

**An agentic approach to investigating barriers to access and participation on the
pathways of mature adult students in Namibia**

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Abstract

Various shifts in the educational landscape of Namibia have made educational access and participation, particularly for mature adult students aiming to enter the teaching profession, difficult. While research on this phenomenon in Namibia is limited, the purpose of the current study is to investigate the barriers to access and participation for mature adult students aiming to live their lifelong dream of becoming teachers. As a result, this study is also necessary, as it can provide valuable knowledge regarding the teaching profession in Namibia which has experienced a crisis over the past few years.

Using a qualitative research approach and an interpretivist framework, I aimed to answer the main research question: “What are the barriers to access and participation among mature adult students at a Higher Education Institution in Namibia?” I used structure and agency as a theoretical framework, highlighting how the students use their agency to approach the barriers they face on their learning pathways.

The study shows how mature adult students demonstrated agentic capacities in the face of hardship, which allowed them to overcome both situational and institutional barriers to access and participation in teacher education. Recommendations are made around these barriers to support teacher education in the hope of solving some of the challenges facing this profession in Namibia.

Keywords:

Mature adult students

Barriers

Access

Participation

Agency

Namibia

Teacher education

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Declaration

I, Bronwin Valerie Basson, declare that this research paper is my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master's in Adult Learning and Global Change at the Institute for Post-School Studies, University of the Western Cape. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any university. All the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Signed: _____B. Basson_____

November 2024

List of abbreviations and acronyms

BETD	Basic Education Teaching Diploma
DPPE	Diploma in Pre-Primary Education
MEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
UNAM	University of Namibia

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Since the fall of apartheid in 1990, Namibia's education system has experienced critical challenges. At the core of these challenges is a shortage of teachers which means that unqualified and under-qualified teachers are employed to teach ("Unqualified teachers to be trained", 2015). In addition to a lack of qualified teachers, Junias, Kambeyo and Katukula (2022) aver that teacher training has challenges regarding curriculum delivery, delivery of lectures, "poor teaching practices" and "a lack of mentoring support from the school" (p. 2635).

The shortage in qualified teachers seems to have provided an opportunity for mature adults returning to study in Namibia, to pursue teaching as a profession. However, various shifts in the educational landscape of Namibia have made educational access and participation, particularly for mature adult students aiming to enter the teaching profession, difficult (Kashedi, 2021). In South Africa, Aploon-Zokufa (2022) also found that mature women face significant challenges in aiming to access a teaching qualification. While research on this phenomenon in Namibia is limited, the purpose of the current study is to investigate the barriers to access and participation for mature adult students aiming to enter the teaching profession. Understanding these barriers is important as it provides opportunities to assist mature adult students to access and participate meaningfully in teacher training. It can also assist in strengthening the teaching profession in Namibia.

Globally, educators are considered an important resource and are a priority on government agendas. The Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) in Namibia stated that "to educate our people is to invest in our development" (1993, p. 14) and that "education is both an investment in our future and our right as citizens" (1993, p. 15); a notion with which I agree.

Most Namibians, and particularly those disadvantaged under apartheid, want to improve their social circumstances and realise that tertiary study to gain a qualification might lead to an enhanced quality of life. Junias et al. (2022) have noted that many students enrol in teaching programmes for "extrinsic and other motives other than intrinsic or altruistic reasons" (p. 2635).

Accessing higher education in Namibia requires meeting set criteria based on a school leaving certificate or prior higher education elsewhere. However, many mature adult students who meet

the criteria to access higher education experience difficulties, not just with access but also with participation. Möwes (2016) commented that mature adult students “have multiple roles and responsibilities that do not allow full-time study or on-campus attendance” and for them “the opportunity to learn away from a physical university campus, either at home or in a local community or regional setting, can provide the flexibility required by adults who wish or need to continue their education” (p. 1).

Thus, accessing higher education has become an important task for mature adult students in Namibia as they seek to improve their life circumstances.

In the following section, I outline the background and context of the study, the study rationale, the research aims, the research problem and the research question.

1.2 Background and Context

Prior to independence, apartheid education was implemented along racially discriminatory lines and quality education was accessible to those who could afford it, leaving the largest part of the population, who were also less fortunate, unable to access quality education. As a result, the largest part of the teaching force was under qualified and unqualified to teach. To this end after Namibia’s independence on 21 March 1990, the government sought to redress the inequality by developing a new education policy, *Towards Education for All*, which clearly stated that, “All persons shall have the right to education” (MEC, 1993, p. 3).

In 2004, Namibia adopted Vision 2030, a document that clearly spells out the country’s development programmes and strategies to achieve its national objectives of access, equity, quality and democracy. The goal of Vision 2030 is to improve the quality of Namibian life to the level of its counterparts in the developed world by 2030. Education is part of this driving force to make Vision 2030 a reality. However, the education system of Namibia has many challenges as it is faced with serious weaknesses in the provision of education for all. According to the Strategic Plan (2012 - 2017), the Ministry of Education introduced an improvement programme, namely the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP), which aims to align the entire Namibian education system to Namibia’s Vision 2030 and the needs of the Namibian population.

The Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) (2006) reported that “among other factors, an underlying cause of the poor quality and internal inefficiency of the

general education system is that the majority of learners enter the system without the pre-requisite learning readiness” (p. 3). Additionally, the quality of education, quality of teachers and the performance of learners are unsatisfactory. Nampa (2015) states that “we must produce quality teachers, who would equally produce quality learners, and this can only happen if the education sector employs well-trained and dedicated teachers from early childhood education through tertiary education” (p. 1). In 2015, the Education, Arts and Culture Minister announced that the Namibian government, in partnership with the higher education institutions, was intent on capacity building for the under-qualified and unqualified teachers. This was to be done through distance learning and in-service training.

Keegan (1996) points out that students world-wide prefer to make use of distance education as a mode of study in higher education. This is true of Namibia where open distance and eLearning in higher education has become a prominent feature as it is “a country of vast geography, and a widely distributed population” (Möwes, 2005, p. 1). This mode of learning is attractive for both the state who sees it as a “practical and cost-effective strategy” (MEC, 1993, p. 74) and mature adult students who often have other responsibilities relating to family life or work (Hummel, 2010). Möwes (2005) points out that students who wish or need to study but are unable to attend physical classes because of personal issues or other barriers might choose to learn remotely.

1.3 Rationale

My research study investigates the barriers to access and participation for mature adult students at a higher education institute in Namibia. The particular programme I am focusing on is the Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD).

Being a mature adult BETD student myself, I was grateful to get the opportunity to become a qualified teacher, because I did not meet the minimum requirement to be accepted at a university. However, this is not the only reason Namibia has not produced qualified teachers. Even though they receive grants to study, students drop out of teaching courses at various institutions. This is concerning given that Namibia has a shortage of qualified teachers. Consequently, it occurred to me that mature adult students may be experiencing barriers, even if they may have an opportunity to access a teaching qualification.

Scholars like Rubenson and Desjardins (2009) note that “there has been little interest from the scholarly community to engage with the topic of participation and barriers, two classic issues in the field” (p. 188) of education. This prompted me to take an interest in the question: “Why do mature adult students access higher education?” I can answer this question myself, as the reason that I decided to study further was to get better job opportunities and a salary increase to ensure that my children can have access to better schools. I regard myself as a professional in adult learning, and, therefore, would like to find out why students leave before they can complete a course.

The sampled institute for the current study was founded in 1995 and it was acquired by a company in 2005. Since 2005, approximately 300 of 4265 students who registered for the Diploma in Pre-Primary Education (DPPE) have graduated. Although the Institute offers academic, business and information technology courses, the focus of the institute is teaching courses. The number of student registrations have grown from 2,500 to more than 55,000 in the past eleven years. This growth in the regional footprint and the expansion in course offerings is due to the high demand for education in Namibia. These applicants have an opportunity to complete the DPPE over 6 years at the Institute, but many fail to do so.

1.4 Research Problem

The purpose of this study was to investigate the barriers that hinder access and participation in educational pathways for mature adult students in Namibia. For the past few years, Namibia has been facing an acute shortage of qualified teachers at schools countrywide as students do not complete their studies and thus, the number of unqualified teachers has not been reduced.

Using an agentic approach, the study aims to examine how mature adult students navigate their learning journeys in relation to structural barriers and personal challenges, exercise their agency in overcoming obstacles, and engage in lifelong learning opportunities. The problem of access and participation for mature adult students is not a new one. By understanding the factors that shape the educational trajectories of mature adult students, the study seeks to contribute to policy and program development that supports mature learners in higher education.

1.6 Research Aims

- 1.5.1 To investigate the barriers to access and participation for mature adult students at a distance higher education institution in Namibia.
- 1.5.2 To develop new theoretical insights into the agency of mature adult students to access and participate in higher education.
- 1.5.3 To understand the impact of barriers to access and participation on the profession of teaching in Namibia.

1.6 Research Questions

1.6.1 Main question

What are the barriers to access and participation for mature adult students at a distance higher education institute in Namibia?

1.6.2 Sub-questions

What structural barriers affect mature adult students' access and participation?

What dispositional barriers affect mature adult students' access and participation?

How do mature adult students use their agency to overcome barriers that affect their access and participation?

1.7. Significance of Study

The significance of this study is located in the fact that it brings to our attention the many challenges faced by mature adult students in Namibia to access and participate in higher education in a meaningful way. As in other regions, mature adult students are often overlooked in the Namibian higher education discourse. By adopting an agentic approach, the research study highlights some valuable insights for policymakers, educational institutions, and stakeholders seeking to enhance accessibility, retention, and success for mature adult students. Additionally, the study contributes to the broader discussion on lifelong learning, social inclusion, and the role of higher education in fostering equitable opportunities for diverse learner populations.

1.8 Summary

In this chapter, I outlined the background and context of the study, rationale of the research problem and significance of this study. As mentioned, the significance of the study is located within the fact that it enables us to understand the barriers experienced by mature adult students in Namibia, who aim to pursue a teaching certificate. Furthermore, this chapter outlined the research aims, main research question and sub-questions that the study aims to address.

In Chapter 2, I provide an overview of the literature which frames the theory of this study and outline the research design and methodology of the study in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 encompasses the presentation of the data analysis of the research study and in Chapter 5, I provide the findings, summary and conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

In this section, I provide a review of the literature that underpins my research study and I also provide my theoretical framework. I start by discussing research on teacher education in Namibia and the barriers to access and participation for mature adult students in Namibia. Thereafter, I follow on with barriers to access and participation for mature adult students in general, the different kinds of barriers that mature adult students experience and how these barriers can be overcome.

The theoretical framework follows on from my literature review, within this same chapter. It provides an overview of the concepts structure and agency, and demonstrates how I apply the varying conceptions of this theoretical framing to the data gathered during fieldwork.

2.1.1 Teacher Education in Namibia

The post-independence context of teacher education in Namibia has been significantly influenced by an education system that had been shaped by the apartheid policies of racial segregation and inadequate services for the largest part of its population (Mayumbelo & Nyambe, 2019). As a result, the new government developed policies to create a more inclusive and effective education system by creating an integrated teacher education framework that focused on critical inquiry, inclusivity and reflective teaching practices. New teacher programmes, like the Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD), were developed to improve teacher qualifications and promote learner-centred education with the aim of addressing Namibia's socio-economic challenges (Curry & Goodwin, 1992; Zeichner, 2008).

However, as teacher training programmes faced challenges like inadequate resources, under-qualified teaching staff, and large classes (Prochner, Cleghorn, Kirova & Massing, 2016), structural and systemic challenges have not been overcome. Furthermore, efforts to bring Namibian education in line with international policies have been problematic as there is a lack of support for in-service teacher professional development. This has also impacted on the implementation of critical enquiry and reflective teaching practices (Mayumbelo & Nyambe, 2019; Zeichner, 2008).

Through frameworks such as Vision 2030 and the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP), the Namibian government has advocated for educational reform with the aim of improving teacher quality through higher degree programmes, innovative teaching methods, and stronger alignment with national development objectives (Prochner et al., 2016). Nevertheless, to achieve these goals requires addressing existing inequalities in rural and urban educational access, improving infrastructure, and ensuring that teacher preparation is consistently supported by adequate policies and resources (Curry & Goodwin, 1992; Mayumbelo & Nyambe, 2019).

