

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COUNSELLING SERVICES AS AN EQUITY
MEASURE TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE AND MARGINALISED STUDENTS
AT SELECTED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN NAMIBIA

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR

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Abstract

Higher education offers a high prospect of job opportunities, has more significant economic gains for individuals and communities and impacts social cohesion. It remains the pathway to career opportunities and contributes to individuals' physical and cognitive well-being. Despite the various support services including financial support and counselling services in higher education to increase access and ensure inclusion, anecdotal and media reports indicate that students from marginalised communities in Namibia continue to face exclusion and have low academic achievements. The study explored and discussed the perceived effectiveness of counselling services offered as an equity measure to support students from marginalised backgrounds in higher education in Namibia. This study employed a pragmatic parallel mixed methods design. It comprised two phases: situational analysis covering chapters one to five, and the development of the Student Assistance Programme (SAP) and implementation strategies in Chapter six. Eleven individual semi-structured interviews with the referrers for counselling support were conducted. In addition, six semi-structured interviews from a subset of beneficiaries from the quantitative sample were performed. Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis paired with Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). In addition, a quantitative descriptive correlational case study design was conducted, and a consecutive sampling method was utilised to recruit 85 beneficiaries. Despite different funding programmes and counselling services aimed at the retention and inclusion of students from marginalised communities in higher education, the study found that students from marginalised backgrounds continue to endure economic, physiological, psychological, and academic challenges in higher education. Counselling effectiveness as an equity measure is compromised by various factors. Besides the

delays and lacks thereof, counselling services were found to be more effective in addressing the psychological needs perceived as secondary, such as depression and anxiety. However, the counselling services proved wanting in addressing the primary causes of student distress, such as economic, physiological, social and academic needs. Moreover, the study established significant important clusters of related attributes that promote student resilience and academic success. The findings informed the development of a person-centred, culturally sensitive Student Assistance Programme (SAP) and guidelines for implementation, with well-defined psychological and non-psychological support services.

Keywords: marginalised, beneficiaries, referrers, counselling effectiveness, counselling as an equity measure

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List of Abbreviations/Acronyms

ACCA	-American College Counselling Association
ACHPR	-African Charter on Human and Person Rights
ACRWC	-African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AIDS	-Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AHC	Agglomerative Hierarchical Clustering
APA	-American Psychological Association
BACP	-British Assistance for Counselling and Psychotherapy
CCPA	-Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association
CESCR	-Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CFA	-Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CORE-OM	-Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation-Outcome Measure
COVID-19	-Corona Virus Diseases of 2019
DEI	-Diversity Equity Inclusion
EAP	-Early Alert programme
EAP	-Employee Assistance programme
EFA	-Education for All
EFA	-Exploratory Factor Analysis
EIF	-Early Intervention Foundation
EIP	-Early Intervention programme
ERA	-European Research Agenda
EU	-European Union
EUA	-European University Association
FA	-Factor Analysis

FEDORA	-European Forum for Student Guidance
GFI	-Goodness Fit Index
GP-CORE	-General Population-Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation
GPP	-Governor's Prevention Partnership
GRN	-Government of the Republic of Namibia
HE	-Higher Education
HEIs	-Higher Education Institutions
HIV	-Human Immune Virus
HOD	-Head of Department
IACS	-International Association of Counselling Services
IASAS	-International Association of Student Affairs and Services
IEO	-Input Environment Output
IEO	-Input Environment Output
ILO169	-International Labour Organisation No. 169
IWGIA	-International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
KMO	-Kaiser Mayor Olkin
MAES	-Mature Age Entry Scheme
MoEAC	-Ministry of Education Arts and Culture
MTSP	-Multi-Tiered System of Support Programme
MV	-Master Validity
NASEM	-National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine
NCHE	-National Council for Higher Education
NDP5	-National Development Plan No. 5
NGOs	-Non-Governmental Organisations
NITA-U	-National Information Technology Authority of Uganda

NPC	-National Planning Commission
NPO-EMC	-The National Policy Options for Educationally Marginalised Communities
NSA	-Namibia Statistics Agency
NSFAF	-Namibia Student Financial Assistance Fund
NUST	-Namibia University of Science and Technology
ODS	-Office of the Dean of Students
OECD	-Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFFA	-Office For Fair Access
OPM	-Office of the Prime Minister
PAF	-Principal Axis Factor
PIE	-Person In Environment
PMMB	-Pattern Model Matrix Builder
SAACDHE	-South African Association for Counselling Develop in Higher Education
SAP	-Students Assistance Programme
SPSS	-Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SPSS AMOS	-Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Analysis of Moment Structures
SDG	-Sustainable Development Goals
SDP	-San Development Programme
SME	-Structural Equation Model
SUCCS	-Standards for University and College Counselling Services
SWB	-Subjective Well-Being
UDHR	- Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UNHCR	-United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees
UK	-United Kingdom
UN	- United Nations
UNAM	-University of Namibia
UNDP	-United Nations Development Plan
UNESCO	-United Nations Educational, Scientific and Culture
UNESCO	-United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNESCO-UIS	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation UNESCO Institute Statistics
UNICEF	-United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
UNOCHA	-United Nations Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
USA	-United States of American
WEF	-World Economic Forum
WCEFA	-World Conference of Education for All
WCHE	-World Conference on Higher Education
WDHE	-World Declaration on Higher Education
YERS	-Youth Ecological Resilience Scale

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family and all students from marginalised backgrounds.

Declaration

I, **Mirjam Sheyapo**, hereby declare that this study is my own work and is a true reflection of my research. This work or any part thereof has not been submitted for a degree at any other institution.

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October 2024

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Chapter One

1. Background of the Study

This study explored the effectiveness (efficacy) of counselling services as an equity measure to support marginalised students in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Namibia. The study further developed a Student Assistance Programme (SAP) with strategies for implementation to support the inclusion of students from marginalised backgrounds. This chapter presents a detailed orientation of the study, the statement of the problem, the research objectives, and the significance of the study. In addition, it discusses the limitations and delimitations of the study and further provides context-based definitions of the key terminologies used in the study. Finally, the chapter outlines the dissertation structure and the chapter summary.

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948) guarantees the right to higher education. “Higher education shall be equally accessible to all based on merit” (United Nations, 2015, p. 54). Furthermore, in 1960 the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) adopted the Convention against Discrimination in Education. The convention stipulated the importance of non-discrimination and equality in educational opportunities (UNESCO, 2015). It became the critical pillar of Education for All (EFA) and the first international instrument to drive laws on the right to education (UNESCO, 2015).

In addition, the principles of EFA were reaffirmed by the Salamanca Declaration of 1994 (UNESCO, 1994), which supports the inclusion of students with special needs in regular education settings at all levels of education. The Salamanca Declaration urges educational systems to implement programmes that consider individuals' unique characteristics, backgrounds, interests, abilities and learning needs

(UNESCO, 1994). It further indicates that inclusive education is imperative in combating discriminatory attitudes and creating welcoming communities. It also requires sound student-centred pedagogy with extensive support from which all students can benefit (UNESCO, 1994).

Higher education is regarded as the best pathway that offers rewarding career opportunities and contributes to individuals' physical and cognitive well-being. It has more significant benefits to the economy as it increases the opportunities for employment and diverse skills and impacts social cohesion (Department of Business for Innovation and Skills, [DBIS] 2014). Consequently, many nations have adopted strategies that promote equal opportunities in higher education to unlock individuals' potential (DBIS, 2014). Namibia is a diverse nation, with about 2.6 million people, as stated by the Namibia Intercensal Demographic Survey 2016 Report (Namibian Statistics Agency, 2017). It comprises rich and varied cultures (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2012). During the colonial dispensation, Namibia was divided into homelands based on tribal and linguistic jurisdiction. The division resulted in some communities' marginalisation (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2018).

Globally, marginalisation refers to the exclusion and restriction of certain individuals or groups in social, economic, cultural, and political aspects. Various societal frameworks often support and perpetuate this exclusion despite protests and resistance from these marginalised groups (UK Aid Direct, 2018). Within HEIs across the globe, marginalisation can be observed in relation to factors such as disabilities, gender, sexual orientation, indigenous status, ethnicity, linguistic minorities, immigrants, international students, refugees, and race (Gale & Mills, 2013). Similarly, in Africa, marginalisation includes disabilities, cultural and tribal factors, indigenous

minorities, socio-economic status, gender, orphanage situations, and educational disparities (Lotz et al., 2019).

Amongst the most marginalised are the traditionally nomadic San, Ovahimba, Ovatwa and Ovazemba communities. These are mainly ethnic minority communities that mostly reside in the remote rural parts of the country and maintain most of their original cultural practices. These include nomadic and hunter-gatherer lifestyles and extended family cohesion.

Furthermore, there is a large, marginalised population resulting from various factors that include but are not limited to race, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental abilities, language, and immigration status (International Association of Student Affairs and Services [IASAS] 2020). Marginalisation is a common term used globally in different disciplines (Dieckmann et al., 2014). It describes the process and conditions that pose barriers to individuals' participation in social, economic, and political life. Social exclusion and marginalisation in the Namibian context refer to the social disadvantage and demotion to the fringe of society (Na+Hub, 2022).

Lotz et al. (2019) describe marginalised communities as members of society who are socially disadvantaged from participating in economic, cultural, political, and ordinal social activities such as work, attending school, and comfortably attending social gatherings due to language barriers and a lack of education. Their marginalisation is characterised by poor progress in terms of socio-economic, education, culture, lifestyle, political or other development indicators.

Similarly, UK Aid Direct (2018) terms marginalisation as both a process and a condition that deprives and prevents a person or group from actively participating in social, economic, and political activities. UK Aid Direct (2018) further mentions several factors leading to communities' marginalisation, including geographic

location, religion, displacement, conflict, and disability. It is also stressed that poverty is both a consequence and a cause of marginalisation.

In the case of the marginalised communities in Namibia, their culture, traditions, and geographic location seem to have played a significant role in their marginalisation status. Although poverty cannot be generalised to all of them, those that possess both culture and, to a certain extent, material wealth have not been enabled to translate them into economic assets to achieve sustainable lives within the context of the contemporary Namibian and global society. In most cases, the level of education is a critical factor in determining a reasonable standard of living. Marginalised communities in Namibia make up 8% of the Namibian population (Namibia Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights [CESCR], 2016). The Ovahimba and related sub-groups are of Bantu origin and mainly live in the Kunene and Omusati regions bordering Angola. They are nomadic and semi-nomadic, valuing and keeping cattle. Formal education is not a major priority, although they have embraced it. The San (an informally adopted name for the group of various communities of the first inhabitants of Southern Africa) are of Khoi-san origin and inhabit various regions throughout the country, such as the Otjozondjupa, Kavango East, Kavango West, Zambezi, Ohangwena and the Kalahari desert (CESCR, 2016). They are traditionally hunter-gatherers and do not keep cattle or other material possessions. Their livelihood is largely characterised by poverty, poor education attainment and high dropout rates from basic, secondary, and post-secondary education (Brown & Haihambo, 2015).

1.1 The Livelihood of the Marginalised Communities in Namibia

This section presents the livelihoods of the marginalized communities in Namibia. It provides details about the historical and livelihoods of the different sub-groups of Ova Herero-speaking groups and the San communities of Namibia particularly highlighting issues that led to their marginalisation.

1.1.1 The Ovahimba, Ovatie, Ovatjimba and Ovazemba Communities of Namibia

Historically, the sub-group of Ovaherero-speaking people (Ovatjimba, Ovahimba, Ovatie and Ovazemba) settled on the semi-arid areas along the Kunene River. To date, these marginalised groups are semi-nomadic pastoralists. These groups reside in the mountainous area North-Western of Namibia in the Kunene Region, formally known as Kaokoland and in South-Western Angola. They are estimated to total between 20 000 to 26 000, representing about 1.6 % to 1.9% of Namibia's population (Berger et al., 2020; Matengu et al., 2019). These groups have preserved their indigenous social and cultural ways of living. Their livelihood as pastoralists depends on cattle rearing, mainly cows, sheep and goats which are kept for food and social status. These are supplemented with crop farming and gathering activities (Anaya, 2013). However, war, drought, animal diseases, remoteness of the region and colonial dispensation have exacerbated their marginalisation and had detrimental effects on their livelihood (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 1998).

Figure 1.2 Map of Kunene Region in Namibia



Note: Adapted from Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2015 p.13

The Diagram shows the map of Namibia, indicating in (orange colour) the Kunene region where the Ovahimba, Ovaturie, Ovazemba and Ovattjimba reside in Namibia.

During the colonial era, the missionaries and traders did not reach the Kunene Region, hence “civilisation” and cultural interference were delayed in this region (Minority Rights Group International, 2008). For a long time, traditional education was the order of the day and formal schooling was alien. The first school in the Kunene region was established in the late 1950s by the Afrikaans Dutch Reformed Church (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 1998), and this signalled the introduction of formal education to the Ovahimba, Ovaturie, Ovazemba, Ovattjimba and other related sub-groups with major resistance from the communities. In 2000, the National Policy Option for Educationally Marginalised Children (NPO-EMC) was launched to facilitate universal access to primary education by all Namibian children (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 1998; Hailombe, 2011).

People from the marginalised communities in the Kunene region move around with their animals to search for grazing and water for their animals as a survival strategy in the harsh conditions of their mountainous environment (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 1998). These practices have adverse effects on education provision. Consequently, their formal education and literacy levels remained the lowest and are educationally marginalised to date compared to other tribes in Namibia.

Although not homogeneous, the marginalised community members of the Bantu groups of the Kunene Region share a similar language with the Ovaherero from the central and eastern parts of the country, only with a slight accent and vocabulary differences. Thus, their schooling benefit from already-developed learning materials available in the well-developed and written Otjiherero language (Ndimwedi, 2016). People from the marginalised communities in the Kunene Region are known for their unique conventional lifestyles and are determined to uphold their traditions.

Moreover, their focus is more on informal, traditional education because of the age and stage sets of roles and responsibilities in the household system. The age and stage sets are traditionally portrayed through distinct hairstyles and body decorations which people from other communities perceive as primitivity and backwardness (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 1998). Subsequently, some forms of discrimination and exclusion in education are rooted in the cultural and traditional practices mentioned above.

In 1997, part of the government initiatives to expand access to education led to the establishment of the Ondao Mobile School in the Kunene Region, with the assistance of a project from the Norwegian government, to meet the schooling needs while considering their ways of living (Hailombe, 2011; Matengu et al., 2019). The purpose of the school was to ensure that learners achieve the formal education

curriculum goals while participating in their traditional household and practice activities by taking turns to look after livestock (Matengu et al., 2018). Learners reside with their parents' extended families and are allowed to attend school, which is within the community, in their traditional attires. The different units of the school operate from tents or semi-fixed structures in the different communities and if the community moves, the school also moves with them. Over the past 15 years or so, most of the mobile school units have been stationed as communities are becoming less nomadic. This intervention has accelerated school attendance and helped with the acceptance of formal education to some extent. However, the mobile schooling concept only applies to the primary level.

Consequently, learners must move to bigger villages or towns to further their secondary education. According to Matengu et al. (2019), learners struggle to cope and adapt, and as a result, they drop out of school to return home to their communities.

In 2012, a group of Kaokoland people (Ovahimba and Ovazemba) claimed that going to school for their children meant giving up traditional clothing and hairstyles, which led to school dropouts. In addition, they maintained that they could not afford the prescribed school uniforms (Namibia CESCRC, 2016). Given the high school dropout rates among learners from marginalised communities, most do not make it to higher education.

Although Namibia Vision 2030 advocates for a well-educated nation to drive a knowledge-based economy, access with equity to higher education remains a privilege to the elite groups leaving students from marginalised backgrounds to suffer from unfair access arrangements to higher education. Therefore, people from marginalised backgrounds remain under-represented in graduate jobs (Tshabangu et al., 2013).

According to Essack (2012), equity of access to the equity of outcome is determined by institutional efforts to facilitate pre and post-admission support strategies for successful participation and completion by individuals who fall into the marginalised categories.

1.1.2 The San Communities of Namibia

The San groups total between 27 000 to 34 000 of the Namibian population and represent about 2% of the entire population (Dieckmann et al., 2014). The San communities were hunter-gatherers and comprised many different ethnic groups with distinct languages and dialects (Dieckmann et al., 2014). The group of Khoisan origin include the Hai//om, Ju/'Hoansi, !Xu also known as (Vasekele), Kwe (or Khwe), //Khaueisi, Naro, !Xo, /Auni and the /Nu//en (Begbie-clench & Gravotta, 2017; Dieckmann et al., 2014). They reside in Eastern and Southern Africa and are scattered in the various regions of Namibia.

Table 1.1 San Groups and their Languages in Namibia

Autonym/s	Language family	Dialect cluster	Region/s	Numbers*
!Xun (or !Kung)	Kx'a	Ju (also known as Northern Khoisan)	Kavango, Otjozondjupa, Ohangwena, Oshikoto	6000-7500
Ju 'hoansi	Kx'a	Ju (also known as Northern Khoisan)	Otjozondjupa, Omaheke	6000-7000
Naro	Khoe (also known as Central Khoisan)	Naro	Omaheke	1000-2000
Khwe	Khoe (also known as Central Khoisan)	Kxoe	Caprivi, Kavango	4000-5000
Hai om and †Akhoe**	Khoe (also known as Central Khoisan)	Khoekhoe	Kunene, Ohangwena, Oshikoto, Oshana	7000-18000
!Xoon and 'N joha	Tuu (also known as Southern Khoisan)	Taa	Omaheke, Hardap	550
Total				24550-40050

Note: Adapted from Dieckmann et al., 2014, p.23

Table 1.1 indicates the distinct groups of the San communities of Namibia, their languages, and their dialects. It also depicts their distribution in the various regions of Namibia and the estimated population of each group.

Historically, the livelihoods of the San communities were characterised by hunting and gathering veld food and medicinal herbs. Their traditional education was also built around these key activities, in addition to survival. Like Ovahimba and the related groups, formal education was alien.

The influx of settlers and colonialists from 1907 led to their land dispossession and marginalisation. Also, the Herero pastoralists were pushed into the traditional territories of the San people to make way for the settlers (Namibia CESC, 2016). The illegal encroachment, illegal settlement, illegal grazing and fencing into the San land by the Settlers and Herero pastoralists left them destitute and landless. As a result, they were left with a small portion of waterless land from their traditional territory in the North-East of Namibia (Minority Rights Group International, 2008).

Subsequently, most landless San people live in communal and commercial farms and townships that do not allow them to practise their hunter-gatherer activities which were their means of survival and livelihood. The colonial authorities disregarded their needs and rights (Begbie-clench & Gravotta, 2017). Moreover, their demeaning livelihood on farms led to slavery, dependency, and eventually to social problems such as alcoholism, and to some extent, loss of identity. Most became labourers on the Herero and Settlers' farms, while some joined the South African army (Minority Rights Group International, 2008). The San communities were unfortunate that they did not have access to the already limited formal education during the apartheid regime offered to the Namibians (Begbie-clench & Gravotta, 2017; Namibia CESC, 2016). These major changes rendered their cultural way of life irrelevant. Yet, they also neither had the culture of, nor access to formal education at all levels. The San communities' lack of access to education aggravated their current situation of being at the bottom of the social hierarchy, without a space to practice their culture

The map of Namibia above shows the distribution of the San groups in various regions of Namibia. Most live along Namibia's central East and North-East, as indicated on the map. A few also live in the central Northern regions of Namibia. They are scattered in regions such as Omaheke, Otjozondjupa, Ohangwena, Kavango West, Kavango East and the Zambezi. Very few are found in the Kunene (Outjo), Oshana and Omusati (Etosha National Park) regions.

As a result of colonial dispossession, most marginalised groups lack land rights. Most of the San community members live on commercial farms of settlers, informal settlements and in dry and remote areas. They have limited to no access to the land to sustain their families in their traditional ways (Namibia CESC, 2016). In addition, some were resettled to designated settlements availed by the governments.

Dieckmann et al. (2014) identify barriers to participation in formal education among marginalised communities. The significant obstacles and reasons for school dropout from formal education are poverty, discrimination, stigma, cultural mismatch, inappropriate curricula, a lack of role models, teenage pregnancy, and communities' remoteness. Most parents from marginalised communities never attended school, while some dropped out at an early age (Dieckmann et al., 2014). In addition, the English medium of instruction makes it difficult for learners from marginalised groups to keep up in schools. Although the language policy made provision for the mother tongue as a medium of instruction during the first three years of formal schooling, a lack of learning materials and teacher proficiency in the diverse dialects of the San community languages makes it difficult for their children to benefit from this provision of the Language Policy. They are often taught in the language of the dominant communities wherever they are (Dieckmann et al., 2014; Matengu et al., 2019). This leaves children from the San communities in a predicament of not only having to attend

school in environments in which they do not feel welcome but also having to learn in a new “foreign” language during their early school years.

After independence, many governments and non-governmental initiatives were instituted, such as the San Development Programme and the resettlement programmes to address social and economic disparities and alleviate poverty among Namibian citizens (Dieckmann et al., 2014; Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2018; Namibia CDESCR, 2016). Despite many government initiatives to support the marginalised people, most marginalised groups, including the San, remain disadvantaged in many aspects such as health, education, and decision-making powers at different levels are largely under-represented on various national platforms. Moreover, they suffer from a low level of schooling attributed to discrimination, bullying and lack of culturally-appropriate education (Dieckmann et al., 2014a; Matengu et al., 2019; Namibia CDESCR, 2016).

Fanshawe College Report (2016) underscores factors that hinder indigenous students’ academic success in higher education, including a lack of role models, geography and distinct languages, dissonant cultures and discrimination, finances, family and community responsibilities, academic weakness and personal factors.

Similarly, students from marginalised backgrounds in Namibia who made it to higher education are often confronted with multiple transitions and adjustments to fit and cope with the new environment. Due to their distinctive ways of living, they are likely to deal with prejudice, stereotype, discrimination, and rejection, often making them feel inferior to other students (Sweet et al., 2020). Moreover, they face relocation from the home and community environment, language barriers, financial limitations and shifts to new university culture. Relocation means abandoning cultural activities, customs, roles and responsibilities. It isolates them from the cultural, social, physical,

and emotional support from family, friends and community members and adjusts to the new support in the context of the new setting. The factors mentioned above bring many shifts in their roles and routines; furthermore, they impact their academic success, leading to their exclusion from higher education.

To ameliorate exclusion and ensure equity of access among students from marginalised backgrounds, HEIs are challenged to design and avail effective academic and personal support services to support students cope with academic demands and the likely psychological distress beyond transition in higher education (Fanshawe College Report, 2016).

Some government initiatives include school feeding programmes and mobile schools which seem to have increased school enrolment and encouraged children to attend primary and secondary school (Dieckmann et al., 2014). Although a division under the Vice president's office (the Department of Marginalised Communities) supports students from marginalised communities to access and complete education (Berger et al., 2020), education completion rates among these communities remain of significant concern. Educational facilities are often inadequate and, at times, inaccessible to marginalised groups. The low education rates and primary and secondary school means that very few students from marginalised communities make it to higher education. The few that do become minorities in terms of numbers and remain marginalised in terms of cultural background and access to basic resources need to be successful in higher education. If no extra interventions are implemented in higher education for this group of students, their success in higher education cannot be guaranteed.

1.1.3 International Legal Frameworks that Support the Rights of People from the Marginalised Communities

The Universal Declaration of Human rights of 1948 declared education a human right. Consequently, like many countries globally, Namibia recognises education as a human right. In addition, Namibia is part of many international treaties and conventions that protect human rights (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2018). Other conventions and declarations supporting education as a human right are the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) of 1981, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) (1990), and the World Conference of Education for All (WCEFA) of 1990; the Salamanca Declaration of 1994 and the World Education Forum (WEF) 2000. Moreover, some international conventions are instrumental to the education of indigenous people, such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of 2007, International Labour Organisation Convention No. 169 (ILO169), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the Dakar Framework for Action (Dieckmann et al., 2014).

Namibia continues to strive toward achieving Goal 4 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the Education 2030 Framework for Action (UNESCO-UIS, 2018). Goal 4 calls for inclusive and equitable quality education and further advocates for promoting lifelong opportunities for all (Boeren, 2019). Target 4.5 of Goal 4 requires all UN Member states to eliminate barriers and all forms of exclusion and inequalities in access and maximise participation and learning outcomes in education for all age groups (UNESCO-UIS, 2018). Furthermore, it calls for equal education outcomes for all groups. It emphasises equity and eliminates disparities in education. Moreover, it calls for equal access to all levels of education for the indigenous and people in vulnerable situations (UNESCO-UIS, 2018).

In education, equity is described by Cahalan et al. (2020) in two dimensions: fairness and inclusion. Equity in the context of inclusive education provides the basis to address distressing encounters and hindrances faced by individual students or a student population in their search for education (Cahalan et al., 2020). Meanwhile, equity in terms of fairness implores that individuals' personal and social conditions should not be barriers to reaching educational potential. Consequently, equity as an inclusion indicator offers basic minimum standards of education, over and above those shared by all, considering the accelerated needs of individuals. It advocates for the necessary support based on individual needs and focuses on assisting individuals to reach their potential (Cahalan et al., 2020). In addition, equity necessitates structures to be in place to ensure that every student has an equal chance to succeed.

1.1.4 The Provision of Higher Education for Students from the Marginalised Communities

The Constitution of the Republic of Namibia provides the legal basis to protect, promote and uphold the rights of the marginalised groups in Namibia and uphold the commitment to providing equitable, quality and inclusive education. Moreover, many legal frameworks support education as a human right and promote education for all agendas at the national and international levels. Amongst others, Namibia Vision 2030, Education Act, Education for All (EFA): National Plan of Action 2002-2015, in addition to the abovementioned instruments, various national legal frameworks formed the foundation and guiding principles for inclusive education namely, the Education Sector Policy on Inclusive Education (2013); The National Agenda for Children 2012-2016; the National Policy on Disability (1997); the National Disability Council (2004); the National Policy Option for Educationally Marginalised Children (2000); National Policy on Orphans and Vulnerable Children (2010), the Education

policy on HIV and AIDS (2007), the Education Sector Policy on Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy (2012), the Ministry of Education Strategic Plan (2012-2017) and Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme and the Cabinet Directive on the Elimination of Child Labour.

Although some of these policies do not directly apply to Higher Education, they have an impact on the youth's possibilities to enter higher education and the skills with which they enter higher education. If their vulnerabilities are effectively addressed at the school level, they are likely to come to higher education with resilience and also with trust in the counselling system.

The Sector Policy on Inclusive Education of 2013 is instrumental in responding to calls for inclusion. The policy recognises various groups as educationally marginalised children in the Namibian context (von Wietersheim, 2002; Ministry of Education, 2013). It aims to maximise access, provide quality education and support individuals with diverse needs at all levels of education (Ministry of Education, 2013). This study recognises all the guiding principles stipulated by the policy and resonates with intensifying access while minimising barriers in the education system at all levels, including higher education, (Ministry of Education, 2013).

Historically, children from marginalised communities were underprivileged to access formal schooling, making it nearly impossible to access and succeed in higher education (UNICEF, 2017). Non- or poor school attendance amongst members of these communities has created cycles of inter-generational poverty in some families (UNICEF, 2017). A lack of education disadvantaged them from developing to their full potential to contribute immensely to the development of their communities and the country at large.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Namibia, as guided by the Affirmative Action Act, made admission provisions to expand access to higher education for students from marginalised backgrounds. These provisions are reflected in admission policies such as entry through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), the Mature Age Entry Scheme (MAE) and admission through the Indigenous groups' admission category stipulated in the undergraduate student recruitment, admission and registration policy (University of Namibia, 2021). Namibian higher education institutions make provision for individuals from marginalised groups who did not meet the normal required admission criteria for HEIs to have access opportunities through the admission mentioned above, mainly under provisions for the indigenous groups' category. In this admission category, their applications are considered, provided that they are eligible and endorsed by the relevant local authorities and the Department of Marginalised Communities in the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare. (The University of Namibia Admission Policy, 2021)

Moreover, Namibia has established various programmes to fund students from low-socio-economic backgrounds, particularly those from marginalised backgrounds. The Education Support Programme was formally referred to as San Development Programme and was previously housed by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). Currently, the programme is under the Division of Marginalised Communities within the Office of the Deputy Minister of Marginalised Communities in the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare. Between 2005 to 2018, the fund benefited 765 students (New Era newspaper, 8 November 2018). Students in HEIs are also funded through Namibia Students Assistance Fund (NSFAF) and by some parastatals and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). These programmes also render education and transport assistance to students. The programme further

extends moral and psychosocial support services to students from marginalised communities at all levels of education (<https://mgepesw.gov.na/division-of-disability-affairs-and-marginalized-communities>). Some students from marginalised communities are also financially supported by relatives and members of society. There is, however, no data on the extent of this individual or community support.

The above interventions have immensely increased access to higher education. In 2020, the University of Namibia registered about 158 students under the marginalised communities' category through the Education Support Programme. Similarly, Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) registered about 92 students through the same programme (obtained from the list of the marginalised students provided by the registrar's office). Despite the financial support and increased access to higher education, very few students from marginalised backgrounds succeed in their academic endeavours (Kxoa/Ui/o/oo, 2016).

Student support programmes are governed by specific principles and have conditions attached to them. One such condition is that the students are expected to progress through and complete their studies within the stipulated study periods. Although this is possible, not all students make it within the maximum period of their study programmes. Failing any of the modules has implications for their financial assistance. As stipulated in the NSFAP policy, loan beneficiaries should submit their academic transcripts to NSFAP (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2005). Unfortunately, the loans get suspended for failing modules, and they must repeat the modules at their own cost. This condition has disadvantaged most students from marginalised communities who have no alternative.

Dieckmann et al. (2014) reveal that students from marginalised backgrounds funded through the Student Support Programme under the Division of Marginalised

Communities encounter many challenges such as delays in the release of monthly stipends and tuition fees. Such delays put students in compromising situations whereby they struggle to access basic needs such as food and toiletries and do not have their tuition fees paid on time. Moreover, only a few students from marginalised backgrounds are aware of the funding opportunities due to their remoteness and a lack of access to information (Dieckmann et al., 2014b). Also, issues related to fear of relocating to the city, worry of discrimination and stereotypes, as alluded to above, discourage some students from seeking further studies upon completing their secondary education (Dieckmann et al., 2014b).

The Namibian government has made tremendous progress in the educational transformation to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all Namibians (Matengu et al., 2019). Despite various government initiatives to curb exclusion in education amongst the vulnerable and marginalised students, most students from these communities remain educationally marginalised (United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF, 2019, 2018). Notwithstanding the government and educational institutions' efforts with numerous initiatives aimed at educational transformation toward equitable access and inclusive education for all in Namibia, and the funding programmes, equitable access to higher education remains an indispensable concern among indigenous and marginalised communities (National Council of Higher Education [NCHE], 2010).

Article 3 of the World Declaration on Higher Education (WDHE) for the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action advocates for equity of access. Section (d), in particular, states that access to higher education for members of groups such as indigenous people, cultural and linguistic minorities, and disadvantaged individuals is crucial because they possess experience and talents that are relevant to the

development of nations and societies (UNESCO, 1998). Thus, the declaration calls for unique materials, support and educational solutions to meet the needs of students from marginalised backgrounds in accessing and continuing higher education (UNESCO, 1998).

In recognising the calls for Equity of Access made by the World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century in 1998, UNESCO 2002 prepared a practical manual to guide the development, implementation and assessment of Students' Affairs Programmes and Services in HEIs. The manual was reviewed in 2009 and 2020 (IASAS, 2020). It emphasises that the services should put students at the centre of all efforts to excel in their academic endeavours. Services should also strive for a high-quality learning experience, improving higher education access with equity, and better retention and progress toward graduation (IASAS, 2020; UNESCO, 2002, 2009).

The Directorates of Student Affairs were established with teams of professional social workers, counsellors, and psychologists to provide counselling services in collaboration with the academic staff (IASAS, 2020; UNESCO, 2002, 2009).

The purposes of the counselling services are to ease and guide the transition process and assist students in coping with the demand and pressure of academic and social life at the university (IASAS, 2020). Counselling services promote better access and equity in higher education (Wulz et al., 2018). The services are also used as measures to reduce dropouts and increase completion rates among students, particularly students from marginalised backgrounds.

Broglia et al. (2018) report an increase in the severity of student psychosocial needs in HEIs. They further note a tremendous demand for student

counselling services resulting from the raised tuition fees and a lack of accommodation due to the growth in the student population. Similarly, there have been media reports about many challenges facing students from marginalised backgrounds in HEIs in Namibia (National Planning Commission, Government of the Republic of Namibia, n.d.; Kahiurika, 2019.; Kxoa/Ui/o/oo, 2016).

Students from marginalised backgrounds are often confronted with academic and social challenges during their transition and adjustment to the university environment, resulting in their exclusion from education through poor attendance or dropout (Thuryrajah et al., 2017).

Unfortunately, there are limited statistical records of specific groups, particularly for students from marginalised backgrounds, indicating their enrolment and dropout rates from HEIs in Namibia. Subsequently, the absence of such statistics makes it difficult to make evidence-based inferences. Nevertheless, tables 1.2 and 1.3 demonstrate the general student enrolment and dropout rates which could be related to the situation of students understudied. The available statistics show that there are more student inputs than outputs. It implies that more students are accessing higher education institutions but very few make it to graduation. Moreover, the tables show an increase in dropout rates over the years.

Table 1.2 NUST Enrolment rates (2016 to 2020)

	Qualification Type	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
		F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Undergraduate	Bachelor honours Degree	7812	4574	8274	4598	8016	4533	8934	4920	9877	5672
	Certificate	573	248	420	172	407	169	349	123	249	86
	Diploma	4607	2332	4810	2273	6559	2820	5807	2404	4273	1886
	Other	193	144	166	184	500	393	554	479	613	697
	Professional bachelor's degree	2190	1278	2237	1214	2966	1653	3255	1693	3497	1891
Under Graduate Total		15375	8576	15907	8441	18448	9568	18899	9619	18509	10232

Note: Adapted from Statistics & Planning, 2020

Table 1.2 depicts the enrolment rates of the general student population between 2016 and 2020. It is evident that in HEIs, the enrolment rate is higher. Although not specific to students from marginalised backgrounds, the statistics demonstrate increased access to higher education.

Table 1.3 NUST Graduation rates (2016 to 2019)

Graduate Level	Gender	2016	2017	2018	2019
Undergraduate	F	2405	2522	3008	2953
	M	1238	1267	1387	1392
Undergraduate Total		3643	3789	4395	4345

Adapted from Statistics & Planning, 2019

The tables compared the four-year (2016 to 2019) graduation rates of the general student population. Without pointing to the students from marginalised backgrounds, the statistic shows more input in the system than output among the general student population. The figures from the general student population seem to validate the concerns raised by (Kahiurika, 2019.; Kxoa/Ui/o/oo 2016) about low

graduation rates among students, which could as well relate to poor progress among students from marginalised backgrounds.

Table 1.4 Dropout rates

Study Period	2012/2013		2013/2014		2014/2015		2014/2015		2016/2017	
	Drop Out rate	Retention Rate	Drop Out rate	Retention Rate	Drop Out rate	Retention Rate	Drop Out rate	Retention Rate	Drop Out Rate	Retention Rate
1	20.1	79.9	21.7	78.3	25.0	75.0	24.0	76.0	33.6	66.4
2	13.4	86.6	13.6	86.4	15.7	84.3	14.3	85.7	21.3	78.7
3	12.8	87.2	14.0	86.0	17.2	82.8	15.1	84.9	24.6	75.4
4	14.4	85.6	19.9	80.1	21.4	78.6	23.7	76.3	30.7	69.3
Total	15.4	84.6	17.5	82.5	20.1	79.9	19.5	80.5	28.2	71.8

Note: Adapted from NUST, 2017

Table 1.4 indicates that many students dropped out between 2016 and 2017. The table shows that more first and final-year students are dropping out HEIs. About 34% of year 1 and 31% of year 4 dropped out of university in 2016/2017. Although not specifically students from marginalised backgrounds, the alarming figures are worrisome and suggest the need to re-look at the prevailing support mechanisms and their effectiveness in maximising student retention. While many existing programmes provide financial support to students from marginalised backgrounds to ensure their inclusion in higher education, not many have structured programmes of psycho-social and academic support. Higher education institutions have counselling services embedded in their programmes under student affairs. It is yet to be determined to what degree the counsellors are equipped to support students from marginalised communities.

This study focuses on the effectiveness of counselling services as an equity measure to support undergraduate higher students from marginalised backgrounds in Namibia. Its justification lies in gaps identified in the literature on the helpfulness of counselling services in HEIs in Namibia. Several studies focused on the effectiveness of counselling in the school context. Hako and Mbongo (2017) indicate that school

counselling services enhance learner performance. Similarly, Thuryrajah et al. (2017) and Biasi et al. (2017) reveal that school counselling intervention has a tremendous bearing on students' academic and personal development. Meanwhile, McKenzie et al. (2015) report that counselling is a reliable element in dealing with students' academic issues.

Furthermore, various quantitative studies evaluated the effectiveness of counselling services in different contexts (Agi & Eric, 2014; Biasi et al., 2017; Connell et al., 2008; Kavetuna & Kloppers, 2019; Mair, 2016; McKenzie et al., 2015; Murray et al., 2016; Musika & Bukaliya, 2015; Thuryrajah et al., 2017). However, there seem to be limited pragmatic studies in the Namibian context that assess the effectiveness of the counselling services offered in Higher Education, particularly from the perspectives of the referrers and beneficiaries.

Moreover, the study draws aspirations from local reports about poor progress among students from marginalised backgrounds. HEIs in Namibia have invested in various counselling programmes to counteract and address the diverse needs of all students. However, poor academic achievement and dropouts remain worrisome (Kxoa/Ui/o/oo, 2016). Poor academic success reflects forms of exclusion and further necessitates interrogations on the effectiveness of availed support services as equity measures to support these students. Given their unique characteristics, backgrounds, beliefs, practices, and world views, the Person-Centred theory paired with Austin's Input-Environment-Output (IEO) and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusive (DEI) models formed the basis for understanding the uniqueness and diverse needs of students (discussed in Chapter Two). The theory and models informed the development Student Assistance Programme and its strategies for implementation.

