THE PSYCHOSOCIAL EXPERIENCES, CHALLENGES AND NEEDS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS STUDYING UNDER ENROLMENT CONDITIONS PROGRAMME IN THE FREE STATE PROVINCE: SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR ENHANCED PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

BY

NEO FRANCES RAVHUHALI

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

Doctor

of

Social Work

At the

University of South Africa

Supervisor:

Prof B. J. Mohapi

Co-Supervisor:

Dr M.P. Dipela

February 2025

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT i
DECLARATION ii
DEDICATION iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS v
CHAPTER ONE: 6
GENERAL ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY 6
1.1 Introduction 6
1.2 Background of the study 6
1.3 Problem statement 12
1.4 Rationale for the study 15
1.5 Theoretical Framework 16
1.6 Research question, goal, and objectives 17
1.7 Research methodology 18
1.8 Ethical considerations 19
1.9 Clarification of key concepts 24
1.9.1 Psychosocial 24
1.9.2 Psychosocial support practitioner 24
1.9.3 Experience(s) 24
1.9.4 Students 25
1.9.5 Challenges 25
1.9.6 Enrolment conditions/Academic probation 25
1.9.7 Programme 26
1.9.8 Enrolment conditions programme 26
1.9.9 Structure of the thesis 26
1.9.10 Conclusion 27
CHAPTER TWO: 28
LITERATURE REVIEW, LEGISLATIVE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK. 28
2.1 Introduction 28
2.2 Understanding Enrolment Conditions 29
2.3 Philosophies of Enrolment Conditions 30
2.4 International overview of enrolment conditions 32

2.5 Enrolment conditions in Africa 33
2.6 Enrolment conditions in South Africa 34
2.7 Legislative frameworks that govern students' support in institutions of higher learning 37
2.8 Indicators of Enrolment conditions 40
2.9 Reasons and causes of Enrolment Conditions 41
2.10 Advantages of Enrolment Conditions 45
2.11 Disadvantages of Enrolment Conditions 46
2.12 Enrolment conditions 47
2.13 Enrolment Conditions interventions 48
2.14 Psychosocial experiences of students on Enrolment Conditions 50
2.15 Other Implications of Enrolment Conditions 52
2.16 Help-seeking behaviours of students on Enrolment Conditions 54
2.17 Approaches to management of Enrolment Conditions 55
2.18 Theoretical Framework 65
2.19 Conclusion 75
CHAPTER THREE: 76
APPLICATION OF QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGICAL PROCESS 76
3.1 Introduction 76
3.2 Research methodology 76
3.2.1 Research approach 76
3.2.2 Research design 80
3.2.2.1 Phenomenological research 81
3.2.2.2 Exploratory research 81
3.2.2.3 Descriptive research 82
3.2.2.4 Contextual research 82
3.2.3 Population and sampling 83
3.2.4 Preparing participants for data collection 86
3.2.5 Method used for data collection 87
3.2.6 Pilot study 91
3.2.7 Method of data analysis 93
3.2.8 Method of data verification 94
3.2.8.1 Credibility 94
3.2.8.2 Transferability 95

3.2.8.3 Dependability 96
3.2.8.4 Confirmability 96
3.2.9 Reflexivity and bracketing 96
3.2.10 Conclusion 97
CHAPTER FOUR: 98
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS 98
4.1 Introduction 98
4.2 Participants profile 98
4.3 Inclusion criteria 101
4.4 PRESENTATION OF THEMES AND SUB-THEMES 101
4.4.1 Theme 1: Participants' understanding of Enrolment Conditions 103
4.4.1.1 Subtheme 1.1: Not meeting the standard 103
4.4.1.2 Subtheme 1.2: Given a second chance 111
4.4.2 Theme 2: Communication strategies for informing students about placement on enrolment conditions 116
4.4.2.1 Subtheme 2.1: Informed by e-mail 117
4.4.2.2 Subtheme 2.2: Informed via other ways 119
4.4.3 Theme 3: Reason participants were placed on enrolment conditions 122
4.4.3.1 Sub-theme 3.1: Academic and non-academic-related matters 122
4.4.3.2 Subtheme 3.2: Non-academic matters 127
4.4.3.2.1 Home circumstances 128
4.4.3.2.2 Personal circumstances 129
4.4.4 Theme 4: Participants' experiences of being placed on enrolment conditions 135
4.4.4.1 Subtheme 4.1: Social implications 136
4.4.4.2 Subtheme 4.2: Emotional implications 140
4.4.4.2.1 Positive experiences 140
4.4.4.2.2 Negative experiences 142
4.4.4.3 Subtheme 4.3: Physical implications 149
4.4.5 Theme 5: Challenges experienced by participants on enrolment conditions 149
4.4.5.2 Accessibility of support services 150
4.4.6 Theme 6: Coping mechanisms of participants 153
4.4.6.1 Subtheme 6.1: Changed attitude and motivation 153
4.4.6.1.1 Academic goal orientation and self-efficacy 154

4.4.6.1.2 Internal motivation through positive self-talk.....155
4.4.6.1.3 Support from significant others.....155
4.4.6.1.4 Isolation.....156
4.4.6.2 Subtheme 6.2: Engaging in recreational and academic activities 156
4.4.7 Theme 7: Support provided by the university for the participants 158
4.4.7.1 Subtheme 7.1: Emotional support 158
4.4.7.1.1 Positive experiences of support 159
4.4.7.1.2 Negative perceptions and experiences of psychosocial support.....160
4.4.8 Theme 8: Suggestions by participants of addressing matters of enrolment conditions 163
4.4.8.1 Subtheme 8.1: Academic and academic-related matters.....163
4.4.8.1.1 Lessen harshness of Enrolment Conditions 163
4.4.8.1.2 More effective communication between all role-players 164
4.4.8.1.3 Students themselves must take more responsibility for their studies 165
4.4.8.1.4 Accessibility of study material and devices 166
4.4.8.2 Subtheme 8.2: Increased student support 167
4.4.8.2.1 Greater accessibility to support 167
4.4.8.2.2 Telephonic support.....168
4.4.8.2.3 Emotional support 169
4.4.8.2.4 Academic support 170
4.5 Conclusion 171
CHAPTER FIVE.....172
PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT GUIDELINES TO ASSIST SOCIAL WORKERS AS PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT PRACTITIONERS IN SUPPORTING STUDENTS ON ENROLMENT CONDITIONS.....172
5.1 Introduction 172
5.2 Background.....172
5.3 The process followed in developing guidelines 173
5.4 Validation and refinement of guidelines through participant feedback ...173
5.5 Scope of application of guidelines 174
5.6 Purpose of the guidelines 174
5.7 Objectives of the guidelines 175
5.8 Strategies for promoting practice guidelines implementation.....175
5.8.1 Clear communication.....175
5.8.2 Information sessions.....176

5.8.3 Collaborate with key university stakeholders 176
5.8.4 Integrate into academic programmes 176
5.8.5 Engage peer networks and ambassadors..... 177
5.8.6 Organise ongoing monitoring and feedback 177
5.9 Nature and role of social workers as psychosocial support practitioners in rendering psychosocial support to students in higher education 177
5.10 Guidelines for planning a psychosocial support intervention for students placed on Enrolment Conditions..... 178
5.11 Guidelines for faculties/stakeholders outside the psychosocial support fraternity 179
5.11.1 Enhanced notification..... 180
5.11.2 Educational Workshops 181
5.12 Suggested guidelines for enhanced psychosocial support for students under enrolment conditions for social workers as psychosocial support practitioners 181
5.12.1 Initial assessment and rapport building 184
5.12.2 Identifying psychosocial challenges and setting goals 184
5.12.3 Providing psychosocial education and intervention/support 185
5.12.4 enhancing social support and peer networks 187
5.12.5 Strengthening academic skills and self-efficacy 187
5.12.6 Regular monitoring and adaptive interventions 189
5.12.7 Crisis intervention and referrals..... 189
5.12.8 Promote long-term self-management and exit planning 191
5.13 Conclusion..... 191
CHAPTER SIX..... 193
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... 193
6.1 Introduction..... 193
6.2 Summary of the previous chapters..... 193
6.3 Achievement of the goal and objectives of the study 194
6.4 What are the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of students on enrolment conditions, and what recommended guidelines could be made to social workers as psychosocial support practitioners who render services to this clientele? 196
6.5 Conclusions and recommendations 197
6.5.1 Conclusion on participants' understanding of Enrolment Conditions 197
6.5.2 Conclusion on communication strategies for informing students about their

placement on Enrolment Conditions 197
6.5.3 Conclusions on reasons participants were placed on Enrolment Conditions 197
6.5.4 Conclusions on participants' experiences of being placed on Enrolment Conditions 198
6.5.5 Conclusions on challenges experienced by participants' Enrolment Conditions 199
6.5.6 Conclusions on coping mechanisms of participants 199
6.5.7 Conclusions on the support the university provided to participants 200
6.5.8 Conclusion on suggestions made by participants regarding Enrolment Conditions 200
6.5.9 Conclusions as stemming from key informants (social workers and psychologists) 201
6.5.10 Conclusions on key informant perceptions of Enrolment Conditions and student vulnerability 201
6.5.11 Conclusions on Services offered by key informants 201
6.5.12 Conclusions on key informants' experiences of their role while working with students 202
6.5.13 Conclusions on key informants' suggestions on the way forward in supporting students 202
6.6 Recommendations 202
6.6.1 Recommendations for social workers as psychosocial support practitioners 203
6.6.2 Recommendations for faculties 204
6.6.3 Recommendations for Future Researchers 205
6.6.4 Recommendations to market and strengthen psychosocial support services for students on Enrolment Conditions 205
6.7 Limitations of the study 207
6.8 Conclusion 208
REFERENCES 210
Annexures 256
Annexure A: UNISA ethical clearance 256
Annexure B: UFS ethical clearance 257
Annexure C: Information letter 258
Annexure D: Consent to participate in this study 263
Annexure E: Editor's letter 264
Annexure F: Semi-structured interview guide for participants (students) 265

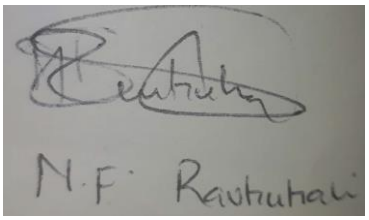
Annexure G: Semi-structured interview schedule for key informants.....266
Annexure H: Turnitin report 267
Annexure I: Turnitin Proof of submission 268

ABSTRACT

Many higher education institutions in South Africa and beyond implement the placement of students under enrolment conditions. Enrolment conditions, also referred to as academic probation, are a system of classifying students who must improve their academic standing by meeting or making evident progress towards their institution's eligibility criteria. The practice of enrolment conditions, although implemented to encourage students to progress in their studies, seems to have unintended consequences, as students tend to experience negative emotional reactions upon finding out about their placement on enrolment conditions. This study aimed to explore and describe the psychosocial experiences of students studying under enrolment conditions at the University of Free State and to develop guidelines for their continued psychosocial support. This qualitative study employed a phenomenological design, supported by a contextual, descriptive, and exploratory design aimed at obtaining an in-depth understanding of the psychosocial experiences of such students. The study population included students on enrolment conditions and psychosocial support practitioners as key informants. The researcher used non-probability, purposive sampling to draw a sample from the larger population. Data was gathered through semi-structured face-to-face interviews and researcher observations using an interview guide facilitated by open-ended questions. Transcribed data was analysed thematically, and the criteria developed by Guba (in Krefting, 1991:214) were used to establish trustworthiness of data. Ethical principles of informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and information management were followed. The findings indicated that putting students on enrolment conditions/ academic probation is often unexpected, triggering negative emotions and placing students under significant pressure to meet academic requirements within constrained timeframes. Furthermore, the study revealed that key institutional stakeholders were largely unaware of the nature and impact of enrolment conditions when designing and implementing student support interventions. This lack of awareness contributed to the inadequacy of existing support mechanisms. Notably, the study found that students in enrolment conditions are particularly vulnerable and require additional psychosocial support services, which are currently lacking. In response, the study developed guidelines for social workers as psychosocial support practitioners, advocating for the introduction of tailored interventions to address the specific needs of students placed on enrolment conditions.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work in design and execution and that it was never submitted by me for a degree at any other university. I have given full acknowledgment of the sources used in this research.



21 February 2025

Neo Frances Ravhuhali Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late father, Revd Dr Kenneth Mashishi, for being an inspiration to me, my mother, Monica Mashishi, for cheering me on and always believing in me, and to all students who have experienced placement on enrolment conditions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful for and appreciate the following people who always poured into my cup; without their support, guidance, and assistance, this work would not have been possible:

- My Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, for the vision, wisdom, counsel, and strength.
- My husband and life partner, Mr Immanuel Ravhuhali, for the technical and other forms of support.
- My supervisors, Prof. B.J. Mohapi and Dr. M.P. Dipela, thank you for your patience, support, guidance, and encouragement.
- My sons and sisters for their encouragement and support.
- My study participants, as well as colleagues who served as key informants in the study.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

GPA Grade Point Average

TUT Tshwane University of Technology

UCT University of Cape Town

UP University of Pretoria

UFS University of the Free State

UNISA University of South Africa

NCHE National Commission for Higher Education

NSFAS National Student Financial Aid Scheme

CHE Council on Higher Education

SCD Student Counselling and Development

SW Social Worker

CHAPTER ONE:

GENERAL ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the study "The Psychosocial Experiences, Challenges, and Needs of Students Studying under Enrolment Conditions Programme: Suggested Guidelines for Enhanced Psychosocial Support." It also highlights the background of the study, the problem statement, the rationale, and a brief depiction of the qualitative methodological process, paradigm, and design, as well as the arrangement of the study.

1.2 Background of the study

Higher education institutions (HEIs) face challenges, including demands for accountability and effectiveness in the production of quality students and the promotion of the reputation and welfare of students. These are enhanced by the development of a caring, supportive institution that is vitally interested in their students' welfare and ability to minister to student needs (Chan, 2016; Douwes, Metselaar, Pijnenborg & Boonstra, 2023). In line with literature on South African higher education institutions (universities), the University in this study may be facing additional challenges, including ensuring that students experience a sense of belonging and experience their learning environment as conducive, comfortable, and progressive. (Sithaldeen, Phetlhu & August, 2022; Kuh, Strydom & Loots, 2017).

To keep to the ideal of student academic progression, universities place students on enrolment conditions, requiring them to adhere to specific conditions to remain enrolled in studies (Hoover, 2014; Ahmed, Chowdhury, Rahman & Talukder, 2014). The Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) (2018:1) has defined enrolment conditions or academic probation as the "conditional grace period in the exclusion process, which provides the student the opportunity, through specific conditions and interventions, to comply with the academic performance requirements, to avoid final exclusion." In a similar vein, Hoover (2014) and Gonzalez (2022) maintain that enrolment conditions refer to the academic policy designed to alert students to the fact that they are not meeting the minimum academic standards of the institution. Furthermore, Jony (2022), in a study in Bangladesh, referred to placement on enrolment conditions as a status

awarded to those students who do not meet the minimum academic requirements of a university in a specific academic term. The reader needs to note that the concepts of academic progression, academic exclusion, academic appeal, and enrolment conditions are interdependent and intertwined and cannot be understood outside of each other. Having said this, however, it should be noted that the enrolment conditions given to the students are intended to assist them in getting back on track with their studies and eventually completing their academic journey (Casey, Cline, Ost & Qureshi, 2018).

The notion of students studying under enrolment conditions is a global practice that is being implemented by many institutions of higher education (Casey et al., 2018; Vanacore & Dahan, 2021), and its practice is in line with the rules as far as the completion of qualifications is concerned (TUT, 2018), University of South Africa (UNISA, 2019). One of these rules is the progression rule, which entails that students must accumulate a certain number of credits per year to progress and continue their studies (UNISA, 2017). Violation of the progression rule often has consequences for the student, such as the student's continued study at the institution being suspended (Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education, 2020) or that it be based on certain enrolment conditions. In this study, the terms "enrolment conditions" and "academic probation" refer to the same concept; however, the term "enrolment conditions" will consistently be used as it is included in the title of the study. Accordingly, an explanation of each of these previously mentioned intertwined concepts (academic progression, academic exclusion, academic appeal, and enrolment conditions) and their relation to each other is indicated below:

Academic progression within the sector of higher education refers to how individuals are permitted to move through National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels by accumulating appropriate combinations of credits (University of the Free State, 2022). When students do not accumulate the required combination of credits, they are then academically excluded. According to Somo (2013), academic exclusion refers to when a student is disqualified from continuing with their studies because they have not met the minimum progression requirements applicable to their qualification. After the student has been excluded, the institution of higher education may allow the student to submit an appeal so that the institution can consider whether the student should be allowed to continue with their studies or not (University of Pretoria, 2023). An academic

appeal refers to a student's request to have an exclusion decision overturned. In support of this view, the University of the Free State (UFS) (2022:7) defines it as "a written application by a student to make a serious, urgent request for a reversal of the decision made by the Faculty Examination Board (FEB) regarding his/her progression status or academic exclusion." Stemming from the appeal, some students are given a positive outcome: they are readmitted and allowed to continue with their studies, while others are not. Those allowed to continue their studies are given conditions stemming from the mitigating factors cited in their appeal and are then readmitted. In this regard, these students are said to be studying under enrolment conditions/academic probation (Somo, 2013).

Literature has suggested that enrolment conditions practices may differ across different institutions in South Africa and globally (Gonzalez, 2022). Enrolment conditions, amongst others, can include that the student seeks career counselling, is given performance level requirements, is given a limited subject load, seeks psychosocial support, is required to progress within a stipulated time frame, seeks academic intervention, contacts the academic advisor, and is monitored for a specific period; that they consult an advisor at the Centre of Teaching and Learning (CTL) for life skills (time management and study methods); that they enrol for a university success course; and that they change their major (TUT, 2018; Gonzalez, 2022; Vanacore & Dahan, 2021; Houle, 2013; Somo, 2013). Placement of students on enrolment conditions contributes to experiences of emotional instability (Pherson & Marrero, 2021; Bowman & Jang, 2022).

Hoover (2014) indicated that there are many reasons why students struggle academically in universities. Some identified issues are a lack of academic preparedness or weak academic skills, student adjustment to university, dissatisfaction with instruction, low motivation, personal issues, not using academic advising resources, or being a first-generation university student from a low-income family. When students do not meet the minimum academic requirements of the institution, they may be at risk of failing, being dismissed, or being placed on enrolment conditions, depending on the sequence of enrolment conditions processes applicable to the relevant institution.

The psychosocial impact of academic exclusion, which often results in students studying under enrolment condition programmes, and the role of academic emotions

in higher education is an under-researched area (Rowe & Fitness, 2018;), and it represents a wide range of emotions such as anger, anxiety, frustration, and boredom, and it also includes affective, cognitive, physiological, motivational, and expressive components. Many studies have investigated the link between academic emotions, student engagement, and potential study success. For example, Rowe & Fitness (2018) and Ge (2021) explored the antecedents of academic emotions in higher education and how these emotions were related to student engagement and withdrawal. The findings indicated that there is a reciprocal relationship between students, emotions, and engagement with studies. A limitation to their studies is that they did not investigate the psychosocial experiences of students studying under enrolment conditions.

In Norway, Nedregård and Abrahamsen (2018) found that students' engagement through an initial interest in the subject was a strong and significant predictor for dropout from professional study programmes. However, few studies have investigated enrolment conditions and academic emotions linked to dropout in higher education institutions. The proposed study seeks to close this identified gap and add to the current research base. A Norwegian study among higher education students found that the risk for non-completion increases with age, family-related challenges, the inability to pay fees, and wrong career choices and that there are more non-continuing students among males (Hovdhaugen, 2011).

Also, in Africa, few studies were conducted on this phenomenon. A study of engagement and resilience factors among first-year university students found significant gender differences in female students' performance, which was more influenced by their ability not to be frustrated when facing adversities (Ayala & Manzano, 2018). Nevertheless, another study reported that male students seem less satisfied with their study course, feel less connected to the study institution, and report poorer interactions with teachers and fellow students (Severiens & Ten Dam, 2012). Similarly, in the United States of America (USA), the reasons for students' non-completion of higher education courses have been considered in depth. Tinto (2017) developed a framework that considers students' pre-entry attributes and their own aspirations as possible predictors of success retention. He investigated how students' background attributes and their own goals impact persistence, a key disposition likely to lead to the successful completion of qualifications. Baker (2020) supports Tinto's

views. Scholars Van der Zanden, Denessen, Cillessen, and Meijer (2018) noted that when students drop out of their courses, it amounts to a loss not only for the university concerned but also for the individual and society. Specifically, there are negative implications for these students' self-esteem and efficacy (Negut, 2020). Additionally, those individuals' employment prospects are reduced (Azmitia, Sumabat-Estrada, Cheong & Covarrubias, 2018; Torenbeek, Jansen & Hofman, 2010). Further to the social effects noted in international studies, there are additional financial implications for Australian students since those students who do not complete their studies have education debts with nothing to show for it (Norton & Cherastidtham, 2018), which can result in more stress, anxiety, and even suicide. Additionally, government funding to universities to educate these students is wasted.

Several studies focus on strategies to enhance student engagement, which are seen as a subset of factors leading to greater success and retention. Kahu and Nelson (2018) identified institutional and personal factors as key elements that increase or decrease engagement. Furthermore, Kahu, Stephens, Leach, and Zepke (2015) reported that those factors that enhance student engagement led to greater student satisfaction and success.

Studies for Australian Universities indicate that activities and initiatives that help students feel like they are a part of the community are important. Examples from Western Sydney University include ongoing refinements that build on existing orientation activities in their just-in-time and just-for-me principles, ensuring student peer and academic support (Gill, Ramjan, Koch, Dlugon, Andrew & Salamonson, 2011). Students need to feel valued and be part of a supportive learning community that extends beyond the lecture theatre (Ekornes, 2022). In their work, Noble and Henderson (2011) found that good, informal relationships between peers and academic staff are essential for students' success. Students involved in such interactions feel valued, and having a bond already established with lecturers, they are more apt to seek support, which enhances the likelihood of their success. This view is supported by a South Australian study that surveyed over 3000 first-year students and found that having effortless access to teaching staff and wellness programmes outside of face-to-face teaching was seen as an important factor in success (Scutter, Palmer, Luzecky, Da Silva & Brinkworth, 2011) and McCallum (2021). Substantial work has been undertaken at the Queensland University of Technology on students' first-year

experience leading to success and retention. Kift, Nelson, and Clarke (2010:8) have noted the importance of an “intentional first-year curriculum design that carefully scaffolds, mediates, and supports first-year learning.” This is achieved when professional and academic staff work together to support students, and where co-curricular supports, such as peer mentors, dovetail with the educational framework of students’ first year. Maher and Macallister (2013) noted that the factors contributing to students remaining at the institution and progressing in their studies cut across all the academic programmes in higher education. The mentioned studies limited the lens to factors such as students’ retention and preparations without necessarily giving enough attention to other factors that may contribute to the poor performance of students and their placement on enrolment conditions.

There are reasons why students are placed under enrolment conditions, and literature has alluded to non-academic reasons, such as psychosocial and mental health challenges, as contributing factors (Jony, 2022). It stems from these reasons (psychosocial challenges) that students can be placed on enrolment conditions, with one of the conditions being that they seek psychosocial support. Other non-academic reasons include the student’s lack of preparedness to deal with the demands of higher education (Fernández-Rodríguez, Soto-López & Cuesta, 2019) as well as medical/health reasons (Jony, 2022), health reasons (illness e.g., TB) are expected to affect students’ academic performance adversely and may lead to placement on enrolment conditions.

In an attempt to help students succeed, universities across the world continue to support students and respond to their needs (including the need for psychosocial support). In creating and realising the holistic support of students in higher education institutions, many universities have established units such as student counselling and development, which include social work and psychological services, and provide various student emotional support programmes. Student support units and other stakeholders collaboratively provide peer help and peer education programmes (Osborn, Town, Ellis, Buckman, Saunders & Fonagy, 2022). Moreover, these units collaboratively offer to advise, support, and coordinate awareness programmes in order to take care of the students’ emotional, social, and psychological well-being while they pursue their studies. However, little has been documented about the psychosocial needs of students who study under enrolment conditions (Woodfield, 2017) and their

experiences with the existing psychosocial support services available. This is despite the practice of studying under enrolment conditions being implemented by institutions of higher education in South Africa (Somo, 2013) and globally.

Different authors also highlight a range of institutional help offered to students. Interventions include academic credit classes focused on skills students need to succeed, online and distance learning academic courses, the use of advising services, developmental courses, early warning systems, career and job placement services, academic success centres, and student support services, which encompass a range of services for students that can include mentoring, academic advising, tutoring, career counselling, financial aid counselling, and instruction in basic skills (Hoover, 2014).

Accordingly, this study intends to investigate the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of students studying under enrolment conditions, as well as their experiences regarding existing psychosocial support services offered by the university. The intention is to develop relevant guidelines to support and enhance psychosocial support services, practices, and interventions.

1.3 Problem statement

Research involves seeking answers to questions and acquiring new information about the world (Brooks, Hammons, Nolan, Dufek & Wynn, 2019). Having a research problem is essential; without it, there would be no need to research because it is a problem or issue that leads to the need for a study (Creswell, 2014). A problem statement emanates from the research problem and is a clear and concise description of the issue that needs to be addressed (Nasheeda, 2021). In this regard, Nasution et al. (2019) indicated that problem statements disclose the research interest and indicate the importance of the research.

Student success is important to higher education institutions (Kahu & Nelson, 2018; Bloom, Hutson, He & Konkle, 2013), and the factors that prevent students from succeeding are matters that should receive attention. Enrolment conditions assist students by giving them additional study opportunities (Espinosa, Escandallo, Muegna, 2023). Having said this, however, unless the factors responsible for their failure and placement on enrolment conditions are addressed, this lifeline is of little value. It is only when the factors responsible for student failure are understood that HEIs can embark on customizing interventions that are relevant for their students on enrolment conditions. Literature has

suggested that psychosocial problems contribute to students feeling overwhelmed and not performing as they should (Freire, Ferradás, Regueiro, Rodríguez, Valle & Núñez, 2020).

Similarly, a study conducted by Barouch-Gilbert (2016) alluded to the influence of negative emotions on the self-efficacy and academic success of students in higher education. Other studies (Pelch, 2018; Asikainen, Hailikari & Mattsson, 2018) have also documented that graduate programme characteristics are associated with students' emotional well-being and the likelihood of completing their graduate programmes. In this regard, a study by Pherson and Marrero (2021) indicated that students placed on enrolment conditions without sufficient support are likely to drop out of their studies owing to the stress and emotional instability brought about by their probation. Further studies (Parviainen, Aunola, Torppa, Poikkeus & Vasalampi, 2020; Mireles-Rios, Rios & Reyes, 2020) found that students, including those on enrolment conditions, had a significantly higher frequency of thoughts about quitting their studies because of emotional instability. According to Mutinta (2022), the prevalence of mental health needs among tertiary students is high; this includes students on enrolment conditions. In a study conducted in Bangladesh, Jony (2022) investigated reasons students are placed on enrolment conditions; these included poor study habits and lack of seriousness in studies; weak writing and presentation skills; difficulty in understanding the English language; previous weak academic background; difficulty with test/exam taking; wrong course or study subject selection; poor interaction with teachers; unfamiliarity with the grading system; irregular class attendance and lack of academic goal setting; health problems; family problems; residential issues; over-involvement with unimportant and unnecessary activities; and lack of self-motivation. A limitation of this study by Jony (2022), however, was that it did not investigate the psychosocial needs and challenges of students on enrolment conditions, nor did it focus on their experiences of psychosocial support efforts available to them.

While the researcher acknowledges that several studies have been conducted around enrolment conditions, the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of students on enrolment conditions remain a gap and warrant investigation. They are thus the area of focus for this study. It should, however, be acknowledged that Institutions of higher education, as service providers to students, try to support them so that they can complete their academic journey. This is evidenced by the various support

programmes (for example, counselling services, academic literacies, and foundational courses) implemented by these institutions (Mogashana & Basitere, 2021).

The researcher's background in social work and academic advising sparked her interest in students ' enrolment conditions. During advising consultations, students have informally and repeatedly cited psychosocial and mental health needs as the reason for their lack of sufficient academic progress, exclusion, need to appeal, and placement on enrolment conditions. The researcher's combined experience in social work, academic advising, and participation in the student appeals process has deepened her interest in exploring how counsellors can support students on enrolment conditions. Furthermore, she believes that these students are vulnerable and at risk of not completing their studies, yet they often do not receive the level of institutional support they need (Arcand & LeBlanc, 2012).

The manifestations of students' emotional distress regarding their placement on enrolment conditions particularly contributed to the researcher's interest. The researcher is therefore concerned about the student's access to and usage of counselling services, as literature has suggested that the functions and role of counselling services in the higher education sector are misunderstood, underutilized and usage thereof by students is limited (Rouse, 2021). This observation, coupled with literature, has sparked the researcher's interest in the role that counsellors play in servicing this specific target group. Literature has also posited that social workers and psychologists (counsellors) in higher education (like many other service providers) cannot render effective services owing to high caseloads and limited resources (Hunter, 2016; Warikoo & Demirdogen, 2021). The researcher's observation is that many of the students on enrolment conditions seem not to make use of the counselling services that are at their disposal. Lambert and Siegel (2018) have indicated that students may not necessarily intentionally seek psychosocial support services, as they may not be comfortable seeking help, and because their access to services may depend on the information they receive about available services from the person (often a fellow student) they ask.

Considering the preceding discussions, the problem statement can thus be formulated: There is limited research on university students' experiences, challenges, and needs regarding enrolment conditions and the psychosocial support services available. Accordingly, this study intends to investigate and develop an in-depth

understanding of the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of university students studying under the enrolment conditions programme and to develop guidelines for continued psychosocial support.

1.4 Rationale for the study

Researchers conduct studies for various reasons and motives; this is known as the rationale or motive for the study. Maree (2016) maintains that the rationale is a statement of how a researcher developed an interest in a particular topic and why the researcher believes the research is worth conducting. The rationale is, therefore, the justification for undertaking the research study; it states the reason(s) why a researcher chooses to focus on a specific topic, including the significance of the study and the gaps the research intends to fill.

As someone who used to advise students daily and has a social work background, the researcher noticed that the practice of placing students on enrolment conditions seems to have unintended consequences, as students tend to experience negative emotional reactions upon finding out about their placement on enrolment conditions (Gordon, 2024). The manifestations of their negative emotions have led the researcher to be interested in their psychosocial experiences, considering their placement on enrolment conditions. Although there is an increase in literature regarding the psychosocial experiences of students in higher education (Zhang, Shi, Tian, Zhou, Peng, Shen, Li & Ou, 2022), there is a dearth of literature on the psychosocial experiences of students studying under enrolment conditions. An exploratory, descriptive, and contextual understanding of the topic will inform practice and contribute towards developing a protocol or framework that psychosocial support practitioners can use to assist this cohort in progressing and being successful in their studies. Enrolment conditions programmes on their own cannot achieve higher student throughput.

Students on enrolment conditions fail to understand the seriousness of their conditions and what is required of them. Mofatteh (2020) has alluded to students having limited and wrong information about their qualifications and the negative effect this can have on their studies. Students on enrolment conditions are also unaware of the resources available to support them and thus fail to adequately satisfy the conditions and outcome of their studies. They need to be empowered to understand the resources at their disposal and learn how to access them, as their inclusion and participation are valuable in addressing the problems that affect them. Bourke and MacDonald (2018)

have alluded to the importance of student involvement or the inclusion of student voices in interventions meant to benefit students. In this regard, the study will explore the students' (under enrolment conditions) suggestions about the nature of psychosocial support services they deem necessary and which they would advise be rendered to future students on enrolment conditions.

Moreover, literature has suggested that enrolment conditions influence throughput rates of universities as these decrease when students do not complete qualifications, and equally, the university loses income (Leon, Scott, Koke, Fiorni & Rangazas ,2019). Low university throughput is likely to cast a negative image on the university's ability to invest in student success (in turn affecting future recruitment) and the university's finances, given the funding frameworks in most public institutions (Paideya & Bengesai, 2021). Accordingly, it is envisioned that the guidelines emanating from this study will, at an intervention level, assist psychosocial support practitioners (particularly social workers) to have a clear picture of what the students undergo psychosocially when placed on enrolment conditions, which will, in turn, guide their intervention. At the administrative level, the findings of this study will assist university policymakers in understanding and catering to the needs of students on enrolment conditions, thereby assisting them in completing their qualifications, which will also increase the university's throughput and income. Moreover, this study aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), particularly in promoting inclusive and equitable access to higher education by addressing the psychosocial barriers faced by students under enrolment conditions. Additionally, the study supports SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) by advancing mental health support and psychosocial interventions for emotionally vulnerable student populations.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

Theory is crucial, especially the one that underpins the study. By definition, a theory is a statement that outlines a logical explanation of the interrelatedness of a set of facts that have been empirically verified or can be verified. It starts when we notice the emergence and continuation of the phenomenon (Haugh, 2012). In addition, Kivunja (2018) notes that a theory is a general principle or body of knowledge reached through an accepted scientific process that explains a phenomenon. Thus, the theory is more than a set of findings and seeks to explain and predict the phenomenon under

investigation (De Vos, Strydom, Fourche & Delport, 2011). Theory construction in social research is undertaken against the framework of more general and fundamental assumptions. Each theory offers itself as the most accurate means of understanding human experiences (Harms & Cannolly, 2023).

This study was guided by the following distinctive, interrelated theories: Urie Bronfenbrenner ‘s Ecosystems Theory and Schlossberg’s Transition Theory. The theories were relevant in this study as psychosocial support to students (particularly through the rendering of social work services) advocates for the understanding of clients, empowerment of clients, protection of human rights of clients, and equal distribution of resources. Bronfenbrenner’s theory is immaculate owing to its ability to aid readers to understand humans through the various layers of their environments and interactions thereof. Placing it in the context of this study, Universities can gain a supplementary holistic perspective on students' experiences and tailor their approaches to create supportive and effective learning environments. Schlossberg’s Transition Theory is appreciated as it provides a framework for understanding how individuals cope with change and transition, offering a structured approach to navigate these experiences. As placement on enrolment conditions can be seen as a transition that students have to navigate, the offering of a structured approach to aid students in this regard is deemed necessary. Having said this, however, it should be noted that the theories underpinning this study are detailed in chapter two (2) of this dissertation.

1.6 Research question, goal, and objectives

1.6.1 Research question

A research question refers to that which the researcher seeks to find answers to or solve. In agreement with this notion, Creswell (2014) and Creswell and Creswell (2017) have defined a research question as the identified issue or problem that indicates the need for the study. Within the context of this study, the study aims to answer the following questions:

- What are the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of students on enrolment conditions?
- What guidelines can be developed to support students studying under enrolment conditions at higher education institutions?

1.6.2 Research goal

Formulating a research goal and objectives is one of the most important aspects of a study, as the aim and objectives determine the research's scope, depth, and overall direction (Dudovskiy, 2021). According to Betti (2021), an aim is a general statement of intent that gives direction. Furthermore, Thomas and Hodges (2010) maintain that a research goal is a study's primary goal or overarching purpose.

In accordance with the above definitions, the twofold goal of this study is as follows:

To develop an in-depth understanding of the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of students on enrolment conditions and guidelines for continued psychosocial support.

1.6.3 Research objectives

To respond to the above-mentioned research question, the following research objectives were suggested:

- To document and describe the lived psychosocial experiences and perceived challenges of students placed on enrolment conditions through in-depth, semi-structured interviews.
- To identify and describe the different support services needed by students placed on enrolment conditions at a higher education institution
- To develop practice guidelines for psychosocial support practitioners rendering interventions to students on enrolment conditions.

1.7 Research methodology

The paradigm, the strategies, and the procedures are all stepping stones to a research approach, which could be either quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods. There are three main research approaches: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed. Research approaches are plans and procedures that span from broad assumptions to detailed data collection methods, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell, 2014). Creswell (2014) adds that the decision to select a particular approach is determined by the assumptions the researcher brings to the study, research designs, data collection methods, analysis, interpretation, and the nature of the problem being investigated.

The approach that was adopted in this study is qualitative. The qualitative research approach varies from the quantitative because the latter is numerical, while the former is descriptive. This is corroborated by Creswell's (2014) assertion that often, the distinction between qualitative and quantitative is framed in terms of using words (qualitative) rather than numbers (quantitative) or using closed-ended questions (quantitative hypotheses) rather than open-ended questions (qualitative interview questions). Another distinctive factor concerning the two research approaches is that quantitative research methods are usually associated with deductive (based on logic**),** whereas qualitative research methods are usually associated with inductive approaches (based on empirical evidence) (McLeod, 2023; Creswell, 2014). Mcleod (2023) and Creswell (2014) further add that research methodology focuses on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used, such as data collection methods and analysis of the existing (secondary) data.

Qualitative research is a methodical inquiry into social phenomena in natural environments. These phenomena can include, but are not limited to, how people experience aspects of their lives, how individuals and/or groups behave, how organisations function, and how interactions shape relationships; it also uses language as its data, be it written or oral, although it may use photos, videos or other types of recordings (Teherani, Martimianakis, Stenfors-Hahes, Wadhwa & Varpio, 2015; Haven & Van Grootel, 2019). Research methodology is a process used to gather information and data to make decisions about research, and its purpose is to describe, analyse, and infer the strengths and limitations of a wide array of approaches. The methodology in qualitative research focuses on the study's approach and design, which are commonly employed by social science researchers (Yin, 2009; Clough & Nutbrown, 2012). On the other hand, the qualitative research approach is located in the interpretive paradigm, derived from constructivist theory, which argues that knowledge is subjective due to varying perceptions of people in the setting. A detailed discussion of the qualitative methodological process is presented in Chapter Three (3) of this thesis.

1.8 Ethical considerations

According to Creswell (2014), research ethics involves protecting research participants from any harm that may occur during the research process, ensuring the trust of participants, promoting research integrity, and preventing misconduct and impropriety

that might reflect negatively on their institutions. Du Ploy Cilliers et al. (2017) referred to ethics as a set of standards, linking researchers' attitudes and behaviours, and guided by moral or professional codes of conduct. For the purpose of this study, the researcher opted to have the following as important ethical considerations:

1.8.1 Informed consent

Informed consent means that participants must base their voluntary participation in the research on a full understanding of the potential risks. Through informed consent, the norms of no harm to participants and voluntary participation have been formalised (Babbie, 2017; Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Accordingly, the researcher provided as much information about the study as possible to enable participants to make an informed decision about their possible participation. In keeping with the principle of informed consent, the researcher sought voluntary participants, adequately informed them of what participation in the research study would entail, and ensured that they voluntarily expressed their willingness to participate in the research study. The researcher ensured that the participants signed the necessary informed consent forms after furnishing them with information regarding the research. Furthermore, the researcher also deemed it necessary to involve key informants (psychosocial support practitioners) as people rendering psychosocial support services to students. Babbie (2017) and Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014) further posit that the issue of informed consent revolves around the fundamental ethical principles of autonomy and fidelity/veracity. Heppner et al. (2016:70) advise that, specifically, the following elements are to be incorporated into a written consent form:

- Name, phone number, and address of the researcher, and who to contact for additional information or questions
- A statement that the study involves research, along with the title, purpose. and a general description of the study
- A description of the procedures to be followed, including the amount of time involved and any plans for contacting participants at a later time
- A description of any reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts that can be expected
- In cases involving treatment or therapy, a statement of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to the participant

- A statement indicating that participation is voluntary, and that the participant may discontinue participation at any time without penalty.
- For research involving more than minimal risk, an explanation of whether compensation or medical treatment is available if an injury occurs. Voluntary informed consent is the cornerstone of research ethics, and all forms of research should be viewed as optional, and refusal should be respected (Ferreira et al., 2015:37).

It is necessary to get informed consent from the initial stage of the research study. In this regard, the researcher prepared a consent letter for participants to make an informed decision whether to participate or not. Participants were informed regarding the purpose of the study and the processes the study entails, and the credibility and competence of the researcher. In this study, the researcher never forced/coerced, or deceived participants. Thus, participants were made aware that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any given stage should there be any reason that concerns them and were to do so without any repercussions. Participants' freedom was guaranteed throughout the entire research study.

1.8.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is when a researcher can identify a participant's responses but does not do so publicly (Babbie, 2017; Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Morris (2006) comments on the importance of confidentiality by emphasizing that the participants should be informed about all possible limits to this principle and the steps to be taken to ensure that no breach of this principle will occur. According to Bos (2020), confidentiality means that every individual has the right to privacy, and it is his or her right to decide when, where, to whom, and to what extent his or her attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour will be revealed. The researcher, in ensuring confidentiality, made sure that the tape-recorded interviews were kept safe in a locked cupboard and informed participants that the research supervisors would be the only persons allowed to access such information and that the interview guides, together with the device containing the recorded information, would be kept for 10 years. During data collection and transcribing, the researcher delinked the names of the participants and used pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality.

1.8.3 Anonymity

The principles of anonymity and confidentiality protect the interests and identities of participants. Anonymity is when a researcher or any other person cannot link a particular response to a participant in the study. Accordingly, the researcher changed the names of the participants and used pseudonyms, and the addresses of the participants were not recorded anywhere; this led to the possibility of identifying information related to any specific life circumstances of the participants being eliminated (Babbie, 2017). In this research study, anonymity was observed by removing the personal details of research participants from all records and transcriptions, making it impossible for them to be traced. Pseudonyms were used to protect participant identities. The researcher ensured that the information given by participants was kept confidential unless the participants had given express permission to divulge the information. Confidentiality was managed through the anonymisation of and proper management of the data (Shaw & Holland, 2014).

1.8.4 Management of data

According to Corti (2014), data management involves storing, managing, and regulating research data during the research process and sharing data with the research community at large. The data collected must be used after consent is given, it must be anonymized, and kept secure (King & Horrocks, 2010). The confidential management of information means that all the data collected by the researcher needs to be stored safely, as it is confidential. Accordingly, the researcher stored the data in a locked cabinet that only she could access and ensured that the electronic versions were stored in password-protected files (Wahyuni, 2012*).* The collected data was kept in a flash drive in a locked cabinet based on ethical considerations. The researcher ensured that the information would not land in the hands that would compromise or implicate the participants, as important and confidential information would have been shared in the interviews. This also applied to the transcribed information. The information would be disposed of through a paper crusher machine, and the data on the flash would be deleted both in a flash and in the recycle bin. This would ensure no paper trail to the data presented by the participants. It can also be noted that the participants, through the responsible authority and the university, would access the output and the research on the university repository portal. PDF electronic versions will also be made available upon request by the relevant stakeholders of the institution.

This would assist in the implementation of recommendations that the researcher has proposed based on the findings.

1.8.5 Beneficence

Beneficence refers to doing good for others, and the study should be significant (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014:76; Heppner et al., 2016:70). Heppner et al.(2016:70) further indicate that competence is inherent in beneficence. Proper arrangements were made to guard against potential harm to participants. During the data collection stage, the researcher facilitated the semi-structured interviews as competently as possible while also demonstrating professionalism. Moreover, the researcher is confident that this study will advance the researcher's professional capacity and competence and also maximise the benefits of the participants. Thus, intentional harm to participants was avoided at all costs. The study should be beneficial to participants in terms of broadening their knowledge base regarding the subject. As mentioned under anonymity, pseudonyms were used in order to safeguard the information provided by the participants. Thus, codes in the form of an alphabets and numbers were assigned to each participant in order to protect their identities. Once the study is finalised and participants are aware of the findings, the information and the transcripts will be destroyed.

1.8.6 Debriefing of participants

The researcher safeguarded and protected the welfare of research participants, and carefully assessed the potential risk factors to participants, after which she solicited the services of a qualified social worker who is experienced in debriefing. The debriefing of participants was readily available in case there was a need (Babie, 2013). The major purpose was to ensure that participants are not harmed, and should they require debriefing services, it is readily and easily accessible without any charge.

1.8.7 Voluntary Participation

Voluntary participation means that participants are free to choose to participate without any pressure or coercion (Bandari, 2021). In this regard, participants were informed of their ability to withdraw from, or leave, the study at any point without feeling an obligation to continue. It was also communicated to participants that there were no

negative consequences or repercussions to their refusal to participate. The principle of voluntary participation was upheld by ensuring that all participants were fully informed of their rights before engaging in the research. Students were explicitly told that their involvement was entirely optional and that they could withdraw at any time without explanation or penalty. Researchers emphasised that choosing not to participate or deciding to leave the study midway would not affect the students' academic standing, support services, or relationship with the institution in any way. This approach helped create a safe and pressure-free environment, reinforcing the voluntary nature of participation.

1.9 Clarification of key concepts

1.9.1 Psychosocial

Psychosocial encompasses the psychological, mental, social, and spiritual state of being (Zinger, 2011). The term psychosocial includes the emotional/mental as well as the collective/social (Eiroa-Orosa, 2020). In the context of this study, psychosocial refers to the state of the student's behavioural, relational/social, psychological, and physical being.

1.9.2 Psychosocial support practitioner

Literature suggests that a psychosocial support practitioner has been professionally trained to guide people with a personal, psychological, or legal problem or someone whose job is to counsel people (Enokela, 2022; Brown, 2010). In addition to this, a psychosocial support practitioner is defined as a person engaged in the practice of a profession, occupation, or something specified that requires skill (Karlsen & Lekhal, 2019). Having said this, however, the reader needs to note that the terms practitioner and counsellor are used interchangeably in this study. Therefore, the psychosocial support practitioners in this study are social workers and psychologists in the higher education sector who provide psychosocial support services to students at universities (Enokela, 2022).

1.9.3 Experience(s)

In their study on the experiences of widowhood, Manyedi, Koen, and Greef (2003:70) define experiences as "an observation of or practical acquaintance with facts or events of widowhood." In the same breath, Sogobile & Khunou (2023), in their study of student

midwives' experiences, defined this term as the practical learning faced by students while performing procedures to complete the midwifery register. In this study, experiences refer to the processes and events that students underwent as a result of their placement under enrolment conditions.

1.9.4 Students

According to Enokela (2022), the term ‘students’ refers to individuals registered and recognised as learners in educational institutions, such as colleges and universities, to acquire knowledge and skills that could enhance personal development to prepare them for the world of work. In the same breath, the UFS rulebook (2021:24) defines a student as “a person who has met the applicable admission/selection requirements set by the UFS, is registered for a module that is included in the curriculum of at least one qualification approved by the Minister of Higher Education and Training, actively participates in a module before or on the census day determined by the institution, and is considered to be a full-time student if she/he is registered for a full academic curriculum as defined in the Faculty Rules in each year of study”. In the context of this study, a student is a person who is currently registered and studies under the enrolment conditions programme at an institution of higher education and who was previously excluded from the institution because of poor performance.

1.9.5 Challenges

A challenge is a difficult task or situation requiring specialised skills and abilities to be successfully dealt with (Wessels, 2020). Uche (2023:134) defines a challenge as “a situation of being faced with something that needs great mental or physical effort to be done successfully and therefore tests a person’s ability.” In the context of this study, challenges refer to the threats that students placed under enrolment conditions may be experiencing.

1.9.6 Enrolment conditions/Academic probation

According to TUT (2024), enrolment conditions refer to the conditional grace period in the exclusion process where the student is provided with the opportunity, through specific stipulations and interventions, to comply with the academic performance requirements to avoid final academic exclusion. These stipulations are set by the Faculty Academic Exclusions Appeals Committee (FAEAC) and may include referral for academic intervention, career counselling, performance level requirement, limited subject load, or any

relevant condition that will be recorded and communicated to the student. In the same breath, the Suny Empire State College (2019:1) indicated that "While on enrolment conditions, students will be restricted to no more than 12 credits of enrolment in a term until they demonstrate an ability to be successful in coursework. Additional conditions or exceptions can be made at the discretion of the student's Dean or Associate Dean in consultation with the mentor. They should be made based on consistent academic achievement".

1.9.7 Programme

A programme is a purposeful and structured set of learning experiences that leads to a qualification (UFS, 2021). In a similar vein (Pellegrinelli, 2011), indicated that a programme is a group of related projects managed in a coordinated way to obtain benefits. In the context of this study, a programme is a series of activities designed to assist students in achieving academic success.

1.9.8 Enrolment conditions programme

Accordingly, in the context of this study, the enrolment conditions programme is a combination of the two terms defined previously, namely "enrolment conditions" and "programme". The enrolment conditions programme refers to the period during which a series of activities (stipulations/conditions) designed to assist the student achieve academic success must take place/be met in order for a student to continue studying after a successful academic appeal and readmission.

1.9.9 Structure of the thesis

This research report consists of six chapters that are arranged as follows:

Chapter One: General Introduction. This chapter offers a general introduction and background of the study, where the researcher outlines aspects such as the objectives of the study, the relevance of and motivation for the study, the research questions, and definitions of key concepts.

Chapter Two: Literature review, legislative and theoretical framework. In this second chapter, the researcher interrogates the reviewed literature and discusses relevant historical, legislative, and theoretical frameworks. Furthermore, research matters from relevant literature and views of other authors about the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of students on enrolment conditions are offered.

Chapter Three: Application of the qualitative research approach. Chapter three is an outline of the employed research design and methodology. It is a focused, systematic discussion of the nature and type of research, study population, sampling, sampling methods, data collection methods, preparation for data collection, pilot testing, method of data analysis, methods of data verification, and ethical considerations applicable to this study.

Chapter Four: Research Findings. This chapter focuses on the presentation of the analysed data stemming from the identified themes, sub-themes, and categories emanating from the study.

Chapter Five: Guidelines for psychosocial support to students on enrolment conditions. Chapter five is a discussion of the guidelines developed for psychosocial support practitioners for service rendering to students on enrolment conditions

Chapter Six: Summary and Conclusion. This final chapter outlines a discussion of the summary and conclusions of the research study, it also charts the recommendations and guidelines emanating from the literature and the study's empirical findings.

1.9.10 Conclusion

This chapter presented a brief outline of the research and a general introduction to the topic of psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of students studying under enrolment conditions. The chapter unpacked the problem statement to identify the literature gap on students' psychosocial needs. The motivation of the study was also outlined, based on the researcher's experiences and the psychosocial needs of students in the higher education sector. A qualitative research approach was used to underline the importance of theory as it relates to the topic under study. Ethical considerations ensured that the research study adds substantive value to the discipline and field of inquiry. A brief introduction to each of the six chapters in this study was also provided.

CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW, LEGISLATIVE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present literature on the central concepts covered in the study. In this second chapter, the researcher interrogates the reviewed literature on various aspects of enrolment conditions/academic probation, including description, underlying philosophies, global, regional, and local perspectives on enrolment conditions, as well as relevant legislative frameworks governing institutional support efforts to affected students in South Africa. This chapter also highlights the indicators, reasons, and causes of enrolment conditions as well as the applicable advantages and disadvantages. Furthermore, the various stipulations inherent to enrolment conditions are presented alongside the various legislative interventions intended to aid students placed on enrolment conditions. Finally, the psychosocial experiences and other implications of enrolment conditions on the affected students, student help-seeking behaviours, and various approaches to managing enrolment conditions are depicted within a relevant theoretical framework, thus culminating in a concluding summary.

The higher education sector is tasked with producing a skilled and educated labour force, and universities are responsible for producing professionals within a specific time frame. Consequently, universities face mounting pressure to demonstrate their value and effectiveness, and more states are linking funding to demonstrated measures of success, such as graduation and retention rates (Quinton, 2015; Stratford, 2015). Beyond these contemporary financial concerns, however, students seeking a higher education degree deserve a fair chance to earn that degree and partake in all the rights and privileges therein. Indeed, as Hamman (2016) recently stated, institutions of higher learning have a “moral obligation” to give students they have admitted the best possible chance to graduate. However, certifications are regulated by an accredited authority, and universities must align themselves with the applicable regulations. In keeping with the quality standard of qualifications, students need to achieve a certain threshold in their studies to be allowed to progress further, and failure to progress results in either placement on enrolment conditions or academic exclusion. This study is interested in the students placed on enrolment conditions and,

in particular, the psychosocial needs, challenges, and needs of such students. Accordingly, the following section is a discussion of what constitutes enrolment conditions.

2.2 Understanding Enrolment Conditions

The placement of students on enrolment conditions, also known as academic probation, is implemented in institutions of higher education across the globe (Bowman & Young 2022). According to Hoover (2014) and Gonzalez (2022), enrolment conditions refer to the academic policy designed to alert students to the fact that they are not meeting the minimum academic standards of the institution. In agreement with this notion, the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT 2018) has defined enrolment conditions as the period in the exclusion process that provides the student the opportunity, by way of specific conditions and interventions, to comply with the academic performance requirements in order to avoid final exclusion. Similarly, Jony (2022), in a study in Bangladesh, referred to enrolment conditions as a status awarded to those students who do not meet the minimum academic requirements of a university in a specific academic term. Enrolment Conditions have also been referred to as administrative feedback from a student's institution that they are performing below the acceptable academic standard expected. Failure to meet this standard in subsequent assessments will result in some action being taken against them (Wright, 2020). Furthermore, placement on enrolment conditions reflects a consistent pattern of students' low grade achievement and is a potential forerunner of academic dismissal (Hensley, Wolters, Won & Brady, 2018). The Department of Higher Education and Training Policy (DHET, 2019) maintains that students can be denied admission with evidence of poor academic performance and attendance records. Furthermore, the policy in question (DHET, 2019) maintains that a student who has failed the same course and level of study twice or more in his/her field of study, after compulsory academic support interventions, will have reasons for their exclusion determined. In this regard, the Academic Board and the College Council will then have to endorse these reasons for exclusion and applicable recommendations. Any student or parent/guardian of the student who has been refused admission to the college may appeal against the decision through the Academic Board, which should make recommendations to the College Council. Taking the stance of the DHET into consideration, it is evident that the practice of enrolment conditions is known to this

regulatory body, as this policy alludes to academic underperformance leading to academic exclusions of students after failed academic support interventions (enrolment conditions), as well as the opportunity granted to students to appeal at their institutions. Stemming from the descriptions of enrolment conditions indicated above, the next section discusses the origins of this universal practice and reasons why it is deemed necessary.