2.1.2 Barriers to Access and Participation for Mature Adult Students in Namibia

Although not much research exists on mature adult students' barriers to access and participation in Namibia, Kashedi (2021), in a study at the University of Namibia (UNAM) has pointed out that mature adult students do experience barriers to access and participation. He identified situational challenges with regard to balancing work and family responsibilities with studies as the hindrance for mature adult students. This is often heightened by financial difficulties which incorporates the cost of tuition, transportation and study materials (Kashedi, 2021; Mutenda, 2020). Furthermore, mature adult students may also encounter psychological barriers such as anxiety, lack of confidence and the difficulty of returning to study (Murangi, 1997).

According to Mutendo (2020), institutional challenges such as a lack of support services, flexible learning options, for example, evening or online classes have made access and participation more difficult for mature adult students. Prochner et al. (2016) have added that rigid programme structures and the full acceptance of the recognition of prior learning deter many mature adult students from either accessing study or completing their courses. Kashedi (2021) and Murangi (1997) have suggested that promoting access to higher education and addressing the barriers that students experience in Namibia would require increased financial aid, improved academic support structures and more flexibility in learning options.

2.1.3 Barriers to access and participation for mature adult students in general

Scholars in adult learning who have contributed to the topic of barriers to participation are Cross (1981), Darkenwald and Merriam (1982), MacKeracher, Stuart and Potter (2006) and Rubenson and Desjardins (2009) all of whom share similar views regarding situational and

institutional barriers. Cross (1981) refers to the perceptions that adults have of themselves as learners with dispositional barriers while Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) refer to it as psychosocial barriers and MacKeracher et al. as attitudinal barriers. Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) and MacKeracher et al. (2006) included two additional barriers, namely, informational and academic barriers as hindrances to participation. I now present a description of the various barriers to access and participation.

2.1.4 Structural barriers

According to Rubenson and Desjardins (2009) structural barriers relate to external factors that individuals experience. Broadly, these include family commitments, employment or lack thereof, lack of finance or access to transport. They maintain that “family, job and institutionally related barriers are seen as structural barriers” and they argued that “broad structural conditions and targeted policy measures are seen to directly affect the extent and impact of institutional and situational, or job- and family-related barriers” (Rubenson & Desjardins, 2009, pp. 195-196). Mature adult students encounter various barriers which are work related and/or related family life.

2.1.5 Institutional barriers

Cross (1981) commented that educational institutions often follow “practices and procedures that exclude or discourage working adults from participating in educational activities” (p. 98). She identified institutional barriers to include classes scheduled at problematic times for working adult students; problematic locations impacting on transportation; uninteresting courses; and unsuitable fee structures (Cross, 1981). Drawing on Cross’s (1981) description of institutional barriers Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) stated that “institutional barriers are lack of attractive or appropriate courses and institutional policies and practices that impose inconvenience, confusion, or frustration on adult learners” (p. 137). In Namibia some mature adult students decide on distance education as they do not meet the minimum requirements to attend a university because of stipulated policies. In addition, they lack finance and need to work and pay for their studies.

2.1.6 Informational barriers

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) stated that the “informational barrier is sometimes construed simply to mean institutional failure in communicating information on learning opportunities to adults” (p. 137). They noted that if mature adult students are not aware of ‘learning opportunities’ they are less likely to access it and that “lack of information is likely to remain a major barrier to participation in adult education, especially for disadvantaged adults” (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 138). Desjardins and Rubenson (2013) also pointed out that “information constraints are also complex and are particularly important for the demand and supply of opportunities to interact efficiently” (p. 264).

2.1.7 Psychosocial barriers, individual barriers and dispositional barriers

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) found that psychosocial barriers “are individual held beliefs, values, attitudes, or perceptions that inhibit participation in organized learning activities” (p. 137). They explained that a potential learner with a negative self-image could evaluate the practicality, relevance, and credibility of learning in a negative manner and thus be deterred from engaging in participating in studying (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982).

According to Desjardins and Rubenson (2013) dispositional constraints were individually based “because they relate to the agency of individuals, in particular their capability to choose and act, given the circumstances they face” (p. 263).

Cross (1981) defined dispositional barriers as “those related to attitudes and self-perceptions about oneself as a learner” (p. 99). According to Cross (1981) these were personality traits acquired through previous learning experiences. Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) included feelings “lack of interest” or “too old to learn” as examples of dispositional barriers. Rubenson and Desjardins (2009) described dispositional barriers as “perceptions such as little to gain by participating, concerns about own ability to succeed, belief that one is too old to go back to study, and bad previous experiences with schooling” (p. 192). Similarly, Hovdhaugen and Opheim (2018) stated that “barriers may include lack of motivation or other forms of emotional barriers, as well as external factors such as cost, access to information or lack of employers’ support” (p. 563).

2.1.8 Situational barriers

Cross (1981) states that situational barriers are “those arising from one’s situation in life at a given time” (p. 99). For Cross these include lack of time resulting from work responsibilities, home and family responsibilities, and factors relating to lack of childcare support, finance or transport. Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) concur with Cross and comment that “situational barriers relate to an individual’s life context at a particular time, that is, the realities of one’s social and physical environment” (p. 137). MacKeracher et al. (2006), however, define situational barriers as “broad circumstantial conditions that hamper the ability of adult learners to gain access to and pursue learning opportunities” (p. 4), and state that it includes “having a mobility, sensory or learning disability; and lack of support from other” (p. 2) as further barriers.

2.1.9 Overcoming Barriers to Participation

Rubenson and Desjardins (2009) have stated that capability and desire to attain a goal motivated some mature adult students to overcome any barrier they encounter. They also point out that governments that developed “welfare state policies that shape the structural conditions” (Rubenson & Desjardins, 2009, p. 201), such as situational barriers as well as institutional and dispositional barriers, were more effective in assisting adult students to overcome barriers to participation. They stated further that “institutional and dispositional barriers appear to be somewhat more persistent than situational barriers” (Rubenson & Desjardins, 2009, p. 202).

2.1.10 Overcoming situational barriers

Managing family time and higher education studies can be challenging for many mature adult students. Planning ahead is perceived as a means to overcome the barrier of not finding time to be fully committed towards studies. Archer (2003) stated that participants define their own course of action and set up schedules to overcome the barrier of lack of time. According to Desjardins, Rubenson and Milana (2006), “setting priorities in one’s life” (p. 104) is the best way to overcome lack of time. However, Hitlin and Elder (2007) refer to Clausen (1991, 1993) who stated that planning required intelligence, reliability and self-confidence to ensure that plans were adhered to over time. Malhotra and Shapero (2007) recommended that “educational

institutions should develop policies” (p. 87) designed to accommodate family life to facilitate mature adult students return to education.

2.1.11 Overcoming financial barriers

A common barrier for many mature adult students (particularly in developing countries) is limited finances. Many scholars advocate a need for an intervention to encourage mature adult students to engage in educational activities or to ensure that they do not drop out. Malhotra and Shapero (2007) asserted that there was a need for “ensuring equal treatment and access to education financial aid for both full and part time non-traditional students” (p. 88). Rubenson and Desjardins (2009) recommended that “public financial support can be important for overcoming institutional barriers” (p. 202). Furthermore, according to De Vito (2009), “the most obvious way to break down the barrier of affordability is to change federal and state loan programs” (p. 6). Similarly, Chaloux (2019) proposed that “financial aid systems must become more student-centric and responsive to how, where, and when students learn” (p. 56), and it “must be fair and reasonable to all learners” (p. 56). In addition, Chaloux (2019) advocated that a financial aid system would be beneficial to mature adult students who wanted to participate in accessing higher learning particularly for “many part-time learners and students with the greatest financial challenges” (p. 55).

2.1.12 Overcoming academic barriers

Many mature adult students returning to study after a long period often face significant academic barriers relating to literacy, numeracy, use of technology to access information and new methods relating to critical and reflective thinking (MacKeracher et al., 2006). However, Torres (2019) emphasised that mature adult students “expected to work hard and understood that college involved a significant amount of reading and responsibility” (p. 27). He continued that mature adult students who were academically challenged found ways to overcome the fear of failing and that support from family and friends helped them to succeed (Torres, 2019).

Ibrahim and Silong (2000) and Hricko (2002) emphasised that it was important that mature adult students receive support and assistance in the use of technology to ensure that it did not become a barrier in their learning experience.

Referring to teaching strategies, De Vito (2009) emphasised that “adults learn best through methods and techniques that use experience” (p. 6). This means that institutions need to provide adult students with opportunities to learn the various technicalities at play when studying and

provide support in them learning these. Moreover, Kovačević (2016) stated that using peer support is a highly recommended way to ensure assimilation into an academic environment.

2.1.13 Overcoming institutional barriers

Falasca (2011) avers that “adult learners of any age can learn and succeed in their pursuits if they are afforded the opportunity, assistance and support they need” (p. 587). According to Abele (2021), “the leadership of the institution must have an unwavering commitment to student success” (p. 22) and that “commitment means believing, and acting on the belief, that every student can be successful” (p. 18). Thus, institutions need to take cognisance of mature adult students’ needs regarding “the method institutions design, deliver and administer learning activities.” (MacKeracher et al., p. 2) to ensure that mature adult students are not discouraged from access and participation in education.

2.1.14 Overcoming informational barriers

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) found that not all mature adult students “know where to go or whom to ask to get information” (p. 138) about educational opportunities. This is particularly applicable for rural communities situated far away from large urban areas. Educational institutions need to ensure that advertised courses reach rural communities as well. In a survey conducted by Easton (1991) it was found that the best way “to overcome information barriers to rural adult education is to publicize adult education programs through brochures, newsletters, and spot announcements on radio and TV” (p. 77).

2.1.15 Overcoming psychosocial barriers

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) reported that “there is no question that psychosocial barriers to participation are formidable, but they are no means always insurmountable” (p. 141). They suggest counselling be made available to mature adult students by “groups and institutions in the community and workplace that exert such powerful influences on individual behavior” (p. 141). These interventions are supported by Goto and Martin (2009) who state that “people were more likely to take on unfamiliar challenges when they believed they had the ability and intelligence to achieve their goals” (p. 15).

2.1.16 Overcoming dispositional barriers

Rubenson and Desjardins (2009) stated that “dispositional barriers refer to perceptions like little to gain by participating, concerns about own ability to succeed” (p. 192). They maintain that negative views towards learning have a greater impact on participation and “restrict a person’s capability and hence freedom to participate” (Rubenson & Desjardins, 2009, p. 196). Ariwijaya and Ningsih (2020) offer that “beside academic support, tertiary institutions had better provide psychological and mental supports for the adult learners, females especially” (p. 85).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Introduction

The theoretical framework for this study is located within Margaret Archer’s (2000, 2003, 2007) structure and agency. By using this framework, I seek to explore the barriers to access and participation for mature adult students at a higher education institution in Namibia, who are on the teacher education learning pathway. I also deliberate on the agency exerted to push through the barriers to access and participate meaningfully. I start with sharing conceptions of structure and agency, conceptions of structure and conceptions of agency. Thereafter, I hone into discussions around agency, structure and access to higher education, the concept of agent, agency, intentions and intentionality, and structure and education.

2.2.2 Conceptions of Structure and Agency

Central to the theoretical framework of structure and agency is the “idea that human beings have the power to exercise agency in any social context” (Masehela, 2015, p. 150). Luckett and Luckett (2009) argue that human agency has been neglected in research that focuses on learning processes. This suggests that human agency is a key part of learning processes, it shapes the process of learning internally and externally. For Luckett and Luckett (2009),

[Margaret] Archer sets out to recover human agency, which she believes has been ‘ontologically undermined’ to no more than the effects of discourse and society by post-structuralists and post-modernist social theorists...Archer identifies the problem of the

relationship between structure and agency as the most pressing contemporary sociological challenge. (Lockett & Lockett, 2009, p. 471)

For Archer, agency is an internal force that exerts power against and onto structural constraints. On the other hand, structural forces exert power onto society that affects which choices are made, as well as how and when the force of agency is exerted.

The notion of structure is vital to understanding social and educational interactions as it organises and controls behaviour in systems. For Giddens' (1984), structure is fundamental to his structuration theory which provides an understanding that structure and agency are not separate concepts. Giddens (1984) defines structure as consisting of rules and resources brought about through human action which then serves to guide human behaviour. Thus, for Giddens, structure influences and is influenced by humans who either replicate or transform structural systems which can create stability or change.