Moreover, a large portion of the national budget is reported to be allocated to the education sector, including support to students from marginalised backgrounds, which yields low outputs (National Planning Commission Government of the Republic of Namibia, n.d.; Kahiurika, 2019).

The study's rationale further lies in the researcher's passion and interests in inclusivity, social justice, and adequate support to uphold the plight of people from marginalised communities in Namibia. Therefore, this study firstly describes the experiences from beneficiaries' and referrers' perspectives on the effectiveness of counselling services as equity measures to support students from marginalised backgrounds. Secondly, the study aims to determine the beneficiaries' and referrers' satisfaction with counselling services' effectiveness as an equity measure concerning student resilience and academic progress. Thirdly, it attempts to describe the beneficiaries' and referrers' perceived factors influencing the effectiveness of counselling as an equity measure. Furthermore, the study aims to identify the factors/processes contributing to students' resilience and academic progress. Finally, the researcher sought to develop sustainable SAP and implementation guidelines.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Higher education promises significant economic gains for individuals and communities. It offers a high probability of job opportunities, high level academic, diverse skills and impacts on social cohesion (Department of Business for Innovation and Skills, 2014). It remains the pathway to rewarding career opportunities and contributes to individuals' physical and cognitive well-being.

Despite efforts from the government and HEIs to increase access and ensure inclusion and equity for students from marginalised backgrounds, reports indicate that marginalised communities in Namibia continue to face exclusion and have lower

economic development, educational achievement and political representation (Begbie-clench & Gravotta, 2017). Walker and Mkwanzani (2015) warn that increasing access to higher education without increasing the needed support creates new forms of exclusion. Therefore, HEIs are expected to provide prospects for personal development, coping strategies, and instrumental economic opportunities (Walker & Mkwanzani, 2015).

Counselling services in HEIs in Namibia ease and guide students' transition process into university life, strengthen students' resilience and enable them to cope with the academic demand and pressure during their years of studies at the university (UNAM, 2019).

Notwithstanding the various counselling services availed in HEIs in Namibia, concerns of delays in fund payments, poor academic achievement, low graduation rates, high dropout rates, and mental health issues amongst these groups of students remain on the increase (National Planning Commission [NPC] NDP5 Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2017/2018 to 2021/2022; Kxoa/Ui/o/oo, 2016). Despite the funding programmes, these denote low output and poor success rates from HEIs among students from marginalised backgrounds. In addition, the Deputy Minister for marginalised communities in Namibia expressed concern that approximately 60 % of the budget from their office is allocated to education. However, few students from marginalised backgrounds are graduating (Kahiurika, 2019). Therefore, these concerns suggest a mismatch between financial investments in the education of students from marginalised communities and the students' success rates. This necessitates an in-depth analysis of the counselling needs of students from marginalised backgrounds, along with an evaluation of the type and effectiveness of the counselling services

currently offered. This assessment should encompass the viewpoints of both the referrers and the beneficiaries of these services.

In Namibia, like elsewhere, most at-risk students are hesitant to seek counselling voluntarily despite being aware of professional counselling services (Joan et al., 2021; Kamunyu et al., 2016). Thus, in most higher education institutions, lecturers have the role of identifying and referring at-risk students for counselling services (Kambouropoulos, 2015). In most cases, students are identified after failing tests; not being able to progress to their second year of study or when they are clearly enduring hardships. Many times, the neediest students, particularly students from marginalised backgrounds, drop out without being detected to be referred for counselling support. Consequently, the problems impact students' performance leading to the suspension of their loans and discouraging students from continuing their studies (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2005). These suggest limitations on the current referral procedures and students' voluntary self-help-seeking in Namibian HEIs and delays in interventions.

Meanwhile, Murray et al. (2016) discover that some students do not complete their counselling sessions and resist referrals. Such concerns are common in most HEIs and might suggest unfavourable and unexplored factors, defeating the purposes of counselling services as an equity measure in HEIs in Namibia. Schlossberg's theory of transition intertwined with resilience theory formed the frame and the lens through which the researcher determined counselling effectiveness, the counselling needs and the factors leading to students' resilience and academic performance as they transit into, and adapt to the university environment.

The current research study is based on the current situation of students from marginalised communities underperforming and dropping out of education

programmes despite available campus-based services. This situation promotes exclusion rather than inclusion, and if left unaddressed, the marginalised communities will remain at the margins of society without benefitting from inclusive, equitable education for all. The counselling intervention is at the centre of the problem and is investigated for the role it plays and can play to facilitate access to higher education by students from marginalised communities. Thus, the empirical evidence from the current study would guide the SAP and its strategies for implementation to maximise student support and ensure equitable access.

1.3 Research Questions and Objectives

1.3.1 Research Questions

The study sought answers to the following main question: What are the efficacy of counselling services as an equity measure for providing support to students from vulnerable and marginalised backgrounds in higher education in Namibia. To accomplish this goal, the study has formulated the following sub-questions:

1. How do beneficiaries and referrers describe their experiences with counselling services' effectiveness as an equity measure? (QUAL)
2. What is the beneficiaries' satisfaction with the counselling services offered? (QUANT).
3. How do beneficiaries and referrers describe their satisfaction with counselling services as an equity measure? (QUAL).
4. What factors influence the effectiveness of counselling as an equity measure leading to students' resilience and academic performance? (QUAL & QUANT).

5. What models could be adopted to develop a sustainable Student Assistance Programme and strategies for implementation? (QUANT).

1.3.2 Research Objectives

1. Explore and describe the experiences of beneficiaries and referrers on the effectiveness of counselling services, an equity measure. (QUAL).
2. Determine beneficiaries' satisfaction with counselling services offered (QUANT).
3. Determine the beneficiaries' and referrers' satisfaction with counselling services as an equity measure (QUAL).
4. Determine the factors influencing the effectiveness of counselling as an equity measure leading to students' resilience and academic performance (QUAL & QUANT).
5. Suggest models to develop a sustainable Student Assistance Programme and implementation strategies. (QUANT).

1.4 Significance of the Study

Inclusive education is a significant process of reaching out to all learners. It is the guiding principles that should inform policies and practices of education systems (Ministry of Education, 2013). There are numerous studies on the inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education. However, the area of ethnically marginalised communities has not been sufficiently studied. Similarly, interventions to mitigate exclusion from and within education have mainly focused on finance plans, infrastructure and sensitisation, but not enough have focused on counselling and its effectiveness as an equity measure. There are multiple significant benefits from the

findings of this study to different education stakeholders, policies and practices. Firstly, equity and inclusion cannot be attained without collecting and analysing data on the most excluded, vulnerable, and marginalised population (UNESCO, 2018). Thus, this study is significant because it fills the gap in literature from the Namibian context about the effectiveness of counselling services as equity and inclusion measures to support students from marginalised backgrounds. The conceptualisation of theories and models and the study's outcomes would help researchers in educational psychology and inclusive education, guidance and counselling, and students' affairs and services in higher education. Furthermore, UNESCO (2018) noted incomplete education data, despite adopting the SDGs and further acknowledged invisible statistics at national and global levels in most Handbook on Measuring Equity for marginalised groups. The study presents data and statistical information on the efforts toward attaining SDG Goal 4 of the UNDP. In addition, since there are limited pragmatic studies in this area conducted in the Namibian context, it is hoped that the findings would inform relevant equity and inclusive policies in HEIs in Namibia and elsewhere.

Secondly, the study provides an understanding of perceived counselling effectiveness from beneficiaries' and referrers' perspectives and insights. Accordingly, the beneficiaries of this study include but are not limited to education management and leadership, HEIs management, the directorate of student affairs and services, the teams of counselling professionals, educators, and students. Finally, the SAP and its implementation strategies would supplement the counselling services in addressing the diverse students' needs. Consequently, this would provide an opportunity to improve the counselling services. It would serve as another measure to promote equitable access to higher education.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

During the Coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19), the government joined the world in fighting against the spread of the virus. Like the rest of the world, Namibia took a phased approach and implemented measures to combat the spread of the Coronavirus. The stringent measures included, but were not limited to lockdowns, limits on public gatherings, suspension of air travel, closures of various public and private institutions such as schools, universities and church gatherings, and restricting the movement of the population (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [UNOCHA], 2020). Subsequently, these measures posed several limitations to the study, particularly the target sample.

Firstly, most beneficiaries of counselling services including students from marginalised communities live in remote areas with limited to no access to network and internet connectivity. Therefore, most were not reachable. The researcher employed a convenient sampling to extract the accessible participants from the sample stratum to alleviate the sampling limitations. The researcher obtained the cell phone numbers of the beneficiaries without names from a database to interview those who were reachable. In addition, the researcher used two (2) versions of the questionnaire; the online to reach those with internet connectivity via e-mails and the hard copies for those who were physically available. The data collection was very costly and labour-intensive since more airtime and internet data were needed to reach the participants. In addition, no students were visiting the counselling offices to complete the questionnaires. Hence, this prolonged the data collection phase.

Secondly, the shift to remote teaching and learning mode due to COVID-19 increased most students' and lecturers' workloads (Bao, 2020). Some lecturers needed to invest more time in planning, preparing, delivering, and marking online activities

(Bao, 2020). Similarly, students also needed more time to go through their learning materials independently and prepare for formative and summative assessments. Thus, most were hesitant to participate in the study.

There were more participants for the quantitative than for the qualitative data collection tools. This study took note of the imbalance in the samples of qualitative and quantitative methods. The disproportions in sampling were justified by the differences in the intents of the two research methods approaches. On the one hand, the qualitative data intended to gain an in-depth quality perspective of the participants, hence a smaller sample was necessary. On the other hand, the quantitative goal was to generalise the findings to the student population. Varied sample sizes for qualitative and quantitative methods could pose threats to validity. Nonetheless, participants for the interviews were a subset of the beneficiaries' quantitative sample. Furthermore, a mixed-methods approach with qualitative and quantitative instruments prevented methodological limitations and allowed cross-validation and data triangulation. Besides, to mitigate the possible uncertainty from the mixed-method approach, the researcher read various studies that applied the mixed-method approach and was guided by supervisors who were more experienced and conversant in mixed-method research.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

Delimitations are the parameters set out by the researcher for the study. They are the limits within the researcher's control and set out to maximise the attainment of the research objectives (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). Although there are many at-risk students, the scope of this study only covered the undergraduate students from the government-pronounced and recognised marginalised communities in Namibia (San, Ovatie, Ovatjimba, and Ovazemba), eligible for financial support and waivers

of entry requirements and admission criteria due to their marginalisation backgrounds. Further, the researcher only explored the effectiveness of counselling services focusing on psychosocial and academic counselling services to students from marginalised backgrounds offered through the Directorate of Student Affairs (DSA) at each sampled higher education institution. Other sources of support that could have contributed to general population of students' well-being were not part of the scope of this research. Similarly, issues related to HIV and general health services were not in the scope of the study.

Furthermore, lecturers who referred students for counselling services formed part of the study sample. Although the researcher used a mixed-methods research approach, only a selection from the beneficiaries' samples participated in the quantitative part of the study. Moreover, there was a limited number of referrers; thus, a total population sampling was used to collect qualitative data.

The researcher selected two public HEIs that admit students through the indigenous admission categories. Also, due to financial constraints and the COVID-19 travel restrictions during the data collection period, only students who were reachable via telephone, e-mails and easy to reach participated in the study.

1.7 Definition of the Terms

At-risk students are heterogeneous groups of the student population, regarded to have a higher chance of failing academically or dropping out of school due to a varied number of conditions such as poverty, family marginalisation and disabilities (Great Schools Partnership, 2014; Lewis & McCann, 2009). In this study, at-risk students are from marginalised communities. However, students with different barriers of a physical, psychological, neurological, or socio-emotional nature, putting them at risk of exclusion and "marginalisation" were not excluded. These students come with

diverse needs and remain at risk of dropping out if not identified and provided with the necessary support. Some of these students are the first generation to enter the higher education space in their families and often had to relocate from rural settings to towns (Horton, 2015; Larose & Tarabulsy, 2012).

Beneficiaries: Students who benefited from counselling services.

Counselling: Muhammad and Kabir (2018) define counselling as a process in which clients acquire knowledge and skills to make decisions and develop new perspectives. In this study, professionals offer counselling to contain students' distress and empower them to cope with social and academic pressure.

Early intervention: A programme to identify and provide adequate early support to students at risk for academic achievement (Early Intervention Foundation [EIF], 2020). Although the term early intervention is often associated with the identification of barriers in individuals during the period between conception and early childhood, in this study, early intervention is a deliberate effort whereby students from vulnerable and marginalised backgrounds are identified as early as possible in their studies and put through a programme to improve resilience and academic self-efficacy.

Effectiveness of counselling: This study's context refers to the efficacy and helpfulness of the counselling services as perceived by the referrers and beneficiaries.

Equity: Equity refers to fairness, impartiality, and justice on equal opportunity (Ismail, 2015). This study adopts a similar definition (2020), describing the two dimensions of equity: fairness and inclusion. This context calls for removing barriers that prevent individuals from reaching their full potential. It also promotes student support tailored to unique needs and enables individuals to perform to the best of their abilities.

Functional Close: This is one of the g-factor (construct) in the psychological domain of the General Population-Clinical Outcome in Routine Evaluation (GP-CORE)

instrument. In positive psychology, it relates to interpersonal relationships within your cycles (Lorentzen et al., 2020). In this study, functional close relates to the student's ability to develop relationships with peers, counsellors, lecturers, and role models and maintain home relationships.

Functional General: This is one of the g-factor (construct) in the psychological domain of the GP-CORE instrument. In positive psychology, it relates to the individual ability to function in general life (Lorentzen et al., 2020). In this study, functioning general relates students' feeling of satisfaction with their own ability to cope and function well in their roles as students in a given environment.

Functional social: In positive psychology relates to individuals' ability to function in their social lives (Lorentzen et al., 2020). In this study, this relates to individuals' satisfaction with their social life while at university.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): According to Alemu (2018), universities and higher education institutions are used interchangeably, although distinct differences exist. HEIs refer to the two-state universities (UNAM and NUST) in this study. From Alemu's (2018) perspective, Higher Education covers diverse higher learning institutions. He further explains that Higher education is a set that encompasses the university, which is a subset of higher education.

Inclusion Borrowing from Hodgkinson (2011), inclusion is termed as a right to be 'equal partners', a right which government extends to all children, celebrating diversity and fair opportunity by all. It is also defined as an approach to responding positively to the diverse needs of learners while seeing individual uniqueness not as problems but as opportunities for elevating learning (UNESCO-UIS, 2005).

Inclusive Education A process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners through increased participation in learning and reducing exclusion

(Ministry of Education, 2013; UNESCO-UIS, 2005). Inclusive education advocates for adjustment, adoption and modifications in contents, approaches, structures, strategies and policies, with a mutual vision for all children and an attitude that it is the responsibility of the regular education system to educate all children (UNESCO-UIS, 2005).

Indigenous people: In Namibia, the government recognises “indigenous people” as all formally disadvantaged Namibians of non-European descent (Begbie-clench & Gravotta, 2017). However, the term is used interchangeably with marginalised communities. In this study, indigenous people refer to all formally disadvantaged Namibians (Begbie-clench & Gravotta, 2017).

Marginalised communities: These are the communities recognised by the GRN as marginalised. They have unique languages, knowledge, and beliefs with irreplaceable knowledge of the sustainable use of natural resources. In this study, marginalised communities are members of the San, Ovahimba, Ovazemba, Ovatjimba and Ovatue communities from which the targeted group of students in this study originate (IWGIA, 2019).

Problem/symptoms: Is associated with psychological health issues such as anxiety and depression symptoms, reactions to trauma, and physical complaints. It is one of the g-factor (construct) in the psychological domain of the GP-CORE instrument. It describes the psychological health issues affecting the general population. In this study, it includes physiological and psychological distresses such as physical pain, anxiety and depression. These constructs were used to determine students’ encounters and satisfaction/dissatisfaction with their own ability to deal with distress.

Referrers: Lecturers who referred students for counselling services.

Resilience: Adopting a definition by American Psychology Association (APA) as presented by Southwick et al. (2014), resilience refers to a process by which an individual can adapt well despite significant sources of stress. Southwick et al. (2014) caution that it is necessary to indicate whether resilience is a trait, a process, or an outcome. In the context of this study, the researcher taps from Windle (2011), who views resilience as a personal trait that enables students to overcome adversity and succeed. This study also recognises a definition adopted by van Breda (2018b), who referred to resilience as a dynamic process that positively surrounds an individual's ability to adapt despite vulnerability or marginalisation. van Breda (2018) notes three conditions embedded into the resilience definition: the presence of adversity, positive adaptation, and dynamic process.

Self-efficacy: This refers to an individual's belief in their own ability to attain the desired goals (Li, 2020; Mathwasa & Sibanda, 2020). A similar definition applies in this study. In the context of this study, self-efficacy implies an individual's motivation to excel in their endeavours. In the same views as Mathwasa and Sibanda (2020), students with high self-efficacy are highly motivated in their studies.

Semi-arid region: Semi-arid is a region with a semi-dry climate. In this study, this is a region in the Northwest Kunene where the Namibian pastoral communities such as Ovahimba, Ovatie, Ovazemba, and Ovatjimba reside (The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs [IWGIA], 2019)

Student Assistance Programme (SAP): In the USA, the Student Assistance Programme is a school-based programme designed to provide education, preventative, identification, evidence-based intervention referral processes and guide students from first grade to the twelfth (Vincent et al., 2019). This study adopts a similar concept to the USA SAP but is tailored to meet the needs of diverse students in HEIs in Namibia.

Students from Marginalised backgrounds: Schatz and Schiffer (2008) indicate that marginalisation describes a population living at the margins of those in the centre of power. To be marginalised is to be distanced from power and resources like education and social services that enable self-determination in economic and social settings. Another definition provided by (NITA-U 2015) describes marginalisation as societal tendencies of excluding people or groups of people, limiting their opportunities and means of survival. Students from marginalised backgrounds in this study are students from the communities recognised by the GRN as marginalised communities studying at HEIs with funds from the Student Support Programme under the Office of the President. These are eligible students for counselling support due to issues surrounding their backgrounds and admissions to HEIs in Namibia.

Subjective Well-Being: This is one of the g-factor (construct) in the psychological domain of the GP-CORE instrument. Subjective Well-Being (SWB) is described as individual perceptions and encounters with positive and negative emotional responses. It is also termed as one's cognitive and affective and the global domain of evaluating life satisfaction (Proctor, 2016). In this study, SWB refers to individuals' experiences and evaluations of their satisfaction with different psychological domains and activities in their lives.

Transition: Donnell et al. (2016) caution that different people may describe other things in describing the transition. Thus, it is essential to be clear about the context and conceptualisation of defining transition. In this study, the transition refers to changing identity, roles, and new meanings within micro, meso and macro systems that impact individuals' actions and participation in higher education. Moving from one situation to a new situation requires a new coping mechanism due to the anticipated and unanticipated academic and social life events.

Vulnerable and marginalised students: These are students at the universities who, for some reason, are unable to safeguard their welfare and cope with university academic demands and who need psychosocial, academic, and economic support. However, students with different physical, psychological, neurological, or socio-emotional barriers were included, which makes them vulnerable to exclusion and their "marginalisation" status. It is worth declaring that, in this study, this term is merely used as an identification tool for support and not as a label to exclude or stigmatise this student population.

Vulnerable students: Adopting a definition provided by the National Information Technology Authority of Uganda [NITA-U], (2015), vulnerability is a social, physical, and economic condition that raises students' susceptibility to hardship. In this study, vulnerable students refer to the disadvantaged students by disabilities, ethnicity, pandemics, financial difficulties, and social and academic adversity who benefitted from the counselling services while in HEIs. These at-risk students needed short-term or continuous support to adapt, cope, and succeed with their academic work.

1.8 Organisation of the Dissertation

The dissertation is segmented into seven chapters, as outlined below.

Chapter One

This chapter presents an overview introduction of the study in terms of orientation, problem statement, significance, rationale, limitation, delimitation, and context-based definitions of the key terms used in the study and lastly presents the structure of the dissertation.

Chapter Two

The second chapter presents the literature review, the theoretical framework that guides this study, and conceptual models.

Chapter Three

This chapter deals with the research methodology employed to answer the study's research objectives, a detailed discussion on research design, study population, sampling and sampling procedures, data collection instruments and methods, data analysis methods, pilot report, ethical consideration, paradigms, and philosophical assumptions.

Chapter Four

This chapter presents qualitative research findings and a discussion concerning the literature review.

Chapter Five

This chapter presents quantitative research results and discussion.

Chapter Six

This chapter presents the merging of qualitative and quantitative data, conclusions, and recommendations from the study.

Chapter Seven

This chapter presents the development of SAP and strategies for implementation.

1.9 Summary

In conclusion, this chapter presented the title, orientation, and problem statement of the study. It outlined the research objectives and the significance of the study. Furthermore, the chapter presented the limitations, delimitations, and definitions of the key terminologies in the context of the study. The following chapter presents the literature review, theoretical framework, and conceptual models.

Chapter Two

2. Literature Review and the Theoretical Framework

This study assessed the effectiveness of counselling services as an equity measure to support students from marginalised backgrounds in higher education in Namibia. The previous chapter outlined the background of the study and clarified the context of the research problem. This chapter reviews relevant literature from international and regional perspectives related to the research objectives outlined in the preceding chapter. The literature review is presented under the following headings: global counselling service practices in higher education, counselling techniques and practices for indigenous and ethnic minorities, counselling services best practices in Higher Education, perceived roles of counselling services and the referral procedures, factors influencing counselling and perceived counselling satisfaction, Student Assistance Programme, the theoretical framework and conceptualisation models.

2.1 Global Counselling Service Practices in Higher Education

Developing and implementing embedded counselling services in higher education have substantial value to HEIs in Namibia. Several studies globally reveal the significance of providing counselling services in HEIs, a practice that existed for many decades post-second world war (Pope, 1997; Pope, 2000; Ruane & Kasayira, 2011; Maree & Westhuizen, 2011; Sharkin, 2012; Bantjes et al., 2016). The UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE) in 1998 strengthened the development of counselling services in HEIs around the globe. The conference established global standards on the models and accessibility of higher education (IASAS, 2020). In 2002, UNESCO published a manual in collaboration with IASAS (The role of student affairs and services in higher education: A practical manual for

developing, implementing and assessing student affairs programs and services). The practical manual aimed to guide HEIs in developing and implementing relevant student support programs. UNESCO's World Conference on Higher Education of 2009 intensified the significance of Student Affairs and Services in HEIs and emphasised their contributions to academic success (IASAS, 2020). In 2009, the second edition titled "Student Affairs and Services in Higher Education: Global Foundations, Issues and Best Practices" was published and revised for the 2020 3rd edition. UNESCO and IASAS (IASAS, 2020; UNESCO, 2002, 2009) practical manuals outline how to develop effective student-centred counselling services that support students' academic, personal, social, cultural and cognitive development (IASAS, 2020). The manuals anticipated a high-quality university learning experience for all students, improved access regardless of students' conditions and backgrounds, improved retention and graduation rates and academic progress (IASAS, 2020; UNESCO, 2002, 2009).

Various studies Broglia et al., (2017); Getachew (2019); Khairani et al. (2019) indicate an increase in mass higher education, the prevalence of diverse students and the impact of counselling services in higher education.

In the UK, for example, a shift to Widening Participation and Globalisation of Higher Education maximised access (Connell et al., 2008). It also increased the number of students from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy [BACP], 2017). Counselling service providers in the UK are obliged to ensure equality and inclusion in all institutional activities and appreciate diversity (BACP, 2017). The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion model (DEI) in the UK provides the basis to ensure that the needs of individual students are met through counselling services (BACP, 2017). BACP (2017) indicates that counselling

in higher education takes a systematic process. It involves reflection and actions offered over a given period through various sessions (BACP, 2017).

Broglia et al. (2018) reveal an increase in counselling service referrals over three years in the UK and classified students seeking counselling into groups: those struggling to adjust to the university environment and its demands and those in need of ongoing counselling support. According to BACP (2017), students sought or were mainly referred for counselling because of multiple factors related to academic distresses, stress, anxiety, phobia, suicidal issues, eating disorders, obsessions, depression, relationships and family problems. In addition, Broglia et al. (2018) state grief, sexual relationships, abuse and personal concept, and gender identity as the distressing factors among students in higher education institutions. Consequently, the abovementioned factors are addressed through long and short-term counselling services by a team of professional consultants such as counsellors, psychologists, social workers, and health professional practitioners in HEIs.

Several studies Francis and Horn (2017); Broglia et al. (2018); Flatt (2013); European Commission (2016); Weber et al. (2018) maintain that counselling services in HEIs restrain numerous factors that could hamper students' academic progress and impede their positive experiences of university life. Namibia shares commonalities in the factors mentioned above, thus, the student counselling services are geared to address most of these factors (McNally & Mwewa, 2018).

Similarly, in the USA, Francis and Horn (2017) underscore that students seek counselling due to anxiety and depression, academic demands, financial constraints, relationships, health, self-image and self-esteem. A study by Flatt (2013) echoes

similar sentiments that counselling services are availed to students experiencing mental, emotional and developmental growth.

In the USA, counselling services in HEIs are guided by principles set by the American College Counselling Association (ACCA), comprised of mental health professionals in counselling, psychology, and social work.

A survey conducted by Francis and Horn (2016) reveals that 61% of counselling service providers' time in the USA were assigned to the actual counselling, while 22% were allocated to activities such as training, supervision, consultation, and outreach programme. According to Francis and Horn (2016), the counselling services in HEIs are offered depending on the institution's culture, the type of institution, and the Student Affairs and Services divisions' structures and capacity.

The European Union (EU) counselling services are guided by principles and guidelines stipulated by the European Forum on Student Guidance (FEDORA). The directions are further endorsed through different declarations and conventions, namely, the Bologna Declaration of 1999, Lisbon Convention of 1997, and Sorbonne Declaration of 1998, and supported by the World Declaration on Higher Education by UNESCO (1999) and the "Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education" published by The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and UNESCO in 2005 (Aastrup, 2007).

In Germany, for example, counselling services are shared among lecturers and counselling officers (European Commission [EC] 2016). Lecturers provide specialised academic guidance while the counselling officials provide general psycho-social support. Both stakeholders, including student bodies in various institutions' departments, are responsible for providing support and assistance on different subjects.

Literature of the European Commission (2016); Weber et al. (2018) reveals that HEIs in Germany utilise undergraduate and assistant researchers to conduct seminars, refresher courses, and tutorials. Moreover, they provide information about available support services and study programmes and guide students on the university study methods and examination preparation tips. Undergraduate senior students and research assistants also provide individual support and enhance student social relations through study groups. Besides, the counselling officials also assist students in coping with personal adversity and study-related issues (European Commission, 2016; Weber et al., 2018).

In Australia, Browne et al. (2017) admit that a shift in government policies has increased participation and equity in HEIs. However, they are concerned that less attention is given to supporting students experiencing mental-health factors which implicate students' academic progress. Further, Browne et al. (2017); Stallman (2012) reveal that limited resources, high counsellor-student ratios, limited consultation sessions per student, and insufficient mental health qualifications by some counselling service providers were impediments to the adequate provision of effective counselling services.

In African settings, several studies indicate the prevalence of student counselling services in most HEIs (Gudyanga et al., 2015; Kamunyu, 2016; Mapfumo & Nkoma, 2013; Walker & Mkwanzani, 2015; Getachew, 2019; Mngomezulu, 2015). Although African countries benchmarked the provision of counselling services in HEIs with the USA, EU, UK and other Western worlds, every institution has its uniqueness in providing counselling services (Goss & Adebawale, 2014). Given the difference in cultural dynamics and socio-economics, each country's counselling services respond to its unique context (Maupa, 2020; Nyaga et al., 2014). Literature reveals different

associations governing counselling services in the USA, EU, UK and other countries to ensure consistency and effectiveness (Aastrup, 2007; BACP, 2017; Brunner et al., 2017). Similarly, in Africa, several associations foster the development of counselling services in higher education by sharing research-based information, such as the Southern African Association for Counselling and Development in Higher Education (SAACDHE) (Villiers, 2014).

Studies in Africa Mapfumo and Nkoma (2013); Mngomezulu (2015); Nyaga et al. (2014); Walker and Mkwanzani (2015) further indicate that students' counselling needs are intensified by mass access to higher education, the complexity of societies, socioeconomic imbalances, and cultural dynamics. An increase in access to higher education has consequences, potentially overburdening counselling service providers and compromising the equitable and quality services provided to needy students. Evaluation of counselling effectiveness to specific needs of students is very critical. Counselling services tailored to the unique needs of students help contain students' adversity and help them adapt and cope with the higher education learning environment and its demands (Escapa & Julià, 2018; Getachew, 2020; Nyaga et al., 2014; de Villiers, 2014). From a global perspective, the literature review conducted in this study has identified a research gap that focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of counselling services and the provision of equitable support for students from marginalised backgrounds in higher education. Therefore, this study is significant as it presents the Namibian situation and contributes to the limited literature in this context.

The provision of counselling services in Namibia follows the guidelines stipulated in the Namibia Sector Policy on Inclusive Education, UNESCO's World Declaration on Higher Education for the 21st Century, UNESCO student affairs and

Services in higher education and the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) (IASAS, 2020; Ministry of Education, 2013; UNESCO, 1998, 2008, 2009, 2018). Teams of professional staff such as social workers, counsellors and psychologists provide counselling services in HEIs in Namibia through the Directorate of Students' Affairs (DSA) and the Office of the Dean of Students (ODS).

In Namibia, like in most African countries, counselling services play a crucial role in the holistic development of students. Counselling comprises multiple activities and services to address academic, personal, psycho-social and other impediments such as disability and health-related distressing factors facing students. The goal is to ensure inclusion, equitable access and remarkable schooling experiences for all students (Ashipala-Hako, 2014; Hako & Mbongo, 2017; Mbongo et al., 2016). In HEIs in Namibia, counselling provision is autonomous. Each institution has unique counselling programmes with teams of professional staff. The ultimate goal is to prevent and contain students' adversities. The counselling services are open to all students in need. McNally and Mwewa (2018) underscore that students from ethnic and cultural minorities who are academically disadvantaged in mathematics, technological skills, and languages are at high risk of poor performance in HEIs. In addition, students from low socio-economic status, with physical, learning and emotional disabilities and victims of abuse are more at-risk and eligible for counselling support (McNally & Mwewa, 2018).

Students in Namibian HEIs come from diverse backgrounds where some are educationally marginalised due to the geographical location of their communities and the political dispensation (Tshabangu et al., 2013). Given Namibian society's diverse and complex nature, Namibian HEIs strive to ensure inclusion and equitable quality education for all, as stipulated in SDG 4 (UNESCO-UIS, 2018). Subsequently, the

counselling services are geared to nurture the potential of all students to become resilient and progress into more fully functioning individuals in their respective communities. This relates well with the Person-Centered theory of Roger, who calls for non-judgemental services that empower individuals to develop self-awareness and self-esteem and become fully functioning (Hayes, 2015). However, the conditions of counselling services in higher education and their effectiveness are under-researched in Namibia like elsewhere. Hence, a gap in the literature in the field (Nyutu et al., 2019; Goss & Adebawale, 2014). Evidence-based and empirical information provides the basis for retaining and improving counselling services.

2.2 Counselling Techniques and Practices for Indigenous and Ethnic Minorities

Counselling originated from Western psychological theories and cultures, which in some instances are regarded as ethnocentric and biased because they were found to have limitations in understanding and explaining the psychological phenomenon in the African context (Matoane, 2012). A study by Thomason (2011) explores best cultural practices native and non-native counsellors and psychologists could use to support the Native Americans effectively. Thomason (2011) points out that some counselling best practices include building relationships with local native communities, combining spirituality with counselling, and lessening administrative impediments to care and support. Oulanova and Moodley (2010) use semi-structured interviews to describe the experiences of mental health professionals who integrated Western (Euro-centric) psychological interventions and Aboriginal traditional (Afro-centric) healing practices. Although not in the education setting, findings revealed that integration of Aboriginal traditional healing practices is commonly used in the Caribbean, South Asia and Africa. In Zimbabwe, studies by Charema and Shizha (n.d.); Ndlovu and Hove (2015) affirm that both Euro and Afro-centric approaches to

counselling exist to date but did not state whether these approaches apply in both the clinical and educational settings. Ndlovu and Hove (2015) recommend that all counselling service providers employ multicultural approaches to counselling to cater to individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Furthermore, Ndlovu and Hove (2015); Oulanova and Moodley (2010) reveal that Euro-Centric (Western) counselling approaches had limitations in meeting the needs of the Aborigines. Oulanova and Moodley (2010) point out some traditional healing practices commonly integrated into Western counselling interventions, such as smudging, eagle feather, drumming alongside Eye Movement, Desensitisation and Reprocessing technique (EMDR) and talking to clients outdoors. Similarly, Thomason (2011) highlights the best traditional counselling practices worth integrating into the Western counselling practices such as visiting traditional healers, and elders to disbelief and prevent burnout. Similar sentiments were echoed by Matoane (2012), who indicates that in the African perspective, healing takes the form of traditional or spiritual, with the healer being a respected elder member of the community who is believed to possess spiritual power to connect to the Supreme Being or the ancestors. Ndlovu and Hove (2015) also indicate that indigenous counselling approaches that are more Afro-centric value the family and community as a means of communication for therapy and moral value. Clearly, traditional therapies emphasise who offers the counselling service and the place where it is offered.

In African psychology, the socio-cultural environment is perceived as the centre of defining the individual, while in Western psychology, individuals are considered self-contained and independent (Matoane, 2012). However, Robertson (2021) maintains that traditional and Western counselling approaches accept individuality within the social context and recognise and respect clients' choices and

decisions. The current study aligns with humanistic approaches and phenomenological perspective as advocated by the Person-centred theory (Hayes, 2015). Individuals have unique perspectives of their world views. Thus, for counselling services to be effective, particularly in the education setting, multiculturalism and a person-centred approach are vital in counselling practices. Service providers ought to create an environment that facilitates self-awareness.

Namibian students from marginalised communities are culturally oriented. Incorporating cultural elements into their support interventions could be more meaningful than relying solely on Western counselling services, which are often seen as "one size fits all." Meanwhile, they must demonstrate congruency, unconditional positive regards, acceptance, empathy and reflection of feeling (Hayes, 2015).

In another study, Adiputra et al. (2020) use a qualitative meta-synthesis to analyse the use of counselling that incorporates cultural and religious values. Their findings indicate that the indigenous approach to counselling makes counselling more accepted by those in need. Worth mentioning is that most Higher Education Institutions have adopted Western counselling practices with less consideration of multicultural approaches to meet the diverse needs of students. Adiputra et al. (2020) advise that counselling service providers must be creative and innovative in incorporating cultural and religious attributes in the methods, interventions, and counselling approaches. According to Oulanova and Moodley (2010), to integrate Afro-centric into Euro-centric counselling practices, there is a need to raise awareness among service providers about the different practices. Awareness could be done through specific courses on traditional healing, the use of guest speakers from local communities, professional seminars, education on traditional ways of helping, avenues of

collaboration with traditional healers and elders and avail names of potential referrals from which work an integrative approach.

Like many African countries, Namibia has different traditional ways of treating mental health-related issues among the young and the elderly. Moreover, Namibia is a diverse nation with different cultural practices. Due to their unique cultures, beliefs, values and practices, mental health is also perceived in cultural contexts (Bartholomew, 2016). Both Afro-centric (traditional) and Euro-centric (Western) counselling services are being practised in medical and educational settings (Bartholomew & Gentz, 2019). Western counselling services are provided by trained professionals such as social workers, psychologists, counsellors, religious workers, and life skills teachers. In Namibia, most professionals in mental health fields are qualified to practice Western counselling support services (Bartholomew, 2016). The Afrocentric practices originate from the “Ubuntu” African philosophy, which believes that there are several relationships with others in an individual's life. The traditional counselling services are provided by people with “Ubuntu” who are open, available for others, selfless and with self-assurance, such as elders, religious and community leaders and trusted individuals (Bartholomew, 2016). Traditional healers also provide counselling support in some Southern African countries (Ndlovu & Hove, 2015; Thomason, 2011). Similarly, some cases of psycho-social challenges among some tribes in Namibia are referred to the traditional healers for intervention (Bartholomew & Gentz, 2019). The prevalent counselling services offered in HEIs in Namibia are inherent in Western practices and have very little to no integration of traditional counselling practices. Bartholomew (2016); Bartholomew and Gentz (2019) called for the inclusion of cultural counselling practices in counsellor training and practices to close the gap between Western and traditional knowledge and theories. They further

urge practitioners in all spheres of mental health to be culturally sensitive when dealing with individuals, multicultural-oriented, and person-centred to meet individual needs. Additionally, they should be willing to extend referrals to indigenous and traditional psychological support providers where necessary. This is the approach the current study intends to adopt.

2.3 Best Practices in Counselling Services in Higher Education

Nura Gili's ongoing, individualised, personal support and well-established ethic of care for all students in need have yielded positive results in improving retention, success, and graduation rate among students from diverse backgrounds (Fanshawe College Report, 2016). This study supports the notion of integrating approaches to counselling with a strong emphasis on multiculturalism and holistic systems of individualism support and discourages aggregating individuals as members but rather adopts a Nura Gili's support services concept implemented at the University of New South Wales in Australia where indigenous students are treated as individuals. Support staff are expected to be conversant with students' study conditions such as financial issues, accommodation, home situation and career obligations and coping within the new environment. Staff are expected to gather information to understand individual students' academic and psychological strengths and weaknesses for continuous support.

Counselling services in many countries were often perceived as out of cultural context and insensitive to the traditions, values and experiences of the native students (Maree, 2009; Maree & Westhuizen, 2011; Robertson et al., 2015). Robertson et al. (2015) qualitatively describe the experiences of offering counselling services to Natives and International Students at the Canadian University Centre. They

recommend intensifying counsellor sensitivity to cultural differences and adapting multicultural counselling services.

