners' participation in adult education activities are influenced by societal factors and the changes in demographics. Ginsberg and Wlodkowski (2010) introduced "the concept of barriers originating from an individual's situation in life combining it with institutional practice or personal disposition such as attitudes and self-perceptions that diminish participation in education" (p. 28).

Radovan (2012) stated that, "The reasons for participation are complex and multi-dimensional and often not reducible to a single motivation. Reasons for a greater or lesser willingness of adult participation in education are interpreted in two ways: psychologically and sociologically" (p. 75). Edwards, Sieminski, and Zeldin (1993) chronicle that psychological factors describe a particular aspect of the internal factors of motivation for learning. For example, motives, needs, attitudes, expectations, beliefs and values. Boeren (2009) alludes that "Participation in adult education is the result of a complex decision-making process" (p. 158). The reasons that some adult learners participate in an educational programme differ and usually cannot be explained fully by a single

motive. Thus, Wlodkowski (2008) stressed that "Motivation is not an either-or condition, but when motivation to learn is very low, it can be assumed that potential learning will be diminished" (p. 5). Furthermore, Ginsberg and Wlodkowski (2010) state that "successes and challenges have deepened our interest in a better understanding of access and participation, with an emphasis on the pragmatic" (p. 26).

Therefore, it is necessary for an adequate comprehension of the underlying factors and barriers behind adult learners' participation in adult learning. Radovan (2012) notes that:

> To participate, a person must be in some way motivated to engage in the educational program, there must be an adequate supply of programs, and participation should not be restricted by restraining conditions, that make it more difficult or impossible (p. 92).

Such restraining conditions may be a lack of money or inappropriate time. Furthermore, Radovan (2012) heralded that "It is a generally accepted opinion that participation in adult learning is based more or less on voluntary decisions of individuals, also knowledge about adults' motives and expectations of their course can significantly increase their willingness to participate in adult education" (p. 91). To substantiate the above claim, MacKeracher, Suart, and Potter (2006) opine that adult learners' participation is a matter of choice which fits into an individual's work or other interests and obligations. In the wide-ranging a positive attitude for education, the desire towards self-actuaization, goal attainment and personal satisfaction for a matrix of factors necessary for one to actively participate in adult learning hence a postive chain-of-response which is based on self-evaluation (Radovan, 2012). The above found expression in Athanasou (2005) who also claims that personal achievement is a key benchmark for one's self evaluation.

Cross, as far back as 1981, developed the Chain-of-Response Model to explain participation in adult learning. Through this model adult practitioners will understand better the decision-making process of participation in adult learning. Mbukusa (2009) stipulates that "in a distance education setting, the process of student learning is more complex for several reasons. Distance education serves many students who find themselves out of formal schooling as a result of many problems" (p. 18). In light of the above, challenges in the form of family commitments, job stress and financial

constraints can hamper one's desires in their drive towards learning (Mbukusa, 2009). In respect of the above, adult education does have the potential to reach many adult learners who otherwise would not be able to access courses and programmes due to barriers such as time and location. However, scholars have identified other barriers as well, such as institutional, situational and informational barriers that may be obstacles to an individual wishing to pursue educational opportunities. I believe that such barriers should be considered when looking at adult participation in learning.

Participation models

In this study therefore, I investigate opportunities for adult learners' participation in adult learning at a university in Southern Africa, using the Chain-of-Response (CoR) Model. Numerous theoretical frameworks and barriers were established such as, learning orientation (Houle, 1961); theory of patterned participation (Knox & Videbeck, 1963); the recruitment paradigm, sometimes called the Expectancy Valence Theory (Rubenson, 1977); and the Chain-of-Response Model (CoR) by Cross (1981). In this section, I review the literature that focuses on these models. I chose the CoR Model because it is relevant to investigate opportunities available for adult learners to further their studies through adult learning and barriers that affect their learning.

Learning orientation

Gordon (1993) illustrated that Houle (1961) developed the learning orientation model in which he identified three separate learning types, "goal-oriented, activity-oriented, and learning-oriented" (p. 5). He postulates that the motivation aspects for participation in adult learning can be defined by adult learners' goals, needs and confidence to accomplish learning by means of participation, which may lead to employment opportunities and acquisition of new skills. His first learning type, goal-oriented, highlights that upon enrolment in any programme, adult learners know the problem to solve, have defined their goals to be attained and what motivates them to participate in adult learning. This equates to personal interest to achieve the goals. In terms of the second type, activity-oriented, adult learners who participate in adult learning choose an educational programme related to social status and purpose for their community. The third type of adult learners are learning-oriented learners who have learning beliefs that learning through study in

adult learning will improve their lives. Houle (1961) says, have a continuity, a flow and a spread which establish the basic nature of the participation in continuing or adult education" (p. 7). Cross (1981) concurs with these sentiments and she states that "even Houle's three types of learning were neither proved nor disapproved by other researchers" (p. 96). The model, however, does not address issues related to life transitions addressed by Cross (1981).

Theory of patterned participation
According to Scanlan (1986), "the first major effort to explain the relationship between situational, social, and psychological antecedents of participation in adult education is attributable to Knox and Videbeck (1963)" (p. 3). He further highlighted that "according to their theory of patterned participation, variations in participation could be attributed to the interaction occurring between one's subjective orientation toward participation and the objective organization of one's lifespace" (p. 3). Consequentially, how one interacts with the surrounding environment is a natural reaction to the variations in the environment. In light of the above the patterned theory is suitable to use as a lens to analyse the phenomenon of barriers faced by adult learners as they engage in learning activities to cope with life experiences. Participation opportunities in adult learning for adult learners remain based on their physical resources as Knox and Videbeck (1963) concur that "an individual's participatory opportunities are defined by physical resources available" (p. 106).

Recruitment paradigm, sometimes called the expectancy valence theory
Rubenson's (1977) model (as cited in Scanlan 1986) the recruitment paradigm model originates from the psychological theories of motivation; it is a collective concept of expectancy-valence. This model explains human behaviour in terms of an individual's interaction with his/her environment. An adult learner's participation in adult learning depends on individual consideration of whether it is valuable in relation to adult learners' actual experiences, actual environmental structures and actual individual needs. According to Cross (1981), Rubenson's (1977) model focuses more on internal factors and places less emphasis on external barriers to educational participation. Scanlan (1986) further stated that Rubenson confirmed that "the product of these two "third order" variables ultimately determines the magnitude of the force motivating an individual to participate in recurrent learning efforts, and, by implication, the likelihood of observing such behavior" (p. 6). He explained that the model reveals how people subjectively perceive and interpret their environment for participation which depends on factors such as

readiness, perception and understanding of the environment, and the experience of individual needs.

Conceptual framework of the study: Chain-of–Response (CoR) model

Cross (1981) developed the CoR Model based on the assumption that an adult learner's decision to engage in educational activities is not an isolated act; it is the result of a complex chain-of-responses to an individual's situation in society. Voluntary participation in adult learning activities is based on identified needs to continue learning. Therefore, I assume that in this study an individual is able to control her/his own destiny and participate voluntarily in adult learning. According to Cross (1981), the CoR Model can be used to explain participation in adult learning activities, where adult learners are self-directed. She affirms that adult learners' participation is not a single act but is rather based on the result of a chain-of-responses.

Cooke (1986) defines the CoR Model as a cycle in which factors impact on adult learners' decisions to participate or not to participate in adult learning. She used the CoR Model to explain what makes some adult learners participate in adult learning and others not. Cross stresses that educational practitioners should understand the decision-making process taken by adult learners to enroll in adult learning.
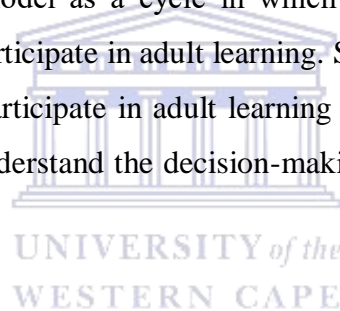
The CoR Model has been used by so many scholars and researchers and for this study the conceptual framework is based on the work of Cross (1981) who elaborated more on the reason that adult learners participate in learning and stresses that it is important for educational practitioners to understand why some adult learners do not participate in educational learning activities. Therefore, for this study, I adopted the CoR Model by Cross (1981) as it is deemed a suitable conceptual framework among other models to find out why some adult learners participate in adult learning while others do not. Cross's (1981) main concept to understand why some adults participate while others do not participate in learning follows several stages with individual self-evaluation and attitude toward education as the first two stages. Self-evaluation sets the stage for participation in adult learning, as adult learners with high self-esteem are more motivated to participate in learning activities than those with low self-esteem. Cross (1981) indicates that "Individuals with high self-esteem 'expect' to be successful" (p. 126) and "if adult educators wish to understand why some adults fail to participate in learning opportunities, they need to begin at

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the beginning of the CoR Model – with an understanding of attitudes toward self and education" (p. 130). An attitude toward education is always determined by an individual adult's prior experience of adult learning and interaction with his/her learning environment. The third stage is influenced by Vroom's Expectancy Theory, which is the importance of goals and the expectations that participation will meet these goals (Suciu, Mortan & Lazăr, 2013). At this stage, if adult learners notice that an important goal can be attained through adult learning, they will be motivated to participate in adult learning. The last stage is life transitions or life circumstances in which certain events in an individual's life might cause motivation to participate in adult learning programmes. This is the point in time at which educational opportunities and barriers to participation are noticeable in adult learners who decide to overcome the barriers and enroll in a programme. A lack of educational information in most cases prevents adult learners accessing courses available in adult learning. Therefore, Cross (1981) emphasises the importance of providing accurate information to adult learners who are willing and motivated to participate in learning activities.
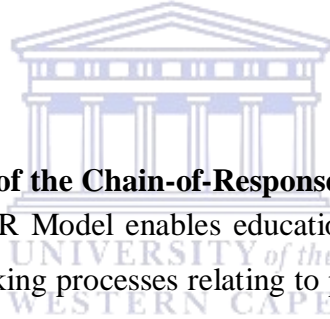
Aims, objectives and the purpose of the Chain-of-Response Model
According to Cross (1981), the CoR Model enables educational practitioners to understand and analyse adult learners' decision-making processes relating to participation in adult learning. Cross (1981) also conceptualised the CoR Model to define barriers related to participation and opportunities for participation in adult learning. Cross's (1981) model is useful mostly to organize and conduct research to investigate opportunities available for participation in adult learning programmes, as well as enabling the identification of variables affecting participation. This model helps to look at psychological variables and the surrounding external social and environmental variables. The model also emphasizes the importance of discovering the actual and perceived factors involved in decision-making regarding participation in adult learning. My study focused on adult learners who participated in an adult learning academic programme. I developed an interview guide with open-ended questions for data collection to investigate the respective opportunities for participation and barriers hindering their participation.

Several researchers (Edwards et al., 1993; Lucal, 2012; Silva, Cahalan, & Lacireno-Paquet 1998; Larson & Milana, 2006; Cervero & Kirkpatrick, 1990) claim that the CoR Model organises the

concept and relationships involved in research with the purpose of identifying what will be explored, examined and described to understand the educational behaviour of humans. Larson and Milana (2006) support the model as they point out that the model is learning–oriented for the indvidual. Using the CoR Model in this study meant that I could focus on the multi-complexity of decisions taken by adult learners who are self-directed and self-evaluated whether or not to participate in adult learning. According to the CoR Model, adults have perceptions that prompt them to either participate or not participate in adult learning. If they participate, they have perceptions that participation in adult learning will transform their lives. If perceptions are not fulfilled as expected, they may stop their participation.

Description of the Chain-of-Response Model

Cross's (1981) model comprises of a cycle consisting of seven stages which all have their own influences on an individual's decision–making process in terms of the decision to participate or not. The stages are as follow:

1. Self-perception/Self-evaluation
2. Attitudes about education
3. Value of goals and the expectation that participation will meet the goals
4. Life transitions
5. Opportunities and barriers
6. Information on education opportunities
7. **The decision to participate**
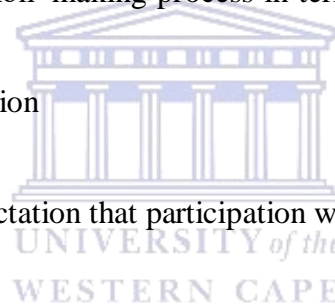
According to Boeren (2009), the CoR Model is one of the best-known models and is the most widely used model in literature. I discuss the stages below:

Self-perception

Cross (1981) developed self-perception as the first stage, in which adult learners evaluate themselves and their enviroment. The outcome of this evaluation will influence whether they move to the next stage. According to Salomnson, Moss and Hill (2006), the self-perception component includes an individual's sense of the characteristics and self–perceived ability to accomplish

objectives and goals in life. They state further that participating in adult learning is a voluntary exercise which has to do with an individual's attitude towards education.

Attitudes about education

Cross (1981) mentions her second stage as being an attitude toward education, namely the attitude an individual has towards education. She claims that an individual's perception can be both a positive and negative attitude towards education. Self-perception and attitude towards education are interrelated; both are influenced by internal factors, such as being comfortable to identify needs to learn, self-esteem and self-confidence toward environmental and global changes. This study showed that adult learners have a postive attitude towards education, as the enrolment increased significantly at the university between 2016 and 2017.

Value of goals and expectations that participation will meet the goals

All these internal factors have an interrelation with the value of goals and expectations that motivate an individual to continue participating in adult learning (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Cross (1981) emphasises that an interest in participating in adult learning activities must come from within an individual before they find a way to remove external factors. An individual is intrinsically motivated to embark on adult learning rather than being forced to do so. Adult learners value their goals and expectations with the perception that participating in adult learning will lead them to meet the goals and expectations. Therefore, Cross (1981) propounded that it is important for educational practitioners to understand that participating in adult learning is an individual's desire to participate to meet her/his goals and expectations.

Life transitions

Cross's (1981) fourth stage of life transitions in her CoR Model is described as a developmental stage of growth and maturity, or a stage of circumstances that adult learners are going through. Adult learners might withdraw from participating in adult education due to certain obstacles such as a lack of finance, family responsibilities or finding themselves in an unexpected situation; these could be other reasons for them changing their mind to eradicate the obstacles. Adult learners' motivations to participate in adult learning are decisions that are affected by life transitions. Edwards et al. (1993) argued life transitions as the influences on adults' decisions to participate

that frequently concide with changes in life circumstances. Life transitions in this study refer to the current situations in which the adult learners found themselves and decided to participate in adult learning as they realised that their first academic qualifications (degrees) failed to take them to their intended life goals or preset life targets. Hence the desire to change or improve on their academic credentials.