In educational contexts, structure can be seen in policies which would influence institutional practices, hierarchies and access opportunities and maintain or strengthen systemic inequalities (Heinz, 2009). However, Kumpulainen, Kajamaa and Rajala (2018) point out that structure and agency act together and can thus influence results individually or collectively. This can be seen when educators and leaders use their agency to bring about reforms to introduce new teaching methods or more favourable policies (Chingara & Heystek, 2019). Consequently, while structure supports society, it relies on human agency to either maintain or transform contexts in which it manifests.

2.2.3 Conceptions of Structure

In educational and social contexts, structure signifies the rules, customs and patterns of relationships that influence individual and group behaviour. Solonchak and Pesina (2015) reasons that “every structure is not a simple set of elements, but an entirety constituted by interrelated elements, so that each depends on the others and has its proper function thanks to the relations with the other elements” (p. 193). This is evident in education through the institutional policies, curriculum frameworks or societal expectations which control educators' and students' behaviours (Heinz, 2009). While these structures can preserve order and standardisation, they can also ensure that inequality in structures continue.

Additionally, cultural and economic factors can affect structural elements which can impact access and participation in education. For instance, inflexible administrative policies or unequal resource distribution can prolong social inequalities for marginalised groups (Ashwin, 2008; Chingara & Heystek, 2019). However, Giddens (1984) argues that structure and agency are not separate concepts and humans have the capacity to influence structures. Leaders in institutions can consequently create educational environments that would ensure inclusivity and fairness for all (Kumpulainen et al., 2018). Subsequently, structure needs to be seen as having a dual role of both enabling and constraining change.

2.2.4 Conceptions of Agency

2.2.4.1 Agency, structure and access to higher education

Luckett and Luckett (2009), Czerniewicz, Williams and Brown (2009), and Powell and MacGrath (2014) are scholars who researched structure and agency regarding access and participation in higher education in a South African context. This resonates with the Namibian context as both countries have similar experiences under the apartheid system.

The new democratic government of South Africa set about restructuring higher education which led to an increase in the access of students, many of whom came from previously disadvantaged communities (Czerniewicz et al., 2009). This widened access to participation in education activated agency within many students who saw education as way out of poverty. Thus, students anticipated life course changes at the completion of their studies.

Luckett and Luckett (2009) found that students' agency was activated by projecting into a future and devising several strategies to realise their goals. One of the strategies was to work to accumulate money to access education (Luckett & Luckett, 2009). Hence, they planned for a future even though they experienced obstacles.

In their study, Czerniewicz et al. (2009) explored how students navigated their way around hindrances to their studies by focusing on how students accessed Information Communication Technology. Czerniewicz et al. (2009) noted that their research participants devised several strategies using technology to succeed in their studies. However, they also observed that students from lower economic groups did not have as much access to technology and resorted to using their mobile phones (Czerniewicz et al., 2009). Thus, students who had limited resources still activated an agentic power to overcome a hindrance to their studies.

According to Archer (2003), “when a project is constrained or enabled during its execution, agents can act strategically to try to discover ways around it or to define a second-best outcome” (p. 6). Archer (2003) further argued that “they [agents] can deliberate about how to get the most out of propitious circumstances, which may mean adopting a more ambitious goal, so that a good outcome is turned into a better one” (p. 6). Archer (2003) believed that “constraints and enablement derive from structural and cultural emergent properties” (p. 7).

Powell and McGrath’s (2014) study focused on the reasons students access TVET colleges in South Africa. Their study describes how students use their agency to achieve their life goals through taking responsibility for their future. Powell and McGrath (2014) proffer that students “come into VET as daughters wanting to financially support their families; as fathers wanting to be an example to their daughters; as workers wanting to upgrade their skills; as community members wanting to encourage other members of their community, and for other reasons beside.” (p. 223). Many of the students in their study encountered poverty, could not access quality schooling, came from single parent families and crime filled areas yet despite these structural conditions they exercised agency to fulfil their aspirations.

Several scholars have used theories of structure and agency in researching and studying education. Following these scholars, I have decided to use these theories to develop my theoretical framework for my research paper.

2.2.5 The Concept of Agent

Scholars have discussed the concept of ‘agent’ in educational literature over many years and have formed similar views as to its meaning. According to Giddens (1984), “to be a human being is to be a purposive agent” (p. 3). For Giddens agents engage intentionally in activities to attain goals and needs which they seek to satisfy. Giddens states further that an agent “has both reasons for his or her activities and is able, if asked, to elaborate discursively upon those reasons” (p. 3).

Sewell (1992) contended that agents had the ability to assess situations in social relations and to some extent change the circumstances of that situation.

According to Bandura (2001) “to be an agent is to intentionally make things happen by one’s actions” (p. 2) and that “an agent has to be not only a planner and forethinker, but a motivator and self-regulator as well” (Bandura, 2001, p. 8). For Bandura (2001) “people are self-organizing, pro-active, self-regulating, and self-reflecting. They are contributors to their life circumstances, not just products of them” (p. 164). For Archer (2003) “agents possess properties and powers distinct from those pertaining to social forms. Among them feature all those predicates, such as thinking, deliberating, believing, intending, loving and so forth” (p. 2). These attributes can only be found in people and not social or cultural structures (Archer, 2003). Archer (2003) also points out that “humans have degrees of freedom in determining their own courses of action” (p. 7). Following this description, I consider mature adult students as agents.

2.2.6 Agency, intentions and intentionality

Agency is a central concept in Giddens’ (1979) theories of structure and agency. Giddens asserted that “it has frequently been supposed that human agency can be defined only in terms of intentions” (Giddens, 1984, p. 8). He further added that “agency refers not to the intentions people have in doing things but to their capability of doing those things in the first place” (Giddens, 1984, p. 9). Thus, for Giddens (1984) agency incorporated not only intention but the capability of carrying out the intention

According to Sewell (1992), the “capacity for agency—for desiring, for forming intentions, and for acting creatively—is inherent in all humans” (p. 20). Krause and Shaw (2003) stated that “although it is important to have a sense of direction in life, one must also believe that progress toward the desired goal is being made” (p. 563). Archer (2003) avers that “a project is a human device, be it individual or collective, because only people possess the intentionality to define and design courses of action in order to achieve their own goals” (p. 6). For Hitlin and Elder (2007) “agency has been thought of alternatively as a capacity, an attribute, evidence of resistance, and as a structurally defined property of persons” (p. 36).

These scholars and especially Giddens’s ideas helped me to conceptualise students as agents who can act on their intentions and have capabilities to succeed as they carefully plan their studies to make sure that they complete the course.

2.2.7 Agency, actions and intervention

According to Giddens (1984) “agency refers to doing” (p. 10) and therefore is an action. This means that when an agent executes an action like accessing education, he/she is engaging in agency. He contends that action is an ‘intervention’ which has an impact on the course of the agent’s life. Giddens (1979) explains that “the concept of agency as I advocate it here, involving ‘intervention’ in a potentially malleable object world, relates directly to the more generalized notion of *Praxis*” (p. 55). Intervention for Giddens (1979) thus “is a necessary feature of action (p. 55).

2.2.8 Agency and capacity

For students to succeed in their academic studies, they must have the capacity and capability to act. Sewell (1992) asserts that “a capacity for agency is as much a given for humans as the capacity for respiration” (p. 20).

Ahearn (2001) defines agency as “the sociocultural mediated capacity to act” (p. 112) while Hitlin and Elder (2007) claim that “agency represents a human capacity to influence one’s own life within socially structured opportunities” (pp. 56-57). Individuals have the capacities to use opportunities to transform their lives

Hitlin and Elder (2007) refer to Bandura (1997) who “suggests that self-efficacy beliefs are the key factor of agency” (p. 41). They continue citing Bandura (1997) that “[if] people believe they have no power to produce results, they will not attempt to make things happen” (p. 41). These scholars aver that while agency is “fundamental to human action (all actors possess agentic capabilities)” (Hitlin & Elder, 2007, p. 37), it differs from person to person.

Some scholars assert that planfulness is a component of agency. Hitlin and Elder (2007) draw on Clausen (2003) and claim that “planful competence involves three dimensions: intellectual investment, dependability, and self-confidence” (p. 42). Hitlin and Elder (2007), furthermore, argue that “more planful adolescents make better choices” (p. 42),

In a study, Powell and McGrath (2014) found that participants in their study revealed plans that the successful completion of their studies would enable them to “to work in the finance sector,

preferably in a large company” (p. 217). This means that students as agents can be planful and that when they enrol for academic studies, they have planned for their future.

2.2.9 Agency and properties of agency

What students bring to the table depends on how much they are willing to contribute towards their own success. Bandura (2006) focuses on four core properties of human agency namely: intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness and self-reflectiveness. In describing these core properties, he refers to intentionality as “people [forming] intentions that include action plans and strategies for realizing them”; forethought as “people [setting] themselves goals and [anticipating] likely outcomes of prospective actions to guide and motivate their efforts” ; self-reactiveness as the “[involving] not only the deliberative ability to make choices and action plans, but also the ability to construct appropriate courses of action and to motivate and regulate their execution”; and self-reflectiveness as people “[reflecting] on their personal efficacy, the soundness of their thoughts and actions, and the meaning of their pursuits, and ... [making] corrective adjustments if necessary” (pp. 164-165).

2.2.10 Agency and resilience, forging an alternative course of action

According to Bandura (1989), a strong sense of efficacy enables people to overcome obstacles that discourage them from attaining their goals. This can be seen when mature adult students who encounter obstacles like access to finance during their studies take on additional work for an extra income to ensure that they would succeed in their studies. Bandura (2006) points out that it is worth noting that “efficacy beliefs also shape people’s outcome expectations – whether they expect their efforts to produce favourable outcomes or adverse ones” (p. 171).

Archer (2003) maintains that “people possess the intentionality to define and design courses of action in order to achieve their own ends” (p. 6). In the pursuit of goals, mature adult students might encounter challenges and resort to alternative actions to ensure success. According to King (as cited in Archer, 2003) we have the ability to shape our own destiny on the human plane. This means that we can direct our path towards our destiny, which is not set in stone, but rather flexible.

2.2.11 Agent, agency and structural transformation

The following definitions of structure inform my thinking. Giddens (1984) defines structure as “rules and resources, recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems. Structure exists only as memory traces, the organic basis of human knowledge ability, and as instantiated in action” (p. 377). Human beings create and influence the social conditions (structure) in which they live and are in turn influenced by the structures created. It is this relationship between structure and humans that initiates agency. Giddens goes on to say, “let us regard the rules of social life, then, as techniques or generalizable procedures applied in the enactment/ reproduction of social practices” (Giddens, 1984, p. 21).

When it comes to adult learning, there can be many reasons that cause learners to be successful or unsuccessful. Rubenson and Desjardins (2009) state that “structural conditions play a substantial role in forming the circumstances faced by individuals and limit the feasible alternatives to choose from, and therefore, they can “bound” individual agency” (p. 196). Rubenson and Desjardins (2009) emphasise the importance of “structures and policies in adult education” (p. 194). Any institution, such as the Institute in this study, which strives to be successful, must have structures and policies in place. These policies prescribe that a student’s studies can be terminated if it is not completed within the period indicated in the relevant policy of the institute.

2.2.12 Agency, future decisions and power

Emirbayer and Mische (1998) define projectivity as “the imaginative generation by actors of possible future trajectories of action, in which received structures of thought and action may be creatively reconfigured in relation to actors’ hopes, fears, and desires for the future” (p. 971). This “projective dimension of human agency” (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 984) enables agents to envisage a better future even as they respond to challenges. Thus, a mature adult student experiencing anxiety about completing a course can endure by envisioning improved family circumstances.

According to Williams (2017), “when they begin to experience the power of this sense of agency for themselves, a world of adventure, exploration, and experience opens up to them” (p. 13). Power involves action and this enables agents to transform situations. In order to continue making progress, he adds, one should continue to feed the light that was turned on.

Mature adult students experience different situations, but they use those situations as the power to ensure completion of their studies.

According to Giddens (1984), “the power of the individual is confined by a range of specifiable circumstances” (pp. 14-15). Giddens (1984), furthermore, states that “action logically involves power in the sense of transformative capacity” (p. 15). Power involves action and this enables agents to transform situations. For Giddens power incorporates intent, will, capacity and the ability to influence. Mature adult students experience different situations, but they use those situations as the power to ensure completion of their studies.