The United States of America (USA) has indigenous designed and controlled Higher Education Institutions worth emulating (Fanshawe College Report, 2016). They have successfully integrated indigenous perspectives and culture into various aspects of the institutions, such as the academic programme, the architecture and the physical environment (Fanshawe College Report, 2016). The report further states that the integration of indigenous practices resulted in new relationships, partnerships, the indigenous-oriented curriculum that meet students' needs, approaches to learning and student support to sustain an effective learning environment for Native American students.

In Canada, Social engagement and formal community-building efforts, cultural identity, and self-efficacy are the identified factors leading to native academic success (Aboriginal) students (Gallop & Bastien, 2016). Gallop and Bastien (2016) also conduct a qualitative with a participatory action research approach to inquiry and concur with (Robertson et al., 2015). However, they suggest that HEIs that wish to retain native students should seek to understand how to create a positive and supportive relationship between the students, their peers, and the educators. These aspects should be formally integrated into institutional planning and faculty instructional support.

Thiimm and Dasgupta (2022) affirm that various interrelated systematic hindrances prevent students from marginalised backgrounds from accessing, succeeding, and persisting through graduation. They pointed to cultural mismatch, a lack of representation on campus and a lack of relationships with same-identity peers and staff. Besides, Thiimm and Dasgupta (2022) state that being the minority on campus puts students at risk of social isolation and decreases a sense of belongingness.

They further postulate that limited representation contributes to narrow professional networks. Moreover, Thiemm and Dasgupta (2022) note the low utilisation of campus resources by students from marginalised backgrounds due to a lack of awareness of their availability. They maintained that some students who are aware of the resources shy away from accessing them, fearing being regarded as weak.

Thompson (2020) affirms that equitable quality education reduces social inequalities. Thus, he recommends equitable access, learning opportunities, and quality learning outcomes. Moreover, Thompson (2020) posits that it is crucial to identify those at risk of marginalisation and exclusion in education and address the risk factors to ensure equity in access and outcomes. Given the backgrounds of students from marginalised backgrounds, as described in Chapter One, they are eligible for targeted support, which is offered through counselling services to ensure equitable access. However, many might not understand the counselling in higher education institutions, which is often based on Euro-centric rather than Afro-centric approaches described above. This literature is significant as it serves as the lens through which Namibia can zoom in to find best practices suitable to need the unique and diverse needs of the diverse Namibia population.

2.4 Culturally-Sensitive Student Support Services

Hung and Fung (2003) discuss the relevance of psychosocial and cultural issues as part of therapist, patient, family and counselling techniques. They also indicate that cultural competencies enhance counselling effectiveness if cultural treatment, goals, process and content are appropriately incorporated. Furthermore, counselling techniques related to culture, such as countercultural, culturally reinforcing, culturally congruent and contradictory cultural beliefs are highlighted (Hung & Fung, 2003).

In another study, Dass-Brailsford (2012) discusses ways to involve students from low-socio-economic backgrounds in counselling support services. He proposed a counselling intervention model that locates individual students and their adversity in their own cultural identity and social background context. He calls for intervention frameworks that are more ecological, culturally sensitive and empowering. He also recommends that service providers should identify clients' cultural needs and abilities to capitalise on their strengths and resources to overcome adversity. This literature supports the goals of Carlo Rogers' Person-centred theory, which advocates creating an environment that capitalises on individuals' strengths and creates an environment that facilitates self-awareness.

Lovell et al. (2014) develop a culturally sensitive well-being intervention for individual groups and signposts for people from ethnic minorities. Findings evidenced the efficacy and acceptability of the well-being intervention. Benuto et al. (2021) use a mixed method to determine how, what, and to whom counsellors integrate cultural factors in clinical treatments. First, Benuto et al. (2021) create awareness of cultural factors and used the factors to assess counselling processes. Counsellors used the outcomes from the assessments to improve and guide practices tailored to the client's needs.

Literature validates the need and significance of cultural sensitivity to counselling practices. Although there are more efforts to integrate cultural factors into modern counselling support, the literature reveals a gap in applying cultural factors in counselling services in HEIs.

2.5 Perceived Roles of Counselling Services as an Equity Measure in HEIs

Several researchers, Ashipala-Hako (2014); BACP (2017); Escapa and Julià (2018); Hako and Mbongo (2017); Mbongo et al. (2016); Mngomezulu (2015); Walker

and Mkwanzani (2015); Weber et al. (2018) reveal that counselling services play a significant role in various aspects of students' lives. Besides, (Kamunyu, 2016); Kamunyu et al., 2016) ascertain that counselling services in HEIs guide students in academic, psycho-social, social, personal, economic, health, physical, career, and spiritual challenges facing students upon entering higher education. Literature signifies the substantial roles of counselling services in HEIs. Ciobanu (2013) evidences the significance of counselling services and maintains that students who lack academic, emotional, and social connection to the cultures of the institutions are at risk of giving up their studies. Students in HEIs come from diverse backgrounds with unique and complex cultural dynamics. They need to adapt and develop connections with the culture of the institutions. Thus, Ciobanu (2013) affirms that student support services contribute to the quality of the overall studying experience of diverse students and academic achievement. He further emphasises that counselling services lessen university dropout while maximising success and graduation rates.

IASAS (2020) recommends that HEIs avail of counselling services that enhance opportunities for multicultural students. The purpose is to develop the necessary skills to blend into the university culture, sensitise the university community to appreciate multi-ethnicity and diversity and create a conducive university learning climate that promotes inclusive and unified cultures in a multi-dimensional society. Furthermore, IASAS (2020) defines financial aid in HEIs as resources to fund their tuition fees and daily living costs. They further caution that states must avail funds to needy students to support them in pursuing their studies based on their interests and abilities. Among others, IASAS (2020) recommends that the following should be among the activities of student support services:

1. Help students determine the available grants, loans, scholarships, work and fee remissions,
2. Help students apply for funds,
3. Avail emergency financial support for unusual or sudden needs,
4. Help students collect outstanding loans.

Rush (2010) exposes a lack of cultural validity for ethnic minorities in most higher education counselling programmes. Accordingly, he calls for multicultural sensitivity in academic and career development, psycho-social counselling and recognition of cultural minorities' perspectives in counselling services (Bantjes et al., 2016; Leong & Flores, 2015) cited in (Weber et al., 2018). Anyin (2022) characterises multicultural counselling as the counselling practice that provides effective intervention to students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Similarly, Robertson et al. (2015) assert that multiculturalism is effective and maximises accessibility to the counselling service for students from marginalised backgrounds.

Applying Roger's person-centred theory in the development and provision of counselling services in higher education provides a basis to ensure inclusive support for individuals or groups of students (Hayes, 2015). Subsequently, the current study assumes that individuals from marginalised backgrounds in Namibia have unique worldviews different from some of the counselling service providers. As a diverse nation, the prevalence of students from cultural minorities in HEIs in Namibia who are educationally marginalised is inevitable. This study's perspective supports Roger's theory and Robertson et al. (2015), who maintain that cultural sensitivity maximises access and overcomes disparities in counselling services. Contextualised counselling services would meet the needs of individual students. Thus, sensitivity and understanding of their unique needs are significant in counselling services provision

in HEIs. In addition, multicultural consideration is one of the tools to assure equity, inclusion and academic outcomes (Anyin, 2022).

Therefore, the following section discusses the different spheres of counselling services in higher education and their influential roles for marginalised students.

2.5.1 Academic counselling services

Academic counselling is the support service helping students deal with academic challenges that impede their academic success (Ashipala-Hako, 2014; Kishore, 2014; Maupa, 2020; Thuryrajah et al., 2017; Belskaya et al., 2016). The roles of academic counselling stipulated by UNESCO's practical manual (IASAS, 2020; UNESCO, 2002, 2009) are as follows:

1. Assist students in overcoming barriers to academic success and help them cope with academic demands and adjust to the university environment.
2. Review and use data to determine students' academic needs, performance, aspirations and problems.
3. Identify systemic and personal conditions that prevent students' academic achievement.
4. Develop effective academic support interventions.
5. Connect students to institutions through personal contact to maximise students' retention.

A descriptive survey was conducted by Iyeke et al. (2018) to evaluate students' perceptions of the role of counselling and the unmet expectation of undergraduate students. The findings affirmed the relevance of counselling services in enhancing the academic development and study skills of students.

Academic counselling services empower students with academic skills that help them handle academic demands and increase students' success rates (University of Namibia [UNAM], 2022). Most academic counselling services in Namibia include but are not limited to study skills, exam preparations, academic writing, time management, exam and test anxiety management, note-taking, and abilities to adapt and cope with academic workloads (UNAM, 2022; Namibia University of Science and Technology [NUST], 2022). Academic skills are offered through various platforms such as refresher courses, tutorials, workshops, seminars, one-on-one sessions, and mentoring programmes (BACP, 2017; Commission, 2016; NUST, 2022; Weber et al., 2018). Similarly, Belskaya et al. (2016) state that academic counselling services are offered as adaptation courses for the first year at Tomsk Polytechnic University in Russia. In the same vein, Getachew (2020) postulates that academic counselling services empower students with time management, study skills and help students cope with academic pressure to prevent failure.

Most researchers, Estrella and Lundberg (2006); CCPA (2015); Muhammad & Kabir, 2018) underscore that academic counselling aims to address related developmental issues such as behavioural change and enhance students' coping skills. It also helps promote decision-making, improve relationships, develop insights and knowledge, deal with inner feelings, and solve specific problems. Zarges et al. (2018) affirm that students who participate in academic counselling have higher retention and persist to graduation.

Moreover, Ashipala-Hako (2014); Hako and Mbongo (2017); Mbongo et al. (2016) indicate that in Namibian schools, student support services are provided in the form of counselling services. Although most literature did not focus on students from vulnerable and marginalised backgrounds in HEIs, they implied that students who

receive support have a high chance of academic excellence, adjust and cope well with the university's social and educational demands (Getachew, 2019, 2020; Murray et al., 2016; Weber et al., 2018).

2.5.2 Psychological Counselling

Several scholars Flatt (2013); Broglia et al. (2018); Connell et al. (200); Ekore et al. (2016); Holmes and Silvestri (2016) observe an increase in the psychological and social factors that influence the mental health of students in higher education institutions. According to Bernhardsdóttir and Vilhjálmsón (2013); Ekore et al. (2016), psycho-social distresses in academia are unpleasant mental disorders in the form of depression and anxiety subjectively affecting university students and their academic work. In essence, it justifies the prevalence of psycho-social counselling services in most HEIs. One of the roles of psycho-social counselling services in HEIs outlined by IASAS (2020); UNESCO (2002; 2009) is to include clinical services to support students who experience psychological challenges conflicting with academic, interpersonal and campus adjustment. In addition, it helps students find effective stress and disappointment coping mechanisms and refer severe psychological distress cases for external psychiatric interventions.

Researchers indicate that mental health issues among students have become a global concern (Broglia et al., 2018; Brown, 2018; Ekore et al., 2016). In the UK, for example, one-third of students report clinical levels of mental health distress and the counselling services providers are challenged to respond to the increased demand with effective counselling interventions (Broglia et al., 2018).

An increase in psycho-social distresses among students in Higher Education Institutions (HEI), particularly students from marginalised backgrounds in South

Africa was echoed (Shankar et al., 2013). They underscore that students face multiple challenges in their quest for academic success. Shankar et al. (2013) point to financial, social, physical and psychological distress troubling students in their attempts to cope with academic demands. Their study postulates that HEIs settings should identify effective interventions to maximise students' potential and help them achieve their academic ambitions.

Brown (2018) highlights loneliness, childhood trauma, cyberbullying, and academic stress as some of the contributors to mental health disorders among students. He states that students with psycho-social distress have challenges coping with academic demands, poor academic progress and doubt whether being at university is worth their time, effort and money. Brown (2018) identifies academic pressure, financial constraints, female to male ratio, technology and university lifestyle as the leading causes of students' psychological distress in North America. He highlights academic pressure as the leading cause of stress, anxiety and depression, resulting from individuals' and parents' expectations of academic achievement and inability to cope with failure. Meanwhile, Matliwala (2017) found that students in HEIs seek psycho-social counselling due to stress, family issues, depression, homesickness, relationship and anxiety stemming from academic pressure such as test and exam anxiety. Moreover, they affirm the positive impact of counselling services, highlighting that it helps students relax, focus on their academic goals, be aware of their strengths and weaknesses, plan and organise their learning, and manage their emotions.

The critical focus of psych-social counselling provided by HEIs in Namibia is to contain personal, social and life adversities that impede students' academic goals. The services cover various aspects perceived as the major causes of students' psychological challenges in Namibia. The highlighted factors causing students'

distress are coping and adjustment to the university environment, homesickness and loneliness, social skills, self-esteem, and confidence (UNAM, 2022).

The person-centred theory supports non-judgemental counselling services that empower individuals with skills to use their abilities to solve their problems (Hayes, 2015). Given the diverse nature of the Namibian students, counsellors need to be culturally sensitive to meet the diverse need of students as advocated (Anyin, 2022). This study wishes to establish the effectiveness of counselling services as an equity measure to support students from a marginalised background guided by equity dimensions: availability, accessibility, and horizontality that ensure the fairness of the higher education system as stipulated by (McCowan, 2016).

2.5.3 Personal and Social Counselling

The main focus of this counselling service is to address emotional and social issues confronting students in HEIs. Some studies, Pinto (2019); Brunner et al. (2014) reveal challenges that students encounter when they transit to the university environment. Among others, they underscore alcohol, drugs, sexual assaults, abuse, discrimination, bullying and suicide ideation as the major causes of social adversity among students. Similarly, Johnson (2015) recounts that hate, crimes, sexual violence and poverty affect students and lead to social distresses, particularly among students from marginalised backgrounds in HEIs. Moreover, other social challenges include basic needs such as shelter, food, safety and resources needed for survival (Johnson, 2015). It is further acknowledged that most students from low-income backgrounds struggle with living spaces, tuition, and stationaries despite having financial assistance (Johnson, 2015). He cautions that in efforts to harness inclusion and diversity, HEIs must consider students' basic needs. He also states that HEIs must safeguard access to resources that provide physical and emotional safety in the university setting (Johnson,

2015). According to IASAS (2020); UNESCO, (2002, 2009), counselling services should guide students experiencing personal and social challenges to become resourceful and progress successfully in their academic journey and guide students to transit into the university setting effectively,

In another study, Joan et al. (2021) highlight that some students in HEIs face challenges adapting to the social and physical environment, adjustment to new peer groups, academic atmosphere, loss of family contact, and financial problems. According to Joan et al. (2021), the challenges mentioned above have implications for personal and social disturbance resulting in poor academic progress, social isolation, suicidal attempts and engagement in unacceptable behaviours such as prostitution, criminals, and drug abuse. Francis and Horn (2017) report that social issues such as relationships with friends and family and a lack of self-esteem are leading causes of depression and anxiety among students. However, they affirm that students who received personal and social counselling report higher self-rated academic, social, and emotional adjustment. Literature confirms multiple social issues that are detrimental to students' academic successes. It further validates the significance of prevailing counselling services in HEIs.

It is apparent that personal and social counselling services are instrumental in addressing the social and emotional challenges facing students in HEIs. Wulz et al. (2018) indicate that in addition to financial support, counselling is one measure to curb dropout and increase completion and graduation rates among students from marginalised backgrounds. In their study, Francis and Horn (2016) conclude that HEIs counselling service providers must be alert to identify at-risk students and avail intervention programmes that assure safety and prevent students' distress. Kamunyu et al. (2016) share similar sentiments on the social and personal challenges facing

students and raised concerns that most students are unaware of the available social counselling supports; hence, they do not seek counselling services.

Agreeing with Francis and Horn (2016); Joan et al. (2021); Pinto (2019) that transition, coping and adaptation to the university environment are crucial to many students, particularly students from marginalised backgrounds. This study recognises the multiple transitions that evoke social challenges among students, particularly students from marginalised backgrounds. Schlossberg's theory of transitions postulates anticipated and unanticipated events in a transition requiring abilities to cope (Sweet et al., 2020). Students from marginalised backgrounds in HEIs have to deal with various transitions that are more detrimental to their self-efficacy development and resilience abilities (Khairani et al., 2019). Indeed, effective social and personal counselling services and interventions in HEIs could support these students to cope and adapt to social challenges. In Namibia, counselling services are assumed to address trauma and crisis, abuse, rape, sexual assaults and harassment, poor self-concept and identity crises, addiction issues, relationships, and family problems (UNAM, 2022).

However, cultural context and sensitivity to cultural diversity remain crucial in providing effective counselling services (Maree & Westhuizen, 2011; Robertson et al., 2015). Therefore, it is essential to understand the needs of individual students and their cultural context and regularly assess the context of the available personal and social counselling services to determine their effectiveness.

2.5.4 Peer Counselling

Several studies Ekore et al. (2016); Mudis and Onyango (2015); Swenson et al. (2017); Osodo et al. (2016); Zakaria (2007) report a lack of professional counselling teams in most HEIs to offer counselling services to the growing student

population in HEIs and their varied needs. They further underscore peer counsellors' eminences to supplement the overloaded counselling teams and step in where there is a shortage. Ekore et al. (2016) affirm the effectiveness of peer counselling in addressing students' challenges because they tend to seek help freer/easier from each other in stressful situations. HEIs need to train and avail teams of peer counsellors who should be accessible to all students at any time of need to drive equity and an inclusive agenda. To harness effective peer counselling and achieve equity, the peer counsellor team should comprise students from diverse and multicultural backgrounds.

Keller and Porter (2020) describe peer health educators as paraprofessionals who avail listening ears to individuals or groups of students experiencing academic, social and mental distressing issues such as eating disorders, sexual and relationship abuse and HIV/AIDS-related issues. Similarly, Mudis and Onyango (2015); Osodo et al. (2016) assert that peer counselling benefits the student population because it nurtures positive relationships and a conducive learning environment. In their study, Mudis and Onyango (2015) posit that student affairs and services departments should utilise peer counselling services and ensure that they are adequately trained to instil disciplines, deal with students' distressing factors, and provide prompt services. According to Essack (2012), peer counselling is provided by more advanced individuals who instruct, counsel, guide and facilitate the personal and intellectual development of less experienced individuals. Peer counsellors facilitate the transition, induct students to realise their potential, and provide psych-social support. The peer counsellors in HEIs are role models and instrumental in accessing inclusion, equity, adaptability and networking (Essack, 2012). The current study aims to establish the factors contributing to counselling effectiveness as an equity measure to support students from a marginalised background. It affirms that if peer counsellors from

multicultural backgrounds could be visible and accessible, most students would be free to express their needs and get the needed support.

2.5.5 Orientation

The need to diversify student support programmes to cater to the needs of students from multicultural backgrounds to transit successfully into higher education is highlighted (Escapa & Julià, 2018; IASAS, 2020; UNESCO, 2002, 2009). Cubarrubia and Schoen (2010) echo similar sentiments and indicate that students from marginalised backgrounds are confronted with financial constraints, inadequate preparation for university education, and limited support networks. Thus, students' orientation is vital to support and ensure a smooth student transition. Moreover, Byrd (2017) acknowledges the benefits of orientations during student transition and recommends that HEIs improve orientation programmes and sensitise the university community about the programmes. Effective orientation programmes strive for equity and inclusion. They help students build a support network within and outside the institution, for example, directing students to get financial, academic, and necessary support (Cubarrubia & Schoen, 2010). Orientations are anticipated to help new students from diverse backgrounds to settle and achieve their full potential (IASAS, 2020; UNESCO, 2002, 2009). Furthermore, before registration, orientations assist the students in making the right career choices and decisions, help students adapt to the new environment and help them persist through to academic success.

Assessing student services' effectiveness in HEIs remains critical to improving such services. Thus, the current study seeks to establish the efficacy of availed counselling services offered to students, and orientation is part of the services that drive the agenda of equitable access in higher education. It is also the platform that creates awareness among students about the available counselling services (Byrd,

2017; Robinson et al., 2016). Indeed, orientation is necessary, however, to ensure its effectiveness, HEIs need to understand students' diverse needs during the transition and identify the appropriate time and programme content to address their needs. Thus, Schlossberg's theory provides the basis for interpreting the transition events in students' lives and guides HEIs to provide effective orientation programmes to all students. Students and staff responsible for planning and facilitating the orientation programmes must have the right skills, attitude, and willingness. Not only to focus on introducing the essential services but also to help students create the necessary support network.

2.5.6 Mentoring

Some student counselling services include mentorship programmes for needy students. Several studies Balu (2014); Leidenfrost et al. (2014); Lucey and White, (2017); Lunsford et al. (2015); Orsini et al. (2019) underscore the significance of mentorship in higher education. Balu terms mentoring as a practice of availing timely help to address students' distressing issues and sharing experiences, values, skills, and views. He describes mentors as the catalysts willing to invest their time, interest and expertise to support students faced with challenges in the university community. Also, Balu (2014); Lunsford et al. (2015); Orsini et al. (2019) indicate that mentorship programmes take different forms, such as peer mentorship (student-to-student) or academic mentorship (academic staff-to-student). Furthermore, varied mentorship programmes are available depending on students' needs in the given institution. Two types of mentorships, namely career-related and psycho-social mentorship programmes are identified (Balu, 2014; Collier, 2017; Leidenfrost et al., 2014; Orsini et al., 2019). The two mentorship programmes mentioned above relate well to the focus of this study. The mentorship programmes in Namibia ensure access to services,

expertise, skills, academic leadership, and facilities for all students regardless of their background, conditions and culture (UNAM mentorship policy, 2013). The policy concurs with Balu (2014); Leidenfrost et al. (2014); Lunsford et al., (2015); Orsini et al. (2019) on the objectives of mentorship programmes. The purposes stipulated by UNAM policy (2013) include but are not limited to the following: Firstly, to form the support systems between (staff members- students) and (students-students) and foster a positive attitude toward academic excellence. Secondly, mentorship programmes in HEIs improve academic and social development among diverse students. Furthermore, it forms the basis for mentors and mentees to share their expertise and skills to achieve their educational goals. Thirdly, mentorship promotes multiculturalism among diverse students and provides insights into mentees' backgrounds that inform the programme and its effectiveness. Finally, mentorship offers feedback on academic, intrapersonal, and interpersonal relationships.

Mentorship is presumed to support students develop resilience and self-efficacy during transitions to overcome social, emotional, academic, mental, and physical well-being and persist toward academic success (UNAM mentorship policy, 2013). Similarly, researchers alluded to multiple benefits of the mentorship programme; both the mentor and the mentee gain a sense of belonging, communication skills, and socio-emotional and cognitive growth (Lucey & White, 2017; Orsini et al., 2019). At the same time, Collier (2017) echoes similar sentiments that mentorship increases students' satisfaction with their university and adjusts to academic demands. The current study wishes to establish the effectiveness of mentorship as part of student counselling services. Resilience theory advocates for positive adaptation despite adversities (Yates et al., 2015). Counselling is expected to play a critical role in addressing the diverse needs of students. The literature has provided valuable insights

into the common counselling needs of students in higher education. Therefore, this serves as a conceptual understanding for the current study and helps guide the design of effective interventions in the Student Assistance Programme (SAP) to foster the resilience of students from marginalised backgrounds in their new environment.

2.6 Counselling Referral Procedures

Referring students to counselling services is crucial in ensuring timely access to counselling services in higher education (Krubsack et al., 2019; Lancaster, 2008; Lemberger et al., n.d.; Yaip et al., 2019). Kambouropoulos (2015) indicates that sources of counselling referrals in higher education include but are not limited to academic staff members, fellow students and friends, medical professionals, and students themselves.

Meador (2020) defines a referral as a process educators engage in to seek extra support to address disciplinary issues, learning needs, and counselling services for their students. Meador (2020) indicates that before educators make referrals, they need to undergo professional development training to recognise the observable signs and behaviour that indicate a need for referral. He points out that educators who are not empowered with referral skills might inappropriately make referrals or choose not to refer because they are uncertain about how to do it (Meador, 2020).

A study by Parikh et al. (2021) found that a lack of time and opportunity to know more about student mental health issues resulted in unfavourable attitudes among educators toward counselling services which deters educator-directed referrals.

Lancaster (2008) of the North Carolina Community College System underscores the best practices for psycho-social referrals in education. He proposed that the referrers must show sincere interest and helpfulness toward the students in

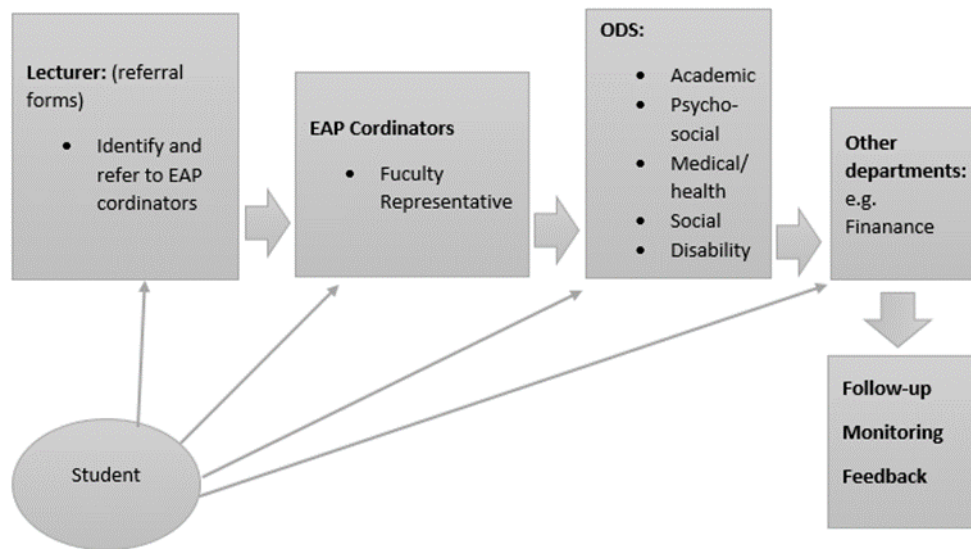
need and should be based on a mutual decision between the student and referrers except in severe cases. Lancaster (2008) further postulates that reasons for referring a student for counselling services must be made clear to the student. Krubsack (2019) recommends that referral pathways systems include identifying, tracking, referring, and following up with distressed students. Moreover, Krubsack (2019); Lancaster (2008) posit that referrals must be made timely; where possible, the referrer must alert the counsellor about the upcoming referral, walk with the student to the counsellor's office, and brief the counsellor about the situation. He further cautions the referrers not to counsel, diagnose and judge the student's state of mind but rather to assist, adhere to ethics and confidentiality and make referrals to the professionals (Lancaster, 2008). Further, Bartlett and Freeze (2019); Yaip et al. (2019) affirm that educators are in constant contact with students and thus are obliged to observe, identify, and refer students for counselling services. In addition, he suggests that HEIs empower, avail resources and support the academic staff to handle students' mental wellness with diligence.

Similarly, Yaip et al. (2019); Nwonyuku (2018) maintain that effective referrals require basic knowledge of counselling regulations, theories, and multicultural orientation. A lack thereof leads to misinterpretation of students' behaviour, particularly from marginalised students leading to improper referrals. This study focuses on counselling effectiveness and borrows from Roger's Person-Centered theory. The theory provides the basis for effective referrals because it is person-focused. The study presumes that effective referrals contribute to effective counselling services.

The process of accessing the counselling service depends on the institution's structure. Some students self-seek while others wait to be identified and referred for

the services. The diagram below explains how lecturers refer and how students seek counselling services from the Directorate of Students' Affairs and the ODS officials at Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST).

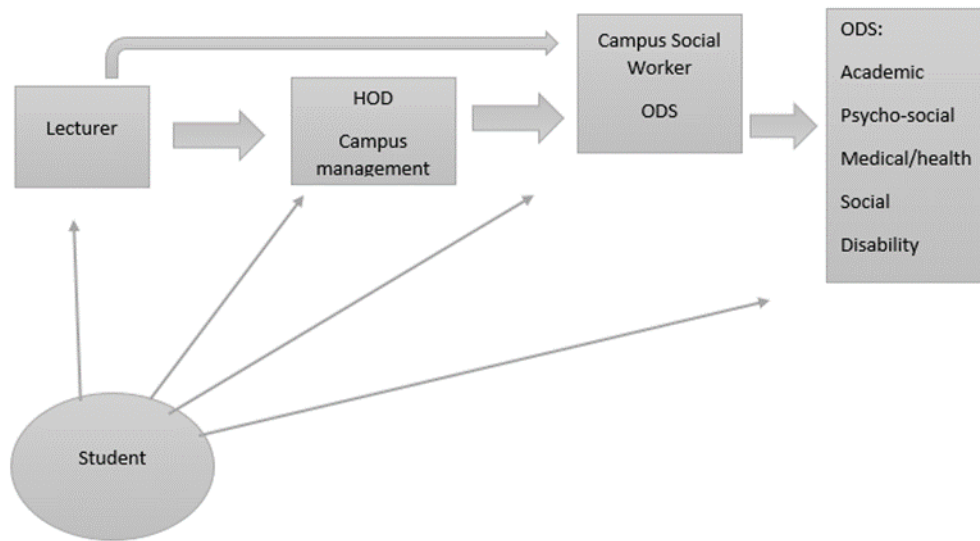
Figure 2.4 Referral Procedure at NUST



Note: Adapted from McNally and Mwewa (2018)

The diagram depicts how students access counselling services. In some cases, a lecturer identifies and completes the referral form to refer the student to their faculty's Early Alert Programme (EAP) coordinator. The coordinator refers the student to the ODS, who intervenes or directs the student for further assistance.

Figure 2.5 Referral Procedure University of Namibia (UNAM)



Note: Summarised as per the referral form of UNAM (2022)

Figure 2.5 outlines a summary of the referral procedures at one of the participating institutions. Depending on the location and structure of the campus, some students seek counselling directly from the service providers. In some cases, students are identified by a lecturer, who completes the referrer form, to refer the students to the campus social worker. In some situations, the lecturer alerts the Head of Department (HOD) and refers a student to the directorate or the social worker for interventions (UNAM, 2022).

2.7 Factors Influencing Counselling Services' Positive Outcomes in HE

Figure 2.6 Factors Influencing Counselling Services' Positive Outcomes in HE

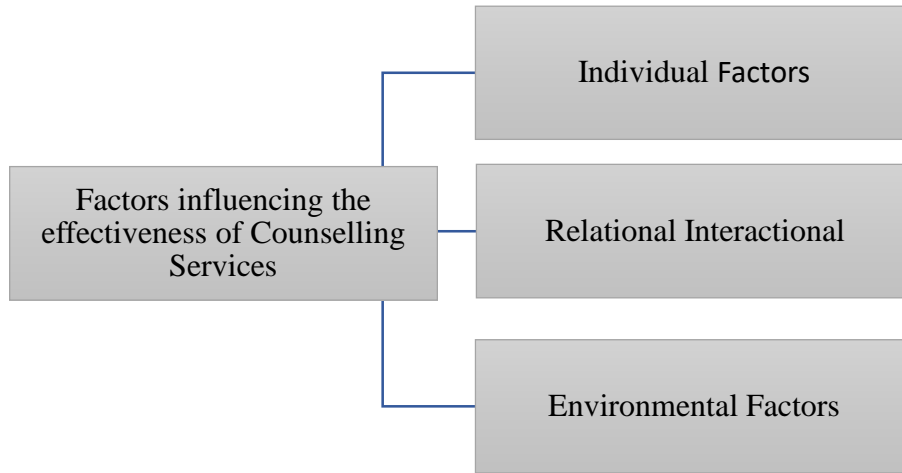


Figure 2.6 outlines the themes derived from the factors influencing counselling services as discussed below.

2.7.1 Individual factors

2.7.1.1 Students' Attitudes. Different students have different perceptions and attitudes toward counselling; studies by Kamunyu et al. (2016); Manana (2017) found that due to stigma associated with mental ill health and the terminologies used to describe the therapy, such as counselling, some students shy away from being seen by others seeking for the counselling services. Therefore, service providers must be mindful of the location of the counselling offices and consider accepted names to refer to the counselling services (Iyeke et al., 2018; Kamunyu et al., 2016; Thuryrajah et al., 2017; Tsikati, 2018). Avery et al. (2014) review the roles of college counselling, coaching, and mentoring. They found that students from lower-income families have

the greatest need for counselling but have limited access to counsellors, resulting from their experiences, encounters, perceptions, attitudes and openness.

Joan et al. (2021) use a cross-sectional study to assess the challenges faced by students in a university in Kenya. He found that although students were aware of the professional counselling services offered, they did not seek counselling because they felt capable of solving their challenges. Instead, they reverted to friends for possible solutions to their distress. Similarly, Kambouropoulos (2015) reports that most students hesitate to seek counselling support. He also reveals that most students who utilised counselling were referred by academic staff, medical doctors or friends rather than self-referral. The students displayed low help-seeking behaviours, which can be the case for many students from marginalised backgrounds in the current study.

2.7.1.2 Motivation. Musika and Bukaliya (2015) emphasise that students' honesty, openness, motivation, responsibility, and support positively impact counselling effectiveness. Seeking counselling support requires courage and a level of personal motivation, thus, some students shy away from seeking or are reluctant to respond to counselling referrals. Confidentiality, invasion of privacy, the expectation to help oneself and a lack of integrity as influencing counselling effectiveness (Bobga, 2016; Choi & Doh, 2019; Kambouropoulos, 2015). Some students believe in personal strength and ability instead of revealing their adversity. Thus, according to Hough (2014), clients' empowerment is critical to strengthen their innate potential to bounce-ability in times of hardship.

According to Kambouropoulos (2015), students hesitate to seek counselling due to a lack of awareness regarding privacy assurance and the essential value of confidentiality practised by referrers and counselling teams. Similarly, Martin (2018)

recounts that some students are reluctant to disclose their adversity because of past bad experiences and interrogations about their personal lives. Meanwhile, some indicated that it is difficult to express their problems while in a difficult situation. Hence, Martin (2018) recommends that counselling service providers communicate their stance on ethical conduct.

Moreover, Kamunyu et al. (2016) point to the gender of the counsellor, mistrust of the counselling services, a lack of confidence in the counsellor, the location of the counselling office and students' perceptions toward counselling services as some of the factors impacting the effectiveness of counselling in HEIs. The above factors inhibit students' motivation to seek counselling (Miller et al., 2019). Without seeking counselling services, students continue to experience adversity in HEIs, making it difficult to determine whether the services offered are effective.

2.7.1.3 Cultural. Culture is believed to have a significant influence on counselling effectiveness among students from minority groups. According to Robertson et al. (2015), cultural differences exist in higher education, and individuals from minority populations require cultural context to construct self-identity. Students from marginalised backgrounds come with unique views, beliefs, norms and values that should be respected and understood. Thus, Lovell et al. (2014); Robertson et al. (2015) recommend counselling service providers to be culturally competent and seek an understanding of diverse world views. Cultural competency provides avenues for students from marginalised backgrounds to seek and respond to counselling referrals and support (Hung & Fung, 2003). Moreover, Hung and Fung suggest that counsellors identify students' informal support networks and find out how the formal support links to the community's informal support. Robertson et al. (2015) underscore that counsellors should be willing to support clients to overcome cultural and language

barriers and involve on-campus and off-campus stakeholders such as different stakeholders such as traditional elders, healers, and spiritual leaders from the clients' communities.

2.7.1.2 Students' Knowledge and Awareness of the Services. In another study, Thiemm and Dasgupta (2022) reveal that students from marginalised backgrounds have limited knowledge and information on accessing scholarships and financial aid. Thus, they depend on counselling services for guidance. However, in their review of the roles of college counselling, coaching, and mentorship, Avery et al. (2014); Getachew (2020) point to a lack of skilled personnel, awareness and training on implementing college and career readiness programmes, and training related to students' financial aid procedures, a lack of clear guidelines on counselling as some of the factors influencing counselling effectiveness. They conclude that college counsellors only provide superficial assistance when discussing financial aid with students from low-income backgrounds. Similarly, Tsikati (2018) posits that counsellors' training, peer counsellors, evaluation of counselling services and the gender of the counsellor are some of the factors influencing counselling effectiveness.

In his study, Getachew (2019) reveals that only 7.8% of students were aware of the counselling centre and its location, and only 2.6% were aware of the services provided. He, thus, concluded that most students are unaware of the counselling services offered by their institutions. These findings imply that awareness about the available counselling services also influences counselling effectiveness. Consequently, he recommends frequent assessment of the counselling service to determine their effectiveness.

2.7.1.3 Socio-economic. Getachew (2020) underscores a lack of financial support, equipment, and materials, as some challenges to effective counselling services in HEIs. Avery et al. (2014) also found that inadequate funds are some barriers to counselling effectiveness. Researchers such as Broton (2018); Goldrick-Rab et al. (2018); Goldrick-Rab et al. (2015) reveal that some students are experiencing basic needs insecurity. Broton et al. (2018) use a survey and interview data to investigate the experiences and examine how food security status varies across background characteristics. Their study found that students from food-insecure homes, ethnic minorities, those who live off-campus and those who moved from rural homes to urban colleges reported the lowest food security.

Moreover, Broton et al. (2018) indicate that a lack of funds is the most significant barrier to food security. Similarly, Goldrick-Rab et al. (2018) report that basic needs insecurity in higher education affects marginalised students. Their report stated that basic food insecurity is associated with poor academic outcomes. While housing is linked to lower completion, persistence and academic progress (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018). A lack of basic needs affects individual self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-efficacy and exacerbates feelings of inferiority and vulnerability among those affected. It is strongly recommended that HEIs learn lessons from Maslow's hierarchy of needs in meeting the needs of students from marginalised backgrounds (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2015).