2.3 Philosophies of Enrolment Conditions

Literature suggests that enrolment conditions are founded in the academic policies inherent in the higher education sector, which address institutional academic standards and requirements, including academic underachievement (Drake, 2011; Hoover, 2014 & Gonzalez, 2022) By offering appropriate services through policies, institutions believe they offer students the opportunity to persist toward graduation, and placement on enrolment conditions is seen as an opportunity by the institutions to assist students at risk of underachieving (Drake, 2011). Hoover (2014) maintains that many higher education policies, including placement on enrolment conditions, are initiated outside the institution in terms of the existing policies regarding education; these policies focus on programme evaluation and are the foundation of and regulate higher education institutions. In agreement with this notion, in their study at the University of Central Florida, Gonzalez (2022) indicated that enrolment conditions policies exist to comply with national financial aid guidelines. In their context, over a third of undergraduate students receive financial aid from the Federal Pell Grant programme, where students awarded the Pell Grant must comply with the satisfactory academic progress (SAP) policy; this means that institutions of higher education have to adhere to the standards of academic progress that the grant has identified. Accordingly, South African institutions of higher education are not exempted from the aforementioned ideology, as they also must comply with the national financial aid guidelines, such as those of the National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE) through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) (Koen et al., 2006; De Villiers, 2023).

Earning a postsecondary qualification is deemed to be one of the paths to upward mobility today; however, many institutions of higher education students do not graduate (Waltenbury, 2018). Paideya and Bengesai (2021) alluded to the fact that only 25% of South African students at contact universities graduate in record time for

their degree, and up to 55% leave before graduation. As a result, student retention and throughput rates remain a topic for research and debate in local and international institutions of higher education (Bester & Somo, 2022). Considering this, universities and colleges in South Africa and beyond have several mechanisms to warn students that they are at risk of not making sufficient academic progress to help them get back on track. Placement on enrolment conditions is one such mechanism (Waltenbury, 2018; Hoover, 2014). In agreement with this notion, Sneyers and De Witte (2018) and Bowman and Young (2022) have indicated that placement on enrolment conditions serves as a wake-up call to let students know that they need to get back on track, as failure to do so will lead to academic dismissal. Gonzalez (2022) maintains that higher education institutions use enrolment conditions to punitively encourage students to improve their academic performance (Gonzalez, 2022; Wright, 2020). Another reason for enrolment conditions is to highlight to students the severity of their poor academic work (Gonzalez, 2022; Wright, 2020) so that they can be referred to the relevant support systems to help them succeed (Ahmed et al., 2014). Having said this, however, it should be noted that students on enrolment conditions have been perceived to be reluctant to seek this help and rather reject it (Silverman, 1989); literature to support this perception will be presented later in this chapter. It is in this regard that the perceived empowering intention of enrolment conditions warrants further study.

It is maintained that enrolment conditions provide affected students with a signal about the quality of their academic performance and impose a cost on subsequent academic performance below the established GPA standard (Wright, 2020). In addition to this, they (enrolment conditions) assist in maintaining a quality academic standard of an institution (Gonzalez, 2022) by warning students that they have not met the minimum standards of their respective Higher education institutions and need to improve to continue their studies. Another reason for the use of enrolment conditions is to identify and prevent students who are at risk of failing or those who are unlikely to graduate from investing more time and accruing more debt through continued enrolment (Gonzalez, 2022; Sneyers & De Witte, 2018). Enrolment conditions are designed to help students improve their grades, stay enrolled, and eventually receive a degree (Bowman & Jang, 2020). It has already been established that enrolment conditions involve formally notifying students that they are not making satisfactory academic progress and are at risk of exclusion. However, it should be noted that various higher education institutions implement their placement of students on enrolment conditions

differently (Bester & Somo, 2022). The following section discusses what literature posits regarding the implementation of enrolment conditions on an international, regional, and local scale.

2.4 International overview of enrolment conditions

The notion that placement of students on enrolment conditions is a practice implemented globally has already been alluded to, and literature has suggested that it is on the rise (Bowman & Young, 2022). According to Caporale-Berkowitz et al. (2022), although the frequency of enrolment conditions varies between different institution types, in some cases, up to 35% of first-year college students are put on enrolment conditions following their first semester of university. Similarly, Casey, Cline, Ost and Qureshi (2018) maintain that enrolment conditions rates in the United States of America reach up to 25%. In agreement with the previously mentioned scholars, Karadsheh and Rezaee (2020), in their study of students on enrolment conditions at Sultan Qaboos University, noted a steady increase in the number of such students (1461 students during the period 2012-2014), thus constituting 8.8% of the total number of students officially enrolled in the university.

The policy structures implementing the placement of students on enrolment conditions differ across institutions of higher education; most universities combine performance standards such as minimum term and cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) requirements (Gonzalez, 2022). In support of this view, Hoover (2014) and Leon et al. (2019) indicated that placement on enrolment conditions is most likely to occur if a student's overall grade point average falls below 2.0 on a 4.0 scale. A study in Canada indicated that, in addition to the GPA being used as a determinant for the placement of students on enrolment conditions, students who have not accrued enough credits in a given period also get placed on enrolment conditions (Waterbury et al., 2018). Furthermore, the aforementioned authors indicated that students on enrolment conditions are required to meet a certain GPA and/or unit accrual threshold for them to work their way out of the conditions and back to good academic standing. Placement of students on enrolment conditions comes with penalties such as temporary suspension or, in some cases, exclusion if not corrected (Gonzalez, 2022; Moss & Yeaton, 2015; Wright, 2020). Ahmed et al. (2014) indicated that placement of students on enrolment conditions could lead to the cancellation of their financial aid, dismissal, or other equally serious consequences.

Moss and Yeaton (2015) maintain that students are informed of their placement on enrolment conditions through a letter/notification sent to their student email address that explains that they have failed to meet the academic standard expected by the college. This letter also informs the student that if this poor performance is repeated in the following semester, they will be asked to withdraw from their studies. Furthermore, the notification in question informs students of the period and stipulations they will have to meet in order to continue with their studies (Walterbury et al., 2018; Wright, 2020). Other authors who allude to students being informed through letters of their enrolment conditions are Ahmed et al. (2014), who explain that letters are sent to students to explain their academic status to their guardians. It is clear from the above- mentioned literature derived from institutions outside South Africa that students are placed on enrolment conditions before they are academically excluded, as the letters come before the students are dismissed.

2.5 Enrolment conditions in Africa

Literature has suggested that placement on enrolment conditions is a reality for many students, and the continent of Africa is no exception (Gisanabagabo, Mfizi & Kayonde, 1984; Bowman & Jang, 2022). In their study of enrolment conditions at the Advent University of Central Africa, the aforementioned authors reported that at their institution, students are placed on enrolment conditions when their GPA is less than 12/20 (60%) for a period of one or two semesters and are given a chance to improve their GPA, failure of which leads to dismissal from the university. Another study that bears witness to enrolment conditions in Africa was conducted by Gwacela, Kolanisi, and Thamaga-Chitja (2015). In their study on enrolment conditions and food insecurity, these authors found a link between food insecurity and students' poor academic performance, which then leads to placement on enrolment conditions and an inability to complete their qualifications. Placement on enrolment conditions is also implemented at Ashesi University in Ghana, where students are placed on enrolment conditions when their cumulative GPA falls below 2.0, less than a C average; the student is then allocated to an academic advisor and faculty interns for monitoring and support (Ashesi University Academic Probation Policy, 2023). Students who fail to work their way out of their enrolment conditions will be academically excluded (Ashesi University Academic Probation Policy, 2023). Stemming from the literature above, it can be said that a common denominator regarding the placement of students on enrolment conditions

in African institutions of higher education, much like globally, is using the GPA average as a determining factor.

However, Ashesi University's approach to enrolment conditions has a unique and broader reach that has not been identified in other higher education institutions. According to the Ashesi University Academic Probation Policy (2023), the failure of a student to exit enrolment conditions after one (or more) consecutive semesters makes it important for the university to inform the student's parents/family of the changed academic status of their student. Having said this, however, when the student's academic status changes to enrolment conditions , a compulsory meeting is arranged between the university's officials (academic advisor, counsellor, dean of students and community affairs, and the provost), the student, and the family. This meeting aims to inform the family of the student's placement on enrolment conditions and its implications. Furthermore, during this meeting, the advisor will provide the family with tools to cope with and support the student during the regular, yet crucial, subsequent semester. Stemming from the meeting, the parents will be provided with an update at the mid-semester point and another update at the end of the semester. This allows Ashesi University to demonstrate care towards both students and families. It is believed that through this intervention, the family and the student will have a safe and regulated space to cope with the changed academic status and a better opportunity to succeed in reverting to good academic standing. Furthermore, as part of the process, privacy steps in the Ashesi Community will be implemented to prevent any stigmatisation concerning the student or family (Ashesi University Academic Probation Policy, 2023).

The above literature gave an overview of the practice of enrolment conditions in institutions of higher education in Africa. Similarities in terms of the GPA being the common determining factor were noted. The following segment will examine the placement of students on enrolment conditions by institutions in South Africa, where this study was conducted.

2.6 Enrolment conditions in South Africa

South African university's qualifications are accredited by the Council on Higher Education (CHE), are regulated by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), and are legislated by the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997. Universities have rules by

which their qualifications are regulated, which are captured in the rulebooks of the respective universities. Amongst the various rules in the rulebook(s), the rule on progression is particularly important for enrolment condition students and this study. According to the University of The Free State's (UFS, 2022:20) General Academic Rules, progression refers to "the means by which individuals are permitted to move through NQF levels by accumulating appropriate combinations of credits." Put differently, the progression rule requires students to reach a certain academic performance threshold to be allowed to continue with their studies. When students fail to meet their minimum progression requirements, they are academically excluded. In agreement, Somo (2013), in her study, indicated that according to the academic rules and regulations of the University of Pretoria, students are allowed to re-register on condition that they meet the minimum progression rules applicable to their field of study (pass a certain number of their core modules); failure to do so leads to them being academically excluded (not being allowed to continue with their studies). It is important to note that upon exclusion, students are granted the opportunity to appeal their exclusion and may be readmitted and placed on enrolment conditions (Somo, 2013; Bester & Somo, 2022). Koen et al. (2006) argue that on average, about 25 percent of students leave higher education (HE) institutions annually in South Africa because they are excluded on academic and financial grounds and are then allowed to appeal. In one South African university, out of the 751 students who had been academically excluded, only 251 were readmitted and placed on enrolment conditions during 1 semester of 2022. Bester and Somo (2022) alluded to a study that found that the graduation rates in South African public universities never went beyond 21% between the years 2010-2017, thus leaving the question of how many of the students ended up in the appeals and enrolment conditions cluster still to be answered.

An appeal is a written application by a student to make a serious, urgent request for a reversal to reverse the decision made by the Faculty Examination Board (FEB) regarding their progression status or academic exclusion (UFS, 2022 & UP, 2023). After the appeal, some students are readmitted and placed on enrolment conditions with certain stipulations they must meet to avoid final academic exclusion.

Much like its counterparts, South Africa's Higher Education Sector is not exempted from the differentiated implementation of enrolment conditions as, according to Bester and Somo (2022), all universities in South Africa have their own criteria for enrolment

conditions. To demonstrate this, in some South African universities, students are placed on enrolment conditions when they fail to meet the minimum academic standards, particularly if they fail to pass a certain number of credits for modules registered. Accordingly, the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT, 2018:4) maintains that "A student who achieves more than 30% but less than 50% of the maximum number of credits as listed in the faculty prospectus for the specified period of study will be placed on academic probation". Having said this, however, the literature suggests that the application of enrolment conditions at the University of Cape Town (UCT) (2024:35) is somewhat different from the one at the TUT in that for a 3-year qualification (e.g, BA or BSocSci), " the minimum requirements for readmission is that full-time students following the regular programme of study shall be excluded from the Faculty either as a full-time or part-time student if they have not passed the following courses by the end of each year of registration: (a) First year: at least five-semester courses; (b) Second year: at least nine-semester courses; (c) Third year: at least thirteen-semester courses, including at least two senior semester courses; (d) Fourth year: met the requirements of the degree". Looking at the 2 institutions mentioned above, one places students on enrolment conditions when their academic achievement is between 31-50%. In contrast, the other institution does not initially adopt placement on probation as an option but rather academically excludes the student at the end of the year. The student is afterwards given a chance to appeal the exclusion and is then placed on enrolment conditions if readmitted and for 1 semester (UCT, 2024). UCT's application of academic exclusion brings to light a factor which is sometimes a twin of enrolment conditions, namely academic exclusion (Casey et al., 2018; UCT, 2018).

Koen et al. (2006) explain that academic exclusion occurs when a student fails to make satisfactory progress and cannot account for this using emotional, health, or psychological reasons. This is either based on a credit criterion (not having passed 40% of courses), a major course criterion (not passing majors), a repeat-fail criterion (continuously failing courses), or a period-rule criterion (not showing sufficient progress over a specified period). In a similar vein, Somo (2013) maintains that academic exclusion refers to when a student is disqualified from continuing with their studies because they have not met the minimum progression requirements applicable to their qualification. In its most basic terms, academic exclusion refers to a student being prevented by certain principles of the higher education institution from participating in higher learning (Batisai et al., 2022). It is important to note that in some

institutions, students are placed on enrolment conditions before they are academically excluded, and in others, they are placed on enrolment conditions after having undergone academic exclusion. Despite the differences in the implementation of enrolment conditions amongst different HEIs in South Africa, the premise that HEIs are regulated and are responsible for managing academic underachievement (including academic probation) whilst promoting student success remains (Hoover, 2014). In this regard, the following section offers a brief discussion of the legislative frameworks that govern all student support initiatives in the various institutions of higher education in South Africa.

2.7 Legislative frameworks that govern students' support in institutions of higher learning

In examining the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of university students subjected to enrolment conditions in South Africa, it is imperative to consider the legislative frameworks and policies that govern higher education and student support services. These frameworks establish the structural and operational guidelines for higher education institutions (HEIs) and underscore the commitment to student well-being and success. They serve as a foundation for ensuring that students, particularly those placed under enrolment conditions, receive adequate support to enhance their academic performance and overall well-being.

2.7.1 Higher Education Act (No. 101 of 1997)

This Act provides the overarching regulatory framework for the governance and funding of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in South Africa. The preamble of this act, as well as chapter two, mandates institutions to promote the full realization of student potential and to provide appropriate support services. The Act obligates HEIs to implement effective academic development programs and support structures that facilitate academic improvement and personal development in students under enrolment conditions. The Act also emphasizes the role of institutional accountability in ensuring that student support services are adequately resourced and effectively implemented. This includes provisions for student academic development centers, faculty-based tutoring programs, and financial aid schemes to support disadvantaged students (DHET, 2019). Furthermore, the Act reinforces the principle of inclusivity by requiring institutions to adopt strategies that accommodate students with disabilities,

ensuring equal opportunities for all learners (CHE, 2018).

2.7.2 National Education Policy Act (No. 27 of 1996)

The National Education Policy Act (1996) provides the legal foundation for education policy development in South Africa. It mandates providing quality student support services as a critical component of fostering holistic student development (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Section 27 of this Act emphasizes the need for HEIs to implement comprehensive support systems that address academic and psychosocial needs, thereby facilitating an environment conducive to student success. For students placed under enrolment conditions, this Act serves as a legislative imperative for institutions to develop targeted interventions that mitigate the adverse effects of enrolment conditions and promote resilience. The Act recognizes that various socioeconomic and psychological factors often influence students' academic performance, necessitating an integrated support approach that includes academic advising, mental health counselling, and career guidance (Department of Higher Education and Training, DHET, 2017). Furthermore, it provides a legal framework for implementing institutional policies that promote student access, retention, and success.

2.7.3 National Plan for Higher Education (2001)

The National Plan for Higher Education (2001) operationalizes the vision outlined in the Education White Paper 3, aiming to transform the higher education landscape better to serve societal needs (DHET, 2001). The plan underscores the importance of access, equity, and success in HEIs and calls for support mechanisms that cater to diverse student populations, including those facing academic challenges. The plan advocates proactive support strategies for students on enrolment conditions, including academic tutoring, counselling services, and mentorship programs to enhance retention and throughput rates. The document highlights that academic underperformance often stems from inadequate preparation for higher education, financial instability, and personal challenges. To address these concerns, HEIs are encouraged to develop structured intervention programs that provide academic literacy support, skills development workshops, and personalized learning pathways to ensure student success (Council on Higher Education [CHE], 2020).

2.7.4 National Policy on Students and Community Support Services (2017)

The National Policy on Students and Community Support Services (2017) acknowledges the critical role of student and community support services in enhancing student retention and academic achievement. It emphasizes the need for institutions to establish comprehensive student support frameworks that identify and address students' needs early in their academic journey (DHET, 2017). Concerning students on enrolment conditions, this policy mandates that HEIs provide tailored support services that address specific challenges, such as academic advising, psychological counselling, and skills development workshops. The policy highlights the importance of early identification of at-risk students through continuous monitoring and assessment, ensuring that appropriate interventions are implemented promptly. Additionally, it underscores the role of student wellness centres, peer support programs, and financial aid services in reducing the risk of dropout among students facing placement on enrolment conditions (CHE, 2021).

2.7.5 Policy Framework to Address Gender-Based Violence in the Post-School Education and Training System (2020)

While the primary focus of this framework is on addressing gender-based violence (GBV) in the post-school education and training (PSET) system, it also acknowledges the broader psychosocial challenges that students may encounter (DHET, 2020). The framework emphasizes establishing comprehensive support systems, including counselling and health services, to create a safe and supportive campus environment.

For students under enrolment conditions who may experience heightened stress and vulnerability, this framework reinforces the need for accessible psychosocial support services to address issues such as anxiety, depression, and social isolation. Research has shown that students on enrolment conditions are at a higher risk of experiencing mental health challenges, which may further hinder their academic performance (De Klerk et al., 2019). Consequently, implementing this policy ensures institutions take a holistic approach to student well-being by integrating mental health awareness programs, crisis intervention strategies, and referral services into their student support frameworks.

2.8 Indicators of Enrolment Conditions

Researchers in the higher education sector have attempted to conceptualize a profile for students at risk of not completing their studies. Accordingly, certain indicators have been highlighted in the literature as factors that have been found to signal a higher likelihood that students can be placed on enrolment conditions. These include a low GPA, ethnic minorities, low socio-economic status, low grades in high school, and low scores on college placement tests and are reasons that remain prevalent to date (Bourke Leon, Guest-Scott, Koke, Fiorini and Rangazas, 2019), (Damashek, 2003; Johnson, Deming-Hodapp & Johnsen, 2005; Lee, 2008; Lotkowski, Robbins, & Noeth, 2004; Santa Rita & Scranton, 2001; Tovar & Simon, 2006; Sage, 2010).

A low socioeconomic status has already been identified as one of the indicators of student failure. This is because the financial pressures of studying can be stressful to the student, leading them to consider getting an income and studying simultaneously. Engaging in this dual role can be detrimental to the student's studies, as some students may prioritise their jobs over their studies (Sage, 2010).

Falling under a certain ethnic minority because of race is another indicator. According to the literature by Sarette (2022), the six-year graduation rate for Black students is 42% in America. For Hispanic students, it is 49% compared to 60% for white students. As minority groups (Black, Hispanic, and Native American) often come from low socioeconomic backgrounds, they may leave institutions of higher education for financial reasons. Furthermore, minority groups often come from communities and families earning low income; they are less likely to have had quality pre-university education owing to the under-resourced schools they are coming from, and are prone to entering universities with a lower ability ranking. In agreement with this notion, Batisai, Makhafola, and Maoba (2022) have alluded to the negative impact of low-quality education that Black students in South Africa (SA) were and continue to be exposed to, which is traceable to SA’s colonial past.

Having mentioned ability, race, and socio-economic status as indicators, it is imperative to establish how they are linked and work together (Sage, 2010). Low-income individuals, who are often minorities, are less likely to have had quality, pre-college educational experiences, as they often come from schools with limited resources and underqualified teachers. Therefore, they may enter college with lower

ability rankings. It is also important to note that although indicators such as race and socio-economic status are not the causes of academic failure, students from these populations often face unique challenges that can result in academic failure (Sage, 2010). Literature has further suggested that the most important indicator of student failure is the ability of the student as well as their past school performance (Sage, 2010; Tinto, 1993; Bean & Eaton, 2000; Berry & Sackett, 2009). Generally, students deemed to have a lower ability are more likely not to succeed than students with a higher ability (Tinto, 1993; Ahmed, Chowdhury, Rahman & Talukder, 2014). Although higher education institutions may use the factors mentioned above as possible predictors to indicate students who might struggle with their studies, it should be noted that some students find themselves on enrolment conditions in the absence of the above-mentioned indicators, thus suggesting that there are other factors at play. For this study, they will be referred to as the reasons and causes leading to placement on enrolment conditions and will be discussed below.

2.9 Reasons and causes of Enrolment Conditions

Placement on enrolment conditions is a corrective measure implemented by institutions of higher learning to support students who fail to meet the required academic standards. Several factors contribute to students being placed on enrolment conditions, including personal, institutional, and socioeconomic challenges. These challenges vary across individuals and often influence students' ability to perform well academically and meet institutional expectations. Understanding these factors is crucial for developing targeted interventions to improve student success and retention rates. The section below presents a discussion on the reasons and causes for placement on enrolment conditions:

Poor Academic Performance

One of the primary reasons students are placed on enrolment conditions is their failure to achieve the minimum grade point average (GPA) required for good academic standing. This underperformance often results from inadequate study habits, difficulty understanding course material, or ineffective time management (Tinto, 2017). Many students struggle to transition from high school to university due to differences in teaching methods and academic expectations. While high school education often emphasizes guided learning with direct teacher supervision, university-level education

requires self-directed learning, critical thinking, and advanced analytical skills, which some students find challenging (York et al., 2015). Additionally, large class sizes and limited personalized attention from instructors can further impede academic progress. The complexity and rigor of university curricula may also overwhelm students, leading to difficulties in grasping advanced concepts, particularly in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) disciplines. Moreover, inadequate academic preparation during secondary education can leave students ill-equipped to handle university coursework, contributing to lower performance and eventual placement on academic enrolment conditions (Bettinger et al., 2013).

Psychosocial and Mental Health Challenges

Students' mental health plays a crucial role in their academic success. Anxiety, depression, stress, and other mental health issues can negatively impact concentration, motivation, and overall performance (Eisenberg et al., 2016). University students, particularly those under enrolment conditions, may experience heightened pressure to improve their grades, which can exacerbate mental health concerns and lead to academic struggles (Beiter et al., 2015). The increased academic workload, pressure to succeed, and social adjustment issues contribute to a stressful university experience, making students vulnerable to mental health disorders. The stigma surrounding mental health in some societies further discourages students from seeking help, which may result in prolonged academic struggles. Studies indicate that students experiencing high levels of stress are more likely to procrastinate, miss deadlines, and struggle with coursework, leading to placement on enrolment conditions (Hershner & Chervin, 2014). Institutions that lack adequate mental health resources may fail to provide necessary interventions, leaving students without the support required to manage their psychological challenges effectively.

Financial Difficulties

Economic challenges are another major contributor to placement on enrolment conditions. Students from low-income backgrounds often face financial stress, which may force them to take on part-time jobs, reducing the time available for academic commitments (Alam et al., 2022). Financial insecurity may also limit access to essential resources such as textbooks, technology, and internet connectivity, further hindering academic success (Carter & Wilson, 2018). For many students, tuition fees,

accommodation costs, and daily expenses pose significant financial burdens. Those without scholarships or financial aid may struggle to cover their educational expenses, leading to increased stress and, in some cases, the necessity of working long hours to sustain themselves. This financial strain can result in fatigue, reduced study hours, and compromised academic performance, ultimately placing students at risk of being placed on enrolment conditions (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017).

Lack of Academic Support and Institutional Barriers

A lack of academic support structures, such as tutoring, mentorship, and student counselling, can contribute to poor performance. Institutions with limited academic support services leave struggling students without the necessary guidance to improve their performance (Kuh et al., 2011). Additionally, students who face bureaucratic challenges in accessing academic resources or adjusting to institutional policies may experience difficulties that lead to probation. Some universities fail to provide adequate support services tailored to students' diverse needs. International students, first-generation students, and those from marginalized communities may experience unique barriers in navigating academic systems, which can negatively impact their academic success (O'Keeffe, 2013). Language barriers, cultural differences, and a lack of familiarity with institutional expectations can also contribute to academic struggles. The absence of well-structured orientation programs and academic advising services may exacerbate these challenges.

Other causes that lead to the placement of students on enrolment conditions include their lack of study direction, as even the most able students may be unsure about the study and career path they may have chosen (Tinto, 1993). Inappropriate choice of study majors is yet another cause of student failure and placement on enrolment conditions, as students can make incorrect personal choices and fail to appropriately recognise and appreciate their true strengths, skills, and advantages regarding various study disciplines.

Personal and Family Responsibilities

Many university students balance their studies with personal and family responsibilities, including caregiving and household obligations. These responsibilities can create time constraints, making it difficult and challenging to meet academic

expectations (Cairns, 2019). Non-traditional students, such as those with dependents or working full-time, may find it particularly challenging to maintain satisfactory academic progress. Family-related obligations can demand significant time and emotional energy, leaving little room for academic pursuits. In many cultures, students are expected to contribute to household responsibilities or provide financial support to their families, which can further strain their academic focus. Married students or those with children often struggle to balance their academic workload with parenting duties, leading to decreased engagement with coursework and eventual placement on enrolment conditions (Wyatt, 2011). Another factor contributing to the placement of students on enrolment conditions is family pressure to study a particular course. Literature has suggested that because students may have enrolled in a particular course as chosen or influenced by a family member or faculty, they may lack the motivation to persist in their studies (Sage, 2010; Takács, Takács, Kárász, Horváth, and Oláh, 2021; Ahmed et al., 2014; Kocak & Sever, 2011).

Poor Study and Time Management Skills

Ineffective study strategies and time mismanagement are common reasons for placement on enrolment conditions. Students who fail to allocate sufficient time for coursework, procrastinate on assignments, or do not engage in active learning techniques are at risk of underperforming (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011). The lack of self-discipline and academic planning can significantly impact a student's ability to meet institutional requirements. Many students entering university have not developed strong study habits or time management skills. Transitioning from a structured school environment to the autonomous nature of university life requires students to manage their schedules effectively. However, distractions such as social activities, excessive screen time, and lack of prioritization often lead to poor academic performance (Credé & Kuncel, 2008). Without proper academic guidance, students may fail to implement effective study strategies, resulting in their placement on enrolment conditions.

The phenomenon of over-enrolment, where the student is enrolled for too many credits, coupled with their subsequent lack of academic success strategies, is a cause that literature has also alluded to that leads to students being placed on enrolment conditions (Sage, 2010; Takács et al., 2021). Also, it has been found that some students display an external locus of control, blaming external factors for their lack of

success and failing to assume responsibility for their learning; this can also end up placing them on enrolment conditions (Sage, 2010).

All of the above examples are challenges that can contribute to academic difficulty, and while any of these factors can contribute to a lack of academic success, a combination of them compounds the difficulty. Sage (2010) alluded to a study by Issak, Graves, and Mayers (2006), which found that students on enrolment conditions identified more areas of difficulty than their counterparts who were not on enrolment conditions. Specifically, in the previously mentioned study, students were given a survey that included thirty possible causes of academic difficulty, and students enrolled in conditions reported experiencing a mean of 8.6 challenges that contributed to their academic difficulties compared to the 5.9 found in their counterparts who were not on enrolment conditions.

2.10 Advantages of Enrolment Conditions

Institutions of higher education commonly use enrolment condition policies to encourage student success and align the students' actions to the expectations of the institution of higher education (Wright, 2020). Placement of students on enrolment conditions has been deemed a form of treatment for students who are not meeting the minimum requirements of their institutions and is intended to help them get back on track with their studies. A critique for this statement is that it gives the impression of a deficit existing on the part of students on enrolment conditions and is not strength based. According to Wright (2020), because being on this treatment imposes a cost on subsequent performance below acceptable standards, affected students may be induced to increase their effort in their studies. Albert & Wonzy (2024) argue that students who are affected by enrolment condition policies enter a new state of nature where they are at risk of facing a penalty or losing an acquired (endowed) benefit, which may incentivize them to work harder and more closely align their actions with the institution's preferences. Albert & Wonzy (2024) and (Mosier 2018) found that students placed on enrolment conditions during their first year improved their subsequent academic performances.

Enrolment conditions can also encourage students to change their behaviour, particularly regarding the subject they did not put an effort in, as they attempt to exceed

the performance standard that they have been given as a condition. In their study of enrolment conditions on first-year students, Sneyers and De Witte (2018) maintained that enrolment conditions strengthen the selective function of the first year, as students who are not likely to finish the study programme can be detected and be dismissed early in the programme, allowing programmes to select and continue with the most talented and motivated students after the first-year level. It has been argued that enrolment conditions allow the most committed students to choose which subjects they want to study and continue their studies with. According to Casey et al. (2018), placement on enrolment conditions encourages students to adjust their course-taking to increase the likelihood of improving their academic performance. Sneyers and De Witte (2018) argue that enrolment conditions help improve the learning environment for students and teachers by removing those who lack the necessary knowledge and capacities to complete their studies.

2.11 Disadvantages of Enrolment Conditions

It has already been established that Higher education institutions use enrolment condition policies to encourage student success, the opposite side of this coin is that enrolment conditions come with a cost to the student as they can lead to loss of funding or expulsion, (Wright, 2020). In agreement, Barouch-Gilbert (2016) states that although the placement of students on enrolment conditions is an institutional response intended to help students raise their grade point average, findings across studies have suggested that this practice is emotionally damaging to students as stemming from students' interpretations of enrolment conditions. Placement on enrolment conditions takes its toll on the student's view of their self-efficacy. Accordingly, Houle (2013) alluded to the existence of a plethora of negative emotional consequences of students' experiences during their placement on enrolment conditions, as students described feelings of embarrassment, humiliation, shame, depression, loneliness, and anxiety. Caporale-Berkowitz et al. (2022) and Yazedjian et al. (2008) have described placement on enrolment conditions as a unique form of adversity facing students in higher education and a major setback. Furthermore, these authors have argued that there is a link between being put on enrolment conditions and reduced likelihood of retention as students face questions about their fit and motivation for completing college, prompting a range of reactions. Sneyers and De Witte (2018) contribute to the negative perception of the enrolment conditions discourse by stating that the setting of performance

standards inherent in enrolment conditions can discourage students from making any attempts to meet them. They also mentioned that there is a high possibility that some suitable students do not register for academic programmes of their choice owing to the fear of enrolment conditions. Furthermore, there is a possibility that teachers in institutions increase the required achievement level for the selected group of students and grade on a curve, thus dismissing a fixed number of students, independently of their performance. Finally, when the first year is too difficult, and no help is provided (e.g., by tutoring), placement of students on enrolment conditions can lead to the dismissal of capable students (Sneyers & De Witte, 2018; Pherson & Marrero, 2021). Enrolment conditions can increase student dropout levels in an institution as students who are not likely to finish their studies are dismissed.

2.12 Enrolment conditions

It has already been established that it is the norm for institutions of higher education globally and locally to introduce certain interventions as conditions under which the student is readmitted to continue their studies (Butler, 2016). In support of this view, Gonzalez (2018) states that there are inherent stipulations that characterize enrolment conditions , failure of a student to satisfy the applicable stipulations will result in the academic exclusion of the student. Furthermore, it is argued that enrolment conditions may be different across different institutions in South Africa, regionally and globally as well (Gonzalez, 2022). Additionally, the previously mentioned author highly recommends that faculty members monitor the process, specifically for first-year students, after one (1) semester and introduce academic interventions where feasible to avoid probation or even exclusion. The period/time frames inherent in enrolment conditions may also vary across various institutions of higher education as students can be given a semester or two to work their way out of their enrolment conditions to avoid academic dismissal.

Various stipulations can be given to students whilst on a enrolment condition programme, amongst others these can include that the student seeks career counselling (Leon, Scott, Koke Fiorini & Rangazaz, 2019), be given performance level requirements, be given a limited subject load, be required to progress within stipulated time frames and that they seek academic intervention , that students raise their grade point average (GPA) to 2.0 (Bowman & Jang 2020) , that students contact the

academic advisor and be monitored for a specific period (Gonzalez, 2018), that they consult an advisor for life skills (e.g time management and study methods) (Leon et al., 2019), that they enrol for a university success course and change their major (TUT, 2018; Gonzalez, 2022; Vanacore & Dahan 2021; Houle, 2013 & Somo, 2013). Students on enrolment conditions are also sometimes required to contact their University's Student Development and Support Unit for counselling and psychosocial support (Walterbury et al., 2018; Vanacore & Dahan 2021). Furthermore, at some universities, students are given the condition(s) to participate in structured activities that are aimed at improving their academic performance (Acevedo-Gil & Zerquera, 2016; Bledsoe, 2018; Young & Keup, 2016).

Literature has suggested that enrolment condition practices may differ across different institutions in South Africa and globally (Gonzalez, 2022). As universities may have differences in their criteria for placing students on enrolment conditions, they often differ in the services or punishments they offer to students on enrolment conditions. Some universities restrict participation in extracurricular activities and coursework hours, while other universities provide additional help with coursework to those "at-risk" (Fletcher & Tokmouline, 2017). In order to help students lift their GPAs, several of the schools have instituted special advising and enrolment conditions programmes. The following section briefly discusses programmes for students on enrolment conditions.

2.13 Enrolment Conditions interventions

Interventions for students on enrolment conditions have the intent of remediation because the student is already in danger, and the institution tries to get them back on track with their studies. According to Sage (2010), interventions for probationary students differ in terms of whether they are voluntary or involuntary, what they will focus on, and how they will be delivered. Enrolment condition interventions are either mandatory or voluntary and are described as intrusive or non-intrusive by the literature. Correspondingly, the purpose of having mandatory interventions is to help students identify the possible causes of their difficulties as well as the resources their institutions have availed to deal with them. Furthermore, mandatory interventions assist students in seeking professional guidance from service providers in their institution, as they are reluctant to seek help voluntarily (Damashek, 2003).

Stemming from the fact that there are causes that lead to the placement of students

on enrolment conditions, interventions to support these students are vast. Literature notes that the major categories of interventions have an advising/counselling focus, a study skills focus, and a comprehensive focus on both advising/counselling and study skills (Damashek, 2003; Kamphoff, Hutson, Amundsen, & Atwood, 2007). Interventions with an advising or counselling focus tend to involve a student meeting with an advisor and are designed to identify the challenges of the student, which might include financial or personal issues and academic challenges. Specific difficulties may be discussed, prompting the advisor to refer the student to a faculty member, disability services, psychological counseling, career counseling, financial aid, tutoring, or other services or personnel. A personalized plan of action is created to move the student toward success. On the other hand, the interventions with a study skills focus tend to address issues more closely related to handling coursework, e.g., note-taking, critical thinking, report writing, time management, and learning styles. Finally, some interventions have a comprehensive focus addressing both advising/counselling needs and study skills issues (Sage, 2010).

The format in which enrolment condition interventions are delivered varies and can be one-on-one or in a group. With the one-on-one format, the university official (advisor, counsellor) meets with 1 student to identify their needs and offers guidance to the student. The group format involves the university official's facilitation of a small group of students on enrolment conditions through some sessions. It is intended to encourage students to form a social network of support amongst themselves and tends to focus on study skills rather than advising. Finally, some interventions for students on enrolment conditions combine the two formats, with group meetings being supplemented with opportunities for students to meet with the group facilitator individually. Taking all the above-mentioned into consideration, it should be noted that the most effective interventions are those that are most intrusive (Mann, Hunt, & Alford, 2003; Isaak, Graves, & Mayers, 2006).

In support of interventions for students on enrolment conditions, Eisaghalian (2019) maintains that various beneficial interventions exist, including:

- Supplemental Instruction (SI) or Peer-Assisted Study Sessions (PASS; Kokaua et al., 2017).
- Group format was found to be suitable and effective (Coleman & Freedman,

1996).

- Regular meetings with a “specialist” for students on probation (Cruise, 2002).
- Monitored Probation (Mann, Hunt, & Alford, 2003).
- Developmental Education focus (Spurling & Gabriner, 2003).
- Success Course (Hutson, 2006).

Placement of students on the enrolment conditions often contributes to the emotional instability, anxiety, and stigma experienced by students (Pherson & Marrero, 2021; Bowman & Jang, 2022).

Whether or not placing students on enrolment conditions is a student-centred approach to helping them succeed remains to be answered. Consequently. Casey et al. (2018) maintain the stance that enrolment conditions policies are often controversial because of concerns that they are too punitive or possibly hinder success; if placement of students on enrolment conditions provides proper encouragement for them to succeed, then adopting stricter standards may be beneficial. By contrast, if enrolment conditions primarily discourage student effort and performance, they may reduce persistence and the likelihood of degree completion.

2.14 Psychosocial experiences of students on Enrolment Conditions

Cruise (2002) highlights that a student who has failed to meet the academic requirements of his or her institution can feel embarrassment, disappointment, and desolation. This, in turn, is likely to discourage the student from studying. Similarly, McPherson and Marrero (2021) indicated that students on enrolment conditions reported experiencing shame, confusion, sadness, isolation, and humiliation. The psychosocial effects of academic exclusion, which often result in students studying under enrolment conditions programmes, and the role of academic emotions in higher education areas still in need of investigation (Rowe, Fitness & Wood 2014; Rowe & Fitness, 2018; Sharp, Hemmings & Kay, 2016) and represent a wide range of emotions such as anger, anxiety, frustration, and boredom, and include affective, cognitive, physiological, motivational, and expressive components. Many studies have investigated the link between academic emotions, student engagement, and potential study success. For example, Kahu, Stephens, Leach, and Zepke (2015) explored the precursors of academic emotions in higher education and how these emotions were related to student engagement and withdrawal. Their study found a reciprocal

relationship between students, emotions, and engagement with studies. One of their recommendations was to conduct a similar investigation with a different population. Similarly, a study conducted by Barouch-Gilbert (2016) alluded to the influence that negative emotions can have on the self-efficacy and academic success of students in higher education. Other studies (Pelch, 2018; Asikainen, Hailikari & Mattsson, 2018) have also documented that graduate programme characteristics are associated with students' emotional well-being and the likelihood of students completing their graduate programmes. In this regard, a study by Pherson & Murrero (2021) indicated that students placed on enrolment conditions without sufficient support are likely to drop out of their studies owing to the stress and emotional instability brought about by their probation. Further studies (Parviainen, Aunola, Torppa, Poikkeus & Vasalampi, 2020; Mireles-Rios, Rios & Reyes, 2020) found that students, including those on enrolment conditions, had a significantly higher frequency of thoughts about quitting their studies because of emotional instability.

According to Atay et al. (2017), students who are enrolled under conditions experience decision-making difficulties, pessimism, and feelings of worthlessness. Furthermore, the same study yielded that such students believed they did not share common values with their fellow students and that those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds were uncomfortable owing to their perceived differences.

Another challenge for students on enrolment conditions is their non-academic or non-learning activities, as they are said to struggle to maintain a balance between these extracurricular activities (e.g., responsibilities of being a student leader) and their studies (Ahmed et al., 2014; Atay et al., 2017). Lack of awareness is another factor challenging students on enrolment conditions as they go to university without a specific purpose and may have entered Higher Education because everybody else did so or because it was expected of them (Atay et al, 2014). In the same vein, Ahmed et al. (2014) narrate that the major study discipline for the student may have been chosen either by the student on his or her personal motivation or influenced by family members, friends, or faculty. Literature has also identified family problems (e.g., the loss of a loved one) as a factor that students who are enrolled under conditions struggle with. In support of this view, Ahmed et al. (2014:8) maintain that "severe family problems such as illness or death of a family member or a break-up between the family members are expected to contribute to a more significant adverse effect than simple

family problems like a quarrel between the family members." Students on enrolment conditions may have difficulties adjusting to their institutions (Arcand & Le Blanc, 2012), this means that they may have waited until it was late to make use of the resources and only viewed campus resources as beneficial after their placement on enrolment conditions (Buenaflor & Bate, 2022). Students on enrolment conditions are sometimes not prepared for the rigour of the classroom environment or the structure of the learning environment (Atay et al., 2014; Arcand & Le Blanc, 2012). In this regard, their unpreparedness and lack of seriousness are problematic for their studies (Ahmed *et al*., 2014).

Silverman (1989) cited a study by Mayes and McConatha (1982), who used the Mooney Problem Checklist to identify challenges commonly experienced by college students, including those on enrolment conditions, accordingly, it was discovered that the four top problem areas for students included an adjustment to college, social-psychological relations, personal-psychological relations, and finances, living conditions, and employment.

Literature has alluded to students on enrolment conditions feeling anxious, depressed, humiliated, ashamed, unworthy, or incapable of completing their qualifications (Arcand & LeBlanc, 2012; Houle, 2013). Silverman (1989: 29) maintained that out of those students who responded in their study on the rejection of help-seeking behaviours by students on enrolment conditions, more than half reported that the experience of being placed on enrolment conditions "further interfered with their academic performance, relationships with others, and self-esteem." In addition, it has been posited that such negative feelings may cause students to believe that they cannot change or improve, thus making it harder to motivate them to change their academic habits (Kadiyono & Hafiar, 2017; Dembo, 2004; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2006).

2.15 Other Implications of Enrolment Conditions

There are many policy implications if students fall under the enrolment conditions. A major retention factor for all students is to remain in good academic standing and progress toward an educational goal (Espinosa, Escandallo & Muegna, 2023). Remaining in good academic standing contributes to completing a degree or certificate; therefore, it becomes challenging, if not impossible, to complete a degree when on

enrolment conditions (Castellon, 2017). In addition to the psycho-social challenges mentioned in the previous section, students on enrolment conditions may lose their funding for studies, meaning they will have to find funding elsewhere during the period of their enrolment conditions. For example, in South Africa, the NSFAS requirements to stay funded include that continuing and first-time entering new university students achieve a course credit pass rate of 50%; they must also achieve a course credit pass rate of 60% at the end of the year (NSFAS eligibility criteria and conditions for financial aid, 2024) (Cloete, 2024). Furthermore, institutions have access to the NSFAS funding lists. They will confirm with NSFAS at the start of the academic year that students have qualified for progression according to standard institutional policy and approved rules for progression for the specific programme they are studying, Central University of Technology (CUT, 2024; Cloete, 2024). According to Castellon (2018), students who are placed on enrolment conditions are more likely to leave college; therefore, recognizing and supporting these students early is the most effective way for them to move to good academic standing. In as much as legislation and policy have driven most of the initiatives implemented to support students, very little remains known about the outcomes of these policies for students on enrolment conditions. The loss of funding for students on enrolment conditions is not only experienced in South Africa, Castellon (2017) alluded to its occurrence in California. According to the previously mentioned author, California is required to establish academic standards, academic probation and dismissal, and readmission policies consistent with the minimum standards adopted by the Board of Governors for California Community Colleges (California Education Code 70902 (b)(3), 2014). The Board of Governors for California Community Colleges approved changes to the Board of Governors Fee Waiver (Fisher, 2016). New regulations state that students will lose eligibility for the Board of Governors Fee Waiver if they are placed on enrolment conditions for not maintaining a 2.0 GPA for two consecutive terms or not completing half the units attempted (Castellon, 2017). Although these initiatives support completion and attainment rates, they also remove financial support for students on enrolment conditions, thus heightening the consequences for poorly performing students. California legislation and policy have impacted how students on enrolment conditions are served more than ever. There is very little research on the methods that effectively retain students on enrolment conditions (Tovar & Simon, 2006; Renzulli, 2015). According to the literature, students welcome intrusive measures and institutional support (Tovar & Simon, 2006), and,

most importantly, students want to feel cared for by the institution (Heisserer & Parette, 2002). Mandatory programme activities for students on enrolment conditions are substantially more attended than optional activities. Thus, intentional and mandatory interventions are thought to be more successful (Weiss, Brock, Sommo, Rudd, & Turner, 2011). Although community colleges use intrusive methods to support students on enrolment conditions, research on the outcomes is limited and unclear. Moreover, faculty-student interactions are commonly not explored when researching students ' enrolment conditions. Research is therefore needed to not only explore student support services (counselling, advising, student wellness) as measures in supporting students, but faculty also need to be included in the conversation of student success, as uncovering experiences of students on enrolment conditions is needed to implement practices that best support them (Castellon, 2017).

2.16 Help-seeking behaviours of students on Enrolment Conditions

Recent research continues to support the finding that students who could benefit most from institutional support services often underutilize them due to concerns about stigma and self-perception (Ryan et al., 2023; Pedrelli et al., 2022; Hagler et al., 2023). These concerns are tied to the self-esteem dynamics originally captured by the vulnerability and consistency hypotheses. While students with low self-esteem may sometimes seek help sooner due to heightened sensitivity to academic struggle, those with high self-esteem may avoid support to protect a positive self-concept (Kulesza et al., 2023; Cho et al., 2021). For instance, Kulesza et al. (2023) found that high self-esteem individuals were more likely to perceive help-seeking as a threat to their self-image, reinforcing the consistency hypothesis. However, context matters. A study of South African nursing students by Mthimunye and Daniels (2024) found that language insecurity and academic self-doubt, not self-esteem, were the primary deterrents to accessing academic support. Similarly, Hagler et al. (2023) reported that first-generation college students approached help-seeking as a cost-benefit decision, only pursuing support when there was a clear, pressing need and when staff were perceived as approachable and trustworthy. Importantly, student belonging also plays a critical role. Kezar and Holcombe (2022) showed that when students feel a sense of connection and inclusion, they are significantly more likely to engage with available support services. Group identity can also influence help-seeking behavior: Sweeney and McFarland (2015) found that students who strongly identified with their university

were sometimes more hesitant to seek formal help, viewing it as inconsistent with group norms. Finally, cultural and gender norms continue to shape support behaviors. In a recent South African study, Mphahlele et al. (2025) found that male students often avoided counseling services due to perceptions that seeking help contradicted traditional masculine roles, emphasizing the need for culturally attuned and gender-sensitive approaches.

It is believed that high self-esteem individuals are less likely to seek help if they cannot reciprocate it; this will conflict with their self-conceptions of independence and self-reliance (Sithaldeen, Phetlhu, Kokolo & August, 2022). Literature has highlighted that help-seeking is assumed to lower self-esteem because it implies the individual cannot succeed without help, perhaps not even with help (Deng, Cherian, Khan, Kumar, Sial, Comite, 2022). These perceptions are thought to decrease expectations for successful task performance, increase concern over evaluation, and further distract the individual from the task, thus causing lower achievement (Patte, Battista, Goddard, Ferro & Leatherdale, 2023).

2.17 Approaches to Management of Enrolment Conditions

Literature has alluded to college students experiencing some type of difficulty during their undergraduate studies that may hinder their academic success (Butler et al., 2016). The contribution of GPA to the academic placement of students has already been established. Institutions generally have specific criteria for probation students to meet to remain eligible for continued enrolment (Vander Schee, 2007). For many higher education institutions, students' academic struggles are deemed the primary responsibility of their respective academic faculties. Accordingly, faculty members attempt to assist students through their advising programmes. Agreeing with this notion, White (2020) maintains that the role of academic advisors includes retaining students in the institution or a major until graduation and increasing knowledge of the university's rules and regulations, among others. Furthermore, it has been stated that contact with a significant person within the institution of higher education is a critical factor in a student's decision to remain in college, as advising lies at the core of undergraduate student retention (Heisserer & Parret, 2002; Zhang, Gossett, Simpson & Davis, 2015). Advisors are the first point of contact that students have access to as academic advisors, and advising centres are the one structured activity on campuses where students can have one-on-one contact with a concerned institution

representative (Hably, 1994). Considering the previously mentioned factors, it can be argued that academic advisors are traditionally perceived to be the relevant officials to assist students on enrolment conditions; this could be because they are the first people students approach upon receiving their enrolment conditions notification.

In order to counteract the negative reactions of students about enrolment conditions, academic advising programmes must adopt various strategies to assist students, which can be done by developing individualised academic plans and encouraging students to utilise resources. Vander Schee (2007) agrees and highlights the importance of academic advising as a key factor in helping students achieve their educational goals. Butler et al. (2016), in support of this view, have maintained that "to help students identify key issues and provide a remedy for clearing out enrolment conditions, academic advisors and institutions offer a variety of programmes and services using specific academic advising theoretical models, such as intrusive advising." The section below presents a synopsis of advising theoretical models adopted by academic advisors to assist students.

2.17.1 Intrusive Advising as an Approach Used by Academic Advisors

According to Vander Schee (2007), much of the theoretical work on approaches to academic advising has focused on prescriptive, developmental, or intrusive approaches. Developmental academic advising is a collaborative, process-oriented relationship between advisor and student where the student's total educational, personal, and career goals are the main focus (Gordon, 2019). On the other hand, prescriptive advising involves the advisor, with an outcomes-oriented approach in mind, directing and making decisions for the student (Masengeni, 2019; Pettay, 2007). Intrusive advising, also called high-involvement advising, includes personal contact, generating student responsibility for problem-solving and decision-making, assisting students in identifying resolvable causes of poor academic performance, and offering negotiated agreements for future actions (Vander Schee, 2007) and Herget (2017). Although three (3) approaches to academic advising have been alluded to, this paper will focus on intrusive advising as the preferred model utilized by academic advisors. In support of intrusive advising being the preferred approach, Vander Schee (2007:50) maintains that "to help students identify key issues and provide a remedy for clearing academic probation, intrusive advising has been employed by institutions of higher

education."

The intrusive model is based on the philosophy that the advisor and the student share responsibility for the student's academic success or failure (Oripova, 2022). Intrusive advising is action-oriented and involves motivating students to seek help when needed (Heisserer & Parette, 2002; Thomas, 2020).

Literature by Bloom and Martin (2002), Varney (2007), and Oripova (2022) supports intrusive advising as a significant way to promote and support student persistence and academic success. When advisors use intrusive practices, they make initial contact with students, meet with them in person, assist them with identifying the issues and situations contributing to their academic difficulty, help them set short and long-term goals, and guide them to develop a plan of action to accomplish these goals. Intrusive advising is an advisor-initiated intervention process that includes at least one follow-up meeting with the advisor to monitor students' progress toward achieving specific goals. In their classic study on the effects of appointment-making and information variables on appointment compliance by students on enrolment conditions, Cuvo (1986) and Masengeni (2019) found that there was greater compliance when appointments were set for students rather than having the students make their own appointments with advisors. The findings of the aforementioned authors led to the recommendation that appointments must be made for students to increase their likelihood of participation (Masengeni, 2019).

The interactions brought on by intrusive advising can enhance the advising relationship and encourage student responsibility (Oripova, 2022). In the study conducted at the University of Southern California (USC), Vander Schee (2007) indicated that the successful intrusive advising model they utilise was created by Bloom, Hutson, and He (2008) and is called Appreciative Advising. This six (6) phase model highlights the appreciative mindset that empowers advisors and students to (a) build trust with each other (disarm phase), (b) uncover their strengths and assets (discover phase), (c) be inspired by each other's hopes and dreams (dream phase) and (d) co-construct plans to make their goals a reality (design phase), (e), provide mutual support and accountability throughout the process (deliver phase), and (f), encourage each other to set higher expectations for their educational experiences which also known as the do not settle phase (Bloom et al., 2008). An advantage of this

model is that it provides a confidential space where students discuss their personal and academic challenges with a caring, responsible, and trustworthy academic advisor.

The initial perception of faculty academic advisors as the relevant and traditional officials to assist students on enrolment conditions has already been established, recognised, appreciated, and briefly discussed, and the relevant approach was presented in the previous section. However, it should be mentioned that there are other non-academic reasons for enrolment conditions, as proven in the discourse and plethora of literature in section 2.2. In this regard, the following section will briefly continue with the non-academic reasons with a special focus on psychosocial reasons (as previously discussed in section 2.11), and a theory to frame understanding around them will be posited.

It has already been established that in addition to the lack of ability or academic skills, there are significant non-academic factors that may also inhibit students' ability to perform to their potential and succeed, including psychosocial interferences, lack of direction, and pressure from family members (Sage, 2010), (Naz, Nawaz, Liaqat, Rasheed & Fatima, 2020). In agreement with this notion, McCoy (2018) maintains that every student's reasons for missing the grade point average mark are unique and are inclusive of non-academic issues, such as anxiety, social alienation, and low self-esteem (psychosocial reasons), lack of financial aid, and the student's inability to graduate on time, all of which can aggravate the student's personal and emotional issues. In response to these non-academic reasons, including the psychosocial reasons, institutions of higher learning are considered to be responsible for assisting students in enrolment conditions and for providing advising, counselling services, and programmes that help students exit enrolment conditions and ultimately graduate (Butler et al., 2016). As this study aims to explore the psychosocial (non-academic) experiences, needs, and challenges of students on enrolment conditions, it is necessary to include psychosocial approaches in exploring these experiences, needs, and challenges. Furthermore, this inclusion of psychosocial approaches dovetails with the researcher's aim as a psychosocial support practitioner interested in the experiences of students on a psychosocial level.