Opportunities and barriers

Cross (1981) indicates that adult learners do see opportunities to study through a distance mode of delivery. The CoR Model initiated by Cross (1981) acknowledges self-esteem as a factor that can influence participation in educational opportunities. Ginsberg and Wlodkowski (2010) encourage adults to "learn continuously of their own accord" (p. 29) in today's business world. Therefore, adult learners get an opportunity to further their studies through adult learning without leaving their houses, jobs and their children. The distance-learning programme is specifically for working adult learners, who have barriers in participating in learning. This includes a lack of transport, lack of financial assistance, lack of time, lack of employment opportunity, lack of accessing internet facilities, lack of schools to do their teaching practice, lack of course information and lack of career guidance, lack of network connectivity, lack of electricity, to mention just a few related to the study. Although the distance-learning programme was designed at the university under study, working adult learners still experience barriers to learning. These barriers include finance, distances and lack of time. Adult learners encounter many barriers according to Cross (1981). She puts an emphasis on the importance of educational practitioners knowing and understanding the barriers that confront adult learners. These barriers are classified into three categories: institutional, situational and dispositional barriers. They originate from circumstances in life in which individual adult learners find themselves.

Institutional barriers

Mbukusa (2009) remarks that "institutional barriers are created by an institution's programmes, policies and procedures, include problems with admissions, registration, scheduling of courses, financial aid and support services" (p. 47). For example, the university is very strict with their tuition payment scheduled due dates. Adult learners are expected to pay the tuition fees before their examinations. Adult learners who apply for financial assistance, often find that it has not been

approved before the due date or it is approved after the due date. Therefore, some adult learners fail to write the examination due to their outstanding tuition fees.

MacKeracher et al. (2006) referred to the institutional barriers as being obstacles that prevent an adult from pursuing an educational programme or getting opportunities to access adult learning. Cross (as cited in Malhotra et al., 2007) delves into hindrances and obstacles, such as the practices, modalities, procedural manner, as these are institutional barriers which serve to dissuade adults from participating in adult education.

Situational barriers

Adult learners have many responsibilities such as work commitments and family responsibilities that prevent them from fully participating in adult learning. Malhotra et al. (2007) establishes that "adults with workplace challenges and family pressures experience a very different set of educational conditions than the traditional age students" (p. 81). However, lack of jobs, lack of a decent income, inadequate time and tiring distances also compound the factors hampering adult learners from participation in adult education. According to Malhotra et al. (2007), difficulties experienced by adult learners are called barriers to participation. Cross (as cited in Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2010) opines that situational barriers originate from an individual's situation in life. Adult learners' lives can change unexpectedly.

Furthermore, Ibrahim and Silong (2000) define situational barriers as "being related to one's circumstances in life at a given time" (p. 2). It becomes imperative to note that adult learners who are hamstrung by situational barriers, frequently feel isolated and far removed from their goals and become discouraged in many aspects.

Situational barriers are a great stumbling block denying adult learners of access in adult learning hence giving them the impression that they have failed in their goal accomplishment. Younger men and women tend to be denied access to education on financial grounds while the older learners interpret it as a total failure in life (Radovan, 2012). On the same wave-length, social commitments and familial responsibilities stand in the way of women who want to pursue education as adults. To this end, a number of variables are behind the sad phenomenon of obstructing adult learners

and they affect men and women, the young and the old in varying degrees, They centre on situational, financial, social and personal, in different degrees but the effect is the same, impeding adults from participating in adult learning. In this study, what remains unknown are the actual barriers, among the various factors that have been elaborated on, that inhibit participation of adults in adult learning.

In this respect, MacKeracher et al. (2006) acknowledge a range of barriers to participation in adult learning by drawing on Cross's (1981) classification of factors influencing participation learning activities without situational, institutional, and dispositional factors. Institutional barriers are referred to as structural factors with broad limitations being structural design and administering learning while dispositional barriers refer to attitudinal factors related to learners' perceptions of their ability to seek out, register, attend and successfully complete the learning activities. Similarly, Desjardins and Rubenson (2013) understand dispositional barriers as factors that limit the ability of an individual's actions and with that the possibility of participation in adult learning. In their view, persons with similar barriers can be more or less active in addressing these barriers regardless of the educational policy and system in the country in which they live. The authors predict further that this situation will affect both the type and size of their constraints as well as the ability and willingness of individuals to overcome these barriers. The specific welfare state regime is not only involved in the social structure, the system of adult learning and people's life opportunities, but also works in an individual's consciousness. In terms of individual consciousness, Desjardins and Rubenson (2013) further state that "dispositional constraints are seen to be individually based because these relate to individual perceptions of themselves, their situation and their surrounding world" (p. 2). Individual dispositions are therefore under the direct and indirect influence of the social system and are a result of experienced and established ways of thinking in society.

Falasca (2011) added that situational barriers are referred as life factors, whereby adult learners are facing external influences in terms of wide-ranging circumstantial conditions beyond their control. This prevents them from active participation as well as challenging their ability to access learning. Falasca (2011) further confirmed that:

> According to most researchers, there are two main barriers to adult learning: external or situational and internal or dispositional. External barriers are typically defined as 'influences more or less external to the individual or at least beyond the individual's control" (p. 585).

Poon, Koehler and Buehler (2014) elaborate more on the psychology of self–prediction as a consideration of stituational barriers to intended action in their research. They argue that it is important to take note of existing barriers, because no matter how strongly a person intends to carry out an intended behaviour, there is always the possibility of encountering circumstances that prevent completion of such a behaviour. This shows that despite one's best intentions, adult learners may encounter situational barriers that prevent them from participating in learning or completing a programme of learning. Adult learners might over-estimate their future accomplishments of the programme to get better jobs or improve their living standards. These might end up in disappointment, broken promises or taking decisions that they may regret at a later stage. These could lead to adult learners dropping out from a programme due to the circumstances they find themselves in.

Dispositional barriers

Radovan (2012) concurs with MacKeracher et al. (2006) that adult learners give the following reasons: "I could not afford it", "too busy", "too tired", "I did not know what programs are available," "I find it too childish," "I feel too old to learn" and "I do not need training" (p. 93). This what MacKeracher et al. (2006) called "situational" and "dispositional" barriers.

MacKeracher et al. (2006) postulate that dispositional barriers can be decribed as attitudinal factors related to learners' perceptions for their inability to seek out, register for, attend and successfully complete the learning activities. These include self-perceptions about oneself as a learner toward

education, such as feeling that one is too old to learn. Cross (1981) highlights that dispositional barriers are factors that are "related to attitudes and self-perception about oneself as a learner" (p. 98). Cross's (1981) CoR Model of internal factors is comprised of dispositional barriers such as negative attitude and perceptions that pertain to adult learning as an obstacle to adult learners' success. Adult learners should be able to self-perceive their level of confidence in their own abilities to determine their willingness to participate and to respond to their current situations.

Cross (1981) believes that "individuals with high self-esteem expect to be successful" and "if adult educators wish to understand why some adults fail to participate in learning opportunities" (p. 126) they should understand the barriers towards participation in adult learning by interviewing the adult learners to get their views regarding their barriers to participating in adult learning.

Possible mitigation strategies to reduce barriers to participation
Adult learners are generally honest, cultured and independent, thus, they have a capacity to act independently and self-directedly when it cames to participating in adult education. Therefore, there is a need to understand what motivates adult learners to participate in adult education (Rubenson, 2011).
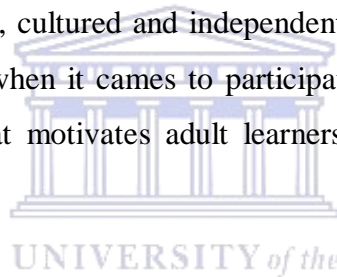
The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2011) observes that "access to education is steadily expanding; across developing countries, enrolment in higher education has risen sharply and innovative literacy and adult education programmes are transforming the lives of the disadvantaged" (p. 6). Darkenwald and Valentine (1990) (as cited in Malhotra et al., 2007) agree that "the decision not to participate in organized adult education is typically due to the combined or synergistic effects of multiple deterrents, rather than just one or two in isolation" (p. 83).

Moreover, theories on the influence of the 'situated nature' of participation in adult learning in the social environment of adults should be taken into account. Some researchers have studied factors such as the influence of family, neighborhood, friends and colleagues at work, on the expected returns of participation in adult learning (Ball et al., 1992). Theories on learning barriers can be considered effective mobilisation strategies or instruments to raise levels of participation or to

mobilise specific target groups into adult learning trajectories, which could be deployed in national lifelong learning policies (Ball et al., 1992).

Information on educational opportunities

Information on educational opportunities are important to adult learners as most of them experience lack of information and lack of knowledge about the availability of learning opportunities. Adult learners may have no knowledge or information about educational opportunities available to participate in adult learning. Adult learners with low self-esteem feel disadvantaged if they lack information about furthering their studies upon completion of their senior certificate (Abdullah, Koren, Muniapan & Rathakrishnan, 2008).

Information availability is an important aspect for any human being, though it takes different forms, shapes, casts and moods. It may be concerned with their welfare, studies, or future employment prospects. Against this backdrop, a university should make information available to all the adults on what learning opportunities are available for them so that they can participate in adult learning. They can do so through media, television, radio announcements, flyers, posters, and other campaigning strategies. I believe that there is a need for the university in the study to let adults know how such opportunities will help them change their life course. Faculty prospectuses need to be made available to all those who are interested in reading such information.

Participation

According to Cross (1981), participation can be self-directed or organised in adult learning. It is an interrelation with an individual's enviromental outcome as a result of a chain-of-responses. Cross (1981) further pointed out that "Developmental/remedial preparation of students is a recent and special instructional goal for community colleges and dissatisfaction with current attention to it is evident" (p. 117). It is a choice made by adult learners to participate in learning. Adults are voluntary learners who decide what they will learn and how and where they will learn (Hammer & Shale, 1981).

Critiques of the Chain-of-Response Model

While the CoR Model seems to have produced remarkable results in many settings, Desjardins and Rubenson (2013) contested the model as it fails to adequately explain the next desire or stage after one has actualised the self professionally or academically. It does not leave room for the endlessness of human desires to attain goals as is done by Maslow's (1970) hierachy of human needs which clearly indicate that "human needs and desires are hierachical and that once humans have attained their desired goals and intentions they move to the next level" (p. 21). In this parlance, this theory makes human desired goals an end in themselves and this is one of the greatest weaknesses of the model.

Lucal (2012) conducted research to examine the impact of supervisor support on non-participation in an educational assistance programme at the University of Tennessee. Lucal states that Cross's (1981) CoR Model includes the respective work of Miller (1967), Rubenson (1977) and Boshier (1973).

One of the stages in the CoR model of Cross (1981), includes an introspection of learning–oriented individuals, with respect to participation, there must be an appreciation that learning is indeed a by-product of a complex interaction of factors. Identifiably, these internal factors derail the efforts for one's participation in adult learning (Silva et al, 1998; Larson and Milana, 2006; Lucal, 2012). Furthermore, Cervero and Kirkpatrick (1990) discerned from Cross (1981)'s CoR that motivation in individuals is continuously flowing and not an isolated case or events. From their propositions, attitude foregrounds the basis of self-perception from where the drive towards personal development emanates. In addition, self-perception and information play an important role in the decision–making process. Therefore, adult learners desire to access information and details in order to gain educational opportunities. However, from an analysis by Cervero and Kirkpatrick (1990), they noted and appreciated some benefits from the model but felt that it excludes the pre-adult factors, such as prior learning experience.

Silva et al. (1998), have shown that the CoR Model shows that adult participation in "learning activities is not an isolated act" (p. 36). They maintain that it is the result of a complex chain of personal responses to internal and external variables that either encourage or discourage

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participation in learning. Silva et al. (1998), and Cervero and Kirkpatrick (1990), agree that the model takes an individual as being at the forefront of self-development in education. Adult learners opted in this case to further their studies to be employed in different fields of study to improve their living standards to afford basic needs. Having said the aforementioned, an adult learner's participation is thus based on individual self-perception and self-evaluation outcomes that lead to participation in the learning activities.

Moreover, Silva et al. (1998) and Cervero and Kirkpatrick (1990) made an observation that the CoR Model tends to thrive at the expense of an individual's life history. This does not mean that there is no solution pertaining to barriers to participation in adult learning. In this study, the model indicates why some people participate in adult learning and why others do not participate. The model helped me to understand barriers to participation in terms of interaction between an individual and an adult education environment, which are explored in the study. For me, the model was the best choice as the focus of this study was on current opportunities and situations that prevent participation in adult learning.

This shows that the decision to participate in adult education is mostly based on individual whether adult learners have pinpoint that they need to address to improve their living standards. This is what Desjardins and Rubenson (2013) pointed out that "it is individuals who decide to participate, but in reality, this is often in conjunction with employers' motivations and hence decisions' to provide support" (p. 266).

Summary
In this section, I present the conceptual framework of the study and a comprehensive review of the literature. The Chain-of-Response (CoR) Model was used as the underlying conceptual framework of the study. I focus mainly on literature that covers opportunities to participation and barriers to participation in adult learning programmes in various contexts and possible mitigation strategies to improve on the participation of adults in adult learning. In the next section, I cover data collection and the methodology used in the study.

SECTION THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

I present the research design and methodology used in the study in this section. I cover the research site, the research approach, the instrument used, methods of data collection including sampling, analysis procedures and ethical considerations in research.

Research site

The site of this study was a campus of a university in Southern Africa where the participants were registered. The campus is situated in the northern part of the country. It offers an academic programme that allows adult learners to use a distance mode of delivery. The campus provides adult learners access to higher education and equity for those with various educational backgrounds.

Research approach

I used a qualitative research approach in this study. According to Baker (2007), "qualitative research enables a researcher to obtain intricate details about a situation such as feelings, thoughts and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn through other conventional research methods" (p. 15). A qualitative dimension of a research approach was used as it allowed me to use interviews, conversations, field-notes, recordings, to make sense of the participants' responses to a phenomenon under consideration in a given natural setting. I chose a qualitative approach because it allowed me to obtain data that covered a multiplicity of descriptions of the participants' opportunities to study and barriers that affect them. A qualitative research approach helps to interpret and enhances a better understanding of the multiplicity of the reality of a given situation and the understanding of a specific adult learner's environment (Bryman, 2012).

Method of data gathering

I conducted semi-structured interviews using the interview guide (Appendix A). A semi-structured interview is a qualitative method used to gather data. It has a pre-determined set of open or semi-

structured question. This enabled me to ask probing questions that arose from interviewees' responses. This in turn generated new ideas that led to a rich depth of data. Bryman (2012) claims that in using a semi-structured interview, the researcher has a list of questions to be covered in the interview guide but does not necessarily follow it exactly in the way outlined on the schedule.

Opdenakker (2006) claims that using a semi-structured interview, the interviewer and interviewees have advantages, because it is very simple in a practical way of gathering data and it is efficient for the researcher. The interviewees are able to answer freely and discuss the questions in detail with the interviewer. Finally, it is easy for the interviewer to record the interview as participants are well informed in advance.