2.7.2 Interactional relationship factors

2.7.2.1 Personality of the Counsellor. When counsellors motivate students and are open and honest without being judgemental, it leads to effective counselling. In Zimbabwe, Musika and Bukaliya (2015) report that counsellors' characteristics, interpersonal relationships, empathy, warmth, positive regard, genuineness,

acceptance, respectfulness, and trustworthiness are the key to counselling effectiveness. Martin (2018) discovers that students felt supported and remained engaged in their studies when the counselling staff demonstrated a respectful attitude and offered helpful advice. Maupa (2020) affirms that students mostly confide in trustworthy and genuine counsellors. Moreover, Getachew (2020) advises HEIs to appoint dedicated and capable counsellors and train them to facilitate attitude change and encourage students to self-seek counselling support.

2.7.2.2 Student-counsellor ratio. In Australia and New Zealand, Stallman (2012) affirms that there are various counselling formats but reveals that higher counsellor-student ratios, limited consultations per student, and lower qualifications in psycho-social among counsellors inhibit counselling effectiveness in HEIs. Similarly, Getachew (2020) discovers that the number of counsellors is not proportional to the number of students. Thus, he indicates that the number of students remains higher than the number of available counsellors in HEIs. Getachew (2020) stresses the importance of collaboration among internal and external specialists such as psychiatrists, social workers, counselling and clinical psychologist, and other relevant members of the communities.

2.7.2.3 Counselling Skills. Hough (2014) describes the term skills in the context of counselling as the interpersonal tools that counsellors need to communicate well with their clients. These skills include the ability to listen and ask questions. Although Hough (2014) observes a growing tendency to describe any occupation that gives advice as counselling, he distinguishes therapeutic counselling from such occupations. Hough (2014) underscores that therapeutic counselling requires extensive training to communicate with clients. Other support services require expertise to offer advice related to the client's needs. Counsellors are trained to provide therapeutic

counselling to clients experiencing psychological adversity. Meanwhile, other experts offer advice on academics, career, finance and sport. However, both deal with complex adversity issues of their clients that require counsellors' skills and positive attitudes. Further, Hough (2014); Maupa (2020) concur that counselling skills and counsellors' attitudes influence counselling effectiveness. Counsellors need to be trained to gain skills and competencies to be non-judgmental, empathetic, and congruent and demonstrate unconditional positive regard in their practices, as advocated by Carl Roger's Person-Centered theory of 1940 (Dameron, 2016; Maupa, 2020). Getachew (2020) indicates a need for different counsellors with varying specialisations and be proportional to the students. Getachew further calls for opportunities for counsellors to develop their skills and be updated with the latest information on students' academic, social and psychological problems.

2.7.2.4 Multicultural Competency. The importance of multicultural sensitivity in guidance and counselling in Higher Education to cater to the unique social, psychological and academic needs of students from diverse backgrounds is emphasised (Hough, 2014; Maupa, 2020). Anyin (2022) reiterates the need to offer multicultural training to counsellors to maximise their understanding of how clients perceive the world around them. The current study looks at the effectiveness of counselling services to support students from marginalised backgrounds. Thus, multicultural sensitivity is crucial as it allows counsellors to gain knowledge, disposition and personal awareness (Anyin, 2022; Maupa, 2020). This study supports multiculturalism in the student support programme and advocates for integrating cultural factors into the modern student intervention programme (Benuto et al., 2021).

2.7.2.5 Monitoring and Follow-ups. Monitoring of interventions is crucial to student affairs offices. In the UK, access to higher education is monitored through a designated

office called Office for Fair Access (OFFA). The state gave this office the mandate to work more closely with HEIs to ensure access and retention of the students (Murray, 2012). Haywood and Darko (2021) emphasise the significance of monitoring the effectiveness of intervention programmes in higher education to ensure equitable access for disadvantaged groups. He reported that despite availing of loans and extra money to increase the participation of students from disadvantaged backgrounds in higher education, their participation diminishes if not monitored and supported.

Moreover, Siddiqi (2005) underscores the significance of feedback on the effectiveness of counselling.

Wulz et al. (2018) highlight the importance of cooperation with stakeholders and monitoring the implementation of student support programmes to ensure their success. Similarly, Getachew (2020) recommends that HEIs create an environment for trust-based relationships, good collaborations and communication with the relevant on and off-campus stakeholders. Stakeholders include student clinics, student clubs, academic departments, police, student affairs service providers, student food services, academic and administrative staff, families and community members.

2.7.3 Environmental Factors

2.7.3.1 Unforeseen Factors such as COVID-19. A study by Dimri (2021) in India collected feedback from the students on the usefulness and effectiveness of the online counselling services offered during the COVID-19 lockdown. Although many students had smartphones, internet connection was a challenge to most, which disadvantaged them from accessing online counselling services. Despite network connection challenges, most were optimistic about the online arrangements during the COVID-19 pandemic. In another study, Okado et al. (2021) discover increased student

distress and report that college students had a high level of depression, anxiety, stress and somatisation symptoms requiring counselling interventions. Alipour et al. (2020) report a lack of accurate and timely information, economic constraints, psychological instability and weakness in social prevention during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although no study was conducted post-COVID-19 to justify the situation in Namibia, most marginalised communities in Namibia are in remote rural areas with limited access to essential services such as electricity and network connectivity. Despite having smart devices, the remoteness of their villages made it difficult to access the universities' learning and counselling support services. Similarly, students with diverse needs in Namibia who usually receive support from the different units in Higher Education Institutions (HEI) were left stranded.

2.7.3.2 Physical Setting. A lack of separate special venues that encourage privacy as an impediment to effective counselling services is pointed out (Getachew, 2020; Iyeke et al., 2018).

According to Kamunyu et al. (2016), counselling services readily available when needed are more effective than those available later. Manana (2017) evaluates the effectiveness of the counselling therapy management of personality disorders among undergraduate students in a Kenyan university. They found that the counselling room environment plays a vital role in the success of counselling therapy.

Getachew (2020) assessed how Counselling service centres in HEIs can better serve students to achieve academic, social and psychological success. He recommends the following, concerning the counselling room: the room to be well equipped and accessible by all, have a recreational centre around the room, and make the space more appealing in terms of colour and some decorations around.

Namibian counselling service centres can refer to the insights provided in this literature to better understand the factors that influence positive outcomes in counselling services. This understanding is important as it can help them improve the provision of counselling services through the SAP planned to be developed based on the current study's findings.

2.8 Perceived Counselling Satisfaction and Dissatisfactions

2.8.1 Perceived Effective Counselling Services in HEIs

Many studies evidenced the significant impacts of counselling services on academic, social and psycho-social issues (Agi & Eric, 2014; Biasi et al., 2017; Escapa and Julià, 2018; McKenzie et al., 2015). Although counselling impacts various aspects, it is vital to determine client satisfaction. Zainudin and Yusop (2018) reveal some factors contributing to client satisfaction, such as individual willingness to express their distress, attitude towards counselling and the environment. Psychological life satisfaction reflects an individual's assessment of their situation instead of their expectations. According to Obrien et al. (2012), psychological life satisfaction correlates with various health behaviours and outcomes such as anxiety, depression and suicide, which predicts mental and physical health. There are general accords that counselling effectiveness is formed from perceptions of satisfaction with multiple life domains such as subjective well-being, functional and problems/distress (Obrien et al., 2012; Sinclair et al., 2005).

2.8.1.1 Subjective Well-Being. Proctor (2016) describes subjective well-being (SWB) as individual perceptions and encounters with positive and negative emotional responses. It is also termed as one's cognitive and affective and the global domain of evaluating life satisfaction (Proctor, 2016). There are three components of SWB,

namely, Life Satisfaction (LS), Positive Affect (PA) and Negative Affect (NA) (Proctor, 2016; Proctor & Linley, 2014). According to Proctor (2016), people who experience LS and frequent PA, such as happiness, optimism, gratitude, etc., have high SWB. Meanwhile, people who experience little happiness and frequent negative emotions have low SWB. De Villiers (2014) cautions that positive psychology should assess aspects of students' subjective well-being, personal resources to resilience and how they could be applied to effective solutions to problems. Besides, Tapia-Fonllem et al. (2013); Gomes et al. (2018) assert that equitable individuals have a chance to experience higher levels of subjective well-being. Cummins (2018) highlights three domains regarded as significant resources contributing to general life satisfaction. The domains are also referred to as the "Golden Triangle of Happiness" and comprise money, relationships and life achievement through purposeful activities. The three Golden Triangle of happiness could also be attributed to life satisfaction for students from marginalised backgrounds.

Students need money and good relationships and strive for academic excellence in the university setting (Masten & Powell, 2003; Werner & Smith, 2001). Moreover, Gomes et al. (2018) indicate that fear of failure and academic workload can lead to unhappiness and impact student well-being, self-efficacy and academic achievement. Thus, each of the three resources mentioned above has the power to reduce negative events and ensure positive feelings through commitments with secure and rewarding activities.

In another study, Denovan and Macaskill (2017) use a positive psychology approach to find out the relative contribution of psychological strengths to stress exposure, academic performance and subjective well-being. They found that optimism facilitated the relationship between stress and subjective well-being (negative affect)

over time. Furthermore, they also emphasise that academic self-efficacy significantly correlates with life satisfaction and positive affect. Their study concludes that optimism remains critical for new students to adjust to university and help them counteract the stress that affects their well-being during their studies. Denovan and Macaskill (2017) recommend interventions focusing on stress management and psycho-educational in HEIs to promote confidence and help them cope with university demands.

2.8.1.2 Life Functional. One of the indicators of counselling effectiveness satisfaction among counselling participants is the domain of life functioning. Functioning in positive psychology relates to interpersonal, social and general life functioning (Lorentzen et al., 2020).

Yates et al. (2015) maintain that the most effective interventions focus on multiple mechanisms and levels of action. He calls for collective efforts to address distress and promote individual resources to safeguard adaptive relationships and general life functioning. In another study, Proctor and Linley (2014) assert that individuals with strong relations with adults and peers develop a sense of purpose and meaning in life. Moreover, Yu and Chang (2021); Chang et al. (2018) found that personal meaning accounts for significant interpersonal well-being changes, implying that when a person finds purpose in life, relates well with others. It is indicated that individuals with high levels of life satisfaction gain from adaptive psychosocial functioning, intra and interpersonal and social relationships, academic success, and overcoming distress compared to those with an average and lower level of satisfaction (Proctor & Linley, 2014; Bamber & Schneider, 2016). Moreover, Proctor and Linley (2014) maintain that raised life satisfaction is interconnected with school-related factors such as academic performance, achievement, success, self-efficacy, support

and guard against negative effects of distress. Proctor and Linley (2014), thus, suggest interventions that facilitate opportunities for positive interactions with peers among students to enhance resilience in the face of adversity.

2.8.1.3 Mental and physical Problems/Distress. Problems or distress in psychology refers to health issues such as anxiety, depression, response to trauma and physical complaints. McKenzie et al. (2015) use Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation Outcome Measures to evaluate the reliability and clinically significant of students who self-reported having academic issues. They found that students with academic issues scored higher on problem severity. Their study suggests that even in situations where academic distress was the reason for counselling referral, students experience challenges in the domains of psychological problems/symptoms.

According to Robinson et al. (2016), a high prevalence of psychological distress and academic concerns among university students calls for comprehensive interventions such as psycho-social counselling, career services, academic advisors and support programmes, and wellness programmes.

Although many researchers Flatt (2013); Ashipala-Hako (2014); Broglia et al. (2017); Maupa (2020) reveal the significance of counselling services, it is evident that there is a gap in the literature regarding counselling effectiveness as an equity measure to support students from marginalised backgrounds. Many quantitative studies Connell et al. (2008); Lorentzen et al. (2020); Murray et al. (2016) use different measures to evaluate counselling effectiveness on subjective well-being, interpersonal functioning, and psychological distress from students' perspectives. However, findings reveal a gap from a pragmatic stance in evaluating counselling effectiveness from the perspectives of students from marginalised backgrounds. Moreover, the literature revealed a need

to develop a comprehensive, culturally sensitive Student Assistance Programme that facilitates interaction opportunities and boosts student resilience. Subsequently, the current study taps from students' development theories (Roger's person-centred, Schlossberg's theory of transition and Resilience theory) as the basis to understand what constitutes effective counselling services as an equity measure. Meanwhile, this study believes that effective counselling services are catalysts for students' adaptation, coping, persistence and academic success (Griffin & Gilbert, 2015; Hayes, 2015; van Breda, 2018b). Nonetheless, the study anticipates that qualitative and quantitative perspectives of referrers and beneficiaries are essential in determining counselling effectiveness.

2.8.2 Counselling Contributions to Equity

In striving to achieve equity in accessing higher education, more flexible entry requirements enabled more marginalised students to access higher education (Mohamedbhai, 2014). In most HEIs, equity of access for students from marginalised backgrounds is achieved through affirmative action with special admission schemes, for example, the indigenous category scheme for students from marginalised communities and special funding programmes (McCowan, 2016). However, Mohamedbhai (2014) maintains that access to higher education without completing studies becomes meaningless. Mohamedbhai (2014) cautions that HEIs must ensure that all enrolled students succeed, particularly those who find it challenging to adapt and adjust to higher education demands. In addition, they should provide quality in all their efforts to address inequity. Subsequently, counselling services are necessary as a support measure to ensure all success.

Wulz et al. (2018) provide an overview of counselling activities in different European countries from the students' perspectives. They reveal that counselling is

one of the measures many countries use to maximise access with equity to higher education. Countries have various methods to include students with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds with the mainstreaming approach (Wulz et al., 2018). Furthermore, Wulz et al. (2018) state that students are provided with basic facilities and support such as accommodation, medical, funding, free admission, university space, and childcare.

In addition to the learner-centred approaches adopted in learning and teaching in most institutions to achieve equity, HEIs are encouraged to create supportive and affirmative learning settings that recognise individuals' potential and motivate and accept different opinions from diverse cultural perspectives (Essack, 2012).

Although several studies Agi and Eric (2014); Biasi et al. (2017); Broglia et al. (2018); Connell et al. (2007); Kloppers et al. (2019); Musika and Bukaliya (2015); Nyutu et al. (2019) evaluate the effectiveness of counselling services, literature evidenced a gap determining counselling services' effectiveness as an equity measure from the referrers' and beneficiaries' perspectives in higher education. Furthermore, there is a gap in assessing the effectiveness of counselling to support students from marginalised backgrounds. Hence, a need for this study.

2.8.3 Counselling Contributions to Academic Performance

Students transiting from high school to university, particularly those from marginalised backgrounds, are at risk of poor academic performance because they lack information about higher education (Walker & Mkwanzani, 2015). BACP (2017) reveals that 79% of students reported that counselling services helped them do better in academic work. Similarly, Simpson and Ferguson (2014); Bamber and Schneider (2016) show that students who received counselling support due to psycho-social

challenges had improved academic achievement and significant retention rates. Meanwhile, Devi et al. (2013) affirm that counselling services ease students' personal and psycho-social distress, positively influencing their academic achievement. In another study, Francis and Horn (2016) indicate that counselled students had a better chance to persist and graduate from their programmes. Flatt (2013) reveals that students from racial minorities suffer from unconscious racial prejudice from their peers, termed macro-aggression. He underscores that such treatment aggravates their psycho-social distress resulting in poor academic performance. Students from marginalised backgrounds in HEIs similarly experience these challenges. Thus, counselling services play a vital role in easing students' situations to focus and improve their performance. Flatt (2013) recommends more research to understand mental illness from different cultural perspectives and help-seeking behaviour by students from diverse cultures.

2.8.4 Counselling Contributions to Student Resilience

Habib (2019) reports a positive statistical correlation between academic resilience and academic motivation and confidence. Hence, students need to receive support that enhances their resilience. BACP (2017) underscores that 81% of students indicated that counselling services contributed to their persistence at the university. BACP (2017) affirms that counselling services reinforce students' emotional resilience to manage their psycho-social, social, and academic distress, leading to increased persistence, resilience and retention. Resonating similar sentiments, IASAS (2020) posit that student support services should be designed to focus intensely on their academic, personal, cognitive and emotional growth. Support should increase students' resilience development to improve learning outcomes, student retention, and graduation rates. Essack (2012) reasons that counselling services assist students from

diverse ethnic, social and educational backgrounds to develop resilience because they mostly enter HEIs underprepared and face academic challenges. This has also been the researcher's observation in higher education in Namibia. Most students from underprivileged and marginalised backgrounds might join the HEI with good marks but have limited life skills for survival and learning to succeed in a new environment with a different culture. One example is students coming from remote and under-resourced schools where they might have seen a computer but never had the opportunity to use it. Yet, basic computer literacy skills are a pre-requisite life skill to cope and succeed in learning in higher education. In their study, Broglia et al. (2018) affirm the need for preventative intervention that equips the student with emotional resilience skills to manage mental distress and seek help.

The current study uses student development theories to understand counselling effectiveness as a support measure for students from marginalised backgrounds. The study shares commonalities with Nwonyuku (2018), who instructs that students' support programmes must be proactive and preventative in helping students gain knowledge, skills, self-awareness, positive attitudes toward success, and resilience. Support services should be tailored to the needs of individual students and should not be offered as a reaction to students' failures. Nwonyuku (2018) further suggests that effective counselling services should be based on human development theories. For example, Carlo Roger's theory advocates that support should be tailored to individual needs and unique circumstances and help individuals achieve their aspirations (Hayes, 2015). Likewise, Schlossberg's theory of transition identified the 4s (situation, self, support and strategies) as the critical resources influencing an individual's ability to develop resilience and cope in a transition (Papay, 2013).

One of the objectives of the current study is to determine the satisfaction levels of beneficiaries and referrers with counselling services, as a measure of equity. It is important to understand both the perceived satisfaction and dissatisfaction with counselling services in higher education settings, as this knowledge is crucial for improving the quality of these services.

2.9 Counselling Needs of Marginalised Students in Higher Education

Many factors lead to students' marginalisation in different contexts. According to Akin and Neumann (2013), students can become marginalised due to cultural differences, knowledge gaps, and socio-economic status. Consequently, the marginalisation of students prompts the need for support within the learning environment. However, stigma, discrimination, unpreparedness, and cultural mismatch drive the need for counselling services to cope and adapt to the university setting its demand (Dieckmann et al., 2014).

Students from marginalised backgrounds encounter multiple transitions due to their unique cultures and traditions. Like other students, students from marginalised communities in Namibia enter HEIs at a crucial transition stage from adolescence to adulthood. Students are confronted with many events that require continuous support (Sweet et al., 2020). Sweet et al. (2020) further state that marginalised students bring unique perspectives on their affective, behavioural and cognitive domains. Many students from marginalised backgrounds transition from high school to university unprepared for university life and are, in most cases, the first in their families to attend university. In addition, most parents are unemployed and thus may lack the economic means to support them. Subsequently, there could be less to no support from the family on academic and financial demands.

The abovementioned challenges contribute to students' psycho-social, academic, and social distress (Pinto, 2019; Sweet et al., 2020). Moreover, students transition to independent living (self-sufficiency) and learning without parental supervision. In most cases, no preparation or induction is provided for this independent living and self-management. As a higher education academic, the researcher has encountered students who moved from the one extreme of parental support and management to self-management without the necessary life skills or resources. Students are also faced with peer pressure, financial constraints, accommodation struggles if not residing in hostels, transport to and from the university and academic workload (Sweet et al., 2020). In addition, poverty, discrimination, stigma and language, dressing codes, hairstyle and dietary shifts interfere with their self-efficacy, self-esteem, self-concepts and confidence, putting them at risk of dropping out of university.

Gale and Mills (2013) identify three principles on which HEIs could build inclusive social pedagogy and create space for marginalised students, namely, recognising that all students bring value to the learning environment, valuing individual differences, providing access and allowing engagement; and being proactive rather than reactive to students and their communities.

2.10 Understanding Student Assistance Programs and Their Contribution to Equity in Higher Education

Student Assistance Programmes (SAPs) are derived from the Employee Assistance Programme, also known as the (EAP) model of 1960 to 1970s. SAPs, although defined in context, are school-based programmes that allow early identification, referrals, prevention, and interventions through counselling, learning

activities and support groups to prevent barriers to learning (Borsato & Alves, 2015; Carnwell & Baker, 2008; Nelson, 2015; O’Sullivan, 2013; Wright, 2013). In the 1980s, schools adopted the idea of EAP into SAPs to address barriers to learning (California Department of Education 2022). The initial focus of SAPs in schools was mainly to address substance abuse among students. It was further used to manage the spectrum of academic and non-academic students' challenges that hinder their academic achievement (California Department of Education, 2022). Consequently, SAPs help students, families, and staff support students experiencing learning barriers in most school settings. Challenges included but were not limited to psycho-social, academic-related, social and personal factors. Students Assistance Programmes are developed to address social-emotional, psycho-social and academic needs that impede students from benefiting from educational opportunities. They also empower students with competencies to overcome barriers and deal with and prevent factors (Carnwell & Baker, 2008; Student Assistance Center at Prevent, n.d.; Taylor & Baker, 2012; Wright, 2013). SAPs are also called the comprehensive campus-based framework, comprising multiple services focusing on education, prevention, early identification, evidence-based intervention, referral processes, and student support services (Vincent et al., 2019).

2.10.1 Prevalence and Significance of SAPs in the Higher Education Settings

Employing SAP in a higher education setting is not a new practice. Besides, Taylor and Baker (2012) and Torres-Rodriguez et al. (2010) affirm that SAPs respond to the increasing numbers of students with diverse needs from diverse backgrounds due to higher education's widening participation and massification. Taylor and Baker (2012) conducted a pilot exploratory study in Wales. The study aimed to investigate the implementation of SAP and a peer support group to reduce the staff workload,

improve student retention, and assess their behaviour change. Their findings revealed that SAP was viable in higher education because it positively impacted the behaviour of the participating students. In the USA, SAPs are commonly available in higher education. Taylor and Baker (2012) conclude that SAPs are suitable for use in the university setting; however, they acknowledged a gap in the literature regarding SAP's effectiveness. Although some schools and HEIs in the USA and other parts of the world have established campus-based SAPs, most institutions outsource the service to private SAPs service providers. According to Torres-Rodriguez et al. (2010), SAP's effectiveness depends on the programme's key elements, such as human resources, administrative involvement, multidisciplinary outlooks, policies and procedures, cooperation among stakeholders, and educators' support. However, flaws within the implementation processes, such as a lack of effective communication, poor promotion of the programme to internal and external stakeholders and a lack of awareness about the SAP are noted (Torres-Rodriguez et al., 2010).

2.10.2 SAP Best Practices in Education

Best practices of SAPs in education focus on continuous programmes covering different aspects of the SAP programmes, such as promotion and prevention, treatment and recovery support (Vincent et al. 2019). An ongoing support approach originates from public health that targets preventing and treating different diseases and conditions.

Moreover, the common approach adopted for SAPs in schools is the model of Mental, Emotional and Behavioural Intervention derived from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) model. The approach has been adapted to education to prevent and treat the various barriers to school achievement (Vincent et al., 2019). The NASEM approaches mainly focus on promotion,

prevention, treatment and maintenance. The promotion aspects focus on developing self-regulation, self-efficacy and goal setting. In addition, prevention is the strategy employed to avoid or limit the risk of distress. Treatments are the intervention given to remedy the situation, and maintenance implies ongoing support to prevent the reoccurrence of the condition (Vincent et al., 2019). NASEM is also called a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSP) that allows effective intervention as early as possible. The Multi-Tiered Systems of Support are geared to improve outcomes; thus, it requires a multi-disciplinary team of specialists, licensed professionals, teachers, counsellors and administrators (Vincent et al., 2019).

Connecticut school district used another model developed by Governor's Prevention Partnership (GPP) to create SAPs. The GPP model is a strength-based approach that capitalises on students' strengths (Torres-Rodriguez et al., 2010). The focus is to address students' needs using ecological assets in the school, family and community and resilience development. The model recognises five structural and operational elements that harness the effectiveness of SAPs teams, such as system development promotion, referrals and action planning, support activities and strategies and evaluation (Torres-Rodriguez et al., 2010). Similar to the NASEM model, the GPP model uses multidisciplinary teams to address the needs of the students. Identified distressed and at-risk students are referred to a team of professionals who plan appropriate interventions to meet the requirements (Torres-Rodriguez et al., 2010).

Literature reveals that most SAPs adopted different approaches, such as problem-based, student strength-based, and whole-school (Vincent et al., 2019; Taylor & Baker, 2012; Torres-Rodriguez et al., 2010). Taylor and Baker (2012) adopt the Watkins model of 1999 that focuses on whole-school approaches. This model posits that psycho-social and well-being should be embedded in educational organisations

and stakeholders. Therefore, interventions mainly encompass school-based support groups. Taylor and Baker (2012) report that a school-based approach to intervention effectively improved attendance and decreased discipline problems.

To summarise the literature review, various gaps have been identified in the current study's context. The literature has highlighted gaps in research pertaining to vulnerable and marginalised students on a global, regional, and national scale. Firstly, limited mixed-method studies explored the effectiveness of counselling services as an equity measure. Secondly, given the unique characteristics and needs, there is a gap in the literature on effective support for students from marginalised backgrounds in Namibia. Moreover, the experiences of counselling services from the perspectives of referrers and beneficiaries remain unexplored. Also, there remains limited literature on counselling effectiveness and equitable access for students from marginalised backgrounds in Namibia. Finally, no studies in the Namibian context have adopted SAP in HEIs to support students, particularly students from marginalised backgrounds. The gaps mentioned above in the literature validate the significance of the current study.

2.11 Theoretical Framework

This section briefly describes the theoretical bases and models that framed the study. Due to the manifold areas of the study, multiple student development theories were employed: Carl R. Rogers Person Centred theory of 1959, Schlossberg's theory of transition in 1981, and resilience theory advocated by Norman Garmezy in 1991 and reviewed by Adrian van Breda in 2018. In addition, the study conceptualised Astin's I-E-O model of student involvement and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) model as additional conceptual frameworks.

Long (2012) identifies four categories of student development theories: psycho-social, cognitive-structural, person-environment, and human-existence theories. Each category looks at the different aspects of students' development. The current study was framed around three student development theories: Schlossberg's theory of transition of 1981, the person-centred theory of Carl Rogers of 1940 and the resilience theory.

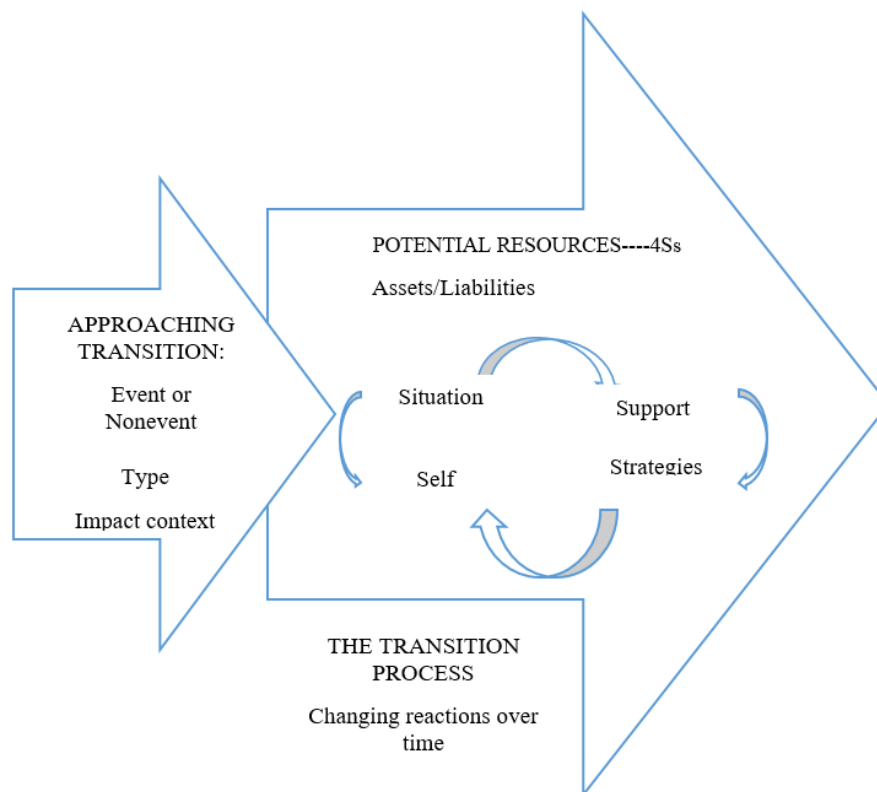
2.11.1 Schlossberg's Theory of Transition

Schlossberg's theory of transition is a psycho-social theory that advocates for developing students' independence and autonomy (Long, 2012). Schlossberg's theory of transition originates from the perspectives of adult development, visible in the work of Clinical Psychologist Nancy K. Schlossberg's "A Model for Analysing Human Adaptation". It provides the basis for understanding adults' multiple encounters and coping mechanisms in a transition (Lindstrom, 2019). The theory emerged as a counselling theory Lazarowicz and Cejda (2015), and it looks at the effects a particular shift has on individuals focusing on the transition, the person and the environment (DeVilbiss, 2014; Griffin & Gilbert, 2015; Tony et al., 2015; Lindstrom, 2019; Powers, 2010).

Over the years, the theory has been reviewed in various books, which Nancy Schlossberg co-authored with other authors. Earlier books include *Counselling Adult in Transition (1984)* and *Getting the Most Out of the College (1995)*. The recent edition (*Counselling Adult in Transition: Linking Schlossberg's Theory with Practice in a Diverse World 2012*) was authored in collaboration with Mary Luise Anderson, Jane Goodman and Nancy K. Schlossberg. This edition provided the basis for understanding contemporary society and the increasing diversity affecting individuals in transitions (Anderson et al., 2012).

Schlossberg's transition theory describes the transition as any event or non-event that changes a person's relationships, routines, assumptions and roles (DeVilbiss, 2014). In her view, a transition is an ongoing process of assimilation and appraisals (Musamali, 2018). According to Schlossberg et al. (2011), a transition occurs in three phases: moving in, moving through, and moving out. However, it can begin at the moving-in stage or the moving-out phase. At each phase, multiple events and shifts affect an individual and, thus, require appropriate coping mechanisms in various aspects (Estrella & Lundberg, 2006). The transition processes explain the complex nature of the transition, describe the approaches to assess factors influencing a transition and help understand the needed coping strategies to face the challenges of their new setting (Musamali, 2018; Pendleton, 2007). They further provide a framework for addressing the needs of all students (Pendleton, 2007).

Figure 2.7 Schlossberg's transition processes



Note: Adapted from (Anderson, 2012)

Figure 2.7 depict Schlossberg's transition process on how individual approach a transition at moving in stage and the 4Ss as the potential resources at moving through stage.

2.11.1.1 The Moving In Period. Moving in period is crucial and can be challenging. Schlossberg classified transitions into three forms: anticipated, unanticipated, and non-event (DeVilbiss, 2014; Anderson et al., 2012; Powers, 2010). Anticipated transitions are the predictable changes, unanticipated transitions are the unpredicted changes, and non-events are the predicted changes that do not occur (Anderson et al., 2012). There are many factors leading to non-events; for example, personal non-events might occur due to individuals' aspirations and interests, whereas ripple non-events occur as a result of the non-events of others. Moreover, resultant non-events are non-events resulting from another event, and delayed non-events are events that are still likely to happen (Anderson et al., 2012).

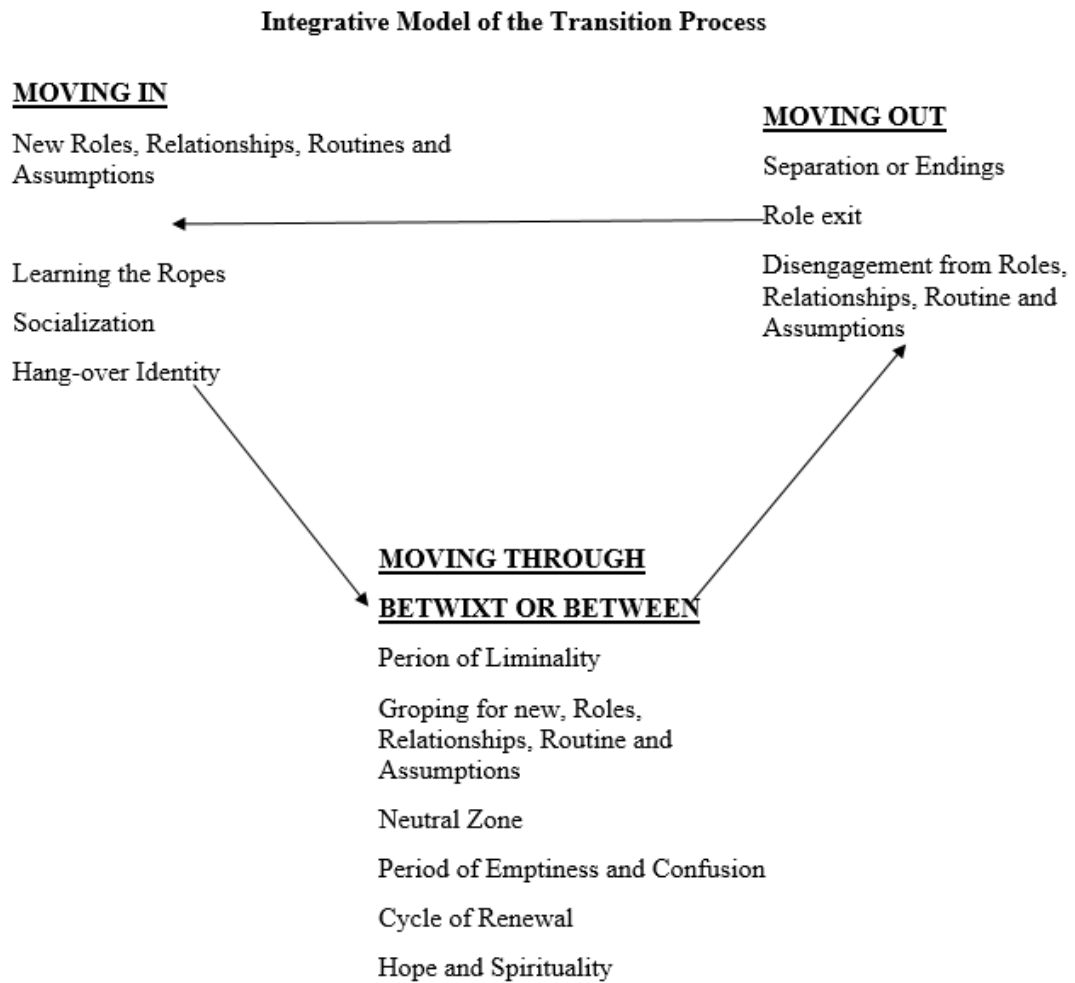
The theory further asserts that transitions affect how one perceives their situations depending on the context, the setting in which a transition occurs, and the impact. Different people encounter changes in varied ways (Byrd, 2017). An event (anticipated or unanticipated) or non-event is only a transition based on the person experiencing it. Thus, Schlossberg stressed that personal perception of an event or non-event is more critical in explaining how the change affects a person (Byrd, 2017).

The moving-in period is characterised by changing roles, responsibilities and relationships (DeVilbiss, 2014; Anderson et al., 2012). It also entails shifting to respond to various aspects, such as psychosocial and social challenges to academic demands. Consequently, individuals require the skills to face challenges and persist

(Derrick, 2019; Lindstrom, 2019). The transitional processes and models advocated by Schlossberg's theory are relevant in guiding the development of an effective intervention programme.

2.11.1.2 The Moving Through Period. Schlossberg's transition processes are significant in explaining individuals' behaviour, needs, and coping mechanisms in a transition. A person is confronted with challenges in a new environment and balancing the new roles and responsibilities with their everyday lives. At this stage, continuous support is needed to remain focused, maintain academic progress, and prepare for future employment. Support helps develop resilience and hopes to adapt to the new demand and persist in completing their studies (Papay, 2013). Moving through describes the coping references with a transition modelled in four critical factors: situation, self, support, and strategies (Musamali, 2018).

Figure 2.8 Four (4s) Schlossberg’s Transition processes



Adapted from (Anderson et al. 2012)

Figure 2.8 presents what happen at each period in a transition process.

4.11.1.2.1 The Situation Factor. The situation factor focuses on conditions and variables surrounding the transition (Musamali, 2018). It involves the purpose, control abilities of the situation, readiness of the transition, significant shifts in the roles, whether beneficial or a loss and the duration and occurrence of the transition (Lindstrom, 2019). This factor provides the basis to understand what happened or did not happen, when, how long and where? It explains the motives behind the changes

and the competencies needed to face the challenges in a given situation (Derrick, 2019).

4.11.1.2.2 Self-Factor. Personal and demographic factors affect how individuals perceive life. They frame the understanding of who the person is, their weaknesses, strengths, and perspectives toward the transition. Self refers to personal characteristics and psychological resources. It encompasses age, gender, socio-economic situation, health situation, ethnicity, and cultural background (Derrick, 2019; Lindstrom, 2019; Papay, 2013). In Schlossberg's theory, age does not refer to how old but rather to the person's functional, psychological and social development (Papay, 2013). The psycho-social resources present individuals' ego development, self-efficacy, values, commitments, outlook, and resiliency. The self-factors influence individuals' coping abilities in a transition (Derrick, 2019; Lindstrom, 2019). This factor helps understand the students' attributes and personal characteristics, including marginalisation, cultural minority status, low socioeconomic status, less preparedness for the transition and being the first generation, as described by (Dieckmann et al., 2014). It also facilitates understanding their coping mechanisms, values, determination, commitments, self-efficacy, and resiliency. These factors inform and guide the interventions to meet their needs (Donnell et al., 2016; Papay, 2013; O'Donnell, 2013).

4.11.1.2.3 Support Factor. This factor justifies the external resources for support. It encompasses the need, the type, and the purpose of support. It describes the needed support team and how support should be provided to help individuals get through the transition. Support can come from the institution, family, peers, colleagues, or professionals, depending on a person's needs in a transition. Moreover, the purposes of support vary depending on the type of transition, context and its

impact. Thus, it could include psychosocial, emotional, social, material, physical and financial support (Derrick, 2019; Lindstrom, 2019; Powers, 2010).