The following section presents the psychosocial approaches relevant to the study

stemming from the perspective of a psychosocial support practitioner. Accordingly, the eclectic use of sociologist Vincent Tinto's theory of student departure and psychologists Bean and Eaton's psychological model for college student retention is adopted as relevant classical studies. In support of the eclectic utilisation of models, Suleman and Hussain (2016) and Terenzini (1991) maintain that eclectic utilisation of approaches is beneficial to student research, as there are other student traits that researchers can overlook if they focus their lens on one particular discipline (e.g., sociology).

2.17.2 Vincent Tinto's Theory of Student Departure (1993)

This theory suggests that a student's characteristics (background, socioeconomic status, academic ability, ability to pay for college, and others) influence their original commitment to succeed in their studies. The initial commitment then influences the student's integration into their institution's social and academic aspects. Tinto (1993) emphasised that the more students integrate with their institution on a social and academic level, the greater the likelihood that their commitment to succeed in their studies will increase because a student's commitment determines how well they will integrate with their institution. In this regard, it can be said that commitment is the student's motivation, drive, or willingness to work hard to complete their qualification at a particular institution successfully.

Academic integration includes meeting the university's standards and identifying with the structure of the academic system, which goes beyond intellectual capacity and development as it includes the ability to apply that intellect to the daily tasks of college work through successful study skills and behaviours. Social integration, on the other hand, is described as the degree to which the student adjusts to the social systems of the university, both at the university level and at the level of subcultures within the university (Jusri & Lechner, 2024). It involves the student detaching from past associations and behaviour patterns (e.g., high school friends) and creating new socialisation patterns among faculty, staff, classmates, or fellow students.

It is important to note that commitment is not the only factor that helps a student persist in college; Tinto (1993) notes that student ability is also an intervening factor and is the most likely predictor of a student's potential for success. Discrepancy(ies) in commitment and ability can influence student departure from or persistence in higher education. As already established, this theory requires that students integrate into their

new academic and social surroundings to persevere. However, as noted earlier, multiple causes can contribute to academic failure and lack of integration. It is sensible to see why students experience academic difficulty and why various solutions have been explored to improve academic success and retention. Regardless of the various initiatives and interventions to address the lack of academic success, it remains a significant conundrum for higher education institutions.

2.17.3 Bean and Eaton's Model of College Student Retention

In their revision of sociologist V Tinto's model of institutional departure, psychologists Bean and Eaton added psychological elements that contribute to students being either successful or unsuccessful in higher education. They introduced the concepts of approach and avoidance in their model (Bean & Eaton, 2000). Student success results from social integration, psychological processes, and academic integration (Somo, 2013). Bean and Eaton (2001) indicated that as psychological creatures, humans depend on their psychological processes to make decisions and participate in higher education institutions. Social integration translates to the student's level of psychosocial comfort with their college environment, how they associate with their affinity groups, and their sense of belonging with fellow comrades. On the other hand, academic integration refers to students' academic achievement and their perception of the relevance and value of their qualifications (Kuh & Love, 2000). Furthermore, student integration depends on the formal and informal psychosocial interactions students have with their institutions (i.e., peers at the institutions and staff members), as these interactions determine whether the student will persist with their studies or not (Kuh & Love, 2000). If students interact positively with their institutions, they are likely motivated to put in the work necessary to come out of enrolment conditions (Pascarella & Terezinni, 2005).

In their attempt to introduce and magnify the contribution of psychological factors to student retention and attrition, Bean and Eaton developed the psychological model of college student retention. This model included the eclectic use of 4 psychological theories as "exploring behaviour is an enormously complex enterprise, and no single theory of motivation has dominance in the field" (Bean & Eaton 2000:49). Accordingly, the theories in question include the attitude behaviour theory, coping behavioural theory (specifically the approach-avoidance theory), self-efficacy theory and attribution theory (locus of control). The basic premises of each will be briefly discussed below.

i. Attitude behaviour theory

The attitude-behaviour theory, developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (2020) and later expanded by Ajzen, Fishbein, Lohmann, and Albarracin (2018), emphasises the existence and significance of the links between beliefs, attitudes, intentions, and behaviour. An attitude refers to an individual's positive or negative evaluation of an object, while a belief is an actual link between the object and an attribute (Bean & Eaton, 2000). All behaviour is intentional, and the intention is linked to the attitude toward the behaviour. The attitude then depends upon the beliefs about the consequences of the behaviour. Intentions stem from normative beliefs about the behaviour. Bentler and Specart (2021) additionally introduced another element relevant to the process of attitude-behaviour attitude, therapy. They argued that past behaviours, attitudes, and norms influence the intentions of humans and were able to prove that the intention to leave college is a good predictor of the student's actual departure from college (Bean & Eaton, 2000). The link between attitude, beliefs, intention, and behaviour is significant for this study; in other words, if students have negative attitudes towards themselves and their study environment and believe that they will not be able to work their way out of enrolment conditions, they will intend to leave the institution and will eventually leave the institution.

ii. Coping Behavioural Theory

For humans to adjust to a life situation, a self-assessment of their environment and their ability to adapt to the environment needs to occur. As a university is a new environment for the student (Atay et al., 2017), students must find a "goodness of fit" in their university environment and adapt. Bean and Eaton (2000: 51) have defined adaptation as "a process by which an individual chooses to cope with a particular situation", this concept is synonymous with what Tinto termed "integration". In this study, adapting refers to the extent to which students can integrate into their university environment.

Literature suggests that for humans to adapt to situations, they need to employ coping strategies (Chen, Stevens & Wong, 2009). Coping has been defined as the "collection of behaviours an individual uses in order to adapt" (Bean & Eaton, 2000:51). Accordingly, the aforementioned authors said that academic and social integration are

interpreted to be the attitudinal outcomes of the coping behaviours of students towards their institutional environment. The Coping Behavioural Theory alludes to the existence and experiences of stress in students and emphasises that management of stress or lack thereof contributes to college retention or attrition. Bean and Eaton (2000:51) have defined stress as "the emotional and physiological response to perceived threats from the environment". In the same breath, however, particularly addressing College/University stress, Li and Boey (2002) and Pascoe, Hetrick & Parker (2020) demarcated it as the normal day-to-day hassles from academic demands, personal demands, and negative life events. The common denominator about stress is that it increases whenever individuals feel that they are not effectively responding to stressful situations, and coping mechanisms must be employed to reduce it. Literature has alluded to two (2) commonly used approaches to coping with stress, namely approach behaviours and avoidance behaviours (Bean & Eaton, 1995, 2000). Approach behaviours (also known as coping behaviours) are adaptive actions intended to minimise stress, while avoidance behaviours are actions intended to avoid stress (Bean & Eaton, 2021, 2000). The ability to adapt depends on the coping behaviours the individual employs. This means that in order for students to be able to adjust academically and socially, they need to engage in behaviours that decrease their stress, e.g., prepare for classes, approach tutors, and regularly engage with their lecturers and social support systems (Bean & Eaton, 2000). The intention of adopting coping mechanisms is always to reduce the amount of stress experienced.

Coping involves spending mental energy in a way that can reduce stress (Bean & Eaton, 2000) and aligns with the principles below:

1. Whether conscious or subconscious, the ultimate goal of all coping mechanisms is to solve a problem and return to homeostasis.
2. Coping strategies can be positive or negative, depending on whether they increase or reduce mental well-being.
3. Coping is dependent on personality patterns and perceptual experiences.
4. The strategies one chooses for adapting to a situation are highly individualised. Coping is never the same for two people.

iii. Self-Efficacy Theory

The concept of self-efficacy, as coined by psychologist Albert Bandura, posits that

people use their experience and observation to perform tasks successfully or to deal with particular situations (Bean & Eaton, 2000). Self-efficacy is the belief, thoughts, and feelings individuals have regarding their personal capabilities, which affect how they function and, ultimately, how they perform (Viviers, De Villiers & Van der Merwe, 2023). In other words, self-efficacy refers to an individual's self-perception of their ability to perform in a way that will yield a desired outcome. When individuals recognise their competence, their self-confidence increases, and they persist in achieving tasks (Bean & Eaton, 2000). In the context of this study, it can be said that students on enrolment conditions who witness other students successfully exit from their enrolment conditions and believe they can do the same may invest more effort in their work in order to exit enrolment conditions. There is a positive relationship between self-efficacy, motivation, and college persistence (Viviers, De Villiers & Van der Merwe, 2023; Bean & Eaton, 2000). This suggests that a strong sense of self-efficacy regarding a particular situation or element(s) of campus life can increase a student's confidence in their ability to adapt to their university.

iv. Attribution theory

Attribution is the process of assigning causes to behaviour and situation outcomes; put differently, it is the way of understanding how individuals explain the events that happened in their environment (Martinko & Mackey, 2019; Mkumbo & Amani, 2012). Bean and Eaton (2000) borrowed from Bernard Weiner's causal attribution model as they found it beneficial in investigating academic performance and integration. In particular, their focus was on the attribute of locus of control, which refers to an individual's ability to describe internal or external causal factors for their past outcomes and experiences (Bean & Eaton, 2000). Individuals with an internal locus of control perceive outcomes to stem from personal and internal attributes (e.g., skills), while the ones with an external locus of control attribute outcomes to external circumstances (e.g., other luck). An example of this would be a student who gets 80% for their exam because they worked hard; this student has an internal locus of control. On the other hand, a student who fails a module and attributes that to the lecture's boring teaching style is said to have an external locus of control. In the context of this study, it can be said that Weiner's theory posits that students who believe they have control over the outcomes of their situations are more likely to display effort towards and respond to them, and they are likely to work towards exiting their enrolment conditions. Internal locus

of control is deemed and has been proven to have a positive relationship with academic success (Mkumbo & Amani, 2012). On the other hand, students who attribute the outcomes of their experiences to external factors are more likely not to put in the effort required as they believe they have no control over their situation. They are less likely to work their way out of their enrolment conditions.

The model of college student retention by Bean and Eaton (2000) attempts to explain the role of individual psychological processes in student persistence in their academic work. According to this model, people arrive at universities with psychological attributes shaped by their experiences, self-efficacy beliefs, self-assessments, personality traits, attribution styles, skills, and abilities. Upon entry into their institutions of higher education, students start to engage with their institutions on an academic and social level. Psychological attributes are important for determining how the student will interact with their institution and can change as students continue to interact with it. While interacting with the academic and social aspects, students can develop new attributes to interpret and meet the demands brought about by their university environment. This starts with them conducting their self-assessments, which include their self-efficacy to achieve academic and social success, engaging in coping mechanisms to reduce the stress encountered, and evaluating themselves and their actions regarding their achievements or failures. Moreover, it is important to note that the self-assessment(s) and psychological processes result in the type of feelings (positive or negative) the student will have about their institution and their studies.

It is important to note that when coming to the placement of students on enrolment conditions, the HEIs in South Africa including the HEI under study have adopted the following approach: The Faculty Examinations Board (FEB) or Faculty Appeals Committee (FAC) determines the progression status of each student and refuses her/him readmission, or allows her/him to continue and, if so, attaches any enrolment conditions to such continuation where a student has failed to meet the minimum progression requirements, University of Pretoria (UP, 2023), Central University of Technology (CUT,), Tshwane University of Technology (TUT, 2024), University of the Free State (UFS, 2024) . After placement on enrolment conditions, students are encouraged to meet with various advisors on campus for assistance to work their way out of the enrolment conditions. These include faculty/curriculum advisors, support advisors (Psychosocial support practitioners), peer advisors (fellow students) and

central advisors (Centre for Teaching and Learning) and depend on the enrolment conditions that have been given to the student (Tiroyabone & Strydom, 2021). Reaching out to each of these remains the responsibility of the student and unless the student discloses their enrolment condition status, the advisor in question will offer support as if they are dealing with an ordinary student. Accordingly, the approach used by the university under study for students on enrolment conditions and those not on enrolment conditions is the same and is stipulated below (De Klerk, Jadhav & Hundermark, 2024). The faculty advisors provide curriculum-specific advice, assisting with module selection and defining academic pathways. The central advisers offer general academic and career advice, helping students connect their academic plans with their career aspirations. The peer advisors, on the other hand, offer support and guidance related to student life, connecting students with relevant support structures, whilst the support advisors offer psychosocial support to students as and when they present themselves to them. It is this lack of distinction between students on enrolment conditions and students not on enrolment conditions that the researcher challenges as she is of the opinion that students on enrolment conditions need more structured, tailored, intensive support, whilst on and because of their placement on enrolment conditions.

2.18 Theoretical Framework

A theory is an argument, figure, discussion, conceptual framework, or rationale that helps predict phenomena that occur in the world and explains how and why variables and relational statements interrelate (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In the same vein, Varpio, Paradis, Uijtdehaage, and Young (2020) view a theory as a connected set of concepts and premises logically developed from one or more theories that a researcher creates to scaffold a study. In the context of this study, a theory is an abstract description of relationships between concepts that help us understand the world. Consequently, this study was underpinned by Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystem Perspective as well as Schlossberg's Transition Theory. Both theories complemented each other as they emphasised the role played by external factors in the psychosocial behaviour/being of an individual. Below is an explanation of the ecosystem's perspective, and the transition theory will be discussed later.

2.18.1 Ecosystem's Perspective

Developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner in 1979, the ecosystems perspective evolved and merges the systems theory and the ecological perspective (Dykes, Lombard, Mbedzi, Rasool, and Schenck, 2019).

This study adopted Ecosystem Theory (also known as Ecological Systems Theory), originally developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979), as its guiding theoretical framework. The theory posits that human development and behaviour are shaped by multiple interrelated systems that range from immediate environments to broader societal structures. This framework was particularly useful for understanding the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of university students placed under enrolment conditions, as it allowed for an exploration of how different environmental layers impact students' academic functioning and emotional well-being.It rests upon the following principles: Firstly, the ecosystems perspective champions the notion of persons and their environment constantly interacting and influencing one another Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Dykes et al, 2019; Crawford, 2020). In the context of this study, this principle posits that students on enrolment conditions interact with, influence, and are influenced by their environment. The environment(s) in a student's life can include the academic (pedagogical approaches and policies), the social (interactions with staff members and other students, the psychological (sense of belonging, emotional support), the physical (campus infrastructure, accessibility to classrooms) and the financial spheres (tuition fees and funding), (Xu, Schonrock-Adema, Jaarsma & Duvivier, 2022). Secondly, individuals cannot be understood outside their context/environment; they are interrelated and face challenges when those interconnected and interrelated relationships are in trouble (Bronfenbrenner,1994; Dykes et al, 2019).In other words, this means that it would be impossible to understand students on enrolment conditions outside of their environment/world; furthermore, problems occur when there are challenges between the environments (e.g., academics and finances) as a result of the enrolment conditions. Thirdly, individuals and their environments form an ecosystem consisting of the individual, all systems where the individual has reciprocal relations, the wider environment in which the individual acts, and all mutual interrelationships between the individual and subsystems (Dykes et al, 2019). In this ecosystem, individuals are influenced by and influence their

environments through their actions. This means that if a student experiences their academic environment as negative, they may react negatively (by way of diminished participation and motivation in academic activities) and may contribute to the University's overall attrition rates (students' influence on their learning environment). Finally, the ecosystems perspective focuses on humans' growth, development, and potentialities, as well as on the properties of their environments that support or fail to support expressions of human potential. In applying this principle to this study, it can be said that it is when the growth, potential, and development of enrolment conditions students are a priority that Universities can focus on the strengthening of their support efforts towards these students. According to Dykes et al (2019) and QUIA (2022), the following concepts are key to understanding and applying the ecosystem perspective: social environment, transactions, boundaries, energy, interface, adaptation, coping, interdependence, subsystem, homeostasis, differentiation, negative entropy, and equifinality. These key concepts, as mentioned, are briefly explained below.

The *social environment* is the actual environment and relationships that a person has (Chopra, Darbandi, Neubauer & Reid, 2023). A negative social environment may warrant the intervention of a practitioner. In this study, students on enrolment conditions may need psychosocial support services from psychosocial support practitioners due to the strained relationship between them and their academics. Secondly, human beings interact through positive or negative *transactions* whenever people relate with each other in their environment within certain parameters (Crawford, 2020). In addition, *energy* refers to the input and output in a person's life and ability to do work; it either adds to or takes away from their life (Shove & Walker, 2014) and an *interface* is the point of interaction/communication between the person and the environment (the written agreement between the student and the university), (Zaatari, Maalouf, 2022). In applying the concepts of transactions, energy, and interface in this study, it can be argued that students on enrolment conditions exchange either positive or negative vigor whenever they interact with their environments (e.g, academic, social, financial, psychological). *Adaptation* refers to the ability of people to conform to their environment (e.g., a student on enrolment conditions learning to spend more time on their modules (Jin, Zheng, Wen & Miao, 2022). *Coping* refers to the positive way people (including students) deal with the negative experiences they have (Jin, 2022). *Interdependence* refers to the mutual dependence of students on others in their social environment (Crawford, 2020). This means students on enrolment conditions depend

on their peers, and the peers depend on them for social support. A *subsystem* is a secondary system that is a component of a larger system, e.g., for a student, these include subsequently the funding systems, student residence, counselling services, and various academic departments within which the student's modules reside (Crawford, 2020). *Homeostasis* is the tendency of a system to maintain equilibrium or balance (Gomez-Marques, 2023). For example, a student who is sick (including students on enrolment conditions) seeks medical treatment. *Differentiation* is the tendency of a system to move from a simpler to a more complex existence (Moscovice, Sueur, and Aureli, 2020); for example, in the lives of students, each day adds new experiences, information, and options. *Negative entropy* is the tendency of a system to move toward growth and development (Love, Goodcase & Durtschi, 2019), meaning that students, as people, develop emotionally, physically, and intellectually. *Equifinality* refers to the idea that there are multiple means to the same end (Fitzgerald, 2019), meaning students can adopt various coping strategies to complete their studies.

The critical analysis of theory in research is significant for evaluating the strengths, weaknesses, and relevance of the theory. In this regard, the critique of the ecosystems perspective is that although it aims to capture the complexity of real environments (academic, social, psychological, and financial), it can sometimes oversimplify them by reducing them to a set of interacting components. This means that developing and implementing interventions influenced by the ecosystems perspective can be expensive, requiring significant resources and collaboration across different sectors. It is these collaborations that can be challenging due to differences in methodologies and priorities, particularly in HEIs where the conundrum of priority regarding academic outputs versus student mental well-being is at play.

Having appraised the ecosystems perspective in the previous section, the researcher still considers it advantageous because it considers the student and all levels of their functioning/relating with their environment. Bronfenbrenner's model consists of five environmental systems: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem, each of which was relevant in analysing the lived realities of students in this study.

Microsystem

The microsystem encompasses the student's immediate, day-to-day interactions with people and environments, such as family, peers, lecturers, and academic advisors (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In this study, students described how personal relationships, especially with academic staff and social service practitioners, influenced their responses to enrolment conditions. Supportive interactions helped mitigate emotional distress, while lack of communication or empathy from faculty or advisors intensified feelings of confusion, anxiety, and helplessness. Similar findings have been reported by Tinto (2012), who emphasised that supportive faculty-student relationships are crucial for student retention and well-being.

Mesosystem

The mesosystem represents the interconnections between two or more microsystems, for example, between the faculty and support services (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In this study, a lack of collaboration between curriculum advisors and psychosocial support units was noted as a barrier to comprehensive care. Where interdepartmental communication was weak, students were often left to navigate enrolment conditions alone. This is supported by Bean and Eaton (2000), who argue that successful student support is rooted in the alignment between academic and non-academic services.

Exosystem

The exosystem includes institutional structures, policies, and practices that indirectly affect students' experiences (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Though students may not directly engage in policy-making, they are deeply impacted by the way enrolment conditions policies are administered. In the context of this study, the timing and method of probation notifications, typically delivered after final marks and during student recess, were found to contribute to disorientation and anxiety. Students often discovered their academic status too late to act or seek support. Similar concerns have been raised in the literature around the unintended consequences of poorly timed institutional communication (Thomas, 2012; Scott, 2017).

Macrosystem

The macrosystem refers to the broader social, cultural, and ideological context in which the student operates (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This includes societal attitudes towards academic success and failure, the stigma of being placed on enrolment conditions, and national educational policies that shape institutional expectations. In this study, some participants internalised their placement on enrolment conditions as a personal failure, reinforcing feelings of shame and low self-worth. This aligns with the work of Kuh et al. (2005), who highlighted how institutional culture and social norms around achievement influence students' self-perceptions and coping strategies.

Chronosystem

Finally, the chronosystem includes time-related dimensions such as life transitions, policy changes, and historical events (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). In this study, the timing of enrolment conditions notifications, often during recess, emerged as a critical issue. Students received life-altering academic status updates when they were off-campus and without immediate access to support. The temporal disconnect between academic processing and student availability hindered both emotional adjustment and timely action. This supports Du Plessis (2019), who emphasised the role of academic calendar structures in shaping student engagement with institutional processes.

Summary of Relevance

Ecosystem Theory enabled this study to adopt a multi-dimensional lens to analyse how different systems, ranging from personal relationships to institutional policy, interact to influence the psychosocial well-being of students on enrolment conditions. This framework justified the need for multi-level interventions, including improved communication strategies, faculty collaboration, psychosocial support integration, and policy alignment. It further underscored that students' academic outcomes cannot be divorced from their emotional, relational, and institutional contexts (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2010).

2.18.2 Schlossberg's Transition Theory

Another theoretical framework employed in this study is Schlossberg's transition theory, which, although categorised as a theory for adult development, applies to other

settings, including university students (Gbogbo, 2020). Nancy K. Schlossberg, a counselling psychologist and expert in adult transitions, developed this theory to explain transitions that require new circumstances to be incorporated into the life of the individual (Guo, Pinto, Edwards, Pask, Firth, Obrien, Murtagh & Murtagh, 2022). A transition is “any event, or non-event, that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles and simultaneously requires new patterns of behaviour that may or may not be effective” (Flowers, Luzynski & Zamani-Gallaher, 2014: 105). In the context of this study, placement on enrolment conditions is “the transition/change/event.”

According to Flowers et al. (2014), Anderson, Goodman and Schlossberg (2011) and Yadusky, Kheang and Hoggan (2021), transitioning is a process consisting of 3 parts, namely approaching the transition (Moving in), taking stock of coping resources (Moving through) and taking charge of the transition (Moving out). In this study, moving in can include the time the student is aware that they have been placed on enrolment conditions, as well as what this means for them; moving through will include the efforts made by the student to try and meet their enrolment conditions, and moving out will mean passing their modules.

Although Schlossberg emphasised that there are differences between people and transitions, she argued that the structure for understanding individuals in transition is generalisable (Flowers et al., 2014) and follows the outline as captured in the figure below.

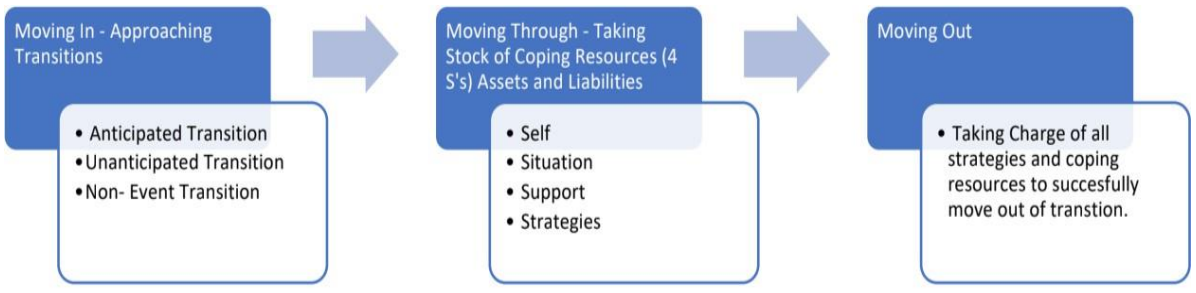


Figure 1. Schlossberg’s Transition Framework (Schlossberg et al., 2012)

Moving Approaching the transition

Approaching transitions includes understanding the meaning the transition has for the individual (Flowers et al., 2014). In this regard, the type, context, and impact (Anderson

et al., 2011) of the transition must be considered. There are different types of transitions, including anticipated transitions, unanticipated transitions, and non-events (Gbogbo, 2020). For this study, the placement of students on enrolment conditions is considered an unanticipated transition. Anticipated transitions occur predictably, e.g., registration of a student in a university; unanticipated transitions are unpredictable, e.g., sudden death of a loved one (Anderson et al., 2011); and non-events are those expected transitions that never materialised. In this study, students placed on enrolment conditions for the first time may experience their placement on enrolment conditions as an unanticipated transition. The context of a transition refers to the individual's relationship with the transition and the setting in which the transition takes place (Flowers et al., 2014). Impact means the degree to which a transition alters the individual's daily life e.g., the extent to which the enrolment conditions has changed the student's life.

Moving Through-Taking stock of coping resources, assets, and liabilities (4S's). According to Schlossberg, there are four major sets of factors that influence a person's ability to cope with a transition: these include situation, self, support, and strategies (Griffin & Gilbert, 2015); they are explained below:

Situation

Situation refers to how the individual assesses the transition and their sense of control over that which is taking place (Griffin & Gilbert, 2015; Powers, 2010; Flowers et al., 2014:107). In other words, does the individual perceive the transition as positive, negative, desired, dreaded, voluntary, or imposed? Killam and Degges-White (2017:25) mentioned, "Other considerations for assessing the situation include the timing of the transition, transition triggers, anticipated duration, previous experience with similar transitions, and whether the student is experiencing concurrent stress." In this study, the factors mentioned by Killiam and Degges-White (2017) imply the following:

Trigger refers to the factors that led to the student's placement on enrolment conditions (e.g., lack of psychosocial support). *Timing* focuses on whether the transition occurs on or off time in terms of the student's social clock. As placement on enrolment conditions is not necessarily good, it may be considered off-time. *Control* refers to those

aspects of the transition that the individual perceives as being within his/her control, e.g., whether the student wishes to continue studying to meet the enrolment conditions given to them. *Role change* refers to whether or not there has been a change in roles owing to the transition. *Duration* refers to whether or not the situation is deemed permanent, temporary, or uncertain. *Previous experience with a similar transition* focuses on how effectively the person could cope with the transition and the implications for the current transition. *Concurrent stress* refers to whether other sources of stress are present (e.g., loss of funding). Lastly, *assessment* refers to the student's perception of who or what is responsible for the transition.

Self

According to Flowers et al. (2014), the "self" refers to personal characteristics (socioeconomic status, gender, age, stage of life, state of health, and ethnicity) and psychological characteristics (locus of control, ego development, e.g., maturity, values, and self-efficacy) that are at the individual's disposal while navigating their transition. Included in the self are the student's strengths and weaknesses (Powers, 2010).

Support

Killiam and Degges-White (2017) and Powers (2010) suggest that support is essential during transitions and is critical to the optimal functioning of human beings in their daily lives. There are different sources of support that an individual can rely on during a transition (Killiam & Degges-White, 2017), including intimate relationships, family support, friends, and communities.

Strategies

According to Schlossberg (2007) and Killam and Degges-White (2017), strategies are the coping responses individuals bring to the transition. These strategies can include trying to control the situation or trying to control the stress caused by the situation through avoidance or other tactics (Montgomery, 2017; Killiam & Degges-White, 2017).

Taking charge: Strengthening resources (Moving out)

According to Flowers et al. (2017), taking charge is the final part/component of Schlossberg's transition theory; the development of new strategies characterises it and allows the individual to take control of and integrate the transition experience into

their life.

In operationalising and individualising the unique experiences of students on enrolment conditions, the study used Schlossberg's transition theory (2011). A transition is an event that impacts relationships, routines, and roles. In the context of this study, placement on enrolment conditions constitutes a transition. Although transitions can be significant or insignificant, placement on enrolment conditions significantly impacts the students and their experiences and requires them to readjust their lives. Accordingly, the need for heightened attention to students on enrolment conditions is important as they may require additional support to work their way out of their enrolment conditions successfully. Transition theory argues that it is important to examine students during their transition (placement on enrolment conditions) and, more specifically, considers each individual's experience unique (Evans, Forner, Guido, Patton & Renn, 2010; Schlossberg, 2011). Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2011) provided a framework that considers the individual experience to provide solutions based on individual needs. This framework utilises the four "s" to examine an individual's experience. The first "s" examines the situation, considering the individual's triggers, role changes, duration, and stress (Evans et al., 2010; Schlossberg, 2011). The second "s" explores the self and considers an individual's demographics and personal characteristics. The third "s" considers the types of support the individual receives. The last "s" discusses the strategies or coping modes students inhibit, including information seeking, direct action, inhabitation of action, and intrapsychic behaviour (Evans et al., 2010; Schlossberg, 2011). Schlossberg's Transition Theory (2011) contextualised the student experience as different for each student. Because students on enrolment conditions are different, using a lens encompassing those diverse experiences is important. This study adopted Schlossberg Transition Theory as one of the conceptual lenses to capture students' psychosocial experiences, needs, and challenges on enrolment conditions. Furthermore, the researcher intends to refer to the transition theory and the ecosystems perspective as a guide when developing suggested guidelines for psychosocial support services for university students. This is because of her stance that it is when the ecosystem of the students on enrolment conditions is considered and understood that relevant efforts to assist them with transitions (placement on enrolment conditions) can be crafted and implemented.

2.19 Conclusion

Chapter 2 discussed the phenomenon of enrolment conditions/academic probation, philosophies, and perspectives as applicable internationally, regionally, and locally. The applicable legislative framework governing enrolment conditions in South Africa and the indicators, reasons, and causes that lead to the placement of students on enrolment conditions were also presented. Furthermore, the advantages, disadvantages, enrolment conditions (stipulations), and interventions were discussed to contribute to a deeper understanding of this phenomenon. Lastly, the psychosocial experiences and other implications of enrolment conditions were presented to illustrate their wide reach in affecting other aspects of a student's life. It was evidenced that, owing to the broad nature of challenges students undergo that place them on enrolment conditions, the traditional view of faculty academic advisors as the primary officials to assist students needed to be broadened to include other professionals, particularly in the psychosocial support fraternity, whenever psychosocial challenges are pertinent in the lives of students. Enrolment condition approaches were posited and included approaches from the viewpoints of academic advisors and those from the viewpoints of psychosocial support practitioners. By presenting the approaches of both professionals, the researcher attempted not to interrupt the chronological flow of literature as, initially and traditionally, academic advisors were the ones deemed primarily responsible for assisting students who are on probation. As the study focuses on the psychosocial experiences, needs, and challenges of students on enrolment conditions, literature and approaches were presented to provide context. Owing to the paradoxical occurrence of students who need assistance being of the view that they do not need it (as identified in the literature), it seemed necessary for the help-seeking behaviours of students on enrolment conditions to be presented. The eclectic use of the Ecosystems perspective and Schlossberg's transition theory was also presented as the theoretical framework for this study.

CHAPTER THREE:

APPLICATION OF QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGICAL PROCESS

3.1 Introduction

The research approach, research design, and research methods are imperative in research studies (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This chapter presents the scientific steps that were followed in conducting this study (Akhtar, Shah, Rafiq & Khan, 2016) and demonstrates that the entire study has coherence across the research purpose (Koch, 2014; Singh, 2015). In this regard, the chapter justifies the methodology employed in the study, and literature is used to secure the methodology as stemming from research questions, goals, and objectives.

3.2 Research methodology

Research methodology refers to the way to solve the research problem systematically; it includes the various steps generally adopted by a researcher in studying the research problem and the logic behind them (Patel & Patel, 2019). It refers to the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, observe, classify, process, analyse, and interpret information about a research topic (Gupta & Gupta, 2022). Literature has alluded to the fact that research methodology is guided and informed by the research question (Ratan, Anand & Ratan, 2019), and this was the case in this study.

This chapter presents the qualitative research approach employed in this study. A detailed application and justification of the research approach are included, and a discussion of the adopted research design, namely the exploratory, descriptive, and contextual research. Additionally, the chapter presents the research design in detail, including the selection and justification of the sample, sampling methods, participant preparation for data collection, data collection tools, pilot test, data analysis, and the overall trustworthiness of the study.

3.2.1 Research approach

Creswell and Creswell (2017:40) define research approaches as “the plans and the procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation”. Generally, there are three

main approaches in research, namely quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods (Taherdoost, 2022). Each of these has dissimilar characteristics; essentially, quantitative research advocates for numerical data and statistical analysis, whilst qualitative research uses non-numerical data to explore and solicit an in-depth understanding of phenomena. Mixed-method research, on the other hand, is a combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches in the endeavor to seek a comprehensive understanding of phenomena (Taherdoost, 2022).

This study is situated within the interpretivist paradigm as the researcher is interested in the subjective narratives and interpretations of students on enrolment conditions (Ulz, 2023). The qualitative research approach was employed, and although this approach has been criticised by quantitative researchers as not being generalisable or sufficiently empirical, its potentialities and applicability within the scientific research environment throughout history have made it one of the necessary, accepted, and preferred research approaches (Queirós, Faria & Almeida, 2017). Unlike quantitative research and in addition to describing phenomena, qualitative research is uniquely identified by its focus on exploration, contextualisation, and understanding of the phenomena through diverse methods to conduct scientific research (Hendren, Newcomer, Panday, Smith & Summer, 2023).

The qualitative research approach was adopted in this study as the researcher collected subjective data from participants about their experiences and the meaning they attach to them in their habitat (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Through the qualitative approach, the researcher was able to discover important aspects of the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of placement of students on enrolment conditions that would be easily overlooked and missed in a quantitative study (Schmidt & Brown, 2017).

The qualitative approach was deemed appropriate owing to the researcher's interest in the new, emerging, natural experiences and world view of students on enrolment conditions and their interpretations thereof (Yilmaz, 2013). Qualitative research allowed the researcher to execute inductive research, especially owing to limited literature on the psychosocial experiences, needs, and challenges of students placed on enrolment conditions (Yilmaz, 2013; Creswell, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Furthermore, the researcher remained cognisant and accepting of the multiple realities and

interpretations expressed by participants about their experiences, challenges, and needs regarding enrolment conditions (Yilmaz, 2013).

This approach was relevant because it enabled the researcher to answer the 'what,' 'how,' and 'why' questions, instead of addressing the quantity, frequency, and intensity of events (Yilmaz, 2013). In this regard, the researcher was interested in the in-depth narratives of students on enrolment conditions and not in the number of students on enrolment conditions. Qualitative research allowed the researcher to gather rich and contextual information from a small group of people. Furthermore, this study was interested in understanding the various perspectives of participants from all angles and made it possible to present a holistic view of the participants' lived experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Through qualitative research, the researcher was able to consider and take the participants' contexts and constructs into account when representing the information, thereby allowing for a presentation of rich data from the detailed descriptions given by participants (Yilmaz, 2013). Although the contextualisation of the study translated to the results not being generalisable as information was sought from a small sample of participants, the study did achieve its qualitative goal of exploring the depth and breadth of participants' lived experiences holistically (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Another qualifying factor for the qualitative approach was that it made it possible for the researcher to investigate the relationships existing between participants in particular social settings (university environment, social relations, family relations, and other contexts in which they exist) and sought to understand the setting(s) rather than predict them (Yilmaz, 2013). Qualitative research also allowed for the presentation of the participants' interpretation of events and not the researcher's interpretation of events (Yilmaz, 2013).

Through qualitative research, the researcher strived to understand the placement of enrolment conditions by spending sufficient time with participants and building rapport with them. Furthermore, the researcher served as a research tool and observed participants during her face-to-face interviews with them (Yilmaz, 2013; Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Creswell, 2017:257). The researcher collected data at a venue comfortable for the participants, namely at an office in the library on campus. The researcher had made arrangements with the library services of the university under

study to allocate a space where the semi-structured interviews would be conducted to gather data from participants. Having the interviews in the library made it easier for both participants and the researcher, contributing positively as participants narrated their experiences in a comfortable, familiar, private space. Qualitative research enabled the researcher to continuously work through her data (back and forth) and establish themes and patterns, thereby championing the notion of open coding and continuous data analysis (Yilmaz, 2013; Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Accordingly, the researcher was able to build themes and continuously check against the data as the themes and patterns continued to emerge from the data.

Qualitative research necessitated the constant observation of ethical considerations applicable to research. It subscribed to the notion of informed consent of participants as participants were requested to sign informed consent forms before participating in the study (Yilmaz, 2013). Furthermore, the researcher abided by the other ethical principles of conducting research, namely, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and no harm to participants.

The qualitative researcher had her biases, ideological preferences, and personal beliefs and reflected on these throughout the study (Yilmaz, 2013; Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). To eradicate their dominance, the researcher employed the services of an independent coder to code and analyse the data (Valencia, 2022). The researcher further triangulated her findings with other data sources, including narratives from the semi-structured interviews, researcher observations, and field notes (Valencia, 2022). The researcher studied a population that was understudied, vulnerable, and represented their voices (Webber-Ritchey, Simonovich, & Spurlark, 2021) and (Leon, Scott, Koke & Fiorini, 2019). This understanding of the experiences, challenges, and needs of students on enrolment conditions was sought and brought about through open-ended questions, and to a certain extent, represented through direct quotations. The researcher also conducted in-depth interviews with key informants (psychosocial support practitioners, including social workers and psychologists) as service providers of psychosocial support services to students. The key informants were purposely targeted as they were deemed to possess relevant information regarding psychosocial support services to students. In support of this view, Cossham and Johanson (2019:1) maintain that “key informants are knowledgeable individuals who contribute a perspective on a research phenomenon

or situation that the researchers themselves lack."

Qualitative research allows the study of sensitive topics that are not necessarily part of everyday conversation. In agreement with this notion, Bowman, Jang, Kivlighan and Schneider (2020) indicated that placement on enrolment conditions is a complex issue that can result in students feeling stigmatised, viewing themselves as deficient or as failures, feeling ashamed, and uncomfortable talking about their studies.

Finally, qualitative research made it possible to contrast different views on enrolment conditions. Furthermore, throughout this study, the manner in which students experienced enrolment conditions regardless of their HEIs intentions was brought to the fore.

3.2.2 Research design

According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), researchers not only choose research approaches (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods) but also choose a type of study methodology or study design, as these provide specific direction for the procedures to be followed in the research. A research design is an edifice for research. It indicates the elements that connect the research study project (Akhtar et al., 2016). In deciding on the appropriate research design, the researcher focused on the research question that the study sought to examine (Moule & Goodman, 2014). The inclusion of a detailed account of the sampling strategy, the data-collection techniques, and the data analysis process in the presentation of a research design (Maree, 2016; Charlesworth & Foëx, 2016) allows other researchers to replicate the process in their own settings. To ensure that the scientific community accepts the empirical findings, this study ensured that the research design is systematic, logical, and consistent (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012).

This study employed a phenomenological research design supported by exploratory, descriptive, and contextual research designs, as the intention was to explore, describe, and understand the in-depth lived experiences of participants according to their context. The following section contains brief descriptions of the designs (phenomenological, exploratory, descriptive, and contextual) adopted for this study and reasons why their application within the qualitative research approach was deemed applicable.

3.2.2.1 Phenomenological research

Phenomenological research studies individuals' lived experiences (including beliefs and perceptions) in relation to a phenomenon. The fundamental principle of this design is that participants relate their lived experiences best in their own words and through in-depth interviews, which will include the researcher observing their non-verbal communication (body language) during their narration (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004; Maree, 2016). Accordingly, in this type of design, the researcher explains the lived experiences of participants as described by them (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Phenomenological research reports meaning for several individuals from their lived experience of a phenomenon; it, therefore, does not report the study or life of a single individual, as is the case in a narrative study (Maree, 2016). In this study, the researcher drew from the lived experiences of multiple students who were placed under enrolment conditions through the use of semi-structured in-depth interviews. The interviews were conducted in a conducive space to allow students to share their lived experiences comfortably; the nature of the open-ended questions allowed the participants to elaborate on their experiences, and the researcher was able to seek clarity where applicable. The ability to seek clarity benefited the study in that the researcher was able to accurately record the participants' version of events and the meaning attached thereto.

3.2.2.2 Exploratory research

Exploratory research is a flexible data-gathering endeavour that allows the researcher to receive information and take risks (Gómez, Burbano, Haro, Borbor & Ortega, 2021). Furthermore, Casula, Rangarajan, and Shields (2021) and Gómez et al. (2021) indicate that this type of research is qualitative and inductive, allowing for the investigation of phenomena that are not clearly defined or sufficiently studied. The exploratory research design was used in this study owing to the dearth of research on the experiences, needs, and challenges of students on enrolment conditions (Creswell, 2017; Babbie, 2017). To explore the topic in depth, a small sample of nineteen (19) participants was used. The researcher used open-ended questions to explore the participants' experiences, challenges, and needs. Open-ended questions required more than a yes or no response and allowed participants to share their experiences in their own words rather than being steered to choose from one or more

fixed responses (Maree, 2016).

3.2.2.3 Descriptive research

Descriptive research aims to define the elements of a phenomenon and applicable relationships systematically (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). According to Babbie (2017), descriptive research is a type of research that aims to paint an accurate picture that indicates the details of a social setting, situation, or relationship. When coming to descriptive research, the focus is on describing rather than interpreting phenomena; it focuses on the who, what, and where of the experiences of participants (Roudsari, 2019:1). The descriptive research design was applicable in this study because the researcher described (presented a picture of who, where, what, and when phenomena took place) the experiences of participants as stemming from their narratives and in their setting. Moreover, participants were allowed to describe their experiences during their in-depth interview with the researcher. After the exploration of the participants' experiences, challenges, and needs because of enrolment conditions, the researcher described in detail what had transpired during the interviews and demonstrated a sense of understanding of the participants' experiences, challenges, and needs (Du-Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014).

3.2.2.4 Contextual research

Qualitative contextual research advocates that social context is imperative for understanding social phenomena (Yilmaz, 2013). Similarly, Neuman (2006) maintains that the environment of the experiences influences the meaning that people attach to their lived experiences and that if the context were to be removed, the social meaning and significance attached to it would be misleading. This research design was relevant for this study, as the researcher was interested in the setting within which the students had their experiences and the subsequent meaning they attached to their experiences. Hennik, Hutter, and Bailey (2020) advocate for considering the subject, theoretical, cultural, physical, and methodological context throughout the study process. Accordingly, the researcher described the context of the research topic, the theoretical background relevant to the study, and the physical context of the study area. This was done to provide a background for readers to understand the findings and convey the methodological context of the research and the environment in which the data were collected. Furthermore, the findings led to the recommendations made from this study.

This study was conducted at a university in the Free State province of South Africa (University of the Free State). Free State, formerly known as Orange Free State before 1995, lies in the heart of South Africa and is the third largest province in land area (about 129 825km^2), divided into one metropolitan municipality and four district municipalities (STATSSA, 2016). The university under study is the academic home to more than 33000 students and, like other universities, places students on enrolment conditions. The researcher employed a contextual design to study participants in the environment where they study and live to understand their experiences, needs, and challenges owing to enrolment conditions. In this regard, research took place in the natural setting of participants, and interviews were conducted with them on their respective campuses.

3.2.3 Population and sampling

Identifying which participants are to be included in a study is a primary step in research. This is referred to as the research population. A research population refers to the people or entities from which the researcher seeks information (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Babbie (2017:202) defines a research population as "that aggregation of elements from which the sample is selected," in other words, the large group of cases from which a researcher gathers a sample to research. The population for this study consisted of students from the University of the Free State. The special focus was on the students placed under enrolment conditions, as these students have the information relevant to the research topic. The researcher also interviewed psychosocial support practitioners as key informants because they have in-depth knowledge regarding psychosocial support programmes offered to students. Having the perspective of key informants allowed the researcher insight into key informants' knowledge of the placement of students on enrolment conditions and the psychosocial challenges, needs, and experiences that come with them. Furthermore, the researcher was able to know how key informants perceive probationary students and the services they render to probationary students in particular (if any). Key informants were moreover afforded the opportunity to make recommendations (where applicable) regarding rendering psychosocial support services to students on enrolment conditions.

Owing to the large number of participants who fall within this category, the researcher

conducted the study with students from one faculty (i.e., Humanities) that places students under enrolment conditions when they had made insufficient academic progress. In this faculty, six hundred students had been academically excluded, with 200 of them being placed on enrolment conditions.

As previously mentioned, the researcher also included six psychosocial support practitioners in the relevant institution of higher education as key informants in the study because they possess rich information and are psychosocial support providers to this clientele. The total number of psychosocial support practitioners was 11 at the time of the study, with 4 of them being social workers (3 permanently employed and 1 employed on a 12-hour per week ad-hoc basis). Accordingly, the counsellors who were included in this study needed to possess a degree in either social work or psychology; they must have been registered and affiliated with the relevant statutory body, namely the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) or the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). They must have had at least two years of experience providing psychosocial support services to students in the higher education sector. Considering that it was impossible to study the entire population, a sample was selected from the population of students. A sample is a smaller set of cases that the researcher will choose from the larger population and from which the results will be generalised; it is a subsection of the population generalisable to the population (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). To select a sample, researchers use probability or non-probability sampling techniques. Probability samples allow for generalising research findings, but this is not true with non-probability samples (Maree, 2016). In agreement with this view, non-probability sampling is used to draw a sample that falls within the research parameters and for which the generalisability of the findings is not the aim (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). In this study, the researcher used non-probability sampling in which the units to be observed were selected based on the researcher's judgment about which ones were the most useful or representative; it is also called judgemental sampling (Yadav, Sharma, Mishra & Shukla, 2018). Tracy (2019) indicated that qualitative researchers often use purposeful sampling to ensure that the chosen data is relevant to the research's purpose, goal, and questions. Purposive sampling means the researcher selects potential study participants according to pre-selected criteria relevant to a particular research question. The advantage of this is that each participant in the sample is able to assist with the research, as all participants

would fall within the research parameters because their information is specifically relevant to the study (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014; Maree, 2016).

For this study, the researcher employed purposive sampling and worked with a relatively small sample of nineteen (19) participants, which is distinctive in qualitative studies. Regarding the number of participants to be recruited from the respective population groups, the researcher was led by the principle of data saturation and did not decide on the sample size from the start of the study (Schmidt & Brown, 2019). In simple terms, data saturation points to the stage in the process of data collection where the information the researchers collect from participants starts to repeat itself, when new data no longer appear during the interviews, and when the data being collected appears redundant (Hennink et al., 2011; Koerber & McMichael, 2008:467). Accordingly, this study reached data saturation at the nineteenth (19^{th}) interview, as it was during this interview that the researcher confirmed that there was no new information coming from the participants, participant nineteen (19) in particular. Study participants needed to meet the following criteria in order to be included in the study:

- Be registered students in the Faculty of Humanities.
- Have studied under enrolment conditions for a period of 6 to12 months, with one of the conditions being that they sought psychosocial support and
- Be able to understand and converse in English, as this was the language used for the interviews.

The students who were excluded from this study had to be

- Students who had not experienced studying under enrolment conditions.
- Students who were not required to seek psychosocial support whilst on enrolment conditions.
- Students who were studying under enrolment conditions but were not willing to sign the informed consent form.

Key informants had to meet the following criteria to be included in the study:
Psychosocial support practitioners who were included in this study needed to possess a degree in either social work or psychology; they must have been registered and affiliated with the relevant statutory body, namely the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) or the Health Professions Council of South Africa

(HPCSA). They must have had at least three years of experience providing psychosocial support services to students in the higher education sector. Key informants needed to be willing to participate and share their knowledge. Practitioners not included in the study were those not affiliated with the relevant statutory bodies (SACSSP and HPCSA), those with less than three years of experience rendering psychosocial support services in higher education, and those who did not sign the informed consent form. Only the 6 key informants (3 social workers and 3 psychologists) who communicated interest and consented to participate in the study were interviewed for the study.

3.2.4 Preparing participants for data collection

Data collection requires researchers to consider both their target participants and strategies for effectively engaging them (Feldman, Bell & Berger, 2003). Data gathering can only commence once approval of the research proposal by the Departmental Ethics Research Committee has been obtained. This committee comprised a group of independent experts responsible for safeguarding research participants by ensuring that research studies are conducted ethically. The experts caution researchers against predictable pitfalls that must be addressed in a timely manner.

The researcher approached the data collection process by applying for dual ethical clearance. The first ethical clearance application was to the College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Review Committee of the university under whose auspices the study is being conducted (UNISA). The study was allocated the following reference numbers: NHREC registration #: Rec-240816-052 and CREC Reference #: 41454928_CREC_CHS_2023.

The second ethical clearance application was to the gatekeepers of the research site (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A research site is where the researcher plans to conduct the research. In the same breath, gatekeepers are the people who, by their professional or personal relationships with potential respondents, stand between the researcher and potential respondents. In this regard, the researcher also applied for ethical clearance and access to participants with the General/Human Research Ethics Committee (GHREC) of the University/site (UFS) where the study would be conducted, and the

following ethical clearance reference number was allocated to the study: UFS-HSD2023/1590

Approval from the aforementioned committees allowed the researcher to approach the university under study for access to study participants; the targeted faculty's faculty manager and admission officer were approached and presented with a permission letter to conduct the study. The admissions and appeals office shared information about the study with students on enrolment conditions via email, and those interested indicated their interest to the researcher via email. The researcher then used the responses received and contacted the participants, clarified who she was , what the study was about, and explained the criteria for inclusion to them. It was pointed out to the prospective participants that participation in the study was voluntary and that their rights would not be jeopardised. Those who agreed to participate in the study were prepared by having the contents of the preamble to the consent form explained to them (see Annexure B). After they indicated that they understood the contents, they were requested to sign the consent form, and an appointment was scheduled with them for the semi-structured interview to be conducted.

Regarding the key informants, the researcher contacted the management of the student counseling unit to inform them about the study and the need for key informant inputs. After approval from the management, key informants were informed of the study via email, and those interested in the study were encouraged to indicate their interest to the researcher via email. Only six (6) Key informants indicated their interest in participating in the study, and they were contacted so that the researcher could schedule an appointment with them to provide details about the study. After a discussion about the study and clarification were given, consent forms were shared with the interested prospective key informants to complete and sign. A face-to-face, semi-structured interview was then arranged with each informant for data gathering.

3.2.5 Method used for data collection

According to Flick (2018), qualitative data collection is the selection and production of material (linguistic or visual) for analysing and understanding phenomena and the related process of creating meaning. In support of this notion, Aguinis, Hill, and Bailey (2021) maintain that data collection involves several choices, including the type of

research design, sampling procedures, and data management to be implemented. Data collection refers to the procedures the researcher will use to gather information for the study to answer the research question. Qualitative researchers can use various data collection techniques, including documents/contextual data, observation, interviews, and focus groups (Maree, 2016). However, this study employed interviews and observations (Maree, 2016).

Prior to conducting interviews, the researcher tested the interview guide with a pilot of two (2) participants to see which areas of the guide needed modification (Babbie, 2017), as well as to decide on logistical processes. Malmqvist, Hellberg, Möllås, Rose, and Shevlin (2019) alluded to the importance of the use of pilot studies in qualitative research, maintaining that these pilot studies are frequently used to assess the effectiveness of research instruments for use in qualitative research projects. The manner in which the researcher conducted the pilot study is elaborated upon in a later section (3.2.6) of this chapter.

For this study, data collection was done using face-to-face, semi-structured interviews and researcher observations. Interviews are two-way conversations between the researcher and participant, where the researcher asks questions to learn about the experiences and behaviour of the participant (Maree, 2016). A semi-structured interview is an exploratory interview used to gather qualitative data; a guide devised prior to the interview is followed, and the focus is on a central topic intended to give structure to the interview (Trub, Berler & Magaldi, 2022).

Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to probe and seek clarification on the answers given by the participant as well as the space to follow topical courses as the conversation unfolded (Maree, 2016; Trub, Berler & Magaldi, 2022). The advantage of conducting semi-structured face-to-face interviews was that it allowed interviewees to express their viewpoints without a framework imposed by the researcher (Bolderston, 2012). The researcher asked all the participants the same questions in the same manner (Vogt, Gardner & Haeffele, 2012).

The interviews were conducted in the participants' natural settings, which were on the campus of the relevant institution of higher education. The researcher arranged for a private office at the campus library to have the interviews, and this enabled the researcher to develop rapport with each of these individuals and facilitate a shared connection to their actual experiences (Creswell, 2016). Generally, qualitative data

collection does not involve manipulation of human lives but studies human experiences through personal narratives (Hayhow & Steward, 2006; Drisko, 2016). The researcher conducted face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with the participants in the current study.

Accordingly, the researcher used semi-structured interviews facilitated by open-ended questions contained in an interview guide to collect data. Open-ended questions encouraged participants to respond in their own words and brought out underlying ideas and feelings that the researcher may not have considered (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). The researcher also drew from her social work experience and skills of probing and seeking clarification without influencing participants' responses. The researcher ensured that she was adequately prepared for the semi-structured interviews by having two (2) audio recorders and extra batteries at her disposal. Acquainting herself with the contents of the informed consent form contributed to the researcher's preparations for the interviews (Mack, 2005). In addition to the audio recording, the researcher, as permitted by participants, made notes of her observations of the verbal and non-verbal communication of participants (field notes), she also kept a reflective journal. Observations refer to the researcher's systematic way of taking note of the behaviour of participants through the five senses during an engagement (Maree, 2016). The researcher was careful and avoided excessive notetaking in an effort not to disturb participants as they were telling their narratives (Muswazi & Nhamo, 2013).

In the initial contact with the potential participants, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and the possible value of the study should they agree to participate. The researcher further informed potential participants about what she had learned about them and why they had been considered. No interview was recorded with the audio/tape recorder without participants having consented to the recording. Matters discussed during the first meeting included the items on which they would be expected to share their views. The researcher arranged to have the interviews in a private office at the campus's library, which made it possible for participants to be interviewed in a comfortable, private space that they were familiar with.