However, Opdenakker (2006), also give some disadvantages of using semi-structured interviews that the interviewer should be aware of such as the interviewer will be required to have the skill to interview and know how to prepare the interview guide. The interviewer should have the ability to think and be able to ask probing questions during the interview to follow up on interviewees' responses. There is a need to know that interview sessions may take long and it is time consuming. Conducting interviews are expensive, as the interviewer has to travel long distances to conduct face-to-face interviews. The data analysis may be difficult as the data collected is extensive, which requires a researcher to decide what is relevant or irrelevant to the research questions as some information was given in vernacular as the interviewees could not express themselves very well in English.

Selection of participants
Participants were selected using purposive sampling one of the non-probability to identify participants by retrieving the list of adult learners who were enrolled for the Diploma in Secondary Education from university databased. Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016) described the purposive sampling procedure, which can also be called judgment sampling, as the deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses. Sampling, according to De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, and Delport (2011), "is fundamental to all statistical methodology of behavioral, educational and social research. There are different types and ways of choosing a sample from a population" (p. 19). There are, for example, non-probability sampling, segmental sampling,

stratified, convenience, purposeful, judgmental, quota and snowball sampling. In judgmental sampling, the person doing the sampling uses his/her knowledge or experience to select the items to be sampled (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The advantage of using purposive sampling is that it targets a particular group (adult learners). However, it has implications, because some selected adult learners were scattered and teaching at schools in remote areas where there are no tarred roads. It is time consuming as it is difficult to reach them and complete the study in time.

The participants were adult learners who were registered for the Teaching Diploma in Secondary education at the university. The diploma was designed to provide adult learners, who had obtained their first degree from various local and international universities, an option to change their fields of study to education to become qualified teachers. It is a one-year programme, normally offered over two years through distance mode. For the purpose of this study, I assumed that the enrolled adult learners had registered for this diploma in order to obtain a qualification in a different field of study compared to their initial qualification. According to Boyle and Boffetta (2009), a population is a group of collected people who have certain characteristics and are of interest to a researcher. In most cases, a research study is conducted to benefit the study's population. In this study, population refers to the entire group of adult learners who were registered for the above Diploma in Secondary Education.
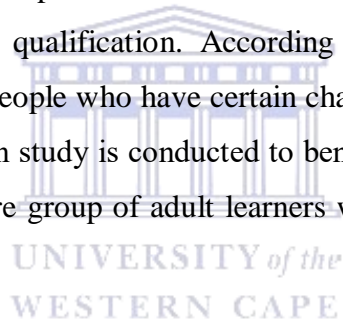
Thirty (30) adult learners out of 151 were selected and given a consent form to sign to participate voluntarily in the study. Only twenty (20) adult learners showed availability and willingness to participate.

Research instrument

I designed an interview guide to question participants about their respective opportunities for barriers to participation in adult learning. The advantage of an interview guide is that it is easy to use and it allows participants to express themselves. An interview guide enhances flexibility of data collection; it allows for discovering a greater depth of a topic during an interview using open-ended questions and is non-threatening (Christensen, Johnson & Turner, 2010). The interview guide was used to explain all the questions to the participants and to address those questions that needed clarification.

Data capturing

I used audio-recordings and field-notes to capture the data. I transcribed the audio-recordings into verbatim transcriptions. All files were password protected and saved on a computer. This was necessary because other staff members were also conducting interviews and used the audio-recorder.

Data analysis

Welman, Kruger, and Mitchel (2005) define data analysis as "a systematic approach" (p. 10). Data analysis is actually a process of breaking down the data into pieces. Data analysis thus enables processing the data in a way which allows the researcher to interpret the findings in terms of the research questions of a study. As I used thematic data analysis, the data were analysed thematically and presented in themes using the different concepts of the CoR Model. The data collected were analysed according to selected components of the CoR of my conceptual framework.

Research ethics

According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), research ethics are ethical standards that should be observed to ensure that participants would not be at risk of harm. In this study, research ethics included protecting the privacy of the participants and ensuring adherence to maintaining confidentiality and the anonymity of each participant. I assured them that the information they provided would not be made available to third parties. In order to adhere to research ethics, the following was done by me.

- Permission to conduct the research was approved by the university research committee (Appendix E).
- An information sheet was handed to participants prior to the agreed interview date. This was done to allow them time to read through and understand the aim of the research, and that they have the right to withdraw from the research without consequences (Appendix C).
- Consensus was reached in terms of the date and the time of each participant's interview and selection of a venue (for example, at the university or at their homes).
- All participants were informed about the procedures and concepts used in the research.
- All were informed of their rights regarding participation in the study (Appendix D).

- Informed consent was obtained from all of the participants. They were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any penalties being applied.
- All agreed to have their interviews recorded. They were shown the audio-recorder at the commencement of their respective face-to-face interviews.
- All participants were informed that they could have free access to the final report if they so wished.
- The participants' rights to anonymity and confidentiality were adhered to as their names were not captured; pseudonyms were used.

Summary

In this section, I present the research methodology used in the study. I cover the research site, the research approach, research instrument, methods of data collection and analysis, sampling and ethical considerations. I present data collection and analysis in the next section.

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SECTION FOUR: PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

My aim in this study is to investigate participation among adult learners at a university in Southern Africa, and to explore the life transition of adult learners. In this section, I present the analysis and interpretation of data obtained during semi-structured interviews with the participants using an interview guide. I start with a discussion of my approach to thematic analysis. Thereafter, I present the demographic information of the participants. This is followed by the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Approach to thematic data analysis

According to Bryman (2008), data analysis is "fundamentally about data reduction" (p. 3). Therefore, I have analysed my data in such way that data reduction reduces information gathered during the interview to make sense of it.

The following steps guided my data processing and data analysis. After I completed my interviews using the interview guide, I transcribed my audio-recordings, which I compared with my field-notes and I coded the data by applying labels as examples of a thematic idea. The coding process allowed me to retrieve and gather all the text and other data associated with a thematic idea. Coding allowed for interpretation of similar data. I also identified themes for the data analysis, which according to Braun and Clarke (2006), "are identified through sequential phases of data familiarisation, data coding, searching for themes and theme development, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and finally writing up the report" (p. 17).

I have divided my themes into four categories, namely institutional barriers, situational barriers, information barriers and participation.

Presentation of biographical information

The participants in this study are adult learners who enrolled for the Diploma in Secondary Education offered at the University. It is a one-year programme offered on a distance mode of delivery for two years. Adult learners can complete the programme in one year, or over two years through distance mode of delivery. The diploma concentrates on offering professional, educational courses similar to those provided in the Bachelor of Education degree at the university. The teaching skills the students acquire in this programme together with the subject knowledge they had acquired in their undergraduate studies will equip them with sufficient knowledge and skills necessary for becoming competent teachers at secondary school level.

The adult learners were confronted by a shortage of relevant jobs related to their degrees and therefore, the Ministry of Education employed them as teachers in short-term contract positions. They had limited knowledge of school subjects and little or no teaching experience. A brief summary introduces the participants followed by the profile of all participants.

Age

One participant was in the age range of 35 to 40 years-old, one was in the age range of 31 to 35 years-old, and three were in the age range of 20 to 25 years-old, while the majority were in the age range of 26 to 31 years-old.

Educational level

Participants obtained their first degree at different tertiary institutions in non-educational fields of study such as Human Resource Development, Economics, Marketing, Business Administration, Public Management, Industrial Psychology, and Clinical Psychology. The majority had obtained Bachelor Degrees in Human Resources Management, while a few had Bachelor Degrees in Business Administration and Marketing and the remainder obtained their degrees in the other fields. The majority were employed on a contract basis as unqualified teachers to teach pre-lower and upper primary phases. Most of the participants were not happy with the first qualification they obtained, because it did not meet their basic needs and expectations.

Marital status

Seventeen participants were single, two participants were married and one was divorced. All participants were contractually employed and worried about their families' future at the end of their contracts.

Profile of participants

An unqualified teacher refers to those who are teaching without educational qualifications. They are not employed permanently but are employed on short-term contracts. The data showed that nineteen participants were employed temporarily as unqualified teachers. The remaining participant was a permanent employee at the Ministry of Justice. The participants are employed by the Ministry of Education to teach pre-lower primary (grades 1- 4), and upper primary (grades 5-8) levels at schools in remote rural areas. They teach pre-lower and upper primary phases despite having no teaching experience or being unqualified teachers. Therefore, they are called unqualified teachers. This encouraged them to register for the diploma course to acquire skills and teaching experience. Most of the schools at which they are employed do not have electricity, clean water, network connectivity, internet facilities, suitable accommodation and daily transport.

All participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identities, as well as where they worked. Participants consisted of 3 males and 17 females. The gender balance of 50% women and 50% men did not play a role here, as only a few men enrolled for this programme. All participants are black. There was a mix of home languages among the participants. As English is an official language of the country, all participants were literate in English. This made it easy for me to conduct the study. The different indigenous languages that the participants speak are Oshindonga, Oshikwanya, Oshimbalantu, Oshikwambi, Afrikaans, Portuguese and Otjiherero. I understand all of these languages, except Portuguese. This meant I could understand villagers when I asked them for directions to find participants' homes or schools. Their profiles are presented below:

Pewa is female, 25 years old and residing in Ondangwa. Her home language is Oshindonga, she is single and looks after her two siblings. She obtained a Degree in Marketing at the University of Technology but has since struggled to get a job with this qualification. After two years of

struggling, she decided to apply for any job available and finally got a temporary teaching post at Okadhila Primary School as an unqualified teacher.

Bola is a 26-year-old female, who resides in Onelago. Her home language is Oshikwanyama and Portuguese. She is single, has one child and she obtained a Degree in Marketing at the University of Technology. She is currently employed as an unqualified teacher at Uupopo Combined School. Prior to this, she spent a year looking for employment.

Daniel is a single 25-year-old male whose home language is Oshindonga and he resides in Oniipa. He has to support five siblings. He obtained a Human Resources Management degree from the University of Technology. He is currently enrolled for a teaching post at Ombwalambwenge Primary School as an unqualified teacher.

Etuhole is a single, 31-year-old female who resides in Okahao. She has three children and her home language is Oshikwanyama. She obtained a Degree in Human Resources Management from the University of Management Science. She first worked as a cashier and administrator in a mini-market while struggling to get a job related to her qualification. Currently, she is in a temporary teaching post at Omuthitu Combined School as an unqualified teacher.

Laimi is a single mother of two children, 30-years of age and resides in Omungwelume. She also looks after one sibling. Her home language is Oshikwanyama. She obtained a Degree in Business Administration at the University of Technology but is currently employed at Okongo Junior Primary as an unqualified teacher.

Tuli is a 27 year –old single female with one child who resides in Ondangwa. Her home language is Oshikwanyama. She obtained a Degree in Business Administration at the University of Technology and is currently employed at Omutsegonime Primary School as an unqualified teacher.

Tuwilika is a 30-year-old single female, mother to two children. She also looks after three siblings while her home language is Oshikwanyama. She obtained a Degree in Economics at the University

of Technology and is currently employed at Uukwiyogwongwe Combined School as an unqualified teacher.

Tumina, a 31-year-old and single lady, resides in Oshakati with her two children. She also looks after five siblings and her home language is Oshikwanyama. She graduated with a Degree in Human Resources Management from the University of Technology. She is currently employed at Okalongo Combined School as an unqualified teacher.

Etukwatha is a single, 29-year-old female and has two children. She looks after two siblings. She resided in Ehafo, and her home language is Oshikwanyama. She attained a Degree in Human Resources Management at the University of Technology. She is currently employed at Omuthiya Combined School as an unqualified teacher.

Fiona is a single, 28-year-old female who resides in Ongwediva. Her home language is Oshindonga. She qualified with a Degree in Human Resources at the University of Technology. She is currently employed at Okani Combined School as an unqualified teacher.

Dolly is a single female and is 29 years old. She looks after nine siblings and resides in Oniipa. Her home language is Oshindonga; and she graduated with a Degree in Human Resources at the University of Technology. She is currently employed at Onengushe Combined School as an unqualified teacher.

Phillo is a single, 31-year-old female who stays in Okana with her one child and four siblings. Her home language is Oshikwanyama. She obtained a Degree in Human Resources Management at the University of Technology and is currently employed at Onemanya Combined School, as an unqualified teacher.

Teresia is 27 years old single lady and resides in Oshikuku. She has one child and looks after three siblings. Her home language is Oshikwambi. She obtained a Degree in Human Resources Management at University of Technology and is presently employed at Okadiva Combined School as an unqualified teacher.

Marika is a 28-year-old female residing in Oshakati. She is single and has one child and looks after four siblings. Her home language is Oshindonga. She attained a Degree in Industrial Psychology at University of Technology and is working at Omafo Combined School, as an unqualified teacher.

Mariska is divorced and has three children. She is a 31-year-old female and resides in Omuthiya. Her home language is Oshikwambi and she also speaks Herero and Afrikaans. She obtained a Degree in Clinical Psychology at the University of Management Science. She is currently employed at the Ministry of Prison and Correctional Services as an administrator.

Petrina is married with four children. She is 31 years old and comes from Oniipa where her mother tongue is Oshindonga. She obtained a Degree in Public Management at the University of Technology. Currently, she works at Oneleiwa Combined School as unqualified teacher.

Dumeni is a single, 27-year-old male with one child and residing in Okalongo. His home language is Oshikwambi. He graduated with a Degree in Livestock and Wildlife Science he is currently employed at the Omuntele Combined School as an unqualified teacher.

Hafeni is a 26-year-old single male who staying in Oluno. His home language is Oshindonga and he speaks Afrikaans. He obtained a Degree in Human Resources and is currently employed at the Kapembe Combined School as an unqualified teacher.

Tekla, a single female with one child, is 27 years old and resides in Olukonda. Her home language is Oshindonga. She obtained a Degree in Human Resources Management at the University of Technology. She is currently employed at the Onandjamba Combined School as an unqualified teacher.

Secilia is a married female and mother to four children. She is 40 years old and resides in Onakaheke. Her home language is Oshikwanyama. She obtained a Degree in Business

Administration at the University of Technology. She is currently employed at the Ruacana Combined School as an unqualified teacher.

Data analysis and presentation

As I mentioned in Section 2, Cross's (1981) CoR Model comprises of seven stages. Using the model, I present the data analysis:

Self-perception and attitude toward education

Cross (1981) developed self-perception as the first stage, in which adult learners evaluate themselves and their enviroment to be able to participate in adult learning. At the same time Cross (1981) describes her second stage as being an attitude toward education, namely the atttitude an individual has towards education. She claims that an individual's perception can be both positive and negative attitude towards education. Both stages are interrelated and influenced by internal factors.

Data revealed that participants used their initiative to evaluate themselves and their environment. Based on the outcome of this evaluation, they decided to participate in adult learning to improve their living standards. The participants evaluated their living situations and this led them to decide on learning further. This is what Cross (1981) indicates as the starting point for participation in learning, that is, the interaction between self-perception and self-evaluation of the adult learners, which include their attitude towards adult learning. This is also what Salomnson et al. (2006) confirm; that self-perception includes an individual's sense of their characteristics and self–perceived ability to accomplish objectives and goals in life.