4.11.1.2.4 Strategies Factor. Strategies factor helps understand individuals coping mechanisms and the required help. It entails the mitigating approaches and methods employed to intervene and rescue the situation. Papay (2013) acknowledges three significant coping responses in a transition. The first response strategy helps modify the problem. The second response strategy interprets the meaning to understand the situation better and develops a positive outlook on the transition (Papay, 2013). The third response strategy help manages and contains the distresses as they adjust to their new roles and routines, understand how the system works, settle in and cope with the demand (Derrick, 2019).

2.11.1.3 Moving Out Period. The moving-out period can be viewed as the end of one chain of transitions and the beginning of the next transition (Estrella & Lundberg, 2006). This period evolves when a new role, relationship, assumption and routine is presumed. It may mean employment, relocating, looking for new accommodation and meeting new friends.

Schlossberg's transition processes include the event or non-event, the person, and the environment (Anderson et al., 2012). They are systematic processes and frameworks to master change and identify coping resources (Pendleton, 2007; Power, 2010; Byrd, 2017). The processes answer questions of what is happening, to whom it is happening, what help is available, and how does the person cope? Each set presents the determinants for evaluating individuals' abilities to cope with the transition. The model illustrates strengths and weaknesses, also known as "assets and liabilities".

2.11.2 Strengths and Weaknesses of Schlossberg's Theory

Although Schlossberg's theory initially focused on adult transition, it can apply to several traditional and non-traditional audiences (Derrick, 2019). It also has flexibility in its application to different age groups, such as young adults, particularly students transiting from high schools to HEIs (Derrick, 2019). It can also apply to transitions in various contexts. The theory shares concepts and commonalities with different psycho-social and cognitive-structural theories and models of student development in higher education. Models and theories of student development provide the basis for understanding and explaining how students learn, grow, develop, and cope in post-secondary environments. Such models include Perry's theory of cognitive development (1968); Chickering's student development theory (1969); Pascarella's model for assessing student change (1985); Astin's theory of student involvement (1985) as well as Tinto's theory of student departure (1993) (Byrd, 2017; Long, 2012). Thus, Schlossberg's theory's strength lies in its applicability to various transitions and its versatility of variables in different contexts (Derrick, 2019; Lindstrom, 2019; Powers, 2010).

According to Anderson et al. (2012), Schlossberg's theory acknowledges that transiting students require coping skills, including support networking, cognitive restructuring, problem-solving, and stress management. It considers the complexity of cultural diversity and addresses the need for a systematic framework that focuses on the self-reflective and interpersonal scopes of student lives (Long, 2012). Also, this theory explains how students think, reason, organise and create meanings from their own experiences. Finally, it describes how students' perspectives of their own identity and society develop through the conflicts and crises they experience (Long, 2012).

Schlossberg's theory of transition is a psycho-social model of development that provides the basis for understanding various events that influence individuals' lives and roles in society. It is the medium to analyse human adaption to transition (Pendleton, 2007). Powers (2010) underscores that the transition model offers practitioners the basis to understand varied students' needs through an organised method that envisages, measures and modifies responses to change. Byrd (2017) also refers to the transition theory as the model that enables the researcher to understand the transition process in one's life and the adaptation strategies. Moreover, the theory is multicultural competent and recognises cultural diversity, global community, technological influences and spirituality in the processes of transitions. Hence, it can serve as a basis for understanding the behaviour, needs and coping mechanisms of students from diverse backgrounds encountering changes in their lives (O'Donnell, 2013).

The advocacy of Schlossberg's theory is that counsellors' roles are to help individuals explore, understand and cope with what is happening in their lives (Anderson et al., 2012). Moreover, Schlossberg's views on counsellors' roles are to increase the capacity for individuals to invest in life by responding to coping and adapting to life challenges, loving, working, and playing to improve their competencies, maturity, and mental health (Anderson et al., 2012).

Despite the usefulness of Schlossberg's theory of transition, some critiques and limitations have been raised. Derrick (2019) and Musamali (2018) acknowledge that it might be challenging to carry out due to its complexity. In addition, the theory has more variables to test but lacks pre-validated tools to assess the variables in quantitative studies. Moreover, the theory lacks validity and requires quantitative data to enhance its validity (Derrick, 2019; O'Donnell, 2013). Musamali (2018) posits that

the willingness and ability to utilise assets are crucial to the transition process. However, he affirms that the Schlossberg transition theory did not provide ways to facilitate the ability and willingness to use the identified assets. (Musamali, 2018)

2.11.3 Application of Schlossberg's Theory to the Study

The central focus of Schlossberg's theory is to help understand how adults cope with life challenges and behave in a transition. Consequently, the theory has been extensively applied in various contexts and used as a framework for multiple studies in varied disciplines (Powers, 2010). Different researchers in higher education have used Schlossberg's transition theory to understand the coping needs and mechanisms employed by diverse groups such as undergraduate students, veterans, non-traditional students, community college transfers, supervisory roles and military personnel (Brown, 2014; Huerta & Fishman, 2014; Lazarowicz, 2015; Powers, 2010; Ryan, 2010; Semer & Harmening, 2015).

The current study explores counselling services' effectiveness as equity to support students from vulnerable and marginalised backgrounds in higher education institutions. Schlossberg's transition theory emerged as a counselling theory for transiting adults (Lazarowicz, 2015); thus, it is relevant to this study. Firstly, it provides the ground to understand the several transitions and the anticipated, unanticipated and non-events that occur as students from marginalised backgrounds move from high schools, their communities (rural settings), and their parental care and cultural practices to HEIs. Secondly, the theory assisted the researcher in establishing the parameters and framework for comprehending the participants' experiences and encounters while moving into, though, and out of the universities, the levels of student satisfaction, and factors influencing students' resilience and academic performance. Understanding the transitions encountered by the students provides a basis for

determining the effectiveness of the counselling services for effective transitions. A series of anticipated, unanticipated and non-events can influence numerous aspects of students' lives, roles, relationships, routines, and assumptions (Stankey, 2018). In this study, students from marginalised backgrounds, due to their ethnic minority status, must deal with financial demands and constraints and balance academic work and household or hostel chores (Papay, 2013). Anticipated transitional events among students from marginalised backgrounds might include but are not limited to a desire for change, hope to have their financial needs met, hope for support from the institutions, their funders, and their families, completing and graduating for their degrees, and getting a better job to alleviate poverty from their families. The unanticipated events in students' transition might include but are not limited to finding hostel accommodation, struggling to make ends meet, shifting lifestyle and culture, academic demands and workloads, psycho-social and social challenges, and failing modules, mostly due to inadequate academic preparation and limited exposure to different forms of learning. Students also encounter multiple non-events that are personal, ripple, resultant, and delayed described by Schlossberg's theory (Anderson et al., 2012). Some of these events have detrimental effects on the lives of the students and indirectly on their families and communities. While they can motivate individuals to work harder, they can also serve as setbacks. The non-events in students' transition from marginalised backgrounds include not securing accommodation in the hostel, unmet financial needs, a lack of support, dropping out of the university and no employment. The marginalised communities on which this study has focused are cohesive social nets. Their culture is centred around the community and not on the individual. The success of an individual is regarded as the success of the group.

Similarly, the failure of an individual is a failure of the group. These non-events may result in some students returning to their communities without achieving the goals set for themselves and their communities. This could affect the communities, questioning the relevance and “promised land” of formal education.

Effective counselling services in HEIs are expected to change behaviour, learning, roles and perceptions (Anderson et al., 2012). Schlossberg ascertains that one requires coping regardless of the nature of a particular change brought by transition (Anderson, 2017). In the context of this study, students from marginalised backgrounds are young adults, and thus Schlossberg's theory provides a lens to understand their behaviour while transiting to HEIs and their coping needs and mechanisms (DeVilbiss, 2014; Lazarowicz & Cejda, 2015; Powers, 2010). Students from marginalised backgrounds need extensive coping responses to manage their academic and social demands as they move in, move through, and move out of HEIs. Hence, effective counselling services are crucial in developing response strategies that modify the situation, create new perspectives toward challenges, and empower students with skills to suppress distress (Papay, 2013).

Meanwhile, Schlossberg's 4s transition process (situation, self, support, and strategies) provided the lens to understand the experiences of referrers and beneficiaries on the effectiveness of counselling services as an equity measure to support students from marginalised backgrounds. The situation factor refers to the conditions and purposes of transitions in the context of students being studied. It also encompasses readiness, encounters and abilities to shift roles in changes. In addition, the self relates to the unique characteristics and backgrounds they bring in the transition. Moreover, the support factor resonates with all needed supports to meet the individual needs of students from marginalised backgrounds to cope with changes,

such as counselling services and all available supports. Finally, the strategies factor relates to the plans, intervention programmes, contents, and implementation strategies. Although different students experience various transitions, encounters affect each person differently; while some develop coping mechanisms and become resilient, others feel overwhelmed and drop out.

The theory focuses on adapting and coping mechanisms using 4Ss. It provided the understanding of participants' experiences in a transition to HEIs concentrating mainly on behaviour, coping needs and mechanisms. It also provided understanding on how HEIs environment could support students to capitalising on their potential resources (4Ss). The theory supplemented the shortcomings of resilience and Person-centered theories. Schlossberg's theory provided the basis for understanding the participants' positive and negative experiences and encounters during the transition processes at moving in, moving through and moving out of the universities. The transition processes in the context of Schlossberg theory enabled the researcher to comprehend meaningful answers to all the research questions and objectives outlined in chapter one of this study. The theory aided in the adoption and development of data collection instruments, in the designing and analysing of interview protocols and shaped the development of the Student Assistance Programme (SAP) and all interventions aimed at helping students to adapt and cope in the new environment.

Employing Schlossberg's theory, the researcher is aware of some shortcomings of the theory; thus, it was supplemented by the resilience theory to guide the adoption and analysis of the Youth Ecological Resilience Scale (YERS) questionnaire.

2.11.4 Resilience Theory

Resilience theory is a multi-disciplinary theory discovered by psychologists, psychiatrists, and podiatrists in their search for root causes and treatment of problems in children's development (Yates et al., 2015). Similarly, van Breda (2001) and Windle (2011) describe resilience theory as a multidimensional field addressed by professionals in various disciplines, such as social workers, psychology, sociology, and educators. According to van Breda (2001), resilience addresses the strengths demonstrated by people and systems to persist amidst adversities. The research works of Norman Garmezy, Lois Murphy, Michael Rutter, and Emmy Werner attempted to understand why some children persevered despite the hardships while others could not (van Breda, 2018a; Yates et al., 2015). These discoveries prompted concerns among researchers to recognise possible processes that mediate hardships (van Breda, 2018a). The researchers promulgated the resilience field; to date, resilience theory is evident in multiple disciplines (Yates et al., 2015). The resilience theory gained momentum when researchers explored individuals' and families' suffering effects to understand better how adversity threatens human adaptation and sought solutions to mitigate risks and find recovery support (Masten, 2018; Southwick et al., 2014; Yates et al., 2015). The initial focus of resilience theory was on the negative impacts of adversity. It was conceptualised in terms of problematic outcomes, such as breakdown, dysfunction and psychopathology (Masten, 2018). The theory has been transformed towards models that focus on optimistic aims, promotive and protective and adaptive capacities. The theory advocates that more critical is how individuals deal with adversity rather than the adversity itself (Yates et al., 2015). Moreover, the theory has been extended to address the developmental processes and applies to various contexts and populations such as children, families, institutions, and society (Yates et al., 2015).

Resilience is a broad and contextual concept, thus, different disciplines have adapted operational definitions to suit specific contexts (van Breda, 2018a). Southwick et al. (2014, p.11) define resilience as “a stable trajectory of healthy functioning after a highly adverse event.” This definition relates to the definition provided by the American Psychology Association cited by Southwick et al. (2014) that resilience refers to “ a process of adapting well despite hardships, trauma, tragedy, threats and in the presence of stress sources”. This study adopts resilience definition as “a multilevel process that systems engage in to obtain better-than-expected outcomes amidst adversity” (van Breda, 2018a, p. 4). Acknowledging that the transition from secondary to higher education for students from marginalised backgrounds can be traumatic, the resilience theory proves relevant.

Southwick et al. (2014) underscore the determinant factors that include biological, psychological, social and cultural, which interact with each other to establish how an individual responds to a distressing situation. They also recognise the binary approaches to determine the presence or absence of resiliencies. Similarly, van Breda (2018a) clarifies that resilience processes exist in various spheres of the social ecology or person-in-environment and not only in the individual. Southwick et al. (2014) acknowledge that resilience is likely to live continuously and be present across multiple areas of one’s life. Moreover, Southwick et al. (2014) underscore that individuals' response to stress and trauma depends on their interactions with fellow humans, available resources, culture and religions, organisations, communities and societies, which may be resilient in their contexts, and have abilities to support individuals in need. Also, Yates et al. (2015) allude that resilience models recognise that adversity, competence, and all the underlying processes differ across analyses and cultures.

Furthermore, Southwick et al. (2014) caution that it is essential to specify whether resilience is perceived as a trait, a process or an outcome. Meanwhile, van Breda (2018a) posits that resilience research focuses on adversity, mediating processes, and outcomes. He further emphasises that resilience is a process that yields outcomes. Yates et al. (2015) affirm that the concept of resilience, particularly in applied sciences, has connotations associated with individual developmental adaptations in the face of hardships. Thus they recommended operationalised definitions of the concepts such as adversity, positive adaptation or competence and risk factors.

2.11.4.1 Adversity. According to Yates et al. (2015), adversity is the negative encounters capable of impairing adaptive functioning and development, which can be chronic or acute. It may impact individuals' systems, the multiple levels and the setting concurrently. van Breda (2018a) shares commonalities that adversity can be chronic or acute. He further divides chronic adversity into two sub-categories: distal-onset chronic adversity and proximal-onset chronic adversity. Distal-onset chronic adversity has no starting point in the person's experience, often progressing from birth to adulthood (van Breda, 2018a). In the context of this study, distal-onsets chronic adversity for students from marginalised backgrounds, including but not limited to low socio-economic status, poverty, educational marginalisation, and linguistic and cultural minorities; hence there is no before adversity. Meanwhile, proximal onset chronic adversity and acute adversity have the starting point in an individual's experience, therefore, they allow one to term resilience as a “bouncing back” to “before”. van Breda (2018a) thus postulates that chronic adversity involves coping with ongoing adversity, while acute adversity implies recovering post-adversity.

2.11.4.2 Positive Adaptation/Competence. In the context of the resilience theory, competence or positive adaptation refers to an individual's or group's ability to adapt and meet developmental expectations in a given cultural context (Yates et al., 2015). Positive transformation is facilitated by assimilated organisation and functions of an adaptive system in a given setting (Yates et al., 2015).

In Western Europe, competence was measured through observable evidence of a given developmental task (Masten, 2018; Yates et al., 2015). However, multiculturalism redirected the definition of positive adaptation/competence to be based on the cultural contexts in a given environment (Masten, 2018; Yates et al., 2015). Consequently, at individual levels of analysis, competence/positive adaptation (“to be doing well” or “better than expected”) is complemented by multilevel competence definitions that include various indicators of positive internal and external adaptations (Masten, 2018; van Breda, 2011; Yates et al., 2015). The positive internal indicators at an individual level of analysis include but are not limited to health, well-being, self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-concept. The external indicators of competence include but are not limited to academic achievement, quality of relationships and personal conduct (Yates et al., 2015).

van Breda (2018a) posits that the focus of resilience research should be on the mediating processes, which he also termed the protective resources or the resilience processes. Such processes facilitate the achievement of competence (doing “better than expected”) outcomes. In his work, van Breda (2018a) asserts that family and community support increases positive adaptation and efficacy and decreases stressful life events. In addition, he values the relationship of childhood support that extend the developmental outcomes in adulthood (van Breda, 2001, 2011, 2018a, 2018b). Resilience processes do not rely on an individual but are interdependent with the social

relationships with family, peers, professionals, and institutions (van Breda, 2018a). Subsequently, van Breda (2018a) maintains that the most significant source of resilience is relationship-centred support and social connectedness with one's cultural heritage. Regarding higher education, especially where institutions are far from home, it alienates students from marginalised communities from their people and, by implication, from their cultural connectedness.

In most cases, they and their families might not possess devices and connectivity tools that they can use to remain connected to their families and friends. They mainly rely on friends, peers, educators and those tasked to provide support. It remains a necessity to provide culturally relevant support to ensure cultural connectedness.

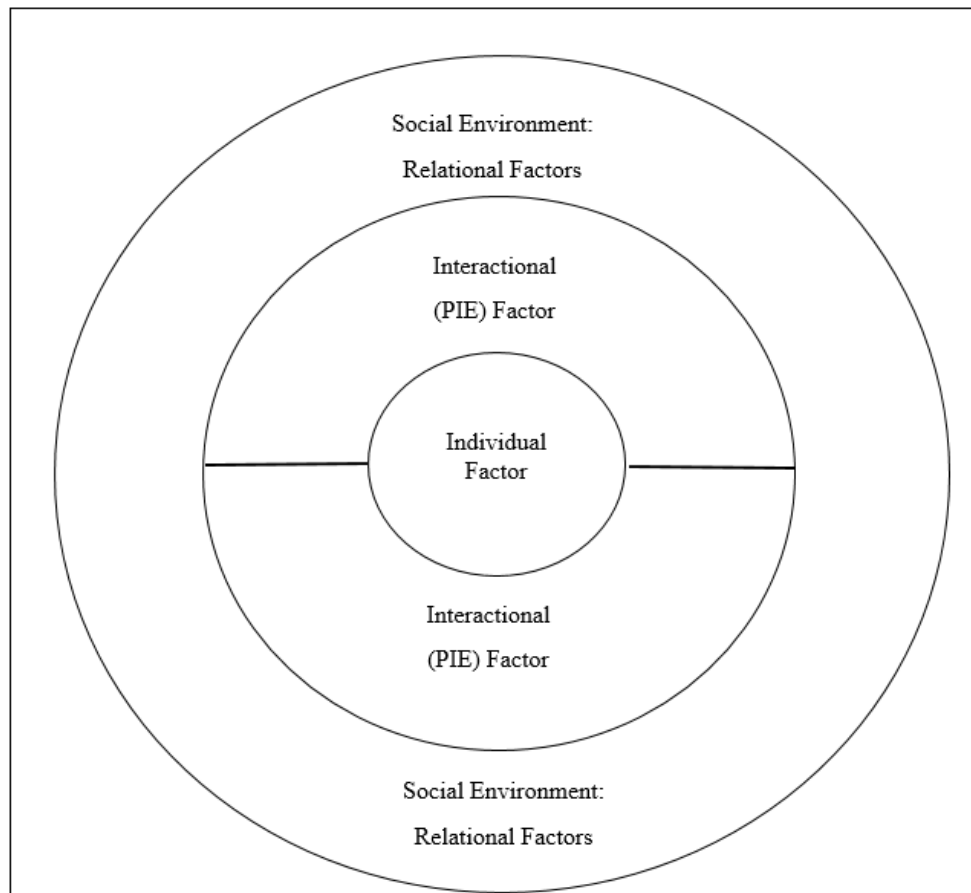
2.11.4.3 Risk and Resources Factors. Risk and resources, also called promotive or assets, are part of the resilience processes. The risk factors are associated with adverse outcomes, while the promotive factors (resource/assets) enhance an individual's positive development (Yates et al., 2015). Similarly, Masten (2018) indicates that protective factors play significant roles amid adversity, and the promotive factors (assets/resources) are linked to the desirable outcomes at all levels of risk. The risk and resources at the population level relate to both negative and positive effects on development. However, they are influenced by the contexts surrounding the systems and individuals' vulnerability to the system (Yates et al., 2015). Moreover, various factors influence an individual's ability to adapt to given risks or resources (Yates et al., 2015).

The current study adopted the Youth Ecological Resilience Scale (YERS) from the resilience theory described in Chapter Three. YERS is a pre-validated instrument

to measure vulnerability, resilience processes, and outcomes framed around resilience theory and arising from the work of Andrian Van Breda. Variables in this measure are framed within an ecological or person-in-environment model and were selected based on empirical evidence assuming that they may contribute to better transitional outcomes for the youth (Van Breda & Dickens, 2017; Van Breda, 2018b). In this study's context, students from marginalised backgrounds leave the care of their families and communities to Higher Education Institutions. Being out of family and community care in the context of students from marginalised backgrounds is characterised by several challenges, including inadequate social and academic support and basic needs instability leading to poor academic outcomes (Pinkerton & Van Breda, 2019). As narrated by Schlossberg's theory of transition, there are socially constructed expectations based on age and life's stages. However, individuals cope with a transition distinctively (Papay, 2013). Understanding views and coping mechanisms is necessary to frame the needed support and facilitate individual resilience as they face the ordinal and extra-ordinal process of life changes. Ecological Resilience among youth is believed to depend on various structures and processes such as the individual: self and strategies, relationships with families, peer and support providers and the institutional and social environment (Pinkerton & Van Breda, 2019). In this study's context, each structure has different factors that could influence counselling effectiveness. Thus, for the interventions to be effective, the support must consider all the factors mentioned above (Pinkerton & Van Breda, 2019).

Similarly, Van Breda further outlined the Person-In-Environment framework that puts individual factors at the centre surrounded by relational, interactional and environmental factors.

Figure 2.9 Person-In-Environment Framework for YERS



Note: Adapted from (van Breda, 2017).

Figure 2.9 outlined the Person-In-Environment framework as described by Van Breda and discussed below.

2.11.6.1 Individual Factors. The centre encompasses individual resilience factors influenced by the various encounters in the learning environment. In this study, the centre depicts individual distressing factors in the university environment.

2.11.6.2 Person-In-Environment (PIE). The elements reflected by the (person) Person-In-Environment include positive learning experience, high self-expectations, resilience (bouncebackability), positivity, self-esteem, distress tolerance and spirituality. The resilience theory underscored that young people with a high

resilience construct persevere amid adversity (van Breda & Dickens, 2017; van Breda, 2017).

2.11.6.3 In – (In-Environment). The (In) in the Person-In-Environment Framework represents the transactional factors that support the navigation of external resources in the resilience processes. They encompass the activities of individuals and their influences on the environment (van Breda, 2001). The YERS measure includes interdependent problem-solving, self-efficacy, resourcefulness, relationships, teamwork, and empathy (van Breda & Dickens, 2017; van Breda, 2019).

2.11.6.4 Social Environment Factors. The (Environment) in the Person-In-Environmental Framework encompasses two sub-groups; relational and environmental factors. The sub-groups reflect the interrelationship underscored in the resilience theory. While the environmental factors point to the resources in the resilience processes, such as safety, financial stability and social activities, the relational factors include family, friends, lecturers, counsellors, the community, role models, partners and peers (van Breda & Dickens, 2017; van Breda, 2018a, 2019).

Resilience theory posits that the experience of adversity makes a person more vulnerable to various adverse outcomes (van Breda, 2018b). Moreover, the theory justifies the student's vulnerability and satisfaction outcomes from the support within the environment. In another study, van Breda (2018b) uses the resilience theory to survey vulnerable undergraduate students in South Africa to identify their resilience processes that enhance resilience outcomes of life satisfaction and academic progress. His findings suggest that in the face of adversity, students depended on relational resources in their communities, and students' love of learning facilitated academic progress. This theory applies to students from marginalised communities in higher

education in Namibia. Given their vulnerability, abject poverty and limited experiences of higher education in their communities and relocating away from their families and community members, there will be minimal community support to rely on and boost their resilience. van Breda (2018b) recommends proactive student support services to create a supportive academic community.

Figure 2.10 Scale Titles and Operational Definitions of YERS

Scale Title	Operational Definition		
Family relationships	Relationships with family members are experienced as caring and supportive.	Resourcefulness	A belief in one's ability to perform difficult tasks with limited resources.
Friends relationships	Relationships with friends are experienced as pro-social, caring and supportive.	Team work	A perceived ability to work productively with others in a team.
Teacher relationships	A relationship with at least one teacher who is experienced as caring and encouraging.	Empathy	Feeling with and caring for the well-being of other people.
Community relationships	A reciprocally supportive and caring relationship between the youth and community.	Positive learning experience	An orientation to learning characterized by low anxiety and high attention.
Role model relationships	A relationship with at least one adult (other than parents, teachers, or employers) who is experienced as caring and encouraging.	High self-expectations	High expectation of self to work hard and achieve the best results.
Love relationships	A romantic relationship that is experienced as intimate and characterised by mutual understanding.	Bouncebackability	A general belief in one's ability to "bounce back" after difficult times.
Community safety	The perception of the community as being safe in terms of low crime/drugs and high in safety and security.	Optimism	A general expectation that good things will happen in the future.
Family financial security	The family has sufficient money to cover their needs and does not worry or argue about money.	Self-esteem	A general feeling of self-worth and self-acceptance.
Social activities	Regular participation in pro-social group activities.	Distress tolerance	The perceived capacity to withstand negative psychological states.
Interdependent problem-solving	A preference for an interdependent approach to problem-solving.	Spirituality	A global orientation toward personal spirituality.
Self-efficacy	The belief in one's ability to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations.		

Note: Adapted from (van Breda & Dickens, 2017, p.8)

Table 2.10 above presents the scale titles of the YERS and their operational definitions

2.11.5 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Resilience Theory

Resilience focuses on individual strength and the ability to gain strength in the face of adversity, and it is a skill that can be learnt. Resilience theory is strength-based and multidimensional and applies to various disciplines and contexts. Its strengths lie

in its ability to be incorporated with many theories and its applicability to varied populations, contexts and age groups. The theory received criticism due to its focus on the individual ability to overcome adversity and paying less attention to the roles of society and the influences of the macro socio-economic structures (Cowden et al., 2015; van Breda & Dickens, 2017). However, according to Van Breda and Dickens (2017), a social worker adopts a multi-commitment to both the person and the environment through person-in-environment principles. Consequently, from the social work perspective, resilience considers both people and the structures to address challenges and harness well-being. Further, (van Breda (2019); van Breda and Dickens (2017) maintain that the core principle of the developmental approaches to social welfare is to incorporate both micro and macro interventions to maximise social development outcomes

2.11.6 Applying Resilience Theory to the Current Study

Resilience theory in the context of the social work area, particularly in the context of vulnerable youth, provides a basis for understanding students' resilience construct. The theory provides the foundation to understand the resilience processes and constructs in the lives of students from marginalised backgrounds. It also helps develop interventions that yield “better than expected” outcomes in the face of adversity. The work of Dr van Breda has extended the understanding of resilience in the social work area, particularly in the context of vulnerable youth in Africa. Despite some critiques, van Breda and Dickens (2017) clarify social workers' dual commitments through the Person-In-Environment approach that focuses on both the person and the environment. Hence, this study took the contextualised definition of resilience proposed by (van Breda & Dickens, 2017; van Breda, 2017, 2018a, 2018b). According to van Breda (2018a), resilience is needed where there is adversity, thus,

the central focus of resilience theory is the resilience processes that intercede adversity and outcomes. Marginalisation is linked to van Breda's distal-onset chronic adversity, including low socio-economic, poverty, and linguistic disadvantages. At the same time, the proximal onset of chronic and acute adversity are the challenges students from marginalised backgrounds encounter in HEIs. Upon transiting to HEIs, students from marginalised backgrounds face many risk factors and require researchers to identify resilience assets/resources in their context to facilitate their success. Resilience theory recognises indigenous knowledge as well as the social nature of resilience. It can lay a foundation for understanding cultural resilience processes (Breda & Dickens, 2017; van Breda, 2018a, 2018b). According to van Breda (2018b), resilience is a process occurring between people and their environment, and they underscore that marginalisation and resilience are both social and individualised.

The resilience theory provided a framework for exploring students' resilience in transitioning to HEIs, helping the researcher understand the internal and external resources needed to withstand and recover from adversities. It also shed light on the resilience processes that students go through during the transition, as well as the factors that influence both resilience and academic achievements. Furthermore, the theory guided the development of the Student Assistance Program (SAP) and its support services, which aim to enhance resilience. By going beyond coping and adapting, resilience theory addressed the limitations of Shlossberg's transition theory, incorporating the ability to withstand and recover from adversities. The theory served as the basis for addressing research questions and objectives four and five, as outlined in chapter one of this study. Additionally, it contributed to the adoption and analysis of the Youth Ecological Resilience Scale (YERS), providing insights from both the students' perspective (emic) and an external perspective (etic) on resilience resources

for students from marginalised backgrounds (van Breda & Dickens, 2017; van Breda, 2018a).

2.11.7 Person-Centred Theory

The person-centred theory originates from the philosophy of humanistic theories of psychology pioneered by Arthur Combs, Carl Rogers and Malcolm Knowles (Hayes, 2015; Purswell, 2019). Humanists advocate that the goal of education is to facilitate student development and self-actualisation (Karthikeyan, 2013). Furthermore, they trust persons' growth capacity and belief in self-directed learning for individual growth (Purswell, 2019). Humanists advocate that the views of the world are a reality from an individual's perspective. Humanists emphasise an individual's inner motivation and their levels of self-efficacy (Karthikeyan, 2013; Purswell, 2019).

The person-centred theory originated from the work of American psychologist Carl Rogers in 1940, the pioneer of the learner-centred approach. Initially, the theory advocated that individuals are in charge of the treatment, allowing clients to develop self-understanding, self-exploration, and improved self-concepts. Lately, the focus has moved to the client's frame of reference and required that service providers demonstrate non-judgemental attitudes and empathic understanding toward the client (Hayes, 2015; Karthikeyan, 2013; Purswell, 2019).

The theory stresses that individuals possess inner resources for self-understanding to adjust self-concepts, attitudes, and self-directed behaviour if given a favourable environment to use such resources (Hayes, 2015).

The theory posits that for counselling intervention to be more effective, there must be three conditions: unconditional positive regard, empathy and congruency

(Witty, 2015). According to Hayes (2015), these conditions are employed to create a favourable environment that facilitates the clients' understanding of self.

2.11.7.1 Unconditional Positive Regard. Roger believes counselling would be ineffective if the counsellors consistently experience negative feelings or attitudes toward the service recipient. Unconditional positive regard implies genuine acceptance of an individual without judgement (Purswell, 2019). It encompasses an experience of prizing and valuing clients' efforts by expressing concerns rather than disagreeing (Hayes, 2015). The counsellor's respect for clients promotes non-judgemental support and creates an atmosphere where change is embraced (Witty, 2015). At the same time, service providers should employ unconditional positive regard and encourage non-judgemental support to facilitate the desired change. Students from marginalised backgrounds are likely to encounter low self-esteem, low self-concept, and low self-efficacy resulting from their characteristics discussed in the previous sections. Consequently, support interventions should encourage students to use their inner resources to rediscover and promote positive self-concepts.

2.11.7.2 Empathy. Empathy is the counsellor's ability to demonstrate understanding and interpret the world from the client's perspective (Hayes, 2015). Empathy encompasses the capability of the counselling service providers to understand and value the feelings of the service recipient. It is the skill to show thoughtfulness and concern toward clients' emotions and help them open up more (Hayes, 2015; Purswell, 2019; Witty, 2015).

2.11.7.3 Congruency. Congruency is the ability of counsellors to demonstrate genuineness and authenticity in their spoken language and actions (Witty, 2015). It is regarded as the counsellor's inner experience and the state of wholeness and openness

the client feels to trigger trust in the relationship (Witty, 2015). Purswell (2019) states that congruent counsellors are associated with self-acceptance, positive self-regard, self-awareness and freedom from inner censorship. The ability to suppress concerns and reservations to fully engage in the relationship with the counselling service recipient (Hayes, 2015). According to Roger, (as cited in Hayes, 2015), the goals of interventions should be to facilitate trust and the ability to encourage honesty in the process without fear of being judged by the service provider. Secondly, it promotes self-awareness and self-esteem. Thirdly, it encourages congruence in clients' behaviours and feelings and, finally, facilitates the ability to manage their lives and achieve self-actualisation.

2.11.8 Strengths and Weaknesses of Person-Centred Theory

The person-centred theory capitalises on the counsellor-client relationship, positive experience, openness, and non-judgmental counselling services (Hayes, 2015). It is an approach that enables clients to set and achieve their own goals, accept their present selves, strive for personal growth and utilise their inner strength to self-heal. The theory puts individuals at the centre and empowers them with the ability to explore their true selves, increase their sense of well-being, self-growth, confidence and increase self-efficacy (Hayes, 2015; Purswell, 2019; Witty, 2015). While the theory advocates for self-change in the client, it also promotes genuineness, understanding, acceptance and a good relationship between the service provider and the recipient. The strength of the person-centred theory is its applicability to diverse audiences, e.g. groups, families, and individuals (Hayes, 2015; Purswell, 2019; Witty, 2015). Moreover, the aspects relate well to multiculturalism and offer up-to-date optimistic perspectives. It is also versatile and can be used to address various challenges, including anxiety and depression (Hayes, 2015; Witty, 2015).

Despite the strengths of the person-centred theory, critiques and limitations were also noted about the theory. Firstly, its effectiveness relies on willingness, motivation and eagerness rather than the clients' ability to change (Hayes, 2015). In addition, due to the non-directive approaches of the person-centred theory, the counsellor might be passive and less challenging, which might hinder counselling effectiveness. However, empathy might influence the counsellor from challenging the client. It places more authority on the recipient than the counsellor, which might inhibit preparing an individual for the real world.

2.11.9 Application of Person-Centred Theory to the Study

The current study took note of the limitations and critiques of the person-centred theory. However, the approach has significant relevance to the study, firstly due to its focus on interventions rather than accurate diagnostic; secondly, its nature of psychological contact and person-centredness.

Counselling services in education aim to capitalise on students' capacity and desire for personal growth and change (Hayes, 2015). The theory provides a better understanding of the expected roles and attributes of the counselling service providers and that of the service recipient to facilitate non-judgmental support to encourage self-healing. It supports interventions that recognise person-centredness, positive psychology, individuals' inner resources, inner motivation, self-efficacy, non-judgmental and cultural sensitivity. The theory forms the basis for understanding the experiences, satisfaction, and factors that influence the efficacy of counselling services. It supplemented the other two theories, expanding beyond coping, adapting, and recovering to emphasise on positive psychology, subjective and social well-being interventions. The theory helped in designing and adopting data collection instruments and is the foundation for the design of the SAP and its support services.

The theory links well with the resilience theory that recognises individuals' ability to achieve positive adaptation or better-than-expected outcomes despite adversity (van Breda, 2011, 2018a, 2019; Yates et al., 2015). This is important because structural inequalities will continue to negatively cause adversities individuals barely have control over. This theory provides a basis to direct interventions toward enabling individuals to develop resilience, self-concepts, self-acceptance, self-efficacy and achieve self-growth amidst challenges (Hayes, 2015; Witty, 2015). Dameron (2016) uses a two-phased approach that combined person-centred with Solution-Focused Brief Therapy as the basis to address the counselling needs of students in a school setting.

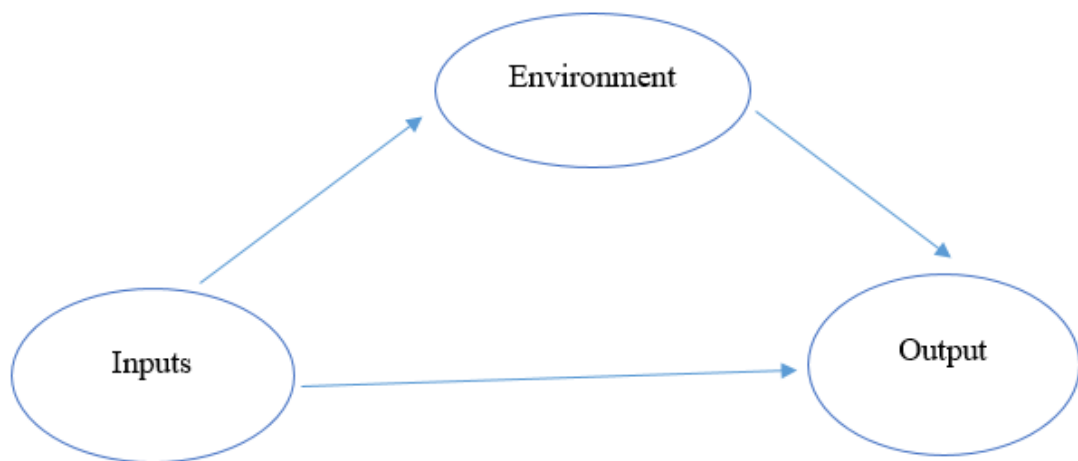
2.12 Conceptualisation Models

2.12.1 Astin's I-E-O Model

The current study employs Astin's I-E-O model of 1993, which originates from student involvement theory, part of student development theory (Cummings, 2014). Astin's model is a person-centred approach built on five assumptions regarding students' involvement (Astin, 2014; Astin & Oseguera, 2004; Hashim, 2019; Student & Theory, 2021). First, it postulates that involvement requires investment in psychosocial and physical activities. Second, it proposes that involvement is a continuous engagement depending on students' needs. The third assumption is that involvement can be quantified (how much time is devoted to activities) or qualitative (the efforts and seriousness of actions). The fourth assumption is that the benefits of involvement depend on students' involvement, and finally, correlated the performance to students' involvement (Hashim, 2019). For students from marginalised backgrounds

to persist and succeed in their academic endeavours, they need to be involved in the counselling processes right from the onset until they find the strengths to overcome their distress. There is a need for student support programmes that are continuous, culturally sensitive and tailored to meet the unique needs of students and encourage students' voluntary involvement. Astin's Model comprises three elements (Cummings, 2014): Input, Environment, and Output (I-E-O) presented and discussed below:

Figure 2.11 Astin's I-E-O model of Student Involvement



Note: Adapted from (Hashim, 2019)

Figure 2.11 shows the elements of Astin's model of student involvement discussed below.