2.2.13 Summary

In this chapter, I have reviewed the literature on barriers to participation and access. I have discussed the different kinds of barriers experienced by mature adult students and the literature on how to overcome these barriers. I have also discussed my theoretical framework, highlighting conceptions of structure and conceptions of agency. Lastly, I deliberated on agency since it will be the agentic approaches of the mature adult students that is the focus of this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this section I start with the research approach, give an overview of the research site, and provide a summary of the research participants and how they were selected. Thereafter, I follow with a discussion on the methods of data collection and the research instruments used during data collection. I also discuss the data analysis and the ethical considerations of my study.

3.2 Research Approach

Bryman (2012) explains that “a research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data” (p. 46). My aims were to investigate the barriers to access and participation among mature adult students at a distance Higher Education Institute, develop new theoretical insights into the agency of mature adult students to access and participate in higher education, and to understand the impact of barriers to access and participation on the teaching profession in Namibia.

According to Creswell (2014), “research approaches are the plans and the procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation” (p. 3).

Bryman (2012) identifies two types of research approaches, namely, quantitative and qualitative. He defines quantitative research “as a research strategy that emphasizes quantification in the collection and analysis of data” (p. 35). Qualitative research on the other is defined by Bryman (2012) “as a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data” (p. 36).

For my study, I adopted a qualitative research approach. Bryman (2012) argues that “a research strategy is inductivist, constructionist, and interpretivist, but qualitative researchers do not always subscribe to all three of these features” (p. 380).

Creswell (2012) states that “research involves asking a question, collecting data, and analysing data to determine the answer to the question” (p. 26). Bryman (2012) avers that:

A research design relates to the criteria that are employed when evaluating social research. It is, therefore, a framework for the generation of evidence that is

suiting both to a certain set of criteria and to the research question in which the investigator is interested. (Bryman, 2012, p. 45)

3.3 Research Site

I selected an open learning institute as my research site. This institute was founded in 1995 and was acquired by a company in 2005. This Institute is a distance education institute which offers opportunities for students to study in various academic fields. The Institute commits itself to excellent recognised educational programmes, involvement with public and community educational activities and it is becoming one of the foremost distance teaching education institutions in Namibia. My study focuses on the access and participation of mature adult students at this institute who are pursuing a teaching qualification.

3.4 Research Participants and Selection

3.4.1 Sample description

Bryman (2012) defines a sample as “the segment of the population that is selected for research” (p. 715). My sample consisted of students who did not qualify to study Education at a university because they did not meet the required admission requirements and who were 23 years and older, entering the Institute through mature age. In addition, they had to have achieved five subjects on their Grade 12 certificate, or a Grade 12 with 25 points in five subjects which must include a C in English and a D in Mathematics. They also had to be registered in the Diploma in Pre-Primary Education (DPPE) course at the Institute.

3.4.2 Sampling strategies

According to Creswell (2012), “the research term used for qualitative sampling is purposeful sampling. In purposeful sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon” (p. 206). I used purposive sampling and selected ten students who were registered in the 2011 academic year and ten students who were registered in the 2013 academic year. My sample consisted of men and women who were older than 23, and were first, second- and third-year students in the DPPE course.

3.5 Method of Data-Gathering

3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

I selected semi-structured interviews as my research method. According to Bryman (2012), semi-structured interviews:

cover a wide range of types. It typically refers to a context in which the interviewer has a series of questions that are in the general form of an interview guide but is able to vary the sequence of questions. The questions are frequently somewhat more general in their frame of reference from those typically found in a structured interview schedule. Also, the interviewer usually has some latitude to ask further questions in response to what is seen as significant replies. (Bryman, 2012, p. 716)

Babbie (2013) states that “you can see a lot just by observing - provided that you’re paying attention” (p. 345). Conducting a semi-structured interview has advantages and disadvantages (Babbie, 2013). A semi-structured interview gives freedom to the researcher to ask questions which are not in the interview guide. This advantage can easily change into a disadvantage because it would be difficult to compare the answers if it were not asked to the other participants.

I agree with Denzin and Lincoln’s (2011) contention that participant behaviour is important as participants might just want to please the researcher. This can be seen as a disadvantage. It can also be time-consuming if you do not adhere to the questions, and it may cause the participants to become irritated.

3.6 Research Instrument

3.6.1 Interview guide

I used an interview guide as my research instrument (See Appendix D). Bryman (2012) avers that:

an interview guide is a rather vague term that is used to refer to the brief list of memory prompts of areas to be covered that is often employed in unstructured interviewing or to the somewhat more structured list of issues to be addressed or questions to be asked in semi-structured interviewing. An interview schedule is a

collection of questions designed to be asked by an interviewer. An interview schedule is always used in a structured interview. (Bryman, 2012, p. 471)

Bryman (2012) suggests that when preparing an interview guide, it is done in the following way: ordering the topic areas so that the questions are reasonable and can flow easily; formulating the questions in a way to ensure that the participants can answer the research questions; using simple English to make it easier for the participants to understand what you are asking; not asking leading questions and always starting the interview with general questions based on personal particulars, such as name, age and gender. When conducting the interviews, I always kept these elements mentioned above in mind.

The researcher may ask questions to the participants which are not in the interview guide, which can be comprehended as an advantage. Bryman (2012) supports this as “questions that are not included in the guide may be asked as the interviewer picks up on things said by interviewees” (p. 471). On the other hand, Bryman (2012) warns researchers to be careful with comparing students as “participant observation may be more flexible because of the tendency for interviewers to instil an element of comparability” (p. 494).

3.7 Data-Capturing

I recorded the interviews using an electronic device. Bryman (2012) states that “researchers are frequently interested not just in what people say but also in the way that they say it” (p. 482). Heritage (1984, as cited by Bryman, 2012) suggests that the procedure of recording and transcribing interviews has the following advantages:

It helps to correct the natural limitations of our memories and of the intuitive glosses that we might place on what people say in interviews. It allows more thorough examination of what people say. It permits repeated examinations of the interviewees’ answers. It opens up the data to public scrutiny by other researchers, who can evaluate the analysis that is carried out by the original researchers of the data (that is, a secondary analysis). It therefore helps to counter accusations that an analysis might have been influenced by a researcher’s values or biases. It allows the data to be reused in other ways from those intended by the original researcher - for example, in the light of new theoretical ideas or analytic strategies. (Bryman, 2012, p. 482)

3.8 Data-Processing

After completing the interviews, I transcribed the interviews into texts. Transcribing, according to Bryman (2012), is “the written translation of recorded interview or focus group session” (p. 717). This enabled me to become aware of the similarities and differences of each participant.

3.9 Data Analysis

Several elements are incorporated in the analysis of data. When analysing my data, I made use of Creswell’s (2009) six-phase process of thematic analysis which involves: “familiarising yourself with your data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, producing the report” (p. 351). I read through the transcribed interviews again and again on order to find the re-curring themes.

3.10 Research Ethics Statement

Israel and Hay (2006) state that “By caring about ethics and by acting on the concern we promote the integrity of research” (p. 5). While interviewing the participants they were fully aware that they were not forced to take part in the research. They had the right to stop at any given time when they did not feel comfortable. I ensured that they signed a statement indicating that “they are aware of the risks and that they choose to participate anyway” (Babbie, 2013, p. 33).

When conducting my research, I considered the well-being of each research participant, which was my top priority. All my research participants received the information letter (Appendix B) that provided details about me and the purpose of my research. This gave them enough information on what the research is about and helped them to decide whether they wanted to be part of this research or not.

Maree et al. (2007) note that “both the researcher and participant must have a clear understanding regarding the confidentiality of the results and findings of the study” (p. 307). Each participant received a consent letter (See Appendix C) that they signed, ensuring that they were fully aware of how the research would be conducted. I also did not overlook the integrity and ethical analysis of the organisation as well as the participants. Creswell (2014) states that “when collecting consent for a study, the researcher should not force participants to sign the informed consent form” (p. 97). The following two elements are also important and should be

included, namely, anonymity and confidentiality. Through the above-mentioned, the participants were assured of anonymity, were well-informed and understood the nature of the study. This obviously reduced the risk of taking advantage of or abusing the participants as well as the invasion of privacy and misleading the participants.

To satisfy the participants and for the sake of transparency, I decided to avail all the findings to the participants and followed the principles below.

3.10.1 No harm to participants

While conducting my research, I considered the well-being of the research participants and ensured that it was my top priority.

3.10.2 Voluntary participation

Creswell (2014) states that “participants in a study should be seen as voluntary, and the researcher should explain in the instructions for the consent form that participants can decide not to participate in the study” (p. 97). I ensured that my participants were fully aware that they were not forced to take part. They had the right to stop at any given time when they did not feel comfortable. I also ensured that they signed a statement indicating that “they are aware of the risks and that they choose to participate anyway” (Babbie, 2013, p. 33).

3.10.3 Consent from institution

Creswell (2014) elaborates that “prior to the study, researchers need to obtain approval of individuals in authority (e.g., gatekeeper) to gain access to sites and to study participants” (p. 97). I asked permission from the Head of the Institute to interview the 20 research participants (See Appendix A). The permission letter was accompanied with the permission letter from the university as well as the ethical clearance certificate.

3.10.4 Anonymity and confidentiality

Maree et al. (2007) drawing on the work of Burns states that “both the researcher and participant must have a clear understanding regarding the confidentiality of the results and findings of the study” (p. 307). I stressed to the participants that their names would never be mentioned in the research. The research records would be stored in a secure facility for five years and that no one would have access to it but me. Creswell (2014) stresses that “data, once analysed, needs to be kept for a reasonable period of time” (p. 100).

3.10.5 Insider-Outsider Positionality

Conducting research in institutions where you are employed or in organisations in which you are a member, can present particular kinds of challenges. This is referred to as ‘insider-outsider’ tension. It was extremely difficult to convince the participants that they were free to answer the questions and that I would always protect them. The participants were allowed to choose the place where they wanted to be interviewed as I wanted to ensure that they had the feeling that they were in control.

3.10.6 Summary

In this section, I discussed the research design and research methodology that was used to conduct this study. Furthermore, I deliberated on the research participants and research instruments that was used to elucidate on my research aims and objectives. Lastly, I explained the ethical considerations used to conduct this study.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

In this section, I share the data analysis process that I followed, as well as the themes derived from the process. In addition, I share a discussion on the selected themes and relate this to my theoretical framework. I focus on two sections: the barriers experienced by the participants in my study and how these mature adult students overcame the barriers they faced. I also share a profile of my participants, and the specific answers mentioned in the interview. I do this in the hope of preserving the authentic voices of my participants. First, a few thoughts on data analysis.

4.2 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a stage that incorporates several elements. At the most basic level, it might be taken to mean the application of statistical techniques to the data that have been collected. However, not all data are amenable to quantitative data analysis, and an approach, like the qualitative approach, is used to analyse data (Bryman, 2012). For my study, I used a qualitative approach to analysing my data.

I used Creswell's (2009) data analysis process to analyse my data. The process outlined by Creswell (2009) are:

- **Validate data for accuracy of the information.** The researcher must make sure of the accuracy of the information that was received. This happens while he/she is busy transcribing.
- **Read through all the data.** The researcher reads through the notes several times to ensure that it makes sense and to reflect on its overall meaning.
- **Organise and prepare data for analysis.** The researcher starts with the sorting and organising of the data.
- **Read through all the data.** The researcher needs to read carefully and try to organise the data in such a way that the sense of what the participants really want to say is captured. Similarities are being compared during this stage.

- **Code the data (hand or computer).** The researcher uses different codes because pseudonyms are used for the participants. (Creswell, 2009, p. 185)
- **Themes/ description.** The answers received from the sub-questions are puzzled together and implemented.
- **Interpret the meaning of themes/descriptions.** This is the final stage for the researcher where he/she asks what lessons were learned through the data analysis process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Using this process, I analysed the interview data that I collected. I read through the data multiple times and organised it. I grouped the data into the following themes: dispositional barriers, institutional barriers, situational barriers. Thereafter, I shared the indicators of student agency and what facilitated overcoming the various barriers faced by these mature adult students.