The data obtained established that most of the participants had a positive attitude towards adult learning; they were willing to voluntarily participate in adult learning and become knowledgeable citizens. They had foreseen the learning opportunity as a gateway to acquire new knowledge and upgrade their professional skills for the job market. This is reflected in their responses related to attitudes about becoming a teacher, attitudes towards self-financing studies, attitudes of families toward education and attitudes of the community towards education.

Attitudes about becoming a teacher

I like teaching now, I do not think of changing now to my previous field of study (Tuwilika, Interview, March 25, 2017).

Education will be my career from now on (Etukwatha, Interview, May 02, 2017).

I would like to teach at secondary level, when I complete this diploma (Fiona, Interview, May 04, 2017).

I want to be a teacher, as this was my first choice but I did not get opportunity to do education in the first qualification (Dolly, Interview, May 15, 2017).

I enrolled for this diploma to acquire new skills and knowledge on how to teach (Daniel, Interview, March 17, 2017).

I like teaching. Through this course, I will be a qualified teacher in future (Phillo, Interview, May 10, 2017).
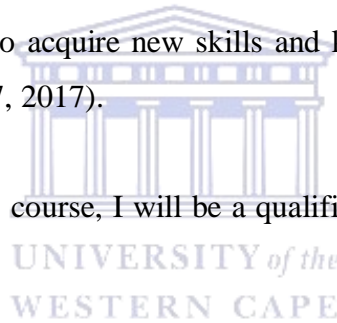
Yes, I am enjoying teaching and I have enrolled for this course to change my field of study to education (Teresia, Interview, March 05, 2017).

I have created a hobby of teaching. I therefore would like to change my career field completely to education field (Petrina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

I have enrolled for this qualification to be a qualified teacher as I found out that education is the best profession for me (Hafeni, Interview, May 08, 2017).

The data above therefore supports what Edwards et al. (1993) observed when they stated that psychological factors, for example, motives, needs, attitudes, expectations and beliefs and values, describe a particular aspect of the internal factors of motivation for learning. Sociological factors,

such as, gender, educational attainment, employment status and job situation, described the external factors that affect an individual when participating in education. Furthermore, the data also indicated that various reasons explain why some participate in educational programmes which cannot be explained by a single motive. Edwards et al. (1993) state that:

> The reasons for participation are complex and multi-dimensional and often not reducible to a single motivation ... Reasons for a greater or lesser willingness of adult participation in education are interpreted in two ways in andragogy: psychological and sociological (p. 75).

This was notable from the following responses:

> I have stayed long hunting for a job, until I give up and job market available was only for education. This forced me to do education now, but anyway I like teaching now (Laimi, Interview, March 04, 2017).

> After all, I end up like to teach (Tuli, Interview, May 05, 2017).

> Education was not really something that I wanted to do, my understanding regards education was not clear, because I was admitted to do a Diploma in Education to teach for lower primary. Me thinking of teaching small children and jumping with them no, no, I cannot teach small nursery (Pewa, Interview, May 04, 2017).

> Yes, because I am more on livestock, and this was my first choice. I am teaching because of the situation I find myself in (Dumeni, Interview, May 05, 2017).

The above serves as confirmation to what Boeren (2009) claims that "participation in adult education is the result of a complex decision-making process" (p. 158).

Negative attitudes toward teaching

From the data it was evident that not all of the participants had self-confidence to teach; some participants had a negative attitude towards teaching. For example, Mariska expressed that teaching was not her career of choice and she did not like teaching:

> Just because of jobless and want to earn income, I do not like teaching and I would not go and teach after completing this diploma (Mariska, March 01, 2017).

> I do not really like the education field at a time (Etuhole, Interview, May 09, 2017).

> Teaching is not my career, as soon as I have obtain my Master Degree for Industrial Psychology, I will look for job related to my qualification (Marika, Interview, March 27, 2017).

> No, I do not really like education (Tumina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

> Yes, because I start enjoying teaching and helping children (Bola, Interview, March 03, 2017).

The responses above serve to confirm that for some participants teaching was not their choice; however, they opted to teach rather than be jobless or bored. This is what Cross (1981) claims that an individual's perception can be both a positive and negative attitude towards further adult education and both stages are interrelated and influenced by internal factors. Therefore, some participants are negative towards the education profession while others are positive towards it and look forward to being qualified teachers.

The data revealed that some participants had such positive attitudes towards education that they decided to further their studies and to pay for their education.

Attitudes of families towards education

Several participants mentioned that their families demonstrate positive attitudes towards their studies:

> My family are happy with my study and hoping that I will get a permanent job after completion (Phillo, Interview, May 10, 2017).

> My family are ok with my study. Encourage me to study to be a qualified teacher (Bola, Interview, March 03, 2017).

> They are happy about my study and they always encourage me to finish and be a qualified teacher. Also, assist to pay my tuition fees and transport for my siblings, especially at the beginning of the year when I have to pay for my study and for my siblings at the same time (Teresia, Interview, March 05, 2017).

> Some say you are supposed to do education in the first place; you have wasted time, some said it is good that you study the correct qualification that you can get job. It is versa-versa. However, anyway, my family encourages me to study this diploma but advise me to pay my tuition fees with little money I am earning. Encourage you but for tuition fee you have to pay for yourself (Phillo, Interview, May 10, 2017) and (Pewa Interview, May 04, 2017).

> They are happy with my studying; give me moral support to study to give example to my siblings (Daniel, Interview, March 17, 2017).

> They are proud that I am study to get permanent job (Tuli, Interview, May 05, 2017).

> They are happy because they know one day I will be a qualified teacher (Tuwilika, Interview, March 25, 2017).

> My family supports me emotionally and encourages me (Petrina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

Provide me with support and encouragement (Tekla, Interview, April 04, 2017).

They are supportive and encourage me to study hard (Secilia, Interview, March 04, 2017).

Many adult learners received support from their family members as they are hoping that the new qualification will secure jobs unlike the job market for the first qualification which was competitive and limited.

Attitudes of community toward education

Participants' responses showed that in their opinion their communities display positive attitudes toward education:

No one wants her/his children to be uneducated (Petrina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

As they all want all the best for their children, encourage youth to study so that we can assist our parents at the village and educate others. (Teresia, Interview, March 05, 2017).

I do not see any norms affect my study (Mariska, March 01, 2017).

The community where I came from everyone understands the value of education, the values and norms would not affect my study. (Phillo, Interview, May 10, 2017).

The community where I came from everyone should be educated, no one wants the uneducated person (Pewa, Interview, May 04, 2017).

No, everyone in our community tries to send their children to school (Etuhole, Interview, May 09, 2017).

Yes, because they want the children to be taught as they are far from town and hard to get teachers within the community (Dumeni, Interview, May 05, 2017).

Value of goals and expectations that participation will meet the goals

Cross (1981) highlighted that an interest to participate in adult learning activities must come from within an individual before they will find a way to remove external factors. The data revealed that the participants' aims were to participate in adult learning in order to achieve their goals and expectations. This is reflected in some of their responses. Some participants reported that doing the Diploma in Secondary Education would help them to acquire new skills and teaching experiences as qualified teachers.

This is illustrated by the responses below:

I have enrolled for this qualification to be a qualified teacher as I found out that education is the best profession for me (Hafeni, Interview, May 08, 2017).

Hafeni shared past experiences by stating:

My first choice was education but in my final year in secondary school, I have started helping my classmate with school activities. I found it difficult to teach and from there I opted to do a degree in Human Resource to work in the office. After obtaining my first degree in Human Resource (HR) I was employed as HR personnel in the Ministry of Health and Social Services. When staff members approached my office with inquiries, I could hear the following questions: Why haven't I received increment yet? Why is my medical card not ready yet? Why my overtime is not paid yet? I get stressed as this was not what I was expecting for this position and I started to think of my first choice as a teacher. Due to all these facts, I then decided to look for a teaching position and I was appointed as a teacher. I did not inform my parents for almost five months, due to the fact that I was scared of them questioning me. Later, I decided to register for this diploma with expectations to acquire teaching

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experience and understanding of the teaching methodology (Hafeni Interview, May 08, 2017).

It will help me to be a qualified teacher, acquire skills and knowledge to teach (Pewa Interview, May 04, 2017).

It will prepare me to be a well-trained teacher, I expect to be qualified teacher, and through this course I will acquire new skills and knowledge on how to teach (Bola, Interview, March 03, 2017).

I have enrolled for this diploma with expectations to acquire new skills and knowledge on how to teach, it helps me to know how to handle children and at the same time acquiring teaching experience and how to assess the learners (Daniel, Interview, March 17, 2017).

To obtain educational qualification, it will help me to reach my goal to be a qualified teacher, I gain skills on how to teach; so far I know a bit how to teach and help my learners to study in a good manner (Etuhole, Interview, May 09, 2017).
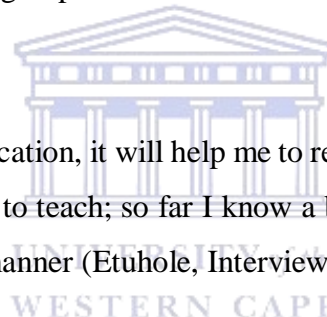
The above responses are similar to what Scanlan (1986) claims in his theory, which focuses on explaining the relationship between "one's subjective orientation towards participation and the objective organisation of a person's life space" (p. 8). This theory is suitable for adult learning as adult learners engage in learning activities to cope with life events, as well as to help them comply with societal expectations of role proficiency. Participation opportunities in adult learning for adult learners is a consequence of what the future holds after receiving the qualification and this was confirmed by the following responses:

Yes, it will help me to be a qualified teacher (Laimi, Interview, March 04, 2017).

This will help me to acquire new skills and be a qualified teacher, to be professionally trained in education field (Tuli, Interview, May 05, 2017).

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It will help me to acquire new skills and knowledge on how to teach economics as it my school subject. Yes, to be a qualified teacher as well be an expert in my field of study economics (Tuwilika, Interview, March 25, 2017).

To get a permanent job, acquire knowledge on how to teach (Tumina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

Acquire teaching experience and it will help me to understand and get more knowledge on my school subject contents (Business studies and Economics) (Etukwatha, Interview, May 02, 2017).

I am expecting to obtain education qualification and to be a qualified teacher (Fiona, Interview, May 04, 2017).

I am expected be an English teacher. So far the course is building my skills towards there (Dolly, Interview, May 15, 2017).

Acquiring new skill and knowledge on how to teach (Phillo, Interview, May 10, 2017).

To be a qualified teacher, to acquire skills and knowledge on how to teach and handle learners with different learning difficulties (Teresia, Interview, March 05, 2017).

It will give me an opportunity to be employed as a qualified teacher, and stop with job-hunting every time and get additional qualifications (Marika, Interview, March 27, 2017).

It will make me a qualified teacher and become an advisory teacher (Petrina, Interview, March 10, 2017).
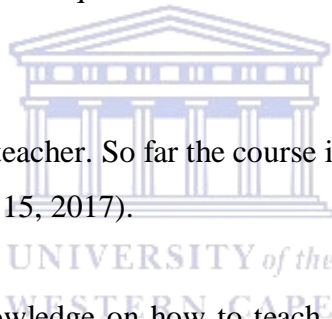
This will help me to acquire new skills and knowledge on how to teach at school (Dumeni, Interview, May 05, 2017).

To be a qualified teacher and gain teaching experience in a short time (Hafeni, Interview, May 08, 2017).

My expectation to be or for enrolling in education programme is to change my field of study to the programme I am interested in (Tekla, Interview, April 04, 2017).

The programme is actual good because it is on advanced diploma and allows us to do it in short term and helping us to reach our goals immediate (Secilia, Interview, March 04, 2017).

This will help me to meet the requirements to do a Master's degree in Educational Psychology (Mariska, March 01, 2017).

The data therefore concurred with what Cross (1981) observed when she said that when motivation is high, then adult learners will overcome many circumstances to meet their goals and expectations. Cross (1981) stressed that an interest in participating in adult learning activities comes from within an individual who will try to find a way to remove external circumstances that hinder their participation in adult learning.

Opportunities and barriers

Opportunities

It is observed that when adult learners get an opportunity to further their studies without having to leave their houses, jobs and their children, they avail themselves of those opportunities. This is reflected in the participants' responses below when they were asked if they had the opportunity to further their studies after completing the senior certificate or finding jobs with their first degree:

Yes, I got the opportunity, but after completion, no job available (Pewa, Interview, May 04, 2017).

Yes, I had the opportunity to go the University upon completion of my senior certificate, but career choice was challenging at the university as I registered late and found that all programmes /faculties were full. I could not make the choice but to register what was available for me (Bola, Interview, March 03, 2017).

Yes, I did get the opportunity, due to the course requirement. I did not do an education course that time (Daniel, Interview, March 17, 2017).

No, because I did not meet the university requirement, so I had to stay home improving my points (Laimi, Interview, March 04, 2017).

Due to financial problem, I stayed five years at home, without further my studies (Tuli, Interview, May 05, 2017).

I had a problem with admission requirement, as I did not meet the requirements for the course I wanted (Tuwilika, Interview, March 25, 2017).

Courses to choose were there, but I was not interested, I was advised by a woman who is a Human Resources Officer (Tumina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

Yes, the education courses were available but I was not interested; I was not interested in choosing a course but I was more interested in going to a university in town. I was tired of living in the village. I would not mind which programme I was going to register for, but my first choice was degree in Health Environmental Science, but when I went for registration, I found that the faculty was already full then, Degree in Human Resource the only one which was available (Etukwatha, Interview, May 02, 2017).

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No, I stayed home for year; I did not apply that year. I thought I could just register at the beginning of the year, and then I realised I was late (Fiona, Interview, May 04, 2017).

No, there **was** no money to pay (Dolly, Interview, May 15, 2017).

No, there was not money to further my studies after I completed my senior certificate (Phillo, Interview, May 10, 2017).

No, I was not aware of any course that was available at the university I just enrolled for the course that I saw my fellow students registering for (Teresia, Interview, March 05, 2017).

Yes, I was admitted to do nursing. I realised I did not like nursing and other courses that were available, but I opted to do Public Management, because my friends were doing it (Petrina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

Yes, I did have the opportunity (Dumeni, Interview, May 05, 2017).

No, I did not meet the requirements in the past for all tertiary institutions (Tekla, Interview, April 04, 2017).

No, I became a nanny for the whole year for her first born daughter (Secilia, Interview, March 04, 2017).

Yes, I did have the opportunity, but I was not interested to do education field (Mariska, March 01, 2017).

For my first degree, I did not have the choice, opted to do Industrial Psychology, because I wanted to do nursing, apparently the nursing was full (Marika, Interview, March 27, 2017).

Yes, but I fail to apply in time. I got information regard due date of application very late (Hafeni, Interview, May 08, 2017).

Yes, I had the opportunity to go the university upon completion of my senior certificate (Bola, Interview, March 03, 2017).