The researcher's interviewing skills have an important influence on the depth of the information that the participants provide, as conducting interviews can be intimidating

for researchers who are not familiar with the skill of interviewing (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019; Mack et al., 2005). During the interviews, the researcher encouraged participants to elaborate on their answers without expressing her approval, disapproval, judgment, or bias, and was able to allow them to naturally flow with their conversation while keeping track of the questions. The researcher determined the sample size based on data saturation, which is the point at which the information or data began to repeat itself. Data collection was terminated when there was repetition of data and no new information was emerging (Liamputtong, 2019).

The researcher used the following interviewing skills during the interviews:

Listening skills: McGrath, Palmgren and Liljedahl (2020) alluded to the importance of active listening during research. According to them, actively listening to participants means respecting silence and identifying such silent moments as an opportunity for ongoing reflection. Interviews on aspects that have profound meaning for participants prompted deep reflection. As a result of this, the researcher remained open and honest and maintained her interest in what participants shared both verbally and non-verbally through their facial expressions and body behaviour (Mc Grath, Palmgren & Liljedahl, 2020).

Types of qualitative interview questions: Besides applying good listening skills, the researcher derived much of the research data from asking appropriate questions. Du Plooy Celliers et al. (2014) theorise that appropriate questions are directly related to the problem statement and address issues emanating from the problem statement. This means that researchers are more likely to miss critical information if they do not ask good questions. In the existing study, the researcher applied a wide range of interview questions: introductory questions, follow-up questions, probing questions, specifying questions, and structuring questions (Maree, 2016; Whittaker, 2012). Introductory questions encouraged participants to respond openly, sharing rich descriptive accounts of their experiences. On the other hand, follow-up questions prompted participants to expand on their narratives, while probing questions enabled the researcher to elicit further information without directing a participant's response. Semi-structured questions were helpful in exploring a particular topic before moving on to the next, as they allowed participants to answer what they were being asked while

at the same time not being channeled.

The key to keeping a conversation going is for the researcher to be conversant with and have mastered probes and follow-up questions such as ‘uh-huh’ and ‘say more’ (Yin, 2011). However, this kind of follow-up question does not imply that the researcher is a passive participant; ‘uh-huh’ or saying more prompts the participant to divulge more details. The researcher was an active and supportive listener, probing and encouraging in-depth discussion until the topic was exhausted. During the interviews, the researcher asked open-ended questions, asked one question at a time, avoided asking leading questions, and, where necessary, asked follow-up questions to prompt participants to elucidate aspects not mentioned in their responses to the original question. Following the suggestion expressed by Gibson and Brown (2009), the researcher could direct the conversation around the topics included in the interview guide without necessarily disrupting the natural flow of the conversation. The researcher conducted 18 face-to-face, semi-structured interviews, mainly at the campus where participants were registered and at other venues (participants’ homes) convenient to participants (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). All the interviews lasted an average of 20 minutes to an hour. At the beginning of each interview, the participants read through the first section about their biographical profile.

Maintaining rapport: Interviews require the researcher to build rapport with participants; this is achieved by listening attentively and respectfully to information the interviewee shares (Dejonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). The researcher deemed it important to establish rapport with the participants so that they could feel relaxed when sharing their experiences honestly. The researcher also remained sensitive and mindful of the needs of participants and afforded them adequate time to respond to the open-ended questions. The researcher was careful and did not ask participants “why” questions, as this could put participants on the defensive or even offend them (Doody & Nooman, 2013).

3.2.6 Pilot study

A pilot study is a small feasibility study designed to test various aspects of the methods planned for a more significant, more rigorous, or confirmatory investigation (Lowe, 2019). The primary purpose of a pilot test is not to answer specific research questions,

but to prevent researchers from launching a large-scale study without adequate knowledge of the methods proposed; in essence, a pilot study is conducted to help identify and prevent potential flaws that could be costly in terms of time and resources. Researchers generally use pilot studies to evaluate the adequacy of their planned methods and procedures (Polit & Beck, 2017). This may begin with evaluating the likelihood of success of planned participant recruitment and retention strategies, such as whether a sufficient number of participants can be recruited from the target population and retained in the study in a reasonable amount of time and at a reasonable cost. Another feasibility purpose may include testing the planned data collection instruments/methods for all data types for quality and appropriateness. If a qualitative study is planned, does the interview guide or the training of the interviewer(s) produce the type and depth of data needed to answer the study question(s). In this study, a pilot test was conducted to assess various components of the interview guide, namely content validity, (Hennink, Kaminski, Willoughby & McMahan, 2014) relevance, (Walker, 2015) and usability, (Nunes, Martins, Zhou, Alajamy & Al-Mamari, 2014). In light of this view, the data (responses) from the participants of pilot study was not included in the study as the intention was only to test the elements of the interview guide. This pilot test indicated the participants' responses to the research questions and whether the questions were formulated at the participants' level of comprehension (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Hassan, Schattner & Mazza, 2006).
Studies have suggested that pilot testing should be carried out with individuals who share the same characteristics as those targeted for the main study (Strydom, 2005; Hennik, 2014). In line with this suggestion, the researcher in this study pilot tested the interview guide with two participants who met the criteria for participation and disclosed the purpose of the pilot test beforehand (Thabane, Ma, Chu, Cheng, Ismaila, Rios, Robnson, Thabane, Giangregorio & Goldsmith, 2010). During these interviews, the two participants were requested to share their impressions of the questions regarding their usability, format, content, duration, and perceived difficulties (Costa, Mullan, Kothe & Butow, 2010:1249). The participants were also requested to share their experiences based on appropriateness, relevance, clarity of the questions, and the wording to eliminate ambiguity (Bing-Jonson, Bjørk, Hofoss, Kirkevold & Foss, 2013). Accordingly, the two participants had given their informed consent and permission for the interviews to be audio recorded. The recorded interviews were transcribed, participant feedback was considered, and the researcher noted that modifications had

to be included in the final interview guide for participants.

3.2.7 Method of data analysis

Qualitative data analysis intends to make sense of the data at the researcher's disposal. The focus is on looking into what occurred during the data-gathering process and the meaning thereof (Yegedis, 2017). In further elaboration of this notion, Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014) and Creswell (2014) maintain that the processes used in the analysis and interpretation of the data are systematic and rigorous to allow for a thick, rich, and detailed description of the meanings. This includes breaking up the data, placing it into sections, and then putting it back together again. In qualitative research, data analysis is a continuous, non-linear process that concurrently runs with other parts that develop the study. Data collection, processing, analysis, and reporting are interwoven (Creswell, 2014; Maree, 2016).

There are innumerable qualitative data-analysis strategies (Holland & Rees, 2010; Sassler & Miller, 2011). Certain researchers employ generic data-analysis techniques, whereas others resort to less structured and more creative approaches (Moule & Goodman, 2014). For this study, the researcher employed thematic data analysis by way of the eight steps of qualitative data analysis proposed by Tesch (cited by Creswell & Creswell, 2018):

The researcher read all 19 transcripts, making notes of salient ideas to get a holistic sense of the collected information. She worked from one interview/transcript to the next (one at a time) and placed emphasis on recording her thoughts on the interview she was working on. After recording her thoughts on each interview/document, a list of topics (outcome of the thoughts) was made. Similar topics were grouped together and categorised into columns. The columns were accordingly classified as major, unique, and leftover. The researcher then looked at the list of topics and transcripts, coded the data by abbreviating it, and recorded a code next to the relevant section in the text to see whether new codes and categories emerged. The most descriptive wording for topics was used and turned into categories. The list was trimmed by grouping related topics, and lines were used to indicate the interrelations between the categories. The researcher then placed the categories in alphabetical form. Each category's data was grouped, and a preliminary analysis was performed. It is important to note that to strengthen the neutrality of the data analysis, the researcher employed the services of an independent coder to analyse all data. After the inputs of both the

researcher and independent coder were brought together, a qualitative report was assembled and presented, indicating how the study unfolded. Both the researcher and the independent coder were satisfied with the themes and sub-themes and compiled the report. The process is further summarised in the following steps as guided by Cresswell 2014:

- **Getting familiarized with data:** Arranging codes or themes from notes, interview transcripts, documents, and/or visual data
- **Generating initial codes:** Sorting and sifting through these coded materials to identify similar phrases, relationships between variables, patterns, categories, themes, distinct differences between subgroups, and common sequences
- **Searching for themes:** Isolating these patterns and processes, and commonalities and differences, and taking them out to the field in the next wave of data collection
- **Reviewing themes:** Noting reflection and other remarks in jottings, analytic memos, and/or journals
- **Defining, redefining, and naming themes: Gradually elaborating a refined set of assertions, prepositions, categories, themes, concepts, and generalisations** that cover the consistencies discerned in the data.
- **Producing final report:** Comparing those generalisations with a formalised body of knowledge in the form of concepts or theories.

3.2.8 Method of data verification

Data verification, also known as rigour, refers to the strength of the research design and the appropriateness of the research methods to answer research questions. Furthermore, it can be defined as the quality of being exact or thorough and accurate (Cypress, 2017). Rigour connotes trustworthiness. The aforementioned author indicated that without rigour, research becomes fiction and loses its value. The researcher applied the Guba model (Krefting, 1991) to assess the trustworthiness of qualitative data. Although this model was conceptualised more than three decades ago, its relevance is still valid today (Holland & Rees, 2010). The model is based on four aspects of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

3.2.8.1 Credibility

A qualitative study is credible when its description and interpretation of participants'

experiences are accurate and can be confirmed by other people who have undergone similar experiences (Cypress, 2017). Measures to ensure credibility include researcher and supervisor debriefing sessions, reflective notes of the researcher, and member checks (Maree, 2016). Member checking strengthens credibility by asking the participants to check for accuracy after data analysis to determine if the proposed themes align with their accounts, given their experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Considering this view, the researcher exercised member checking throughout the study to ensure that her understanding of the participants' answers and the meaning they attached to their experiences was correct. Member checking was done face-to-face as the researcher continuously confirmed her understanding of participants' narratives. Furthermore, the researcher utilised supervisor debriefing by consulting with her supervisor on decisions regarding the research. The researcher applied the principle of triangulation by using different data collection methods, such as interviews, observations, and field notes, to check the consistency of the information.

The researcher also achieved credibility by providing a thick and detailed description of the participants' experiences, which enables readers to come to their own conclusions about their experiences of enrolment conditions (Tracy, 2010). The findings were also validated through an independent coder who carried out data analysis independently from the researcher. After that, a joint discussion between the independent coder and the researcher in consultation with the supervisor was conducted to compare and consolidate the themes, sub-themes, and categories that emanated from the data.

3.2.8.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the findings of a qualitative study can be applied or transferred to other settings, contexts, or groups. It does not equate to generalisability in the statistical sense, but rather to the potential for others to determine whether the research findings are relevant to their own context, based on the richness and depth of the description provided (Du-Plooy Cilliers, 2014). In this study, transferability was supported through the provision of thick, detailed descriptions of the research context, participant selection, data collection methods, and key findings. By thoroughly documenting the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of university students on enrolment conditions within the Free State Province, the study

offers insights that may be applicable to other higher education institutions with similar academic support structures or probation policies. While the aim was not to produce universally replicable results, the comprehensive contextual framing enables future researchers and practitioners to assess whether the findings are meaningful in their own settings. In this way, the study upholds the principle of transferability by allowing for informed judgment regarding the applicability of the results across similar educational and psychosocial environments.

3.2.8.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the extent to which repeated measure administration will provide similar data or equivalent results if administered to a different audience (Krefting, 1991). The notion of dependability is concerned with the consistency of the findings over time and assessing if the same results would be obtained if the research were to be repeated in a similar context (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). In order to ensure that the findings presented were an accurate reflection of the participants' experiences, the researcher provided a rich and detailed description of the research methodology employed in the study. In addition, the stepwise replication strategy was implemented, in which an independent coder analysed the data set and subsequently compared the identified themes and sub-themes (Anney, 2014).

3.2.8.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to freedom from bias in the research procedures and results (Maree, 2016). Put differently, confirmability ensures the data represents the participant's responses and not the researcher's biases or viewpoints. In this regard, the researcher gave thick descriptions of the research methodology, context, and findings. The researcher also kept a reflexive journal, where notes and introspections relevant to the study were recorded, and used her social work experience to remain objective (Cypress, 2017). The researcher's reflective journal detailed all other methodological decisions taken during the study. The researcher consulted her supervisors throughout the research process and heeded their expertise, experience, and guidance to ensure the study was conducted appropriately.

3.2.9 Reflexivity and bracketing

It is important for researchers to "locate and re-locate themselves within their work

constantly and to remain in dialogue with research practice, participants, and methodologies through the principle of reflexivity" (Bott, 2010). Within qualitative research, reflexivity is an important response to complexity, which emanates from the presence of the researcher within and through the research (Daley, 2010; Berger, 2015). Reflexivity is generally the process of the researcher's personal and academic reflection on lived experiences, views, and biases, which may compromise the interpretation of the participants' narratives (Hennik, 2011; Saldana, 2014). This process requires researchers to have an "internal dialogue" (Caetano, 2014) and continuously reflect on their assumptions throughout the research (Berger, 2015; Rae & Green, 2016).

The researcher also applied bracketing, which is closely related to reflexivity. Bracketing is an effort to achieve a state of neutrality by suspending the researcher's prior understanding or preconception of monitoring and evaluation. The researcher was previously responsible for curriculum advising to students (Koch et al., 2014). The researcher achieved bracketing by constantly interacting with her supervisor to develop the capacity to be reflexive and to identify any stereotypical assumptions on her part (Nilson, 2016). Through self-reflection and continuously asking herself the question - who am I in this context? - the researcher further explored her personal cultural and religious norms regarding the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of students on enrolment conditions. The researcher's constant awareness of her personal views and perceptions regarding enrolment conditions helped her exercise restraint during the interviews.

3.2.10 Conclusion

A qualitative research approach was applied to develop an in-depth understanding of the experiences, needs, and challenges of students on enrolment conditions. A detailed explanation of the research methodology and techniques applied was presented. These descriptions reveal the empirical process followed and the justification for the choices made to demonstrate the authenticity of the study. The qualitative research approach was deemed appropriate for the goal of this study due to its inherent capacity to accentuate the participants' experiences of being placed on enrolment conditions.

CHAPTER FOUR:

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 includes a presentation of the findings of the study. Students on enrolment conditions and psychosocial support practitioners (social workers and student counsellors) in the institution under study were interviewed. The study focused on the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of students on enrolment conditions as well as the development of guidelines for psychosocial support to this clientele. Participants needed to have been on enrolment conditions in the previous 6-12 months. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted from October to November 2023. Some of the participants indicated insight into the existence of enrolment conditions, while others did not. They also narrated their own experiences, challenges, and needs while on enrolment conditions. Furthermore, they shared their views on enrolment conditions and how best practices to improve the placement of students on enrolment conditions could be developed. The following sections outline the main themes and relevant sub-themes from analysing the interview transcripts. Moreover, supporting excerpts from the transcripts were subjected to thorough literature review. Accordingly, extracts are contrasted with the existing literature to establish the credibility and trustworthiness of the study.

4.2 Participants profile

This section presents the biographical profiles of the participants and key informants who met the inclusion criteria. A total of nineteen (19) students (participants) and six (6) Key informants were interviewed. The biographical data, as presented below, provides information on each participant. To ensure anonymity, student participants and key informants were assigned pseudonyms instead of their real names.

Table 4.2.1 Profile of Participants (students)

No	Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Probation
1	UNZI (AM)	21	M	YES
2	UKO (CM)	25	F	YES
3	HWA (KK)	26	M	YES
4	IEL (LK)	23	M	YES
5	HLA (LM)	21	F	YES
6	ANI (LQ)	23	M	YES
7	ANE (LS)	27	M	YES
8	MANI (ML)	22	F	YES
9	SOA (MN)	22	M	YES
10	UNG (MN)	21	M	YES
11	OSI (OK)	21	F	YES
12	OEI (OS)	23	M	YES
13	ETLA (PM)	23	F	YES
14	WER (RD)	23	F	YES
15	AZI (RR)	20	F	YES
16	ASO (SM)	30	M	YES
17	EPE (ST)	20	F	YES
18	MBU (TM)	21	F	YES
19	ELE (TS)	23	F	YES

Taking the above table into consideration, it can be deduced that the majority of participants were youths between the ages of 20 and 24; this is in line with literature findings regarding the age of university students highlighted by the Department of Higher Education and Training (2021), which states that higher education institutions are primarily attended by youth. Notably, only one participant was 30 years old. Furthermore, the researcher did not find statistically significant differences according to gender when it came to the placement of students on enrolment conditions. Of the 19 students interviewed, 09 were males, and 10 were females. This parity may be owing to historical changes in social, less discriminatory attitudes towards girls' and women's education globally (Stoet & Geary, 2020:14073).

Table 4.2.2: Profile of Key Informants (psychosocial support practitioners)

PARTICIPANT	HIGHEST QUALIFICATION	YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	WORK DESCRIPTION
Dou (KIA)	MA in Psychology	4	Counselling Referrals Group work assessments
Ula (KIB)	MA in Psychology	4	Individual Therapy
Ams (KIC)	MA in Counselling Psychology	3	Counselling
Olo (KID)	MA in Clinical Social Work	16	Counselling Assessments
Ali (KIE)	BA in Social Work	17	Assessments
Adu (KIF)	BA in Social Work	14	Counselling

The above table displays the qualifications and experience of key informants who participated in the study. They all met the criteria for being a psychosocial support practitioner within their respective disciplines, namely social work or psychology. Social workers needed to have met the requirements to register with their council before they could service clients (Government Notice No. R. 101 published in Government Gazette No. 34020 of 18 February 2011), and the student counsellors needed to have met the minimum requirements of counselling psychology to render psychosocial support services to students (Health Professions Council of South Africa: Minimum standards for the training of counselling psychology 2019). Psychosocial support practitioners (key informants) also needed at least 3 years of experience in the higher education sector to possess the information relevant to participate in the study. The researcher was guided by the supervision framework for social work services (DSD & SACSSP, 2012) as well as literature from Hendricks *et al*. (2021:3) in determining the level of experience necessary (3 years) for each to practice independently and provide supervision services to colleagues. The key informants played a critical role in this study as they possessed the expertise in the field psychosocial support to students in higher education.

4.3 Inclusion criteria

As indicated in Chapter 3, students who had been placed on enrolment conditions and the key informants (psychosocial support practitioners) were included in this study. The students had been placed on enrolment conditions/academic probation for 6-12 months, with one of the conditions being that they sought psychosocial support services. Furthermore, participants had to understand and converse in English as this was the language in which the interviews were conducted. The key informants should have had at least three years of experience within the psychosocial support sector in higher education. Accordingly, the student counsellors who were included in this study needed to possess a degree in either social work or psychology; they must have been registered and affiliated with the relevant statutory body, namely the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) or the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA).

4.4 PRESENTATION OF THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

Table 4.4.1 below displays an overview of the themes and related subthemes. The themes stem from the individual in-depth interviews conducted with participants of the sample. This information was thematically analysed. Direct quotations from the participants' transcribed interviews are provided to reinforce and substantiate the identified themes and the related sub-themes. Literature extracts and related ideas were added to confirm, contrast, and elaborate on the participants' accounts and comment on a theme or sub-theme.

Table 4.4.1: Themes and sub-themes

Themes	Subthemes	Categories
Theme 1: Participants' understanding of enrolment conditions/academic probation	Subtheme 1.1: Not meeting the standard Subtheme 1.2: Given a second chance	

Theme 2: Communication strategies for informing students about placement on enrolment conditions	Subtheme 2.1: E-Mail Subtheme 2.2: Other ways	
Theme 3: Reasons participants were placed on enrolment conditions	Subtheme 3.1: Academic and academic-related matters Subtheme 3.2: Non-academic matters	• Home circumstances • Personal circumstances - Caregiving responsibilities and academic balance - Motivation, social adjustment, and academic integration - Trauma and mental health impact on academic performance
Theme 4: Participants' experiences of being placed on enrolment conditions	Subtheme 4.1: Social implications Subtheme 4.2: Emotional implications Subtheme 4.3: Physical implications	• Positive experiences • Negative experiences • Positive experiences • Negative experiences o *Lack of sense of belonging.* o *Loss of funding.* o *Embarrassment and self-esteem.* o *Psychological distress and isolation.* o *Institutional and psychosocial support needs.*
Theme 5: Challenges experienced by participants on enrolment conditions	Subtheme 5.1: Accessibility of resources Subtheme 5.2: Accessibility Of Support Services	
Theme 6: Coping mechanisms of participants	Subtheme 6.1: Changed attitude and motivation Subtheme 6.2: Engaging in recreational activities Subtheme 6.3: Engaging in academic activities	

Theme 7: Support provided by the university for the participants	Subtheme 7.1: Emotional support Subtheme 7.1: Support in terms of resources	• Positive experiences of support • Negative experiences of support
Theme 8: Suggestions by participants of addressing matters of enrolment conditions	Subtheme 8.1: Academic and academic-related matters Subtheme 8.2: Increased student support	• Lessen harshness of enrolment conditions • More effective communication Between all role-players • Accessibility of study material • Students themselves must take more responsibility for their studies • Greater accessibility to support • Telephonic support • Emotional support • Academic support

4.4.1 Theme 1: Participants' understanding of Enrolment Conditions

The researcher deemed it important to establish participants' understanding regarding their enrolment conditions. It could be argued that although some participants realised that they had been placed on enrolment conditions, others did not. Accordingly, the responses in this theme were solicited by asking, "Please share with me your understanding of enrolment conditions/academic probation." The participants' views regarding these questions are captured below through sub-themes and supported by the literature. Generally, the participants understood the stipulations of their enrolment conditions, even though they may not have fully comprehended the holistic process.

4.4.1.1 Subtheme 1.1: Not meeting the standard

In institutions of higher education globally, regionally, and locally, students are placed on enrolment conditions when they fail to achieve the minimum requirements of their qualification. This can take various forms across the various institutions of higher

education; for some, placement on enrolment conditions is due to not passing a certain number of compulsory credits. At the institution under study, much like at other institutions, when students do not pass the required credits in a particular year of study, they are academically excluded and granted an opportunity to appeal for readmission as a student (TUT Prospectus, 2019). This is the standard adopted by institutions of higher education. Stemming from the submission of an appeal, the appeal is discussed by the relevant institutions' Faculty Academic Exclusions Appeals Committee (FAEAC). It should be noted that the previously mentioned committee has different names across different institutions; for example, at the institution under study, it is known as the Faculty's Appeals Readmission Committee (FRAC). The committee will communicate the appeal's outcome to students via email. Those who have been granted readmission are placed on enrolment conditions, and for others, their exclusion remains. The use of the minimum standard/credits as a determining factor for placement on enrolment conditions was applicable in this study, as highlighted by the following participant:

Participant ML: *The person is put there if she fails, like more than 32 credits*.

In agreement with the participant above, literature has suggested that when students fail to make satisfactory progress based on a minimum standards credit criterion (failing to pass 40% of courses), major course criterion (failing to pass majors), repeat fail criterion (continuously failing courses), or period rule criterion (failing to show sufficient progress over a specified period), they can be academically excluded and then subject to a successful appeal to be placed on enrolment conditions (Koen et al., 2006; Somo, 2013).

Moreover, Participant ML's view that academic probation occurs "if she fails more than 32 credits" reflects an understanding that a quantifiable academic failure triggers probation. This view is consistent with the formal definitions found in many academic institutions, which often specify a credit threshold below which a student is placed on probation (Kuh et al., 2006). ML's comment aligns with the understanding that probation serves as an institutional response to students failing to meet minimum academic requirements, whether in terms of credit accumulation, grade point average (GPA), or performance in key courses (Hicks et al., 2010).

Participant CM below echoes this idea, stating that enrolment conditions take effect when a student "did not meet the… their faculty requirement on your academics." This interpretation is supported by academic literature, which defines enrolment conditions as a corrective measure that alerts students when they fall below the academic standards required for their degree programme (Lindo et al., 2010). Probationary status is often based on faculty-specific criteria, such as GPA thresholds, course completions, and programme-specific benchmarks, reinforcing CM's view of probation as a response to unmet academic expectations. Notably, participant CM reported the following:

Participant CM: *I think being academically probation is when you did not do well academically, you did not meet the… their faculty requirement on your academics.*

Participant LM below expands on this theme by discussing enrolment conditions, indicating that probation occurs when a student "does not meet the faculty requirement or you failed." This understanding is critical as it touches on the relationship between enrolment conditions and the formal academic standards students must meet upon entering and continuing in a programme. HEIs commonly establish enrolment conditions such as minimum credit completions, prerequisite course success, and Grade Point Average (GPA) benchmarks that students must maintain to continue their programmes (Tinto, 1993). LM's reference to "enrolment condition" implies that enrolment conditions are tied to both initial and ongoing eligibility to remain in a programme, emphasising that students are placed on enrolment conditions when they to sustain the required academic level.

This view is corroborated by research that enrolment conditions often act as an early intervention when students are at risk of not meeting graduation requirements or progressing in their academic programme (McGrath & Braunstein, 1997). Thus, LM's interpretation of enrolment conditions as a failure to meet academic standards fits within the broader institutional goal of ensuring students remain on track academically.

Notably, the excerpts from the below participants further outlined how they understand enrolment conditions.

Participant LM: *OK, to my understanding, academic enrolment condition is whereby*

*you…, do not meet the enrolment condition or you failed***.**

Participant OS: *My understanding is that, Like, when I got on probation because I wasn't doing well in, in my studies for, for quite a while, and that's why I got into probation cause I had to go out.*

Participant OS highlights a personal experience with enrolment conditions, explaining, "I got on probation because I was not doing well in my studies for quite a while." This statement reflects an understanding of probation as a consequence of consistent academic underperformance rather than a singular failure. Enrolment conditions policies often emphasise this cumulative aspect, where sustained poor performance over several semesters or academic years results in probationary/enrolment conditions' status (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). OS's experience illustrates how enrolment conditions can result from an ongoing inability to meet institutional standards rather than a one-time failure, aligning with research that frames enrolment conditions as a last-resort intervention before academic dismissal or exclusion (Martin & Marsh, 2006).

Furthermore, participant OS's mention of being placed on probation due to prolonged academic difficulties is consistent with findings from studies that show students are often placed on enrolment conditions after several warning signs of academic trouble have been identified, as the goal of enrolment conditions in such cases is to provide a structured opportunity for students to improve and regain good academic standing through advising, tutoring, and other institutional support services (Heisserer & Parette, 2002).

As previously mentioned by Gonzalez (2022:76), Wright (2020) in Chapter 2, and Fletcher (2017:2) in Chapter 2, the GPA is often used as a threshold for placement of participants on enrolment conditions. The grade point average (40%) represents the average of a student's grades during a study period and is weighted by the number of credits allocated to the modules the student was enrolled in (University of Pretoria). The excerpts below are a clear indication that participants understood enrolment conditions as a consequence of academic underperformance and low grade point average achievement:

Participant PM*: Uhm, yeah, the university has strict rules in terms of academic*

enrolment because some students do not qualify to be part of the university, and then they are being rejected.

It is evident that the above participant was in agreement with their understanding that their placement on enrolment conditions was a consequence of their limited grade point average performance; this correlates with the literature findings of Gisanabagabo and Mfizi (1984).

In addition to the GPA being utilised as a determining factor, it should be acknowledged that institutions have rules governing which students are to be placed on enrolment conditions (Hoover, 2014). Universities are tasked with producing a skilled labour force by bestowing qualifications upon deserving students. An accredited authority regulates the qualifications, and universities must align with the regulations that apply to them. In keeping with the quality standard of qualifications, one of the rules is that students need to achieve a certain module credit threshold in their studies in order to be allowed to progress further with their studies, and failure to progress results in either placement on enrolment conditions or academic exclusion. Accordingly, the matter of university rules leading to enrolment conditions was alluded to by participants below:

Participant TM: *You have to pass all your modules; they say you have to pass all your majors, and then we are in the higher certificate, so I think that's why we have to make and come, and we have to face the enrolment condition.*

Considering the excerpt above, the researcher noticed that the participant understood the role that university rules play in placing students on enrolment conditions.

What is of interest, however, is that participants mentioned they had been aware of the university rules only after their placement on enrolment conditions; they maintained that they were not aware of these before their placement on enrolment conditions, thus leading to the question of whether enough is being done to alert students to the existence of enrolment conditions.

In addition to violated institutional rules as a contributory factor to placement on enrolment conditions, it also came forth that study participants viewed enrolment conditions probation as coming with mandatory stipulations attached to it. The

introduction of enrolment conditions as a remedy to assist students not reaching their academic milestones has been observed in the literature (Somo, 2014). Institutions of higher education consider the reasons cited by students during the appeals process and use these to decide which stipulations students should be given upon their return to continue their studies. The knowledge of stipulations as inherent of enrolment conditions was captured in the sentiments of the participants below:

Participant LK: *Uh, as far as I understand, it means you didn't meet the requirements according to your degree. And… now…. You have to ask them if you can still continue studying, and this is when they say yes, but you have to follow certain rules and achieve certain goals to continue studying.*

In agreement with and in addition to this notion, participants LS and ML below had a shared understanding regarding the lingering and final nature of enrolment conditions should they not be able to exit their enrolment condition status. Gonzalez (2022) has also alluded to this finality of students being excluded again in the event of their failure to exit enrolment condition status. In this regard, the participants in question said the following:

Participant LS: *Yeah, they allowed me, but there since I was told when there's a group I was attending academic advice saying, I need to pass until I finish my degree because my probation is always there for me. So, if I failed again, I might be excluded*.

Participant ML: *The person is put there if she fails like more than 32 credits, and then she has to appeal, and they have a condition like you have to pass all your remaining modules, and there will be no appeal after that one, so you have to make sure that you pass.*

In agreement with participants LS and ML above, it is worth mentioning that, as contributors to this study, most key informants seemed to know slightly what enrolment conditions entail. In this regard, key informants KIB, KIE, and KID had a common understanding that placement on enrolment conditions is a consequence of student academic failure and includes extra rules or specific standards, or university regulations that the student has to abide by in order for them to continue with their studies. Their sentiments are captured below:

KIB: *It's you registering and participating, or you're a student here based on an ABCD, so now there are extra rules. You participate or enrol as a student here, and you must also do this*.

KID: *Students are expected to perform academically well, and if they are not, they will be affected by the university regulations.*

Key Informant E (KIE), in agreement with the previous key informants, added more depth and displayed an understanding of enrolment condition processes by maintaining the following:

KIE: *When students didn't make it due to, they failed maybe then they come back to appeal when they have been excluded from the faculty and then now, they, they will come and appeal stating reasons for their failure, which will be their mental health, which could be there any other social stresses*.

It is the researcher's opinion that this limited understanding of enrolment conditions by most of the key informants is a small victory, as the practitioners do not choose which students are allocated to them for service rendering; it would, therefore, be beneficial to the student community if all their psychosocial support services practitioners knew what enrolment conditions entail. To illustrate the key informant's elementary knowledge, Key Informant A (KIA) said the following:

KIA*: I think. Yoh! I have not heard the word probation; I have primarily heard exclusions and terms of enrolment. I think that will go with if you achieve or fail a certain number of modules, then you get excluded. Uhm, yeah, that's more of what I have worked with.*

The researcher's concern is that during the period of enrolment conditions, participants would need to attend to their stipulations, particularly the stipulation to seek psychosocial support, as those were the participants targeted for this study, and knowledge of their enrolment condition status would allow the practitioner to know from where to support the student, mainly if the student is not forthcoming in the initial stages of the helping process. In this regard, knowledge of a student's enrolment condition status was deemed important, as indicated by Key Informant B (KIB) below:

KIB: *Uhm, of course, until I learn what's happening to the student. However, as we know, sometimes students withhold information, so helping them becomes much slower than it would have been. If the students would come in and say, hey, this is the issue; this is what I'm dealing with, they will be open and honest. I think a big challenge I face is that it does become quite a slow process, and you know, with the number of students we see, we don't have the time for it to be slow. There are too many students, right?*

Similarly, all key informants reported not doing anything different when rendering psychosocial support services to students on enrolment conditions, as this information (the student's probationary status) is generally unknown to them. Instead, they mentioned that they punctuated their service rendering from the point of assisting ordinary students, as they are often not aware or alerted to the student's enrolment condition status when rendering psychosocial support services; the excerpt below, as said by Key Informant B (KIB), captures these views:

KIB*: When we see students who are already excluded, these are students who, in one way or another, were struggling anyway. So now we have included other uh… needs and tasks on top of what they already have. It almost seems we're unaware of the student's condition. Uhm, it's almost like we're trying to look busy, you know when someone's trying to look busy, but they're not. So, we don't; we come into a picture where we don't necessarily know the background of, let's say, a particular student. We don't know the student's story, but we see many students may be excluded and want to return, right? Moreover, as part of a bigger system that wants to help the country's financial situation, we must have a working class, right?*

Having said this, however, it is worth mentioning that key informants agreed that students on enrolment conditions are likely to be in more psychosocial distress than students not on enrolment conditions. This is in line with literature findings by Tovar and Simon (2006) in maintaining that professional counsellors and advisors need to be available when assessing and supporting students on enrolment conditions, as these cohorts of students may have "inner work" to do in order to work through and overcome their probation. The "inner work" refers to the resilience and psychosocial hard work students need to be assisted with, owing to the increased psychosocial distress their enrolment conditions status brings. The thoughts of the key informants are expressed

below:

KIE: *I think you cannot compare a student who's on probation and a student who is not because already they have this, at the back of their mind to say mina (me), I'm walking on eggshells, that's my view.*

KIF: *Yeah, of course, they are at risk. They are so vulnerable because it is done, if anything goes wrong, she will; the student will no longer be able to pursue that particular career. So yeah, they are at so much risk.*

Taking the responses of the key informants above and in agreement with Tovar and Simon (2006), it is the researcher's viewpoint that knowledge of a student's placement on enrolment conditions would allow the practitioner to be intentional in their efforts to assist students in processing and working out their enrolment conditions from the onset.

Across all the participants and key informants, there is a clear understanding that enrolment conditions indicate a failure to meet the university's standard requirements. Whether the issue is failure to accumulate enough credits, failure to meet faculty-specific academic benchmarks, or sustained poor academic performance, the participants perceive enrolment conditions as a formal acknowledgment by the institution that they are not on track academically. This perception aligns with academic definitions of enrolment conditions/academic probation, often framing it as an intermediate stage between warning and dismissal. According to Tinto (1993), enrolment conditions serve as a necessary mechanism to alert students to their academic shortcomings while providing a pathway toward improvement. In this way, enrolment conditions do not only reflect a student's failure to meet academic standards but also an opportunity for corrective action (Kuh et al., 2006). What is of interest to the researcher as a psychosocial support practitioner is that many participants reported not seeking psychosocial support during their placement on enrolment conditions and stated various reasons, which will be discussed in later sections of this chapter. This was regardless of them being given a stipulation to seek psychosocial support by the University as a support and corrective measure.

4.4.1.2 Subtheme 1.2: Given a second chance

This sub-theme was deduced from the information provided by the participants in response to the researcher's question: "Please share with me your understanding of enrolment conditions/academic probation." Research has suggested that enrolment conditions have been adopted as a policy by institutions of higher education aimed at providing students with a second chance at pursuing the completion of their studies. By offering appropriate services through policies, institutions believe they offer students the opportunity to persist toward graduation, and enrolment conditions are seen as an opportunity by the institutions to assist students at risk of underachieving (Kelly, 1996).

Enrolment conditions are often viewed within the framework of punitive measures in higher education. However, many students interpret enrolment conditions not merely as a consequence of academic underperformance but as an opportunity to correct a course. The participants in this study repeatedly referred to enrolment conditions as a "second chance," emphasising this practice's potential to offer students the opportunity to recover from academic difficulties. This analysis explores this interpretation in the context of academic literature, focusing on how enrolment conditions function as a support mechanism rather than merely a sanction. The following participants shared the perception of enrolment conditions as a second chance for students:

Participant KK: *So they are giving you a second chance.*

Participant LM: *You can apply for a second chance again.*

Participant MN: *My understanding of academic probation is that you are provided a second chance to redeem yourself*.

Enrolment conditions, as defined in various educational policies, serve the purpose of alerting students to their unsatisfactory performance while providing them with a framework for improvement (Hoover, 2014). Far from being purely punitive, enrolment conditions often come with academic counselling, access to support services, and tailored plans to help students return to good academic standing (Lindo et al., 2010). This dual nature of enrolment conditions is consistent with Participant MN's statement that placement on enrolment conditions offers students an opportunity to "redeem themselves." MN's perception aligns with the understanding of enrolment conditions as a mechanism designed to address underlying personal, academic, or social issues

that may have contributed to a student's underperformance (Keller et al., 2016).

Participants KK, MN, and LM agree that enrolment conditions serve is a "second chance." This recurring reference suggests a general consensus among students that placement on enrolment conditions is not simply a final warning but an opportunity for improvement. Research supports this view. For instance, Yorke (2004) posits that the periods and stipulations inherent with enrolment conditions often aim to support students rather than expel them, emphasising personal growth and resilience. A "second chance" reflects a rehabilitative philosophy, where students are not permanently penalised for their shortcomings but are instead offered structured opportunities to improve their academic performance (Murtaugh et al., 1999).

Moreover, Participant LM's observation that students "can apply for a second chance again" reflects higher education's cyclical nature of learning and recovery. Probation is often not a singular event but a process in which students may require multiple interventions before fully overcoming academic difficulties. This aligns with findings by Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), who note that institutional support must be consistent and persistent to aid students in academic recovery. The notion of enrolment conditions as a second chance also resonates with "academic resilience," which refers to a student's ability to recover from academic failure or adversity (Martin & Marsh, 2006). By giving students a formal opportunity to recover, institutions reinforce that setbacks are temporary and can be overcome through effort, discipline, and the appropriate use of institutional resources. Moreover, the excerpt below shows that participants view their placement on enrolment conditions as an opportunity and way for them to redeem themselves.

Participant AM: *A second chance whereby students are given to regain or redeem themselves through whatever they have been through*.

Participant AM's mention of "regaining" and "redeeming" oneself points to the personal dimension of enrolment conditions. Placement on enrolment conditions is about improving grades and a period of self-reflection and personal growth. In line with this, Heisserer and Parette (2002) argue that enrolment conditions can catalyse personal development by forcing students to confront their underperformance, whether related to time management, personal issues, or lack of engagement with their studies. This

developmental aspect of enrolment conditions suggests that institutions of higher education view them as a constructive intervention, where the primary goal is to encourage students to develop the skills necessary for long-term academic success (Tinto, 1993).

On the other hand, another dynamic related to enrolment conditions as a second chance, their accompanying comorbidity in a deemed finality. As indicated in the literature, placement on enrolment conditions has been said to serve as a wake-up call to let students know that they need to get back on track, as failure to do so will lead to academic dismissal (Bowman & Young, 2022:1286). Accordingly, the participants below, in agreement with this notion, stated the following:

Participant LS: *I had to ensure that I pass 100% of everything; whatever I do, I will not have a second chance. That's what the phone told me. I do not have a second chance after this.*

Participant TS: *There are rules that if they fail again, the school will not accept them back.*

Considering the perceived finality of enrolment conditions, the reality of the possible finality they brought was the message that participants understood and focused on. Moreover, the researcher thinks this perceived finality could aggravate the emotional distress of some students. Key informants agreed with the participants that although placement on enrolment conditions can be viewed as a second chance , it can negatively affect the student's well-being. These sentiments have also been captured by literature (Barouch-Gilbert, 2016; Bowman & Jang, 2022) and key informants in stating the following*:*

KIE: *They are affected mentally, like when you have this constant worry every day, you are, of whether am I going to make it through or not you, are not at rest, and when you are not at rest, definitely it can end up affecting your study skills, how you perform.*

KIC: *There is a lot at stake because they are thinking about their future. It is on the line, and that could be stress-inducing in that sense.*

It should be stated that the intention and perception of enrolment conditions as a second

chance do not take away the applicable time frames attached. As Jony (2022) put it, placement on enrolment conditions is a status awarded to those students who do not meet the minimum academic requirements of a university in a specific academic term. In agreement with this, the Tshwane University of Technology Prospectus (TUT, 2018) narrated that enrolment conditions encompass a conditional grace period in the exclusion process, providing the student with the opportunity, through specific stipulations and interventions, to comply with their academic performance requirements, in order to avoid final exclusion. This realisation was shared by participants, as captured in their responses below:

Participant RD: *Um, My understanding would be that I get a specific limited, a certain time period where I would need to prove to the university that the decision that they made after excluding me and then putting me back into, I'll call it the system (short sharp laugh). So, I need to prove that I'm worthy of returning and finishing in the time period under the conditions they have given me.*

Participant OK: *Academic, err, a time whereby a student is given to finish his or her courses.*

In agreement with the time frames applicable to enrolment conditions, key informants KIC and KIF shared the following sentiments:

KIF: *The student repeated a module more than twice, and they are requesting to be admitted to continue with that module for the third time and are placed in conditions that they can only continue if they achieve this percentage. These mental health-related issues have put them in that situation. So, she will be given conditions to prove that she is indeed attending tutorial classes. That will be the last chance opportunity that she is given.*

KIC*: OK, so I understand that academic probation is when students have to, let's say they were excluded, and then they must meet specific standards to stay in a particular academic programme. They will be excluded if they fail to meet those standards in those times.*

While students interpret enrolment conditions as a second chance, institutions often walk a fine line between sanction and support. Research shows that enrolment condition policies are designed to motivate students through the threat of dismissal

and provide resources for improvement (Lindo et al., 2010). This balancing act is critical; too much emphasis on punishment can demoralise students, while an overly lenient approach may undermine academic standards. The participants' views suggest that institutions might be more successful if they frame enrolment conditions more explicitly as an opportunity for growth rather than a mere consequence of failure. The research participants' data strongly indicate that placement on enrolment conditions is perceived as a second chance by students, allowing them to recover from academic setbacks and redeem themselves. This interpretation aligns with academic literature that views enrolment conditions not only as a sanction but also as an opportunity for personal and academic development. Placement on enrolment conditions offers structured support that can foster resilience, encourage self-reflection, and provide students with the tools they need to succeed in the future. Ultimately, the subtheme of enrolment conditions as a second chance underscores their potential as a rehabilitative process that aims to help students succeed rather than punish them for their failures.

4.4.2 Theme 2: Communication strategies for informing students about placement on enrolment conditions

This theme stemmed from the participants' responses to the research question, **"**How did you experience how you got to know about your academic probation?" As placement on enrolment conditions is a formal practice implemented by institutions of higher education, students are notified of their placement on formally (Waltenbury, Brady, Gallo, Redmond, Draper & Fricker, 2018:10). According to Wright (2020:1), enrolment conditions serve as the administrative feedback from a student's institution that they are performing below the acceptable academic standard expected and that failure to meet this standard in subsequent assessments will result in some action being taken against them. Furthermore, Wright and Yeaton (2020) maintain that students are informed of their placement on enrolment conditions through a letter that explains that they have failed to meet the academic standard expected by the institution of higher education. This letter also informs the student that if this poor performance is repeated in the following semester, they will be asked to withdraw from their studies. Other authors who allude to students being notified of their enrolment condition status through letters are Ahmed et al. (2014), who explain that letters are sent to students to explain

their academic status to their guardians. Students are accordingly informed through letters sent to their email addresses. Having said this, however, not all participants in this study were informed in this manner; this has implications on whether their negative feelings were heightened compared to those of others who had received letters through emails. Participants who were not informed of their exclusions, subsequent appeals, and enrolment condition processes only found out when they presented themselves to the university under study for registration. In this regard, this theme is divided into 2 subthemes: informed via email and informed otherwise.

4.4.2.1 Subtheme 2.1: Informed by e-mail

As stated previously, the responses of participants to the question "How did you experience the way you got to know about your academic probation? (procedure and process, manner, decency)" inform this theme. Moss and Kelcey (2022:257) highlighted that it is common practice for higher education institutions to notify students of their placement on enrolment conditions by sending letters/notifications to their student email addresses. It should be noted that some participants were pleased with the notification being sent via email, as this ensured they were the only people who had access to it; other participants were not and thought that it had contributed to a delayed response on their part. This common practice of email notifications was found to prevail as per the responses of the participants below:

Participant CM: *I was sent an e-mail and. I was very, very, very, very, very… nervous about my future. I thought it was the end of my career. It was pretty good being on an email because I'm the only one who opened my emails. Maybe if it was a message, someone could see if the school academically excluded me.*

Participant MN: *Um, they sent me an email to appeal; yeah, for me, it is bad if coming through emails, but I would prefer SMS because some of us struggle financially, don't get access to emails full time, you get to view your emails sometime, not like usually.*

Considering the response of Participant CM, it can be deduced that finding out about one's placement on enrolment conditions can evoke negative feelings, as participants did not want others to know about their enrolment condition status. This finding aligns with what the literature has alluded to regarding students being ashamed of being placed on enrolment conditions (Arcand & LeBlanc, 2012; Houle, 2013).

Participants further alluded to the importance of the timing of the emails; according to them, the challenge is that such emails were sent after the exam season, after they had gone home for the end-of-the-year holidays; this is a time when they least expected to hear from the university; they, therefore, did not engage with their student emails during this time. Having said this, however, it can be argued that universities can only communicate such statuses to students after all the year's marks, including exam marks, have been tallied (University of Cape Town, Faculty of Humanities, Academic Exclusions, 2023); this is normally either at the end of an academic year or at the beginning of a new academic year. The following is an excerpt from a participant whose experience was that the academic exclusion, appeals, and probationary email notification should have been sent earlier.

Participant LK: *That was an issue because I was let, I was informed via my UFS e-mail, which makes sense…, but it was done after… the semesters ended, classes have ended, it's been a while, so you do not check your emails.*

Literature has suggested that, on average, students in higher education institutions do not read their student emails, therefore presenting to the higher education sector that which is known as the email paradox. (https://www.readyeducation.com/resources/webinars / effective-communication).

In fact, according to a recent study, less than 50% of students read emails from their institution, yet most universities almost exclusively rely on email to communicate with students. (https://www.readyeducation.com/resources/webinars/effective-communication).. This suggests that universities may need to find alternative ways of communicating with their students to communicate with them and, among others, effectively communicate profound messages such as those of their placement on enrolment conditions. Institutions of higher learning will not be able to contribute to student success and retention if they cannot reliably communicate with the students on their campuses.

An alternative dynamic to the academic exclusion and subsequent enrolment conditions' notification letters that has been alluded to in literature is their nature. In a study on enrolment conditions notification letters conducted by Waltenbury, Brady, Gallo, Redmond, Draper, and Fricker (2017) with students at Mohawk College, it was recommended that Institutions of Higher Education remain mindful of negative feelings such letters can evoke when sent to students. It was recommended that the letters be

psychologically attuned and designed to communicate information about relevant policies and procedures clearly, but also clearly address students' likely psychological concerns about their academic status. This is because communication developed in a way that does not consider the psychological impacts of these notification letters, which can negatively affect the student experience and how they feel toward the person and institution sending them. The experience of receiving the enrolment conditions' notification letters was highlighted by the participants below:

Participant RD: *Um, when you receive that letter, I, I, think even when I received my letter like there were times was, like, let me drop out, you know, it is not worth it, also so I think. Yeah, that's the most important thing. And then another support or need, I would say is, I think it should not just stop like after you receive your letter, but also be a continuous thing throughout the year because… uhm because of those conditions that you receive like you are automatically under pressure that no one else is under like within your class.*

Participant ST: *When I got an e-mail saying that academic excluded, so I asked around So what this means, they said I should do an appeal. Yeah*

Participant PM: *The letter that I got like, yoh! know that e-mail like!*

It is the investigator's viewpoint that the university under study should examine how its enrolment conditions' notification letters are crafted to establish whether they are psychologically attuned to communicate support to students.

4.4.2.2 Subtheme 2.2: Informed via other ways

It has already been indicated that institutions send letters to students to inform them of their exclusion, the need to appeal, and the subsequent enrolment conditions' status. Literature has also alluded to the psychological and social harmful effects of students being aware of their placement on enrolment conditions (Waltebury et al., 2018). In fact, in a study by Hidalgo Bellows (2024) at the University of California, it was recommended for institutions of higher education to replace the term "academic probation" with academic notice" as the term "probation" was deemed to have negative criminal connotations attached to it. Furthermore, students as the targeted recipients of academic probation have indicated that they found it to evoke negative feelings as

it contributed to their self-doubt, lowered self-esteem, feelings of not belonging, feelings of inadequacy, and stigma (Bowman & Jang, 2020: 1280; Bellows, 2023). Moreover, scholars have advocated for the enrolment conditions letters/notifications to be psychologically attuned; this means they should communicate the university's support to the students, alerting them to the need for them to improve their academic performance (Walternbury et al., 2018). As emails are sent to students at their student address, it can be argued that this allows the student to be aware of and decide on how to deal with their negative feelings associated with this awareness. Either way, the awareness can be a lonely experience for the student.

It should be mentioned that although the standard procedure across institutions of higher education locally and globally is to send emails to students, this was not the case for some participants in this study. Instead, they found out about their exclusion when they came to the institution to register for the academic year. For these participants, finding out about their exclusion when they expected to register exacerbated their shock, negative feelings, and experiences. Furthermore, it was only then that they were made aware that the only way to continue with their studies was by following the appeals process, and for some of them, the deadline for submission had passed, although they were allowed to submit. Below are the narratives of the participants in question:

Participant RD*: Yoh, For me, I think because of the experiences that led to the exclusion, I think the exclusion was quite that cherry on top in terms of trauma itself, so it was very traumatic. And what's worse with mine is that I didn't get like an e-mail directly from, like, the university. I had to basically go look for my exclusion. I do not know if that makes sense, so they did not like e-mail me from the get-go and say listen, you excluded. And this is what you need to do. I had to be the one to stand up and say OK, I can't register like what's happening. It's January. It's hectic. I don't have funding. Already… So, all of that I think and also just helped me being me having to go like after them to actually give me my exclusion letter that was… Yeah. Um, like I mentioned, I had to send an e-mail to the faculty myself before they could let me know that listen, you're, you are excluded because I didn't understand some of the blocks that were appearing on my Academic Data Summary (ADS).*

Participant AM*: Um, I actually came here to the registration lines to actually find out what was happening about my student profile. Yeah. Yeah. So the lady told me no you*

can't, um register and all that, you were excluded. So, like, you have to appeal and all that. So I did that, um, actually and… they told me that I should pass my modules 100% and the academic advisor or maybe not academic, Yeah, if , someone, something advisor would be monitoring my like, my progress study progress for the, for the, throughout the year and I actually found out on campus.

Participant LK: *So I only found out when I came back and I tried to register and my department told me, oh!.. You can't register, so I found out in February which the deadline for appealing was over because I think I might have gotten it in December. That e-mail when I'm home… you don't check your student, OK, might be my own fault, but normally there's no emails. So I feel like that could have happened a little bit earlier (short sharp laugh), but I understand the marks have to be finalized and stuff, by the time like you have less than a month to appeal it and that if you don't know that academic probation is a thing because that's never been a threat… to then find out, oh, this is a thing. No… this doesn't work.*

Participant NM: *Huh…! The system is, i just logged into my student portal, Uhh… (signs). I wanted to do register again and then I saw like there is red on my ADS, And I googled what does the red mean and it said academically excluded.*

The above-mentioned participants commonly only found out about their exclusion and later placement on enrolment conditions when they presented themselves for registration. They were unaware that placement on enrolment conditions was a possibility for them and expected to register and continue with their registration and studies. This may suggest that participants were not cognisant of how their academic progression, as per their academic programmes, works. It supports the researcher's opinion that students in higher learning barely understand their qualification progression and accompanying processes. In support of this notion, Jama, Mapesela, and Beylefeld (2008:1001) argue that students do not graduate from universities because they struggle to understand and integrate into the academic language, rules, processes, and academic environment governing their qualifications. Also, this talks about the poor internal institutional mechanisms of passing sensitive, important information to the students.

Participant OS: *Because I went with my coach to, to, cause my grades were not good so me and my coach wanted to get advice, so we knew it through an advisor*

Participant TS: *That, that was when like my, my, my my brother saw my results ma'am*

ne (right)? He was like, eish, I see like you have not been working, so try to appeal at school and see if they will give you that chance . So that is also like what led to this, my brother was the one who said like you know what, try to find out about appealing and what not.

4.4.3 Theme 3: Reason participants were placed on enrolment conditions

The placement of students on enrolment conditions is a practice regulated by legislation as well as the rules of the institutions of higher education (Hoover, 2014). It is, however, important to note that various reasons led to students being placed on enrolment conditions; some are academic reasons, and others are not. Accordingly, certain indicators have been highlighted in the literature as factors that have been found to signal a higher likelihood that students can be placed on probation. These include a low GPA, ethnic minorities, low socio-economic status, low grades in high school, and low scores on college placement tests (Damashek, 2003; Johnson, Deming-Hodapp & Johnsen, 2005; Lee, 2008; Lotkowski, Robbins, & Noeth, 2004; Santa Rita & Scranton, 2001; Tovar & Simon, 2006; Sage 2010). This theme presents the reasons participants cited as culminating in their placement on enrolment conditions.

4.4.3.1 Sub-theme 3.1: Academic and non-academic-related matters

Participants alluded to being placed on enrolment conditions for reasons related to their academic programme and module regulation processes. In agreement with this, literature has indicated that academic factors, including lack of awareness about academic programmes, purpose, and inadequacy to meet minimum requirements, are among the reasons for placement on enrolment conditions (Atay, Ruppert, Gulmez, Cirakoglu & Kilic, 2017: 1342-1354). In light of academic reasons, the following is what participants had to say:

Participant NM: *I had ehh, an altercation. with my vocal lecturer because we're not agreeing on some of the things and then because that's a core module and then I was like, I'm going to deregister this module not knowing for it's going to affect me and then the minute I deregistered the module I had to deregister the other ones that*

corresponds and then for one module I just lost interest of going to class, so I was like I'm no longer going to class because what's the use of going to class whereas I deregistered my core module.