2.12.1.1 Input. Firstly, the inputs are students' diverse characteristics and attributes when entering university. These include demographic information, backgrounds, previous experiences, needs, and challenges. In the context of this study, "input" justifies students' diverse attributes from marginalised backgrounds ranging from their cultures, traditions, beliefs, values, expectations, shortcomings, economic

situations, abilities, and disabilities. Relating to Astin's input element, students from marginalised backgrounds have unique characteristics. Most are the first generations to enter the higher education sphere in their families; they access universities on special admission schemes and face multiple changes in accessing higher education. In addition, some have a lower level of English proficiency, low academic achievement compared to their peers and limited exposure to social city life (Hashim, 2019; Johnson, 2015; Sweet et al., 2020). The above traits are relevant to Namibian students from marginalised communities at first entry to higher education. Some of the traits mentioned above serve as determinants of possible risk factors for academic outcomes. Furthermore, they would form the basis for identifying eligible students for SAP. They would also encapsulate the type, contents and depth of the SAP.

2.12.1.2 Environment. The second element is the students' environment, including all encounters at the university. The "environment" speaks to the SAP, its support teams, students' involvement in support activities, continuous and equitable support and programme evaluations. Astin's element of environment validates the relevance of adequate and effective counselling services offered by HEIs. Relating to Astin's environment element, HEIs have roles to play in containing barriers to learning for all students. They are expected to establish programmes that ensure a smooth transition, inclusion, equity, persistence and retention to achieve memorable university experiences and academic progress for all (Johnson, 2015). Hashim (2019) underscores that Astin's model offers opportunities to explore the influence of the university environment on student development, determine the kind of interventions needed and their strategies for implementation to attain the desired outcomes, and the depth of student involvement required. Walker and Mkwanzani (2015) emphasise the significance of preparing the environment before admitting students from marginalised

backgrounds to avoid further marginalisation. To explore the perceived effectiveness of the available counselling services is also to assess the preparedness of students' environment to ensure equity for students from marginalised backgrounds. Furthermore, to determine whether the university environment provides the needed support and propose further interventions to meet the students' diverse needs and ensure academic success upon exiting the institutions. Astins' I-E-O model forms the basis to guide SAP development.

2.12.1.3 Outputs. Output determines the effectiveness of the SAP, such as the level of resilience, persistence, retention, graduation, employability and productivity of students. This element of student involvement includes students' characteristics, knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs, values and all competencies students exit with after graduation (Hashim, 2019). Moreover, the students face numerous challenges such as poor language proficiency, self-concept, low self-esteem and poverty/financial constraints (Dieckmann et al., 2014; Hashim, 2019; Sweet et al., 2020). Consequently, these factors make them susceptible to psycho-social and academic distress that could hinder their desired outcomes.

This model fits well with the current study because it provides the basis to understand how students' characteristics, different factors in their midst, and the universities' support influence their outcomes. The model helped summarised the theories, the research questions and objectives, findings to draw conclusions.

The three elements provide the framework that guides the SAP toward the desired outcomes, particularly for students from marginalised backgrounds in higher education in Namibia, which is the focus of this study.

Chapter Three

3. Methodology

The previous chapter presented the review of relevant literature for this study. This chapter focuses on the methodological aspects of the study. It describes the research designs for qualitative and quantitative, the population, samples and sampling procedures, data collection methods and instruments, and data analysis methods for the qualitative and quantitative data sets. Finally, the chapter presents the Student Assistance Programme (SAP) development, pilot study, procedures, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Paradigms

Research paradigms are shared beliefs, understandings or agreements in which theories and practices can function and the perspectives from which problems can be understood (Dawadi et al., 2021; Hall, 2013; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). A paradigm is also called a philosophical assumption that defines the worldview and guides the researcher's actions on how a problem can be approached for better understanding (Dawadi et al., 2021; Hall, 2013; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). The current study took a pragmatism stance to understand better the counselling effectiveness and the support needs of students from marginalised backgrounds in HEIs in Namibia. Pragmatism embraces multiple methods and advocates for methodological approaches that best understand the studied phenomenon (Hall, 2013; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019; Maarouf, 2019). This study employs a mixed-method research approach and taps from the different perspectives of research participants. Below are the pragmatic philosophical assumptions adopted by the current study:

3.1.1 Ontology

Ontology in research is the study of being and concerns with what truth claims a researcher can make about reality. There are two ontological perspectives, namely, realist and relativist. Realist ontology philosophy considers a single reality which can be studied, understood and experienced as a truth (Dawadi et al., 2021; Essack, 2012; Hall, 2013; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019; Maarouf, 2019). Their philosophy is that the real world exists as sovereigns of human experience. Meanwhile, relativist believes in multiple reality, and reality is constructed in the human mind and depends upon how individuals experience it at any given moment and place (Hall, 2013; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019; Maarouf, 2019). Ontological from pragmatism perspectives, a stance of the current study views reality as normative and perceives reality as what works and how far it helps the researcher find meaningful relations with individuals' experiences (Hall, 2013; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). It is believed that reality is inseparable from human affairs and needs and is based on context (Hall, 2013; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). It advocates for multiple approaches to inquiry (Hall, 2013; Mertens, 2015). Various methods and approaches were employed in this study to answer the research questions best and achieve the research objectives.

3.1.2 Epistemology

In research, epistemology concerns how knowledge is created and from whom knowledge is acquired. It deals with aspects of validity, the scope and methods of obtaining information (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Mertens, 2015). While objective research ensures reliability and external validity, subjective studies assume that people impose meanings on the world and interpret it in a way that makes sense to them, implying that a person's experience determines how they perceive the world (Dawadi et al., 2021; Essack, 2012; Hall, 2013; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019; Maarouf, 2019).

Pragmatists value both subjective and objective knowledge to achieve the research objectives. Pragmatic epistemology gives the researcher freedom to choose research methods or strategies that best answer their research questions and suggest that the study must help the researcher discover what they intend to know (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019; Maarouf, 2019). This study undertook mixed methods to understand the subjective and objective experiences counselling services' effectiveness of the referrers and beneficiaries of the HEIs in Namibia. Multiple data were obtained using multiple methods of inquiry. Furthermore, data were analysed using varied methods to achieve the research objectives. It is imperative to clarify the researchers' epistemological assumption as it influences how the data collected are analysed and interpreted to create meanings (Dawadi et al. 2021; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019).

3.1.3 Axiology

Axiology in research concerns ethical aspects that must be followed throughout the research process. It is concerned with clarifying, defining, evaluating and understanding issues about a researcher's acceptable and ethical behaviour. Axiology considers the values researchers attribute to research participants, the data and the audience of the research findings (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The current study observed the four criteria of ethical conduct: teleology, deontology, morality and fairness.

Deontology criteria were ensured through the principles of ethics from the proposal stage to the writing of the dissertation. Ethical considerations observed included the principles of autonomy, confidentiality and anonymity, as discussed in Chapter Three of the study. Research ethics were adhered to during data collection, handling, storing, analysis and presentation to benefit the participants, the researcher, the scholars and the public.

Furthermore, the researcher ensured the morality criterion by truthfully presenting and interpreting the data. Thus, original narratives from the participants were presented to ensure the authenticity of the data collected. Raw data were only accessible by the researcher for study purposes.

Finally, fairness was maintained through bracketing, where the researcher was aware of, and attempted to set aside her own experiences, pre-assumptions, biases, judgements and prejudice throughout the research process.

3.1.4 Methodology

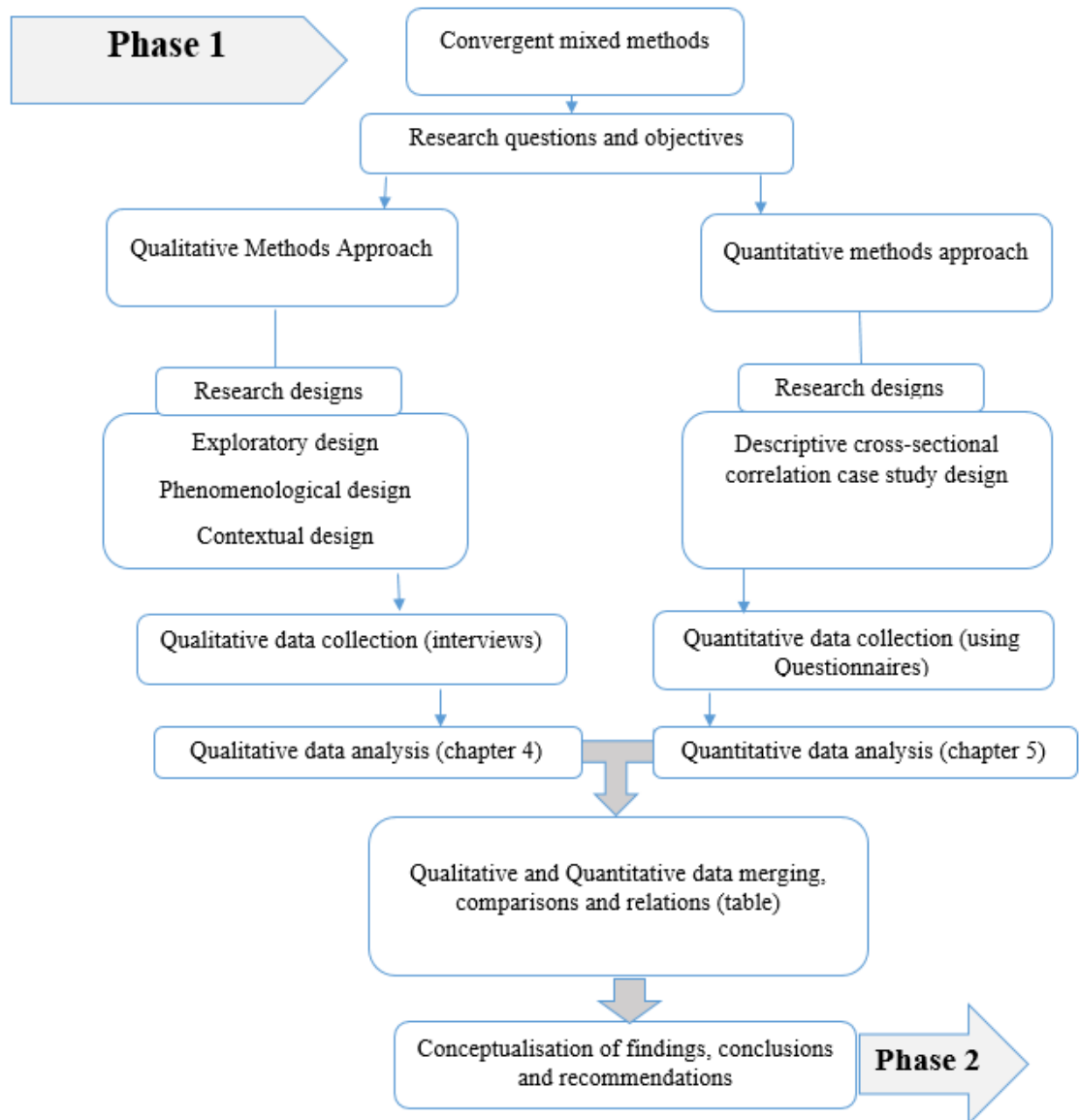
Methodology as a pragmatic philosophical assumption refers to the research method approaches, the designs and procedures used to gain knowledge and understand the problem (Dawadi et al., 2021; Hall, 2017; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). It concerns the flow and logic of the systematic research process (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). In this study, the convergent mixed methods design allowed the researcher to gain insights into the experiences, satisfaction with counselling services and the factors influencing counselling effectiveness. The research objectives were clarified, and limitations and mitigations were explained. The entire systematic research process including the research designs, the population, samples, data collection methods, instruments and analysis were clarified in Chapter three of the current study.

3.2 Research Design

Kumar (2014) describes research design as a roadmap the researcher undertakes to achieve the research objectives in a valid, objective, accurate and economical fashion. Research designs are inquiries within different research methods and approach that guide and direct a study's research procedure (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study employed a convergent mixed methods design, also referred to as

pragmatic parallel mixed methods design or triangulation (Mertens, 2015). This strategy allowed the researcher to collect qualitative and quantitative data independently but concurrently, analyse the two data sets separately, and merge the results to confirm or disconfirm each other (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Convergent parallel designs allow the researcher to compare different findings on a single phenomenon to develop and draw corroborated conclusions. In this study, including referrers and beneficiaries and using qualitative and quantitative data provided an opportunity for multi-level triangulation to understand better experiences about counselling effectiveness from the perspectives of the referrers and the beneficiaries (Maree, 2021). It also allowed the researcher to gain insights and details on the subjective and objective views of the participants, validate the data and ensure certainty of conclusions (Mertens, 2015; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Figure 3.12 Convergent Mixed Methods Design



Note: The outline of phase 1 flow chart of mixed method design process

Diagram 3.12 depicts the flow of this study's convergent mixed-method design. Each method approach is characterised by specific sub-research designs such as exploratory, phenomenological and contextual designs for the qualitative and descriptive sectional correlation case study for the quantitative design. The data were collected concurrently, analysed separately, and subsequently combined to develop a comprehensive understanding of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations that

informed phase two of the study. A comprehensive discussion of the specific designs can be found under each method approach in this chapter.

Moreover, the study is segmented into two phases: Phase One is a situational analysis covering the research objectives one to four and chapters one to five. In contrast, Phase Two is the development of the Student Assistance Program (SAP) covering objective number five, as illustrated in the following table:

Table 3.5 The outline of Research Phases and the Research questions and objectives

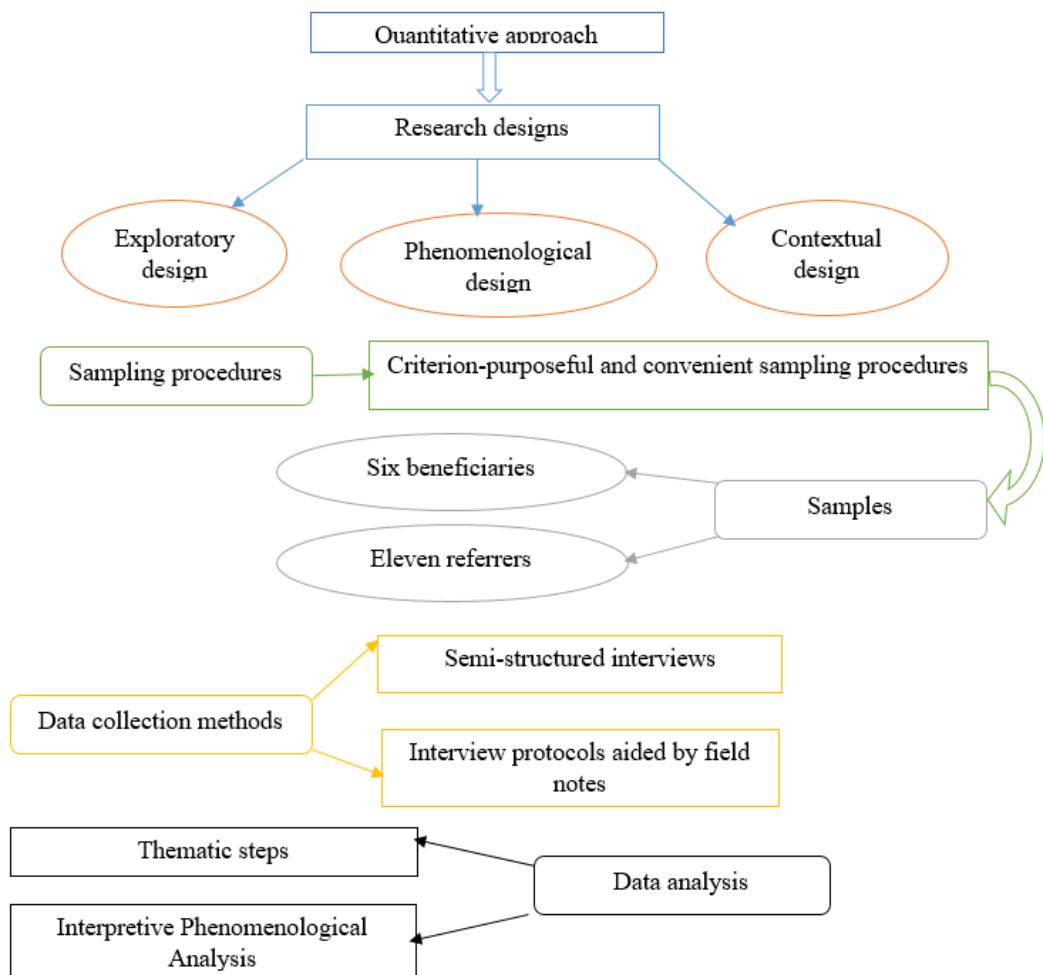
		Research questions and objectives
Phase 1 Situation analysis Chapter 1 to Chapter 5	Question/Objective 1	<p>Questions: How do beneficiaries and referrers describe their experiences with counselling services' effectiveness as an equity measure? (QUAL)</p> <p>Objectives: Explore and describe the experiences of referrers and beneficiaries on the effectiveness of counselling services. (QUAL).</p>
	Question/Objective 2	<p>Question: Determine beneficiaries' satisfaction with counselling services offered (QUANT).</p> <p>Objective: What is the beneficiaries' satisfaction with the counselling services offered? (QUANT).</p>

	Question/Objectives 3	<p>Question: How do beneficiaries and referrers describe their satisfaction with counselling services as an equity measure? (QUAL).</p> <p>Objective: Determine the beneficiaries' and referrers' satisfaction with counselling services as an equity measure (QUAL).</p>
	Question/Objectives 4	<p>Question: What factors influence the effectiveness of counselling as an equity measure leading to students' resilience and academic performance? (QUAL & QUANT).</p> <p>Objective: Determine the factors influencing the effectiveness of counselling as an equity measure leading to students' resilience and academic performance (QUAL & QUANT).</p>
Phase 2 SAP Programme development Chapter 6	Question/Objectives 5	<p>Question: What models could be adopted to develop a sustainable Student Assistance Programme and strategies for implementation? (QUANT).</p> <p>Objective: Suggest models and develop a sustainable Student Assistance Programme and implementation strategies. (QUANT & QUAL).</p>

Table 3.5 outlines the research phases and the research questions and objectives. A detailed discussion of each research approach (qualitative and quantitative designs), their specific design, population, samples and sampling techniques, data collection methods and instruments, and data analysis methods as employed in the study are presented below.

3.3 The Qualitative Approach

Figure 3.13 Summary of the Qualitative Approach Process



Note: The flow chart summarises the process followed for the qualitative approach used in this study

Diagram 3.13 summarises the qualitative approach process. It provides an overview of the various sub-research designs, including exploratory, phenomenological, and contextual. The diagram also covers the sampling procedure, the chosen samples, the data collection methods and instruments, and the data analysis methods used in the qualitative aspect of the current study.

According to Mertens (2015), the nature of the research objectives, the type of information required, the participants, and the research's intent greatly influence the selection of the research method design. He identified three conditions on which qualitative methods that are rooted in pragmatics are selected. First, qualitative data from human interaction are valuable in developing and designing educational and psychological programmes. In addition, it provides an opportunity for the programme users to get involved in the decision to value the results. Second, it can be selected when no acceptable, valid, and reliable quantitative instrument is appropriate for the desired outcomes. The final condition of selecting qualitative data is that it adds depth to the quantitative data (Mertens, 2015). Subsequently, the selection of the qualitative methods approach lies in the researcher's pragmatic philosophical assumptions, the nature of the research objectives, the depth of the desired outcomes, triangulation to substantiate the quantitative data and the need for participants' perspectives to inform the development of the Student Assistance Programme (SAP).

The researcher employed exploratory, phenomenological, and contextual designs in the qualitative part of the study. The aims were to explore and describe the experiences of referrers and beneficiaries on the effectiveness of counselling services. Furthermore, to determine the beneficiaries' and referrers' satisfaction with counselling services. The designs were also used to explore and describe the factors

influencing the effectiveness of counselling as an equity measure leading to the resilience of students from marginalised backgrounds and academic performance.

3.3.1 Qualitative Designs

3.3.1.1 Exploratory Design. An exploratory design is a type of research conducted to learn more about an understudied phenomenon (Dartey, 2016). The design's significance is entrenched in its ability to explore primary ideas from small samples. It allows the researcher to examine the topic in-depth, gain new insights, and explore new ideas and better knowledge about the phenomenon. It also helps the researcher comprehend the different concepts about counselling services in relation to students from marginalised backgrounds and their needs. In the current study, exploratory design was employed to gain in-depth insights into counselling effectiveness from the perspectives of referrers and beneficiaries.

3.3.1.2 Phenomenological Design. According to Mertens (2015), the phenomenological design emphasises the subjective experiences of individual participants. It allows the researcher to seek individual perceptions and the meaning of encounters. Similarly, Creswell and Creswell (2018) describe the phenomenological design as an inquiry that enables researchers to describe individuals' lived experiences about a phenomenon from participants' perspectives. The phenomenological design requires researchers to shift their focus from theories, explanations and conceptualisations to understanding the phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Mertens, 2015). With a pragmatic philosophical stance, the exploratory and phenomenological designs allowed the researcher to interact and dig deeper into the accounts of referrers and beneficiaries in this study (Mertens, 2015). The researcher had an opportunity to gather primary data from the participants and gained insights on counselling effectiveness from varied perspectives.

In this study, the design allowed the researcher to understand the subjective and objective ways that referrers and beneficiaries perceived counselling services' effectiveness as an equity measure in their contexts. It also provided the basis to involve participants and have immense contributions valuable to SAP development.

3.3.1.3 Contextual Design. Duda et al. (2020) describe contextual design as an inquiry that allows semi-structured interviews to attain information about the setting and context. The researcher examines behaviours, organisational culture and perspectives on the phenomenon being studied in the context of the study setting (Dartey, 2016). Contextual design is characterised by sensible worldviews on how humans should treat each other and work in harmony (Duda et al., 2020). It also allows the data collected to create models and develop or improve existing products or programmes. In this study, the design allowed the researcher to explore the latent needs of both students from marginalised backgrounds (beneficiaries) and the lecturers (referrers), their core values and aspirations as far as counselling services are concerned. The design is significant to the study because it enables the researcher to sort and interact with the data for better interpretation (Duda et al., 2020).

The research context in this study is counselling services in HEIs for students from marginalised backgrounds. The combination of exploratory, phenomenological and contextual designs is substantial in phase one of this study (situational analysis). The designs established an understanding of the concepts, the characteristics of the participants, the environment, the institutional culture and services. The designs allowed the researcher to understand subjective and objective perspectives on counselling encounters, the views that contributed to phase two of the current study (SAP development).

3.4 Population

Population in research is defined as the general group you want to apply your study findings (Mertens, 2015). Kumar (2014) describes the study population as the people the researcher intends to study. It also refers to the events, things, and people to be represented (Christensen et al., 2015). The population is thus the whole group of interest to which the researcher wishes to generalise and draw the sample (Christensen et al., 2015). The target population of this study was 351 undergraduate students from marginalised backgrounds from databases and the university lecturers teaching in the participating institutions. The first group comprised 251 undergraduate students from marginalised backgrounds registered in the two participating HEIs in Namibia. The second group consisted of 100 HEIs lecturers working in the two participating HEIs who met the study's inclusion criteria described below.

Since the main focus of the study was on students from marginalised communities, students with physical, psychological, neurological or socio-emotional challenges who are not from the targeted communities were intentionally excluded.

3.4.1 Sampling Procedure

Sampling refers to the process the researcher uses to select the participants from the population as sources of the desired information to achieve the research objectives (Christensen et al., 2015; Kumar, 2014). The study employed criterion-purposeful and convenient sampling procedures to select the two groups of participants (referrers and beneficiaries) from the population. In addition, a criterion purposeful sampling procedure was used to select the only two state Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that included students from marginalised backgrounds through the indigenous admission category. Criterion purposeful and convenience sampling are non-

randomised and non-probability sampling techniques that allow researchers to rely on judgements to select information-rich participants to answer the research questions or achieve the research objectives (Etikan, 2016; Mertens, 2015). Convenience sampling allows the researchers to gather information from the population that meets criteria such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given period, and willingness to participate (Etikan, 2016).

Meanwhile, criterion purposeful sampling, also known as judgmental sampling, allows the researcher to gather information from participants due to the qualities of information they possess (Etikan, 2016; Mertens, 2015). In this study, the researcher used convenience sampling to select a subset from the quantitative samples that were physically accessible and reachable via e-mails or telephone calls. For purposeful sampling, the researcher sets criteria and purposefully identifies individuals from the population who meet the criterion (Mertens, 2015). It is mainly used in studies where information needed for the study can be obtained from a particular information-rich group or groups.

The criterion for inclusion in the samples of this study were as follow:

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

- State-owned HEIs that:
 1. Admit students through the Indigenous admission category
 2. Admit students who are funded through the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare,
 3. Offers counselling services to students,
 4. Permitted the researcher to collect data from the institution.
- Students sampling criterion (beneficiaries)

1. Undergraduate students from marginalised backgrounds (indigenous minority backgrounds) in the above HEIs,
 2. Students in the above HEIs funded by the Student Support Programme through the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare,
 3. Students in the above HEIs who benefited from the counselling services at their Higher Education Institutions,
 4. Students from the quantitative sample
 5. Students in the above HEIs who met the above criteria and volunteered to participate in this research.
- Lecturers/ Referrers sampling criterion
 1. Lecturers in the participating HEIs.
 2. Lecturers who referred students from marginalised backgrounds for counselling services.
 3. Lecturers who met the above criteria and volunteered to participate.

The researcher assumed that participants who meet the above criteria are knowledgeable and information-rich to provide the desired information on the phenomenon (Mertens, 2015). In this case, the phenomenon under study is the effectiveness of counselling as an equity measure to support students from marginalised backgrounds.

3.4.2 Sample Size

A sample is the representative number of the population from whom the researcher collects information for the study (Christensen et al., 2015). According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the researcher stops collecting data when saturation is reached in qualitative data collection. Saturation refers to when new data from the

participants reveals no more new insights (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Kumar, 2014). As indicated above, criterion and purposive sampling procedures were used to select the targeted participants who met the above criterion. From the referrers sample, eleven lecturers who referred students for counselling support were purposefully selected to participate in the semi-structured interviews. Therefore, eleven individual semi-structured interviews were conducted and by the eleventh interview, data saturation was reached; there were no new insights.

Moreover, a subgroup of ten beneficiaries from the quantitative sample was purposefully and conveniently selected for the semi-structured interviews. These were individuals who successfully completed the questionnaires and, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 situation, were accessible and expressed willingness to participate in the interviews. Although initially ten participants were chosen and agreed to take part, four individuals later withdrew from the interviews.

Consequently, a total of eleven samples were obtained from the referrers, while six samples were obtained from the beneficiaries to gather the qualitative data for this study.

3.5 Qualitative Data Collection Methods and Instruments

According to Mertens (2015), in mixed-methods research, data collection should be guided by the researcher's purpose and paradigmatic views. He indicates that qualitative data collection is a complex and vital research process. The researcher is the instrument that collects data through interviews, observation, document analysis, and examines records (Maree, 2021; Mertens, 2015).

3.5.1 Semi-Structured Individual Interviews with Beneficiaries

Semi-structured interviews are mainly used to substantiate data emerging from other data sources (Christensen et al., 2015; Maree, 2021; Mertens, 2015). This study collected data through semi-structured interviews with beneficiaries of the counselling services to address the research objectives (one to five) and corroborate the quantitative data. It allowed the researcher to interact with the participants in their natural settings and provide opportunities for the researcher to probe and clarify information. Consequently, six semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of beneficiaries from the quantitative sample who were conveniently reachable and willing to be interviewed. As interviews progressed, no new information came by the sixth interview, implying that data saturation was reached.

3.5.2 Semi-Structured Individual Interviews with the Referrers

Semi-structured interviews were also used to collect data from the referrers (often educators) of students from marginalised communities who provided in-depth insights on the effectiveness of counselling (Dartey, 2016). Interviews were conducted in settings where the participants felt comfortable expressing themselves. Data collected from the referrers' semi-structured interviews allowed triangulation and substantiated beneficiaries' data to enrich the SAP (Students' Assistance Program).

3.6 Qualitative Data Collection Instruments

Mertens (2015) states that data collection instruments are complex and time-consuming and there is no pre-existing instrument that can precisely measure a particular study construct. Hence, he advised researchers to develop their own data collection instruments. The following instruments were used to collect the qualitative data for this study.

3.6.1 Semi-Structured Interview Protocols

Interview protocols are instruments containing research questions prepared for the interviews (Creswell & Clark, 2011). They are interview instruments with prepared questions used by the researcher to collect data from the participants (Christensen et al., 2015). The researcher designed interview protocols with open-ended questions for both referrers and beneficiaries. The interview protocols were developed and guided by the research objectives. In this study, individual semi-structured interviews took the form of Beneficiary Assessment (BA), which allowed the researcher to gain insights and perspectives of the participants. During the semi-structured interviews, participants were asked to describe their encounters with the counselling services they received from their institutions, their satisfaction with the service, and proposed changes (Mertens, 2015). Using open-ended questions, the researcher did not use predetermined scales to collect data but allowed the participants to express their views and opinions freely. By doing so and aligning with the phenomenological design, the researcher could elicit more information and probe for clarity (Christensen et al., 2015). In addition, the researcher requested participants' permission to use recording devices for later transcription (Mertens, 2015). Thus, audio and Cellular Phone voice recorder were used to support data collection. According to Mertens (2015), there are innovations in data collection because of technological advances. The researcher used a laptop and external hard drives to enter transcribed data, store the collected information throughout the research process and write the research report.

3.6.2 Field Notes

Field notes are notes the researcher takes during and/or shortly after interviews (Christensen et al., 2015). The researcher captured the relevant observatory information worth noting and not catered for in the interview protocol (Creswell &

Clark, 2011). The field notes recorded the body language, cues, facial expressions, and any other observed information worth reflecting on. The field notes also served as backups to the audio recording. The field notes were reminders and guidance and helped the researcher remain organised throughout the interview process (Christensen et al., 2015; Dartey, 2016). In addition, the researcher used a reflective personal journal log during interviews to record the necessary events of the data collection process (Dartey, 2016; Kumar, 2014).

3.7 Qualitative Data Analysis

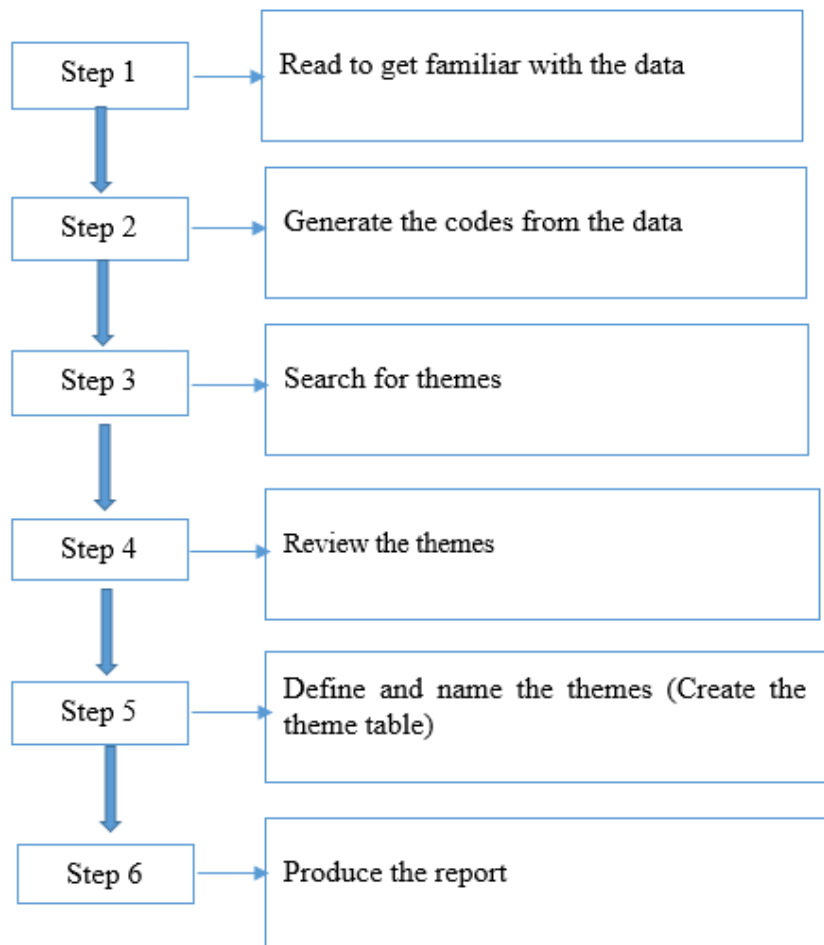
The researcher can choose from numerous qualitative data analysis models, depending on the research design and data collected (Christensen et al., 2015; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Clark, 2011; Kumar, 2014; Mertens, 2015). In qualitative research, data analysis is regarded as a sequential process that is taken step by step with multiple levels of analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It is a mysterious and complex yet captivating process of structuring and organising extensive data to deduce meanings (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

Guided by Schlossberg's theory of transition, resilience and the person-centred theory with conceptualisation from Asutn's I-E-O model, this study used thematic data analysis and Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The thematic data analysis is described as a versatile and general analysis of qualitative data into themes (Coolican, 2009). Thematic data analysis in this study allowed the researcher to interact with data and identify emerging themes. Furthermore, it offered an opportunity to see and make sense of collective and shared insights, meanings and experiences of referrers' and beneficiaries' perspectives on counselling services as an equity measure. Subsequently, the researcher found commonalities and contrasts. Finally, it allowed

the researcher to make sense of the common grounds and draw conclusions and recommendations (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Coolican, 2009). The analysis followed six steps outlined by (Braun & Clarke 2012) as follows:

3.7.1 Steps in Qualitative Data Analysis

Figure 3.14 Thematic Steps in Data Analysis



Note: Adapted (Braun & Clarke, 2012)

The diagram shows the steps employed in the qualitative data analysis. Each step is discussed in details below.

3.7.1.1 Step 1: Familiarising Yourself with the Data. In Step One, the researcher familiarises with the data to understand them (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

During the data collection and after data transcription, the researcher immersed in the data through reading and re-reading to develop comprehension of the data sets. The researcher highlighted ideas and recorded attention-grabbing points that were potential codes in the journal log. Braun and Clarke (2012) state that this stage requires active, critical, analytic thinking about what the data entails.

3.6.1.2 Step 2: Generating Initial Codes. At this stage, the researcher assigned codes to the data. A code is a brief description of what is stated in the narratives. They are the building blocks of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Kiger & Varpio, 2020). The researcher used the computer to colour code the data in this study. In addition, she ensured that each code had a semantic level of meaning, described and interpreted the data content and related to the research objectives. As recommended by Braun and Clarke (2012); Kiger and Varpio (2020), the codes were well-defined and demarcated to avoid overlaps.

3.6.1.3 Step 3: Searching for Themes. Searching for themes is an active and interactive process that allows the researcher to interact with the codes and data extracts to generate themes (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Kiger & Varpio, 2020). At this stage, the researcher reviewed the codes and identified similarities, overlaps and relations from the codes. Furthermore, she created a table with identified possible themes, subthemes, and extracts from the coded data. Indeed, some codes became themes; some codes required further active interpretation to generate themes.

3.6.1.4 Step 4: Reviewing. Themes This stage is described as a recursive process, where the identified themes are evaluated in relation to the coded data and the entire data set (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Kiger & Varpio, 2020). At this stage, the researcher reviewed the themes and compared them to the codes and extracts, checked

for overlaps, coherence and broadness in the themes and made reshuffles where necessary. The researcher ensured sufficient and meaningful data for each theme to support it.

3.6.1.5 Step 5: Defining and Naming Themes (creating the theme table). At this stage, the researcher describes each theme, focusing on what it entails, what and why it is interesting, its uniqueness and relation to other themes and the research objectives (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Kiger & Varpio, 2020). The researcher delimited the scope of what each theme included. At this stage, the researcher developed the final draft table of themes, sub-themes and the data sets represented by each theme for the research report.

3.6.1.6 Producing the Report. This stage is a continuation of analysis and interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Coolican, 2009). According to Kiger and Varpio (2020), the report must go beyond descriptions of codes and themes and present narratives that clarify concise and logical accounts. At this stage, the researcher interpreted and discussed the research findings resonating and contrasting with the reviewed literature to present the qualitative research findings according to the research objectives.

3.7.2 Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is described as a data analysis approach that tries to describe the subjective experiences and encounters of participants from their point of view as closely as possible (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). It allows researchers to interpret the data by listening to the narratives of individuals. In this study, IPA was used to interpret the qualitative data from the semi-

structured interviews to infer and draw meanings from the participants' subjective accounts and experiences of counselling services encounters.

3.8 Trustworthiness

According to Maree, (2021); Nowell et al., (2017), trustworthiness is the test a researcher can use to ensure that the research findings are worthy of attention. From a pragmatic stance, this study considered the following trustworthiness criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability as discussed below.

3.8.1 Credibility

Credibility is the confidence level placed on the research findings to establish truthfulness (Maree, 2021). It is regarded as a measure of the truthfulness, correctness and accuracy of qualitative findings (Nowell et al., 2017). Credibility was achieved through the following criteria. Firstly, the researcher used qualitative and quantitative data (mixed methods) and the research designs to collect data from varied perspectives (referrers and beneficiaries). Consequently, the qualitative and quantitative data from semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and field notes allowed triangulation. Secondly, the researcher used literature control to guide theme generating and selected multiple theoretical stances (described in Chapter Two), focusing on the research problem and objectives. Also, the researcher selected participant samples that met the study criteria, and those willing and volunteered participated in giving their truthful views. Thirdly, interviews were recorded using audio recorder devices, cellular phone voice recorder applications, a journal log and field notes for backup (as indicated on the instruments) and promptly transcribed the narratives to register the expression. Fourthly, member checking and peer debriefing were used through the supervisor and co-supervisor, experts in the field, colleagues and fellow students. It was done through

a postgraduate seminar and departmental and faculty consultation during the proposal and thesis/ dissertation phases of the research. Finally, experts in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the Directorate of Students Affairs (DSA) or Office of the Dean of Students (ODS) officials and counselling services experts were consulted to evaluate the SAP with its strategies for implementation.