Cross (1981) also acknowledges self-esteem as a factor that can influence participation in educational opportunities while Ginsberg and Wlodkowski (2010) encourage adults to "learn continuously on their own accord" (p. 29) in today's business world. Having encountered challenges and hurdles in their way, the data from the respondents confirm their interest in the programme but they encountered challenges, except for Mariska, Petrina, Tumina and Etukwatha who had other first priorities.

Barriers that affect adult learners' participation in adult learning
Cross (1981)'s CoR Model was developed to help education practitioners to understand the barriers that prevent adult learners from participating in adult learning. Cross (1981) says there are many barriers that adult learners encounter in their learning, such as finance, travelling long distance and lack of time to study. She stresses the importance of educational practitioners having to know and understand the barriers that confront adult learners. These barriers are classified into three categories: institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers. They originate from circumstances in life in which individual adult learners find themselves.

Silva et.al. (1998) (as cited in Scanlan, 1986) describe Cross's CoR Model by saying that the model of participating in adult learning "is not an isolated act but the result of a complex chain of response based on the evaluation of the position of an individual in their environment" (p. 36). This means that as soon as adult learners understand their barriers and evaluate the situation, they will act on it and voluntarily participate in adult learning. The literature revealed that external and internal barriers are those factors that prohibit active participation in adult learning and this is what Cross (1981) refers to as institutional, situational and dispositional barriers. The data show that participants were not aware of the courses offered by the university at the time. The literature also

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revealed that adult learners with low self-esteem feel disadvantaged in getting information about learning after completion of their senior certificate (Abdullah et al., 2008).

I compared these barriers to participation with the data collected in the study. I, therefore, divided my data into four major themes comprising of sub-themes. These barriers are presented as themes and sub-themes as follow:

Institutional barriers related to the university

A close examination of the literature reveals through Cross (1981) that institutional barriers refer to practices and procedures that discourage adult learners from participating in the learning activities.

Lack of internet connectivity

Although a distance-learning programme was designed at the university in this study, working adult learners still experienced barriers to learning. The distance-learning programme therefore is specifically designed for working adult learners who have barriers in participating in full-time learning. These barriers might include lack of transport, lack of financial assistance, lack of time, lack of employment opportunity, lack of accessing internet facilities, lack of schools to do their teaching practice, lack of course information, lack of career guidance, lack of network connectivity and lack of electricity to mention just a few that are related to this study.

The data show that the lack of internet connectivity was a barrier in the distance mode **of** delivery. The university provides internet devices, called Netman, and a sim card to all distance students to access the internet at their workplace/home. The data showed that most of the participants stay in rural areas where there is no internet connectivity and electricity. Thus, having a device to access the internet does not translate readily into accessing the internet. The participants who worked at schools in remote rural areas also experienced lack of network connectivity. Etuhole and Daniel narrated that whether or not they had received the Netman device from the university, it would still not work at their workplaces because there is no internet connectivity and electricity. Other participants provided similar responses:

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Internet device received from the university - the internet provided by the university is not working at the remote areas where there is network connectivity and electricity (Tuwilika, Interview, March 25, 2017).

I have a device (Netman) provided by the university, but we stay far from the network connectivity. The device not always working (Daniel, Interview, March 17, 2017).

There is internet installed at our school with one computer, but due to poor network connectivity, it does not work always. If we have network working everyone wants to use the computer, so it is difficult to make use of it for my studies (Hafeni, Interview, May 08, 2017).

I do not have any device. Even if I get one, there is no electricity at our school; therefore, I cannot make use of my internet device provided by the University (Etuhole, Interview, May 09, 2017).

We have artificial network and something like booster but you cannot download the document and this artificial is like Wifi (Tumina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

Yes, I obtained one, but there is no use of it, as there is no network at school and it is very difficult to be connected, even to do assignments and to submit electronically (Pewa, Interview, May 04, 2017).

Yes, but it is not working at the village as there is no network connectivity; only if I come with it to the place where there is network connectivity (Bola, Interview, March 03, 2017).

Not at home, but rather at school (Laimi, Interview, March 04, 2017).

I have a laptop and a sim card provided by the university (Tuli, Interview, May 05, 2017).

I did not collect it, most of the time I went to the university and found it closed and they do not open on weekends for us who are travelling from far (Fiona, Interview, May 04, 2017).

No, there is no network connectivity and it is hard to communicate through a mobile phone, hence I have to climb up the tree to get network (Dolly, Interview, May 15, 2017).

Yes, but there is no use for it at school, because the network is poor at school and it is very difficult to be connected, even to do assignment and submit electronically (Phillo, Interview, May 10, 2017).

I am using on my laptop and sometimes it just stops working just like that (Marika, Interview, March 27, 2017).

No, I only make use of my mobile. I can use my mobile connected to my laptop and I can load my documents through the mobile (Petrina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

Yes, we have Wifi at school but it is not working all the time and if it is not working, we must sure we load all assignments. The lecturer may change the assignment while we have already downloaded the first version on student portal and we will see the notice very late or after we have submitted the wrong version. If we fail the first assignment, this can cause us to pay re-submission fee to re-submit the assignment (Dumeni, Interview, May 05, 2017).

I have the internet device provide by the university, but we have Wifi at school (Tekla, Interview, April 04, 2017).
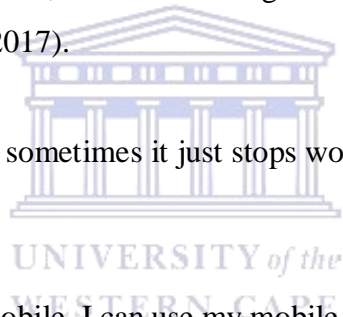
No, we have Wifi at school but the Wifi is very slow specially when is raining (Secilia, Interview, March 04, 2017).

They sometimes not, it may be down, broken or just freezing and sometimes students said no, there are not working on laptops or it is working on smart phones (Mariska, March 01, 2017).

Lack of internet connectivity and access to Moodle learning Management Systems (LMS)

The Centre for Open, Distance and eLearning (CODeL) (2018) states that adult learners are expected to submit all their assignments through the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS). The data revealed that most of the participants who work in the rural areas found this challenging, as they were not able to access the LMS to submit their assignments on time because of lack of internet connectivity. The data expressed these barriers as indicated below:

I always find myself submitting my learning activities at the last minute (Etuhole, Interview, May 09, 2017).
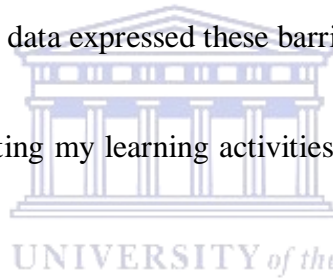
This can frustrate you as we have to come to town every week to do assignments and to access internet for other activities (Tuwilika, Interview, March 25, 2017).

Getting leave, which is not approved to visit the university, has impact on my learning as sometime I miss the due date of submitting my assignment in time or not at all (Daniel, Interview, March 17, 2017).

The internet provided by the university is not working at the remote areas where there is no network coverage and this is frustrating, as we have to come to town every week to do your assignments and gain access to internet for other activities (Pewa, Interview, May 04, 2017).

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I have to come over the weekend to town to access internet and submit my assignment (Phillo, Interview, May 10, 2017).

We have Wifi at home and internet at work (Mariska, March 01, 2017).

No, I make use of the university internet (Tuli, Interview, May 05, 2017).

No internet at home, only at school (Laimi, Interview, March 04, 2017).

I have an internet device, but it is not working at the village, as there is no network connectivity. Only if I come with it to a place, where there is network connectivity (Bola, Interview, March 03, 2017).

I don't have internet at home but, I can make use of my university device, at school we have artificial network at school, something like booster but you cannot down load the document and this artificial network is like a Wifi (Tumina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

Most of my weekend I have to come to town to access the network, because at the school there is not network connectivity (Etukwatha, Interview, May 02, 2017).

There is internet installed at our school with one computer, but due to poor network connectivity, it does not work always. If we have network working everyone wants to use the computer, so it is difficult to make use it for your study (Hafeni, Interview, May 08, 2017).

No, I do not have a device to access internet (Petrina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

Urban location of universities

The location of a university can be an institutional barrier to distance adult learners. My study found out that the location of the university and the participants' places of work play an important role in terms of learners' participation in the adult learning process. The university in this study is located in a developed urban area. This means that those in close proximity do not experience problems in terms of readily accessing the university. However, those who are not in close proximity and who may wish to participate in adult learning would not readily do so because of the distance between their homes and the university. Most of the participants reported travelling long distances from their homes to the university. Philo, a single female with one child and four siblings was staying with other relatives and Tumina, a single female with two children and looking after five siblings, stayed with relatives while working. Both Phillo and Tumina reported staying very far outside town, far from their homes and used public transport to travel about 300 kilometres to visit the university as well as visiting their homes. Lack of internet and electricity in some remote areas forced adult learners to travel long distances to visit the university to make use of the computer and internet facilities. The data further revealed that the location of the university is a barrier to learning, as participants reported not being able to visit the university for learning purposes for one to three weeks at a time. Cross (1981) confirms this when she observed that learners had barriers that prevented them from studying, such as barriers of schedules, costs and location. These are reflected in the participants' responses below:

> Yes very far. I am staying at Epembe around 300 kilometres (Tumina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

> I am very far. It is about 80km to my home but at the school is about 300 kilometres (Phillo, Interview, May 10, 2017).

Etuhole reportedly travelled a longer distance than others as she claimed staying very far and was only able to visit the university once every two months. This is reflected in Etuhole's response as follows:

I stay in the rural area where public transport is not always available. I visit the university once after two months and travel 350 kilometres from my workplace (Etuhole, Interview, May 09, 2017).

This showed that participants were very far from the university and they can only visit the university once after two months and some once after a week or three weeks. This is reflected in other participants' responses when they were asked how often they visited the university. Their responses are below as follow:

I visit the university once after three weeks and I had to travel 120 kilometres from my workplace (Hafeni, Interview, May 08, 2017).

I travel about 120 kilometres one way; transport at our area only goes to town once a week, and it is difficult to travel to the university if you need study guides urgently (Tuwilika, Interview, March 25, 2017).

I have to travel for almost 250 kilometres twice to visit the university, and this is frustrating and time consuming as the time I reach the university I will find them closed (Fiona, Interview, May 04, 2017).

Dolly, Teresia, Marika, Petrina, Dumeni, Tekla, Mariska, Fiona, Pewa, Bola, Daniel, Laimi, Etukwatha, Tuli, and Secilia who were also staying far from the university, travelled long distances and did not report their frequency of visiting the university for learning purpose.

Difficulty finding a school for teaching practice
The participants encountered many problems such as lack of knowledge on how to teach and how to acquire teaching skills at the schools they were teaching at among others. To acquire teaching experience, the participants were required to do teaching practice for two to three weeks at secondary level schools, grades 8-12, as their degree subjects were at secondary level. In addition, as they were specialising in subjects and the secondary schools they practiced at, had to have these subjects. However, due to lack of employment

at secondary schools most of the participants found themselves teaching at pre-lower primary school levels, Grades 1 – 4, where specialisation subjects were not offered as required by the university. The data revealed that most of the participants had to look for secondary schools to do teaching practice.

Tuwilika expressed that it was not easy to get a school and she got **a** place at a school where the principal knew her. The data also revealed that another challenge for participants was teaching practice for two to three weeks away from the schools where they were employed, as this means that they left their learners unattended. Since they were unqualified teachers, they had to apply for leave or arrange to teach over weekends. The following sentiments from the participants supports these claims:

> It is difficult to get a school to do your teaching practice because I am teaching at the pre and lower primary and I have to do the practice at the secondary level (Secilia, Interview, March 04, 2017).

> Yes, but three weeks allocated to teaching practice is too long, because you have to leave the leaners at your school unattended, because the grade you teaching is not the same grade to do teaching practice (Teresia, Interview, March 05, 2017).

> Yes, but I do teaching practice at the other school as at the school we have lower primary grade and I have to do my teaching practice at secondary level (Etukwatha, Interview, May 02, 2017).

MacKeracher et al. (2006) established that adult learners encounter a number of circumstantial (situational) realities beyond their control hence a nascent need to devise stratagems to accommodate all. In this study, it was unveiled that the participants met problems with the time allocated to do teaching practice. Participants expressed that three weeks allocated to do teaching practice was too long and their teaching subjects were not available at the schools where they were employed.

Distance adult travel from home/work to schools

It is very far from home about 50 kilometres (Marika, Interview, March 27, 2017).

It is about 5 kilometres from my work (Mariska, March 01, 2017).

Secondary schools are far from home about 60 kilometres. I have to struggle to find accommodation (Bola, Interview, March 03, 2017).

Not much in the case as students should find the nearest or preferable school for them to find accommodation easily (Teresia, Interview, March 05, 2017).

It is not near; we are based at the school (Phillo, Interview, May 10, 2017).

Is very far, we are camping at the school, (Daniel, Interview, March 17, 2017).

It is near the school (Laimi, Interview, March 04, 2017).

I am near my home, about 20 kilometres (Tuli, Interview, May 05, 2017).

Far from the school 300 kilometres (Tumina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

Is about 120 kilometres (Hafeni, Interview, May 08, 2017).

Yes, there is one secondary school where can I do teaching practice, but it is far from where I work (Marika, Interview, March 27, 2017).

Not available, not easy, because schools with secondary level are far from our school (Hafeni, Interview, May 08, 2017

Unsuitable student accommodation at remote schools

Most of the participants teaching in the rural areas reported having lack of accommodation. The data revealed that participants in schools in the rural areas lived in huts made of wood, tents and shacks, as there were no proper accommodation structures. In addition, there was no clean water and electricity. They had to walk some kilometres to fetch water for their daily use. This is reflected in the following responses:

> Accommodation is big problem at our school; we are sleeping in tents and it is difficult to buy or build yourself a shack because of our short contract. No water, we have to fetch water from far (Fiona, Interview, May 04, 2017).

> We have shelter there to sleep, not electricity no internet, we have small solar that hardly work, no water we depend only on rain, sleeping in huts is scary as snakes can enter the room anytime and making use of candle at night is dangerous and I am not used to such accommodation (Pewa, Interview, May 04, 2017).

> I have a shelter at the school because the school is far from my home about 120 kilometres (Tuwilika, Interview, March 25, 2017).

> No, there is no proper accommodation. We live in huts made of wood at school (Phillo, Interview, May 10, 2017).

> We are camping at the school (Dumeni, Interview, May 05, 2017).

> No, we are living in tents (Etuhole, Interview, May 09, 2017).

Institutional barriers beyond the university

Institutional barriers such as lack of infrastructure can be referred to as barriers that prevent adult learners from fully participating in adult education. In this section barriers encountered by adult learners are the poor condition of roads and unreliable transport. Adult learners travelled long distances on gravel roads and transport was not always available or reliable to reach the university in time to access internet facilities or collect study materials for assignments on time.