Participant NM's frustration with a core module lecturer reflects a broader issue among students who may feel disconnected or conflicted with faculty members, impacting their motivation and coursework engagement. Participant NM's decision to deregister a core module and subsequently lose interest in attending classes mirrors findings in student engagement research, highlighting the student-instructor rapport in maintaining motivation (Silverman, 1989; Ahmed et al., 2014).

According to Chhetri & Baniya (2022), constructive faculty-student interactions are critical to academic motivation, perseverance and satisfaction with the education institution. When students perceive faculty as approachable and supportive, they are more likely to persist despite challenges. Conversely, unresolved conflicts with faculty can lead to disengagement; as Ozgan (2015) noted, students struggling with core requirements often experience academic setbacks due to their unwillingness or inability to reconcile with the instructor. Kovach (2018) discuss how students with an external locus of control might blame instructors or external situations for their struggles, which can prevent them from taking corrective action. This pattern aligns with Participant NM's inclination to avoid class rather than seek alternative solutions, highlighting the need for support programmes that promote self-efficacy and conflict resolution skills.

Participant RR: *For first semester, I, I think I've registered late. So, there were, I've never, I was never told ukuthi (that) I should, there was something called Blackboard, by that time I was, I was new so I never knew about Blackboard, never knew. And I was confused because it was all in online. But semester II, I managed to know how, how, how things are working. Yes, I never attended other classes*

Participant RR describes feeling lost during the initial semester due to a lack of orientation regarding online platforms like Blackboard. This is a common challenge, especially among first-year students who may struggle with technology or lack adequate guidance in digital learning environments (Johnson et al., 2020). Research indicates that the digital divide was significantly exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic, with students often underprepared for sudden shifts to online education

(Hussong et al., 2021). During the COVID-19 period, institutions overlooked the need for comprehensive onboarding for new students, contributing to widespread confusion and academic challenges (Hussong et al., 2021). Studies by Voigt and Hundrieser (2008) also suggest that early-semester orientation programmes are crucial for academic integration, particularly for students at high probation risk. In Participant RR's case, a lack of orientation led to a delayed understanding of key resources, ultimately impacting their academic engagement. Implementing thorough orientation sessions and continuous support throughout the semester can clarify university processes and enhance digital literacy, reducing confusion for students like Participant RR.

Another contribution of COVID-19 to the academic challenges of students and subsequent probation is that students struggled with the online teaching and learning environments, their mental health, financial difficulties, and access to technology. This pandemic further affected their health and social patterns (Johnson et al., 2020). This means that understanding this pandemic's impact is necessary for many coming years (Hussong et al., 2021). Correspondingly, Participant LK below referred to COVID-19 as a factor that contributed to his placement on enrolment conditions.

Participant LK: *So, it's a long one because in my first year it was when COVID happened. and I had for my, so fine arts, you have your full Fine Arts practical subjects, Art history, which is I think I know it's difficult modules cause our drop out number is more than 50% in some years and then I had to have an elective and my elective was sign language and then when COVID happened, we were no longer able to…. to see each other and learn sign language where I used to get 100% from my assignments like my group project, now all of a sudden and no one I could talk to.. and we had to learn from photos which led me to failing and then also I was never registered, why, I don't know if I was registered but a certain module never appeared on my blackboard. It was never communicated to me And then in my second year, I, um, switched from sign language because I didn't know how COVID was going to work to psychology and beginning of that year, the pressures of Fine Arts because it is a lot*…

Participant LK's experience demonstrates how the COVID-19 pandemic introduced unprecedented challenges, especially for hands-on courses such as Fine Arts and

language. Disruptions in practical learning, group work, and isolation from peers hindered Participant LK's ability to achieve in previously mastered courses, resulting in academic failure.

Numerous studies have documented the multifaceted impact of COVID-19 on student performance and mental health. For instance, Johnson et al. (2020) found that many students struggled with transitioning to online learning, which hindered practical and collaborative tasks. Hussong et al. (2021) further emphasise that prolonged isolation and virtual-only interactions disrupt normal social and academic development, particularly in courses that require hands-on or collaborative components. The pandemic highlighted the need for universities to incorporate mental health and adaptive learning resources into academic programmes, especially for disciplines heavily reliant on interaction. Participant LK's struggles underline the importance of having alternate learning strategies and mental health support to help students cope with isolation and frustration, which otherwise can lead to disengagement and probation.

Taking the responses of participants NM, RR and LK into consideration, it can be detected that their placements on enrolment conditions was owing to their limited understanding of the university processes and pressures accompanying their study programme/course. These challenges experienced aligned with those identified by Silverman (1989) and Ahmed et al. (2014:8). The aforementioned authors suggested factors that contribute to the placement of students on enrolment conditions; these included poor study habits, failure to keep up with coursework, lack of discipline or motivation, lacking interest in required courses, not scheduling time wisely, uncertainty over career goals and inability to concentrate.

Research has mentioned yet another factor deemed responsible for the placement of students on enrolment conditions, which is the locus of control. In a study conducted by Sage (2010), it was found that some students display an external locus of control, blaming external factors for their lack of success and failing to assume responsibility for their learning and thus end up being placed on enrolment conditions. In this regard, a person with an external locus of control believes that rewards or outcomes in life are determined by luck, chance, or powerful others (Mearns, 2008). If they fail at

something, they believe their lack of success is due to forces beyond their control. Placing this into the context of this study, it can be said that the contribution of locus of control was identifiable in participants' responses, which agreed with literature findings regarding the relationship between locus of control and student academic achievement (Yadav 2023: 2294). Furthermore, it is suggested that there is a significant association between an external locus of control and low academic performance (Choudhury, Borooah, 2017). The following excerpt in agreement with this notion is from a student who indicated that his placement on enrolment conditions was because other university officials made a mistake regarding his academics, a trait identified as characteristic of university students (Okeke & Uzochukwu, 2005).

Participant SM: *Yeah… to be honest, it's not my personal reasons... (it was a mistake of other people here at school) in what way, because now, for me to be where I am, I had told myself that I passed and am funded.*

Participant SM's belief that their probation status was due to administrative errors rather than personal factors reflects an external locus of control. This view aligns with research suggesting that students with an external locus of control are more likely to attribute academic difficulties to external causes rather than their actions (Mearns, 2008; Choudhury & Borooah, 2017). Studies indicate a strong correlation between an external locus of control and lower academic performance, often because these students do not take ownership of their learning challenges (Yadav, 2023). This is supported by Okeke & Uzochukwu (2005), who found that students with an external locus of control are more likely to attribute their failures to external entities, such as administrative errors or faculty biases, which can impair academic resilience. Having said this, however, it should be mentioned that students with an external locus of control can be assisted and provided with psychosocial support services by practitioners, including those on their respective university campuses (Da Costa, Zelkowitz, Letourneau, Howlett, Dennis, Russel, Grover, Lowensteyn, Chan & Khalifé, 2017).

University students sometimes struggle to balance their academics with other responsibilities they have undertaken. For example, they may fail to set short-term

goals to complete assignments or readings, lack time management skills, have poor study skills, and prioritise other activities over coursework (Sage, 2010). In addition to this, over-involvement with other non-academic activities and lack of seriousness in studies have been cited as contributory causes to the placement of students on enrolment conditions (Ahmed et al., 2014:6). The following extract captures the experiences of an over-involved university student whose over-involvement may have contributed to placement on enrolment conditions:

Participant LQ: *I was the prime there so therefore like I put all the responsibility of the House on myself, took a major knock on my mental and emotional well-being, even though I ,I, I ,I denied it… Because you tell yourself that you're strong and you can't do everything, and then midway through the year my grandfather passed away, I couldn't even go to the funeral unfortunately, because I had to write here. And then overall, the year just took a turn for the left from there on, I couldn't cope, I couldn't deal, I, second semester, I basically gave up. I stopped! I just blacked out. I was like, no, I don't care. I and I regret that decision today because I'd still have funding cause I don't have funding now and a lot of things are the consequence of that decision of just giving up. I just gave up completely, and I was like a (no), I will see it next year again. So that is basically what happened and that's how I got to be on academic probation*.

Looking at the above excerpt, it can be deduced that the student prioritised his duties as a student leader in his residence (hostel) and realised later in his academic journey that he could not balance his residence duties and academic work. In addition to this, grieving for his grandfather played a role in his diminished motivation to study, and with decreased motivation came his placement on enrolment conditions. The role of grief in students' academic performance will be mentioned in the next session, focusing on the non-academic reasons. The contribution of lack of motivation to placement on enrolment conditions was recognised by Tifft (2014) in maintaining that diminished motivation leads to placement on enrolment conditions, which further diminishes motivation; this was referred to as the negative reinforcing cycle of academic probation due to motivation.

4.4.3.2 Subtheme 3.2: Non-academic matters

This sub-theme is divided into 2 categories, namely, home circumstances and personal circumstances.

4.4.3.2.1 Home circumstances

Literature has alluded to students still having to deal with challenges from their home whilst studying; in particular, Sony (2022: 263) cited family problems such as the death of a family member or parent separation as contributing to poor academic performance. This is because the previously mentioned family problems are a constraint on a student's ability to concentrate and stay motivated in their studies and may, eventually, lead to placement on enrolment conditions. Although loss and grieving for a loved one can affect all individuals, it is especially detrimental to students as it coexists with their rigorous academic plans/programmes and the overall stress they face (Vasilko 2021). The viewpoint of grieving for a family member as a contributing factor to poor academic performance was shared by Participant MN below:

Participant MN*: So…and then some things came up, my father passed away last week while I was studying so that took my mind a bit off academics.*

Participant MN's experience of losing a family member during their studies illustrates how significant life events like bereavement disrupt academic performance. This is a widespread challenge among students, who often lack the necessary support to cope with such losses. Literature confirms that bereavement can lead to severe disruptions in students' mental health and academic performance. For instance, Sony (2022) and Vasilko (2021) discuss how family issues, such as losing a loved one, can decrease a student's concentration and motivation, leading to placement on enrolment conditions or even dropout. The negative impact on educational performance is significant, especially when institutions lack adequate bereavement support services (Lake, Luke & Boyd, 2020; Servaty-Seib, 2006). Thus, enhancing institutional awareness and outreach for bereavement support is crucial to help students manage such trauma in healthier ways.

Research findings have indicated that 30% of students deal with the loss of a family member or friend in the first 12 months of their study period and that the bereavements have ended up in damaged mental health, failing grades, study dropout, and even death for students who have not received assistance (Vasilko, 2021). It remains the responsibility of psychosocial support practitioners to support students when they suffer the loss of a loved one. Although attempts are made to support students in their bereavement at the institution under study, these efforts can be strengthened, and information about such support services should be made public to the student community. Psychosocial support practitioners need to strengthen their support efforts towards bereaved students because loss, specifically, can lead to a decrease in "educational performance, placement on enrolment conditions, academic dismissal, or voluntary withdrawal" (Lake et al., 2020; Servaty-Seib, 2006). In agreement with this notion, Mitchell, Morris, Bennett, Sajid and Dale (2017) alluded to the danger of students not acknowledging the impact of their loss/bereavement. He suggested that universities must provide support groups, counselling, and remembrance activities to students because the mere knowledge that such services exist greatly assists students with coping.

4.4.3.2.2 Personal circumstances

i. Caregiving responsibilities and academic balance

Other circumstances and responsibilities contributing to student placement on enrolment conditions include caregiving responsibilities and household chores. In their study, Tucker, Bradley, Millar, Thorne and Diehl (2022:34) maintained that student caregivers often struggle to balance their caregiving responsibilities while trying to succeed academically. This is because such responsibilities and activities limit the time a student has available to focus on their studies. Having said this, however, the academic demands and pressure from the academic load characteristic of higher education do not decrease in intensity as the academic programme is highly intensive and time-bound. If a student cannot keep pace with the workload owing to too many social commitments and distractions, they will likely fall into enrolment conditions. This study's findings confirmed the negative contribution of demanding home circumstances as captured in the utterances of the following participant:

Participant TS*: Uhm, first of all, I'd say it's like my personal things, the reason why I say this is because I live with my grandmother, ne (right) ma'am? And I have a 5-year-old son, a 5-year-old son; there are also my cousins here at home. There is like 5 of them. I do most of the things here at home, I do chores, I buy groceries, when everything is needed, I need to go there, like ma'am, let's us , let us say if my grandmother needed something, I need to attend to that you know ma'am Everything like involves me here, like I need to try at least to combine that with my studies.*

In the excerpt above, Participant TS describes the overwhelming demands of managing household duties, caring for younger family members, and attempting to balance academic responsibilities. The extensive nature of these caregiving tasks often limits the time students can dedicate to studying, leading to poor academic performance. Research shows that students with caregiving responsibilities face unique challenges that require more support from educational institutions. Tucker et al. (2022) found that students who must balance caregiving with their studies often struggle due to time constraints and energy depletion, contributing to their placement on enrolment conditions . Additionally, Ngaboyishema, Gisanabagabo and Kayonde (2022) emphasise that students' academic performance suffers when they lack sufficient time for studying and mental recovery due to social commitments and caregiving roles. This suggests that universities must recognise and accommodate the unique needs of students who balance academic demands with family responsibilities.

ii. Motivation, Social Adjustment, and Academic Integration

As previously mentioned, participants also attested to personal circumstances leading to their placement on enrolment conditions. These ranged from lack of motivation to study, struggles in romantic relationships, and difficulty adjusting to university life. In their study at Princeton University, authors established that a student's lack of motivation to study contributed to placement on enrolment conditions (Gisanabagabo, Mfizi & Kayonde, 1984). In addition, Ngaboyishema *et al*. (2022) alluded to students' perception of academic life as demanding owing to their inability to balance academic demands and social life requirements. In this regard, academic demands, amongst

others, include the selection of the university, assessments, and usage of library resources, while social life requirements point to a new social environment, religious activities, relationships, and extracurricular activities. Participants seemed to agree with this view by maintaining the following:

Participant AM*: But I feel like what I got here. ….When I touched the surface in my, like my mood just completely changed Like psychologically, mentally, you know emotionally because like now, the approach was no longer different because, like I came here, I wanted to make friends and all that you know, but like, I don't have friends. I'm always alone. I'm always doing my own things ,**u ya bona (you see),** and like um , I feel like last year….. I just cared less, I don't know what happened. Yeah, it could be, but like that has to be temporarily because like it cannot be having a hard time adjusting it to one thing, you have to have like a certain limit and then you fully, you have fully adapted. You just have to find a way to sustain it.*

Participant PM*: So, I was going through like my own like, like personal matters and everything like maybe like I don't know, like I wasn't prepared to be in this place then I came here to stay here at Res. I didn't have a roommate for like, 6 months. I was staying alone, which is me, like personally I was fine with it but mentally I don't know what was happening because I would, I would skip classes, I would skip the whole day even one of my lectures would be aware ukuthi (that) something wrong with this kid. So, our, I was not like in a in a right space but that time.*

Participant LS*: (Sighs) ok, last June 4. 20...2022, yes. I was dating a girl called (mentions name of person he was dating) and we were doing the same for faculty, the same modules. Err, I was the type of boyfriend would like to spend time in studying… let's do studies so that we can be together, and she was a kind of a girl who, like, private time all the time. Because I was being told if you fail in this, in this faculty, you get excluded so I decided not to pay, paying attention to him, to her, so she decided to go! (raises his volume) with another boyfriend to Thembisa and then she was reported as a missing person, as I was the known boyfriend in the school, they called me the first suspect they said I killed her and the students (sighs), they harassed me. Some of these students, they wanted to even to kill me, the security at the protection*

services, they had to protect me each and every day. at home things were not going well for me. Like everything was escalating, health wise I was always sick.

Participant AM reported a significant drop in motivation and found it hard to adapt to the social and academic environment. Similarly, Participant PM struggled with isolation in the university residence, leading to disengagement from studies, while Participant LS experienced turmoil due to a challenging romantic relationship and its impact on his social reputation. Motivation and social adjustment are critical factors in students' academic success. Research by Ngaboyishema et al. (2022) suggests that students who struggle to balance social life with academic requirements often experience demotivation, which can result in probationary status. Social integration challenges are further linked to increased feelings of loneliness and academic disengagement (Garett et al., 2017). Universities can assist by providing structured social and emotional support systems, like peer mentoring programmes and counselling services, to foster a more supportive environment for these students.

iii. Trauma and Mental Health Impact on Academic Performance

Trauma, particularly incidents involving abuse or assault, can cause long-term psychological effects that impair academic functioning. Johnson (2018) and Stone and Zibulsky (2015) highlight that cumulative trauma increases stress hormones, impacting brain function and contributing to decreased academic achievement. Institutions should be proactive in advertising trauma support services, as well as ensuring that students are aware of and have access to mental health resources. Accordingly, the contribution of trauma to placement on enrolment conditions was also highlighted by Key Informant E (KIE):

Key Informant KIE: *The only challenge that I've experienced over the years is students who've buried things for many, many years. There are students who've buried things, it's maybe childhood trauma. It may be things that happened a few years ago, but there are a lot of things, emotions that are buried, and when you speak to them, they will tell you that I've been to counselling before…"*

The key informant mentioned above (Key Informant KIE), emphasises the importance

of assisting students who seek counselling. In this regard, the notion that the student whom Key Informant KIE was assisting revealed to have attended counselling interventions before may suggest that the student's trauma is still at play, hence their need to be assisted by Key Informant KIE. In addition to Participant PM citing mental health struggles stemming from adjustment challenges as contributory factors to placement on probation (in the previous section), another participant below (Participant RD) alluded to mental health struggles stemming from a traumatic incident as having led to their placement on enrolment conditions . As empirical studies have linked trauma to academic problems (Johnson, 2018, Stone & Zibulsky, 2015), the most prevalent forms of trauma include emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional neglect, physical neglect, parent separation, witnessing domestic violence, household substance abuse, household mental illness, and household member incarceration (Johnson, 2018). It is in this regard that institutions of higher education have to be equipped and readily available to assist students in dealing with traumatic experiences as such experiences destabilise students as captured by Participant RD below.

Participant RD*: Ok,uhm, so my… (short laugh), my exclusion in the, I experienced sexual assault both in my, in the first semester and in the second semester, so there's no way that I could manage. I tried coming back in the second semester and it happened again, also around October, just before exam season, so there was no way that I was going to say, ok, I'm going to focus on school, I had to just choose myself and make the conscious decision that whatever happens, it's fine.*

It can be argued that the above participant is self-aware as she was able to identify that her repeated traumatic experiences contributed to her placement on enrolment conditions. In this regard, it would have been ideal for the participant to reach out for psychosocial support in order to be in a different position to cope with her life and possibly her studies, particularly as her traumatic experiences were repeated. Nakazawa (2016) discusses the concept of toxic stress, which emphasizes that repeated traumatic experiences disrupt concentration, memory, and other cognitive functions critical to academic success. Johnson (2018) reported that people often experience multiple types of traumas (cumulative trauma), which is associated with

toxic stress in which the brain and body produce an overload of stress hormones, thereby harming the function and structure of the brain (Rosenbalm & Story; Nakazawa, 2016). It is, therefore, imperative for psychosocial support practitioners to be positioned and readily available to assist students after surviving a traumatic event. Placing the effect of trauma in the context of enrolment conditions, the researcher cannot over-emphasize the importance of the psychosocial support partitioner's knowledge of a student's enrolment conditions status (in the initial stages of the helping relationship) as this knowledge may aid the practitioner to be relevant (immediately) and agile in responding to the needs of students, this is because the contribution of trauma to academic failure has already been established in literature (Nakazawa et al., 2016).

iv. Parenting Responsibilities and Academic Challenges

The challenges faced by student-parents are well-documented. Williams and Conroy (2024) report that student-parents face unique pressures, often lacking the institutional support to balance their academic and caregiving roles. This lack of tailored resources can lead to lower retention rates and higher incidences of placement on enrolment conditions or parenting students. Institutions should consider adopting student-centred policies that include childcare services, flexible deadlines, and extended leave options to support student-parents in successfully managing their dual roles.

Parenting students are trying to succeed while receiving limited support from higher education and financial aid systems not designed with them in mind. Having said this, it is evident that higher education institutions may need to start considering the matter of parenting students and interventions to support them. The following participants indicated that they were on enrolment conditions owing to not being able to balance their studies, pregnancy, and raising their newborn children:

Participant CM*: No, it was my personal reasons that I stated when I wrote the appeal. I just gave birth to a premature baby so I had to stay (short laugh) in the hospital*, Yeah*, taking care of this premature baby. Yeah. So, it was very difficult for me balancing the, my personal life and the academic life.*

Participant ML*: It was personal ma'am cause I had to, I just had a baby and I had to*

look for work. It was schoolwork on the other side so I had to balance and didn't have much time for school work and the baby as well.

Participant LM: *I'd say both personal and academic reasons, I was pregnant, didn't attend classes, didn't write tests, so I failed, yes.*

It is palpable from the statements above that those participants felt overwhelmed by their caretaking responsibilities and studies. This suggests that institutions of higher education need to start considering and intentionally rendering support services to parenting students. Universities have various classifications for students, including commuter students, first-generation students, students with disabilities, and international students (Fűzi & Jármai, 2019). It is the researcher's judgment that parenting students need to be added as yet another category when categories of students are considered; in this way, when interventions are tailor-made to support the other student categories, they too can be considered. Decision-makers must pay more attention to parenting students with inclusive and specialized efforts. By supporting parenting students and adopting student-centred policies, colleges and universities can become environments where student parents feel welcomed and supported to succeed; this would benefit student parents and institutions of higher education that are trying to alleviate the enrolment crisis. Supporting parenting students is more than just a matter of impartiality. However, it is also an economic development and mobility issue, as when student parents succeed, the likelihood of their families succeeding is heightened.

4.4.4 Theme 4: Participants' experiences of being placed on enrolment conditions

This study focused on the psychosocial experiences of participants whilst on probation; accordingly, these were expected to be subjective as per the nature of a qualitative study (Pathak, Jena & Kalra, 2013). The themes in this section were derived from participants' responses to the question: "Kindly share with me your experiences of being placed under enrolment conditions (How did you experience being on academic probation, psychologically/emotionally and socially?) "The study yielded that

participants deemed their placement on probation to have affected them on a social, emotional, and physical level. As a result, the section below will focus on the social implications of enrolment conditions, as well as the emotional and physical implications. Literature has highlighted the role that social support also plays in predicting students' GPA and academic success. Accordingly, a strong sense of integration is deemed an important element for future academic success. Being well-integrated into social life at college, having a supportive network, and having good relationships with staff and significant others are important components of social adjustment (Gray, Vitak, Easton & Ellison, 2013). Having said this, however, it should be mentioned that for some, the experiences were positive, whilst for others, not.

4.4.4.1 Subtheme 4.1: Social implications

The social implications of enrolment conditions can be categorised as positive and negative.

(i) Positive experiences

As previously mentioned, placement on enrolment conditions has been perceived to be a “dangerous opportunity” in that it either leads to the student working harder to get out of it or feeling discouraged and succumbing to it (Tovar & Simon, 2006). On a social level, probation either pushes students to engage with their studies by aligning with supportive networks (lecturers, tutors, and study groups) or leads them into isolation in an attempt to use their social time to focus on their studies. The following are participant LQ and OS’s responses regarding how they experienced enrolment conditions in relation to their social activities.

Participant OS*: It was, not really. I didn't spend much time with my family and friends because most of the time I, I depended my ,I depended my time on studying because I ,I want to get ahead on of ,of my ,my ,my, my, studies , I always wanted to be like ahead and not behind I don't want to, like lose out on the time that I have for me to, to catch up on what I can.*

Participant LQ: *Socially, it sorts of, I had to prioritize my time like I've never done before here at school because previously, I was more into the experience of being a university student as opposed to actually being an academic student, so it just focused*

me, put me on another part. So, I had, I feel like it had a positive impact on my academics, yeah.

Taking the above comments into consideration, it can be deduced that the students used their enrolment conditions to pay closer attention to their studies; they decreased the time they had normally spent socialising with their family members and friends and used it to engage with their modules. In this regard, it would be logical to state that placement on enrolment conditions isolated the students, although for reasons that may be deemed to be beneficial to them. Having said this, however, the isolation resulting from placement on enrolment conditions has another side to it; the following section signifies the negative social experiences of participants as a result of their placement on enrolment conditions.

(ii) Negative experiences

Students on enrolment conditions tend to believe they don't share common values with their fellow students. In their study, Atay, Jacques Ruppert, Gülmez, Çırakoğlu, and Kılıç (2017) found that 42% of probation students saw themselves as being different from their fellow students, and 40% would, given the chance to do so, choose other fellow students. A contributory factor to this negative experience is that probationary students often do not feel a sense of belonging with their student counterparts; this includes students they may have been friends with.

Participant SM: *I would find myself sitting alone most of the time. I would sit by myself because I had told myself that I am not like the other students.*

Participant LS*: So even my friends right now, my friends, they feel like every time I'm with them, I feel like I don't belong to them because even when we chill, I will go and sit there alone.*

Participant LQ: *Significantly, significantly, to a point whereby I didn't go home during June Because I wanted to prepare for the second semester (short sharp laugh), Uhm my friends they don't know me, every time I see them they say that we don't know you anymore and I'm telling them "Bra, I don't want to leave I am trying to secure this degree, I don't have room to mess about, stay out and things like that.*

In addition to a lack of a sense of belonging with their counterparts (former and new), Participant NM below concurred with what the literature has to say about the diminished self-esteem that probationary students are said to experience. Cruise (2012) highlights that embarrassment, disappointment, and desolation can be felt by a student who has failed to meet the academic requirements of his or her institution. This, in turn, is likely to make the student discouraged in their studies. Similarly, McPherson and Marrero (2021) indicated that students on enrolment conditions reported experiencing shame, confusion, sadness, isolation, and humiliation.

Participant NM: *Mhhh (signs), my social life now, I can't be the person I was last year because like now I have to be focused on academics of which is something that I don't like*. And *As for my peers. Now it's hard for me to, you see, like when they are socializing about academics and something like that. For me, it's hard to say like, no last year I got a distinction for this thing and this thing because I don't know any of those things. So I kind of feel like,whenever they're having such conversations, I have to step back.. (lowers voice) So that they can have them then I only enter after the thing, after they're done with the conversations.*

Participant TS*: Like it affected a lot ne ma'am cuz like, like sometimes I can't even go out like, like have fun you know? I'm always ,like stuck ,like kamotlung (in the house) Yeah, you know that feeling like you want to do something like you want to go and then comes that idea that if I go out yet like, I'm not failing but ka mo dibukeng (when it comes to books) ke a bona hore I lack (I can see that I am lacking) Like it comes in my mind like Yoh I want to go out but my school work, what if, what will , you know ma'am people say and ntoni ntoni ntoni ntoni (what, what, what, what) so really it affects and I can't just like go out, socialize with people like I'm always like indoors, even now I'm like… yes ma'am.*

Participant TM*: Well, my friends were supportive… Yeah, not so often, we do talk, but not so often not like before.* Considering the above responses, it seems evident that higher education institutions need to rigorously consider how to support such students. Furthermore, it is the researcher's opinion that psychosocial support practitioners have to be cognisant of the type of student they are dealing with and not necessarily punctuate from the point of view of a student who is not in additional distress. This poses a challenge and contradicts what some of the key informants (psychosocial support practitioners) of this study maintained in stating that currently, they perceive all students (including students on enrolment

conditions) the same and not necessarily under additional psychological duress. To illustrate this point, Key Informant (KIC) maintained the following:

KIC: *There isn't a particular programme designed for them, but they can come for all the services that we provide as a, as a, as a unit, psychotherapy, individual psychotherapy group sessions, workshops and anything else that that they can benefit from.*

Having said this, however, it should be mentioned that there were key informants who perceived students on enrolment conditions as students in distress, although they did not offer pathways of how to support them more intensively. The differences in the opinions of key informants necessitate that discourse about psychosocial support service rendered to probationary students takes place so that the practitioners can have a common understanding of probation and establish a relevant, agile, and impactful intervention toward supporting students on enrolment conditions.

It has already been mentioned that placement on enrolment conditions contributed to student isolation in that some respondents reported no longer having friends from the previous year; Participant AM further captures this notion below:

Participant AM*: (Sighs), Socially, Um, it has been limiting because I don't have friends and all that and, um, emotionally, um…. emotionally..., sometimes like, I find I struggle to adapt.* For some participants, the urgency to pass let them to use any and whatever time at their disposal to engage with their academics. Participant LK was able to draw a picture of what this looked like for him:

Participant LK*: And it did take away the social aspect of my life because there was extra stress, so I had to put in… more work that sometimes felt unnecessary. Yeah. So, you do miss out, where I normally would do two hours in art history, I'd spend 4 hours and then normally working until 12 at night. There was no coming home, at 12 at night, there was no social interactions, but it's gotten better now.*

Moreover, other participants changed the activities in their friendship circles and instead of doing other things e.g., shopping, they encouraged their group to study.

Participant ST: *Ok, with my friends like now we are not spending like that quality time going out, doing shopping and stuff, we're always like it's either studying, like the time, is limited between, like you don't spend more time like before. I don't, like, I don't feel*

like I'm the same person, like I have changed a lot I'm not the same even though like during assessments like let's go and do this, like I'm going to say you have assignments and stuff, so I have to do the school like, before you do anything.

Participant OS*: Well, it, it, it, really impacted a lot cause I used to spend more time with my friends and my, my, family cause since I'm from here. But then after the probation I had to like, be on my own most of the time. Just go to sports, come back, get my work done, make sure that I, I work on my, on my school and my grades. So, it really impacted it a lot cause I had limited time to, to family and friends.*

Taking the sentiments of the above participants into consideration, it seems apparent that enrolment conditions left a lasting imprint on the lived experiences of probationary students; it therefore rests upon the shoulders of psychosocial support practitioners to play their supportive role to students. This role of psychosocial support practitioners has been skilfully captured by Key Informant C (KIC) below:

Key Informant *KIC: Our role is always helping them find that balance between, you know, managing that stress, but also seeing what it is that they can do for themselves out there to ensure that they meet those requirements of academic probation.*

4.4.4.2 Subtheme 4.2: Emotional implications

4.4.4.2.1 Positive experiences

Placement on enrolment conditions encouraged some participants to work harder as they could motivate themselves and possess self-efficacy. According to Bandura, "self-efficacy is concerned with judgments about how well one can organise and execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations containing many ambiguous, unpredictable, and often stressful elements" (Bandura & Schunk, 2000, p. 587). Mosier (2018) states that self-efficacy influences how students handle personal and academic challenges. It has been argued that students with higher self-efficacy are more resilient and deal with academic challenges better than students with low self-efficacy (Watson & Foxcroft, 2015). They are also more likely to turn failure into

opportunity and embrace the failure as a challenge (Farruggia & Moss, 2017; Komarraju & Nadler, 2013). This ideology was also demonstrated in the findings of this study, as characterised by the utterances of participants below:

Participant CM*: Like, you know, I was doing. I was doing 10 modules with last year so. I had to make sure that I study very hard, here. So that I meet…. The requirements of this time.*

Participant MN*: So, I was the only one left behind, so what I came to think of was I should just do like what I did last year, uhm, try to focus more.*

Both participants, CM and MN, seem to have directed the responsibility for working their way out of their probation towards themselves; this may have been beneficial for them as it strengthened their motivation to intensify their efforts to pass their modules, thus solidifying the argument that students who possess an internal locus of control tend to fare better in their studies (Kirkpatrick, 2008).

The participants below (participants LQ and CM) captured how one person can have mixed feelings about enrolment conditions; on the one hand, probation is not a positive standpoint to be in, but on the other hand, it serves as a necessary wake-up call and second chance. The mixed feelings brought about by enrolment conditions have been found in literature (Hoover, 2014).

Participant LQ*: Psychologically, it was good because I feel like if that wasn't in the form, I would have messed up again in my honest opinion, I feel like it helped me focus up. It gave me an excuse not to participate in many things, Yeah, stress, stress, No room for error (short sharp laugh) but fortunately I, I feel like, I do, I know it's a cliche, but I do perform well under pressure to a certain degree, but it did add a bit of stress... when you see the due date coming like ok, you want to take an extra nap, but you know, little boy, you're not allowed to fail. So, if this nap is going to negatively impact you or whatever, you need to submit or whatever test you need to write, then it's better not to take the nap. So, it did put a little bit more stress on myself. because firstly, if you are a student and you don't receive funding, it gets really heavy on you not having funding and the things you need like maybe if you don't have toiletries and food, and you have to think about that, it will disturb you, on the one hand you don't have funding and on the other you are under guard/spot light.*

Participant CM*: Um, I think was a bit challenging and pressurizing, but I think it gave me the strength to push hard. in order to not break the condition that I was given Umm,*

yeah, it made me work hard.

In this regard, Key Informant (KIC) had the following to say*:*

KIC: *The challenges would only really be them making sure that they do perform as per the requirements and manage, helping them manage that stress because for some students there are other factors that led to them not doing well, so this could be factors from home where they aren't any finances or there are a lot of limitations or even them just not really understanding the content of their courses or modules that they may have failed.*

Placement on enrolment conditions, often viewed as a "dangerous opportunity" (Tovar, 2006), compelled some students to prioritise academic success over social engagements, leading to increased focus on their studies through alignment with supportive academic networks, such as tutors and study groups, instead of other social non- academic groups. This aligns with research showing that structured, supportive peer networks can provide critical academic and emotional support (Gray et al., 2013). For example, Participant LQ noted a shift toward prioritising academics over socialising, which helped improve their academic focus. Similarly, Participant OS described how distancing from family and friends allowed them to dedicate more time to their studies, demonstrating a form of productive isolation. This notion of prioritising academics over social engagements can be linked to Tinto's Theory of Student Retention, which emphasises the importance of academic and social integration in college success (Tinto, 1993). For students on probation, increased academic focus, though isolating from non-academic social groups and intentional alignment and affiliation with study groups (academic groups), may provide a structured approach to overcoming academic challenges, ultimately aiding in academic performance improvement.

4.4.4.2.2 Negative experiences

i. Lack of sense of belonging

In contrast, other participants expressed feelings of social disconnection, alienation, and diminished self-worth, often leading to emotional withdrawal and isolation.

According to Atay et al. (2017), students on enrolment conditions commonly experience a lack of shared values with their peers, leading to a perceived lack of belonging. This aligns with responses from Participant SM and Participant LS in the previous section (4.7.1.2), who reported feeling different from their peers and often choosing to sit alone, signalling a loss of previous social connections. This experience is echoed in recent literature that highlights the psychological impact of enrolment conditions, where students experience a "compromised social self" (McPherson & Marrero, 2021). Reduced social interactions and feelings of inadequacy can have long-term psychological consequences, such as reduced self-esteem, as Cruise (2012) noted. For instance, Participant NM reported avoiding academic discussions with peers and feeling unqualified due to poor academic performance, which fostered further feelings of isolation and inferiority.

Participants indicated that probation worsened the notion and feeling that they were studying under a spotlight. This is not a position that they felt was helpful to them, as their knowledge of probation constantly made them feel pressured in their study journey. In support of this view, Wright (2020) maintained that the student's negative or positive academic performance information may change their confidence, motivation, and self-image; thus, pressure to rectify one's academic standing may contribute to the stress and anxiety of students on enrolment conditions.

Participant LS*: Aah (sighs)Emotionally, it's, it's damaging cause you feel like you're under pressure. You don't enjoy being in university, you feel like one mistake, one bullet. So, like you, you do things under pressure, so you, you, you don't get time to have a time management for your studies because you feel like, yoh! know, if I didn't start right now, if I take a break, I'm wasting time. It it's making it's; it's making you to be confused and feel like I don't belong here Like I feel like I don't belong here.*
Participant AM*: It's not easy. It's not easy and I can say um, it's difficult actually, it's difficult because like now you expected him, I feel like, you will, now you are expected to perform on a certain degree, yeah, not to the usual thingie you, you, you, you do for yourself, yeah. Yeah, it feels like more pressure, but like there should be pressure cause like you should redeem yourself.*

ii. Loss of funding

In addition to the psycho-social challenges, students on enrolment conditions may lose their funding for studies, which means that they will have to find funding elsewhere whilst on enrolment conditions (Cloete, 2024). For example, in South Africa, the NSFAS requirements to stay funded include that “continuing and first-time entering new university students must achieve a course credit pass rate of 50%; they must also achieve a course credit pass rate of 60% at the end of the year (Cloete, 2024). Furthermore, “Institutions will confirm with NSFAS at the start of the academic year that students have qualified for progression according to standard institutional policy and approved rules for progression for the specific programme they are studying” (Cloete, 2024). The impact of enrolment conditions on student funding was also a finding in this study. The excerpts below are a representation of participant responses in resonating with the reality that enrolment conditions led to a loss of their funding.

Participant SM: *Because firstly, if you are a student and you don’t receive funding, it gets really heavy on you not having funding and the things you need like maybe if you don’t have toiletries and food, and you have to think about that, it will disturb you, on the one hand you don’t have funding and on the other you are under guard/spot light that alone is enough to abuse you because in the first place you are supposed to participate in class.*

Participant LM: *Very stressful, Yes, very stressful, Ke hore (it is that), it’s the only thing you can think about, losing the funding and not being able to go to school again.*

Participant OS*: Studying under the conditions of probation was very difficult for, for me as student because I, I had sports on my other side that I was attending and I also had school that I had to focus on. And it's quite scary to be like placed on probation because you don't want to lose your academic scholarship being in school. You don't want to be out of school, so it was quite challenging. For me. Especially when it came to my studies because every time there's some studying and I don't understand something, I, I tend to stress out more than before because I don't want to lose what I have right now. So just very challenging and very difficult for me as a student.*

Participants above all expressed the additional psychological distress they had to deal with owing to losing their funding as a result of their placement on enrolment conditions. For most students in the institution under study and in the sector of higher education

in South Africa, funding comes from the NSFAS owing to the inability of their parents to afford university fees. Accordingly, Mngomezulu and Maposa (2017) stated that the NSFAS was an intervention by the South African government to increase access for economically and educationally disadvantaged students. In a similar vein, Wildschut, Mnwango, Rogan, Rust and Fongwa (2018) maintained that NSFAS was created to focus on redressing past discrimination, promoting equal access to higher education, and responding to the human resource development needs of South Africa. The loss of funding by probationary students presents a conundrum, as literature has suggested that poverty and lack of student funding are key reasons for academic failure and progression challenges; this suggests that when funding has ceased for probationary students, they struggle to survive financially and run the risk of then being academically excluded again, with final consequences this time.

iii. Embarrassment and Self-Esteem

Participants frequently cited feelings of embarrassment, shame, and diminished self-worth. Participant NM's statement about feeling disconnected from peers due to their lack of recent academic achievements reflects findings by Cruise (2012), who states that placement on enrolment conditions can result in negative emotions such as embarrassment and disappointment. These feelings are compounded by social isolation, as students often avoid socialising to prevent uncomfortable discussions about academic performance.

According to Castellon (2017), students who are placed on enrolment conditions are more likely to leave Institutions of Higher Education, therefore recognising and supporting these students early is most effective in students moving to good academic standing. In as much as legislation and policy have driven most of the initiatives implemented to support students on enrolment conditions, very little remains known about the impact and outcomes of these policies for students on enrolment conditions. The following responses indicate how participants experienced enrolment conditions, particularly in relation to their emotions.

Participant NM*: Is draining because now you have to make sure you attend classes 100 %. You have to make sure you pass all your modules even though sometimes you*

are sick, you can't even err, err, say like. I'm not going to class because now I am sick thinking of that thing It's like it's putting you under pressure. For you to study hard and then it also increases the, increases the stress level because every now and then if they think now. I have to work from this percentage to this percentage and now you have to balance all your work and at the same time it's not only academics, you also have social life, you have to. *Balance out those things. So its been physically, it's been emotionally draining. and psychologically draining very much.*

This emotional impact aligns with the concept of "academic self-efficacy" (Bandura, 1997), which asserts that self-belief in academic abilities plays a crucial role in student motivation and performance. When probation students feel academically inadequate, their self-efficacy declines, creating a self-perpetuating cycle of low confidence and reduced academic engagement (Komarraju & Nadler, 2013).

iv. Psychological Distress and Isolation

Participant RD*: Yoh, For me, I think because of the experiences that led to the exclusion, I think the exclusion was quite that cherry on top in terms of trauma itself so it was very traumatic. And what's worse with mine is that I didn't get like an e-mail directly from, like, the university. I had to basically go look for my exclusion. The cherry so psychologically, emotionally, like it was just a bump. So yeah, yeah*

Participant ML*: Yoh! Emotionally, yoh! it was draining*

Participants also alluded to the placement on enrolment conditions changing their daily routines in an effort to prioritise their studies. Literature has highlighted the importance of probationary students changing their daily routines to incorporate more hours of focusing on their studies as well as having a designated person who they need to frequently consult to guide and monitor them (Ryan & Mooney, 2024).

Participant ST*: It was hard, Yeah. I was hard like every time you like, I'm going to write a test, I have to make sure I pass a test, I have to study to make sure, I ,I'm not like academically excluded again student again. Ai no (sighs), now I want to spend a lot of time here at campus studying. Yeah, so I could pass, studying, maybe like I'm two hours with my friends eating, then go back to the schoolwork.*

Participants commonly reported experiencing heightened psychological distress due

to the rigorous demands of enrolment conditions. McPherson and Marrero (2021) found that probationary students commonly experience emotions such as sadness, isolation, and shame. Participant ST's reluctance to socialise due to constant academic worries illustrates this, as they reported staying indoors and avoiding typical social activities. This behavior aligns with findings by Tinto (1993), who noted that students who struggle academically often experience an increased sense of isolation and disengagement from campus life.

v. Institutional and Psychosocial Support Needs

Participants' experiences underscore the critical need for psychosocial support services that are sensitive to the unique challenges faced by students on probation. While some psychosocial support practitioners in this study acknowledged the additional distress experienced by these students, others did not perceive a significant difference in their needs, leading to inconsistent support approaches.

Literature highlights the necessity of tailored psychosocial support to address the distinct psychological needs of probationary students (Yazedjian, Toews, Sevi & Purswell, 2008). A holistic approach is crucial, as studies have shown that probationary students benefit greatly from programmes that offer academic counseling and peer support, fostering a sense of belonging and shared experience (Walsh et al., 2020). This aligns with the recommendations by Atay et al. (2017), who emphasize the need for higher education institutions to implement structured support systems that prioritize both academic and social integration.

In their study on enrolment conditions and companioning, Arcand and Leblanc (2012) found that the probationary students regarded the companions as essential for them successfully exiting their enrolment conditions status. Furthermore, they described their advisors as guides that gave them hope during their probation, particularly when they were going through the motions of their probation. Their sentiments are captured below:

Placement on enrolment conditions takes its toll on participants and has been cited for contributing to the creation of feelings of trauma, anxiety, fear, discouragement, embarrassment, and depression (Curry, 2024). Participants expressed how their

probationary status contributed to these negative emotions.

Participant **TM***: Emotionally, yoh! it was hard. I used to cry every day.*

Participant RR*: It was depressing, depressing! (raises the volume on her voice). There was a point whereby I wanted to commit suicide…*

The emotional distress expressed by participants TM and RR is not a new phenomenon. In fact, it has been suggested that students in higher education often face significant stress in the form of academic workloads, peer pressure, separation from family. and poor funding. These various stressors increase the vulnerability of students to various mental disorders such as depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation and behaviour, and substance abuse (Alabi, 2022). Considering the response of Participant RR in particular, it seems notable that the role of the psychosocial support practitioners is important during the academic probation journey of students, as they are professionals trained in assisting students in coping with their feelings of being overwhelmed.

Placement on enrolment conditions came with secrecy for some of the participants owing to the thoughts of shame and fear of how others may perceive probationary students. In their study, Naparan, Lomosco and Naparan (2023) attested to the perception of probationary students regarding how other people see them, perceptions that are often untrue, like in the case of Participant PM below:

Participant PM*: because I, I was also under pressure what if I might fail? Yeah, and end up not coming back to like the university again. And also on top of that they, they, they would like tell us that they, uhm, high like volumes that we as like people that have appealed and we, we are like in the university again we may not move from like main campus or maybe next thing we might struggle to get enrolled all of those things. So psychologically, they literally give you stress. No, like I didn't communicate with anyone about it cause of yoh! already like I was, I was, I was struggling like last year, like mentally, emotionally so me being in a, in a friendship cycle zone it was kind of difficult for me.*

Participant LQ*: No, actually I don't think I told Mama, I don't. Think I told my mother exactly the wording of that document because u za stresa, (she will stress out) and freak out so I didn't tell her the specifics. I just told her the good news, which is I'm finally registered.*

Participant LM*: No, I kept it to myself*, *Ai! Uh-uh, nowadays people are very judging, they are really judging…*

4.4.4.3 Subtheme 4.3: Physical implications

Placement on enrolment conditions can be stressful for students, and the manifestation of the stress could be through a myriad of physical symptoms, including chronic fatigue, changes in bowel habits, headaches, and migraines, amongst others (Attia, Ibrahim, Elsady, Khorkhash, Rizk, Shah & Amer, 2022). Study participants in agreement with the literature findings confirmed the following:

Participant KK*: Psychologically it affected me a lot, it affected me physically, Oh, physically nan dine intloko (I had a headache),*

Participant SM: *I'm not on that, I think I'm not treat same like other students, that's why I am*

4.4.5 Theme 5: Challenges experienced by participants on enrolment conditions

4.4.5.1 Subtheme 5.1: Accessibility of resources

Students on enrolment conditions have to engage with their studies and university differently when they attempt to work their way out of the probation; this presents the realisation that they have to utilise the university's resources at greater intensity in their attempt to strengthen their study efforts as they attempt to overcome the probation (Daniels College of Business, 2020). Participants on enrolment conditions face unique challenges regarding the accessibility and effectiveness of university resources, which they need more intensively to meet the academic requirements and reverse their probation status (Daniels College of Business, 2020). Several participants expressed difficulties and mixed sentiments regarding the availability and accessibility of these resources. In this regard, study participants referred to the challenges they experienced on probation as they responded to the question, "Please describe resources the university made available to you to facilitate your academic progress as well as their usefulness." Their contributions are recorded below:

Participant LM: *Resources I think media lab, very useful, very useful, we do not have*

laptops, and media lab is where we go, we complete our assignments

Participant KK*: University put computer lab, computer lab, computer lab sometimes are too far because I am staying off campus*

Participant OK: *They just gave us the study guides, they are not useful as much but our facilitator sometimes gives us err… recordings, downloads to help us understand what we are doing in class, after class he makes sure he sent every record we used and some information for us to know, yeah (sighs)*

Participant LM shared that the media lab was "very useful," especially given the lack of personal laptops. This observation reflects a critical reliance on university-provided technology to fulfil academic requirements, underscoring how students on enrolment conditions require immediate access to resources that facilitate successful academic performance (Wright, 2020). However, Participant KK indicated difficulty due to the distance to the computer labs, an issue supported by literature emphasising the impact of resource accessibility on student engagement and retention (Curry, 2024). Participant OK's sentiments regarding the need for academic support platforms (study guides, recordings, and downloads) may speak to the challenges of student underpreparedness and struggles with adjustment that literature has alluded to (Yadusky et al., 2020).

4.4.5.2 Accessibility of support services

Literature has established that although placement on enrolment conditions may not necessarily evoke positive feelings in its recipients, its intended purpose is to alert students to their diminished academic performance with the optimism that they will intensify their study efforts and achieve their academic goals (Wright, 2020). In this regard, higher education institutions assume the responsibility of supporting students on enrolment conditions, as failure to do so will hurt student retention, amongst other things (Curry, 2024). The following participant responses were stimulated by the question**,** "Please describe resources the university made available to you to facilitate your academic progress as well as their usefulness."

Participant LQ: *My academic advisor was a very nice lady. Um, she calmed me down at the registration station and afterward as well, like the first two weeks of the first semester; I used to go to her a lot… to touch base about my degree. Like I said,*

changing my mindset around my degree, let us find out what I can do with it, where it can take me, what kind of doors are open.

Participant LK: *Um, It was, It was, I thought, I think it could have been better, but I don't think that's on the academic advisor, but like I said, only at the one session, And then there was no follow up, which I completely understand. There's a there's a lot of students on academic probation. I know it is a busy job, but the one session I had was time management.*

Participant *OS*: *Anything, I think for SCD that there's a programme, that's there, but also there's an Empower programme that's been going on. Whereby like for SCD, I think it's the GROW programme Where I have been attending for past, Uhm for, for six weeks and then there's CTL that I went to once. I once went to CTL, OK wait! twice to CTL and then also academic advisors. I think that academic advisors are, they ,they, they've advised me more about my like, my modules, how to how to manage my modules and how to look at my modules. Yes. And I think those are the resources that that helped me a lot, that helped me a lot. Yes, ma'am.*

The literature suggests that while the practice of enrolment conditions aims to motivate some students toward academic improvement, adequate institutional support is essential to achieving this goal. Effective support services, such as counselling and academic advising, positively affect students' ability to manage academic responsibilities and emotional well-being (Curry, 2024). Participant LQ shared a positive experience with their academic advisor, who offered reassurance and guidance on academic planning. This aligns with Curry's (2024) perspective that institutions with dedicated advisors can foster a supportive environment for probation students, enhancing their persistence and motivation. However, Participant LK mentioned that they received only a single session with an advisor, indicating a lack of follow-up support necessary for sustained improvement. This limited engagement contrasts with recommended practices that call for ongoing support to facilitate continuous progress for students on enrolment conditions (Wright, 2020).

Participants had different views regarding their experiences of resources availed by the university to assist them in overcoming their probationary status. Participant RD reported not to have been assisted by the institution under study:

Participant RD: *I haven't received like any contact from an academic advisor ever since, so I wouldn't say that was useful in any way, then obviously because I have my*

own psychologist, I didn't go to the SCD, so yeah.

Considering participant RD's response, the researcher questions how this student perceives the institution. In their study on psychologically attuned enrolment conditions notification letters, Waltenbury et al. (2018) referred to the conception of student behaviour in terms of a diminished sense of belonging in their institution, particularly in instances where they do not feel supported by the institution.

Contrary to the contribution made by Participant RD, participants TM and TS mentioned the student counselling and development unit (SCD), tutors, and academic advisors as resources the university availed to them. This is in line with the viewpoint of Curry (2024) that by offering counselling services and academic advice services, institutions of higher education attempt to support students on enrolment conditions.

Participant TM: *The SCD office (short sharp laugh). Yeah, the way, And then the academic advising*

Participant TS: *We got tutors, they also help us to, to, like, they, they, help us figure out like if you wanna like study something, like you want a strategy*

As this study employed the qualitative research methodology, participants could elaborate and share their views on which support mechanism they deemed necessary for students on enrolment conditions. Accordingly, the responses in this section were solicited by the question "The following is what they had to say:

Participant LS: *Ah! nah (no), nah (no), because I don't know, but I believe maybe they should do something like organize, maybe people going to help us or talk to us or help us with, with our modules, because I believe they have to do that.*

Participant PM: *So, if we say it to them, We need textbooks, and then not everyone can afford them. Let the library have those textbooks, and we need to have access to those textbooks. It can be like time. It can be like giving tickets or something to borrow so that we can study, Yeah.*

Participants OS, TM, and TS spoke about their engagement with specific programmes like the GROW and Empower programmes and tutoring and advising. This diversity in resources provided by the university demonstrates the institution's attempt to address various support needs, backed by Curry (2024), who posits that holistic support services contribute to academic resilience. However, Participant RD reported an absence of any contact from advisors or counselling services, which could potentially damage their perception of institutional support, as highlighted in Waltenbury et al.'s

(2018) research on student dropout rates due to feelings of neglect.

Participants expressed various unmet needs and suggestions for improving institutional support mechanisms. The qualitative methodology allowed participants to elaborate on areas where they felt the university's support was lacking, which provided valuable insight into potential areas for enhancement. Participant LS expressed a need for additional tutoring or peer support to aid with specific module difficulties, suggesting that direct intervention or one-on-one academic assistance could better support students on probation. This aligns with Daniels College of Business's (2020) recommendations that universities should provide tailored support beyond generalised resources to meet individual student needs effectively. Participant PM voiced the need for more accessible textbooks and proposed a ticket-based borrowing system to improve equitable access. This practical suggestion underlines the financial and logistical barriers that probation students may face, which can hinder academic recovery if left unaddressed (Wright, 2020). Providing targeted resources for those on probation could mitigate these accessibility issues and promote a more supportive academic environment.

4.4.6 Theme 6: Coping mechanisms of participants

The premise of the ecosystem theory is that organisms (including humans) will strive to revive their state of equilibrium after a period of disequilibrium (Dykes et al ., 2019). As enrolment conditions disrupted students' academic lives, they attempted to return to their original level of functioning, and it should be stated that they used different mechanisms. This section of the chapter presents the various mechanisms adopted by participants, including changed attitude and motivation, engaging in recreational activities, and engaging in academic activities.