3.8.2 Transferability

In qualitative research, transferability is the generalisability construct and concerns case-to-case transfer (Nowell et al., 2017). Maree (2021) argues that transferability does not involve generalised claims but directs the readers to connect the study elements and their experiences. To ensure transferability, the researcher should focus on the participants' characteristics, study context, the operational construct and the setting to which data apply (Maree, 2021). According to (Maree, 2021; Nowell et al., 2017), researchers should provide details and thick descriptions to allow readers to contextualise the data to their setting. The researcher offered thick descriptions and detailed contextualised and operational constructs definitions in this study's context. A criterion purposive sampling technique ensured participants and the environment met the study inclusion criteria.

3.8.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to readers' ability to evaluate the research process. It determines the reliability of the study and its applicability with similar participants in different contexts to yield similar findings (Gunawan et al., 2020; Maree, 2021; Nowell et al., 2017). Dependability can be demonstrated by the research design, execution, and operational data collection (Maree, 2021). The researcher achieved dependability through external audits by the supervisor and the co-supervisor to evaluate the accuracy of the findings and how they apply to the study (Dartey, 2016).

Frequent reviews keep journals of changes and different report versions to ensure data consistency and usefulness.

3.8.4 Confirmability

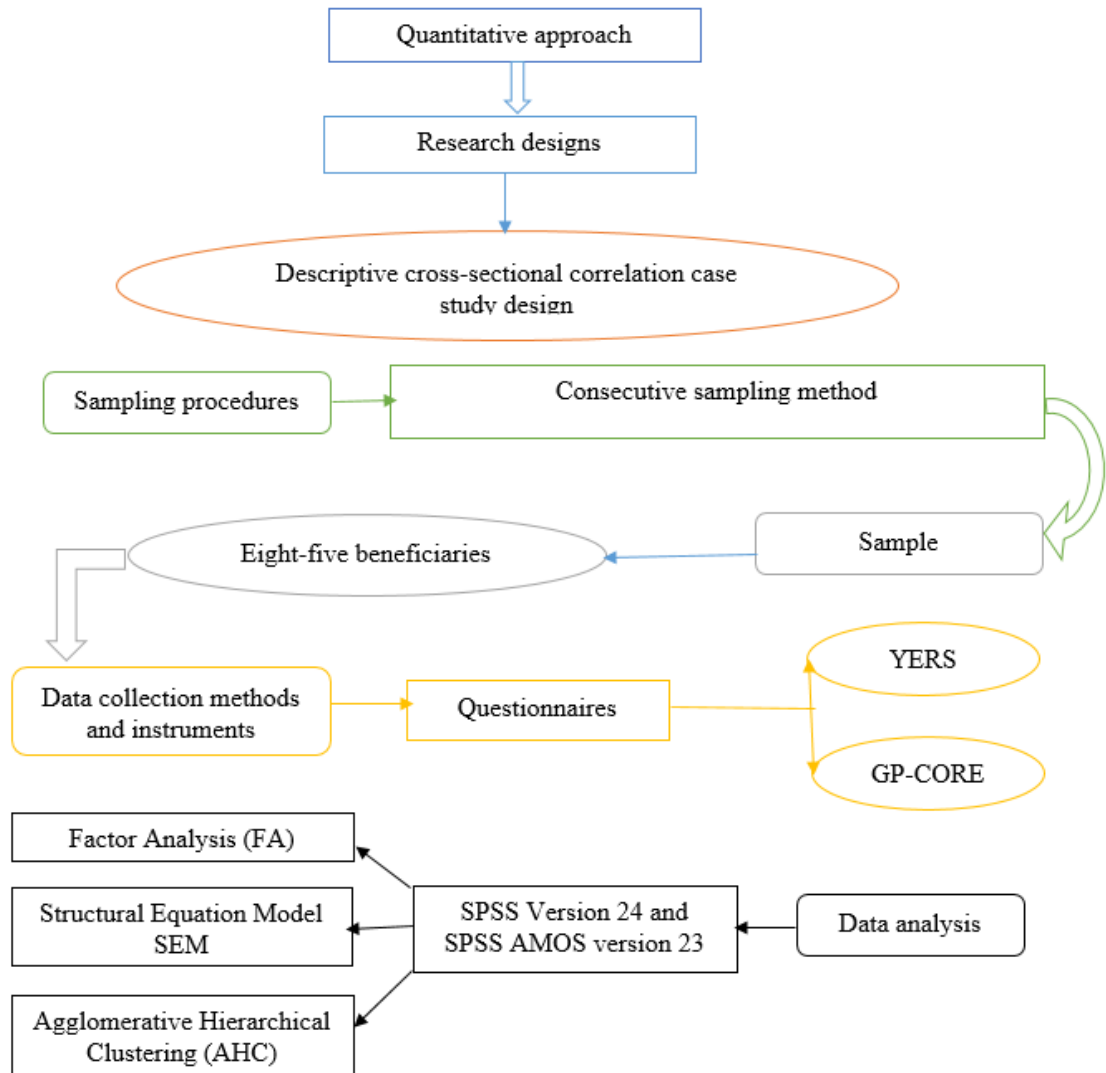
Confirmability establishes consistency between the researcher's data interpretation and the actual data (Maree, 2021; Mertens, 2015). Maree (2021) indicates that triangulation could achieve confirmability by reducing the researcher's bias. This study achieved confirmability by presenting the actual verbatim as echoed by the participants and using multiple data collection methods (semi-structured and questionnaires) to allow triangulation. Moreover, confirmability was ensured through confirmatory audits with the research supervisors, and finally, reviewing transcribed data, a journal log, the coded data and themes.

3.9 The Quantitative Research Methods Approach

The study addressed the following research objectives quantitatively to determine the beneficiaries' and referrers' satisfaction with counselling services as an equity measure, explore and describe the factors influencing the effectiveness of counselling as an equity measure and explore models to develop the Student Assistance Programme (SAP) and guidelines for implementation.

3.9.1 Quantitative Design

Figure 3.15 Summary of the Quantitative Approach Process



Note: The flow chart summarises the process followed for the quantitative approach used in this study

Diagram 3.15 summarises the quantitative approach process. It provides an overview of the research design, sampling procedure, the chosen samples, the data collection methods and instruments, and the data analysis methods used in the quantitative aspect of the current study.

Study designs for quantitative studies are classified by examining them from varied perspectives. Some designs inform the number of contacts with the study population, some to the study period and others to the nature of the study (Kumar, 2014). According to Kumar (2014); Mertens (2015), there are different designs that the researcher can select from simple descriptive, cross-sectional, before and after and longitudinal designs. A descriptive cross-sectional correlation case study was considered suitable for the current study. Descriptive studies allow the researchers to describe, analyse and interpret the conditions of the phenomenon being studied. It also allows the researcher to make comparisons or contrasts in order to discover relationships between different variables.

Furthermore, descriptive studies are more concerned with the present and allow considerations of past events and how they relate to the present situation. This study used the descriptive design to explore and describe the factors influencing the effectiveness of counselling as an equity measure leading to students' resilience and academic performance. Meanwhile, a combination of cross-sectional and correlation designs is undertaken to determine the prevalence of a phenomenon, situation, problem, attitude or issue and establish relationships between two or more variables (Kumar, 2014). In this study, the cross-sectional and correlation design was used to explore beneficiaries' satisfaction with available counselling services as an equity measure and explored and established the existing relationship between different variables or factors influencing counselling service effectiveness and students' resilience and academic performance. Moreover, cross-sections of students from different campuses in various fields and year levels were sampled (Kumar, 2014). According to Crowe et al. (2011), a case study is a design used to explore issues in a real-life context to develop an in-depth and insightful understanding. The quantitative

part of this study focused on a case of students from marginalised backgrounds in HEIs in Namibia.

3.10 Population

The population of this study comprised 251 students from indigenous minority/marginalised backgrounds in the two participating HEIs. One participating institution registered 94 students, and the second participating institution had 157 students from marginalised backgrounds on their various campuses.

3.10.1 Sampling Procedure

The sampling procedure is described as the method used to select several representatives from the population. The sampling technique influences the quality of the data and the conclusions drawn from them (Mertens, 2015). A consecutive sampling method was utilised to recruit 85 beneficiaries. Samples were obtained from student databases, obtained from the Directorate of Student Affairs of the participating institutions and campus administrators and coordinators upon request. Students' names were withheld, and only their student numbers and emails were provided. Consecutive sampling, also called total enumeration, is a non-probability sampling where the researcher includes all members of the population who meet the inclusive criteria and are conveniently accessible to participate in the study. Given that the study population was small, a total enumeration/consecutive sampling was used to sample all members of the population who met the following criterion:

- Undergraduate students from a marginalised background
- Beneficiaries of the counselling services
- Registered in any of the participating institutions
- Conveniently accessible

- Willing to participate in the study

3.10.2 Sample Size

The sample size is the number of participants from whom the researcher collects the required data (Deshwal et al., 2014). The researcher used a total population sampling of 251. Owing to the COVID-19 situation during data collection, the researcher issued different questionnaires to the social workers and counsellors at different campuses of participating HEIs for easy access to students willing to participate. The researcher also designed an online questionnaire and shared the link via email with the study population from the institutions' database. The inclusion criteria were clarified in the email and on the questionnaire. Eighty-five (85) students who met the inclusion criteria stated above and volunteered and consented to participate completed the questionnaires. Moreover, ten participants were willing to form part of a subset of qualitative semi-structured interviews described under the qualitative aspect of the study. A total of eighty-five students completed the questionnaires.

3.10.3 Data Collection Methods

Christensen et al. (2015) describe the data collection method as the technique employed by researchers to gather data for a research study physically. It is the method of collecting empirical data to address the research objectives (Christensen et al., 2015; Mertens, 2015). A questionnaire is a self-report data collection measure to be completed by the participants where they report their demographic information, opinions and perceptions (Coolican, 2009; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Creswell John & Creswell, 2018; Kumar, 2014; Mertens, 2015). In this study, empirical quantitative data were collected with pre-validated instruments to measure vulnerability, resilience processes, and outcomes. The outcomes of counselling

services were measured using the General Population-Clinical Outcome in Routine Evaluation (GP-CORE) scale. While academic progression and resilience processes were measured using the Youth Ecological-Resilience Scale (YERS).

3.11 Data Collection Instruments

3.11.1 Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation (GP-CORE)

The GP-CORE originates from the Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation system group and members of the University of Leeds. GP-CORE is extracted from the primary Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation-Outcome Measure (CORE-OM). Thus, its scoring is similar to that of the CORE-OM. The user of the GP-CORE measure rates how often they experienced the event after receiving the counselling service on a five-point scale (Sinclair et al., 2005). The measure was designed to conceptually address subjective well-being, referring to students' sense of quality of life and emotional health. In the study context, these include abilities to adjust to the university setting, improved coping, performance, increased persistence, retention, academic progress and success rates (Lorentzen et al., 2020; Obrien et al., 2012). The second domain is related to students' psychological health issues such as physical complaints, and their responses to trauma, stress, anxiety and depression. The third domain concerns the daily functioning of social and general and interpersonal relationships (Robinson et al., 2016). The fourth domain in the original CORE-OM measure is risk. However, in the GP-CORE, the risk is excluded from making the measure suitable for the non-clinical population.

Table 3.6 Items included in the GP-CORE measure

Item	Item # in GP-CORE	Item # in CORE-OM	Positive wording	Hi/Low intensity	Domain-cluster
I have felt tense anxious or nervous	1	2		Lo	Problems-anxiety
I have felt I have someone to turn to when things go wrong	2	3	+	Lo	Functioning-close
I have felt OK about myself	3	4	+	Lo	Subjective well being
I have felt able to cope when things go wrong	4	7	+	Hi	Functioning-general
I have been troubled by aches, pains or other physical symptoms	5	8		Lo	Problems-physical
I have been happy with the things I have done	6	12	+	Lo	Functioning-general
I have had difficulty getting to sleep or staying asleep	7	18		Lo	Problems-physical
I have felt warmth or affection for someone	8	19	+	Lo	Functioning-close
I have been able to do most things I needed to	9	21	+	Lo	Functioning-general
I have felt criticised by other people	10	25		Lo	Functioning-social
I have felt unhappy	11	27		Lo	Problems-depression
I have been irritable when with other people	12	29		Lo	Functioning-social
I have felt optimistic about my future	13	31	+	Lo	Subjective well being
I have achieved the things I wanted to	14	32	+	Hi	Functioning-general

Note: Adapted from (Sinclair et al., 2005)

Table 3.6 presents the items included in the GP-CORE measure. The GP-CORE measure was used in the University of Quality of Life and Learning project (UNIQoLL) that investigated student psychological well-being and associated factors. The measure has been used extensively in studies Bewick et al. (2010); Cooke et al. (2006); Robinson et al. (2016); Sinclair et al. (2005) that explore and evaluate counselling effectiveness, counselling satisfaction, psychological well-being and mental health need of student population in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The GP-CORE in this study measured the outcomes of the counselling services. It determined the beneficiaries' satisfaction with the effectiveness of the counselling services. The research question addressed by the GP-CORE drew on the person-centred and resilience theories. Eighty-five students from marginalised backgrounds who benefited from the counselling services completed the physical (paper-based) and the online Google questionnaire.

3.11.2 Youth Ecological Resilience Scale (YERS)

Another instrument used to gather empirical data for the quantitative part of this study was the Youth Ecological Resilience Scale (YERS). The YERS measure

originated from the work of Andrian van Breda and drew from the resilience, person-centred and Schlossberg theory of transition. The measure attempted to provide information on the factors influencing counselling services' effectiveness as equity measures to support students from marginalised communities. The measure is a pre-validated instrument, and with permission, it was adapted to fit the context of the current study. The YERS was initially developed and validated in South Africa for youth transiting from residential care. The measure had good factorial validity and reliability. It was deemed relevant to be applied to youth from ethnic minority backgrounds because it provides an opportunity to explore, establish and understand the relationships between the factors influencing counselling effectiveness, academic achievement and resilience. A total of eighty-five students from marginalised completed the physical and the Google questionnaires.

3.12 Validity

Validity is the ability of the research instrument and the extent to which the researchers used the empirical measure to reflect the real meaning of the concept being studied and measure what they intend to measure (Kumar, 2014). Researchers employ logic and statistical evidence to establish the validity of their instruments. Researchers relate the instrument questions with the leading research questions or objectives through the logic approaches (Kumar, 2014). Meanwhile, statistical approaches imply using information gathered through the actual instrument to calculate the correlations between the questions and the outcome variables and provide hard evidence (Kumar, 2014; Mertens, 2015). In this study, both logic and statistical approaches were used to establish content validity, face validity, construct validity and convergent validity, as discussed below:

3.12.1 Face Validity

Face validity determines whether the data collection instrument is relevant to measuring what it intends to measure. It ensures a logical link between the instrument and the leading research questions or objectives (Kumar, 2014). It is regarded as a decision mainly subjected to the researcher's feelings and judgements about the functioning of the questionnaire (Sürücü, 2020). Firstly, the researcher ensured a relationship between the questionnaires and the research objectives through literature control. Secondly, instruments were piloted, and all the necessary changes were integrated. Finally, the instruments were evaluated by the supervisor, and the statistician used the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to test the accuracy of the pre-validated instruments. The purpose was to simplify interrelated measurements and explore patterns in a set of variables (Sürücü, 2020).

3.12.2 Construct Validity

Construct validity concerns the magnitude to which data collection questionnaires measure the theoretical construct, such as concept, behaviour, and ideas it has to measure. It is based on statistical procedures to ascertain each construct's contribution to the study's total variance (Kumar, 2014; Sürücü, 2020). A pilot study was carried out, and the researcher adapted all the necessary changes. Meanwhile, a statistician conducted some statistical procedures with the data collected to establish the construct validity (Kumar, 2014; Mertens, 2015; Sürücü, 2020).

3.12.3 Content Validity

Content validity determines the extent to which the items in the instrument represent the sample of the area of focus of the research study (Mertens, 2015; Sürücü, 2020). It can be achieved by using a matrix to list the items in the instrument and the content area each item covers (Kumar, 2014; Mertens, 2015; Sürücü, 2020). In

addition, content validity can also be done by content experts in the field through alignment methodology (Mertens, 2015).

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Analysis of a moment structure (SPSS AMOS) version 23 was used to test the content validity of the instruments. In addition, the researcher used literature control to adapt pre-validate instruments (GP-CORE and the YERS) in this study. The supervisors and the expert statistician checked the data collection questionnaires for validation. Moreover, the researcher piloted the instrument before the actual data collection to ensure that it covered the content focus of the study.

3.13 Reliability

Reliability refers to the data collection instruments' dependability, consistency and predictability (Kumar, 2014). It concerns the ability of research instruments to produce consistent measures of the research study (Kumar, 2014). According to Sürücü (2020), reliability relates to the stability of the questionnaire and its consistency over time to give similar results when used at different times. Reliability is essential in ensuring the consistency of the instrument over time. Thus, researchers must ensure that data collection instruments are reliable and should yield consistent results over time. This study used standardised and pre-validated data collection instruments to ensure repeatability.

Moreover, a statistical Cronbach alpha was run to test the internal consistency of the YERS and GP-CORE. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the two instruments was .745 ranging within the acceptable value (.70 and higher), ensuring reliability. In addition, reliability was ensured through the piloting of the instrument to determine if the instrument could yield reliable results.

3.14 Quantitative Data Analysis

The data were prepared, summarised, and analysed by the researcher with the assistance of a statistician. The data were analysed using SPSS version 24 and SPSS AMOS Version 23 to carry out Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to determine the beneficiaries' satisfaction and establish an effective model for counselling and equity towards improving the students' resilience and academic performance. A hierarchical clustering algorithm based on agglomerative clustering was also used to iteratively group the cases based on their proximity. The data analysis was conducted immediately after data entry and checking missing data. The researcher's choice of data analysis techniques was based on the level of measurement methods used to achieve the research objectives. Meanwhile, Schlossberg's theory of transition, resilience theory, person-centred theory and Austin's I-E-O model guided the quantitative data analysis.

3.14.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Pallant's (2013) Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) method examined the scales' factorial structure. Exploratory Factor Analysis was used to identify the latent factors and to reduce a large set of observed variables to a smaller number of factors. There are three basic assumptions underlying EFA. These include the absolute sample size, the coefficients in the correlation matrix, and the sampling adequacy. Computing the variability in scores (variance) for any given measures (or variables) is essential. Notably, a variable with no variance would have a communality of one, while a variable that shares nothing with other variables would have a communality of 0' (Hair et al., 2013). The study used communality, an output from SPSS EFA analysis calculated from factor loading in a model containing multiple constructs.

Communality was used to assess the adequacy of extraction, together with Eigenvalues greater than ($>$) 1 and the Scree plot. In this study, the researcher used the Principal Axis Factor (PAF) analysis technique to extract the minimum set of variables accounting for the maximum variance in the data. The Varimax Rotation method was utilised to reduce the number of items and extract factors. The factor loadings equal to or above 0.30 are considered practically significant (Hair et al., 2013). Items with Kaiser Mayor Olkin (KMO) measures of sampling adequacy greater than 0.60 suggest satisfactory factorability. Bartlett's Test of sphericity examined whether variables in the population are uncorrelated.

3.14.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Confirmatory factor analysis is like exploratory factor analysis in some respects, but philosophically they are quite different. With the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), the researcher specifies the number of factors that exist within a set of variables, and which factor each variable will load highly on before results can be computed. Therefore, the technique does not assign variables to factors, instead, the researcher must be able to make this assignment before any results can be obtained. The study used SPSS AMOS version 23 software to determine the construct validity of the research measures. It also involved the determination of the model fit for the structural model.

Using the iteration method suggested by Gaskin (2017) and model fit measure cut-off criterion from (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The model fit iterations were carried out using the Gaskin and Lim (2016) AMOS Model fit measures Plugins. SPSS AMOS plugins include the "Pattern Matrix Model Builder" (PMMB) and "Master Validity" (MV) versions. Using the SPSS AMOS plugin, researchers have produced a structural model of the EFA varimax rotated matrix. The validity and model fit measures were

tested using the MV and MFM plugins (Gaskin & Lim, 2016). If the validation measures are not acceptable, they must use the recommendations from the output to improve the model fit. The CFA model Diagrams are presented in Chapter 5, together with their model fit measures. If a researcher's model fits poorly, they must use the recommendations from the output to improve it. One way to improve the fit is to use the modification indices estimations for each parameter.

3.14.3 Structural Equation Model (SEM)

Structural Equation Modelling is a model testing design requiring all concepts relevant to the model to be measured and relationships among these concepts examined (Grove et al., 2015; Polit & Beck, 2010).

According to Polit and Beck (2010), the SEM proceeds in two phases, with the first phase corresponding to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA); and this phase tests the measurement model. The Gaskin and Lim (2016) procedure for CFA also includes structural equation modelling; the only difference for SEM is the modification index which focuses on regression weights and not covariance.

This study used the Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Model procedure because it provided a more comprehensive multivariate analysis by combining multiple regression, path analysis, factor analysis and time series analysis in one procedure. While iterations for CFA are more focused on the covariant relationships and modification indices used to improve the model. The SEM yields information about the hypothesised causal parameters, which are path coefficients presented as beta weights (Polit & Beck, 2010). These coefficients indicate the expected change in the latent endogenous variable caused by a change in the latent causal variable. The Structural Equation Model (SEM) yields information on the

significance of individual paths. The Structural Equation Model considers interactions, nonlinearities, correlated independents, and measurement error. The overall fit of the causal model to the research data can be tested by using statistics such as the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI).

3.14.4 Agglomerative Hierarchical Clustering (AHC)

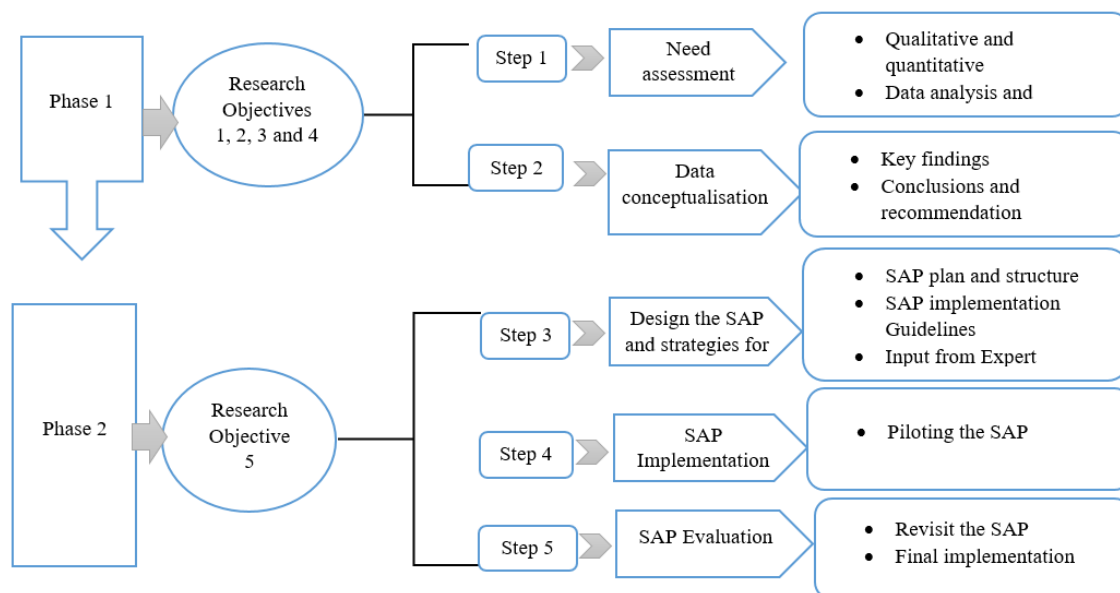
AHC is an iterative classification method that determines the similarities and dissimilarities between the variables to be grouped. The hierarchical clustering algorithm was based on the agglomerative clustering table. Furthermore, a dendrogram represented the hierarchical clustering of factors that emerged from findings based on their similarity or dissimilarity. It was used to iteratively group the cases based on their proximity until they were in a single cluster. A dendrogram is developed to show the progressive grouping of the data and presents the idea of a suitable number of classes into which the data can be grouped.

3.15 Phase Two Student Assistance Programme (SAP) Development

The Student Assistance Programme was inspired by the need to improve student support services, reinforce HEIs' commitments to equitable access and ensure the overall university experience and progress for all students. The development of the programme followed two phases with different steps and actions. Phase One was a need assessment covering chapters one up to five of the study and addressed the first four research objectives stipulated in chapter one. Qualitative and quantitative data were convergent collected, analysed, discussed, and conceptualised to form the basis for SAP development. Phase Two of the study addressed research objective five, which concerned the SAP development and implementation strategies. The findings,

conclusions and recommendations drawn from Phase One informed the development of SAP. The process is summarised in a diagram below:

Figure 3.16 Student Assistance Programme (SAP) Development Process



Note: Adapted from (Dartey, 2016)

Figure 3.16 outline the development process of the SAP. The programme development adopted SAP guidelines outlined in the SAP guidebooks (Borsato & Alvos, 2015; Wright, 2013). The guidebooks offer processes, strategies, tools, and relevant resources for educational institutions implementing evidence-based SAP to support students from marginalised communities in higher education. It may also apply to students with other additional needs that may lead to their exclusion from education or hinder their success. Moreover, SAP was framed around Austin’s IEO and the DEI models discussed in Chapter Two of this study.

The SAP emphasises early detection, intervention, and preventing barriers to academic success (Taylor & Baker, 2012). In most cases, the SAP in some Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is mainly designed to assist educational leaders,

educators and youth officers (Student Assistance Center at Prevent, n.d.; Wright, 2013). The current programme would be helpful to Student Affairs and Services, particularly the Department or Directorate of Student Affairs in some institutions or the Office of the Dean of Students in others. It is also useful to the academic, support staff and peers with added responsibilities and interest in supporting students and promoting inclusive education using the equity measure.

Steps four and five of Phase Two (programme implementation and evaluation) were not part of the current study. Still, they would be carried out in the future as a community engagement responsibility of the researcher. The present study only designed the programme and its implementation strategies. The SAP comprises two components, the SAP itself and the strategies for implementation discussed below:

3.15.1 Structure of SAP

The programme's structure encompasses the introduction, purpose, objectives, principles, and values. Moreover, it also includes the regulatory frameworks, the services spheres (clinical and non-clinical), the actual services/programs and the key stakeholders (internal, external and core team) in each service domain (Vincent et al., 2019). The SAP is tailored to address marginalised students' support needs. It is a multicultural sensitive programme established on the principles of autonomy and voluntary participation, justice, confidentiality and continuous support and caring. More information is to be availed to ensure timely and easy access by students in need.

3.15.2 SAP Strategies for Implementation

The current programme adapted strategies recommended by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the University of Caroline (Department of Psychology) (Vincent et al. 2019). It comprises eight

strategies: institutional policy and guidelines development, stakeholder identification, staff development, programme awareness, environment and accessibility procedures, direct services to students, an external network for cooperation and collaboration and monitoring continuous support (Vincent et al., 2019).

3.16 Procedure

The researcher followed the University of Namibia Postgraduate Studies and Higher Degrees regulations, procedures and ethical clearance protocols. Furthermore, the researcher sought permission from the two participating HEIs and the author of the standardised questionnaires to ensure that the study adhered to the ethical research standards. The study used a convergent mixed-method design, meaning both quantitative and qualitative data were concurrently collected in the same phase of the research process. As discussed earlier, the researcher embarked on the data collection process after the pilot study. Firstly, the researcher adapted all the recommended changes from the pilot study and finalised all data collection instruments. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic at the time of data collection, the researcher designed an online questionnaire to reach the participants who could not complete the hard copy questionnaire.

Secondly, the researcher distributed soft copies of the questionnaire via emails and hard copies to the counselling teams through the office of the Dean of Students and the Directorate of Student Affairs of the participating HEIs. In the meantime, the researcher organised face-to-face semi-structured interviews with referrers and beneficiaries. Upon completing the questionnaire, the researcher contacted those who were willing to participate in the semi-structured interviews. Interviews were recorded with the consent of participants. After every interview session, the researcher transcribed the audio and interacted with the data for comprehension. Due to the

COVID-19 pandemic, the data collection took (12 months) longer than expected, as most participants preferred face-to-face interviews.

3.17 Pilot Study

A pilot study is defined by Lowe (2019) as a preliminary study carried out on a small scale before the actual study is conducted. It is further referred to as an experimental, exploratory test to prepare for the main study (Lowe, 2019). Similarly, Cadete (2017) terms the pilot study as a small-scale, preliminary study examining whether the main study's critical sections would be feasible.

3.17.1 Purpose of the Pilot Study

In this study, the pilot was a small-scale trial run intended to evaluate the research process' feasibility, predict the main research sample size, and determine the resources and data management (Cadete, 2017). As discussed above, the pilot study was also carried out to establish face, construct and content validity and reliability in the quantitative part of the study (Lowe, 2019). Moreover, it helped establish the trustworthiness of the study's qualitative part. Furthermore, possible limitations were identified, and where necessary, adjustments were made. It resembles the process envisioned for the main study.

3.17.2 Pilot Study Methodology

The pilot study population was students from marginalised backgrounds and the lecturers (referrers) who referred students for counselling services. Three referrers and two students from one of the Windhoek-based Campuses of one participating Higher Education institution (HIEs) were purposefully selected for a semi-structured interview. In addition, ten students were chosen conveniently (from the selected pilot

study campus) to complete the questionnaires. The participants of the pilot study were not included in the main study.

3.17.3 Challenges Addressed in the Research Instruments

3.17.3.1 Questionnaires. The researcher piloted the two adopted standardised instruments, the Clinical Outcome Routine Evaluation for the general population (CORE-GP) and the Youth Ecological Resilience scale (YERS), to explore counselling effectiveness as an equity measure. Only a few alterations were made to the questionnaires. Firstly, the introductory part of the questionnaire was removed because similar information was included on the consent form. Secondly, the pilot study revealed the repetition of the biological data on the instruments. In response, the questionnaires were combined to become one document and the biological information was written as the first section of the questionnaire. Finally, the researcher added the region of origin and the number of sessions attended in the biological information section.

3.17.3.2 Interview Protocols. The piloting of instruments necessitated the following changes to both the beneficiaries' and referrers' interview protocols: First, the numbering of sub-questions was re-aligned to the research objectives. Second, a few changes were integrated into the interview questions. The alterations, additions, and removal ensured credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability. The changes are presented in the table below:

Table 3.7 Alterations to the Interview Instruments (Protocols)

Interview Protocols	Changed questions (Added or removed)	Justification
Beneficiaries	1.1 Why did you need counselling? (removed)	Most were not open to answering it. Thus, it was replaced with, describe your experience regarding the counselling service you received.
	1.2 Where did you seek counselling and why? (added)	Most students chose to approach specific individuals?
	1.3 How many counselling sessions have you had? (removed)	Captured in the biographic information
	3.1 In your opinion, how can counselling be improved to meet your needs. (added)	Views on how counselling services could be improved to meet their needs.
Referrers	3.4 Why do you think the counselling service offered to students was effective? (removed)	Yielded similar information with another question
	What are your opinions on counselling contributions to: 2.2 equity; 2.3 resilience, and 2.4 academic progress	

Table 3.7 presents the alterations recommended on the interview protocols after piloting.

3.18 Pilot Study Qualitative Findings

3.18.1 Identified Themes

Table 3.8 Identified Themes from the Pilot Data

Main themes	Sub-themes
1. Perceived Needs and Counselling Effectiveness	1.1 Physiological Needs
	1.2 Economic Needs
	1.3 Academic Needs
	1.4 Psychological Needs
2. Beneficiaries and Referrers Satisfaction with Counselling Effectiveness	2.1 Satisfaction
	2.2 Dissatisfaction
3. Factors Influencing Counselling Effectiveness	3.1 Counsellor Characteristics
	3.2 Referrers' Characteristics
	3.3 Student Factors
	3.4 Cultural Factors
	3.5 Institutional Factors

3.18.1.1 Perceived Needs and Counselling Effectiveness. Findings from the participants revealed varied categories of students' needs that necessitated referring students for counselling support. They pointed to physiological needs such as food, shelter, accommodation, and clothing/toiletries. Participants also pointed to economic needs and expressed how such needs affected students' academic work. Most indicated that they referred students for counselling services but were less effective in addressing some of their needs. As narrated below:

Some come here on an empty stomach while some sleep in the hostel without meals. Counselling does not cater to these needs. At one point, a campaign went on for campus staff to sponsor items to support the students from marginalised.

We are prepared to accommodate this number (referring to students from marginalised backgrounds); this kind of plan of how many students to expect is not there; they are aware they will have these students but do not know where they will be accommodated.

The students need to survive; this has been a problem; students are here, the academic work has commenced, but finance is not coming forth to cater for all their basic needs.

She was sleeping in class, did not hand in her tasks, not submitting her work.

The statements above reveal the motivating factors that led to student referrals and counselling seeking. They stressed that attending classes on an empty stomach and a lack of accommodation negatively impacted their academic work. Many studies indicated the roles and effectiveness of counselling services in addressing students' economic, social, psychological and academic needs (Getachew, 2020; Kamunyu, 2016; Nkechi et al., 2017). However, the pilot study reveals limitations on counselling effectiveness in addressing the primary (funds) and secondary (basic needs). Findings contrast with those of Johnson (2015), who cautions that HEIs should meet students' basic needs to enhance inclusion and equity. Findings indicate unsustainable efforts to help students with food items. The utterance echoed delays in funding which seem to be the primary cause of students' distress leading to a lack of basic needs, which translates into students' psychological needs and leads to poor performance and dropout.

3.17.1.2 Perceived Satisfaction and Dissatisfactions. The findings from the semi-interviews revealed that although participants indicated dissatisfaction with counselling effectiveness on some aspects of students' needs, they also stated that they were satisfied in some areas that were addressed through the counselling needs. Participants expressed satisfaction with improved performance and student retention for the fortunate referred or sought counselling services. Similar sentiments were echoed by (Ciobanu, 2013; Belskaya et al. 2016; Wulz et al., 2018) that counselling services positively impact students' academic performance and maximise retention. In addition, they also expressed satisfaction with how students stood together to advocate for their needs by seeking counselling and other support services from different offices. *Although it comes too late, you will see that they start performing and attending classes and progress after referrals.*

Participants also demonstrated dissatisfaction with the delays of student funds, delays in distressed students' identification, and a lack of awareness and knowledge. Some participants expressed a lack of knowledge in dealing with students' issues *You do not know what to do in some situations.*

You will be surprised if you ask some students; they do not know where the social worker's office is on campus.

In some participants' views, the sources of challenges are not addressed, which implies that counselling is lacking in addressing the root cause of students' distress. *We need to get to the source. Let us diagnose the source.*

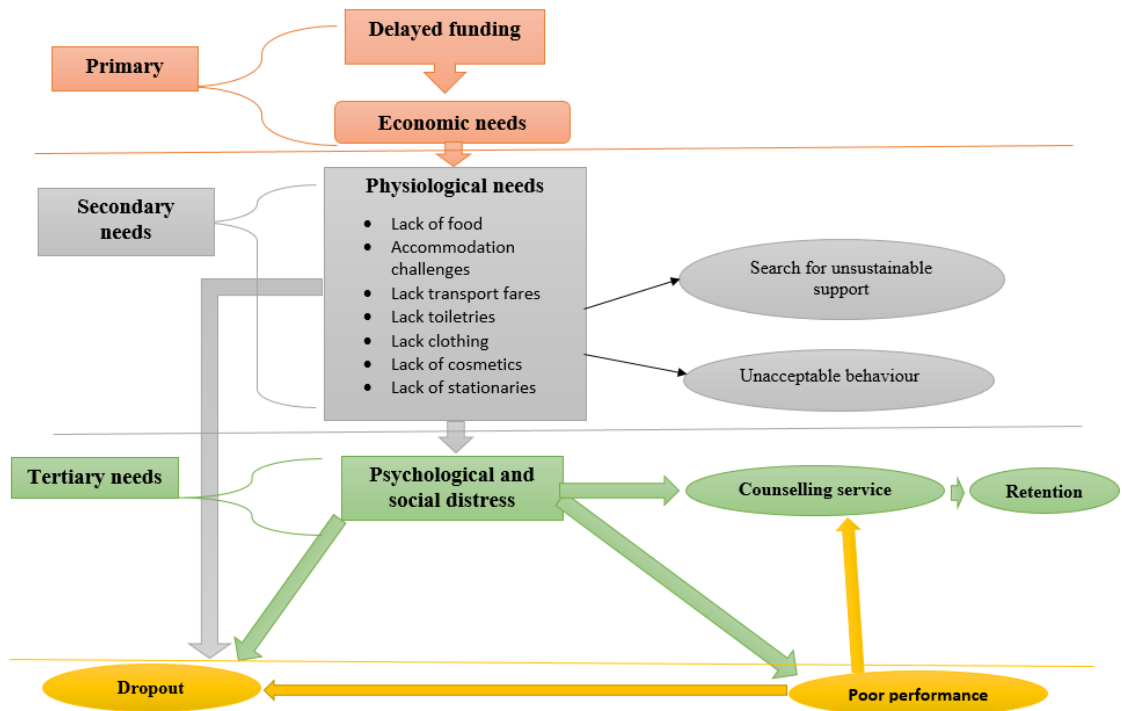
3.17.1.3 Factors Influencing Counselling Effectiveness. Participants echoed several factors influencing counselling effectiveness. Findings pointed to individual students' characteristics. Some students resist speaking out about their problems

impacting counselling effectiveness *the students resist to say out their problems freely; they need to open up, they pretend to be happy.* This could imply that the methodologies used to identify the needs and encourage students to reach out for support do not work for this group of students. The students' cultures could also be a factor. They might not be used to talking to a stranger when they have problems. The traditional setup is totally different. Hence, a need for SAP to cater for the support needs of students from marginalised backgrounds.