Poor condition of roads and unreliable transport
From the data, it was noted that, Marika, Etukwatha, Phillo, Bola and Dolly reported that the roads they travelled were not tarred; it is a distance to reach the tarred road and it was difficult to get public transport, which was also unreliable. This is reflected in their responses below:

> No, there is not tarred road from the school, there is gravel road and is very rare to get a car to come there (Marika, Interview, May 27, 2017).

> No it is not reliable as from the tarred road there is 5 kilometres on the gravel road, you need to make arrangement with the owner of the vehicle to take you to school and sometimes it is dangerous as you don't trust all drivers (Etukwatha, Interview, May 02, 2017).

> There is not tarred road and public transport is difficult to find in time (Phillo, Interview, May 10, 2017).

> No there is long distance from home to reach the tarred road to get public transport (Bola, Interview, March 03, 2017).

> Not really, as I have to walk a long distance to reach to the tarred road (Dolly, Interview, May 15, 2017).

Lack of access to transport to the university

The data revealed that most participants used public transport and taught at rural schools where transport to the university was a challenge. Participants reported having to travel long distances from their homes or schools to the university. They reported that the travelling distance ranged between 80 and 350 kilometres compared to 10 to 70 kilometres for those who were staying close to their homes or the university. The data showed that participants, especially those who were teaching at rural schools 350 kilometres away, experienced challenges with lack of transportation as well as with the modes of transportation available and could not visit the university regularly. This means that they had to pay high prices for fares to travel from one place to another, as transport fees were not fixed.

Living far distances from the university

The data revealed that participants experienced barriers related to transport, because they travelled long distances between the university and their places of work. The distance from their schools to the university meant they needed at least two days leave because private transport had to be used to visit the university. Some of the participants had to travel between 250 to 350 kilometres and this could take three to four hours to reach the university. The observation is in agreement with what MacKeracher et al. (2006) noted when they defined situational barriers as life factors. Adult learners face these external influences in terms of broad circumstantial conditions beyond their control. These prevent them from active participation as well as challenging their ability to access learning.

The data established that Teresia, Etuhole and Daniel reported travelling longer distances, between 300 to 350 kilometres than the others did. The participants reported that the distance from the university affected their learning most as they did not reach the university punctually or visited the university regularly. This is reflected in their responses as follows:

> I travel about 350 kilometres. It is very difficult for me to visit the university regularly to get study guide because of the long distance **as** well using public transport; it is costly (Etuhole, Interview, May 09, 2017).

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I travel a long distance of about 250 kilometres to reach the university and it is difficult to get transport in time (Daniel, Interview, March 17, 2017).

I am very far, it is about 80km to my home but at the school is about 300 kilometres (Phillo, Interview, May 10, 2017).

I am very far, outside town, Ms Felix, if you know about Hakafia like you going to Okongo, only 4x4 pick-up bakkies go there, if you do not get transport you have to foot four hours (Pewa, Interview, May 04, 2017).

It is very far. I come from Eheke near Ondangwa, it is about 60 kilometres one-way (Marika, Interview, March 27, 2017).

Yes, very far, I am stay at Epembe around 300 kilometres (Tumina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

The data above is in agreement with what MacKeracher et al. (2006) noted when they identified distance as one of the barriers towards accessing educational programmes by adult learners, because it requires adult learners to make use of the internet to submit their assignments and where they are working at there is not internet or electricity.

Lack of access to available and reliable transport to the university
Participants reported that it was not easy to get transport from their homes or workplaces to visit the university. The data revealed that participants had to struggle to get public transport to visit the university regularly as required to access the internet and this prevented the progress of their studies. Transport is an external barrier and Radovan (2012) postulates that barriers to participation can range from an individual's motivation based on internal factors and how some individuals remove external barrier factors. In order to deal with poor participation of adults in adult learning, it requires a good understanding of factors, such as attitudes, educational biography, motives of adult learners, the structure of offerings, qualifications of staff and ways of organising learning

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needs should be documented and appropriate mitigation strategies be sought to attend to each barrier.

> Not easy, if you want to go back the same day, you have to book the owner of the vehicle to wait for you and they charge you much more for that (Fiona, Interview, May 04, 2017).

> No, it is not easy. I stay in the rural area where public transport **is** not always available. I visit the university once after two months and travel 350 kilometres from my workplace (Etuhole, Interview, May 09, 2017).

> Like today, I have to struggle to get transport because there is a lot of water that side of Omusati and I am working at Uukwaludhi (Marika, Interview, March 27, 2017).

> Yes, because I have a vehicle, but other who are staying at our school struggle to get transport because of limited numbers of vehicle in the area and only travel in the morning and back in the afternoon. They have to wait for long time at the road (3 hours) (Mariska, March 01, 2017).

> It is easy to get transport from home to the university but it is not easy from school to the university, because there is not tarred road and public transports are difficulty to find on time and costly (Phillo, Interview, May 10, 2017).

> It is not easy to get transport because it only depends if these two vehicle owners are planning to go to town and it **is** almost 300 kilometres to town (Pewa, Interview, May 04, 2017).

> Not easy to get transport, there is a long distance from home to reach the tarred road to get public transport (Bola, Interview, March 03, 2017).

It is not easy, it depends on the situation, as sometimes you will get transport at late hours (Daniel, Interview, March 17, 2017).

It is not easy, transport at our areas only going to town once a week and it **is** difficult to travel to the university if you need study guides urgently (Tuwilika, Interview, March 25, 2017).

Not easy to get transport, you need to make an arrangement in advance by calling any one to pick you at the road (Tumina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

It is not easy; I have to foot almost 5 kilometres to the tarred road to get public transport (Etukwatha, Interview, May 02, 2017).

I have to walk a long distance to reach to the tarred road. It is not easy because transport will only be available during the day until 15h00 (Dolly, Interview, May 15, 2017).

Yes, because we have tarred road and there are many people are using public transport. I am scared to take public transport in the evening if I am late (Teresia, Interview, March 05, 2017).

No, there is not tarred road from the school, there is gravel road and is very rare to get a car to come there (Marika, Interview, March 27, 2017).

Only sometimes, when you reach to the university it almost late half past to the hour to write examination (Petrina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

It is not easy to get transport. I visit the university once after three weeks and I had to travel 120 kilometres from my workplace (Hafeni, Interview, May 08, 2017).

It easy to take transport, yes, because it is near the town (Laimi, Interview, March 04, 2017).

Yes, because I not far from the university (Tuli, Interview, May 05, 2017).

Is it easy to get transport from home (Tekla, Interview, April 04, 2017).

The data showed that participants who were teaching at schools where none of them owned a car to transport them, experienced lack of transport as a barrier more than the others. At some schools, only two teachers owned a motor vehicle. Participants reported that it was not easy to get transport or that transport was unreliable. Darkenwald and Valentine(1990) (as cited in Malhotra et al., 2007) agree that "adult learners' decision-making not to participate in adult learning activities is usually a combination of a multi-complex of obstacles, rather than just one or two factors in isolation" (p. 83). Participants also reported that public transport was not reliable. This is indicated in their responses as follow:

No, transport is not reliable as public, not available in time as you need it (Tuwilika, Interview, March 25, 2017).
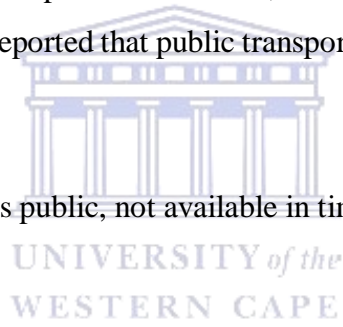
No transport is not reliable as sometime there is no transport available at all (Tumina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

No, because public transport is only available until 16h00 to go to our village, you will not find transport after that (Bola, Interview, March 03, 2017).

Not reliable, it depends on the situation, as sometimes you will get transport at late hours (Laimi, Interview, March 04, 2017).

It is not reliable because we can stay for an hour waiting at the road and end up getting any transport for anyone without knowing if he/she known the right driver or it is a stranger (Phillo, Interview, May 10, 2017).

It is not reliable, as colleagues who have vehicle might want to go to different directions (Pewa, Interview, May 04, 2017).

Not really, like today I have to struggle to get transport because there is a lot of water that side of Omusati and I am working at Uukwaludhi (Marika, Interview, March 27, 2017).

Not reliable, it depends on the situation, as sometimes you will get transport at late hours (Daniel, Interview, March 17, 2017).

No, it is not easy, I stay in the rural area where public transport is not always available, I visit the university once after two months and travel 350 kilometres from my workplace, No public transport is not reliable, as there is not public transport with transportation permit from the government. (Etuhole, Interview, May 09, 2017).

No, it is not reliable as from the tarred road there is 12 kilometres on the gravel road, you need to make arrangement with the owner of the vehicle to take you to the school sometimes it is dangerous, as you don't trust all drivers (Etukwatha, Interview, May 02, 2017).

Not reliable (Fiona, Interview, May 04, 2017).

Not really, as I have to walk a long distance reach to the tarred road, It is not easy because transport is only available during the day until 15h00 (Dolly, Interview, May 15, 2017).

It is not reliable as sometimes you find that there is no transport from Ondangwa to home (Petrina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

No, it is not easy, I visit the university once after three weeks and I had to travel 120 kilometres from my workplace (Hafeni, Interview, May 08, 2017).

To appreciate the above concerns as barriers, strategies such as providing information and guidance, flexible learning trajectories, proximity, quality assurance, management, outreach work to specific target groups, community-based learning, recognition of prior learning and financial instruments stimulate the participation of adults. Cross (1981) claims that institutional barriers could be inappropriate time, problems of location and transportation, lack of interesting and relevant offers, procedural problems and lack of information on offer. However, it was also noted in the data that some participants had their own transport but they appreciated the fact that public transport may be a problem, hence their nearness to the road or possession of cars make life easier for them.

Situational barriers

Johnstone and Rivera (1965) (as cited in Malhotra et al., 2007) classify situational barriers as those which are external to an individuals' control. Self-evaluation and attitude towards education are sub-themes and main concepts reflected by Cross's (1981) definition of situational barriers in which an individual is in a position to evaluate his or her environment and then can make a decision on whether to participate in adult learning. This concurs with Salomnson et al. (2006) as they expressed that self-evaluation includes an individual's sense of individualism to accomplish objectives and goals in life. The data revealed that the adult learners experienced different barriers that prevented them from being active participants in adult learning. This concurred with Cross (1981) who states that situational reasons generate the greatest barriers. Situational factors also include, multiple roles and responsibilities regarding work, family, community, the amount of time, energy and finances one can or is willing to invest in the learning activities, the level of support received from significant others and the distance from and to a learning institution. A more detailed discussion follows below.

Lack of time for studies due to work commitments

The data reflected that not all participants had time to study and comply with work commitments. Cross (1981) states that lack of time because of home responsibilities and job responsibilities can become a barrier. Participants reported having trouble in submitting their assignments in time and preparing themselves for the lessons for students the next day. Some have to teach extra subjects to what they teach daily. Tumina and Tekla stated that they lacked time management in handling their studies and workload, because they had extra classes in the afternoon on top of the normal morning sessions. Bola reported being tired when she arrived home after school and this prevented her from studying and preparing the next lesson. This was expressed by other participants who also experienced a lack of time to study and work constraints as barriers. This is reflected in their responses as follow:

> I am too tired when I arrive home. I cannot spend time to study and prepare a lesson plan for the next day at school (Bola, Interview, March 03, 2017).

> Not really, as working commitment, so we do not have sufficient time (Mariska, March 01, 2017).

> It is not easy sometimes. I used to be tired from work (Phillo, Interview, May 10, 2017).

> It is not easy as I have to plan next day lesson plan and other activities for the learners (Pewa, Interview, May 04, 2017).

> No, I have afternoon classes and most of the time I knock off late and I don't have enough time to do assignments (Tekla, Interview, April 04, 2017).

> I have inadequate time to study as I teach until 4 o' clock and we are camping at school. I also have a policy to teach from 7:30pm until late and monitor again learners with afternoon classes. I also have books to mark and I think I have poor management with my time hence I find myself pressured doing my assignments.

When it comes to the village, family commitments are too much (Secilia, Interview, March 04, 2017).

I find it difficult to manage time for my education activities (work commitment) and study at the same time. (Get leave not approved to visiting the university have impact to my learning as sometime I miss due date of submitting my assignment in time or not at all). One hour after work or study over the weekend and holidays (Daniel, Interview, March 17, 2017).

Not really, working commitment will not give you sufficient time to study (Etuhole, Interview, May 09, 2017).

Not, what prevents me is the workload; I have almost 41 learners in each class (3 classes)
I study only over the weekend. I take my afternoon Saturdays and Sundays (Etukwatha, Interview, May 02, 2017).

Not really as working commitment, so we do not have sufficient time (Fiona, Interview, May 04, 2017).

No too much work. I do not know how long I take to study (Petrina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

Not really. I do not have sufficient time to study. Sometimes one hour per week (Hafeni, Interview, May 08, 2017).

No, I have afternoon classes and most of the time I knock off late and I did not have enough time to do assignments (Tekla, Interview, April 04, 2017).

No, enough time to study, I teach until 4 o' clock. We are camping at school. I have policy to teach from 7:30 until late and monitor again leaners with afternoon classes.

I have books to mark and I think I have poor management with my time. I find myself having pressure in doing my assignments. When you come to the village, family commitment is too much (Secilia, Interview, March 04, 2017).

Yes, I have to sacrifice to cut friends and other things and take time to study (Laimi, Interview, March 04, 2017).

Yes, after working hours, but sometimes I teach after classes for Grade 10 until late. I have it but I do not really follow it the way I set it up (Tumina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

I take about 6 to 7 hours, because in our ministry if you are studying many hours will be allocated for study purpose (Mariska, Interview, March 10, 2017).

Yes, I always take two to three hours in the evening to study (Teresia, Interview, March 05, 2017).
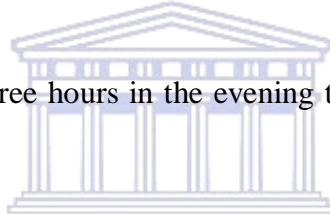
The data revealed that some participants reported putting an hour a day aside to study and using their weekend to study to be able to cope with work responsibility. This is reflected in their responses above when they were asked about the number of hours they spent studying:

Lack of financial assistance
The data showed that the majority of the participants reported that registration fees were affordable as they were all working and could pay their tuition fees themselves. Most of the participants reported that they pay their studies for themselves, as they do not get financial assistance. This confirms what Cross (1981) says that cost may be perceived as a barrier to education for some adult learners.

Unaffordable university fees

> I find it very expensive (Tekla, Interview, April 04, 2017).

> It is sucking into my pocket (Marika, Interview, March 27, 2017).

> No, because I am breadwinner and I have to look after my siblings (Etukwatha, Interview, May 02, 2017).

> No, and university is strict with payment method. I am worrying to this contract employment and I want to get permanent post and earn more to support my family and pay my tution fees on time (Fiona, Interview, May 04, 2017).