4.4.6.1 Subtheme 6.1: Changed attitude and motivation

The significant role motivation plays in academic performance has already been highlighted. Having said this, however, students on enrolment conditions need to find ways to process their probation status and decide whether to persist or give up on their studies. It is in this regard that the mechanisms used by participants were captured below:

Participant CM: *I, for me, it was (short sharp laugh) it was easy, I did not take things very hard, yeah, I just, I just took things normal*

Participant LK: *I mostly kept on as I used to, I just had to like, I had to like, try and sometimes forget about the probation... because it put a lot of stress also on my family because there's the possibility of dropping out and starting over again at different university, so it would mentally, it would really mess with my head.*

For some students, shifting attitudes and maintaining motivation were crucial in coping strategies. According to ecosystem theory, resilience and adaptive responses can emerge when individuals face disruptions, promoting emotional stability and long-term persistence (Dykes et al., 2019). Participant CM's statement, "I just took things normally," indicates an approach to emotional regulation, suggesting that normalising the experience helped reduce stress. Similarly, Participant LK's approach to "forget about the probation" to reduce stress reflects a cognitive avoidance strategy. This type of coping aligns with the concept that minimising focus on stressors can sometimes prevent mental overload, allowing students to maintain emotional stability (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

4.4.6.1.1 Academic goal orientation and self-efficacy

For other participants, focusing on understanding their course material rather than merely passing helped reshape their motivation. For example, Participant LQ shifted their approach to a more strategic and meaningful engagement with coursework: "I see the value in the assignment… meeting my degree halfway." This reflects a change from performance-based motivation (cramming) to mastery-oriented motivation (gaining understanding), which can foster resilience and improve academic outcomes (Zimmerman, 2008). Participant ML also used time management to increase academic focus, illustrating that motivation and strategic planning can enhance students' self-efficacy, which Bandura (1997) notes as critical in achieving challenging goals.

For participants LQ and ML, their coping mechanism included strategising how to understand the content of their modules.

Participant LQ: *And then once you do that and I see the information and I'm reading the assignment, then I see the value in the assignment, and I understand what the, what the content is teaching me and how it will help me in what I'm trying to do.*

So that's the strategy that I use instead of just Uh "I have to, I have to study, cram, remember," now it's more halfway like I'm meeting my degree halfway…
Participant ML: *I gave myself enough time to focus on my schoolwork.*

4.4.6.1.2 Internal motivation through positive self-talk

Participants OK and ST engaged in self-talk and self-motivation as strategies to assist them work their way out of their probation:

Participant OK*: I just told myself that I have a baby, so I have to make it, I have future plans, I have, I have to make my parents proud even though I disappointed them with the baby, but I have to have something that will cherish them in the future.*

Participants OK and ST relied heavily on self-talk and self-motivation, aligning with research indicating that self-affirmations can strengthen commitment to goals during adversity (Yeager & Dweck, 2012). Participant OK's self-encouragement, focusing on future goals like supporting her baby and making her family proud, is an example of motivation grounded in social responsibility. Similarly, Participant ST adopted goal-setting behaviours by framing each semester as a new achievement opportunity. This goal-oriented behaviour aligns with research on intrinsic motivation, where setting smaller goals contributes to a sense of progress and boosts persistence (Locke & Latham, 2002).

Participant ST: *OK, firstly I just treated my goals like I'm going to achieve this at the end of the year like every semester ne? So, if you want to achieve something, you have to work hard. So, I told myself if I wanted to achieve something, I had to work hard and spend more time doing it rather than doing other things*.

4.4.6.1.3 Support from significant others

Participant TM on the other hand leaned on the support of significant others and shared her enrolment conditions difficulties with her mother and friend(s).

Participant TM: *Anyone, I say anything to anyone. I just know when I talk out, I'm going to be fine. My mom, my mom, and then my friend, yeah, yeah, my friend from home.*

Participant TM's reliance on emotional support from her mother and friends highlights the value of social support in mitigating feelings of isolation and distress. Sharing her difficulties aligns with findings that emotional support from significant others can improve coping efficacy and reduce stress-related symptoms (Cohen & Wills, 1985). TM's approach exemplifies the social-ecological perspective, which suggests that social networks and familial bonds serve as stabilising factors when individuals face disequilibrium (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This interaction reaffirms the ecosystem theory's premise, where individuals turn to their social environment to regain balance during personal challenges.

4.4.6.1.4 Isolation

For Participant RR, isolating herself was her natural response, and she mentioned losing weight during period when on enrolment conditions.

Participant RR: *Yoh! I had no strategy, and I was just always indoors nothing interesting happened; I changed my eating habits. I was so slim, slim, very slim, Always cooped in my room, and wanted alone time.*

The findings above are in line with the following literature. According to Dykes et al . (2019), some individuals may attempt to regain equilibrium by reducing external social interactions, allowing them to focus on personal stress processing. RR's behaviour of "always [being] indoors" and experiencing significant weight loss due to changed eating habits suggests that stress can manifest in physical symptoms when psychological burdens are internalised (Thoits, 2010). While self-isolation can sometimes provide temporary relief, prolonged social withdrawal may exacerbate stress and could hinder long-term emotional recovery if not balanced with positive coping mechanisms.

4.4.6.2 Subtheme 6.2: Engaging in recreational and academic activities

Research participants cited their involvement in different recreational activities as a coping mechanism they employed to deal with their enrolment conditions. Creativity and the arts were key in the coping ability of participants RD and AM, as can be seen below**:**

Participant RD *(short sharp laugh): ok, I am, like, a creative, so I like to draw so that*

I think that played a major role; in Um…. where I am in terms of just letting things… out… In my friend group, I'm so sorry for mentioning it. My friend, they've played a very big role… (short sharp laugh); my friend group, I think we've also made catching up, you know, every two to three weeks a thing so. Yeah, my friends have healed me in many ways. I think, you know, being able to just pull away from isolating and going into a social space where, a safe social space where I feel like we can just engage, and talk and sometimes even laugh about our academic struggles because I noticed that we are all just going through a lot (short sharp laugh) … So I think those two things played a major role in the cause, I know, even some of the activities that I wanted to be part of on campus, I, at some point, I just pulled away from them, but my friends and, you know, drawing and painting. That's really kept me… going, yeah.

Participant AM: *I'm an artist, so I can draw, I can write stories, I can create things with my hands. That's, that is my happy place. I always go there.*

Sports can serve as a coping mechanism for students on enrolment conditions, and the role of sports in serving as a stress detractor and thus contributing to the academic achievement of students has been portrayed by literature findings (Teuber et al., 2024). Accordingly, participants KK, OS, and MN used sports to cope with their enrolment conditions status:

Participant KK: *(short gentle laugh), exercise, the situation that is happening at home is the one that motivates me*

Participant MN*: So, I play soccer, and sometimes I would tell myself I just got to study, if I get stressed, I just go to play soccer and come back*

Participant OS: *Honestly, my only, my only coping mechanism was going to soccer cause I play soccer a lot.*

Participants also intensified their engagement with their studies to work themselves out of their enrolment conditions. They started making use of the tutorial platforms, indicating a lack of understanding where applicable; some consulted academic advisors and used their enrolment conditions experience to warn other students about the risk and possibility of being placed on probation. The aforementioned mechanisms of coping are recorded below:

Participant **LM**: *Yoh! Ke hore (It is that), after I got answer that I came back, I attended every time, I attended tutorials and asked where I did not understand the assignments.*

Participant LS: *The coping strategy I used, I won't say it's a coping strategy, its*

something that distracted me; I got a group of students, first-year students, and I'm teaching them maths. It's just that I wanted to prove that I didn't fail math because I didn't know it, even though they sent me everything, being bonga (thanking me); I got proof because I wanted to give it to (mentioned name of the official). One day, I'm going to use it to show this school that It was a mistake and something out of my control. So I use stats to talk to the first year students, share my experience with them, share my emotions with them, share my knowledge with them.

Participant NM: *I planned a timetable for me where I can do my modules and then when I can start to be studying, it's like I have to work 8 hours per day.*

4.4.7 Theme 7: Support provided by the university for the participants

4.4.7.1 Subtheme 7.1: Emotional support

Psychosocial support is imperative when students are placed on enrolment conditions. The question solicited participant responses in this section, **"**How would you describe the support (emotional) you received from the psychosocial support practitioners (social workers and psychologists), if any, during this time? (If you did not go to them, why did you not go?)"

Scholars have reported that placement on enrolment conditions leads to negative feelings of shock, shame, and embarrassment (Barouch-Gilbert, 2016). Having said this, however, some participants shared that they had not consulted the services of psychosocial support practitioners, although they had been referred to them. In their study on student help- seeking behaviour, Sithaldeen, Phetlhu, Kokolo, and August (2022) indicated that students struggle to ask for help for various reasons, including feelings of stigmatization, embarrassment, and a preference for self-reliance. Participant AM below, in agreement with the literature findings, shared the following sentiments:

Participant AM: *And I Actually feel open because, like, I never told anything, anyone what I'm telling you now. Yeah. So, like, yeah, it's actually been more opening, and*

you are my first time; I never went to any psychological or social workers and all that, but I've been referred to that. I'm not referring to you as people, but like, It's not easy. It is not easy, you know, like, cause, like my moms, I couldn't even tell about this, so like telling someone I just met, like, it touches me on a deeper Level.
In a vein similar to that of Participant AM, Key Informant E (KIE) indicated the following*:*

KIE: *They tend to come to you when they really not coping because they are young people and they don't want to be seen as clients and they, they want to be seen by friends as a having it all together.*

4.4.7.1.1 Positive experiences of support

Students on enrolment conditions have reported appreciation regarding the support services received from officials in their respective institutions. In their study on enrolment conditions and companioning, Arcand and Leblanc (2012) referred to students who had positive experiences of support from staff members during their enrolment conditions period. Accordingly, the participants below narrated:

Participant PM*: But I got assistance from the social worker, psychologists, like, literally, each and every office that I went to, I got the help that I needed because of. I knew ukuthi (that) at the end of the day I have to like to pass and do everything on my own and also like never like to drop from the person that, cause I changed a lot from like the previous person that I was like, they totally assisted me so bad. Yoh! Like, I don't wanna lie because last year yoh! yoh! If, if this year was last year, last year was given like maybe die or something.*

Participant NM: *They've been helping a lot. Now, I can talk about anything personal and academic. I can open up, and then it helps a lot. They also help with Managing err, , time management.*

Key informants (KIF and KIE) were in agreement and made reference to the positive experiences that probationary students have upon receiving psychosocial support from their institutions. Literature on funding has already alluded to the contribution of student feelings of support to student retention and success (Tiroyabone & Strydom 2021).

KIF: *They do find our services helpful and throughout the academic journey, they do really appreciate* and come say thank you very much for that.
KIE: *They tend to come to you when they are really not coping because they are young people and they don't want to be seen as clients and they, they want to be seen by friends as a having it all together.*

4.4.7.1.2 Negative perceptions and experiences of psychosocial support

In contrast to the narratives of participants PM and NM above, the following participants had negative experiences and perceptions of psychosocial support services as offered at the institution under study. Moreover, findings by Givens and Tija (2002) indicate that a lack of emotional openness and privacy concerns contributed to the experiences of psychosocial support, a notion realised in the expressions of participants below:
Participant RR*: Is not helping, I felt like the, the, the person they, for me, I, it's not easy for me to open up, so she did not help, helpful.*
Participant LQ*: Nix (none), I did not go to any support structures of the university. 1, because I was, reviews for people normally say that it takes forever to get assistance… and it's like a waiting list. So, I just took what they said and I was like I it's not, it's not pointless but I'd rather just not go down and just do what I have to do instead of trying to deal with a lot of things.* It was the *counselling pha (there) at …… (Name of institution) yes, that's the one I know, I'm aware of.*
Stemming from the responses, Participant LQ in particular, confirms what the literature has to say about the students' finding long wait times for psychosocial support services off-putting as a result of the fast-paced life in which they (students) live (Ong, 2017). Another angle to student help-seeking behaviour was illustrated by Participant RD when introducing the contribution of embarrassment to her cessation of pursuing psychosocial support services.
Participant RD: *So, I stopped going to a SCD (Student Counselling and Development) like, yoh! Last year, already before, I think I experienced my sexual assault, and then I just went for like 2 sessions, and then my mom found me like a private psychologist, so I went to a private psychologist, and I think she assisted me a lot.* I*n terms of also just coming back like into society itself and not necessarily, you know, the university*

but…I think just getting to talk about those experiences and the academic exclusion and also just how it affected not just me, but think it affected my entire family… because at the end of the day…my parents had only planned to pay my fees for three years and then fourth year in terms of my honours and other stuff. I don't think it was much of a challenge, but I think in terms of, but I think in terms of undergraduate self, they had only planned to pay for three years, and now it's an extra four years. Um having to get support from your parents, also, I think she just tried to make me better integrate back into society after that, because I, at some point was even scared of going to class because, like Yoh! Yeah. I think for me I was just like I'd say, I was embarrassed. For me, it is mainly an embarrassing thing; I've never failed, you know, like academically, so having to go back to class and say, Yoh! Kids, people, some of them know me, you know, some know I was in 3rd year last year and now we are in the same class. I think in the beginning, yeah, it was definitely an embarrassment thing because of heart attacks, panic attacks, and everything, but this year, I'm cool, I'm cool.

In support of embarrassment being a contributory factor to Participant RD's cessation of the pursuit of psychosocial support from the institution under study, Ong (2017) stated that stigmatising attitudes by students of their psychological distress have contributed to lower help-seeking behaviours. It is in this regard that the researcher wonders whether this participant did not further pursue psychosocial support services at her institution owing to feeling embarrassed. Students' feelings of embarrassment are a phenomenon also relayed by key informants in previous sections.

Another significant matter of student engagement with their campus resources refers to this; this was in consideration of the participant responses on their knowledge of where to find psychosocial support practitioners. In this regard, Ong (2017) highlighted that a lack of knowledge about campus resources is a factor that negatively contributes to student help-seeking behaviour. Accordingly, Participant MN shared the following sentiments:

Participant MN*: Um, to be honest, I knew only about the student academic advisor, Yeah yeah, I did not know, like on campus, we have a social worker to talk to; I; thought maybe we have them at …. (mentions name). campus and the students that are supposed to see them are the (mentions name) campus students and not this*

campus's students.

Participant KK*, Yes, they are here, but I do not have enough information regarding which steps you must take, …*

Key Informant B (KIB) contributed to the notion of students not always knowing what resources are available to them and how to access them. Their sentiments are captured below:

KIB: *I mean, again, I'm going to repeat what I've already said, that I think everybody's doing what they can. I look at all our colleagues and the support is there for the students. I think just make them aware of what the university has for them.*

Studies have shown that students tend to avoid seeking psychosocial support as they believe that they can deal with their challenges themselves. Accordingly, Ong (2017) maintained that college students may perceive the psychosocial support treatments offered by a university as ineffective, unneeded, or unavailable. Participants CM and OK, in agreement with this viewpoint, shared the following sentiments below:

Participant CM: *I think like, I'm not the person who takes things very hard. I easily take things easy; I like this just say, OK, I'll solve this problem myself. I don't need any social or psychological support; I would just sort it out for myself. Yeah, yeah.*

Participant OK*: No, I didn't go to them, I just accepted and put myself together, there is nothing I can do, it was my problem, I got pregnant and had to raise my baby, and also I have to make a way to raise my baby so ill repeat, I don't have any choices Go and do better he (then).(sighs).*

Participant TM*: No, I did not tell any of them,*

Participant LM*: Ai, signs (short sharp laugh) I did not know honestly who, I had this other guy, he was the one helping me with the appeal, he was always telling me I should not stress, ho tloba hantle (it shall be well).*

Taking the above student sentiments into consideration, it can be deduced that participants felt like they didn't need to seek psychosocial support; this perhaps may be due to the lack of knowledge regarding the benefits of psychosocial support for probationary students. It is therefore the researcher's view that the psychosocial support unit of the university under study, as well as other role players, should intensify efforts towards alerting students to the benefits of psychosocial support, especially

during the period of enrolment conditions.

4.4.8 Theme 8: Suggestions by participants for addressing matters of enrolment conditions

The natural desire and tendency to solve their challenges is something literature has ascribed to humans. In their study of the psychology of human inquiry, Coenen, Nelson and Gureckis (2019) highlighted that humans intuitively seek solutions to their challenges, much like scientists utilising scientific experiments to test their hypotheses. Consequently, participants had suggestions for the challenge of enrolment conditions. The section below is an account of suggestions by participants regarding how enrolment conditions can be addressed. Furthermore, the participant responses were triggered by the question, **"**What do you think should be done differently to improve the psycho-social (psychological and social) support of students on academic probation?"

4.4.8.1 Subtheme 8.1: Academic and academic-related matters

4.4.8.1.1 Lessen harshness of Enrolment Conditions

Participants NM and CM reported that they found enrolment conditions to be harsh and that one of the ways for it to work for the students is to have its harsh conditions lessened. This was in line with the literature findings by Fletcher (2017) and Webb (2024), which correlated that probation is a blow to the confidence of students. The extent to which participants agreed with this notion is noted as follows:

Participant NM: *By not. Err…giving harsh conditions gain inverting students OK, so not giving conditions, harsh conditions on students. It is brilliant and understandable, and whenever again, it happens. If a student has proof to show that he or she tried to get the necessary help from the institution outside to improve their studies, they can be allowed again to be enrolled in the institution, so those conditions, I think can be at least amended again, or lifted. They can be reviewed so that it can allow your students to have a chance. Involving students in their academic probation because you can't*

expect a student to pass 100% modules. We are not geniuses; we are not greats.

Participant CM: *I think, uhm, there must be (short laughter) less pressure, like academically cause in life we don't only live for academics we also have personal, um, personal situations, that we have to sort out so if maybe you are given an assignment today (short sharp laugh), you are given a quiz, uhm, maybe let's say Friday you are writing a test, you see it's a lot. So, I think, I think academically we must be given enough time to do the schoolwork.*

4.4.8.1.2 More effective communication between all role-players

Institutions of higher education best serve students when the different stakeholders work in unison. Student success is not only the responsibility of academics but all other stakeholders whose services fall outside the classroom of the student. Atay et al. (2017) highlighted the tenets of student success to include social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment, academic adjustment, and institutional attachment. This means that university service providers, including housing and residence affairs, student counselling, academics, faculties, and policymakers, must intentionally work together to benefit students. In attempting to do so, university stakeholders must readily exchange communication and, where possible, refer students between themselves. Participant LK suggested that if the various faculties within the institutions communicate with one another, perhaps there could be a standard for the institution to primarily warn students before excluding them and placing them on enrolment conditions.

Participant LK: *So I feel like, if there is, it would be nice to know that there is research being done, like across different faculties, because, so my experience is faculties do not communicate with each other, and I feel like that hinders the students, so it would be nice to know if there was a faculty, cross-faculty research and then like I said, a warning ahead. And I would say rather than arranging a meeting by meeting thing, to rather maybe either say every first Monday of a month we meet up at this time because we know the students have classes, so it will be almost like attending a class, or seeing a supervisor or sending a text or written out questionnaire that says, answer this one by end of January, answer this one by end of February so that you're, are, you are aware of it, because arranging that meeting seeing, as I said, I understand,*

like, people handling of probation and stuff, it is a university, It is very busy, there are many students.

The positive contribution that improved communication between faculties could bring was alluded to by Key Informant A (KIA) in agreement with Participant LK. KIA had the following to say*:*

KIA: *I think I would like that the faculties identify the students at risk and then refer to say they need these services. I think that would help in terms of being* ***proactive about helping*** *the students. So, I often think about that like it would help if there is an office in the different departments or different faculties that identify students that needs psychosocial support, counselling and, and then referring them instead of us getting the students once they've been, once they've once the word, once they haven't lived up accord, they haven't performed according to the requirements.*

4.4.8.1.3 Students themselves must take more responsibility for their studies

Participants below deemed the matter of students succeeding after placement on enrolment conditions as an area that is the responsibility of the students. It can be suggested that these participants have an internal locus of control as they place the student's ability to exit enrolment conditions on the student and not external factors. In agreement with this perspective, Okeke & Uzochukwu (2005) reported that research evidence illustrated the importance of an internal locus of control in explaining students' school performance; in fact, locus of control was the most important predictor of students' academic achievement after ability.

Participant KK: *So far, ma'am I would be lying if I were to say something is lacking because there is no lack anywhere; the issue is with the person, I believe so, its not that the school is lacking anywhere, it's ok, the lecturers facilitate the class well, the issue is upon the individual to say after class, go make time to study*

Participant OS, *To keep on improving, I think in, in, in terms of me, but I don't, I don't think they, there is anything that I say that it should, it should be like made available to,to,to , me or us, cause we already have psychologists who, who can help us, like Kovsie Health, we have CTL who can help you. Like all the strategies to study, we have academic advisors. They can advise you on what to do how to do it and when to do it. If you should leave modules or other modules or to check, to check to help you*

if you even if you can balance your time and everything. So, I think the university has made all the resources available to us. Unless, unless uhm we could, we could, psychologists could be made available to students without even students having to go like, how we can go to academic advisors.

Participant TS: *I have to pay attention in class so that ke tlo khona ho tseba something (I can be able to know something). So I need to, to, pay attention in class, so there is no other person or thing which can help me kantele le moo (without that) tutor.*

The notion of students having to take responsibility for themselves and working their way out of enrolment conditions was also highlighted by key informants. Accordingly, the limitations in terms of how far stakeholders can assist students in working their way out of probation were captured by Key Informant F (KIF) below*:*

KIF: *It's the, there is adequate support already. Umm, I don't. Umm. I can't think of anything that really, Umm that is lacking.*

4.4.8.1.4 Accessibility of study material and devices

Participant OK46*: Maybe if they can assist us with some…, those study guides do not have much information, its questions mostly so maybe they can try to make those study guides have more information that we can use because sometimes, like I am not getting NSFAS, I can't afford to buy textbooks.*

Participant SM71*: the resources right now I can say are not big, I can say a laptop, a laptop but the stress that I can say I have right now is the outstanding fees.*

Limited financial resources remain a challenge for students on enrolment conditions. The link between probation and loss of funding (particularly NSFAS and other bursaries) and enrolment conditions has already been established previously. In this regard, Key Informant F (KIF) alluded to the improved contribution that the food environment office could make in increasing their material (food support) to students, including those on enrolment conditions. This is key as students on enrolment conditions lose funding during their period on enrolment conditions.

KIF: *KIF20 I would say Umm, maybe the Food Environment Office because you know as they, the, the, their criteria and their rules, they really need to be loosened sometimes because Umm I think the, the food package that is given to student I don't think it's enough to sustain them for, for a month.*

4.4.8.2 Subtheme 8.2: Increased student support

Institutions of higher education are constantly striving to strategize on how to support students on enrolment conditions to achieve academic success (Brady, Wills & Jost, 2017). In this regard, and particularly with this study's focus on the psychosocial support of participants, the segment below is a representation of their thoughts and responses to the question, "What do you think should be done differently to improve the psychosocial (psychological and social) support of students on academic probation?"

4.4.8.2.1 Greater accessibility to support

The enigma of accessibility to support for students in higher education remains a topic on the agenda of many institutions of higher education (Campbell, Blank, Cantrell, Baxter, Blackmore, Dixon, & Goy, 2022). Higher education as a sector has recognised the importance of psychosocial support as university students rank highly on the list of cohorts experiencing mental ill-health owing to psychosocial stress (Moeller *et al.* 2020). It can be argued that students on enrolment conditions specifically need psychosocial support owing to the discomfort brought about by their probationary status. In support of this perspective, participants in the study reported the following regarding the enhancement of psychosocial services for probationary students:

Participant AM: *I would say um (clears throat). Y'all should find people who can connect with students, you know, like not someone who just speaks for the sake of speaking, but like when somebody utters their words like people are deeply touched. So like, so that people can actually act towards motivation or, or, act towards whatever they're feeling like because like (There is some background noise of big piece of wood/shelf falling) cause I feel like at some point I'm not talking about you (looks more intensely at researcher) I'm actually talking about you when I'm saying they should find someone who can touch people's hearts. Cause like you make me open up* ***u uya bona (you see)*** *Yeah.*

Participant CM, *Yeah, I think, um, the social workers might be more welcoming to students because others are really in a difficult situation academically .. yeah*

Participant RR*: They should normalize coming to you guys because now I believe I can; I can tell by looking at you that you're going to be helpful to me.*

It can be deduced from the narrative above that students think there is value in talking to and receiving services from psychosocial support practitioners; furthermore, the practitioners themselves also confirmed the vulnerability of probationary students as well as the need for them to be supported. Their sentiments are captured below*:*

KIF: *Yeah, of course, they are at risk. They are so much vulnerable because if anything goes wrong, it's done. She will, the student will no longer be able to continue to pursue that particular carrier. So yeah, they are so in so much risk. I would really like to have such a programme for such students to, you know, to be Umm, Prioritized to be supported. that we give them adequate support to pull through*.

KIE: *If there can be a standard, a standard procedure that will be compulsory for all of them to say if you are a student on probation, you, you go for a psychosocial assessment from the word go. When you come in you see someone you are assessed just to rule out to say no, we don't have to worry about this, we don't have to worry about this, the student is coping. Initially, we conduct your psychosocial assessment for all of them, and then, it can be done every month. Every month that student is, a student who's on probation should have ongoing consultations. Yes. Just to know that we're not missing anyone, so we, we, we don't wait until the end of the semester to discover that someone was not ok, someone was not coping, someone was facing this. So, if we can have that ongoing interaction with them, I think it will, it will make a difference.*

4.4.8.2.2 Telephonic support

The provision of counselling services by way of a telephone call has been a reality for a while, and the value thereof has been referred to in the literature (Jena, 2018; Matkin et al., 2019). Taking what the literature has stated regarding the intentional readiness and willingness of students to actively seek psychosocial support (Sithaldeen et al., 2022), it seems apparent that they would benefit from counselling via telephone. In this regard, participants AM and LQ below stated the following:

Participant *AM* *OK, like, just because, like, because, like the people are full of pride and all that, what you did right now, calling me and all that, I feel like that is the best way to connect with someone if ever they are facing troubles cause as you can just call someone and try to connect with them while they are not having troubles. Yeah, and I feel like the phone, telephone, or are the best place to reach people.*

Participant LQ*: I think a call would be nice. a call would be nice now, and then, I think... I'm just checking in to see if you are still coping. Do you need help? How can I assist you? Then, that also allows the student to feel comfortable and ask questions… because the student might have questions or not understand exactly what the probation means! (raises his voice) you know. Um, I won't say activation. Activation is maybe once a semester, but the bridge's shut down (the bridge is an area where students hang out on campus); maybe talk to students, but then that's why it's a bit difficult, because that might shame the students, you know?*

4.4.8.2.3 Emotional support

The benefits of group work as an intervention for assisting people with a common challenge have been established in the literature. In a study conducted by Makhmudova (2024), group work was deemed beneficial for dual reasons, including allowing a similar cohort of students to mutually support one another as well as the provision of support services to more than one individual at the same time. Accordingly, the study participants below cited counselling in a group format as an intervention they deemed necessary for probationary students.

Participant RD: *I think the biggest thing would be… some sort of like a support group for people who are excluded and I, I think a lot of us maybe like twisted to a great extent embarrassed about our exclusion… Or shy. But I think being able to step into a space where everyone has experienced what I've experienced would be quite safe. I also think like I don't know what. They can do it, but there are times. Where if you were to. Let's say I feel a taste, right? Because of the conditions again automatically, I've already given up if that makes sense. So, I, I think we, we, kind of also need someone who's going to hold our hand and say, listen, this is not the last Test. I understand that it's OK. To carry like we carry ourselves a lot, but I think it would also kind of low key*

be nice to be carried by someone who's supported by someone as well who's also going to just reassure you. I don't think we're all, like, emotionally strong in the same way. So, some of us, it might have like that one feel might hit you brutally or, you know, it might just make you. So, yeah, I think those are the resources.

Participant LS: *And find a day to come, they bring us some counselling to talk to us. Yeah, I like a special group, especially find us counselling to help us to be stress-free, counselling is very important.*

Looking at participant responses, it is the researcher's opinion that group work can be one of the platforms psychosocial support practitioners can utilise to support students on enrolment conditions in particular.

4.4.8.2.4 Academic support

Participants CM, MN, and ST below were in agreement in expressing that on an academic level, more support can be provided to probationary students by academic (faculty) and academic advising staff members, thus reinforcing the notion that it takes all and numerous university stakeholders to contribute to student success (Hepworth *et al.* 2018*).*

Participant CM*, I think the university must, like those who are in academic probation must be given um, not too much, not too much schoolwork but must be taken step by step so they can manage their schoolwork, so that they may pass their modules, though you may find it very difficult to cover all the credits you have lost*

Participant MN*: Um, what I think should be done is, um, facilitators or the campus should like to provide like, um, extra lessons for students who couldn't manage to pass their modules from the previous year, Yeah, and give them some access to information that they couldn't get hold of, provide more details on what we will be studying this coming year*

Participant ST*: OK, to support us, maybe we can have something like a group ne? where we can, like all of us who were academically excluded, share our thoughts and told like I did this one, I did this. Sharing ideas will just help us. Ok like they should be handled like, ok…. They should be reminded, like often like, you have to study a work hard. Eintlik (actually), like they should have like given like a study timetable. They*

should give you a time study timetable so that they can follow it. Not like I should make my own, no, we should be given. The academic advisors should help them, if I failed a certain module and am repeating it this year, the academic advisor should make sure that, that module, I spend a lot of time on making sure like I pass the module.

The positive contribution of a multi-sectoral approach to student support was highlighted by Key Informant E (KIE) in alluding to the establishment of multidisciplinary sittings/meetings where student cases are presented and the best route to support student(s) on enrolment conditions are discussed.

KIE: *We can sit and have and have team meetings to say social worker is there or mental health practitioner is there, academic advisors are there, the lecturers are represented.*

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the study's findings based on the narratives of participants (students) and key informants, as well as the researcher's active listening skills. The chapter further delved into literature findings that either confirmed or nullified the narratives as expressed by participants. The common thread throughout the literature is that students on enrolment conditions need psychosocial support services, although more needs to be done to sensitise them to this pathway. It is in this regard that the following chapter will present guidelines that psychosocial support practitioners can consider when rendering agile, impactful psychosocial support services to students on enrolment conditions.

CHAPTER FIVE

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT GUIDELINES TO ASSIST SOCIAL WORKERS AS PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT PRACTITIONERS IN SUPPORTING STUDENTS ON ENROLMENT CONDITIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explains practice guidelines for psychosocial support practitioners in supporting students on enrolment conditions. It also covers the background of developing practice guidelines, practice guidelines that guide practice, strategies promoting guidelines implementation, making better intervention choices, and making better practice guidelines.

5.2 Background

The psychosocial support services guidelines for psychosocial support practitioners developed here are underpinned by the research findings of this study, as discussed in Chapter 4. The guidelines aim to strengthen and give direction to psychosocial support practitioners who render support services to students on enrolment conditions at the university under study. Psychosocial support is imperative to student adjustment and student success. This is owing to a myriad of psychological, social, and other needs experienced by students during their study period. The contribution of mental health to student retention and success has been hailed by literature, and students placed on enrolment conditions more so need intensive psychosocial support services than those who are not on enrolment conditions. This is owing to them studying under the “spotlight” and already utilising the one and only lifeline regarding studying for the qualification they are enrolled for. Placement of students on enrolment conditions is a practice observed in local, regional, and international institutions of higher education. Although intended to serve as a wake-up call to students, it often elicits negative feelings on the part of students and is interpreted as a threat. Its accompanying stipulations have led to it being perceived a dangerous opportunity for students. Furthermore, students have been placed enrolment conditions for various reasons, including psychological, social, adjustment, and mental ill-health. This study examined the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of students on enrolment conditions. Subsequently, guidelines have been developed to guide psychosocial support practitioners (social workers) in supporting this clientele.

5.3 The process followed in developing guidelines

The process of developing these guidelines emanated from the findings of this study as outlined in Chapter 4, specifically the psychosocial support guidelines. The guidelines also stemmed from the researcher's professional reflections on her own practice and experience as a social worker who is involved in the rendering of psychosocial support services to students, including students on enrolment conditions and the desire to assist students in working their way out of their enrolment conditions. The findings from this study presented in Chapter 4 and the extensive literature review in Chapter 3 informed the drafting of these guidelines. The actual process of developing the practice guidelines was guided by Schlossberg's theory of transition and Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystems theory. The researcher focused on the experiences, challenges and needs of participants to determine aspects that should be covered by the guidelines, furthermore, the researcher highlighted the experiences and professional opinions of key informants in compiling the guidelines in question.

5.4 Validation and refinement of guidelines through participant feedback

Following the initial development of the psychosocial support guidelines, a process of validation was undertaken to enhance their clarity, relevance, and practical applicability. The preliminary version of the guidelines was circulated back to a selection of original study participants and key informants, specifically psychosocial support practitioners and four student representatives who had consented to ongoing engagement.

The guidelines were shared via email and in-person follow-up sessions, accompanied by a brief explanatory note outlining the purpose of the validation process. Participants and key informants were asked to review the guidelines with attention to the following:

- Clarity of language and concepts
- Relevance to the psychosocial needs of students on enrolment conditions
- Practical feasibility of implementation within institutional contexts
- Suggestions for additional content or improvements

Feedback was collected through structured forms, and follow-up conversations (via email), which were documented in field notes. This feedback informed a final round of

revisions to the guidelines, with particular adjustments made to the structure, terminology, and sequencing of recommended interventions. The process helped ensure that the guidelines were not only grounded in empirical data but also endorsed by practitioners as a usable and contextually appropriate tool.

The feedback obtained during the guideline validation process confirmed the practical relevance of the recommendations and highlighted areas for ongoing development. Future studies could expand this process through wider stakeholder consultation, including institutional leadership and broader student representation, to facilitate adoption and implementation at the policy level. Some of the limitations of this process were timing and scope constraints because the development of the guidelines occurred during the final phase of the research, with limited time and logistical challenges preventing a structured, comprehensive feedback round.

5.5 Scope of application of guidelines

The guidelines are designed to assist psychosocial support practitioners, particularly social workers, in their process of rendering services to students on enrolment conditions. In as much as the psychosocial support guidelines are designed for practitioners at the university under study, they can be applied outside the context of the institution, as placement of students on enrolment conditions is a universal phenomenon. Furthermore, the researcher notes that the application of the guidelines outside the context of the university under study may warrant that they be amended.

5.6 Purpose of the guidelines

The purpose of developing the guidelines is to provide the institution under study with information regarding its support services intended for students on enrolment conditions. It takes various stakeholders to support students placed on enrolment conditions, and each may have to consider manners in which they can improve and contribute towards student success. Accordingly, the guidelines will be provided as informed by the known enrolment condition process of the university of the Free State. This set of guidelines is designed to assist social workers in supporting students on enrolment conditions. The guidelines aim to address these students' psychosocial experiences, challenges, and specific needs. By following this structured approach, social workers can offer comprehensive, targeted support to help students overcome

barriers to academic success (including enrolment conditions) and foster well-being.

5.7 Objectives of the guidelines

The objectives of these guidelines are to:

- Guide social workers as psychosocial support practitioners in rendering psychosocial support services to students on enrolment conditions.
- Highlight the psychosocial impact of enrolment conditions on students and the subsequent need for intentional and relevant psychosocial support services to be rendered to them.
- Provide clear directives on the principal requirements of successful psychosocial support services to students on enrolment conditions.
- Describe recommended practices to make the provision of psychosocial support services to students more relevant at the university under study and beyond.
- Advocate for the strengthening of psychosocial support training for practitioners (social workers) in the higher education sector, ensuring that the support services are responsive to the needs of students on enrolment conditions.
- Contribute to the validation of the psychosocial impact of enrolment conditions and the need for agile and impactful support efforts.

5.8 Strategies for promoting practice guidelines implementation

To effectively promote the "Psychosocial Support Guidelines to Assist Social Workers as Psychosocial Support Practitioners in Supporting Students on Enrolment Conditions," the strategies should focus on raising awareness, engaging stakeholders, and providing accessible resources for students and should be facilitated by the University's social workers. Implementation strategies are methods or techniques to enhance practice guidelines' adaptation, implementation, and sustainability (Cassidy, Harrison, Godfrey, Nincic, Oakley, Ross-White, Grantmyre & Graham, 2021). Below are structured strategies to market these guidelines within a university setting that should be facilitated by the social workers of the University.

5.8.1 Clear communication

Clear communication and engagement with students, and the university population will

be essential to raising awareness of these guidelines. As such, social workers must build awareness of the guidelines among students, other psychosocial support practitioners, faculty staff (curriculum advisors), other university staff (academic advisors) and student organizations by creating a dedicated campaign introducing them and emphasizing their benefits for students on enrolment conditions. This can be done through collaborations with other stakeholders (e,g University communication and marketing office) by way of emailing newsletters sent to all students and staff explaining the purpose and importance of the guidelines for the student community. Publishing of press releases or articles on the university's official platforms, including the website, student portals, faculty newsletters, mass short message service (SMS) 's nudging and talks on the University's radio station would further aid in this effort.

5.8.2 Information sessions

Social workers must organize workshops and seminars for students, advisors (curriculum/faculty and academic advisors) to introduce the guidelines and their implementation. Faculties must be encouraged to invite social workers when conducing their student information sessions so that they (social workers) can explain the role of psychosocial support during placement on enrolment conditions and academic success in general. Social workers must collaborate with faculties to include guideline-related topics in their orientation programmes for new students.

5.8.3 Collaborate with key university stakeholders

The usage of existing networks to integrate the guidelines into student support structures is key to their marketing. In this regard social workers should work with the Student Affairs Department to integrate these guidelines into existing counselling and support programmes. Furthermore, social workers can partner with academic and curriculum advisors to ensure they are aware of the guidelines and can refer students to social workers for psychosocial support. Social workers can also coordinate and collaborate with student organisations (e.g., student representative council) to include promotion of these guidelines in their activities.

5.8.4 Integrate into academic programmes

Normalisation of the guidelines within the institution's academic culture is a paramount

marketing strategy. Taking this into consideration, the guidelines for psychosocial support to students on enrolment conditions can be integrated in social work or counselling courses as a case study for training practitioners. Social workers can introduce them as a topic in faculty training programmes so that teaching staff can support students better. Furthermore, social workers can work with curriculum committees to ensure the psychosocial support framework is highlighted in professional development programmes for university staff.

5.8.5 Engage peer networks and ambassadors

Utilization of peer influence to promote the use of psychosocial support services by students is imperative. To achieve this, student ambassadors can be recruited to share information about the guidelines, focusing on relatable experiences. In addition to this, peer support groups can be created, and senior students can guide students on enrolment conditions and encourage them to seek professional help. Student testimonials can also be used in promotional campaigns to highlight the positive impact of psychosocial support services for students on enrolment conditions.

5.8.6 Organise ongoing monitoring and feedback

Assessment of the impact of the guidelines is necessary to ensure their usefulness and relevance to the University community. Subsequently, feedback mechanism (e.g., surveys, focus groups) for both students and practitioners to evaluate the usefulness of the guidelines would assist in this regard.

5.9 Nature and role of social workers as psychosocial support practitioners in rendering psychosocial support to students in higher education

Psychosocial support practitioners, which in the context of this study are inclusive of social workers, form part of the student counselling division of the university under study. Owing to the perceived and evident mental health needs of students identified by the sector of higher education, institutions of higher education intentionally appoint these professionals together with others (psychologists) to render psychosocial support services to students (Rouse, 2021). As students are confronted with various adjustment challenges and are in a period of transition while studying, they may need the services of social workers to support them through their study journey. Students on

enrolment conditions, more than those not on enrolment conditions, are deemed to be more in need of psychosocial support as they are studying under pressure and do not have another “lifeline” should they fail to work their way out of their probation (Tovar & Simon, 2006:548). The main task of social workers as psychosocial support practitioners is to render psychosocial support across the various methods of social work intervention, including casework (by way of case individual psychotherapeutic services to students), group work (educational, support, growth-orientated, life skills, and therapeutic groups to students), community work (psychoeducational workshops and mass awareness sessions), and research (to confirm the relevance of social work services rendered and discover improved strategies to service rendering as social ills continuously evolve). Having said this, however, it should be noted that enrolment conditions do not start at the service-rendering point of the social workers. Instead, students are placed on enrolment conditions by their Faculty Examination Committees. It is owing to this reality that the researcher posits that the guidelines for psychosocial support services to students should, at a minimal level, speak to enrolment conditions processes outside the psychosocial support space. Specifically, the researcher argues that faculties can consider the few suggested guidelines that apply to them.

5.10 Guidelines for planning a psychosocial support intervention for students placed on Enrolment Conditions

Below are the suggested guidelines for enhancing psychosocial support based on the collected data regarding the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of students studying under enrolment conditions.

Placement of students on enrolment conditions is a chain reaction involving various stakeholders within the higher education sector, which has already been alluded to under point 5.6. Furthermore, it has been established in previous chapters (Chapter 2) that the implementation of enrolment conditions starts at the faculty level and then cascades to other university stakeholders as they need to provide various support services to affected students. In this regard, the following guidelines are for faculty:

5.11 Guidelines for faculty/stakeholders outside the psychosocial support fraternity

Table 5.11.1: Suggested Guidelines for stakeholders outside the Psychosocial Support Sector

Stakeholder	Finding	Key indicators
Faculty Teaching and Learning managers, through the faculty's Curriculum advisors and faculty admissions officers	Communication strategies for informing students about academic probation placement	Inform students of enrolment conditions via SMS, WhatsApp, and telephonically, over and above the email notification
Faculty Teaching and Learning managers, through the faculty's Curriculum advisors	Suggestions by participants of addressing matters of enrolment conditions-Academic matters effective communication between all role players	Establish and provide regular, accessible workshops informing students of enrolment conditions, applicable criteria, and provide information on various platforms, including Blackboard, the University's radio station, and podcasts
Institutional Student Success Office / Dean of Students	Limited collaboration across departments supporting at-risk students	Establish an Enrolment Conditions Task Team involving academics, support services, and student reps
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Services	Students often miss email notifications and important messages	Improve digital platforms to integrate enrolment condition alerts into student portals
Registrar's Office / Enrolment Services	Students feel disoriented after receiving an enrollment condition notification	Notification should be accompanied by a clear step-by-step guide (user-friendly language) to support services, resources, and appeal processes.
Academic Advisors and Faculty Coordinators	Lack of personalized academic advising post-placement on enrollment conditions	Schedule mandatory advisory meetings with students on enrolment conditions. Each student placed on enrolment conditions should receive a follow-up consultation to create an academic recovery plan

Student Affairs	Students feel isolated and lack peer connection	Design a peer-led support system where successful former enrolment condition students can mentor those currently on probation
Library and Learning Resource Services	Students need improved academic research and learning strategies	Provide targeted academic literacy sessions for students on enrolment conditions. Run short courses or workshops on information literacy, referencing, and academic writing specifically for students under enrolment conditions.
Institutional Research and Quality Assurance Units	Limited tracking of students on enrolment conditions' outcomes across the institution	Implement institutional monitoring and evaluation of enrolment condition interventions. Use academic data to assess the effectiveness of enrolment conditions support programmes and make data-informed adjustments

5.11.1 Enhanced notification

One of the study's findings was the timing of the messages (emails) students get that inform them of their enrolment conditions. The current practice is for the institution under study (relevant faculty) to inform students at the end of the year and exam season, which falls during the time the students are on recess. Accordingly, through its faculty curriculum advising office, the institution could invest in efforts to ensure timely, multi-channel notification (emails, SMS, WhatsApp and telephonic consultations) to students to alert them to their placement on enrolment conditions. Furthermore, it can be through this exercise that the faculty reaches out to students, that the questions students may have about enrolment conditions can be answered, and the confusion some students experience when learning about their probation status can be minimised. Additionally, when curriculum advisors reach out to students to check if they are aware of their placement enrolment conditions, there would be a limited number of students who come for registration in the following year only to be alerted to and realise their academic exclusion, appeals process, and subsequent probationary status at such a late stage. Similarly, when faculty curriculum advisors reach out to students, they can be informed/reminded of the conditions of their probation and encouraged to seek

relevant psychosocial support services, and other support services from other stakeholders on campus.

5.11.2 . Educational Workshops

The institution under study can prioritize the availability of regular, accessible workshops that inform students about the enrolment conditions, placement criteria, process, and available resources. The researcher notes that each faculty would need to engage its own students through their curriculum advisors as per their faculty's rule book and criteria for enrolment conditions. It should be mentioned, however, that the support services available to students would remain the same; thus, faculty would need to remind students of their enrolment conditions and encourage them to seek support. Faculty curriculum advisors could do this through workshops on various platforms (e.g., Blackboard, podcasts, and information sessions at the university's radio station).

The following section, in full alignment with the purpose of this study, presents a discussion of guidelines targeted at psychosocial support practitioners (social workers) as they are mandated to provide such services to students. They are developed from the needs and insights shared by students and practitioners (key informants) and can serve as a structured framework to enhance psychosocial support for students under enrolment conditions. Implementing these practices may alleviate some challenges and foster a more supportive academic environment for these students.

5.12 Suggested guidelines for enhanced psychosocial support for students under enrolment conditions for social workers as psychosocial support practitioners

This set of guidelines is designed to assist social workers in supporting students in enrolment conditions programmes. The guidelines address these students' psychosocial experiences, challenges, and specific needs. By following this structured approach, social workers can offer comprehensive, targeted support to help students overcome barriers to academic success and foster well-being.

Table 5.12.1: Suggested Guidelines to Social Workers as Psychosocial Support Practitioners

Stakeholder	Finding	Key indicators
SCD Social workers	Suggestions by participants of addressing matters of enrolment conditions /academic probation- Increased student support	**Initial Assessment and Rapport Building** - Conduct and initial psychosocial assessment - Build trust and rapport **Identifying Psychosocial Challenges and Setting Goals** - Identify specific psychosocial challenges - Develop Personalised, Realistic Goals **Providing Psychosocial Education and Intervention/Support** - Conduct Psychosocial Education Sessions - Encourage Self-Awareness and Self-Care Practices - Counselling and Support Networks - Trauma and Grief Support **Enhancing Social Support and Peer Networks** **Link Students with Peer Support Groups**

		- Promote Engagement in Campus Activities **Strengthening Academic Skills and Self-Efficacy** - Provide Academic Skills Training - Focus on Building Self-Efficacy **Regular Monitoring and Adaptive Interventions** - Schedule Regular Follow-Up Sessions - Adapt Interventions Based on Evolving Needs **Crisis Intervention and Referrals** - Provide Immediate Support During Crises - Facilitate Referrals to Specialised Services - Emergency Contact Plans: On-Call Support Systems **Promote Long-Term Self-Management and Exit Planning** - Develop an Exit Strategy - Provide Tools for Continued Self-Management

5.12.1 Initial assessment and rapport building

5.12.1.1 Conduct and initial psychosocial assessment

Social workers should establish trust, identify immediate challenges, and lay the foundation for a supportive relationship for students on enrolment conditions. As a starting point, the social worker must conduct an initial psychosocial assessment. In this regard, social workers should be aware of their clients' placement on enrolment conditions to ensure that their interventions from the onset of the helping relationship is focused. This means that they must begin with a comprehensive intake assessment to understand the student's academic, social, emotional, and psychological status, particularly in light of their placement on enrolment conditions. To do this, they must use open-ended questions to allow the students to express their current experiences, challenges, and expectations.

5.12.1.2 Build trust and rapport

Social workers as psychosocial support practitioners need to build relationships of trust with their clients. Accordingly, the employment of active listening skills and empathetic responses to create a safe environment for the student would be key to helping relationships. This means that the social worker would need to avoid judgment and convey understanding, thus ensuring that the student feels comfortable sharing their personal and academic difficulties. Using the previously mentioned skills employed by the social worker will contribute towards laying down a supportive relationship, thus communicating to the student that their well-being is paramount in the social worker's intervention efforts.

5.12.2 Identifying psychosocial challenges and setting goals

5.12.2.1 Identify specific psychosocial challenges

Social workers should assist students in articulating their specific psychosocial challenges and collaboratively set achievable, personalised goals. This can be made possible by exploring students' academic stressors (e.g., performance anxiety, lack of

motivation) and personal issues (e.g., family pressures, social isolation) that may impact their studies. Investigating how these challenges affect their academic and personal functioning is the essential step towards prioritising them, deciding what they want to do with them, and how to approach them. In this regard, the researcher is convinced that identifying and understanding the “what” (psychosocial challenges) and the “why” (impact thereof on their studies) will assist the student in deciding “when,” “where” and “how” to approach them.

5.12.2.2 Develop Personalised, Realistic Goals

The social worker and the student should then collaboratively set clear and attainable goals, including academic and non-academic targets. A collaboration between the two parties involved is key so that both can commit to the goals as the student will own their goals as a partner and not as a passive bystander. Goals include managing stress, developing better social relationships, improving study habits, and the intervention of other stakeholders.

5.12.3 Providing psychosocial education and intervention/support

5.12.3.1 Conduct psychosocial education sessions

It is the researcher’s opinion that students need to be empowered with knowledge about mental health, resilience, coping strategies, and psychosocial support interventions/services. To do this, social workers should educate and provide information on stress management, emotional regulation, time management, and healthy coping mechanisms to their student community and, more so, to students on enrolment conditions. The students would benefit from the normalisation of such topics as part of the student journey. Such sessions can be conducted in groups and individual counselling sessions. Facilitating such sessions through the method of group work can help students recognise that their struggles are shared by others in similar situations. Meanwhile, addressing their concerns in individual counselling sessions would allow the social workers and students to spend as much time and intensity as necessary without delaying the progress of other group members. Having said this, however, it is important to note that the content of the session(s) needs to be tailored and customised to address each student’s unique challenges.

5.12.3.2 Encourage self-awareness and self-care practices

Social workers play a crucial role in helping students recognise the importance of maintaining mental health and self-care routines. This can be achieved by introducing various techniques, including mindfulness, journaling, or other self-care strategies, to aid in reducing academic and personal stress. The intention is to equip students with the skills to manage and regulate their emotions when faced with psychological distress. Self-awareness and self-care practices can be introduced on a mass level (community level) as a preventative measure and then zoomed into through group and casework interventions when necessary

5.12.3.3 Counselling and Support Networks

Social workers should create and facilitate dedicated counselling groups for students on enrolment conditions to address their social and emotional challenges. The purpose of these would be to reduce student isolation and help students build supportive peer connections with other students experiencing similar challenges. Such groups can include elements of psychoeducation, peer support (under the guidance of a social worker), and therapeutic services (where the social worker in a closed group assists group members in dealing with their negative feelings and doing the hard emotional work as linked to their placement on enrolment conditions).

5.12.3.4 Trauma and Grief Support

Social workers should remain mindful of the fact that studying does not exempt students from going through various painful human experiences, such as the loss of loved ones (Jony, 2022). In this regard, the designing and implementation of trauma-informed care training is necessary for social workers as they should offer grief support groups for the benefit of students. To this effect, Vasilko (2021) has mentioned that 30% of students will likely lose their loved ones during their study period. This study, in agreement with the literature, confirmed that losing a loved one could contribute to a student's placement on enrolment conditions. Furthermore, the student would need to be assisted in working through the grief whilst on enrolment conditions, as both phenomena will be occurring concurrently.

5.12.4 Enhancing social support and peer networks

5.12.4.1 Link Students with Peer Support Groups

The facilitation of connection building to help students establish a sense of belonging, support, and positive reinforcements from peers is key to student success. Social workers should encourage students to be involved in peer support groups or mentoring programmes. These groups or programmes can include assigned mentors who successfully worked their way out of enrolment conditions, allowing current probationary students to receive encouragement and practical advice on managing academic and personal stressors. This can help students share their experiences and learn from others in similar situations, fostering resilience and a sense of community. Accordingly, social workers can intentionally introduce the reality of enrolment conditions within the peer support group space, so peer group leaders/mentors are sensitised to this phenomenon and are encouraged to draw light and normalise it. Social workers can work with relevant curriculum advisors from the relevant faculties to ensure that as much (though) basic information on enrolment conditions as possible is available to students; working with faculty curriculum advisors would further strengthen the dissemination of accurate information about enrolment conditions.

5.12.4.2 Promote Engagement in Campus Activities

During their casework efforts, social workers can guide students toward joining social, recreational, or academic clubs that align with their interests. This is owing to the relationship of trust they would have built with probationary students so that they could truly express where their interests lie. The researcher agrees with the literature that positive peer relationships contribute to enhanced self-esteem and improved academic focus. Furthermore, there is a link between a sense of belonging and academic success (Vorfeld, 2023; Lyons, 2015).

5.12.5 Strengthening academic skills and self-efficacy

5.12.5.1 Provide Academic Skills Training

Students need to be equipped with academic strategies to build confidence in their abilities and to improve their academic performance. Social workers work systemically and are often the resource at higher education institutions who knows how other stakeholders can support students. The premise of people existing in their environments, one of the theoretical schools of thought in social work, encourages social workers to explore, understand, and work with the various aspects of the student environment. To strengthen students' academic skills, social workers can organise and facilitate sessions between students and academic advisors. The role of academic advisors is to support students by assisting them with their time management and study techniques (Tiroyabone & Strydom, 2021). In this regard, social workers should partner with academic advisors, curriculum advisors, and tutors for a holistic approach to benefit students on enrolment conditions.

5.12.5.2 Focus on Building Self-Efficacy

Social workers should assist students in building on their self-efficacy by encouraging them to recognise and celebrate their small achievements. Accordingly, motivational interviewing techniques can be used to foster a belief in their (students') ability to succeed academically. During motivational interviewing, social workers help students explore their feelings and find their own motivations using four basic techniques, namely open-ended questions, affirmations, reflections, and summaries. The social worker will, therefore, gather information by asking open-ended questions, showing support and respect using affirmations, expressing empathy through reflections, and using *summaries* to group information shared by the student(s). The benefit of open-ended questions is that they encourage clients to think more deeply about an issue and allow the social workers to learn more about their clients. Conversely, affirmations are statements that recognise a person's strengths and acknowledge their positive behaviours. If done right, affirmations can help build a student's confidence in their ability to change areas they wish to and, subsequently, their enrolment conditions status. The skill of reflection is vital, and social workers can use it as this skill alerts clients that their therapist is listening and trying to understand their point of view. Furthermore, reflective listening will allow students to correct any misunderstandings and elaborate on their feelings, thus granting social workers the opportunity to express much-needed empathy. Summaries highlight the intensity at which the social worker

has listened to and understands what the student says. Through summarizing, the social worker can collect and link information the student shares. According to Arbuckle, Foster, Talley, Covell and Essock (2020), motivational interviewing would be a useful tool to use when working with students by way of building their self-confidence and trust in themselves, helping them take responsibility for themselves and their actions, lowering the chances of them relapsing/giving up on their goals, and showing them that they have the power to change their lives themselves.