4.3 Participants' profile

I selected 20 students from the Diploma in Pre-Primary Education (DPPE) course offered at my research site. All of the participants accessed the course via mature-age exemption, this means that they do not qualify for this programme. However, due to their mature age, and some work experience, they are given an opportunity to access it. I tried to get a balanced sample of men and women, but only one man was willing to be interviewed. The other males I approached were not willing to be interviewed and as a result my sample consisted of 19 women and 1 man. Pseudonyms were used to protect the participants and for the purpose of confidentiality. Below, I share the profiles of each participant.

Helena is a 60-year-old woman and lives in Windhoek. She only completed Grade 10, and her mother tongue is Khoekhoegowab. She is married with children. Currently, she is looking after her grandchildren.

Sandra is a 42-year-old woman and lives in Windhoek. She speaks Afrikaans and has completed her Grade 12. She is married with three children and works as a relief teacher.

Voza is a 49-year-old woman and lives in Windhoek. Her mother tongue is Oshindonga. She is single with children and works as a switchboard operator.

Mabry is a 35-year-old woman from Windhoek. She completed her Grade 12 and speaks Afrikaans. She has two dependents and is married. She works as a relief teacher.

Gail is a 32-year-old woman residing in Windhoek. She does not have any dependents. Her home language is Oshindonga. She is married and is a housewife.

Gerra is a 37-year-old woman from Windhoek with three dependents. Her home language is Otjiherero. She only has Grade 10 with teaching experience. She is a teacher and is in a partnership.

Edwin is a 40-year-old man residing in Gobabis. He successfully completed his Grade 12 and speaks Otjiherero. He has four dependents and works as a farmer. He is married.

Zani is a 26-year-old woman residing in Windhoek. She completed her Grade 12 and lives with her parents. She speaks Oshindonga and has no dependents.

Kaylin is a 32-year-old woman from Windhoek with one dependent. She completed her Grade 12 and speaks Oshindonga. She is single and does odd jobs to earn a salary.

Novell is a 40-year-old woman from Windhoek with one dependent. She successfully completed her Grade 12 and speaks Oshindonga. She is a teacher and is in a relationship.

Brenda is a 24-year-old Oshikwanyama speaking woman residing in Windhoek with two dependents. She completed her Grade 12 and has no job for an income. She is in a relationship.

Nana is a 36-year-old woman residing in Windhoek with two dependents. She completed Grade 12 and works in retail. She speaks Romano and is in a relationship.

Vella is a 27-year-old woman living in Windhoek. She successfully completed her Grade 12 and speaks Oshikwanyama. She is currently working as a nail technician for an income and has one dependent. She is in a relationship.

Mercy is a 46-year-old woman residing in Windhoek with three dependents. She completed her Grade 12 and works as an office administrator. Her native language is Oshikwanyama and she is married.

Lolla is a 48-year-old woman residing in Windhoek with three dependents. She has Grade 12 and speaks Oshikwanyama. She works as a cleaner and is married.

Fenis is a 31-year-old woman living in Windhoek with two dependents. She completed her Grade 12 and speaks Otjiherero. She is married and works as a temporary teacher.

Jane is a 36-year-old Oshikwanyama speaking woman residing in Windhoek with two dependents. She completed her Grade 12. She is single and does odd jobs for a salary.

Sara is a 39-year-old woman living in Windhoek with two dependents. She speaks Oshikwanyama and has a Grade 12 certificate. She is single and works as a temporary teacher.

Kina is a 43-year-old woman with four dependents residing in Windhoek. She speaks Otjiherero and has Grade 12. She works as a temporary teacher and is single.

Jems is a 43-year-old woman residing in Rehoboth with three dependents. She completed Grade 12 and speaks Afrikaans. She works as an administrator and is married

4.4 Mature adult students as agents

According to Giddens (1984), “to be a human being is to be a purposive agent, who both has reasons for his or her activities and is able, if asked, to elaborate discursively upon those reasons” (p. 3). The participants in my study, from the perspective of my research, are thus all agents as they exercised their agency to plot the course of their lives, in relation to work and education.

4.4.1 Agency, intentionality and access to higher education (Reasons for access)

I concur with Bandura (2001) that “to be an agent is to intentionally make things happen by one’s actions” (p. 2). Hitlin and Long (2009) stated that “people make choices, even as structures circumscribe those choices such that a great deal of human interaction is patterned” (pp. 140-141). All my participants experienced various structural barriers, however, through their agency, they chose to pattern their lives in particular ways.

Participants were asked what their most important personal reason was to apply for the Diploma in Pre-Primary Education (DPPE). The themes that derived from this question were: desire to become a teacher, pursuing a career in teacher education and a love for children.

Giddens (1984) remarked that “human agency can be defined only in terms of intentions” (p. 8). Archer (2003) explained that “a project is a human device, be it individual or collective, because only people possess the intentionality to define and design courses of action in order to achieve their own ends” (p. 6). Intentionality is clear in the participants responses below.

4.4.2 Desire or dream to become a teacher

Most of the participants responded having a particular dream or desire to become a teacher. Intentionality is clear in the participants responses below.

I always had the interest of being a teacher and the love I have for children (Helena, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I always wanted to be a teacher and the difficulties at home pushed me more into this direction. I resigned from my work because of my last born. He became very sick and needed more attention (Sandra, Interview, September 24, 2018).

Because I like it very much. I've been dreaming about it since I was a kid. My children also saw how good I am with children, and they encouraged me to do it because it was something I always wanted (Voza, Interview, September 24, 2018).

Since I was young, I have wanted to be a teacher (Zani, Interview, February 2, 2019).

I really want to be a teacher; this is the job I want (Novell, Interview, February 16, 2019).

I wanted to be a teacher, and at least to do something in life (Brenda, Interview, February 9, 2019).

As I grew up, I wanted to be a teacher. I tried many times to apply to be a teacher, but I was not successful. I never gave up on my dream but forced myself to apply to become a teacher (Nana, Interview, February 13, 2019).

It took me a long time to realise that teaching is in my blood, my veins (Jems, Interview, February 11, 2019).

When I was growing up, I used to play school with other children. I used to be the teacher. So, I decided I would just go study pre-primary so that I can go become a pre-primary teacher (Fenis, Interview, 11, 2019).

According to Desjardins et al. (2006), "the underlying reasons for participating involves the desire to improve one's own life, including one's working, family and social conditions" (p. 94). This is clear in the responses below.

It was the only way to get a job easily in education. It was better to study because I was just at home (Gail, Interview, September 24, 2018).

To improve my lifestyle. Because if you are not educated nowadays, there's nothing that you can do. You will become either a housewife or you will be in the streets, and I didn't want it to end up in the street. That's why I decided to apply for this diploma in education (Sara, Interview, February 9, 2019).

4.4.3 Pursue a career in teaching and education

Participants also responded that they wanted to pursue a career in education. Hitlin and Elder (2007) aver that agents have qualities of self-efficacy and planful competence. Goto and Martin (2009) posit that “to pursue further education was influenced strongly by the individual’s sense of self-efficacy” (p. 15). Participants were asked who or what influenced them to choose the course. Their responses indicated that they had the capacity for self-efficacy as their motivation enabled them to exercise their agency.

Myself, because I want to open my own kindergarten (Helena, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I want to do this (Voza, Interviewed, September 24, 2018).

Myself (Mabry, Interviewed, September 24, 2018).

Myself, and people encouraged me because they saw that I love children (Zani, Interview, February 2, 2019).

Myself and in a way my husband (Jems, Interview, February 11, 2019).

Because we need qualified teachers in Namibia (Novell, Interview, February 12, 2019).

Because I want to educate children (Vella, Interview, February 16, 2019).

I love being with kids playing with them and teaching them so I decided that I would just become a teacher. (Fenis, Interview, February 11, 2019).

I just influenced myself to be a teacher because I want to help the children and I'm willing to work with the children. (Lolla, Interview, February 13, 2019).

Because I can still be a farmer and study (Edwin, Interview, February 2, 2019).

4.4.4 *Love for children*

All the participants in my study indicated that they had a love for children, and hence wanted to teach them. Sewell (1992) refers to “agency for desiring”, and this was the heart desire for the participants because they simply love children.

Well, my personal reason is I love working with children. At first, I studied a beauty course and as I gave training to the bigger children, I realised that I like working with children. So, I decided to study for teaching (Mabry, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I’m an assistant at a kindergarten and there I saw my love for children. My supervisors also saw the potential I have working with the children and how patient I am with them (Gerra, Interview, November 15, 2018).

My siblings saw the love I have for kids and encouraged me to become a teacher (Kaylin, Interview, February 2, 2019).

My passion for kids. Ever since I was young, whenever we played school-school I was the teacher (Vella, Interview, February 16, 2019).

I’m a secretary at school and I have to work with students daily. Assisting children at school made me realise that I love working with children (Mercy, Interview, February 16, 2019).

Currently, I’m a teacher with no qualifications. I love working with children that’s why I wanted to be a qualified primary teacher (Lolla, Interview, February 13, 2019).

I love working with small children and our country needs teachers (Jane, Interview, February 12, 2019).

The love I have for children pushed me in this direction. In our community there are only a certain number of schools and only a few had the opportunity to go to school. I decided to start teaching them. (Kina, Interview, February 11, 2019).

The responses of the participants indicate acts of agency as they sought to attain a goal and transform their lives.

4.5 Barriers to access and participation, agency and overcoming barriers

While there were many barriers highlighted in the interviews of this research study, the barriers mentioned in this analysis are those that came across as predominant. I share these below. However, to reiterate, Cross (1981) classified barriers to participation as “situational, institutional and dispositional” (p. 98). In their study, Emirbayer and Mische (1998) found that the students “encounter hard barriers of interpersonal and institutional conventions” (p. 1009). Rubenson and Desjardins (2009) consider constraints to be both structurally and individually based, which have some effect on the family, job and institution. The participants showed that despite any barriers that they faced, they can learn and succeed with their studies if they are willing to face and overcome these barriers.

4.5.1 Dispositional barriers

4.5.1.1 Limited Kindle- operating skills

Czerniewicz, Williams and Brown (2009) found that “computers are the means to a ‘better’ life” (p. 85). MacKeracher et al. (2006) applaud the children in their study for “helping their parents search for information or learn how to use the internet” (p. 15). Managing computers proved to be a significant barrier to the mature adult students in my study.

The following participants found it extremely difficult to work on the Kindle device provided by the institution specifically, and this was a personal constraint for them. These participants could have decided to drop out, but they chose to continue with their studies and look for alternative ways to continue. Their responses regarding this barrier are below:

I faced many challenges; it was difficult to work on the Kindle. I asked my brother to help me save the study guides on a USB, then I would print it myself (Zani, Interview, February 2, 2019).

I committed myself and tried my best to understand the course material. I asked for help from my children because I was not that good with technology (Helena, Interview, September 24, 2019).

I decided to get a second opinion regarding my health issues because I was now behind with one year (Mercy, Interview, February 16, 2019).

4.5.2 Institutional barriers

4.5.2.1 Lack of student support from tutors and administrators

As mature adult students, the participants in my study experienced institutional barriers in the form of limited support from the institution, lack of information and limited financial resources. According to Pont (2004), “information, guidance and counselling systems are vital for greater recognition of adult users and potential users of adult learning opportunities” (p. 41). The participants felt like they did not get the support they needed.

The lack of communication with tutors because when you needed help from the tutors, they never answer their phones. In the past there were holiday classes (you met the tutor in person) but that changed to contact classes that you watch through the television. I could not deal with that technology. When you experience problems when you are busy with an assignment or study for the examination it is difficult to get hold of tutors. They never pick up their phones. I tried to get help from the office because it was difficult to get in contact with other students (Helena, Interview, September 24, 2018).

When I contacted the tutors for help and they did not get back to me, I informed the office that tutors don't assist me. During examinations it is very hard to get hold of tutors. Especially if I really need help with a specific subject. The office will follow-up with the tutors (Mabry, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I received my study materials very late and that forced me to start later with my studies. Even if you call the office and tell them that you are still waiting for the assignments and the due date is around the corner (Fenis, Interview, February 11, 2019).

The service I received from the Institute was really bad, especially the lady sitting in the front line with no customer service. I went to the office and told them to work on their customer service (Sandra, Interview, September 24, 2018).