> No, I did not write my first year examination due to financial problem (Hafeni, Interview, May 08, 2017).

It was revealed that even for those who work, though their salaries enable them to pay for the fees, there is a tacit acceptance that indeed the fees are a barrier. Hence, they reach out to get support of a financial nature from the spouse, in the case of Petrina.

Low income

Most of the participants were teaching at rural schools and because they lack teaching experience, they earn low income and aimed to earn more to meet their basic needs. This confirms what Knox and Videbeck (1963) say, "An individual's participatory opportunities are defined by physical resources available" (p. 106). The data revealed that the participants were earning a salary based on their senior certificate instead of current degrees. They felt that they were underpaid. Tumina, Marika, Tuwilika and Phillo reported earning a low income.

The following statements supported the claim:

> I am earning very little income that **is** not enough for my tuition fees and the family's basic needs (Tumina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

I feel underpaid because I am earning based on my senior certificate instead on the degree. I am struggling to settle my university account (Marika, Interview, March 27.2017).

Yes, to say that we are earning little (Tuwilika, Interview, March 25, 2017).

I am underpaid, so, I am earning little (Phillo, Interview, May 10, 2017).

This is confirmation of what is expressed by Cross (1981) that "low-income groups are far more likely to mention cost as barrier than middle and upper income" (p. 100).

Financial problems

The university requires adult learners to pay the tuition fees before they are allowed to write their examinations. The data revealed that a barrier to participation in adult learning is lack of money as many adult learners were not high-income earners. Participants reported that they had experienced lack of financial assistance, which was one of the main reasons why they stayed at home for one to three years without furthering their studies to obtain a tertiary qualification.

Yes, I paid for my husband help and myself me sometimes (Petrina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

No, I find it very expensive (Tekla, Interview, April 04, 2017).

We are also facing the challenges for example, when you have the young ones going to the university, other financial responsibilities and some people who are not working to afford to pay the university (Secilia, Interview, March 04, 2017).

The data revealed that most of the participants were not granted a bursary or loan for their study fees and this had affected their learning in the past. This shows that student assistant fund organisations do not really fully assist adult learners who have applied financially. Therefore, adult

learners who were earning low incomes found it difficult to pay their tuition fees in time. This is what was confirmed by Cross (1981) that institutions and colleges do not give financial aid of any type for part-time students. She further declared that the issue of financial aid is in great flux, indeed it may not be too harsh a judgement to say that financial aid programmes,' whether traditional or non-traditional, are in general a disarray.

Participants were asked if they had been granted bursaries or loans for their study fees and most of them reported that they did not have bursaries or loans. This is what one participant expressed in her response related to the granting of a bursary/loan toward her study:

> I don't have loan /bursary now because last time I was given 1500.00 loan from the ministry, they demand me to pay back within a short term, and therefore I am discouraged to re-apply. I was challenged also when you get a loan and after you finish and did not get job to pay back the loan it is a stressful situation (Secilia, Interview, March 04, 2017).

Participants reported that the university is very strict with the method of payment of tuition fees. Adult learners reported that the university had fixed dates to pay the tuition fees and learners were expected to meet the due dates. This made the situation worse as adult learners were unable to pay their tuition fees. Some adult learners did think about quitting the programme because of this barrier. Adult learners reported that they did have a problem with paying their tuition fees before examinations.

Lack of family support
As it has already been mentioned, most families were proud of the participants, some families felt the participants wasted their money paying for their first degrees. The data also show that some families were having concerns about their studying. This is reflected in some of the participants' responses as follow:

No support as they do not trust this will help me to get a permanent job, but I am confident that they will understand as soon as I finish and get **a** permanent teaching post (Etukwatha, Interview, May 02, 2017).

My parents feel I have wasted time to do my first degree without knowing that I cannot find **a** job with my degree. (Marika, Interview, March 27, 2017).

Not really supportive because I am on my own with my children (Mariska, March 01, 2017).

They are not happy. They feel I have wasted time to do my first degree and failed to get a job related to my qualification. No support as they do not trust that this will help me to get a permanent job. But I am confident that they will understand as soon as I finish and get permanent teaching post (Etukwatha, Interview, May 02, 2017).

Information barriers related to the university

It is important that information related to education reach adult learners timeously to enable them to make appropriate choices to further their studies. The data revealed that some participants experienced lack of information and knowledge about the availability of learning opportunities. They felt that they were disadvantaged in terms of getting information about learning after the completion of their senior certificates

Lack of course information

Participants reported experiencing course information as a barrier in making a decision and selecting the right course that would meet their needs. For participants, this obstacle prevented them from doing the right qualifications in the first place. This study found out that the adult learners knew about a very limited number of courses to access adult learning programmes. Lack of necessary qualification to enter a programme was another barrier for one participant.

The data revealed that one participant registered for the Diploma in Secondary Education as this was a requirement for admission to the master's degree. Most of the participants did not want to go back to full-time classes to further their studies as they regarded it as time consuming. The above developments and observations concur with Merriam and Caffarella (1999) who posited that "barriers can be overcome and adult learners can get opportunity to participate in adult learning if they get information needed to proceed" (p. 5). What is evident in this study is that the participants overcame their barriers, and obtained information to participate in adult learing as accurate information was made available to them. Lack of accurate information dissemination at the university results in denying adult learners an opportunity to acquire new skills and knowledge (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).

The data below confirm that relatively few participants received information via advertising of programmes by the university. The responses below confirm this:

I got information about the university from the website and applied (Bola, Interview, March 03, 2017).

I got at the university reception (Daniel, Interview, March 17, 2017).

I got information from the website (Tuli, Interview, May 05, 2017).

I got the information from the university website (Tuwilika, Interview, March 25, 2017).

I got information from the university website (Dolly, Interview, May 15, 2017).

I got information from the newspaper (Petrina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

Most participants confirmed accessing information pertaining to the course from workmates or colleagues and that human agency played a pivotal role. This is a testimony to the position taken by Abdullah et al. (2008) that adult learners may have no knowledge or information about

educational opportunities available to participate in adult learning. This was the case as seen below:

I heard it from friends (Dumeni, Interview, May 05, 2017).

I got the information about this course from a colleague at the school where I am teaching. (Teresia, Interview, March 05, 2017).

One of my friends informed me about it. We were doing Industrial Psychology and she was also employed as unqualified teacher at the same school. She then obtained the information that one can register for this advanced diploma to be a qualified teacher and can be employed as **a** qualified teacher (Marika, Interview, March 27, 2017).

I was referred by the faculty as the requirement to the master that I wanted to do. (Mariska, March 01, 2017).

I got the information from my colleague at school who was studying at the university during that time (Phillo, Interview, May 10, 2017).

It was 2015 when my friend talked to me about it and when I got a job I tried to apply (Pewa, Interview, May 04, 2017).

I heard it from friends (Etuhole, Interview, May 09, 2017).

I got the information from the colleague at school where I am teaching (Laimi, Interview, March 04, 2017).

I got the information from a friend after I got teaching post (Tumina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

I got the information from my colleagues at the school (Etukwatha, Interview, May 02, 2017).

I heard it from colleagues at school (Fiona, Interview, May 04, 2017).

I heard it from a friend at school (Hafeni, Interview, May 08, 2017).

I heard from colleagues at school (Tekla, Interview, April 04, 2017).

I was working for a private company. I found the information from the website, friends, but it was a challenge to ask yourself if you have to resign and go on full-time to study. I was working on a contract when I got information I was scared to leave my work. Even now, I get temporary teaching post; I live far from my family (Secilia, Interview, March 04, 2017).

This is what Dhawan (2006) confirmed that course information dissemination does not mean adult learners need to rely on only one source, such as newspapers or a faculty prospectus.

The data in this study revealed that some participants experienced English as a Second Language as a barrier to them obtaining university course information upon completion of the senior certificate. They described it as a challenge for them to choose the correct course, because they struggled to understand information written in English, especially in completing an application form. The following illustrates this language barrier:

In the past, I found it difficult to understand information written in English as I had to apply for admission but I struggled to understand the admission letter received from the university and this had caused me not to enroll in any programme after completion of my senior certificate at the university (Secilia, Interview, March 04, 2017).

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We are taught in our mother tongue at the lower grade. Understanding English in the past at university level was a problem. I think the Ministry of Education should allow our children to be taught in their mother tongue and English at low grade (Hafeni, Interview, May 08, 2017).

Lack of information was shown to be a barrier to adult learning opportunities at the institution of higher learning in this study. In other words, the data show that participants did not get proper advice and guidance in choosing the correct career initially, but some ended up doing the programme, because they registered late, which could be a result of lack of information about registration dates, or that there was a limit on the number of registrations per programme. The data revealed that adult learners, who lack course information, see this as an information barrier, as educational information always reached them very late or never.

I thus concur that the findings in this study are in accord with those of Cross (1981) in terms of lack of information being an institutional barrier; an institution of higher learning should be responsible for making information about their courses known as well as the incentives for learning.
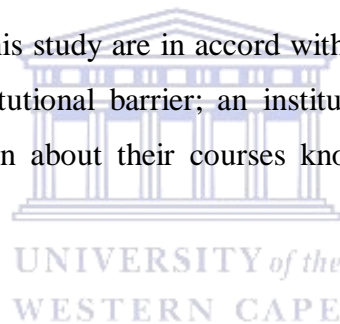
Participation

All participants were postive about learning as most of them participated in adult learning voluntarily. Participants have set goals and expectations for after they obtain their teaching qualifications. The findings are not in accord with what Cross (1981) argued about dispositional barriers of negative attitudes and perceptions about returning to adult learning that prevent participation in adult learning programmes. The positive attitude of the participants are illustrated in the topics below.

Intention to become a qualified teacher
Most of participants enrolled for the diploma with intention to become a qualified teacher to earn income a and get a permanent position. This is reflected in their responses as follow:

I have enrolled for this diploma with expectations to acquire new skills and knowledge on how to teach (Daniel, Interview, March 17, 2017).

After completion, I realised that education was the right choice for me and start looking for a teaching post and enrol for this programme be a qualified teacher (Pewa, Interview, May 04, 2017).

I have enrolled for this programme to be a qualified teacher. After all I end up liking teaching (Tuli, Interview, May 05, 2017).

I enrolled for this programme to obtain education qualification, now I am under-qualified teacher. I have created a hobby of teaching. I therefore would like to change my career field completely to education field (Petrina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

I have enrolled for this qualification to be a qualified teacher as I found out that education is the best profession for me (Hafeni, Interview, May 08, 2017).

I want to be a teacher as this was my first choice but I did not get the opportunity to do education (Dolly, Interview, May 15, 2017).

Teacher or Lecturer
I have enrolled for this programme to be a lecturer in future (Tuwilika, Interview, March 25, 2017).

Income and qualified teacher
I have enrolled for this programme to be a qualified teacher and able to earn more money, as with my degree the Ministry paid me a low salary (Dumeni, Interview, May 05, 2017).

Qualified and job

I did enrol for this course to understand the foundation of education and to get permanent teaching post and to obtain a qualification in education because now I am an unqualified teacher and I would like to completely change my career field to an education field (Bola, Interview, March 03, 2017).

Due to the limited job market for my first degree' field of study, it forced me to apply for a teaching post (Teresia, Interview, March 05, 2017).

Actually what forced me to do this diploma is that the job hunting and the competition is very high and for you to go for interview for HR position you find more than 350 fighting for one post. Right now, I am not HR, I am teacher, why do I have to stick and wait for HR position while education have many posts (Tumina, Interview, March 10, 2017).

Enrol for Masters

I do not like teaching and I would not go and teach after completing this diploma. I am doing this diploma to prepare and enable me to meet the requirements to enrol for my Master degree (Mariska, March 01, 2017).

I have enrolled for this course to teach and earn money; teaching is not my career, as soon as have to obtain my Master degree for Industrial Psychology I will look for a job related to my qualification. (Marika, Interview, March 27, 2017).

Income and job

I have enrolled for this programme to get a permanent job and earn an income to support my family (Phillo, Interview, May 10, 2017).

The situation of not earning anything forced me to enrol for this course to get job (Fiona, Interview, May 04, 2017).

I have enrolled for this programme to get job and earn income (Tekla, Interview, April 04, 2017).

My husband was the only breadwiner at home and I was sitting with my degree at home without a job, and it was not easy to support the family alone. I therefore decided to enrol in this programme and find this teaching post (Secilia, Interview, March 04, 2017).

Likes education
I have enrolled for this course because I fell in love with education (Etukwatha, Interview, May 02, 2017).

This shows that the participants voluntarily enrolled for the diploma through adult learning with expectations and goals to meet. They had identified their need to learn; they were self-directeded as well as confident to be able to overcome barriers to learning. This confirms what Salomnson et al. (2006) say that participating in adult learning is a voluntary exercise; it has to do with an individual's attitude towards education for the adult learner to decide whether to participate in adult learning or not.

Philo stated that education was not really something that she wanted to do, as her understanding regarding education was not clear. She further narrated that she was admitted to do a Diploma in Education to teach lower primary and had decided to do a degree in human resources, but upon completion, she did not get employment.

This resonates with Malhotra et al. (2007) that participation in higher education is a complex phenomenon involving various reasons. A similar opinion was expressed earlier by Edwards et al. (1993) that the reasons for participation are complex and multi-dimensional and often not reducible to a single motivation. The verbatim responses and comments of the participants in terms of why they enrolled as adult learners support this.

MacKeracher et al. (2006) also confirmed that adult learner's participation is a matter of choice which fit into an individual's work or other interests and obligations. I found this argument true looking at the determination and dedication the participants had towards education. Cross (1981) also stressed this sentiment that in order for participation in adult learning to take place there must be a postive chain of response based on the self-evaluation of adult learners and their attitude about education.

Summary

In this section, I focused on the approach used for thematic data analysis. I presented the data obtained during the interviews to address the aim of this study. I then interpreted the data and presented the responses of the participants to discuss the barriers to participation in distance learning. I discussed the results in terms of the aim of the study. In the next section, I present a summary of the findings, theoretical insights, recommendations and conclusion.

SECTION FIVE: SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

In this section, I present a summary, findings, theoretical insights, recommendations and conclusion.

Summary

The aims of my study were to investigate the opportunities for participation in adult learning among adult learners, and the barriers that inhibit adults' participation in distance learning. The Chain-of-Response (CoR) Model by Cross (1981) was used as the conceptual framework in the study.

Non-probability purposive sampling was used to draw 20 adult learners from the university's database. Using an interview guide (Appendix A), I conducted semi-structured interviews. The interviews were audio-recorded and field notes were used to capture the data. The audio-recordings were transcribed and then I analysed them according to the CoR conceptual framework.

The study showed that the adult learners in the study after completing their first degree found themselves unemployed as competition in the job market was high and jobs relating to their qualifications were unavailable. The only jobs available were in education and they ended up teaching without teaching experience and a teaching qualification. Thus, their situation of being unemployed forced them to change their field of study. In other words, existential reality or circumstantial (situational) barriers emanate from one's social, economic and political background hence border around issues of social, family and other commitments (Mbukusa, 2009).