5.12.6 Regular monitoring and adaptive interventions

5.12.6.1 Schedule Regular Follow-Up Sessions

Consistent monitoring of student progress is essential as it allows for the adjustment of applicable support strategies as and when necessary. In this regard, social workers should maintain consistent check-ins on an individual level with students on enrolment conditions to discuss the progress made towards their goal achievement, address their new challenges, and celebrate successes. This is imperative as students who feel supported by their institutions and are reminded that they are not navigating the study journey alone tend to work harder in their studies as they attempt to work their way out of their probation (Arcand & Leblanc, 2012). Social workers should therefore implement regular progress reviews and monitor students' mental well-being and academic performance.

5.12.6.2 Adapt Interventions Based on Evolving Needs

Social workers should strive to be relevant and responsive to the needs of students on enrolment conditions. Subsequently, they may adjust their psychosocial support approach based on continuous feedback and assessment throughout the helping relationship. For instance, if a student shows improvement in academic management skills but struggles with social engagement, the social worker can assist the student by shifting the focus of the helping relationship to addressing the student’s social support needs.

5.12.7 Crisis intervention and referrals

5.12.7.1 Provide Immediate Support During Crises

The psychosocial crises of students need to be attended to immediately, and students must be referred to specialised support services where necessary. Social workers should therefore employ and offer crisis intervention strategies for students experiencing severe emotional distress, suicidal ideation, or other acute psychological needs. It has already been established in previous chapters that the placement of students on enrolment conditions, more often than not, elicits negative feelings and places them in psychological distress. As a result, institutions of higher education, through their social work office, should engage in efforts to ensure that students on enrolment conditions feel supported in accessing urgent care if required. This can include having a dedicated crisis response team to address the urgent needs of students on enrolment conditions, especially those struggling with mental health issues or extreme stress, as the placement on enrolment conditions is likely to exacerbate the stress experience. This team should be trained to know the psychosocial impact of enrolment conditions on students.

5.12.7.2 Facilitate Referrals to Specialised Services

Social workers should refer students to other mental health professionals when necessary. This will increase the probability of students receiving services holistically and all necessary services that fall outside the scope of social work. The researcher notes that the emotional/psychological distress of students on enrolment conditions may warrant that they receive medication concurrently with therapeutic interventions. In this regard, the social worker can, with the permission of the student, rope in a colleague(s), for example, a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist, to render holistic services to the student.

5.12.7.3 Emergency Contact Plans

As psychosocial support practitioners, social workers must work with students to develop emergency plans. This can include direct support lines, such as a hotline for students on enrolment conditions who need immediate guidance.

5.12.7.4 On-Call Support Systems

The university under study has employed on-call/emergency services. However, the

criteria for an “on-call” situation must include students on enrolment conditions. The social worker needs to coordinate and, by default, should be a part of a dedicated crisis response team to address the urgent needs of students on enrolment conditions, especially those struggling with mental health issues or extreme stress. This response team should be composed of professionals who are familiar with the phenomenon of enrolment conditions, so as not to minimise its possible impact on student mental health

5.12.8 Promote long-term self-management and exit planning

5.12.8.1 Develop an Exit Strategy

Students need to be empowered to become self-sufficient in managing their psychosocial needs and academic responsibilities. To facilitate this, social workers should create a structured plan that gradually transitions students from intensive support services and discuss strategies for sustaining their achievements. Furthermore, both parties can engage in discussing how the student can access resources independently as they progress academically.

5.12.8.2 Provide Tools for Continued Self-Management

One of the principles of social workers is that clients should be assisted to get to a point where they can fully function without the social worker. To equip students in the long run, social workers can provide resource lists, contact information for campus support services, and guidelines for maintaining self-care and resilience in students. This would ensure that students feel confident using these resources independently. At the university under study, the student counselling unit offers a resource map to guide students. However, its current limitation is that it only includes services rendered by the psychosocial support unit. The researcher suggests expanding this resource to include other stakeholders who actively support students.

5.13 Conclusion

This structured approach provides social workers with a sequential, clear framework to support students under enrolment conditions. By addressing the multifaceted needs of these students from initial assessment to long-term self-management, social

workers can foster resilience, enhance students' coping abilities, and ultimately contribute to improved academic outcomes. By applying these guidelines, social workers can empower students not only to overcome immediate enrolment conditions challenges but also to develop lasting skills that support both academic and personal well-being.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes with recommendations for providing psychosocial support services to students on enrolment conditions at the university under study. Accordingly, the concluding remarks reflect the discussions of the general introduction, literature review of enrolment conditions, research design, methodology, and the findings presented in Chapter 4. Despite proposing measures to strengthen psychosocial support options, this chapter highlights the challenges of students on enrolment conditions. The proposed recommendations are not mandatory but could be considered during decision-making processes related to psychosocial support services for this cohort of students.

6.2 Summary of the previous chapters

The study comprises six chapters, each contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the research. The previous five chapters are summarised as follows:

Chapter One provides a general orientation to the research study, outlining the background, problem statement, and motivation behind the research, supported by relevant literature. The research questions and research goal derived from the topic are provided, followed by objectives that guided the inquiry. The qualitative research methods were briefly introduced, including ethical considerations that guided the researcher's conduct during the study. These comprise informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and management of information and voluntary participation. Key concepts utilised in the study are clarified to provide context and demarcation.

Chapter Two provides a literature review of the central concepts covered in the study. The researcher interrogates the reviewed literature and discusses related historical, legal , theoretical and research matters from the applicable literature and the views of

other authors about the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of students studying under enrolment conditions.

Chapter Three details the application of the qualitative research approach, including the research paradigm and methodology. It systematically discusses the research design, study population, sampling and sampling methods, data collection techniques, the pilot testing, data analysis and verification methods. Ethical considerations that guided the study are also addressed.

Chapter Four presents the research findings based on the data collected from participants and key informants. The data is analysed and presented as according to applicable themes, sub-themes and categories that emerged during the study.

Chapter Five focuses on the development of guidelines for social workers, aiming to improve psychosocial support practitioners' support efforts for students who are studying under enrolment conditions. These guidelines are informed by the study's findings and literature review.

Chapter Six provides the summary and conclusions of the research report and recommendations and guidelines based on the literature and the empirical findings.

6.3 Achievement of the goal and objectives of the study

Table 6.3.1: A description of the goal and objectives of this study is explained in the table below:

GOAL	HOW IT WAS ACHIEVED
1. To develop an in-depth understanding of the psychosocial experiences, needs, and challenges of students on enrolment conditions and guidelines for continued psychosocial support.	With regards to the first part of the research goal, the researcher intensively reviewed the literature on enrolment conditions and the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of students on enrolment conditions in Chapter Two. This

	assisted the researcher in developing an in-depth understanding of how enrolment conditions are implemented on students by HEIs. In relation to the second part of the research goal, the research developed guidelines based on the experiences of participants and key informants, which are discussed in Chapter Five.
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	
• To document and describe the lived psychosocial experiences and perceived challenges of students placed on enrolment conditions through in-depth, semi-structured interviews	In Chapter Two, the researcher achieved this objective through the intensive literature review on enrolment conditions/ academic probation and psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of students on enrolment conditions. Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to listen and probe the participants' and key informants' understanding and accounts of the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of students on enrolment conditions, this information was presented in Chapter Four
• To identify and describe the different support services needed by students placed on enrolment conditions at a higher education institution.	Through literature and in-depth interviews with participants and key-informants, support services needed by students on enrolment conditions were explored. Findings in this regard were presented in chapter four, and the developed guidelines were presented in

	chapter five.
• To develop practice guidelines for psychosocial support practitioners rendering interventions to students on enrolment conditions.	Psychosocial support guidelines to assist social workers as psychosocial support practitioners in supporting students on enrolment conditions were developed and presented in Chapter Five.

The researcher was interested in investigating the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of students placed on enrolment conditions, emphasising utilising the data to inform the provision of psychosocial support services to this cohort of students. Furthermore, the study reviewed the implementation of enrolment conditions as an intervention by the institution of higher education under study. Central to this study, the guiding research questions were:

6.4 What are the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of students on enrolment conditions, and what guidelines can be developed (for social workers as psychosocial support practitioners) to support students studying under enrolment conditions at higher education institutions?

In relation to this question, it was established that most participants experience enrolment conditions negatively and do not use the resources proposed to assist them during their period of enrolment conditions. Also, psychosocial support practitioners (including social workers and psychologists) are not conversant with matters of enrolment conditions. Having said this, however, psychosocial support practitioners highlighted that students on enrolment conditions may need increased psychosocial support services as they are studying under a spotlight.

The goal of this study was twofold and set to:

Develop an in-depth understanding of the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of students on enrolment conditions and guidelines (for psychosocial support practitioners i.e. social workers) for continued psychosocial support.

6.5 Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions drawn from the findings detailed in Chapter Four (4) are presented below, following the pattern of the themes and subthemes.

6.5.1 Conclusion on participants' understanding of Enrolment Conditions

- It was established that participants understood enrolment conditions as relating to them not meeting the applicable academic standards and a second chance to redeem themselves or risk final academic exclusion.

6.5.2 Conclusion on communication strategies for informing students about their placement on Enrolment Conditions

- Participants were informed of their placement on enrolment conditions either by email or other ways. For the participants who received their enrolment conditions notification letters via email, their challenge was that the emails were sent late in the year, and some did not see them in time. Participants agreed that the emails elicited negative feelings (shock, fear, anxiety, uncertainty, shame) on their side. There were mixed reviews about the email notifications as some participants preferred the private nature of an email notification (nobody has access to their emails but them), whilst others deemed the email notifications to have delayed their response (as they only saw them late). The concept of the email paradox (as discussed in Chapter 4) also came into play, whereby attention was drawn to the fact that student emails may not be the best manner and platform to communicate with students, more so on issues as serious as their placement on enrolment conditions
- It was established that participants who were not informed via email had more negative experiences and feelings regarding how they found out about their placement on enrolment conditions. Participants who did not receive emails only found out about their exclusion and subsequent enrolment condition processes during the registration period, and this further added to their psychological and social distress.

6.5.3 Conclusions on reasons participants were placed on Enrolment Conditions

- The reasons participants were placed on enrolment conditions included academic and non-academic matters on both personal and home/family fronts. The academic reasons included disconnection (owing to conflicts between students and faculty staff members) with the institution leading to lessened motivation to engage in studies, lack of guidance in digital learning environments, limited understanding of the university processes and pressures accompanying their study programme/course, external locus of control and attribution of failure to external factors, lack of necessary academic/study skills (time management, planning, organising), over-involvement in non-academic activities, isolation and mental health challenges owing to the negative impact of COVID-19 (some students' enrolment conditions took place immediately after COVID-19.
- On a non-academic level, reasons for placement on enrolment conditions included home circumstances in the form of grieving after the death of a loved one, failure to balance caregiving responsibilities with academic demands, lack of social adjustment and academic integration, trauma and its negative impact on academic success, and inability to balance parenting responsibilities with academic demands.

6.5.4 Conclusions on participants' experiences of being placed on Enrolment Conditions

- Participants experienced placement on enrolment conditions as having social, emotional, physical, and financial implications, and these were negative, as only three (3) of the 19 participants alluded to their experiences being positive.
- On a social level, participants distanced themselves from fellow students/friends and other students (new classmates), they lessened their socialising time to commit more energy and time to their studies. Emotionally, participants felt inadequate in their abilities and experienced a lack of sense of belonging with the institution; they had a lowered self-esteem owing to their feelings of shame. For those who disclosed their probation status, they relied on significant others in their lives for emotional support. There were, however, those who kept their probation a secret owing to shame and fear of being judged. Studying under enrolment conditions contributed to the anxiety in participants as it constantly

reminded them that they were studying under a “spotlight.” On a physical level, enrolment conditions contributed to weight loss and headaches for some participants. Financially, enrolment conditions led to the loss of funding for participants and exacerbated their material needs (food, clothing); this is a concern as only one (1) out of the 19 study participants was a self-funded student.

6.5.5 Conclusions on challenges experienced by participants' Enrolment Conditions

- The challenges experienced by students on enrolment conditions included a lack of accessibility to resources and support services, including continued academic advising services. Also, a need for more accessible textbooks was expressed, thereby underlining the financial and logistical barriers that probation students may face, which can hinder academic recovery efforts if left unaddressed.
- It was also established that most participants did not seek out psychosocial support services, although one of their conditions was to seek psychosocial support services. Participants did, however, indicate the need for such services and reported that institutions of higher education should continue to invest in such (psychosocial support) services for students on enrolment conditions.
- It was also established that there is a need for additional tutoring and peer support, suggesting that direct intervention or one-on-one academic assistance could better support students on enrolment conditions.

6.5.6 Conclusions on coping mechanisms of participants

- The coping mechanisms employed by participants during their enrolment conditions included changed attitude and motivation. Participants engaged in academic goal orientation and self-efficacy, positive self-talk, and, where applicable, support from significant others. With regards to managing their stress levels, some participants engaged in approach behaviours (normalised their stress experiences), whilst others adopted avoidance behaviours by trying to ignore and forget about the enrolment conditions. Both these previously mentioned stress management behaviours (approach and avoidance) were

identified and discussed in the literature review in chapter two.

- Participant engagement in recreational activities was another coping mechanism employed by participants as they resorted to either sports or cultural activities (writing, art, gym) to cope with their enrolment conditions. The study also discovered that increased engagement in academic activities by way of intentionally attending and participating in classes and tutorials was yet another coping mechanism for participants.

6.5.7 Conclusions on the support the university provided to participants

- Participants cited their positive and negative experiences regarding the university's emotional support and resource support. The positive experiences included the availability of computer labs, lecturers, study guides from the university, support from psychosocial support services practitioners and academic advisors.
- The negative experiences regarding resources included participants' limited knowledge and struggles in utilising digital technology (e.g., Blackboard) as well as their own perceptions, struggles, and reservations about engaging in help-seeking behaviour. The reluctance of students to seek emotional support has been confirmed by literature findings by Sithaldeen et al. (2022). In addition, the negative experiences included their adjustment struggles and lack of knowledge regarding the accessibility of resources to offer emotional support.

6.5.8 Conclusion on suggestions made by participants regarding Enrolment Conditions

- Participants suggested a two-fold approach to assisting them in coping with their enrolment conditions. This approach included support in academic and academic-related matters and increased student support. Support in terms of academic and academic-related matters means the lessening of the harshness (the enrolment condition to pass 100% of modules or else face final academic exclusion with no opportunities to appeal) of enrolment conditions, instead, participants requested to be warned (by faculties) prior to the actual academic exclusion, appeals and placement on enrolment conditions. Intentional communication between university stakeholders was another pathway identified

and suggested for supporting students on enrolment conditions. In this regard, for example, the faculty curriculum advisor could monitor student records and, upon realising that the student is failing (before the beginning of exams in the first semester), engage the student on what their challenges are, thus referring them to support (between university stakeholders) if necessary before it is too late. Greater and easier accessibility to support by way of various means of support (e.g., intentional telephonic reaching out by curriculum advisors to students), group counselling (psychosocial support) specifically for students on enrolment conditions, and a wider reach of material support (more food assistance) for students were also suggestions made regarding the provision of enhanced support to students on enrolment conditions.

6.5.9 Conclusions as stemming from key informants (social workers and psychologists)

- As previously mentioned, this study consisted of students as participants and psychosocial support practitioners as key informants. The following section presents conclusions stemming from the key informants who participated in the study; their contributions were deemed necessary as they render services to students. It is the researchers' view that the involvement of key informants gave a recent, relevant, real picture of psychosocial support services to students on enrolment conditions. The study found that the provision of psychosocial support services targeted at students on enrolment conditions was non-existent and needed to be established.

6.5.10 Conclusions on key informant perceptions of Enrolment Conditions and student vulnerability

- It was established that enrolment conditions occur when students fail modules and are vulnerable; enrolment conditions further keep them vulnerable, thus aggravating their need for psychosocial support. It is in this regard that key informants recognised the need to have a psychosocial support intervention, particularly for students on enrolment conditions.

6.5.11 Conclusions on Services offered by key informants

- Key informants offer psychosocial support services to all students (and do not differentiate between students on enrolment conditions and those not on enrolment conditions) through assessments, counselling, and student support (material). Furthermore, they are often not knowledgeable of the enrolment condition status of the students. However, they are convinced such knowledge would be significant, particularly in the initial stages of their helping process.

6.5.12 Conclusions on key informants' experiences of their role while working with students

- The challenges of key informants in providing psychosocial support services to students on enrolment conditions include the timing of their intervention (students seek psychosocial support services late, if at all, during their enrolment conditions)
- Another finding of the study was that the limited communication from the institution and students (to key informants) about placement on enrolment conditions dilutes and delays the intensity of support efforts practitioners could have offered had they known that the student is on enrolment conditions from the onset of the helping process.
- Key informants experienced students lacking motivation to adhere and attend support sessions, and students were also perceived to have unrealistic expectations of practitioners.

6.5.13 Conclusions on key informants' suggestions on the way forward in supporting students

- Key informants indicated that being alerted to student enrolment condition statuses, prevention efforts (awareness creation), and more professional help (through individual and group sessions) are key to improving the rendering of psychosocial support services to students on enrolment conditions.

6.6 Recommendations

This section focuses on the study's recommendations, derived mainly from the presented findings. The recommendations are directed at social workers as psychosocial support practitioners, future researchers, and faculty members of the

institution under study.

6.6.1 Recommendations for social workers as psychosocial support practitioners

- Social workers should undergo targeted training on the nature and impact of enrolment conditions, co-facilitated by the researcher and faculty advisors. This will ensure they are equipped with both institutional and psychosocial insights necessary for effective student support.
- Upon referral, social workers should conduct comprehensive psychosocial assessments and establish rapport with students on enrolment conditions. These early interactions lay the groundwork for trust and guide the development of personalised intervention plans.
- Social workers must encourage students to explore and articulate their experiences, then collaborate on setting realistic, prioritised goals. They should also provide psychoeducational sessions, individually or in groups, on stress management, emotional regulation, time management, and adaptive coping strategies.
- Dedicated counselling groups should be facilitated for students on enrolment conditions to reduce isolation and promote peer connections. These groups should be led by trained social workers familiar with the psychosocial implications of enrolment conditions.
- Social workers should continue with trauma-informed care and provision of access to grief support groups for students navigating concurrent emotional and academic stressors.
- Social workers should collaborate with academic advisors, curriculum developers, tutors, and peer mentors to provide holistic academic support. They should also connect students to success stories and role models who have successfully made their way out of enrolment conditions.
- Social workers should empower students to regain confidence, take responsibility for their progress, and maintain focus on their goals, thereby reducing the likelihood of academic disengagement.
- Social workers should ensure regular monitoring, reinforcing a sense of support and encouraging sustained academic and emotional effort.
- Social workers should help students prepare to transition from intensive support

to independent resource use by creating structured exit strategies. Providing resource lists, campus contacts, and resilience-building tools can foster student autonomy and long-term success.

6.6.2 Recommendations for faculties

- Ensure timely and multi-channel communication of enrolment conditions status to students.

  Faculties should inform students of their enrolment conditions promptly after final marks are released. Considering that these notifications go out during the recess periods, faculties can use multiple communication platforms such as email, SMS, WhatsApp, and phone calls to ensure accessibility and understanding.
- Initiate proactive outreach by curriculum advisors to support affected students.

  Curriculum advisors should personally reach out to students placed on enrolment conditions to explain their status, reduce confusion, answer questions, and help students understand the steps to take, especially before the start of the new academic year.
- Clearly communicate probation conditions and refer students to support services.

  During outreach, curriculum advisors should remind students of the specific stipulations attached to their enrolment conditions and actively refer them to appropriate support services, including psychosocial support, academic development programmes, and counselling.
- Conduct regular faculty-led workshops on enrolment conditions.

  Faculties should host ongoing workshops to educate students about enrolment conditions, appeals processes, and available institutional support services, with content tailored to each faculty's specific policies and rulebook.
- Deliver information through diverse and accessible platforms.

  Information regarding the support offered to students on enrolment conditions should be disseminated using a range of platforms, including Blackboard, faculty websites, podcasts, and the university radio station, to ensure students receive consistent messages regardless of time or location.
- Collaborate with crisis response services to support high-risk students.

  Faculties should establish formal referral pathways to crisis response teams for students experiencing severe emotional distress related to enrolment conditions,

ensuring that mental health emergencies are addressed swiftly in partnership with social workers and other support professionals.

- Institutions should establish a dedicated crisis response mechanism for students on enrolment conditions, including immediate referral protocols, emergency plans, and 24-hour support lines. Social workers should be central to these processes, ensuring that mental health crises are addressed promptly and appropriately.

6.6.3 Recommendations for Future Researchers

- Conduct similar studies across other higher education institutions
  Future researchers are encouraged to replicate this study in various universities across South Africa to enable comparative analysis and identify institution-specific and systemic trends affecting students on enrolment conditions.
- Adopt a mixed methods approach in future studies
  Using both qualitative and quantitative methods will allow researchers to explore the depth of psychosocial experiences while also measuring prevalence, trends, and the effectiveness of interventions at scale.
- Investigate long-term outcomes of students on enrolment conditions
  Future studies should track students over time to examine how enrolment condition status influences their academic trajectories, emotional well-being, graduation rates, and post-graduation success.
- Explore the perspectives of academic staff and institutional decision-makers
  Including the voices of lecturers, academic advisors, and senior management could offer insights into institutional policies, support limitations, and administrative attitudes that shape the enrolment conditions experience.

6.6.4 Recommendations to market and strengthen psychosocial support services for students on Enrolment Conditions

- Clear communication
  Clear communication and engagement with social welfare practitioners, students, and the university population will be essential to raising awareness of these guidelines. As such, social workers must build awareness of the guidelines among students, social workers, faculty, and staff by creating a dedicated

campaign introducing them and emphasising their benefits for students on enrolment conditions. Emailing newsletters to all students and staff explaining the purpose and importance of the guidelines will assist in this regard, as well as publishing press releases or articles on the university's official platforms, including the website, student portals, and faculty newsletters.

- Information sessions

  It is imperative to organise workshops and seminars for student advisors (curriculum and academic advisors) to introduce the guidelines and train them on implementation. Faculties can when conducting student information sessions invite social workers to explain the role of psychosocial support in enrolment conditions. Incorporating guideline-related topics into orientation programmes for new students and those at risk of enrolment conditions is key in proactively addressing challenges and promoting student well-being.

- Collaborate with key university stakeholders

  The usage of existing networks to integrate the guidelines into student support structures is imperative to the marketing of the guidelines. In this regard social workers can work with the Student Affairs Department to integrate these guidelines into existing counselling and support programmes and the University. It is also crucial to partner with academic and curriculum advisors to ensure they are aware of students' guidelines and referral systems to social workers for psychosocial support. Another essential element is coordinating with student organisations (e.g., student representative council) to include promotion of guidelines in their activities.

- Integrate into academic programmes

  Normalising the guidelines within the academic culture and including them in social work or counselling courses as a case study for training practitioners can aid in integrating them into academic programmes. Introducing them as a topic in faculty training programmes can assist teaching staff in supporting students better. Working with curriculum committees can offer assistance in ensuring that the psychosocial support framework is highlighted in professional development

programmes for university staff.

- Engage peer networks and ambassadors

  Utilising peer influence to promote psychosocial support and recruiting student ambassadors to share information about the guidelines, focusing on relatable experiences, can facilitate the process of the message getting to students. It will be useful to create a peer support group programme where senior students are trained to guide students on enrolment conditions and encourage them to seek professional help. Using student testimonials in promotional campaigns to highlight the positive impact of psychosocial support will cascade the psychosocial support message to students on enrolment conditions and the larger student community.

- Organise ongoing monitoring and feedback

  Assessing the impact and refining promotion strategies as needed will be a beneficial continuous exercise. Setting up a feedback mechanism (e.g., surveys, focus groups) for both students and practitioners to evaluate the usefulness of the guidelines will assist in evaluating the relevance of the guidelines in promoting psychosocial student support efforts. Sharing reports on the implementation's success to encourage stakeholders' continued engagement and adjusting the promotion strategy based on feedback received will ensure relevance and effectiveness.

6.7 Limitations of the study

While this study provided valuable insights into the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of university students studying under enrolment conditions in a higher education institution in the Free State Province, certain limitations must be acknowledged. Firstly, the study was conducted within a single institutional context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other universities with different enrolment condition policies or support structures. The use of a non-probability purposive sampling strategy, while suitable for qualitative inquiry, also restricts the broader applicability of the results. Data was based on self-reported experiences, which are inherently subjective and may have been influenced by individual biases or emotional states at the time of the interviews. Moreover, participants who agreed to

take part may have had particularly strong opinions or experiences, introducing a potential response bias. The study did not incorporate a longitudinal perspective and therefore does not account for how students' psychosocial needs and coping mechanisms may evolve over time. Although efforts were made to validate the developed psychosocial support guidelines through feedback from selected participants and key informants, this process was limited in scope and did not include broader institutional stakeholders such as academic advisors or university leadership. Finally, the researcher's role as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, while managed through reflexivity and rigorous thematic procedures, presents the possibility of unintentional bias. These limitations highlight areas for future research and refinement of both the findings and the proposed guidelines.

6.8 Conclusion

This study was based on the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of students placed on the enrolment conditions programme. The study was motivated by the widespread practice of placing students on enrolment conditions (by institutions of higher education) and the researcher's interest in exploring their psychosocial experiences as a social worker (psychosocial support practitioner). The researcher was therefore interested in the contribution that exploring these students' experiences, challenges, and needs could make within the student psychosocial support space, if any. The study consists of six chapters. The basis of the first chapter was to set the context for this study. Key discussions in this introduction focused on the problem statement, research questions, and objectives. Not only did the description of the problem statement distinguish this study from existing ones, but it also identified the need for extensive research on the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of students on enrolment conditions. It justified why such research is necessary for the higher education sector.

The target population was diverse, consisting of participants selected from different age and gender groups, including students and key informants (psychosocial support practitioners). The research methodology highlighted all the research items contained in the interview schedule. There is evidence that the research items in the interview schedule are embedded in the literature review discussed in Chapter 2. This research methodology is, therefore, consistent with the units of analysis. It can, therefore, be

concluded that the research methodology ensured that the information gathered from the participants was consistent, valid, and reliable.

The findings indicate that placement of students on enrolment conditions elicits negative emotions from them. Most participants (students) alluded to their placement on enrolment conditions as a negative experience that exacerbated and brought about further challenges and needs in their student lives. Student participants concurred that they would benefit from psychosocial support services, although they did not actively seek them while on enrolment conditions; their reasons are presented in Chapter Four (4). Key informants agreed with participant views and stated that enrolment conditions contribute to students' psychosocial vulnerability. Furthermore, key informants alluded to having limited knowledge about enrolment conditions and the subsequent psychosocial effects on students. Moreover, key informants reported that their psychosocial support efforts towards probationary students can be improved if their understanding of this phenomenon is enhanced.

Numerous recommendations were made based on the conclusions of the research process and findings. These recommendations include a call for social workers as psychosocial support practitioners to be trained on the phenomenon of enrolment conditions as well as the psychosocial experiences, challenges, and needs of affected students; it is also recommended that social workers be introduced to and implement a structured framework tailor-made to support this cohort of students. Recommendations were also made to future researchers to conduct a similar study in other higher education institutions.

REFERENCES

Aguinis, H., Hill, N.S., & Bailey, J.R. (2021). Best practices in data collection and preparation: Recommendations for reviewers, editors, and authors. Organizational Research Methods, 24(4), pp.678–693.

Ahmed, J.U., Chowdhury, M.H.K., Rahman, S. and Talukder, A.M.H., (2014). Academic probation: An empirical study of private university students. Research in Education, 92(1), pp.1–17.

Ajzen, I., Fishbein, M., Lohmann, S., and Albarracín, D., (2018). The influence of attitudes on behavior. The handbook of attitudes, volume 1: Basic principles, pp.197–255.

Akhtar, S., Shah, S.W.A., Rafiq, M. and Khan, A., 2016. Research design and statistical methods in Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences (PJMS). *Pakistan journal of medical sciences*, *32*(1), p.151.

Alabi, A.A., 2022. Suicide attempts among students of higher education, Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, South Africa. *South African Family Practice*, *64*(4).

Alam, F., Sultana, A., & Ferdousi, S. (2022). Financial stress and academic performance: A study of university students. *Journal of Higher Education Policy*, 35(2), 167-183.

Albert, A. and Wozny, N., 2024. The Impact of Academic Probation: Do Intensive Interventions Help?. Journal of Human Resources, 59(3), pp.852-878.

Anderson, M.L., Goodman, J. and Schlossberg, N.K., 2011. Counseling adults in transition: Linking Schlossberg's theory with practice in a diverse world. Springer Publishing Company.

Anney, V.N., 2014. Ensuring the quality of the findings of qualitative research: Looking at trustworthiness criteria. *Journal of emerging trends in educational research and policy studies (jeteraps)*, *5*(2), pp.272-281.

Arbuckle, M.R., Foster, F.P., Talley, R.M., Covell, N.H. and Essock, S.M., (2020). Applying motivational interviewing strategies to enhance organizational readiness and facilitate implementation efforts. Quality Management in Healthcare, 29(1), pp.1- 6.

Arcand, I. and LeBlanc, R.N., (2012). “When you fail, you feel like a failure”: One student’s experience of academic probation and an academic support program. Alberta *Journal of Educational Research,* 58(2), pp.216–231.

Arias Valencia, M.M., (2022). Principles, scope, and limitations of the methodological triangulation. *Investigacion y educacion en enfermeria*, *40*(2).

Ashesi University Academic Probation Policy, (2023). - https://ashesi.edu.gh/academic- probation-policy/

Asikainen, H., Hailikari, T. and Mattsson, M., (2018). The interplay between academic emotions, psychological flexibility, and self-regulation as predictors of academic achievement. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 42(4), pp.439-453.

Atay, S., Ruppert, J.J., Gülmez, N., Çırakoğlu, B. and Kılıç, H., (2017). Why Do Students Who Are Eligible to Enter University Fall into Academic Probation and What Possibilities Are There for Effective Interventions? Psychology, 8(9), pp.1342- 1354.

Attia, M., Ibrahim, F.A., Elsady, M.A.E., Khorkhash, M.K., Rizk, M.A., Shah, J. and Amer, S.A., (2022). Cognitive, emotional, physical, and behavioral stress-related symptoms and coping strategies among university students during the third wave of COVID-19 pandemic. Frontiers in Psychiatry, 13, p.933981.

Ayala, J.C. and Manzano, G., (2018). Academic performance of first-year university students: the influence of resilience and engagement. Higher Education Research &

Development, 37(7), pp.1321–1335.

Azmitia, M., Sumabat-Estrada, G., Cheong, Y. and Covarrubias, R., (2018). “Dropping out is not an option”: How educationally resilient first-generation students see the future. New directions for child and adolescent development, 2018(160), pp.89- 100.

Baker, S. (2020). Promoting Student Success in Historically Black Colleges & Universities. Urban Education Research & Policy Annuals, 7(1).

Bandura, A. (1997). Self-efficacy: The exercise of control. New York: Freeman.

Bandura, A. & Schunk, D.H. (1981). Cultivating competence, self-efficacy, and intrinsic interest through proximal self-motivation. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 41(3), p.586.

Bandura, A. and Wessels, S., 1997. Self-efficacy (pp. 4–6). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Barouch-Gilbert, A. (2016). Academic probation: student experiences and academic probation: student experiences and self-efficacy enhancement. *Journal of Ethnographic & Qualitative Research*, 10(3).

Batisai, K., Makhafola, K.P. and Maoba, P., (2022). Rethinking inclusion in higher education: lessons for the South African academic space. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 36(6), pp.210–230.

Bean, J. and Eaton, S.B., (2001). The psychology underlying successful retention practices. *Journal of College Student Retention*: Research, Theory & Practice, 3(1), pp.73–89.

Bean, J.P. and Eaton, S.B., (2000). A psychological model of college student retention.

Beiter, R., Nash, R., McCrady, M., Rhoades, D., Linscomb, M., Clarahan, M., & Sammut, S. (2015). The prevalence and correlates of depression, anxiety, and stress in a sample of college students. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 173, 90-96.

Bellows, K.H. (2023). Why didn't colleges rein in their police? The Chronicle of Higher Education.

Bentler, P.M. & Speckart, G. (1979). Models of attitude–behavior relations.

Berger, R. (2015). Now I see it, now I don't: Researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative research*, *15*(2), pp.219–234.

Berry, C.M. and Sackett, P.R., (2009). Individual differences in course choice result in an underestimation of the validity of college admissions systems. Psychological science, 20(7), pp.822–830.

Bertram, C. & Christiansen, I. (2014). Understanding research. An introduction to reading research. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Bester, S. & Somo, C. (2022). Intrapersonal Factors that Support Higher Education Students' Achievement During Academic Probation. *Journal of Educational Studies*, 21(3), pp.146–164.

Betti, M.J. (2021). Aims and objectives of teaching language and literature. Retrieved from Aims and Objectives of Teaching Language and Literature. pdf.

Bing-Jonsson, P.C., Bjørk, I.T., Hofoss, D., Kirkevold, M. and Foss, C., (2013). Instruments measuring nursing staff competence in community health care: A systematic literature review. *Home Health Care Management & Practice*, *25*(6), pp.282-294.

Bledsoe, R.K. (2018). Facing academic dismissal: An adaptive organizational approach preparing all students for success. *Community College Journal of Research*

and Practice, 42(7-8), pp.550–563.

Bloom, J.L. and Martin, N.A., (2002). Incorporating appreciative inquiry into academic advising. *The Mentor: An Academic Advising Journal*, 4(3).

Bloom, J.L., Hutson, B.L. and He, D.Y., (2008). The appreciative advising revolution.

Bolderston, A. (2012). Conducting a research interview. *Journal of Medical Imaging and Radiation Sciences*, *43*(1), pp.66–76.

Bos, J., (2020). Research ethics for students in the social sciences (p. 287). Springer Nature.

Bott, E. (2010). Favourites and others: reflexivity and the shaping of subjectivities and data in qualitative research. *Qualitative research*, *10*(2), pp.159–173.

Bourke, R. & MacDonald, J. (2018). Creating a space for student voice in an educational evaluation. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 41(2), pp.156–168.

Bowman, N.A. and Jang, N., (2022). What is the purpose of academic probation? Its substantial negative effects on four-year graduation. Research in Higher Education, 63(8), pp.1285–1311.

Bowman, N.A., Jang, N., Kivlighan, D.M., Schneider, N. and Ye, X., (2020). The impact of a goal-setting intervention for engineering students on academic probation. *Research in Higher Education*, *61*, pp.142–166.

Brady, W.J., Wills, J.A., Jost, J.T., Tucker, J.A. and Van Bavel, J.J., (2017). Emotion shapes the diffusion of moralized content in social networks. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *114*(28), pp.7313–7318.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design. Harvard University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Ecology of the family as a context for human development: Research perspectives. Developmental Psychology, 22(6), 723–742.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). The ecology of human development. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecological models of human development. International encyclopedia of education, 3(2), pp.37–43.

Brooks, A.W., Hammons, J., Nolan, J., Dufek, S. and Wynn, M., (2019). The purpose of research: What undergraduate students say. Scholarship and Practice of Undergraduate Research, 3(1), pp.39–47.

Brown, G.W. (2010). Psychosocial origins of depressive and anxiety disorders.

Buenaflor, S. & Bate, S. (2022). “I Felt Like Nothing I Did Prepared Me”: The Experiences of Engineering Transfer Students on Academic Probation. *Journal of College Orientation, Transition, and Retention*, 29(2).

Butler, M., Blake, N., Gonzalez, A., Heller, E., and Chang, F., (2016). Appreciative advising: Retaining academic probation students. *Journal of Appreciative Education*, 3(1), pp.1–17.

Butler, M.S. (2016). A Case Study on Readmitted Students: The Impact of Social and Academic Involvement on Degree Completion (Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California).

Caetano, A.P. & Freire, I. (2014). Multiple voices contribute to the development of a critical and responsible citizenship. *Sisyphus—Journal of Education*, *2*(3), pp.100–119.

Cairns, D. (2019). Youth transitions, international student mobility and spatial reflexivity.

Campbell, F., Blank, L., Cantrell, A., Baxter, S., Blackmore, C., Dixon, J., and Goyder, E., (2022). Factors that influence mental health of university and college students in the UK: A rapid review.

Caporale-Berkowitz, N.A., Boyer, B.P., Muenks, K., & Brownson, C.B. (2022). Resilience, not grit, predicts college student retention following academic probation. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 114(7), p.1654.

Carter, P. L., & Wilson, W.J. (2018). Disparities in higher education access: The role of financial challenges, *Educational Review*, 42(3), 198–215.

Casey, M.D., Cline, J., Ost, B., and Qureshi, J.A. (2018). Academic probation, student performance, and strategic course-taking. *Economic Inquiry*, *56*(3), pp.1646–1677.

Cassidy, Harrison, Godfrey, C., Nincic, V., Khan, P.A., Oakley, P., Ross-White, A., Grantmyre, H., and Graham, I.D., (2021). Use and effects of implementation strategies for practice guidelines in nursing: a systematic review. Implementation Science, 16, pp.1–29.

Castellon, Y., (2017). Persisting on academic probation: implications of policy and practice for educational leaders. (Doctoral dissertation, California State University, Sacramento).

Casula, M., Rangarajan, N. and Shields, P., (2021). The potential of working hypotheses for deductive exploratory research. *Quality & Quantity*, *55*(5), pp.1703-1725.

Central University of Technology (CUT), .(2024). NSFAS eligibility criteria and funding conditions for 2025. https://www.cut.ac.za/announcements/254- Accessed 29 Feb

2025.

Chan, Y.K., (2016). Investigating the relationship among extracurricular activities, learning approach, and academic outcomes: A case study. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, *17*(3), pp.223-233.

Charlesworth, M. and A Foëx, B. (2016). Qualitative research in critical care: Has its time finally come? *Journal of the Intensive Care Society*, *17*(2), pp.146–153.

Chen, J.A., Stevens, C., Wong, S.H. and Liu, C.H., (2019). Psychiatric symptoms and diagnoses among US college students: A comparison by race and ethnicity. Psychiatric services, 70(6), pp.442–449.

Chhetri, S.B. and Baniya, R., (2022). Influence of student-faculty interaction on graduate outcomes of undergraduate management students: The mediating role of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. The International Journal of Management Education, 20(2), p.100640.

Chiramba, O. and Ndofirepi, E.S., (2023). Access and success in higher education: Disadvantaged students' lived experiences beyond funding hurdles at a metropolitan South African university. *South African journal of higher education*, 37(6), pp.56–75.

Cho, H., Kim, J., & Park, E. (2021). Help-seeking behavior among college students: The role of self-esteem and perceived stigma. Journal of American College Health, 69(6), 655–663.

Choudhury, S.A. and Borooah, I.P., (2017). Character strengths and academic achievements of undergraduate college students of Guwahati, Assam. Space and Culture, India, 5(1), pp.49–64.Claremont: Juta.

Cloete., R. (2024). NSFAS Requirements: University Students Need to Stay Funded. https://www.careersportal.co.za/nsfas/nsfas-requirements-university-students- need-to-stay-funded-accessed 29 January 2025

Clough, P. and Nutbrown, C., (2012).). A student's guide to methodology.

Coenen, A., Nelson, J.D., & Gureckis, T.M. (2019). Asking the right questions about the psychology of human inquiry: Nine open challenges. Psychonomic Bulletin & Review, 26(5), pp.1548–1587.

Cohen, S. and Wills, T.A., (1985). Stress, social support, and the buffering hypothesis.

Coleman, H.L. & Freedman, A.M. (1996). Effects of a structured group intervention on the achievement of academically at-risk undergraduates. *Journal of College Student Development.*

Corti, L., Veerle Van den Eynden, L. Bishop, & Matthew Woollard. (2014). Managing and Sharing Research Data: A Guide to Good Practice. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Cossham, A. & Johanson, G. (2019). The benefits and limitations of using key informants in library and information studies research. *Information Research*, *24*(3).

Costa, D., Mullan, B., Kothe, E., & Butow, P. (2010). A web-based formative assessment tool for Masters students: A pilot study. Computers & Education, 54(1), 1248–1253.

Council in Higher Education. (2020). Retention and Success in Higher Education: A National Perspective. Pretoria: CHE.

Council on Higher Education. (2018). Higher Education Monitor: Student Support in South African Universities. Pretoria: CHE.

Covington, M.V. and Omelich, C.L., (1979). It's best to be able and virtuous too: Student and teacher evaluative responses to successful effort. *Journal of Educational*

Psychology, 71(5), p.688.

Crawford, M., (2020). Ecological Systems theory: Exploring the development of the theoretical framework as con-ceived by Bronfenbrenner. J Pub Health Issue Pract, 4(2), p.170.

Crawford, M., (2020). Ecological Systems theory: Exploring the development of the theoretical framework as con-ceived by Bronfenbrenner. J Pub Health Issue Pract, 4(2), p.170.

Crawford, M. (2020). Ecological Systems theory: Exploring the development of the theoretical framework as conceived by Bronfenbrenner. J Pub Health Issue Pract, 4(2), p.170.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method approaches. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Creswell, J.W. & Creswell, J.D. (2017). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. Sage Publications.

Cruise, C.A. (2002). Advising students on academic probation. The Mentor: An Academic Advising Journal, 4(4), pp.1-4

Curry, M.S. (2024). *Prepared for a Future? Experiences and Perceptions of Former Students Who Were Remanded to Alternative Programs While Attending High School* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro).

Cuvo, A.J., (1986). Conditions of Appointment Compliance for Students on Academic Probation. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 27(1), pp.58-64.

Cypress, B.S. (2017). Rigor or reliability and validity in qualitative research: Perspectives, strategies, reconceptualization, and recommendations. *Dimensions of critical care nursing*, *36*(4), pp.253–263.

Da Costa, D., Zelkowitz, P., Letourneau, N., Howlett, A., Dennis, C.L., Russell, B., Grover, S., Lowensteyn, I., Chan, P., & Khalifé, S. (2017). HealthyDads. ca: What do men want in a website designed to promote emotional wellness and healthy behaviors during the transition to parenthood? *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, *19*(10), p.e325.

Daley, A. (2010). Reflections on reflexivity and critical reflection as critical research practices. *Affilia*, *25*(1), pp.68–82.

Damashek, R., (2003). Support Programs for Students on Academic Probation.

Daniels College of Business. 2020. https://daniels.du.edu/undergraduate-programs/beyond-the-classroom/ [accessed 20 December 2024]

De Klerk, M., Van Der Merwe, T., & Rothmann, S. (2019). Student Well-being and Academic Success: The Role of Psychosocial Support Services. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 33(2), 43-63

De Villiers, P. (2023). Perspective chapter: The role NSFAS has played in facilitating poor students in South Africa. In Higher Education-Reflections From the Field-Volume 2. IntechOpen.

De Vos, A.S, Strydom, H., Fouché, & Delport, C. S. L. (2005). Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Services Professions. (3rd ed.). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

DeJonckheere, M. and Vaughn, L.M., (2019). Semi-structured interviewing in primary care research: a balance of relationship and rigour. Family medicine and community health, 7(2).

Dembo, M.H. (2004). Motivation and learning strategies for college success: A self-management approach. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Deng, Y., Cherian, J., Khan, N.U.N., Kumari, K., Sial, M.S., Comite, U., Gavurova, B., & Popp, J. (2022). Family and academic stress and their impact on students' depression level and academic performance. Frontiers in Psychiatry, 13, p.869337.

Department of Higher Education and Training Policy (DHET). (2019). Policy framework for the administration and management of student admissions in technical and vocational education and training colleges. https://www.dhet.gov.za/SiteAssets/Policy%20framework%20on%20Administration%20and%20Management%20of%20Student%20admissions.pdf. Accessed 27 January 2025.

Department of Higher Education and Training. (2001). National Plan for Higher Education. Pretoria: DHET.

Department of Higher Education and Training. (2017). National Policy on Students and Community Support Services. Pretoria: DHET.

Department of Higher Education and Training. (2019). Higher Education Act (No. 101 of 1997) Amendment. Pretoria: DHET.

Department of Higher Education and Training. (2021). Fact Sheet on age for students in PSET institutions. Pretoria: DHET Department of Higher Education and Training. (2020). Policy Framework to Adress Gender-Based Violence in the Post-School Education and Training System. Pretoria: DHET.

Donald, D., Lazarus, S. and Lolwana, P., 2010. Educational psychology in social context: Ecosystemic applications in Southern Africa. *(No Title)*.

Donald, D., Lazarus, S., & Lolwana, P. (2010). Educational psychology in social context (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.

Doody, O. and Noonan, M., (2013). Preparing and conducting interviews to collect data. *Nurse researcher*, *20*(5).

Douwes, R., Metselaar, J., Pijnenborg, G.H.M. and Boonstra, N., 2023. Well-being of students in higher education: The importance of a student perspective. Cogent Education, 10(1), p.2190697.
Drake, J.K. (2011). The role of academic advising in student retention and persistence.

Drisko, J.W., 2016. Teaching qualitative research: Key content, course structures, and recommendations. *Qualitative Social Work*, *15*(3), pp.307-321.

Du Plessis, A. (2019). Improving student engagement through strategic academic scheduling. Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 41(3), 1–13.

Du Plooy-Cilliers, F; Davis, C; and Bezuidenhout, R. (2014). Research Matters.
Dudovskiy, J. (2021). Tesla Value Chain Analysis Available at: https://research-methodology.net/tesla-value-chain-analysis-2/ (Accessed 05 July 2021).

Dunwoody, P.T. and Frank, M.L., 1995. Why students withdraw from classes. *The Journal of Psychology*, *129*(5), pp.553-558.

Dykes, G., Lombard, A., Mbedzi, R.P., Rasool, S. and Schenck, C.J., (2019). Theories for decolonial social work practice in South Africa. Oxford University Press South Africa.

Earl, W.R. (1988). Intrusive advising of freshmen in academic difficulty. NACADA journal, 8(2), pp.27-33.

Eaton, S.B. and Bean, J.P., (1995). An approach/avoidance behavioral model of college student attrition. *Research in higher education*, *36*, pp.617–645.
Education Studies, 9(2).

Eiroa-Orosa, F.J. (2020). Understanding psychosocial wellbeing in the context of complex and multidimensional problems. *International journal of environmental*

research and public health, 17(16), p.5937.

Eisaghalian, A., (2019). Academic Probation as an Obstruction: Factors Influencing College Students' Retention (Doctoral dissertation, California State University, Northridge).

Eisenberg, D., Hunt, J., & Speer, N. (2016). Mental health in American colleges and universities: Variation across student subgroups and across campuses. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 204(1), 60-67.

Ekornes, S., (2022). The impact of perceived psychosocial environment and academic emotions on higher education students' intentions to drop out. Higher Education Research & Development, 41(4), pp.1044-1059.

El Zaatari, W. and Maalouf, I., (2022). How does the Bronfenbrenner bio-ecological system theory explain the development of students' sense of belonging to school?. Sage Open, 12(4),p.21582440221134089.

Enokela, A.E. (2022). Digital Mental Health Support for Students in Higher Institutions in Nigeria During Pandemics. In Digital Innovations for Mental Health Support (pp. 278-295). IGI Global.

Espinosa, D., Escandallo, J. and Muegna, K.J., (2023). Transition to Academic Probation: A Phenomenological Inquiry. *International Journal of Asian Education*, 4(2), pp.98- 105.

Evans, N.J., Forney, D.S., Guido, F.M., Patton, L.D., & Renn, K.A. (2010). Student Development in College. 2nd Edition, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Fernández Rodríguez, C., Soto López, T. and Cuesta Izquierdo, M., 2019. Needs and demands for psychological care in university students. Psicothema.

Fishbein, M. and Ajzen, I., (1977). Belief, attitude, intention, and behavior: An

introduction to theory and research.

Fisher, S.B. (2016). The California community colleges Board of Governors fee waiver: A comparison of state aid programs. Sacramento, CA: The California Community College Chancellor's Office.

Fitzgerald, J.B. (2019). Equifinality and pathways to environmental concern: a fuzzy-set analysis. Socius, 5, p.2378023119872412.

Fletcher, A.J. (2017). Applying critical realism in qualitative research: methodology meets method. *International journal of social research methodology*, *20*(2), pp.181–194.

Fletcher, J.M. and Tokmouline, M., (2017). The effects of academic probation on college success: Regression discontinuity evidence from four texas universities (No. 11232). IZA Discussion Papers.

Flowers, R.D., Luzynski, C. and Zamani-Gallaher, E.M., (2014). Male transfer student athletes and Schlossberg's transition theory. *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, 8(2), pp.99–120.

Freire, C., Ferradás, M.D.M., Regueiro, B., Rodríguez, S., Valle, A. and Núñez, J.C., (2020). Coping strategies and self-efficacy in university students: A person-centered approach. Frontiers in psychology, 11, p.841.

Friedlander, J. (1980). Are College Support Programs and Services Reaching High-Risk Students? *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 21(1), pp.23–28.

Fűzi, B. and Jármai, E., (2019). The features and types of university students from the viewpoint of teachers. Innovations, Technologies and Research in Education, p.601.

Garett, R., Liu, S. and Young, S.D., (2017). A longitudinal analysis of stress among incoming college freshmen. *Journal of American College Health*, 65(5), pp.331–338.

Gbogbo, S., (2020). Early motherhood: voices from female adolescents in the Hohoe Municipality, Ghana—a qualitative study utilizing Schlossberg's Transition Theory.

Ge, X., (2021). Emotion matters for academic success: Implications of the Article by Jarrell, Harley.

Gill, B., Ramjan, L., Koch, J., Dlugon, E., Andrew, S., & Salamonson, Y. (2023). Standardised orientation program for first year undergraduate students in the College of Health and Science at the University of Western Sydney: a practice report.

Gisanabagabo, S., Mfizi, J. and Kayonde, J.P.K., (1984). Factors Contributing to Student Placement into Academic Probation at Adventist University of Central Africa (AUCA).

Givens, J. L., & Tija, J. (2002). Depressed medical students' use of mental health services and barriers to use. *Academic Medicine,* *77*(9), 918–921. doi:10.1097/00001888-200209000-00024.

Gómez-Márquez, J., (2023). A new definition and three categories for classifying ecosystems. Academia Biology, 1(1).

Gonzalez, V. (2022). The cost of academic dismissal and attrition of students on academic probation. New Directions for Higher Education, 2022(198), pp.75–85.

Gordon, E.N. (2024). "I Feel Like I Was Set up to Fail": Exploring the Experiences of Students on Academic Probation. Journal of the National Organization for Student Success, 1(2).

Gordon, V.N. (2019). Developmental Advising: The Elusive Ideal. NACADA Journal, 39(2), pp.72-76.

Government Notice No. R. 101 published in Government Gazette No. 34020 of 18

February 2011.

Governors for California Community Colleges (California Education Code 70902 (b)(3), 2014).

Gray, R., Vitak, J., Easton, E.W., and Ellison, N.B. (2013). Examining social adjustment to college in the age of social media: Factors influencing successful transitions and persistence. Computers & Education, 67, pp.193-207.

Griffin, K.A. and Gilbert, C.K., (2015). Better transitions for troops: An application of Schlossberg's transition framework to analyses of barriers and institutional support structures for student veterans. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 86(1), pp.71–97.Guilford Press.

Guo, P., Pinto, C., Edwards, B., Pask, S., Firth, A., O'Brien, S., & Murtagh, F.E. (2022). Experiences of transitioning between settings of care from the perspectives of patients with advanced illness receiving specialist palliative care and their family caregivers: A qualitative interview study. Palliative medicine, 36(1), pp.124–134.

Gupta, A.K. & Gupta, M. (2005). Synthesis and surface engineering of iron oxide nanoparticles for biomedical applications. *biomaterials*, *26*(18), pp.3995–4021.

Gwacela, M., Kolanisi, U. and Thamaga-Chitja, J., (2015). Food insecurity in higher educational institutions: A case study of first-year students on academic probation at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *African Journal for Physical, Health Education, Recreation & Dance*.

Habley, W.R., (1994). Administrative approaches to advising undecided students. Issues in advising the undecided student, pp.17-24.

Hagler, M., Perez, D., & Cox, R. (2023). Help-seeking behaviors of first-generation college students: A cost-benefit analysis. Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice. https://doi.org/10.1177/15210251231198006.

Hamman, K. (2016). Factors that contribute to the likelihood of academic recovery. *Journal of College Student Retention*: Research, Theory & Practice, 0(0), 1-14. doi:10.1177/1521025116652636.

Han, C.W., Farruggia, S.P. and Moss, T.P., (2017). Effects of academic mindsets on college students' achievement and retention. *Journal of College Student Development*, 58(8), pp.1119-1134.

Harms, L. and Connolly, M., (2023). Social work: From theory to practice. Cambridge University Press.

Hassan, Z.A., Schattner, P. and Mazza, D., (2006). Doing a pilot study: why is it essential? *Malaysian family physician: the official journal of the Academy of Family Physicians of Malaysia*, *1*(2-3), p.70.

Haugh, H. (2012). The importance of theory in social enterprise research. Social Enterprise Journal, 8(1), pp.7–15.

Haven, T. L., & Van Grootel, D. L. (2019). Preregistering qualitative research. Accountability in Research, 26(3),229–244. https://doi.org/10.1080/08989621.2019.1580147.