4.5.3 Institutional barriers

4.5.3.1 Lack of information

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) state that an “informational barrier is sometimes construed simply to mean institutional failure in communicating information on learning opportunities to adults, but the problem is more fundamental” (p. 137). Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) furthermore argue that a “lack of information is likely to remain a major barrier to participation in adult education, especially for disadvantaged adults” (p. 138).

Lack of information and if you get information, it’s not clear. When you approach the institute’s office, you are not treated as if you are important (Sandra, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I searched for more information whenever I struggled making use of google or from other students and teachers (Jane, Interview, February 12, 2019).

4.5.4 Institutional and situational barriers

4.5.4.1 Limited financial resources

Cross (1981) states that situational barriers are “those arising from one’s situation in life at a given time” (p. 99). Rubenson and Desjardins (2009) observed that “people, because of work or family conditions, may have very little time or money left over which they can freely decide” (p. 191). They, furthermore, concluded that “public financial support can be important for

overcoming institutional barriers” (p. 202). After analysing the data, it was found that the main situational barriers that the participants faced were financial and family constraints. The responses of the participants in relation to this barrier, are below:

Finance was the biggest challenge for me, although I tried to save money on my own it was difficult. I tried to get someone to pay for my studies to take that burden away from me (Gail, Interview, September 24, 2018).

If you fail a module twice in the examination, you have to pay to write it again. We, as students, felt that the amount per subject is too expensive and it is very discouraging that you feel stacked. Finance was my biggest problem and that blocked me from keeping up with my studies (Kaylin, Interview, February 2, 2019).

Finance was the problem because I had no one to pay for my studies. I had to find a way on my income because I could not continue after my first year because of the lack of money. I started cleaning houses just to get extra money to pay for my studies (Vella, Interview, February 16, 2019).

I found out that I don't have money, I had to stop and could not continue with my studies. I applied for a loan but was rejected. But then by God's grace, because of the application that was approved by the government, they gave me a grant loan. So, I managed to proceed. But I would like to advise any student to never give up on your dreams and your goals (Sara, Interview, February 9, 2019).

I had trouble paying for my studies even though I tried to pay for it on my own. Luckily, my brother came to my rescue because he saw that I'm really working hard (Kina, Interview, February 11, 2019).

Money was the issue to pay for my studies and the other factor is also taking leave from work to write examinations. This caused me to take unpaid leave and that was heavy on our household (Jems, Interview, February 11, 2019).

Work related problems because I did not have enough time to study. So, I had to take unpaid leave (Nana, Interview, February 13, 2019).

I was booked off for the whole of 2018. So, I had to set my studies aside for a year, which really trained me, because I had to pay medical bills. By the grace of God, I managed to get well and proceed (Mercy, Interview, February 16, 2019).

I kept failing one subject and that blocked me from continuing with the studies, because I did not have the money to pay every time (Lolla, Interview, February 13, 2019).

4.5.5 *Situational barriers*

4.5.5.1 Work and family commitments

Hitlin and Elder (2007) argued that “we have commitments – to ourselves and others - that we enact and recreate within interactions” (p. 180). Rubenson and Desjardins (2009) confirmed that “distinguished situational constraints are either job or family related” (p. 263). The participants proved that with determination and resilience, they had to endure to overcome the battle when it comes to family and work commitments.

Well, it was very, very tough. Sometimes my supervisor did not allow me to take study leave, so I had to take a risk because I wanted to make it. I had to take unpaid leave (Voza, Interview, September 24, 2018).

Juggling between work and studies was hard because I travelled between two towns. I had to sacrifice hours after work (Jems, Interview, February 11, 2019).

It's very difficult to be a mother, to be married, to do assignments and stuff like that. So, I had to make sacrifices, I had to wake up at two o'clock in the morning and I start with my assignments or when it's exam time I wake up two o'clock and I study because that is the only time that I can study (Mabry, Interview, September 24, 2018).

It was difficult to do my assignments because of my work. The assignments were too much, and you have a family to look after (Gerra, Interview, November 15, 2018).

4.5.6. Overcoming situational barriers

4.5.6.1 Agency and overcoming lack of time

Archer (2003) defines own course of action by explaining that “people possess the intentionality to define and design their courses of action in order to achieve their own ends” (p. 6). The participants realised that they were solely responsible for the success of their studies. They looked at alternative routes to achieve the goals they set for themselves. They explored alternative routes such as setting up a schedule to overcome the barrier created by a lack of time in order to achieve the goals they set for themselves.

Pont (2004) found that the “lack of time is one key reason why adults do not engage in learning, and adult learning programmes often have excessively strict schedules that require attendance” (p. 40). The participants realised that their time had to be managed and that they had to set up a schedule for their studies. The responses of the participants in relation to this barrier and overcoming the limited time they seemed to have, are below:

I need more time for my husband and children. I clean my house myself like washing, cleaning and ironing. That is why I draw up a schedule to have quality time with my family and enough time to study (Sandra, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I had to prioritise my schedule. I just had to set-out my things to be successful (Mercy, Interview, February 16, 2019).

For me, I think it's I have to put more, I have to commit myself to put more effort with my assignments. Commitment was the key to success that's why I set up a timetable (Gerra, Interview, November 15, 2019).

At least I have to make a timetable so that I can study harder, and at least so that I can make it (Brenda, Interview, February 9, 2019).

Actually, you have to make your cycle short. You have to choose what to follow and what not. I have to set a timetable, I have to study and then push to make sure I will and can complete my studies (Vella, Interview, February 16, 2019).

I had a talk with my boss to give me extra days. We came to an agreement that after the written examination I have to be back at the office (Nana, Interview, February 16, 2019).

4.5.6.2 Agency and overcoming financial barriers

In the past, the Ministry of Education of Namibia offered 5-year contracts to the unqualified teachers. The Ministry has, however, realised that although funding is an issue, these unqualified teachers still take too long to complete their distance education. As a result, this contract was changed to a year-based agreement and students had to submit a report at the end of the year.

The participants below could decide not whether to continue with their studies because of financial constraints, but they did not give up and looked for alternative ways to pay for their studies. Giddens (1979) states that “at any point, the agent ‘could have acted otherwise’: either positively in terms of attempted intervention ... or negatively in terms of forbearance” (p. 56). However, giving up was not an option for the participants. They found ways to secure money to complete their studies. In answering the question on how demanding their choice of career was, the participants had the following to say:

I applied for a loan to pay for my studies (Gail, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I received a loan to solve my financial problems, to pay for my studies (Fenis, Interview, February 11, 2019).

Finances was my problem, but I got a loan (Jane, Interview, February 12, 2019).

My financial issues were solved, I got a loan (Sara, Interview, February 9, 2019).

Finance was really holding me back, so I had to work to pay for the studies. I started to make clothes to help pay for my studies. Very committed towards studies (Helena, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I opened a kindergarten to get money to pay for my studies, even though I just asked for N\$50-00 per child. My brother saw that I really wanted to study, and he offered to help me to pay for my studies (Kina, Interview, February 11, 2019).

I went to my boss and asked him if the company can pay for my studies because this was a big burden on me. The company paid for my studies and my boss even agreed to give me extra days for examination (Jems, Interview, February 11, 2019).

The moment I realised that money is a problem for me to continue with my studies, I looked for other options to pay for my studies (Vella, Interview, February 16, 2019).

If you want to continue with your studies like you planned it. Try to get someone to pay for my studies to take off this burden (Kaylin, Interview, February 2, 2019).

4.5.6.3 Agency, capacity for peer group interaction and overcoming academic barriers

According to Bandura (2006), “people are self-organizing, proactive, self-regulating, and self-reflecting. They are not simply onlookers of their behaviour. They are contributors to their life circumstances, not just products of them” (p. 164). The participants had to develop new attributes to overcome their academic barriers such as seeking academic support from their peers and tutors. Boud (1992) strongly believes that “each person is responsible for intervening at any stage in the process of the group to express their needs and interest” (p. 186). The following participants knew that they are responsible for their own success.

Group interaction

I joined a WhatsApp group, and, in that group, we helped each other (Lolla, Interview, February 13, 2019).¹¹

I asked for help from tutors and joined a WhatsApp group for students to help me whenever I face problems (Novell, Interview, February 16, 2019).

I’m not afraid to ask for help if I don’t understand (Jane, Interview, February 12, 2019).

Challenges will always be there, but you need to be committed, compromise and ask for help (Sara, Interview, February 9, 2019).

If I face problems, I would join a group to help me with the problems (Nana, Interview, February 13, 2019).

I would go to the library. It is a nice and quiet place. If I needed more information, I could find books to help me understand better (Zani, Interview, February 2, 2019).

Tutors

Falasca (2011) believes that “adult learners of any age can learn and succeed in their pursuits if they are afforded the opportunity, assistance and support they need” (p. 587). Desjardins and Rubenson (2013) expressed that “guidance and other information support are thus critical to mediating the demand and supply of learning opportunities” (p. 264).

If you don’t understand, ask for help from tutors and colleagues (Kina, Interview, February 11, 2019).

I asked help from the tutors and made use of the internet to help me understand (Vella, Interview, February 16, 2019).

I contacted the tutor and asked for assistance from the institute office (Jems, Interview, February 11, 2019).

Get help from tutors if I struggle doing assignments and study for the examination (Edwin, Interview, February 2, 2019).

I asked teachers to help me (Fenis, Interview, February 11, 2019).

Peer teaching

These participants have faith in peer teaching and Boud (1992) acknowledged that “in a peer learning community, staff and students learn from each other” (p. 186)

The participants were supported by their children to succeed in their studies. MacKeracher et al. (2006) confirmed that the participants in their study were “supported by children who frequently contribute to academic success by helping their parents” (p. 15).

I asked help from other students when a problem arose (Sandra, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I asked students to help me when I don’t understand (Voza, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I asked for help from students, that’s doing the same course, and my colleagues were always eager to help me (Mercy, Interview, February 16, 2019).

I had a difficulty using the Kindle, but I asked other students to use their study guides (Kina, Interview, February 11, 2019).

I met up with groups if I don’t understand or called the tutor (Sara, Interview, February 9, 2019).

My cousin did the same course, so I would ask her to help me (Brenda, Interview, February 9, 2019).

Go to friends that are doing the same course as me, if I did not understand (Nana, Interview, February 13, 2019).

4.5.6.4 Agency and attitudes for confronting challenges and overcoming barriers

Chao (2009) argued that “learning is a complicated process, notwithstanding the fact that the individual learners, particularly adult learners are complicated beings” (p. 906).

Norman and Hyland (2003) argued that “confidence for a teacher means ... knowing your strengths and weakness” and “knowledge” (p. 8). They also believed that it has “an impact on their well-being and involvement in the learning process” (p. 9). I asked the participants what

personal attitudes enabled them to confront their challenges about their academic capabilities. These were the responses:

Hard work

Bandura (2006) stated that the participants “are not simply onlookers of their behaviour but contributors to their life circumstances, not just products of them” (p. 164). The participants realised that as students, their success depended on how hard they wanted to work.

Although communication was a big problem and when we had contact classes the classes were overcrowded, that did not stop me. My willingness to complete my studies as well as to prove to my children that I can (Helena, Interview, September 24, 2018).

My willingness to ask if I don’t understand because if I understand something I will not lose interest (Novell, Interview, February 16, 2019).

Hard work and willingness to continue to the next level. For example, if I don’t understand a question in the assignment, I will use Google to get information. (Brenda, Interview, February 9, 2019).

I’m a hard worker and not afraid to ask for help if I need it (Voza, Interview, September 24, 2018).

Like I said there were no obstacles because I’m a hard worker (Edwin, Interview, February 2, 2019).

Always be positive and avoid negativity. Don’t let negativity follow you because you end up disappointing yourself (Kaylin, Interview, February 2, 2019).

According to Lukianova (2016), “motivation is the driver of adult learning” (p. 1). Working hard to be the best version of themselves and pursuing their dreams is the most reliable motivation.

I like to work very hard and stay focused to achieve my goals. Very motivated to complete my studies (Sara, Interview, February 9, 2019).

I had to work hard to succeed in my studies and be the teacher I want to be (Lolla, Interview, February, 13, 2019).

I'm a hard worker and always do what you can to reach your goal (Mercy, Interview, February 16, 2019).

I'm a hard worker and like to push myself to be the best I can be (Jane, Interview, February 12, 2019).

I studied on Saturdays to complete my course even though my children joked with me because I'm just studying (Voza, Interview, September 24, 2018).