Main questions

What opportunities are available for participation in distance education study?

What barriers affect participation in distance education study?

Sub-question

What support should be provided to make possible participation in distance education study?

<u>Findings</u>

The participants indicated that adult learning is part of lifelong learning. Learning is a well-thought-out energetic tool for coping with the challenges of economic competitiveness and demographic changes for fighting unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. There were 17 female participants and 3 males who voluntarily participated in the study. All participants had obtained their first degree at other institutions of higher learning in different fields of study. The majority (19) were employed as unqualified teachers. One was registered in the diploma programme as a requirement to be admitted to a master's degree. All were required to acquire teaching experiences and new knowledge on how to teach at secondary phase.

Findings related to opportunities for participation

1. Nineteen participants were unqualified teachers residing in the rural areas.
2. The participants' self-perception attitudes towards education were positive.
3. The participants received an opportunity to further their studies to acquire education qualifications and to get permanent jobs as well as to be qualified teachers.
4. The participants were in the process of reaching their goals that they had set for themselves.
5. Participants accepted opportunities to participate in the diploma programme.

Findings related to barriers to participation

Participants had difficulties coping with the situation they found themselves in and opted to register for the diploma course to acquire education qualifications to get permanent employment. Participants were challenged by new life patterns and job market competition, although they did have a first degree. They resided far from their family members and had to travel long distances to their homes for weekends or during holidays. Visiting the university required them to apply for leave for one or two days a month. Some indicated that it was not always easy to get leave approved.

Situational barriers

1. Participants experienced lack of teaching experience as a barrier.
2. Participants experience lack of financial assistance as a barrier.
3. Participants experienced lack of time to do assignments and work commitments as barriers.

Information barriers

1. Participants experienced lack of course information dissemination.
2. Participants experienced language as barrier to information.

It was also noted that most participants did have past experiences of not receiving course information in time or during registration in order to make informed decisions to choose marketable courses. Understanding English was a problem for some to make the right choices in the past.

Institutional barriers

1. Participants did not have access to the internet at home and in the workplace.
2. Participants experienced an unreliable supply of electricity at schools.
3. Participants had access to a limited number of schools to do their teaching practice.
4. Participants experienced lack of accommodation at schools as a barrier.
5. Participants experienced the timeframe and hours allocated to do teaching practice as a barrier.
6. Participants experienced the urban location of the university as barrier.
7. Participants experienced limited transport as a barrier.

Theoretical insights

According to the CoR Model, the components of self-perception and attitude to education allow adult learners to evaluate themselves in order **to** improve their living standards and to decide to either participate or not to participate in adult learning. Based on my data, I found that my study confirmed that adult learners evaluate themselves. The adult learners realised their need to participate in adult learning to acquire new skills and teaching experience voluntarily. This is confirmed by Salomnson et al. (2006) who state that participating in adult learning is a voluntary exercise and it has to do with an individual's attitude. Edwards et al. (1993) hold a similar position

by describing life transitions as factors that influence adults' decisions to participate frequently conciding with changes in life circumstances. Based on the findings of this study, I am in agreement with this sentiment. My study found that the participants experienced difficulty in coping with the situation they found themselves in, that is, teaching pre- and lower primary grades without teaching knowledge or experience. Therefore, their attitude towards education confirmed that adult learners have a willingness to improve on their academic credentials.

My study found that there is a wide variety of reasons that adult learners pursue learning through adult learning while they are working. In my study, all participants who were interviewed were working and were unable to attend full-time classes. Opportunities are a component in Cross's (1981) CoR Model. This component indicates that adult learners have opportunities to study through adult learning, although they could find themselves having barriers to participate in different ways.

The data revealed the following situational barriers experienced by the participants, lack of teaching experience, lack of finance, lack of time to do assignments and job tasks. These are situational barriers. Cross (1981). MacKeracher et al. (2006) state that situational barriers are external factors that influence individual adult learners who are facing broad circumstantial conditions beyond their control. These inhibit adult learners from participating in the above-mentioned adult learning activities.

Barriers experienced by the participants also related to information, for example, lack of course information and lack of career guidance. The data revealed that there was lack of information about educational courses offered, thus the participants felt disadvantaged, as they did not know which course to select when they first registered at an institution of high learning. They experienced that information dissemination was limited. Dhawan (2006) underscored that course information dissemination does not necessarily mean adult learners should rely on one source; they should be referred to many sources, such as newspapers, television and a faculty prospectus, just to mention a few. Abdullah et al. (2008) also add that information must be accurate as most adult learners experienced lack of information and lack of knowledge about the availability of learning opportunities.

The data revealed that the participants experienced institutional barriers such as lack of network connectivity and electricity at home and their work places; lack of accessing internet facilities; lack of schools to do teaching practice; unavailability of staff members to render support over weekends or after working hours and challenges of timeframe and hours allocated to do teaching practice.

Recommendations

I am of the opinion that strategies should be designed to resolve the problems identified with widening participation, supported by policy instruments that address the prevailing barriers to adults participating in learning activities. Based on the findings above, I make the following recommendations:

- The university should improve its dissemination of career information and staff should be available at its regional centre for easy access to rural adult learners and to answer their inquiries over weekends.
- The coordination of teaching practice should be improved by involving other stakeholders such as the school inspector of education to facilitate access to relevant schools for distance learners to do practice teaching.
- The university should have an education outreach officer to improve access and availability of course information in remote rural areas in order to attract more adult learners to participate in adult learning.

Conclusion

I found the CoR Model suitable for my study as the data confirmed that particular dispositions and conditions activate a 'chain-of-responses' which result in adult learners' participation in adult learning activities and programmes. Desjardins and Rubenson (2013) claim that the model does not precisely explain what would happen if an adult's anticipated professional or academic destination has been attained in terms of what happens next.

However, the model did not not leave room for the endlessness of human desires for adult learners to attain goals in this study. As discussed in the literature review, Maslow's (1990) hierachy of human needs should be considered in the model to explore more insights.

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Appendix A
Interview guide

Title: Investigating barriers to participation in adult learning among adult learners at a University
         in Southern Africa

Biographic Information

1. Name:……………………………………………………………………………………………

2. Gender: Male ☐   Female ☐

3. Age: ☐

4. Race:…………………………………………………………………………………..

5. Home language:……………………………………………………………………..………..

6. Other languages:……………………………………………………………………………

           ☐
       Speak

           ☐
       Write

           ☐
       Understand

7. Marital status: Single ☐   Divorced ☐   Widowed ☐   Married ☐

8. Number of dependents: ☐

9. What is your highest qualification?

10. What is your job position?

a) Goals and expectations of participants

11. How will this course enable you to reach your goals?

12. What do you expect from this course? How has the course met your expectation thus far?

b) Opportunities

13. Have you had any opportunities to study in the past?

c) Barriers

Course information dissemination (Information barrier)

14. How did you find out about this course?

15. How well do you understand information written in English?

Course financial implications (situational barriers)

16. Is the registration fee affordable?

17. Have you been granted a bursary or loan for your study fees?

18. If yes, how did this bursary or loan help you?

Opportunity/lack of transportation (situational barriers)

19. How far is your home from the university?

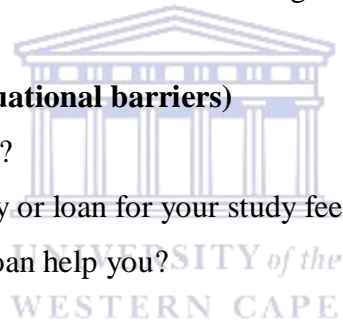20. How do you travel to the university?

21. Is it easy to get transport from home to the university?

22. Is this transport reliable? If yes, how? If not why not?

Opportunity/lack of Internet connectivity (Institutional Barriers)

23. Which device do you use to access internet?

24. Do you have internet access at your home?

Opportunity/lack of time for studies (situational barrier)

25. Do you get enough time to study, if no what prevent you?

26. If yes, how much time do you spend on your studies each day?

Opportunity/lack of schools to do practice (situational barrier)

27. Are the schools available in your community for teaching practice?

28. If yes, was it easy to get a school to do teaching practice?

29. How far is the school from home?

30. What do you want the university to do in order assist students before and during teaching practice?

Opportunity /lack of learning support (Situational Barriers)

31. What is **your** mode of study? (Study alone or in group) why?

32. How does your family feel about your study?

33. What kind of support do you got from your family which had helped you to succeed?

Opportunity/lack of community (cultural) support (Situational Barriers)

34. How do the cultural values and norms affect your study?

35. **Does your cultural background allow** you to study with ease?

36. If yes How? If no why?

d) **Participation**

37. Why did you enroll for this course?

Appendix B

The Registrar
University in Southern Africa
Tel: +264 61 207 3001
Fax: +264 61 2086806

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Request for permission to conduct research your University

I am a registered for the Master in Adult Learning and Global Change at the University of the Western Cape. My supervisor is Prof Zelda Groener. The topic of my research focuses on participation, and barriers to participation in adult learning among adult learners at your University.

This research is aimed at investigating the factors that influence, and deter participation. This study is of great importance to the adult learners, educational policy makers, Ministry of education and your University to understand barriers among adult learners and to address these in multiple ways.

I am therefore writing to request permission to conduct the above mentioned research at your University. I would like to conduct face - to- face 20 adult learners who are currently registered for Diploma in Secondary Education.
I trust that my request will receive your favourable consideration and am looking forward to hearing from your office.

Yours sincerely,

Agnes Fiina Felix (Ms)
Email: kukugwanamboga@yahoo.com

Supervisor: Prof Zelda Groener
Email: zgroener@uwc.ac.za
Tel: +27 21 9592801
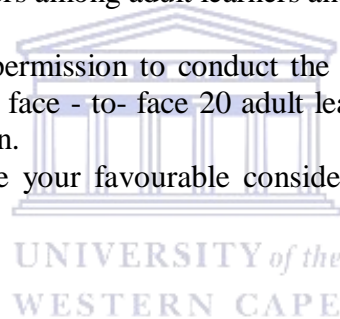
Appendix C
Participant information sheet

10 February 2017

Introduction

I am registered student for the Master's Degree in Adult Learning and Global Change at the University of the Western Cape. As a part of this programme, I am required to carry out a research project. My research topic**:** Investigate opportunities to participation in adult learning among adult learners at a University in Southern Africa. As a distance student at your respective University, I would like to invite you to participate in this research project. It is important that you understand why the research is to be conducted and why your participation in this research is vital. Kindly take time to read and decide whether or not you wish to take part in this research. Taking part in this research project is entirely voluntary; you are free to refuse or withdraw at any time without any penalty or giving reason.
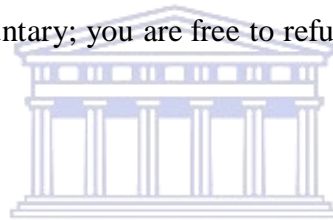
The purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate opportunities to participation in adult learning learners who are studying through distance mode of delivery and find new strategies that can be in place to increase the number of adult learners participating in adult learning like you. All adult learners in this study are drawn from the list of adult learners enrolled for diploma in secondary education (professional and training) program that obtained their first degree from various local and international universities and opted to change their career to education field in order to become qualified teachers. You are invited to participate in this study because you are part of this group. As you are participating actively in adult learning, you will benefit once barriers to participation will be discussed in relation to adult learning and come up with mitigation strategies that will increase the number of adults participating in adult learning. The University and the Ministry of education who are providing funding and resources to the adult learners will benefit in the sense that their resources will be utilized meaningfully rather than buying resources which nobody will utilize.

The policy makers of the University will benefit as they will use the findings to this study to implement adult learning policies that are achievable, practical, meeting the needs of the stakeholders as well as being aware of barriers adult learners are facing during their studies.

How the research will be conducted

Adult learners will be interviewed individually with me and I will ask you questions thirty-eight (38) questions from interview guide. I will arrange a time to meet, which will be convenient for you in order to come to your place (work, home) or any preferable place you choose. The duration of the interview will be approximately an hour or less as it will depend on our discussion. The interview can also take less time or with extra minutes. **With your permission**, I will use an audio recorder and field notes to capture accurate information.

Confidentiality

Your name and the real name of your organisation /school will be protected; in this case I will use pseudonyms to ensure the confidentiality of the organisation name and adult learners. All information collected about you in this study will be kept strictly confidential as all personal details will kept in a locked filling cabinet and electronic data will be save in my Dropbox folder, a folder in Dropbox.com website and the information can only be accessed by me with a password.

Thank you so much for taking time to read this information sheet and kindly feel free to ask me if might not understand something in this sheet.

Agnes Fiina Felix (Ms)

Email: kukugwanamboga@yahoo.com

Supervisor: Prof Zelda Groener

Email: zgroener@uwc.ac.za

Tel: +27 21 9592801

Appendix D
 Consent form for participants

10 February 2017

Research Project Title: Investigating barriers to participation in adult learning among adult learners at a University in Southern Africa

Dear Participant

Thank you very much for taking time to read this information sheet provided and also for agreeing to participate in the research project. Kindly be assured that all information given during the interview session will be held strictly confidential and nothing will be compromised.

Kindly sign this consent form as an indication that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this research project and you agree that:

- You have read and understood the participant information sheet and the consent form provided.
- You have freely given your consent to be interviewed by the researcher and understand that the researcher will take field notes and to be audio recorded.
- You understand that your words may be quoted and used in publications, reports and webpages without disclosing your identity.
- You understand that you are free to refuse or withdraw at any time without any penalty or giving reason (s) why you no longer want to participate.

Kindly sign this form and return it to the person that gave it to you.

Name of Participant: ……………………………………………………………………
Participant signature: ……………………………………………………………………
Contact details: ………………………………………………………………………….
Place of employment:……………………………………………………………………..
Place of Interview: ……………………………………………………………………
Date of interview: ……………………………………………………………………
Researcher signature: . ……………………………………………………………………

Appendix E

Office of Deputy Director academic Affairs and Research

UNAM Oshakati Campus

Dr J Sheehama, **E-Mail: jsheehama@unam.na;**

Contact: +264 814348018

20/01/2017

RE: Ms Agnes Felix's Permission for conducting research at UNAM Oshakati Campus

To whom it may concern

Ms Felix is a staff member at the University of Namibia, working with distance education student's administration and coordination. The UNAM Oshakati Campus is pleased to allow Ms Felix to conduct her research at our campus (Theme: Investigating barriers to participation in adult learning among adult learners at a University in Southern Africa). This is in fulfillment of her for the Master's Degree in Adult Learning and Global Change. The study is very meaningful and relevant to the UNAM Oshakati Campus, as the results of the study will also be helpful to our Campus.

We trust that, Ms Felix will conduct her study following all the research ethics and procedures according to the Proposal and identified tools of studies. If any additional information is required, do not hastate to contact the University of Namibia Oshakati Campus.

Kind Regards,

Dr. Sheehama Jacob, PhD