Hayhow, R. & Stewart, T. (2006). Introduction to qualitative research and its application to stuttering. *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders*, *41*(5), pp.475–493.

Health Education and Training Institute. 2020. Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Advanced Standing Policy.V2.2.TRIM HEP18/8[V2].

Heisserer, D.L. & Parette, P. (2002). Advising at-risk students in college and university settings. College student journal, 36(1), pp.69–83.

Hendren, K., Newcomer, K., Pandey, S.K., Smith, M., & Sumner, N. (2023). How can qualitative research methods be leveraged to strengthen mixed methods research in public policy and public administration?. Public Administration Review, 83(3), pp.468–485.

Hendren, K., Newcomer, K., Pandey, S.K., Smith, M., & Sumner, N. (2023). How can qualitative research methods be leveraged to strengthen mixed methods research in public policy and public administration? *Public Administration Review*, *83*(3), pp.468–485.

Hendricks, S. et al. (2021). Clinical supervision in South Africa: Perceptions of supervision training, practices, and professional competencies. *South African Journal of Science*. 117, 3/4 (Mar. 2021). DOI:https://doi.org/10.17159/sajs.2021/7428.

Hennink, M. M. (2014). *Focus group discussions.* Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:osobl/9780199856169.001.0001.

Hennink, M., Hutter, I. and Bailey, A., (2020). Qualitative research methods. Sage.

Hensley, L.C., Wolters, C.A., Won, S. and Brady, A.C., 2018. Academic probation, time management, and time use in a college success course. *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 48(2), pp.105–123.

Hepworth, D., Littlepage, B., & Hancock, K. (2018). Factors Influencing University Student Academic Success. Educational Research Quarterly, 42(1).

Herget, A., (2017). Intrusive academic advising: A proactive approach to student success. HigherEd Jobs.

Holland, K. & Rees, C. (2010). *Nursing evidence-based practice skills*. Oxford University Press, USA.

Hoover, C., (2014). The purpose and practice of academic probation (Doctoral

dissertation, East Tennessee State University).

Houle, N., (2013). Academic suspension and student adjustment: How students make meaning of their experiences.

Hovdhaugen, E., (2011). Do structured study programmes lead to lower rates of dropout and student transfer from university? Irish Educational Studies, 30(2), pp.237-251.
https://www.readyeducation.com/resources/webinars/effective-communication).

Hunter, K.A. (2016). Supervision-the power to save? an exploration of the role supervision can play in a social worker's decision to resign in the child protection field (Doctoral dissertation).

Hussong, A.M., Benner, A.D., Erdem, G., Lansford, J.E., Makila, L.M., Petrie, R.C., and SRA COVID-19 Response Team, (2021). Adolescence amid a pandemic: Short-and long-term implications. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 31(3), pp.820-835.

Hutson, B.L., 2006. Monitoring for success: Implementing a proactive probation program for diverse, at-risk college students. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(4).*International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and well-being*, 15(1), p.1716620.

Isaak, M.I., Graves, K.M. and Mayers, B.O., (2006). Academic, motivational, and emotional problems identified by college students in academic jeopardy. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 8(2), pp.171-183.
IX, G.S.V., STATS SA.

Jama, M.P., Mapesela, M.L. and Beylefeld, A.A., (2008). Theoretical perspectives on factors affecting the academic performance of students. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 22(5), pp.992–1005.

Jena, P.K., 2018. Academic counselling services in Indira Gandhi National Open

University (IGNOU*). International Journal of Advanced Research (IJAR),* 6.

Jin, S., Zheng, L., Wen, J., & Miao, M. (2022). The relationship between active coping and hope during the COVID-19 pandemic: The mediating role of meaning in life. Journal of Health Psychology, 27(12), pp.2685–2695.

Jin, Y., (2022). The promoting effect of mental health education on students' social adaptability: implications for environmental. Journal of Environmental and Public Health, 2022(1), p.1607456.

Johnson, C., Deming-Hodapp, D. and Johnsen, L., (2005). Mentor connection: building success for students on academic probation. Academic Advising Today, 28(4).

Johnson, M.E. (2018). The effects of traumatic experiences on academic relationships and expectations in justice-involved children. Psychology in the Schools, 55(3), pp.240–249.

Jony, M.S., (2022). Exploring the reasons for academic probation among private university students in Bangladesh. *European Journal of Journal of Psychology*, 129(5), pp.553-558.

Jusri, R. & Lechner, C. (2024). The level and development of university students' social integration: Personality traits and person-environment fit predict integration with fellow students and teaching staff. Higher Education, pp.1–20.

Kadiyono, A.L. and Hafiar, H., (2017). The role of academic self-management in improving students' academic achievement. In Ideas for 21st Century Education (pp. 117-120). Routledge.

Kahu, E., Stephens, C., Leach, L. & Zepke, N. (2015). Linking academic emotions and student engagement: Mature-aged distance students' transition to university. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 39(4), pp.481–497.

Kahu, E.R. & Nelson, K. (2018). Student engagement in the educational interface: Understanding the mechanisms of student success. Higher education research & development, 37(1), pp.58–71.

Kalkbrenner, M.T., Jolley, A., Hays, D.G. (2021). Faculty views on college student mental health: Implications for retention and student success. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 23(3), pp.636–658.

Kamphoff, C.S., Hutson, B.L., Amundsen, S.A. and Atwood, J.A., (2007). A motivational/empowerment model applied to students on academic probation. *Journal of College Student Retention*: Research, Theory & Practice, 8(4), pp.397–412.

Karadsheh, M. & Rezaee, A. (2020). Social, Economic, and Academic Characteristics of Students on Academic Probation at Sultan Qaboos University: A Field Study. *Jordan Journal of Social Sciences*, 13(2).

Karlsen, L. and Lekhal, R. (2019). Practitioner involvement and support in children's learning during free play in two Norwegian kindergartens. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 17(3), pp.233–246.

Kezar, A., & Holcombe, E. M. (2022). Belonging in higher education: Addressing systemic barriers to support student success. New Directions for Higher Education, 2022(201), 49–60.

Kift, S., Nelson, K. and Clarke, J. (2010). Transition pedagogy: A third generation approach to FYE-A case study of policy and practice for the higher education sector. Student Success, 1(1), pp.1-20.

Killam, W.K. and Degges-White, S., (2017).). Introduction to student affairs and student development issues. College student development: Applying theory to practice on a diverse campus, pp.1–12.

King, N., & Horrocks, C. (2010). Interviews in qualitative research. London: Sage.

Kirkpatrick, M.A., Stant, K., Downes, S. and Gaither, L., (2008). Perceived locus of control and academic performance: Broadening the construct's applicability. *Journal of College Student Development*, 49(5), pp.486–496.

Kivunja, C. and Kuyini, A.B., (2017). Understanding and applying research paradigms in educational contexts. *International Journal of Higher Education*, *6*(5), pp.26–41.

Kivunja, C., (2018). Distinguishing between theory, theoretical framework, and conceptual framework: A systematic review of lessons from the field. *International journal of higher education*, 7(6), pp.44-53.

Kocak, G.N. and Sever, N.S., (2011). Should I take it or should I not? Exploration of students' course choice as a product. International Review of Management And Marketing, 1(1), pp.1-7.

Koch, L.C., Niesz, T. and McCarthy, H., (2014). Understanding and reporting qualitative research: An analytical review and recommendations for submitting authors. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*, *57*(3), pp.131–143.

Koch, L.F. (2014). The nursing educator's role in e-learning: A literature review. *Nurse education today*, *34*(11), pp.1382–1387.

Koen, C., Cele, M. and Libhaber, A., (2006). Student activism and student exclusions in South Africa. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 26(4), pp.404–414.

Koerber, A. and McMichael, L., 2008. Qualitative sampling methods: A primer for technical communicators. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, *22*(4), pp.454–473.

Komarraju, M. & Nadler, D. (2013). Self-efficacy and academic achievement: Why do implicit beliefs, goals, and effort regulation matter? Learning and individual differences, 25, pp.67-72.

Kovach, M., (2018). A review of classical motivation theories: A study of understanding the value of locus of control in Higher Education. Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Education, 7(1), pp.34-53.

Krefting, L., (1991). Rigor in qualitative research: The assessment of trustworthiness. *The American journal of occupational therapy*, *45*(3), pp.214-222.

Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Buckley, J., Bridges, B. K, & Hayek, J. C. (2011). Piecing together the student success puzzle: Research, propositions, and recommendations. ASHE Higher Education Report, 116(5), 1-182

Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J. H., & Whitt, E. J. (2005). Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter. Jossey-Bass.

Kuh, G., Strydom, F. and Loots, S., (2017). Engaging students: Using evidence to promote student success (p. 262). UJ Press.

Kuh, G.D. and Love, P.G., (2000). A cultural perspective on student departure. Reworking the student departure puzzle, 1, pp.196–212.

Kuh, G.D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J.H., Whitt, E.J., & Associates (2005). Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kuh, G.D., Kinzie, J.L., Buckley, J.A., Bridges, B.K. and Hayek, J.C., (2006). *What matters to student success: A review of the literature* (Vol. 8). Washington, DC: National Postsecondary Education Cooperative.

Kulesza, M., Pedersen, E. R., & Larimer, M. E. (2023). Self-esteem, perceived stigma, and help-seeking among college students. Psychological Services, 20(1), 101–109.

Lajoie and Naismith (2017) for creating nurturing and supportive learning

environments to help students manage their emotions. Educational Technology Research and Development, 69(1), pp.67–70.

Lake, W., Luke, H. and Boyd, B., (2020). Mismatch between student and university expectations of academic achievement: A negative outcome from well-intentioned student support or a driver for improved academic performance? *Journal of perspectives in applied academic practice*, *8*(2), pp.97–106.

Lambert, C.P. and Siegel, D.H., (2018). Social workers in higher education: new roles, new opportunities. *Social Work Today*, 18 (5), pp.16–20.

Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). Stress, appraisal, and coping. New \brk: Springer.

Lee, D.S., (2008). Randomized experiments from non-random selection in US House elections. *Journal of Econometrics*, 142(2), pp.675–697.

Leedy, P. D., &Ormrod, J. E. (2005). Practical research: planning and design. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Leon, M.A.B., Scott, A.G., Koke, A.M., Fiorini, S. and Rangazas, A., 2019. Claiming their education: The impact of a required course for academic probation students with a focus on purpose and motivation. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 19(4).

Li, H. and Boey, K.W., (2002). Development of the college stress scale. *Chinese Journal of Applied Psychology*, 8(1), pp.27–32.

Lindo, J.M., Sanders, N.J. and Oreopoulos, P., (2010). Ability, gender, and performance standards: Evidence from academic probation. American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 2(2), pp.95–117.

Locke, E.A. and Latham, G.P., (2002). Building a practically useful theory of goal

setting and task motivation: A 35-year odyssey. American psychologist, 57(9), p.705.

Lotkowski, V.A., Robbins, S.B., & Noeth, R.J. (2004). The Role of Academic and Non-Academic Factors in Improving College Retention. ACT Policy Report. American College Testing ACT Inc.

Love, H.A., Goodcase, E.T., and Durtschi, J.A., (2019). Negentropy in family systems theory. In Encyclopedia of couple and family therapy (pp. 2022-2024). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Lowe, N.K. (2019). What is a pilot study?. *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing*, *48*(2), pp.117–118.

Lyons, P., (2015). The role of the police in building community identity among young people. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 85(6S), p.S100.

Mack, N., (2005). Qualitative research methods: A data collector's field guide.

Maher, M. & Macallister, H. (2013). Retention and attrition of students in higher education: Challenges in modern times to what works. Higher Education Studies, 3(2).

Makhmudova, S.Z., (2024). Features of the mechanisms of psychological counseling are individual and in small groups. *American Journal of Social Sciences and Humanity Research*, 4(10), pp.300-315.

Malmqvist, J., Hellberg, K., Möllås, G., Rose, R. and Shevlin, M., (2019). Conducting the pilot study: A neglected part of the research process? Methodological findings supporting the importance of piloting in qualitative research studies. *International journal of qualitative methods*, 18, p.1609406919878341.

Mann, J.R., Hunt, M.D. and Alford, J.G., (2003). Monitored probation: A program that works. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 5(3), pp.245-254.

Manyedi, M.E., Koen, M.P., & Greeff, M. (2003). Experiences of widowhood and beliefs about the mourning process of the Batswana people. Health SA Gesondheid, 8(4), pp.69-87.

Maree, K. (2016). First Steps in Research (2nd ed.). Braamfontein: Van Schaik Publishers.

Martin, A.J. & Marsh, H.W. (2006). Academic resilience and its psychological and educational correlates: A construct validity approach. Psychology in the Schools, 43(3), pp.267–281.

Martinko, M.J. and Mackey, J.D., (2019). Attribution theory: An introduction to the special issue. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 40(5), pp.523-527.

Masengeni, M., (2019). Building trust between academic advisers and students in the academic advising centre at a private higher education institution. Educor Multidisciplinary Journal, 3(1), pp.159–172.

Matkin, W., Ordonez-Mena, J.M., & Hartmann-Boyce, J. (2019). Telephone counselling for Smoking cessation. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, Issue 5 Art No. CD002850.

Mayes, A.N. & McConatha, J. (1982). Surveying student needs: A means of evaluating student services. *Journal of College Student Personnel*.

McCallum, F., (2021). Teacher and staff wellbeing: Understanding the experiences of school staff. In The Palgrave handbook of positive education (pp. 715–740). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

McCoy, M.R. (2018). Holistic approaches to advising students on academic probation.

McFadyen, J., & Rankin, J. (2016). The role of gatekeepers in research: Learning from reflexivity and reflection. *GSTF Journal of Nursing and Health Care, 4*(1), 82–88

McGrath, C., Liljedahl, M. and Palmgren, P.J., (2020). You say it, we say it, but how do we use it? Communities of practice: a critical analysis. Medical education, 54(3), pp.188–195.

McGrath, M.M. & Braunstein, A. (1997). The prediction of freshmen attrition: An examination of the importance of certain demographic... College student journal, 31(3).

Mcleod, S., (2023). Qualitative vs quantitative research methods & data analysis. simplypsychology. org Available: https://www. simplypsychology. org/qualitative-quantitative. html [Accessed Feb. 12th, 2023].

McPherson, M.P. & Arbelo Marrero, F. (2021). Latinx community college students on academic probation: Struggles and success. *The Journal of the National Academic Advising Association*, 41(1), pp.33–46.

Mearns, J. (2008). The social learning theory of Julian B. Rotter. Retrieved October 1, 2008, from http//psych.fullerton.edu/jmearns/rotter.htm.

Melbourne-Thomas, J., Wotherspoon, S., Raymond, B. and Constable, A., (2012). Comprehensive evaluation of model uncertainty in qualitative network analyses. Ecological Monographs, 82(4), pp.505–519.

Mireles-Rios, R., Rios, V.M. and Reyes, A., (2020). Pushed out for missing school: The role of social disparities and school truancy in dropping out. Education Sciences, 10(4), p.108.

Mitchell, S., Morris, A., Bennett, K., Sajid, L. and Dale, J., (2017). Specialist paediatric palliative care services: what are the benefits? Archives of disease in childhood, 102(10), pp.923–929.

Mkumbo, K.A. & Amani, J. (2012). Perceived university students' attributions of their academic success and failure. Asian social science, 8(7), p.247.

Mngomezulu, B.R. and Maposa, M.T., (2017). The challenges facing academic scholarship in Africa. In Knowledge and change in African universities (pp. 175- 188). Brill.

Moeller, R.W., Seehuus, M. and Peisch, V., (2020). Emotional intelligence, belongingness, and mental health in college students. Frontiers in psychology, 11, p.499794.

Mofatteh, M., 2020. Risk factors associated with stress, anxiety, and depression among university undergraduate students. AIMS public health, 8(1), p.36.

Mogashana, D. and Basitere, M. (2021). Proactive student psychosocial support intervention through life coaching: A case study of a first-year chemical engineering extended curriculum programme. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*, 9(2), pp.217–231.

Montgomery, C., (2017). Development and testing of a theoretical-empirical model of educator stress, coping, and burnout. Educator stress: An occupational health perspective, pp.181–195.

Morris, T., (2006). Social work research methods: Four alternative paradigms. Sage.

Moscovice, L.R., Sueur, C. and Aureli, F., 2020. How socio-ecological factors influence the differentiation of social relationships: an integrated conceptual framework. Biology Letters, 16(9), p.20200384.

Mosier, S.B., (2018). Academic probation and self-efficacy: Investigating the relationship between academic probation types and academic self-efficacy measures. Johnson & Wales University.

Moss, B.G. & Kelcey, B. (2022). Words of warning: A randomized study of the impact

of assorted warning letters on academic probation students. Community College Review, 50(3), pp.253–268.

Moss, B.G. and Yeaton, W.H. (2015). Failed warnings: Evaluating the impact of academic probation warning letters on student achievement. Evaluation Review, 39(5), pp.501–524.

Moule, P., & Goodman, M. (2014). Nursing research: An introduction. In P. Moule & M. Goodman (Eds.), Sources of nursing knowledge (2nd ed., pp. 21–30). London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Mphahlele, R., Mothiba, T., & Rabothata, M. (2025). Masculinity and mental health: Barriers to help-seeking among male college students in South Africa. South African Journal of Psychology, 55(2), 143–158.

Mthimunye, K., & Daniels, F. (2024). Language barriers and academic support among South African nursing students. African Journal of Health Professions Education, 16(1), 21–26.

Murtaugh, P.A., Burns, L.D. and Schuster, J., (1999). Predicting the retention of university students. Research in higher education, 40(3), pp.355–371.

Muswazi, M. & Nhamo, E. (2013). Note taking: A lesson for novice qualitative researchers. *Journal of Research & Method in Education*, *2*(3), pp.13–17.

Mutinta, G., 2022. Mental distress among university students in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. BMC Psychology, 10(1), p.204.

Nadler, A., Fisher, J.D., & Streufert, S. (1976). When helping hurts: Effects of donor-recipient similarity and recipient self-esteem on reactions to aid 1. *Journal of Personality*, 44(3), pp.392-409.

Nakazawa DJ (2016). Childhood disrupted: How your biography becomes your biology,

and how you can heal. New York: Atria.

Naparan, Janus, and Lomocso, Rosebelt, and Naparan, Genesis B., Survival Stories of Former Academic Probationary Students: A Narrative Inquiry (February 27, 2024). Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=4740037 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4740037.

Nasheeda, A., Crafting A Research Problem Statement. Research Digest, p.2.

Nasution, M.K. and Aulia, I., (2019, June). Design of the research problem statement. In *Journal of Physics*: Conference Series (Vol. 1235, No. 1, p. 012115). IOP Publishing.

Naz, S., Nawaz, S., Liaqat, S., Rasheed, T. and Fatima, S., (2021). Effects of social and psychological factors on students #39; learning achievements in English at the intermediate level in Pakistan. PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology, 18(4).

Nedregård, O., and B. Abrahamsen. 2018. Frafall fra profesjonsutdanningene ved OsloMet. Rapport nr. 8/2018. Oslo: OsloMet.

Negut, C.N., 2020. Psychosocial Factors Involved in Dropping Out of University Education. New Trends in Psychology, 2(2).

Nelson-Le Gall, S. (1986). Help-seeking behavior in learning. ERIC Clearinghouse.

Neuman, S.B. (2006). How we neglect knowledge-and why. *American Educator*, *30*(1), p.24.

Ngaboyishema, J.M., Gisanabagabo, S. and Kayonde, J.P.K., Perception of Stress among Masters' Students at Adventist University of Central Africa (AUCA).

Nilson, L.B. (2016). *Teaching at its best: A research-based resource for college instructors*. John Wiley & Sons.

Noble, K. & Henderson, R. (2011). The promotion of" character" and its relationship to retention in higher education. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education* (Online), 36(3), pp.24–36.

Norton, A. and Cherastidtham, I., (2018). Dropping out: The benefits and costs of trying university. Grattan Institute.

Okeke, N., & Uzochukwu, O. N. (2005). Locus of control: Influence on students' academic performance and achievement. The Educational Psychologist (NCEP).

Ong, V.M., (2017). The Elephant in the Classroom: College Students' Perceptions of Mental Health and Barriers to Accessing Mental Health Services on College Campuses (Master's thesis, Middle Tennessee State University).

Oripova, M., (2022). The impact of intrusive college academic advising on high school students’ college degree attainment commitment levels: A quantitative quasi-experimental study. Social Sciences &Humanities Open, 6(1), p.100315.

Osborn, T.G., Town, R., Ellis, R., Buckman, J.E.J., Saunders, R. and Fonagy, P., (2022). Implementing peer support in higher education: A feasibility study. SSM-Mental Health, 2, p.100175.

Özgan, H., (2016). The usage of domination strategies in conflicts between the teachers and students: A case study. Educational Research and Reviews, 11(4), pp.146–152.

Paideya, V. and Bengesai, A.V., (2021). Predicting patterns of persistence at a South African university: a decision tree approach. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 35(6), pp.1245–1262. Palgrave Macmillan.

Papworth, L., (2020). Intensive student support coordination. JANZSSA: Journal of the Australian and New Zealand Student Services Association, 28(2), pp.102–107.

Parviainen, M., Aunola, K., Torppa, M., Poikkeus, A.M. and Vasalampi, K., (2020). Symptoms of psychological ill-being and school dropout intentions among upper secondary education students: A person-centered approach. Learning and Individual Differences, 80, p.101853.

Pascarella, E.T. & Terenzini, P.T. (1991). How college affects students: Findings and insights from twenty years of research. Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers, PO Box 44305, San Francisco, CA 94144-4305 (ISBN-1-55542-304-3--$75.00, herdcover)..

Pascarella, E.T. & Terenzini, P.T. (2005). How College Affects Students: A Third Decade of Research. Volume 2. Jossey-Bass, An Imprint of Wiley. 10475 Crosspoint Blvd, Indianapolis, IN 46256.

Pascoe, M.C., Hetrick, S.E. and Parker, A.G., (2020). The impact of stress on students in secondary school and higher education. *International journal of adolescence and youth*, 25(1), pp.104–112.

Patel, M. and Patel, N. (2019). Exploring research methodology. *International Journal of Research and Review*, *6*(3), pp.48–55.

Pathak, V., Jena, B. and Kalra, S., (2013). Qualitative research. *Perspectives in clinical research*, *4*(3), p.192.

Patte, K.A., Battista, K., Goddard, J., Ferro, J., & Leatherdale, S.T. (2024). Students' reasons for being reluctant to seek help for mental health concerns in secondary schools. Cogent Mental Health, 3(1), pp.1–17.

Pedrelli, P., Nyer, M., & Yeung, A. (2022). Stigma as a barrier to help-seeking among college students. Journal of Affective Disorders, 296, 543–550.

Pelch, M. (2018). Gendered differences in academic emotions and their implications for student success in STEM. *International Journal of STEM Education*, 5(1), p.33.

Pettay, R., (2007). Making the transition from prescriptive advising to advising as teaching. Academic Advising Today, 30(2).

Polit D. F., Beck C. T. (2017). Nursing research: Generating and assessing evidence for nursing practice (10th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Wolters Kluwer.

Powers, M.S., 2010. Applying Schlossberg's transition theory to nontraditional male drop-outs.

Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation, 20(5), 1-20. Pretoria: Government Printer.Psychological Bulletin, 98(2), p.310.Psychological Review, 86(5), p.452.

Queirós, A., Faria, D. and Almeida, F., (2017). Strengths and limitations of qualitative and quantitative research methods. European journal of education studies.

Queirós, A., Faria, D. and Almeida, F., (2017). Strengths and limitations of qualitative and quantitative research methods. *European journal of education studies*.

QUIA, 2022, Social work chapters 1-3. https://www.quia.com/jg/1444550list.html Accessed 10/10/2022.

Quinton, S. (2015, December 31). States to colleges: Prove you're worth it. Stateline. Rae,J.and Green,B.(2016).Portraying reflexivity in health services research. *Qualitative health research*, *26*(11), pp.1543-1549.ni

Ratan, S.K., Anand, T. and Ratan, J., (2019). Formulation of research question–Stepwise approach. *Journal of Indian Association of Pediatric Surgeons*, *24*(1), pp.15-20.

Renzulli, S.J., (2015). Using learning strategies to improve the academic performance of university students on academic probation. *The Journal of the National Academic Advising Association*, 35(1), pp.29-41. Retrieved from http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and- analysis/blogs/stateline/2015/12/31/best-of-

stateline-states-to-colleges-prove- youre-worth-it

Republic of South Africa. (1996). National Education Policy Act (No. 27 of 1996).

Republic of South Africa. (1997). Higher Education Act (No. 101 of 1997). Pretoria: Government Printer Reworking the student departure puzzle, 1(48-61), p.12.

Rosen, S., Mickler, S.E., and Collins II, J.E. (1987). Reactions of would-be helpers whose offer of help is spurned. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53(2), p.288.

Rosenbalm, B. and Story, R.T., EdNC. Essential education news. Important stories.

Roudsari, R.L., 2019. Critical Appraisal of Research Evidence at a Glance. *Journal of Midwifery & reproductive Health*, *7*(3).

Rouse, K.D. (2021). A Qualitative Intrinsic Case Study of Persons with Social Work Degrees Working on College Campuses. Ohio University.

Rowe, A.D. and Fitness, J. (2018). Understanding the role of negative emotions in adult learning and achievement: A social functional perspective. Behavioral sciences, 8(2), p.27.

Rowe, A.D., Fitness, J. and Wood, L.N., (2014). The role and functionality of emotions in feedback at university: A qualitative study. The Australian Educational Researcher, 41, pp.283–309.

Ryan, J., Keller, T. E., & Rosenthal, M. (2023). Academic support utilization and psychological distress among undergraduates. Journal of College Student Development, 64(2), 135–150.

Ryan, J.B. and Mooney, P., (2024). Assessing Problem Behaviors. In *The Special Educator's Guide to Behavior Management* (pp. 213-228). Routledge.

Sage, T.L. (2010). Academic probation: How students navigate and make sense of their experiences (Doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, College of Fine Arts and Communication).

Saldana, J., (2014). *Thinking qualitatively: Methods of mind*. SAGE Publications, Santa Rita, E., and Scranton, B., 2001. Retention Strategies, 2001-2003.

Sarette, N., (2022). The relationship between race and high school and college drop out rates. Perspectives, 14(1), p.3.

Sassler, S. & Miller, A.J. (2011). Waiting to be asked: Gender, power, and relationship progression among cohabiting couples. *Journal of Family Issues*, *32*(4), pp.482–506.

Schlossberg, N.K., 1981. A model for analyzing human adaptation to transition. The counseling psychologist, 9(2), pp.2-18.

Schlossberg, N.K., (2007). Overwhelmed: Coping with life's ups and downs. M. Evans.

Schlossberg, N.K., 2011. The challenge of change: The transition model and its applications. *Journal of employment counseling*, 48(4), p.159.

Schmidt, J., Schmidt, M. and Brown, I., (2017). Quality of life among families of children with intellectual disabilities: A Slovene study. Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities, 14(1), pp.87-102.

Schmidt, N. & Brown, J.M. (2017). What is evidence-based practice?. *Evidence-Based Practice for Nurses: Appraisal and Application of Research: Appraisal and Application of Research*, p.1.

Schunk, D. & Zimmerman, B. (2006). Competence and control beliefs. Handbook of educational psychology, pp.349–367.

Schwartz-Shea, P. and Yanow, D. (2013). *Interpretive research design: Concepts and processes*. Routledge.

Scott, I. (2017). Reflections on student success in South African higher education. Journal of Student Affairs in Africa, 5(1), 1–13.

Scutter, S., Palmer, E., Luzecky, A., Da Silva, K.B. and Brinkworth, R., (2011). What do commencing undergraduate students expect from their first year at university? *International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education*, 2(1).

Seidman, A. (Ed.) (2005). College student retention: Formula for student success.

Servaty-Seib, H.L. and Hamilton, L.A., (2006). Educational performance and persistence of bereaved college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 47(2), pp.225–234.

Severiens, S. and Ten Dam, G. (2012). Leaving college: A gender comparison in male and female-dominated programs. Research in higher education, 53, pp.453–470.

Sharp, J.G., Hemmings, B. and Kay, R., 2016. Towards a model for the assessment of student boredom and boredom proneness in the UK higher education context. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 40(5), pp.649-681.

Shaw, I., & Holland, S (2014). Doing Qualitative Research in Social Work. London: Sage.

Shove, E. and Walker, G. (2014). What is energy for? Social practice and energy demand. Theory, culture & society, 31(5), pp.41–58.

Silverman, S.L. (1989). Students on academic probation: factors related to help rejection.

Singh, K.D. (2015). Creating your own qualitative research approach: Selecting, integrating and operationalizing philosophy, methodology and methods. *Vision*, *19*(2), pp.132–146.

Sithaldeen, R., Phetlhu, O., Kokolo, B. and August, L., (2022). Student sense of belonging and its impacts on help-seeking behaviour. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 36(6), pp.67–87.

Sneyers, E. & De Witte, K. (2018). Interventions in higher education and their effect on student success: A meta-analysis. Educational Review, 70(2), pp.208-228.

Sogobile, W.N.T. and Khunou, S.H., (2023). Exploring student midwives experiences regarding completion of the midwifery register at a nursing college in Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. *African Journal of Health Professions Education*, 15(3), pp.2-13.

Somo, C.M., (2013). Success stories of students after academic probation (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pretoria).

Spurling, S. and Gabriner, R. (2003). Students on academic probation at City College of San Francisco. San Francisco, CA: City College of San Francisco. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 481773).

Stoet, G. & Geary, D.C. (2020). Gender differences in the pathways to higher education. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 117(25), pp.14073–14076.

Stone, S. & Zibulsky, J. (2015). Maltreatment, academic difficulty, and systems-involved youth: Current evidence and opportunities. Psychology in the Schools, 52(1), pp.22–39.

Stratford, M. (2015). The new college scorecard. Inside Higher Ed. Retrieved from https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/09/14/obama- administration-publishes-

new-college-earnings-loan-repayment-data

Strydom, F., Kuh, G. and Loots, S., (2017). Student engagement in South African higher education: Taking stock and moving forward. Engaging students: Using evidence to promote student success, 219.

Suleman, Q. & Hussain, I. (2016). Effects of Eclectic Learning Approach on Students' Academic Achievement and Retention in English at Elementary Level. Journal of Education and Practice, 7(16), pp.32-37.

SUNY Empire State College (2019). https://sunyempire.edu/policies/? search=cid% 3D121110 Accessed 27 January 2025.

Sweeney, D., & McFarland, K. (2015). Group identity and academic help-seeking behavior: A study of college students. Frontiers in Psychology, 6, 1462. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01462.

Taherdoost, H., (2022). What are the different research approaches? Comprehensive review of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method research, their applications, types, and limitations. Journal of Management Science & Engineering Research, 5(1), pp.53-63.

Takács, R., Takács, S., T Kárász, J., Horváth, Z. and Oláh, A., (2021). Exploring the coping strategies of different generations of students starting university. Frontiers in psychology, 12, p.740569.

Teherani, A., Martimianakis, T., Stenfors-Hayes, T., Wadhwa, A., & Varpio, L. (2015). Choosing a qualitative research approach. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, 7(4), pp.669–670.

Tessler, R.C. and Schwartz, S.H., (1972). Help seeking, self-esteem, and achievement motivation: an attributional analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 21(3), p.318.

Teuber, M., Leyhr, D. and Sudeck, G., (2024). Physical activity improves stress load, recovery, and academic performance-related parameters among university students: a longitudinal study on daily level. BMC Public Health, 24(1), p.598.

Thabane, L., Ma, J., Chu, R., Cheng, J., Ismaila, A., Rios, L.P., Robson, R., Thabane, M., Giangregorio, L., & Goldsmith, C.H. (2010). A tutorial on pilot studies: the what, why and how. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, *10*, pp.1–10.

Thoits, P.A., (2010). Stress and health: Major findings and policy implications. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 51(1_suppl), pp.S41-S53.

Thomas, D.R. and Hodges, I.D., (2010). Designing and managing your research project: Core skills for social and health research.

Thomas, L. (2012). Building student engagement and belonging in higher education at a time of change. Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

Thomas, N.G. (2020). Using intrusive advising to improve student outcomes in developmental college courses. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 22(2), pp.251–272.

Tinto, V. (1993). Heaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Tinto, V. (2012). Completing college: Rethinking institutional action. University of Chicago Press.

Tinto, V. (2017). Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition.

Tinto, V., (2012). Enhancing student success: Taking the classroom success seriously. Student Success, 3(1), p.1.

Tiroyabone, G.W. & Strydom, F. (2021). The development of academic advising to enable student success in South Africa. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*, 9(2), pp.1-16.

Torenbeek, M., Jansen, E. & Hofman, A. (2010). The effect of the fit between secondary and university education on first-year student achievement. Studies in higher education, 35(6), pp.659–675.

Tovar, E. and Simon, M.A., (2006). Academic probation as a dangerous opportunity: Factors influencing diverse college students' success. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 30(7), pp.547–564.

Tracy, S. J. (2019). Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact (2nd ed.). Wiley.

Trub, L., Berler, M. and Magaldi, D., (2022). Collisions and collusions with new norms: Renegotiating time and space in a pre-pandemic digital era. *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration*, *32*(1), p.64.

Tshwane University of Technology. (2018). Chapter 2. Prospectus 2018-Students' Rules and Regulations.

Tucker, G., Bradley, D., Millar, R., Thorne, C. and Diehl, C., (2022). Informal student caregivers: balancing caregiving responsibilities and achieving academic success. Innovation in Aging, 6(Suppl 1), p.34.

Uche, M.C. (2023). The Challenges of Teaching English Language and Literature in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of African Studies* (NJAS), 5(1).

Ulz, J., (2023). What is a research paradigm? Types of research paradigms with examples. Researcher. Life.

University of Cape Town (UCT). 2024. Faculty of Humanities. https://uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/media/documents/HUM_UG_Handbook_2024 University of Chicago Press.

University of Pretoria. (2023). Appeals Submission Guide. www.up.ac.za › shared › appeals-submission-guide.zp240927.pdf (Accessed 25/01/25).

University of South Africa. (2017). Admission and re-admission rules (academic progression). Pretoria.

University of South Africa. (2019). Rules for students. Pretoria.

University of the Free State.(2022). General Academic Rules and Regulations.

Van der Zanden, P.J., Denessen, E., Cillessen, A.H. and Meijer, P.C., (2018). Domains and predictors of first-year student success: A systematic review. Educational Research Review, 23, pp.57-77.

Vanacore, S.M. and Dahan, T.A., 2021). Assessing the effectiveness of a coaching intervention for students on academic probation. *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 51(1), pp.3–16.

Vander Schee, B.A., (2007). Adding insight to intrusive advising and its effectiveness with students on probation. *Nacada Journal*, 27(2), pp.50-59.

Varney, J., (2007). Intrusive advising. Academic Advising Today, 30(3), p.11.

Varpio, L., Paradis, E., Uijtdehaage, S. and Young, M., (2020). The distinctions between theory, theoretical framework, and conceptual framework. Academic medicine, 95(7), pp.989–994.

Vasilko, K.,(2021). The Effects of Bereavements on College Students: Finding Solutions for Support and Success. *The* Macksey *Journal*, *2*(1).

Viviers, H.A., De Villiers, R.R. and Van der Merwe, N., (2023). The impact of self-efficacy beliefs on first-year accounting students' performance: A South African perspective. Accounting Education, 32(6), pp.646-669.

Vogt, W.P., Gardner, D.C. and Haeffele, L.M., (2012). *When to use what research design*.

Voigt, L. & Hundrieser, J. (2008). Student success, retention, and graduation: Definitions, theories, practices, patterns, and trends. Noel-Lewitz Retention Codifications. November, 1, p.22.

Vorfeld, P., (2023). Sense of Belonging and Academic Success. Southern New Hampshire University.

Wahyuni, D. (2012). The Research Design Maze: Understanding Paradigms, Cases, Methods and Methodologies. CLOCK. Vol. 10. No. 1, pp. 69-80.

Walker, A., (2015). *Project management in construction*. John Wiley & Sons.

Walsh, F., (2020). Loss and resilience in the time of COVID-19: Meaning making, hope, and transcendence. Family process, 59(3), pp.898-911.

Waltenbury, M., Brady, S., Gallo, M., Redmond, N., Draper, S. and Fricker, T., (2018). Academic probation: Evaluating the impact of academic standing notification letters on students. Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.

Warikoo, N. & Demirdogen, E.S. (2021). Effective clinical caseload management strategies from the perspective of a community consultant psychiatrist: Qualitative analysis. medRxiv, pp.2021-05.

Watson, M.B. and Foxcroft, C.D., (2015). Development and validation of a managerial decision-making self-efficacy questionnaire. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*,

41(1), pp.1–15.

Webb, M.J., Sangsuwannukul, T., van Vloten, J., Evgin, L., Kendall, B., Tonne, J., Thompson, J., Metko, M., Moore, M., Chiriboga Yerovi, M.P. and Olin, M., (2024). Expression of tumor antigens within an oncolytic virus enhances the anti-tumor T cell response. Nature Communications, 15(1), p.5442.

Webber-Ritchey, K.J., Spurlark, R., Lofton, S., Brown, E., Lattner, C., Nwafor, G., Ponder, T.N. and Simonovic, S.D., Exploring the Experience of Black Nurses Practicing during COVID-19: A Qualitative Descriptive Study. *Board Members*, p.76.

Weiss, M., Brock, T., Sommo, C., Rudd, T. and Turner, M.C., (2011). Serving Community College Students on Probation: Four-Year Findings from Chaffey College's Opening Doors Program. MDRC.

Wessels, J.S. (2020). Challenges to inform the curricula of Master of Public Administration programmes. Teaching Public Administration, 38(2), pp.144-167. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.

Wildschut, A., Mncwango, B., Rogan, M., Rust, J., Fongwa, S. and Meiring, L., (2018). The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) and its impact: Exploring the absorption into employment of NSFAS-funded graduates.

Williams, S. and Conroy, D. (2022). 1 Being prepared. *A Student's Guide to Placements in Health and Social Care Settings*, p.7.

Woodfield, R., (2017). Undergraduate students who are required to withdraw from university: The role of ethnicity. British Educational Research Journal, 43(2), pp.230-252.

Wright, N.A. (2020). Perform better, or else: Academic probation, public praise, and students decision-making. Labour Economics, 62, p.101773.

Xu, X., Schönrock-Adema, J., Jaarsma, A.D.C., Duvivier, R.J. and Bos, N.A., (2022). A conducive learning environment in international higher education: A systematic review of research on students' perspectives. Educational Research Review, 37, p.100474.

Yadav, A., (2023). Locus of Control and Academic Scores of Undergraduate Students.

Yadusky, K., Kheang, S. and Hoggan, C., (2021). Helping underprepared students succeed: Minimizing threats to identity. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 45(6), pp.423–436.

Yazedjian, A., Toews, M.L., Sevin, T. and Purswell, K.E., (2008). " It's a Whole New World": A qualitative exploration of college students' definitions of and strategies for college success. *Journal of College Student Development*, 49(2), pp.141–154.

Yeager, D.S. & Dweck, C.S. (2012). Mindsets that promote resilience: When students believe that personal characteristics can be developed. Educational psychologist, 47(4), pp.302–314.

Yegidis, B.L., Weinbach, R.W., & Myers, L.L. (2018). Research methods for social workers (8 edition).

Yilmaz, K., (2013). Comparison of quantitative and qualitative research traditions: Epistemological, theoretical, and methodological differences. *European journal of education*, *48*(2), pp.311-325.

Yin, R. K. (2009). Case study research: Design and methods (4 ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

York, T. T., Gibson, C., & Rankin, S. (2015). Defining and measuring academic success.

Yorke, M., (2004). Employability in the undergraduate curriculum: Some student perspectives. *European journal of education*, 39(4), pp.409–427.

Young, D.G. and Keup, J.R., (2016). Using hybridization and specialization to enhance the first-year experience in community colleges: A national picture of high-impact practices in first-year seminars. New Directions for Community Colleges, 2016(175), pp.57–69.Your voice.

Zhang, C., Shi, L., Tian, T., Zhou, Z., Peng, X., Shen, Y., Li, Y., and Ou, J., (2022). Associations between academic stress and depressive symptoms mediated by anxiety symptoms and hopelessness among Chinese college students. Psychology Research and Behavior Management, pp.547–556.

Zhang, X., Gossett, C., Simpson, J., & Davis, R. (2019). Advising students for success in higher education: An all-out effort. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 21(1), pp.53–77.

Zimmerman, B. J., & Schunk, D. H. (2011). Self-regulated learning and academic achievement: Theoretical perspectives. Routledge.

Zimmerman, B.J. (2008). Investigating self-regulation and motivation: Historical background, methodological developments, and future prospects. American educational research journal, 45(1), pp.166–183.

Annexures

Annexure A: UNISA ethical clearance

UNISA university of south africa

CONFIRMATION LETTER BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SCIENTIFIC REVIEW COMMITTEE (SRC) OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

Name of candidate: Ms NF Ravhuhali
Student number: 41454928
Qualification: Doctor of Social Work (DSW)
Supervisor: Prof BJ Mohapi
Co-supervisor: Dr M Dipela

Working title

The psychosocial experiences, challenges and needs of university students studying under enrolment conditions programme in the Free State Province: Suggested guidelines for enhanced psychosocial support

The Departmental Scientific Review Committee (DSRC) in the Department of Social Work at Unisa has assessed the research proposal for **DSW degree** compliance for scientific validity. The DSRC confirms that:

- The research approach, design, recruitment method(s), data collection protocol(s) and relevant ethical considerations regarding informed consent, the rights of participants/ respondents to withdraw from the study, the protection of the participants' privacy, confidentiality and management of the information are clearly articulated.

The DSRC recommends that the application be reviewed for ethics acceptability.

Kind regards

Prof HM Williams

Chairperson: Departmental Scientific Review Committee

Date: 2023-01-31

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile +27 429 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

Annexure B: UFS ethical clearance

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA
UFS UV

GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

11-Aug-2023

Dear Applicant External

Application Approved

Research Project Title:
The Psychosocial Experiences, Challenges, and Needs of University Students Studying Under Enrollment Conditions Programme in The Free State Province: Suggested Guidelines for Enhanced Psychosocial Support

Ethical Clearance number:
UFS-HSD2023/1590

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Adri Du Plessis
Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

Adri Du Plessis
Digitally signed by Adri Du Plessis
Date: 2023.08.12 17:45:17 +02'00'

205 Nelson Mandela Drive
Park West
Bloemfontein 9301
South Africa

P.O. Box 339
Bloemfontein 9300
Tel: +27 (0)51 401 9337
duplessisA@ufs.ac.za
www.ufs.ac.za

Annexure C: Information letter

Research title: The psychosocial experiences, challenges and needs of university students studying under enrolment conditions programme in the Free State Province: Suggested guidelines for enhanced psychosocial support.

Researcher:

(N.F Ravhuhali)

Ethics clearance reference number: 41454928_CREC_CHS_2023

26 January 2023

Title: The psychosocial experiences, challenges and needs of university students studying under enrolment conditions programme in the Free State Province: Suggested guidelines for enhanced psychosocial support

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Neo Ravhuhali, and I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr. M.P, Dipela (Senior Lecturer) and Prof. B. Mohapi (Professor) from the Department of Social Work at the University of South Africa. This research is part of my Doctor of Social Work (DSW) studies. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: **The psychosocial experiences, challenges and needs of University students studying under enrolment conditions programme in the Free State Province: Suggested guidelines for enhanced psychosocial support**

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

I am conducting this research to find out what the psychosocial experiences challenges and needs of students who are studying under enrolment conditions are.

This important information could lead to the exploration, description, and in-depth understanding of the student experiences. Understanding the experiences will assist psychosocial services providers in higher education (universities) in reflecting on the services provided to this clientele in particular and determining whether their service rendering needs to be strengthened.

Furthermore, the policymakers at the institution will have additional information at their disposal regarding the services rendered by their institution as stemming from the opinion of their service beneficiaries. It is envisioned that the findings of this study will result in the development of guidelines for advanced psychosocial services for students who are studying under enrolment conditions.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

The reason you have been chosen to participate in the study is that you are deemed to possess relevant information that is needed as a key informant and service provider to students.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves data gathering through a face-to-face semi-structured interview(s) with each key informant that is anticipated to take 20-30 minutes. The researcher will have an interview guide and will ask you open-ended questions from the guide (approximately 10-13). The interview will be audio recorded to allow the researcher to have an accurate record of the information shared. The information can be transcribed at a later stage, and a research report can be produced.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Please note that participation in this study is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep, permission will be asked from you to audio record your interview, and you will be requested to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Please note that the interview guide will allow for the usage of pseudonyms and that your identifying details (name, surname, address) will not be recorded or shared in the guide.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

Although there may be no obvious immediate benefits to you for participating in the study, the information you share will assist the scientific community in understanding the psychosocial experiences and challenges of students on academic probation. This understanding will avail information to psychosocial support practitioners and allow them to reflect on their practice for the purpose of service rendering that meets the needs of students. It is students who will be placed on enrolment conditions in future who may benefit from the information shared by you and fellow participants in this study.

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

There are no apparent risks associated with your participation in the study.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Your name will not be recorded, and a pseudonym of your choice will be allocated to you. This means that no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give *as a* measure to preserve anonymity. The use of the pseudonym will be used to refer to you in data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, an external coder who will sign a confidentiality agreement, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee who are bound by the ethics of scientific research. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

Please note that your anonymous data may be used for other purposes, such as a research report, journal articles and/or conference proceedings and a report of the study may be submitted for publication, but you (as a participant) will not be identifiable in such a report.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a minimum period of five years in a locked filing cabinet at the researcher's home office. For future research or academic purposes, electronic information will be stored on a password-protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Hard copies of the information will be shredded, and electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer using a relevant software programme.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

Unfortunately, you will not be paid for participating in the study and all efforts will be made to engage with you at a time convenient to you. Should there be an engagement that necessitates you to visit the researcher (e.g., need to have the interview on a day you were not planning to be at the institution, the researcher will either come to see you at a place convenient to you or will reimburse you for the travelling costs incurred.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL

An application for written approval from the College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Review Committee (CREC) has been approved. The registration number by the National Health Research Ethics Council (NHREC) has been allocated as follows:

NHREC Registration # : Rec-240816-052

CREC Reference # : 41454928_CREC_CHS_2023.

A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish once approval has been given.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

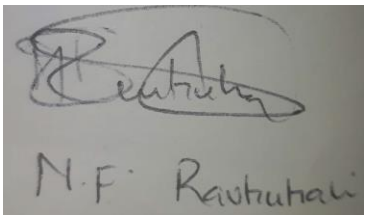
If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Neo Ravhuhali at 0828847256 or email her at neoravh@gmail.com.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Neo Ravhuhali at neoravh@gmail.com, 0828847256.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Dr M.P Dipela at 0124293568, dipelmp1@unisa.ac.za or Prof B. Mohapi at joycemohapi@yahoo.com. You are also at liberty to contact the research ethics chairperson of the Scientific Review Committee Prof M.H Williams if you have any ethical concerns.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you
Neo Ravhuhali



Annexure D: Consent to participate in this study

Research title: The psychosocial experiences, challenges and needs of university students studying under enrolment conditions programme in the Free State Province: Suggested guidelines for enhanced psychosocial support.

Researcher: N.F Ravhuhali

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the face-to-face interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname ..... (please print)

Participant Signature……..Date……

Researcher's Name & Surname ..... (please print)

Researcher's signature……..Date……

Annexure E: Editor's letter

Office No. 06
Department of English, Media Studies and Linguistics
University of Venda
P/Bag X 5050
Thohoyandou
0950

20 February 2025

To Whom It May Concern

This serves to confirm that I proof-read and edited the thesis titled "The Psychosocial Experiences, Challenges and Needs of University Students Studying Under Enrolment Conditions Programme in the Free State Province: Suggested Guidelines for Enhanced Psychosocial Support" by Neo Frances Ravhuhali, Student number: 41454928.

Regards



Vincent N. Demana (PhD)

University of Venda
Department of English, Media Studies and Linguistics
Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education
University of Venda
Tel: +27- 015 962-8363 Cell: +27-739912237
E-mail: Vincent.demana@univen.ac.za
Website: Website:http://www.univen.ac.za/
A quality driven, financially sustainable, rural-based comprehensive university

Annexure F: Semi-structured interview guide for participants (students)

Data collection tool **(**interview guide for participants)

"The psychosocial experiences, challenges and needs of university students studying under enrolment conditions programme in the Free State Province: Suggested guidelines for enhanced psychosocial support".

DATE
Date of the interview

Biographical questions

- Please confirm your age (what is your age)
- Have you been placed on academic probation previously?
- Gender (Please confirm your gender identification)

Topical questions

1. Please share with me your understanding of enrolment conditions/academic probation.
2. Kindly share with me your experiences of being placed under enrolment conditions (How did you experience being on academic probation , psychologically/emotionally and socially)
3. In your opinion, what are the needs (requests) and challenges (problems) of students on academic probation?
4. Kindly share with me the reasons that lead to your placement on academic probation (academic or personal)
5. How did you experience the way you got to know about your academic probation? (procedure and process, manner, decency)
6. How would you describe the support (emotional) you received from the psychosocial support practitioners (social workers and psychologists) if any during this time? (if you did not go to them, why did you not go?)
7. How did placement on academic probation impact your social life and relationships with peers and significant others
8. Kindly share the coping strategies you used to cope with being placed under academic probation (coping strategies you used to cope with challenges and needs associated with academic probation)
9. Please describe resources the university made available to you to facilitate your academic progress as well as their usefulness
10. What additional resources or services would you like to receive so that your academic performance can improve?
11. What do you think should be done differently to improve the psycho-social (psychological and social) support of students who are on academic probation?

Annexure G: Semi-structured interview schedule for key informants

Data collection tool **(**interview guide for key informants)

The psychosocial experiences, challenges and needs of university students studying under enrolment conditions programme in the Free State Province: Suggested guidelines for enhanced psychosocial support

DATE
Date of the interview

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR KEY INFORMANTS

Biographical questions

- Kindly share with me what your highest qualification is.
- How long have you been serving as a practitioner with the sector of Higher Education?
- Do you offer psychosocial support services to students? Elaborate on your answer.

Topical questions

1. What is your understanding of enrolment conditions/academic probation?

2. Do you think students on academic probation are at risk/vulnerable? Please elaborate on your answer (priority ranking in comparison to other students)

3. What services are you offering to students on enrolment conditions/academic probation?

4. What challenges if any are you experiencing when rendering services to students on probation programme?

5. Kindly share with me your perception or view on how the students receive your services? (Attitude and adherence)

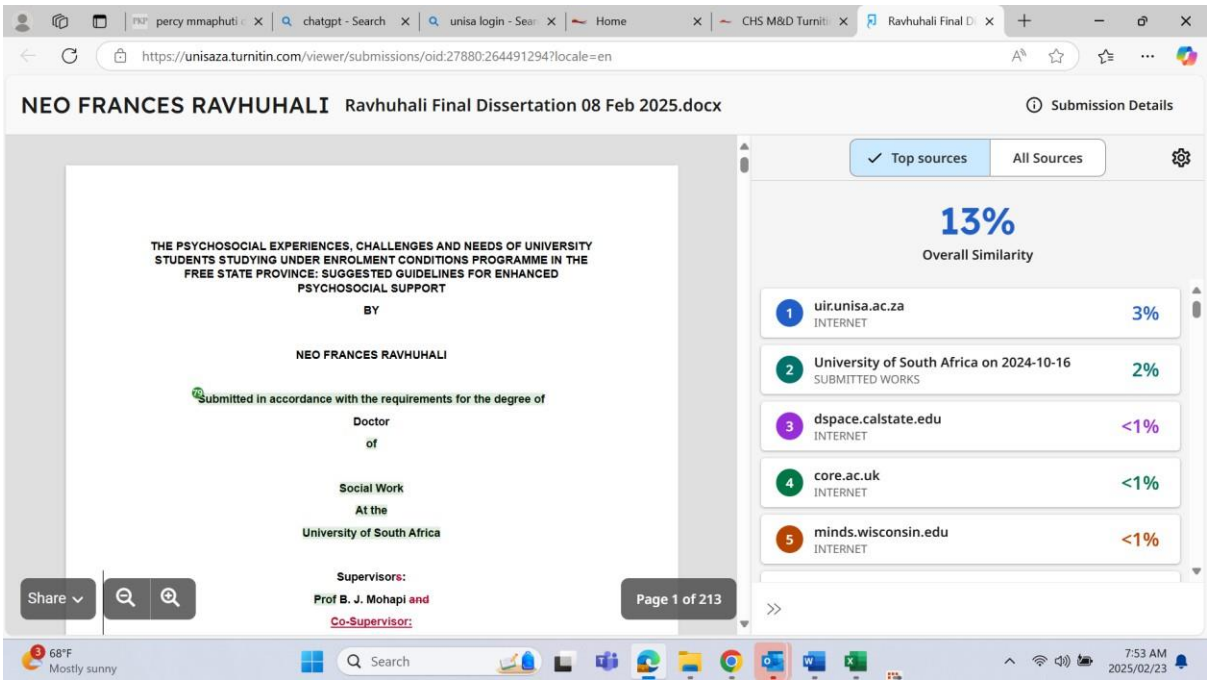
6. How will you describe the support received from the institution to enable your efficient support to students under academic probation?

7. Do you have any suggestions for psychosocial support services to students on academic probation/enrolment conditions (if any) for? (over and above what you have already said)

8a) The psychosocial support fraternity

8b) Other stakeholders in the institution of higher education

Annexure H: Turnitin report



Annexure I: Turnitin Proof of submission