“Human agency is inextricably social, structured by interactional situations” (Hitlin & Elder, 2007, p. 185). The participants knew that hard work always pays off, so this is how they responded.

I need to study and take my education seriously. I studied very hard every day (Gail, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I really want to set up my own private school and I'm a hard worker (Novelle, Interview, February 16, 2019).

I just wanted to work hard so that you will succeed in my studies, to do something in my life (Lolla, Interview, February 13, 2019).

I'm committed to my work, if it stays like that, I will complete my studies (Nana, Interview, February 13, 2019).

Pushing Drive

“Some people have more agency, others have less, this mode of agency differs markedly from the human freedom that all beings possess” (Hitlin & Elder, 2007, p. 37). Tinto argued that “there appears to be an important relationship between learning and persistence that arises from the interplay of involvement and the quality of student effort” (as cited in Milen & Berger, 1997, p. 387). Desjardins and Rubenson (2013) see dispositional constraints as individually based because “they are related to the agency of individuals, in particular their capability to choose and act, given the circumstances they face” (p. 263).

Achieving the goals set for yourself is the most important reason to keep on studying. The participants believed in themselves to make their dream a reality.

I like pushing myself and studying very hard (Vella, Interview, February 16, 2019).

I always push and motivate myself to do my best (Fenis, Interview, February 11, 2019).

My willpower to complete my studies and be there for my children (Sandra, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I put in a lot of effort and push myself to work hard. Commitment and just pushing moving forward is the key (Jane, Interview, February 12, 2019).

I focused on my goals, meaning that I have to push, the more you push, the more you pull. I focused on these four letters meaning Push, **P** -push, **U** – until, **S** -something **H** - happens. These letters were the ones that’s pushing me to become something (Sara, Interview, February 9, 2019).

Pay attention and stay focused (Kaylin, Interview, February 2, 2019).

Motivated/committed

“Society does not “cause individual behaviour in a deterministic way: we make decisions based on reflection and the internalization of our social realities” (Hiltin & Elder, 2007, p. 37). Tinto (2015) alludes that “without motivation and the effort it engenders, persistence is unlikely” (p. 2). Motivation was the vital element for the following participants to make a success of their studies.

I’m very motivated to complete my studies and be the best teacher (Gail, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I’m very committed and not afraid to ask for help from teachers. I always go the extra mile even if I have to go and sit in a Grade 1 class just observing what the teacher is doing (Gerra, Interview, November 15, 2018).

I'm very capable of completing a course because I'm committed towards my studies. I have role models that I look up to. [I] prioritise my duties so that I don't have clashes because being a mother is very difficult (Mabry, Interview, September 24, 2018).

My commitment towards my studies will make me achieve my dreams (Zani, Interview, February 2, 2019).

My willingness to complete my studies is the only push I need (Jems, Interview, February 11, 2019).

I worked very hard and stayed committed (Novell, Interview, February 16, 2019).

4.5.6.5 Agency, capacity for career planfulness and achieving success: outcomes of overcoming barriers

According to Jarvis (2010), "education is one of the major foundations of a rich life which influences the choice of career you choose" (p. 44).

Bandura (2001) postulates that "as people progress in their life course they continue to plan ahead, reorder their priorities, and structure their lives accordingly" (p. 7). Bandura (2006), furthermore, reasoned that "forethought includes more than future-directed plans. People set themselves goals and anticipate likely outcomes of prospective actions to guide and motivate their actions" (p. 164).

Own business

I really would like to open my own kindergarten and prove to my husband and children that I did it (Helena, Interview, September 24, 2018).

Open an after-care or kindergarten. I want to give back to the community (Gerra, Interview, November 15, 2018).

A qualified teacher and become a head of department. Why not open my own institute (Mercy, Interview, February 16, 2019).

Teacher, becoming head of department and principal

As argued by Darkenwald and Merriam (1982), mature adults continue to study to improve “occupational competence or getting ahead in the world of work” (p. 132). Emirbayer and Mische (1998) state that agents “give shape and direction to future possibilities” (p. 984). The following participants saw that being educated would guarantee them a better future.

I want to be a teacher and continue to upgrade my studies (Mabry, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I want to become a head of department and even a principal (Gail, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I want to be a head of department (Nana, Interview, February 13, 2019).

To become a head of department and principal (Vella, Interview, February 16, 2019).

I want to be a teacher and then a principal (Lolla, Interview, February 13, 2019).

Be a good teacher and even want to be a principal (Brenda, Interview, February 9, 2019).

I want to be a head of department, so I need to enrol myself and do it remotely (Gerra, Interview, November 15, 2018).

I want to be a head of department and later a principal (Jane, Interview, February 12, 2019).

Be a good teacher, maybe a head of department (Jems, Interview, February 11, 2019).

Teacher Education

“People’s choices, we need to highlight and then bracket what we call the “opportunity structure” of agency” (Hiltin & Elder, 2007, p. 37). According to Lukianova (2016), “no one, even a highly qualified teacher, will achieve the desired result if their efforts are not coordinated with the motivational basis of the learning process” (p. 224). Galbraith and Jones (2008) advocated the view that “a personal philosophy or vision for teaching is important” (p. 5). The

choices one makes will determine your future and this is what motivated the following participants.

I always wanted to be a teacher (Fenis, Interview, February 11, 2019).

I will not change my career because I just want to be a teacher (Zani, Interview, February 2, 2019).

I want to be a teacher because I love working with children (Kaylin, Interview, February 2, 2019).

Baker et al. (2014) comment that “the intrinsic value of teaching, and the desire to make a social contribution, shape the future, and work with children/teenagers” (p. 156).

Be a good teacher so I need to complete my diploma (Sandra, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I want to be a qualified teacher (Novell, Interview, February 16, 2019).

Be the best and understanding teacher (Mercy, Interview, February 16, 2019).

Teacher first and then a lecturer at the University of Namibia (Sara, Interview, February 9, 2019).

4.5.6.6 Agency, capacity for planning for future studies and achieving success: outcomes of overcoming barrier

Bandura (2001) states that “after people attain the goal they have been pursuing, those with a strong sense of efficacy set higher goals for themselves” (p. 158). Barnett’s (2010) argument is that “the prior experiences that many adult learners bring to the classroom may actually increase their capability to become successfully integrated into an educational programme and accomplish their goals” (p. 10). When asked what they planned to do after they completed their course, participants responded:

Pursue studying continuing professional education

Education is a dominant step in continuing being competitive and enhancing your skills daily. It helps you to move forward by climbing the ladder and reaching the potential and goals that you set for yourself. Emirbayer and Mishe (1998) define projectivity as “the imaginative generation by actors of possible future trajectories of action in which received structures of thought and action may be creatively reconfigured in relation to actors’ hope, fears, and desires for the future” (p. 971). To have a better future and be financially stronger, these participants believe that they have to continue studying to get better job offers.

I want to complete my diploma (Sandra, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I want to continue with my studies, I want to do my bachelor’s in education (Voza, Interview, September 24, 2018).

After completing my Advanced certificate, I want to apply for head of department (Kina, Interview, February 11, 2019).

Do my bachelor’s in education (Novell, Interview, February 16, 2019).

I want to join the education team (Edwin, Interview, February 2, 2019).

I will keep on studying until I get my masters (Nana, Interview, February 13, 2019).

I will further my studies (Sara, Interview, February 9, 2019).

I want to do my Advanced Certificate (Jems, Interviewed, February 11, 2019).

Lukianova (2016) states that “adult motivation is manifested in setting goals, maintaining attention through-out certain activities, applying efforts and perseverance to achieve them” (p. 225).

Further my studies first, do my Advanced Certificate and then my bachelor’s in education (Vella, Interview, February 16, 2019).

I will work very hard (Helena, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I sacrifice my free time to study (Sandra, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I will study further to get more skills (Gail, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I will study more, do my Advanced Certificate and open my own kindergarten (Gerra, Interview, November 15, 2018).

I will study and spend more time with kids, the more time you spend the more interested you will be (Kaylin, Interview, February 2, 2019).

I will study and complete my Advanced Certificate (Brenda, Interview, February 9, 2019).

I want to study and study (Mercy, Interview, February 16, 2019).

I will study (Jane, Interview, February 12, 2019).

4.5.6.7 Agency, access to distance learning capacity for planfulness and future security: outcomes of overcoming barrier

Jarvis (2010) argues that “distance education, therefore, provides the opportunity for people to continue their education individually in their own space, at their own time and pace” (p. 202). The participants opted for distance education because of time, full-time work and family. The participants’ responses to, “Why did you choose distance learning?” are explained below.

Distance education choice

Family responsibility accommodating and higher education studies

MacKeracher et al. (2006) in their study found that “participation in learning activities is a matter of choice that must be fitted into work, family and community responsibilities and other interests and obligations” (p. 10). Families play a vital role in our lives because they will always be there when you need them. The participants could study at their own pace without neglecting their families.

I got married too young; so, because of the children I had to stay at home and look after the children (Helena, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I can work and be at home at the same time. I helped my husband with his company and spent more time with the family (Sandra, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I can be a mother and work at the same time (Mabry, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I need to pay for my studies, look after my children and parents (Fenis, Interview, February 11, 2019).

Because I can still be a farmer and study (Edwin, Interview, February 2, 2019).

Financial obligations towards education

The participants opted to work and pay for their studies because it was a decision they had to take to overcome this hurdle. That is why they decided to choose distance education. The following participants agree with Hitlin and Elder (2007), that “the more optimistic a person is, the more they feel they will have efficacious and positive influence on their lives and in their choices” (p. 43). According to Giddens (1984), “the power of the individual is confined by a range of specifiable circumstances” (pp. 14-15). These participants had no choice but to work and pay for their studies.

So that I can work and study because I had no one to pay for my studies (Gail, Interview, September 24, 2018).

I had to work and pay for my studies (Voza, Interview, September 24, 2018),

As adults we need money, so I needed to work and study (Gerra, Interview, November 15, 2018).

I need to work and study to help with the payments of studies (Kaylin, Interview, February 2 & 16, 2019).

I need to work and study to help with the payments of studies (Novell, Interview, February 2 & 16, 2019).

You can still do your things at home and study (Brenda, Interview, February 9, 2019).

I need to work and pay for my studies (Nana, Interview, February 13, 2019).

I need to work and pay for my studies (Vella, Interview, February 16, 2019).

I need to work and pay for my studies (Mercy, Interview, February 16, 2019).

I need to pay for my studies, so I had to work (Lolla, Interview, February 13, 2019).

I need to work and pay for my studies (Kina, Interview, February 11, 2019).

I need to work to help provide for my family (Jems, Interview, February 11, 2019).

Because my grades were not good enough to study at a university, but I did not want to waste time (Zani, Interview, February 2, 2019).

Chaloux alluded that “distance learning has the added benefit of allowing workers to better balance work, family and educational responsibilities and may permit them to stay on the job while pursuing studies” (p. 57). The participants still had the financial security while studying.

We need to pay for the things in life, so to work and study worked for me (Jane, Interview, February 12, 2019).

We need to pay our bills, so I had to work and study at the same time (Sara, Interview, February 9, 2019).

Encouragement from family and friends

“Receiving encouragement from friends and family helped to bolster this individual’s educational goals and sense of self-efficacy” (Goto & Martin, 2009, p. 16). The participants believed that if you have a support system in place you can do anything, and Hitlin and Elder (2007) agree that the “social support positively influences one’s sense of agency” (p. 43). The support that they received from family and friends helped them to become more resilient towards the barriers they encountered. Thus, family can be a positive energy and a support system that motivates mature adult students when circumstances become difficult.

“The motivation to learn is influenced by internal and external factors, although their interpretation may differ significantly” (Lukianova, 2016, p. 226).

My children because mothers don't have time for their children, and I wanted to be there for them (Sandra, Interview, September 24, 2018).

My friends encouraged me to become a teacher (Gail, Interview, September 24, 2018).

Actually, it was my boyfriend and myself because I saw that in Namibia, we need teachers (Gerra, Interview, November 15, 2018).

My wife influenced me (Edwin, Interview, February 2, 2019).

My sister influenced me (Kaylin, Interview, February 2, 2019).

My cousin is the one who influenced me to choose this course because he is also doing this course (Brenda, Interview, February 9, 2019).

While being a secretary at school you deal with learners, and they encouraged me to become a teacher (Mercy, Interview, February 16, 2019).

So, my mother and my sister encouraged me to become a teacher (Sara, Interview, February 9, 2019).

My mother encouraged me (Jane, Interview, February 12, 2019).

I always wanted to be a teacher, so I chose this career (Kina, Interview, February 11, 2019)

You need to be disciplined, and your support system should be in place (Sandra, Interview, September 24, 2018).

According to Powell (2012), "I'm living with it. It's in my veins. I love it" (p. 15). According to Bakar, Mohamed, Suhid, and Hamzah (2014), "teaching is a noble profession and has helped to shape many nations" (p. 155). They, furthermore, state that "teaching is viewed as a demanding and stressful profession" (p. 156). In my view, there will always be a demand for qualified and quality teachers. In answering the question on how demanding their choice of career was, the participants had the following to say:

It is very demanding (Helena, Interview, September 24, 2018).

It is very demanding because we have a lack of qualified teachers in Namibia (Lolla, Interview, February 13, 2019).

It is very demanding (Fenis, Interviewed, February 11 and 12, 2019).

It is very demanding (Jane, Interviewed, February 11 and 12, 2019).

It is very demanding because of the lack of qualified teachers (Sara, Interviewed, February 9 and 11, 2019).

It is very demanding because of the lack of qualified teachers (Kina, Interviewed, February 9 and 11, 2019).

It is very demanding (Jems, Interview, February 11, 2019).

It is very demanding (Edwin, Interview, February 2, 2019)

It is demanding (Fenis, Interview, February 11, 2019).

It is very demanding (Zani, Interview, February 2, 2019).

Teaching is very demanding (Voza, Interview, September 24, 2018).

Very demanding. We need qualified teachers (Novell, Interview, February 16, 2019).

It is demanding (Brenda, Interview, February 9, 2019).

There is a lack of teachers, so it is very demanding (Nana, Interview, February 13, 2019).

We need qualified teachers in Namibia (Gail, Interview, September 24, 2018).

[We are] in need of qualified teachers (Vella, Interview, February 16, 2019).

[We are] in need of qualified teachers (Mercy, Interview, February 16, 2019).

In Africa we need a lot of teachers so that all the kids are educated. Everybody must be able to read and write (Gerra, Interview, November 15, 2018).

4.5.6.8 Summary

In Chapter 4, I discussed the themes derived from the data analysis process and the barriers to access and participation for the mature adult students in my study. I also discussed the ways in which my participants used their agency to overcome the barriers they experienced. I have also discussed the perspectives of agency that I believe relate to the choices made by participants. These can be seen as the agentic approaches of the participants in my study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Summary

In this chapter, I present a summary of the main findings of the study. I discuss my findings and recommendations as well as share some concluding thoughts. All the data that was gathered for this research was based on the main question that the research study aimed to answer.

5.2 Main Research Question

What are the barriers to access and participation for mature adult students at a distance higher education institute in Namibia?

5.3 Sub-Questions

What structural barriers affect mature adult students' access and participation?

What dispositional barriers affect mature adult students' access and participation?

How do mature adult students use their agency to overcome barriers that affect their access and participation?

To answer these questions, I adopted a qualitative research approach as I wanted to understand the barriers to access, and participation experienced by mature adult students on the teacher education learning pathway. I used purposive sampling, which allowed me to select 20 participants who were registered at the institute and who could participate in my study. My data was collected by conducting semi-structured interviews and I used an interview guide as part of this process. Creswell's (2009) data analysis process guided the manner in which I analysed my data. Structure and agency were used as a theoretical framework and agency, more specifically, is used to understand the approaches to barriers exerted by participants. I utilised my theoretical framework to conceptualise my findings.

5.4 Findings

The aim of this study was to investigate the barriers to access and participation among mature adult students aiming to become teachers in Namibia. As mentioned before, teacher education in Namibia has faced significant challenges. There is a shortage of qualified teachers and teacher training has challenges regarding curriculum delivery, delivery of lectures, “poor teaching practices” and “a lack of mentoring support from the school” (Junias et al. 2022, p. 2635). Since the participants in my study were all mature adult students, I also wanted to understand the barriers to their access and participation. As mentioned, adult learners face significant challenges in accessing, participating in and succeeding in post school education and training. It was my observation that if Namibia wants to achieve its 2030 national goals of access, equity, quality and democracy; both an understanding and analysis of the barriers to access and participation for mature adult learners on the teacher education pathway is crucial. Given the limited research in this field, I embarked to conduct such an analysis.

5.4.1 Institutional, dispositional and situational barriers on the learning pathways of mature adult students

The mature adult students in my study experienced a vast range of barriers; institutional dispositional and situational. The prominent institutional barriers were a lack of support from the institution in terms of tutor support and a lack of information regarding navigating studying at the institution. The students also experienced dispositional barriers due to a lack of technological skills to use the kindle device, some discouragement from other students who indicated that they were wasting their time pursuing education at their age and the fear of completing the teacher education course they were on, were at the forefront of their minds.

In addition to these, the mature adult students in my study also experienced financial problems with tuition fees, had difficulties applying for leave to write examinations and doing their school-based studies as well as a range of family-related barriers which made access and participation challenging. The predominant barrier to access was the fact that all the participants were not qualified to enter the teacher education pathway and accessed this route via their mature-age exemption and work-related experience. They also experienced a barrier to access in terms of limited funding opportunities and financial challenges while studying.

All of the barriers experienced by the mature adult students in this study, did not stop or detract them from the path they chose. They enacted their agency to choose a course through the barriers (Czerniewicz et al. 2009; Lockett & Lockett, 2009). They realised that if they wanted to succeed with their studies, they needed to work harder and be motivated to succeed in their studies. They were responsible for directing their own ambitions. A highlight was that the participants were also willing to continue studying after completing their diploma course as they wanted to be able to contribute more to the education sector.

5.4.2 How do mature adult students overcome barriers that enable them to access education and participate meaningfully?

Rubenson and Desjardins (2009) mention that a person's capability and how much he or she wants to achieve a goal enables them to overcome any barrier. The participants were very enthusiastic to do whatever they could to make their studies a success. Some of the strategies used by the mature adult students in my study were applying for funding from various sources throughout their studies, managing their time through setting up a schedule for their learning, approaching the institution for support and being pro-active about such support. They also drew on family and friends for support, especially technological support, and they also drew on peers for academic strength and support. However, their own motivations and utilising their agency was the key to their success in accessing and participation. Thus, it was their agentic approaches that enabled their success. The desire to overcome the barrier of structural and situational challenges conceptualised the adult students as agents to succeed in their studies.

5.3 Teacher Education in Namibia

The mature adult students in my study said that they studied teaching because it could help to secure employment and that they loved children. Several also agreed that teaching is a noble profession and a very demanding calling in Namibia. I, agree with Basilius Haingura's statement that "Namibian teachers are facing a crisis of professionalism, with many joining the profession as a last resort" (Herbert, 2023). This means that teaching is also a chosen field of study for mature adult students as a result of the fact that there is a crisis, and adult students

can create a purpose around this crisis and need. It is essential that the barriers experienced on the teacher education pathway is further investigated and researched. Understanding more of these barriers is essential to know how to support not only mature adult students; but also, all students aiming to enter the teaching profession through the course and institution, which formed a part of this study.

5.4 Recommendations

It is recommended that mature adult students receive support and guidance on how to apply for funding and also support and information regarding the various funding opportunities that are available. The institution should approach funders on behalf of students, specifically for teacher education.

It is also recommended that with every induction a demonstration on how to work on the Kindle as well as the student portal should be given. This will enable students to have access to the study material which they can make use of while waiting for hard copy materials.

5.5 Conclusion

Enhancing teacher education in Namibia has the potential to influence the teaching profession in a positive manner. While this was not the aim, the study contributes to our knowledge of teacher education in this region. This study contributes to our knowledge and understanding regarding barriers to access and participation for mature adult students in Namibia. It also contributes to our knowledge regarding agency and the ability of agentic approaches to carry students through educational endeavours to overcome barriers to access and participation. While various approaches were used, it was the self-motivations of students that enabled them to use their agency to continue plotting their course of action to continue accessing and participating in the teacher education pathway.

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APPROVAL LETTER

Dear Mrs B Basson

30 July 2018

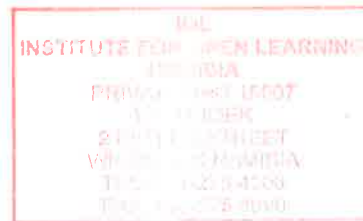
This letter acknowledges that I have received and reviewed a request by you, Bronwin Valerie Basson to conduct a research project entitled "Access, participation and success barriers among adult students registered at the Institute of Open Learning, towards your Master's Degree in Adult Learning and Global Change.

I agree that you can interview 20-30 students from IOL. Thank you for ensuring us that the data you get will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Sincerely,

Ilana Calitz

Head: Institute for Open Learning



INSTITUTE FOR OPEN LEARNING (PTY) LTD.

Registration Number: 06/228

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Participant Consent Form

Appendix D

Dear Participant

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study. By signing this form you indicate consent for your participation in the research study.

By signing this consent form, you agree that:

- You have read and understood the information letter and consent form provided.
- You freely consent to be interviewed by the researcher.
- You agree that the interview can be recorded with an electronic recording device.
- You understand that your words may be quoted and used in publications, reports and in webpages but your name will not be used.
- You understand that you can withdraw from the research project at any time and no question will be asked about the reasons why you no longer want to participate.

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

Name of Participant:

Participant Signature:

Place of interview

Date of interview

Researcher Signature



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Information Letter to Participants

Appendix C

Dear.....(Name to be inserted later.)

KIND REQUEST FOR AN INTERVIEW

I am registered as a student at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) where I am enrolled in the M. Ed. (Adult Learning and Global Change). The university requires me to conduct a research study as a course requirement. The purpose of the research is to investigate the barriers which students experience, and how they confront these. I hope that this research will help the Institute as well as students to overcome these barriers.

I hope that the findings could contribute in a small way to achieving the Vision 2030 which promotes quality education with qualified teachers for every Namibian child.

For this reason, I would like to invite you to participate in my research study. Should you consent to participate, I would like to request an interview with you at a time which is convenient for you. The interview is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the research at any stage.

I will provide you with an interview consent form and request that you sign the interview consent form before I conduct the interview. I request to record the interview using a micro-recorder. I will treat the information that you share with the strictest confidentiality and maintain your anonymity.

If you have any questions about the research you may contact my supervisor, Professor Zelda Groener, or myself.

Student:	Bronwin Basson
Telephone number:	+264 81 424 0446
Email:	vellatheron@yahoo.com
Telephone number:	+264 61 270 9153
Course:	M. Ed. (Adult Learning and Global Change)
University:	University of the Western Cape
Supervisor:	Professor Zelda Groener
Email:	zgroener@uwc.ac.za
Tel:	Tel. +27 (0) 21 959 2801



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WESTERN CAPE

Yours sincerely

Ms Bronwin Basson

Appendix A

Interview guide

Profile Questions

1. Name
2. Age
3. Gender
4. Qualification
5. Occupation
6. What was your most important personal reason to apply for the? Diploma in Pre Primary Education?
7. Has it changed over the past year?
8. If so, what is your most important personal reason at this moment to complete this course?
9. What changes did you have to make within yourself in order to make a success of the programme thus far?
10. When you felt that your academic capabilities were challenged, what did you do to enable yourself to build your academic capabilities?
11. What personal attitudes enabled you to confront your challenges about your academic capabilities?
12. What personal attributes/qualities enabled you to confront your challenges about your academic capabilities?
13. What career changes would you like to make over the next 5 years?
14. What new personal attributes/qualities would you have to develop in order to realise these career changes?
15. What are some of the personal constraints that have influenced your progress negatively since you started the DPPE course?
16. How did you address these personal constraints?
17. What are some of the work-related constraints that have influenced your progress negatively since you started the DPPE course?
18. How did you address these work-related constraints?
19. Are some of these constraints related to overcoming 'apartheid related' 'disadvantage' challenges?
20. How did you address these constraints related to overcoming 'apartheid related' or 'disadvantage' challenges?
21. How did you address these personal constraints?
22. How demanding is your choice of career?
23. What do you plan to do after you completed your course?
24. Who or what influence you to choose this course?
25. Why did you choose distance learning?