Musika and Bukaliya (2015) affirm that counsellors' characteristics, interpersonal relationships, empathy, warmth, positive regard, genuineness, acceptance, respectfulness, and trustworthiness are the key to counselling effectiveness. Participants pointed to counsellors' and referrers' characteristics *We need people with good skills, focused on serving others with the right attitudes, flexible enough to accommodate all.*

Sometimes students confine on lecturers or seek help somewhere else instead of going for counselling. It is a pity to learn that students do not always seek counselling from appropriate offices. Not approaching the right office defeats the purpose of counselling services for students, making the services ineffective. As mentioned above, the lack of awareness and counsellor characteristics make students confine to their lecturers instead of seeking counselling services from appropriate offices.

Figure 3. 17 Pilot Findings Summary



The diagram 3.17 summarises the findings from the pilot study.

The pilot study classified students' counselling needs as primary, secondary and tertiary. Moreover, the pilot study found that the primary cause of student distress stems from fund payment delays and a lack of basic needs. In addition, the pilot study revealed that counselling effectively addresses psychological distress but has limitations in addressing funding and basic needs.

In addition, the pilot study revealed dissatisfaction resulting from delays in student funds, delays in identification and referrals, and a lack of awareness, a lack of knowledge and feedback. However, despite some dissatisfaction, the pilot study's findings expressed satisfaction with improved academic performance and students' retention after counselling intervention. Moreover, the pilot study highlighted that students' personalities, attitudes and willingness hinder counselling effectiveness as

students resist revealing their challenges. The pilot study found that characteristics affect counselling effectiveness depending on the counsellors' and referrers' nature, attitudes, and willingness. The findings also revealed that most students were at liberty to approach their lecturers for support rather than seek help from the social workers. Further, the findings evidenced a lack of awareness among students and lecturers about the available counselling services. Moreover, the pilot study concludes that the extent to which counselling is effective depends on the students' needs (primary, secondary or tertiary), the type and promptness of the interventions, the characteristics of referrers and counsellors and the students' willingness and openness in expressing their needs.

3.19 Pilot Study Quantitative Findings. The statistical tests were not carried out during the piloting for the following reasons: Firstly, the questionnaires were standardised and pre-validated. Secondly, sufficient responses are required to accurately determine the significance of the relationships between variables from the statistical tests. Consequently, the limited population and sampled questionnaires could not yield significant statistical results. However, the statistician ensured the validity and reliability of the questionnaires through Cronbach's alpha and factor analysis.

3.20 Ethical Considerations

People seek counselling services for several reasons; some issues could be sensitive to some individuals. Due to the study's sensitivity in some cases, research ethics were the most crucial aspect of the study. Research ethics are the moral values of professional conduct that aim to prevent risks to the participants (Bless et al., 2013; Kumar, 2014). Research ethics also avert research abuses and help researchers take

responsibility as ethical academics (Bless et al., 2013). The following ethical principles were considered:

3.20.1 Ethical Review

The ethical review was necessary to ensure adherence to ethical standards (Bless et al., 2013). The researcher sought proposal approval through the various committees established by the University of Namibia, with all anticipated ethical concerns clarified. Upon proposal approval, the researcher was issued an Ethical Clearance Certificate from decentralised ethics committee. Moreover, the researcher sought permission from the postgraduate studies to conduct research from the participating HEIs and consent from individual participants.

3.20.2 Autonomy (Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation)

The study recognised that participants have the right to understand the purpose of the study, how it affects them, and the risks and benefits of participation (Claire, 2013). Thus, participation in this study was voluntary. All necessary information regarding the purpose of the study was clarified to the participants, and it was made clear that participants could choose to withdraw from participation at any point. A consent form was designed and approved by the university committees. Participants had to sign the consent form to participate but still had the right to withdraw and decline at any time.

3.20.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Confidentiality is an ethical principle that protects the sensitive and personal information of the participants, while anonymity is concerned with avoiding linking information to participants (Claire, 2013; Kumar, 2014; Maree, 2021; Mertens, 2015). In this study, confidentiality and anonymity were adhered to by not divulging and

mentioning the actual names of the participants. Participants were assigned numbers for identification only known by the researcher, e.g. (LP1 for lecturer/referrers, SP1 for students/beneficiaries, HEI 1 and HEI 2). Data recordings and transcriptions were kept safely in passworded external hard drives and only accessible to the researcher for study purposes. Moreover, the printed materials, such as hard copies of questionnaires, field notes, and personal journal logs, were kept in lockable cabinets accessible to the researcher only. Data are kept safe until the final dissertation is published. After the publication of the dissertation, the soft copies are to be deleted, and the hard documents shredded and discarded.

3.21 Summary

This chapter discussed the methodological processes of the entire study. It outlined the mixed-methods research approaches used in Phase One. It described the specific designs, methods, and techniques used to collect and analyse the qualitative and quantitative data to reach the identified themes. Furthermore, the chapter outlined the process of the development of the SAP. The chapter also presented the pilot study methodology, findings from the pilot study, challenges and how they were addressed. Finally, the chapter outlined all the ethical considerations observed throughout the entire study.

Chapter Four

4. Presentation and Discussion of Findings

The study explored and described the perceived effectiveness of counselling services as an equity measure to support students from marginalised backgrounds in higher education institutions from the beneficiaries' and the referrers' perspectives. Thus, this chapter presents and discusses the qualitative findings derived from semi-structured interviews with the study participants (beneficiaries of the counselling services and lecturers as referrers of students for counselling services) as described in Chapter Three. The narratives from the participants' interviews are presented under the emerged themes and sub-themes. In addition, the qualitative narratives are discussed in relation to the reviewed literature. The chapter begins with demographic information of the participants. Furthermore, the findings are discussed under three main themes: the perceived students' needs, beneficiaries' and referrers' satisfaction and dissatisfactions, and the factors influencing the effectiveness of counselling services. Themes and sub-themes that emerged from the narratives of the participants are outlined in the table below:

Table 4.9 Qualitative Research Questions/Objectives

Questions and Objectives	Research method approach	Research design	Data collection methods	Sampling	Participants	Method of data analysis
<p>Question 1: How do beneficiaries and referrers describe their experiences with counselling services' effectiveness as an equity measure? (QUAL)</p> <p>Objective 1: Explore and describe the experiences of beneficiaries and referrers on the effectiveness of counselling services, an equity measure.</p>	Qualitative	Exploratory / Phenomenological and Contextual	Semi-structured interviews	Purposive criterion/convenient	Referrers and Beneficiaries	Thematic and phenomenological analysis
<p>Question 2: How do beneficiaries and referrers describe their satisfaction with counselling services as an equity measure? (QUAL).</p> <p>Objective 2: Determine the beneficiaries' and referrers' satisfaction with counselling services as an equity measure.</p>	Qualitative	Exploratory /Phenomenological/Contextual	Semi-structured interviews	Purposive criterion/convenient	Referrers and Beneficiaries	Thematic and phenomenological analysis

<p>Question 3: What factors influence the effectiveness of counselling as an equity measure leading to students' resilience and academic performance? (QUAL)</p> <p>Objective 3: Determine the factors influencing the effectiveness of counselling as an equity measure.</p>	Qualitative	Exploratory /Phenomenological/Contextual	Semi-structured interviews	Purposive criterion/convenient	Referrers and Beneficiaries	Thematic and phenomenological analysis
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Table 4. 9 outlines the qualitative research questions, their designs, data collection methods, sampling procedures and data analysis methods.

4.1. Demographic Information

4.1.1 Demographic Information of the Referrers as Participants

Referrer interviews comprised eleven participants who referred students for counselling services from the two participating institutions of higher education in Namibia. Their characteristics are shown in the table below:

Table 4.10 Referrer Demographic Information

Lecturer code	Interviews	Age	Gender	Working Experience
LP1	INTERVIEW 1	55	F	20+
LP2	INTERVIEW 2	41	M	5
LP3	INTERVIEW 3	41	F	8
LP4	INTERVIEW 4	30	F	6
LP5	INTERVIEW 5	50	F	12
LP6	INTERVIEW 6	46	F	20
LP7	INTERVIEW 7	54	F	14
LP8	INTERVIEW 8	38	F	8
LP9	INTERVIEW 9	59	F	22
LP10	INTERVIEW 10	47	F	15
LP11	INTERVIEW 11	41	M	11

Table 4.11 indicates that participants were between thirty to fifty-nine years old with lecturing experience ranging from five to twenty-two years. Most of them were above forty years old, and only two were in their thirties. In addition, seven had more than ten years of lecturing experience. Only four had below ten years of lecturing

experience. The table further indicates that more females referred students for counselling services than males.

4.1.2 Demographic Information of the Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries' interviews consisted of six students from marginalised backgrounds who benefited from the counselling service. Their characteristics are shown in the table below:

Table 4.11 Beneficiaries' demographic information

Code	INTERVIEWS	Age	Gender	Year of study
SP1	INTERVIEW 1	22	F	3
SP2	INTERVIEW 2	21	F	3
SP3	INTERVIEW 3	24	M	2
SP4	INTERVIEW 4	26	F	2
SP5	INTERVIEW 5	26	M	4
SP6	INTERVIEW 6	24	M	4

Table 4.12 shows that there were six interviews conducted with the counselling beneficiaries who were between twenty-one and twenty-six years old. Participants were from different study year groups (years two, three and four).

Table 4.12 Qualitative Design Themes

Questions	1. How do beneficiaries and referrers describe their experiences with counselling services' effectiveness as an equity measure? (QUAL)	2. How do beneficiaries and referrers describe their satisfaction with counselling services as an equity measure? (QUAL).	3. What factors influence the effectiveness of counselling as an equity measure leading to students' resilience and academic performance?
Themes	1. Perceived students' counselling needs	2. Referrers' and beneficiaries' satisfaction encounters	3. Factors influencing the effectiveness of counselling as an equity measure
Sub-themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ anxiety ▪ suicidal ▪ depression ▪ mentally confused ▪ home social situation ▪ hope and motivation ▪ Academic needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjective well-being <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delayed funding ▪ Delayed identification, referrers and interventions ▪ The COVID-19 situation ▪ Functioning-general <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Academic performance ▪ Students' retention, completion and graduation rates ▪ Functional -close 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cultural Beliefs, norms, customs and values ▪ Responses to referrals and counselling services ▪ Fear of revealing confidential information ▪ Students' expectations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ academic self-efficacy ▪ study skill ▪ language ▪ academic writing ▪ adapting ▪ Physiological needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ accommodation ▪ food insecurity ▪ clothing and toiletries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Self-advocacy and help-seeking for financial and basic needs ▪ Peer Support ▪ Lack of knowledge and skills ▪ Lack of awareness ▪ Lack of clear referrals, policies and guidelines ▪ Students masses in lecture venues ▪ Lack of representation and mediation ▪ Lack of monitoring ▪ Lack of feedback ▪ Unsustainable solutions ▪ Students' resistance • Functional -social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drop out ▪ Engage in inappropriate behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interactional relationship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Counselling skills and expertise ▪ Counsellors personality ▪ Counsellors' attitudes towards students ▪ Counsellors workloads ▪ Students' relationships with referrers ▪ Institutional environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Location of the counselling office ▪ Visibility and accessibility of counselling services ▪ policy development and implementation
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4.2 Objective/question 1: The Experiences of Beneficiaries and Referrers on the Effectiveness of Counselling Services as Equity Measures.

As indicated by Ibrahim (2012), thematic analysis allows the researcher to use deductive and inductive approaches to data coding. Thus, this study used a combination of coding approaches. Some codes emerged through data analysis, supplementing the predetermined themes from the research objectives. The narratives were presented as original excerpts of participants. Furthermore, the narratives were analysed, coded, and categorised to generate themes linked to the interview data driven by the research objectives.

Questions: Under this objective, participants were asked to:

1. Share their experiences on the counselling services
2. Describe the situations before and after counselling referrals.

Positive and negative experiences emerged from participants' responses about counselling services' effectiveness. From the coded data, four themes with various sub-themes emerged and are presented below:

Figure 4.18 Perceived Students' Counselling Needs

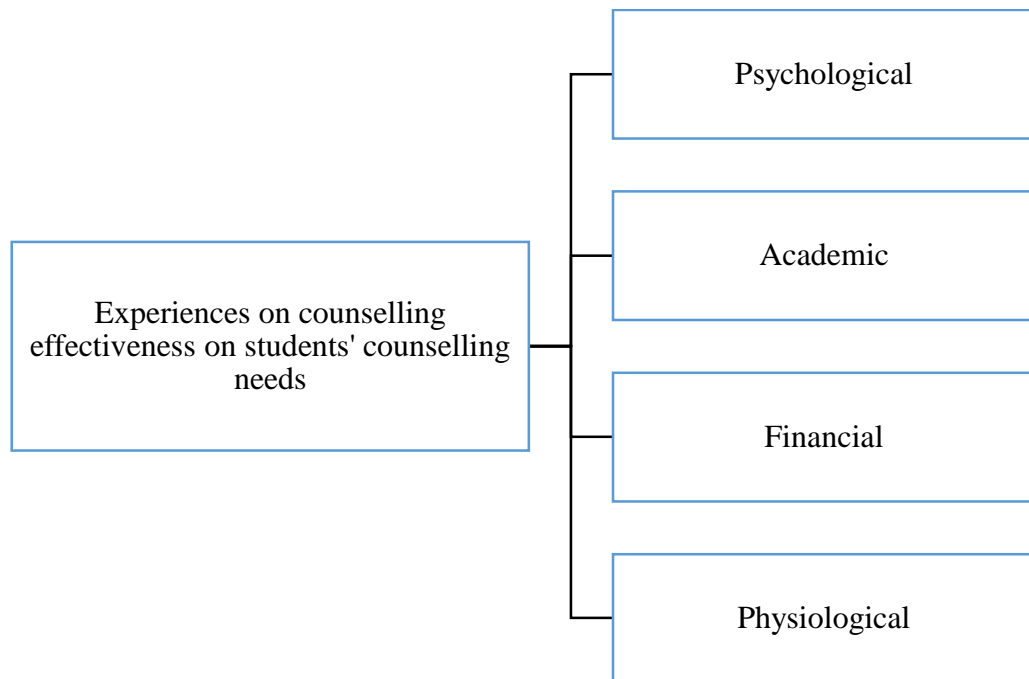


Figure 4.18 indicates the themes discussed under the research/objective number one. The discussions revolved around the counselling needs to be classified into four categories, including but not limited to psychological, academic, financial, social, and physiological counselling needs.

4.2.1 Psychological Counselling Needs

Under this theme, participants who referred students for counselling services discussed their reasons for doing so. Additionally, students who benefited from the counselling services shared their counselling needs and how they perceived the support they received. The participants recognized that many students, especially those from marginalized backgrounds, face numerous challenges during their studies. Some of these challenges are interconnected. For example, depression can lead to suicidal thoughts, which can, in turn, cause other problems. The fortunate students are those who are

identified and referred for counselling support, as it helps them manage their studies. Unfortunately, many students who are experiencing distress go unnoticed and eventually drop out of university. The sub-categories discussed under this theme include anxiety, suicide, depression, mental confusion, abuse, loss of hope, and lack of motivation. These sub-categories will now be presented and discussed in detail.

4.2.1.1 Anxiety. Three referrers disclosed that certain students are plagued by anxiety, which stems from financial limitations and academic demands. A few referrers mentioned:

Their body language says a lot, and you see their anxiety when talking to them.

You can tell the absence of their consciousness (LP2).

Before the referral, anxiety went far beyond (LP3).

Sometimes, students are anxious toward examinations and related academic activities, thus struggling to cope with their academic demands (LP5).

Meanwhile, one beneficiary had this to say:

When exams are approaching, students suffer from examination anxiety when coming to the exam. (SP6).

The statements above indicate that students face hardships despite having access to on-campus counselling services. Participants identified academic pressure, such as tests and exams, as the main source of anxiety among students. Similar findings from Matliwala (2017); BACP (2017) support the notion that academic pressure is the primary cause of student anxiety, requiring counselling intervention in higher education institutions (HEIs). It is assumed that student counselling services are responsible for helping students manage

academic pressure, as (Brown, 2018; Matliwala, 2017) reported. However, despite the availability of counselling services, the narratives indicate that most students struggle with unrecognized anxiety. It appears that support is only provided after students have already endured suffering rather than being used proactively to address the root causes of anxiety. Based on the accounts, this study assumes that counselling services are more reactive than proactive in preventing prolonged distress leading to anxiety. These findings raise questions about how unnoticed students endure hardships in HEIs. Some scholars, including Bernhardsdóttir and Vilhjálmsón (2013); Broglia et al. (2018); Connell et al. (2007); Ekore et al. (2016); Flatt (2013); Holmes and Silvestri (2016) describe counselling services as outreach programs that aim to prevent, identify, and address students' psychological needs, helping them cope and enjoy their university experience. The findings suggest a need for timely and effective interventions to prevent the causes of anxiety among students and support them in overcoming their challenges. In support of the need for effective support interventions, the resilience theory emphasises that how individuals deal with adversity is more important than the adversity itself (Yates et al., 2015).

4.2.1.2 Suicidal Ideation. Although not mentioned by many, three participants reported suicidal threats among students referred for counselling support. These are some of their statements:

The student threatened to commit suicide. I want to commit suicide; I do not want to continue (LP2).

She talked about suicide; death is just going to come; whether I die now or next week, I will die anyway.” She was rebellious against the norm that society expected from her (LP8).

There are students with different relationship issues; some think of committing suicide (SP3).

Despite counselling services, the findings reveal a lack of timely intervention programmes that encourage timely help-seeking and coping skills to avert life-threatening conditions among students. Person-centred theory emphasises the goals of interventions to facilitate trust and promote honesty in the process without fear of being judged by the service provider (Hayes, 2015). Fear of being judged prolongs suffering as it deters timely self-seeking behaviour. Participants expressed hopelessness and helplessness among students with suicidal thoughts. Similarly, Brunner et al. (2014); Getachew (2020) note suicide ideation among HEI students. Participants resonated with multiple concealed distressing factors stemming from academic pressure, financial constraints and love relationships. Issues related to love relationship problems are not easy to talk about openly. Ultimately, the findings signify the urgency of early identification and intervention and concur with BACP (2017), which reported that most students were referred for counselling due to suicidal threats. Unfortunately, students had to endure suffering undetected, which pushed them to suicidal thoughts. These findings revealed limitations on counselling promptness in counteracting distress among students.

4.2.1.3 Depression. Depression was another condition that referrers had to deal with among students. They described states of devastation experienced by students as a result of depression. The following narratives serve to validate these findings:

Depression strained her physically; the situation affected her physical appearance and academic work (LP2).

The student was looking down and depressed (LP3).

She will come at the end of the semester to talk about registration. I struggled to enrol myself in this subject. You try to tell the student that things are not working like that, and she is in total confusion and lost (LP10).

I felt lost and depressed because there was too much to deal with, school work and family issues, which I cannot talk about Ms.(SP1).

You cannot concentrate; money means happiness. Mm when you are not happy, you keep thinking about the money problems and get frustrated and depressed (SP4).

Although students who have benefited from counselling services have not provided much detail about their depressive situations, it is clear that there is a growing need for more students to receive help to prevent depression. Likewise, reports of depression among students have been increasing BACP (2017); Francis and Horn (2016) in the USA, mainly due to academic pressure and relationships with family and friends. Bernhardsdóttir and Vilhjálmsón (2013) and Ekore et al. (2016) mention that depression has detrimental effects on academic work.

The findings suggest that there are students who require interventions beyond counselling services. In addition to referring students for counselling, referrers did not provide any further support for managing depression. The study indicates that a lack of preparedness and readiness to face academic life, prolonged suffering, academic pressure,

love relationships, financial constraints, and being distant from family support are distressing factors that contribute to student depression. As a result, the alarming rate of depression among students highlights the need for timely and effective counselling intervention programs, as suggested by (IASAS, 2020; UNESCO, 2009).

4.2.1.4 Mental Confusion. It became evident from the accounts of five participants that they encountered mentally confused students who required counselling support. Here are a few excerpts from their statements:

Most students that I referred were at the stage of mental breakdown (LP2).

The student was here physically but not mentally (LP3).

She is now struggling with mental healing, and she lives with suicidal thoughts (LP7).

It was a mental problem because she talked about things that did not make sense. I took her to the ODS (Office of the Dean of Students) several times, and nothing happened (LP10).

She was confused and looked mentally disturbed (LP11).

It is disheartening to hear about the difficult situations that affect students' career aspirations. Some of these situations are consistent with the prolonged distress and delayed interventions mentioned earlier in this study. The findings have identified some unsuccessful efforts. This aligns with Schlossberg's theory of transition, which emphasizes the need for ongoing support during the "moving through" transition stage. This support is crucial in helping students develop resilience to overcome challenges. The findings support Flatt's (2013) suggestions for researching to gain a deeper understanding

of mental illness from diverse cultural perspectives and the help-seeking behaviour exhibited by students from different cultures.

4.2.1.5 Domestic Abuse. Referrers highlighted various hardships related to family and home situations when referring students for counselling support. Some of the issues discussed included family problems arising from marital issues and child-rearing. The participants expressed that some students hesitate to disclose their home situations, making counselling interventions less effective. Additionally, referrers identified a lack of family support systems and instances of sibling rivalry that negatively impact students' well-being, relationships, and social connections. The study's participants also reported instances of abuse by their caregivers and expressed a need for more parental guidance and sustainable interventions to address their problems. The following narratives further support these findings:

Some students have been abused by family members who took advantage of their situations (LP1).

The student had many family problems that she refused to disclose, which affected her study. You could see she needed help (LP2).

It is not primarily because of academic pressure but social... some were sexually abused. Such a student I immediately refer (LP6).

I had a student whose oldest sister would verbally abuse her. She would tell the sister, I spent so much money on you; you should just get married and pop out children (LP7). Our parents believe the government supports us; when we tell them they think we are lying, that is it. (SP2).

We young people have problems with boyfriends and family matters (SP3).

Despite promises and efforts to achieve equitable access, the study revealed that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have fallen short in meeting students' basic needs, resulting in distress among students. Students who experience abuse, maltreatment, evictions, or are forced into additional roles that make them vulnerable to domestic abuse, such as babysitting, serving as house helpers, or being coerced into unplanned marriages, face a higher risk of poor academic performance and dropping out. The study also addresses the impact of family problems on students' academic lives.

Previous research by Francis and Horn (2017); Joan et al. (2021), and Matliwala (2017) explored this topic. Francis and Horn (2017) emphasise that social problems, especially those arising from unhealthy relationships with friends and family, are common in higher education institutions (HEIs). However, they affirm that students who receive personal and social counselling have reported higher self-rated academic, social, and emotional adjustment, even when experiencing domestic abuse. In many cases, these students demonstrate resilience in overcoming adversities such as domestic abuse.

4.2.1.6 Loss of Hope and Motivation. Three participants in the study, acting as referrers, disclosed the positive effects of counselling services on marginalised students. They shared that they referred deeply impacted students who were on the brink of losing hope in certain instances, but counselling services restored their hope. Similarly, four participants who received support expressed satisfaction and resilience. Some students mentioned that the counselling support motivated them to persevere despite their difficulties. The satisfaction with the counselling services emphasised the importance of

student support. However, their stories also highlighted the negative impact of delayed interventions, which caused some students to lose hope. Here are their statements:

We need to provide services that offer motivation and encouragement to these students; some lose hope due to different situations. I mostly referred them to regain hope (LP1).

In most cases, what I picked through talking or interaction, most of them were at the edge of losing hope (LP2).

You find that when they come to discuss their problems with you, they are at a point where they think their challenges have reached a dead end, in the sense that when you talk to them, they have no hope of finding solutions to their issues or problems (LP11).

We get the kind of motivation we sometimes need (SP1).

She will talk and advise you not to give up on life when you go there. It gave me hope (SP2).

Counselling motivates students when they feel down. Sometimes, after receiving counselling, they pay attention to their schoolwork (SP3).

Counselling calmed me; I developed a positive attitude and perceived the problem as temporary. They told me to think about my future and the opportunity I have. They also reminded me about the situation back at home and the hope my parents/family had for me, this gave me courage, and every time I think of these words (SP4).

The study discovered that delayed interventions and prolonged distress have a demotivating effect on students, leading them to lose hope in their ability to continue and complete their studies. The findings also demonstrated that counselling support serves as a motivator and restores hope among students experiencing distress. Additionally, participants emphasised that counselling services encourage students to see beyond their current circumstances, foster a positive mindset, enable them to appreciate their opportunities and maintain focus on their future pursuits.

The findings concur with Habib (2019); Matliwala (2017), who maintain that effective counselling enhances academic motivation. Matliwala (2017) argues that effective counselling services can assist students in finding relaxation, maintaining focus on their academic objectives, and effectively managing their emotions. A notable issue is that some students suffer in silence and do not receive any attention or counselling recommendations, especially those who are unaware of or reluctant to seek support. As a result, the study argues that the high rates of student dropout among marginalised populations occur because these students lose hope due to delayed access to intervention and unresolved distressing factors. Drawing from Person-centered theory, timely support interventions encourage students to tap into their inner resources, rediscover positive self-concepts, and enhance their resilience to cope with distress. Despite the perceived benefits of counselling services, providing timely access to intervention programs with long-term solutions can enhance the effectiveness of counselling as an equitable measure.

4.2.2 Academic Counselling Needs

Participants further revealed the motivating factors for referring students from marginalised backgrounds for counselling support services. They pointed out multiple

academic distress requiring academic counselling interventions. The subcategories under this theme are presented and discussed below.

4.2.2.1 Academic Self-Efficacy. Academic self-efficacy is described as students' belief in achieving educational goals at the university level (Sharma & Nasa, 2014). Referrers confirm that some students enter higher education with a strong sense of self-efficacy but face various challenges that disrupt their balance. These challenges include poor performance and observing the struggles and limited progress of their peers from similar backgrounds. Additionally, factors such as poverty, lack of preparation from high school, low self-esteem, adjusting to a new environment and making new friends, peer pressure, academic expectations, and a lack of timely support contribute to this imbalance. On the other hand, two students who sought counselling services reported that despite feeling discouraged, their visit to the counselling offices helped them refocus and regain confidence in their academic abilities. The following narratives provide further evidence to support these findings.

I think marginalised students in our institutions are mostly neglected; yes, they have access to education, but do we support them in class to gain confidence in learning? (LP2.)

Are we giving them support to succeed despite access to education? (LP4).

Some are being affected by failing, especially those who never encountered it before. When they fail, they quickly lose focus (LP6).

Many come from different backgrounds; some come here with positive minds and determination. At the end of the day, if these students are not supported, they are kicked off-balance (LP7).

Remember, students find themselves in a new setting with new friends, and some are stricken by poverty or hunger. They develop negative perceptions. Maybe they are overwhelmed by lots of work that they were unprepared for by the university and high school. And the more they fail, the more they feel left out, so access becomes questionable (LP9).

Each time I failed my test, I lost courage, then I went to the Social worker, told her my problem, and encouraged me to try harder (SP1).

Her words helped me work hard for my tests and assignments, and I passed them very well (SP3).

The findings confirm Khairani et al. (2019) who stated that there are transitional factors that can be detrimental to students' self-efficacy. Additionally, the findings reveal that when interventions are delayed, students can lose focus and experience poor academic performance. Gallop and Bastien (2016) argue that self-efficacy is critical to achieving academic success. The study identified several factors that can disrupt students' self-efficacy, such as academic workload, poor performance, and hunger. Furthermore, it highlighted the lack of tailored academic support programs that can meet the needs of students and help them succeed in their academic pursuits, including coping skills. The third assumption of Austin's I-E-O model and the person-centred theory emphasises the importance of quantifying and qualifying students' involvement in the intervention processes. The extent to which students are involved determines their ability to uncover their inner strengths and overcome challenges in their new environment. Additionally, the model highlights the significance of custom-made continuous and culturally sensitive interventions to address individuals' specific needs. While participants expressed some

satisfaction with the outcome of counselling services, the study also exposed unfavorable factors that prompted a need for new approaches to ensure equitable access and find sustainable solutions.

4.2.2.2 Study Skills and Methods. Study skills and methods emerged as a prominent concern among the study participants. The referrers reported that they referred students to counselling services due to insufficient study skills and techniques. Moreover, referrers highlighted that students from marginalised backgrounds often encounter difficulties in study skills, methods, and time management, ultimately hindering their academic performance. Participants acknowledged the significance of study skills and recognised their pivotal role in achieving academic success. Nonetheless, it is essential to note that concerns were expressed during the discussions regarding the adequacy of counselling services in addressing students' study skills needs. The following excerpts illustrate some of the viewpoints expressed by the participants:

So, we refer them to get help on study methods (LP1).

We also refer students who perform poorly; they assist them with study skills (LP6).

We refer them for support with study skills. (LP7).

They are using the first tests as the yardstick to measure performance for the early alert referrals. But several factors can contribute to students failing that first test; it might be not attending classes, might be that the student was not in the right mindset, and is not using appropriate study methods applicable to university (LP8).

We, as lecturers, are entrusted with the students; we need to assist. If you see them suffering, struggling, not knowing study methods, and not knowing how to answer questions, I am not sure to what extent counsellors assist students with study techniques (LP8).

Students need time management and study skills like revising, studying, and preparing for the tests and examinations (LP9).

The critical findings from the narratives confirmed that students lacked the skills to adequately prepare for assessment activities, effectively plan, organise, manage their time, revise their academic work, and answer assessment questions at the university level. Similarly, the importance of academic counselling was emphasised by (Ashipala-Hako, 2014; Belskaya et al., 2016; IASAS, 2020; Kishore, 2014; Maupa, 2020; Thuryrajah et al., 2017; UNESCO, 2009). Although most participants indicated referring students for counselling support, the findings did not reveal the specific counselling interventions offered or their impact on student's academic performance. While one participant felt obligated to provide study skills to students, others referred them to counselling services. This situation suggests a lack of structured support programs, coordination, and collaboration between lecturers and counselling teams. The findings also revealed limitations in designating roles and responsibilities among student support team members in terms of providing support to students. Iyeke et al. (2018) validate the need for lecturers to collaborate and supplement the counselling team when necessary, asserting that students' academic success depends on their relationship with lecturers and support teams.

Moreover, the results indicate a lack of proactivity and delays in counselling interventions. The findings revealed that most referrals were made after students had

already failed an assessment. Participants called for insights and timely interventions regarding the key factors contributing to poor performance, such as a lack of study skills and ineffective time management. Furthermore, there is a need to clarify the roles of subject experts and the psychological team in addressing the diverse needs of all students.

4.2.2.3 Academic Performance and Progress. Referrers and beneficiaries of counselling services within this specific category exhibited similarities. Participants expressed concerns about poor academic performance, even among students with high potential, as well as slow progress and failure to complete their studies. However, they noted that counselling services positively impacted academic performance and progress. Referrers believed that psychological support helped alleviate students' mental distress, thereby improving their overall well-being and mental health, leading to better academic performance. They also emphasised that the effectiveness of counselling depended on individual students' willingness to engage with the counselling team.

Three referrers confirmed that students who displayed a positive, open attitude and were receptive to support experienced improvements and progress. The findings indicated that a significant number of students remained stuck in their courses and programs, exceeding the expected duration before eventually dropping out. Additionally, the findings revealed concerns about the role of counselling services in supporting students struggling with poorly achieved modules. Nonetheless, referrers who referred students who demonstrated perseverance and progress expressed satisfaction with the impact of counselling services on their academic success. These were the narratives provided by the participants:

Some marginalised students performed poorly, especially those I referred. Yes, they positively responded to the referral to the ODS for counselling (LP1).

If students' psychological well-being improves, they can positively influence their academic performance and progress (LP6).

When we talk about counselling, we say this includes everything. If the student is open and willing to receive counselling, losing them will be lower, and there can be an 80% or more success rate. It does help with academic progress (LP7).

The challenge, as I indicated, was that she was not performing well, but she had the potential. Her behaviour changed, and this affected her academic performance (LP9).

Most students are at-risk of dropping out because they are stuck in the system. They are not performing, cannot move on (LP10).

Another business management student came in in 2017, and the student could not just finish (LP11).

The support we got helped some of us to excel in our academic work, only that it came a bit late (SP1).

Some completed their studies after they went for counselling, while most of us passed our modules/and performed better (SP2).

Counselling is considered an equity measure because it facilitates students' successful navigation of academic programs (Ciobanu, 2013). The current study has identified that certain students encounter difficulties in specific programs and require

support to advance academically. IASAS (2020); UNESCO (2009) recommend academic counselling to guide students who face personal, social, and academic challenges, empowering them to become more resourceful and achieve academic success. Additionally, researchers such as Flatt (2013); Broglia et al. (2018); Francis and Horn (2017); Weber et al. (2018) have confirmed that counselling addresses factors that impede academic progress.

Based on these findings, it is evident that inclusive intervention programs are necessary to promote academic success among students from marginalised backgrounds. Echoing with the strategy factor of the 4s in Schlossberg's theory of transition, the strategy factor highlights three significant coping strategies students need during the "Moving through" phase. Firstly, students need to modify the problem. Secondly, they need to interpret the situation in order to understand and develop a positive outlook. Finally, they need to manage and contain the adversity they face while adjusting to their new roles and routines in their environment. The study also revealed that individuals referring students for counselling believed there were existing programs to address poor academic performance and anticipated solutions from counselling services. However, it remained unclear which specific programs were available to meet these needs.

4.2.2.4 Languages Barriers. Language emerged as a significant theme in academic counselling needs at the university. Both referrers and students identified linguistic challenges as a barrier to success in higher education. Referrers reported referring students with English language difficulties for counselling support. Marginalised groups who did not meet the standard admission criteria for higher education institutions (HEIs) have access opportunities through the Indigenous group category, as stated in the

(University Student Recruitment and Admission policy, 2021). Referrers also mentioned that some students who entered through the marginalised students' admission category had lower English grades, which resulted in insufficient English skills for higher education learning.

Referrers in the study expressed concerns about the imbalance in language proficiency among students and called for an early intervention language program to address this gap. They noted limitations in both spoken and written forms of language, which made it challenging for students to express their thoughts orally and in writing. The following excerpts provide further evidence supporting these findings:

Our students cannot express themselves. We need a language person who can help the students to speak English; they never developed to express themselves critically (LP3).

The language is not at the same level. Most marginalised students enter with fewer points and lower grades in English (LP4).

What are we doing to help them? Are we offering them equity by teaching them with those who have grade 12 and better grades in English? (LP4).

I referred students for counselling once I identified that the student required assistance, particularly when I noticed a language barrier, then the early alert will help (LP7).

Some marginalised students who get opportunities in higher education have backlogs, such as understanding English. They could have passed grade 12 very well but had an F in English and language issues (LP8).

They have the basics already, but these basics could be advanced to bring them to an academic level where they can operate confidently. Modules are content-packed. Students require language to cope with the content (LP9).

The biggest problem that I picked is language; if one is in a group where they feel limited because of the language, they feel left out and shy away from expressing or participating in discussions (LP9).

One would say start with language because students cannot express themselves in most cases (LP10).

English lecturers to create or work out a small programme where these students can get special media and help with the spoken and written language plus confidence (LP11).

I always remember my first year. You want to ask people around, but you are afraid, and my English is somehow not so good (SP1).

Most students and staff are unfriendly, and if you come there speaking your broken English, they look at you like you are crazy (SP3).

English Language is the primary means of communication and instruction in higher education institutions in Namibia and many other English-speaking countries. However, it is important to recognise that English is often the third or fourth language for approximately 50% of the student population in Namibian higher education institutions.

According to McNally and Mwewa (2018), students with limited proficiency in English are at a greater risk of experiencing academic difficulties in these institutions. Their research revealed that a lack of English language skills is one of the main factors contributing to poor academic performance among students.

The Government of the Republic of Namibia (2018) acknowledges that there are linguistically marginalised populations in the country. The students' limited ability to articulate themselves in English hinders their interactions with peers, lecturers, counsellors, and various administrative offices within the institutions. Additionally, English is the language through which students submit their academic assignments. The lack of proficiency in English not only limits their ability to seek support but also affects their self-concept, confidence, and sense of belonging. Similar concerns were raised by Sweet et al. (2020), who highlighted that poor English proficiency undermines students' self-efficacy, confidence, and self-esteem, putting them at risk of dropping out of higher education institutions. The participants in the study also questioned whether less privileged students have equitable access to support, as a lack of language proficiency negatively impacts their academic progress. They emphasised the importance of early language interventions provided by language experts. The participants suggested that more should be done to equip students from marginalised backgrounds with the necessary academic language skills to effectively engage with the course content. While various English courses are available, such as English for Academic Purposes, English for General Communication, and English Communication and Study Skills, the findings suggest that there may be limitations in addressing the language needs of students from marginalized

backgrounds. Therefore, the participants called for the development of specialised programmes tailored to meet the specific language requirements of these students.

4.2.2.5 Challenges to Academic Writing Skills. The findings showed that students' lack of academic writing skills was a major reason for referring them to counselling intervention. This subtheme came from the narratives of referrers who took part in the study. They emphasised the need for early writing programs to better prepare students for academic work. Even though courses are available, such as English for Academic Purposes, participants expressed difficulties with academic referencing and using formal language in writing assignments, especially for students from marginalised backgrounds. They reported that some students made it to their final year without fully grasping the art of academic writing. As a result, poor performance could be attributed to a lack of English writing proficiency. Four participants shared their thoughts on this matter:

The students cannot write academically. Some are in the fourth year going to exit, some aspire to do masters and cannot write (LP3).

They need to up their games to write correct English. We need bridging courses or programmes to show them what university students expect in academic writing (LP4).

We have to start with how to reference and write assignments academically. They are not acquainted with academic writing (LP7).

Introducing them to academic writing as early as the first year is necessary, informal versus formal writing and university versus high school writing (LP8).

The study revealed that poor academic writing has a negative impact on student's academic performance and progress. It also suggests that students from marginalised backgrounds lack the necessary academic writing skills due to unpreparedness for the university's academic standards. This study supports the International Association of Counseling Services: Standards for University and College Counselling Services (2011) in emphasising the importance of counselling support in helping students develop their academic skills and achieve their educational and future goals. Many higher education institutions (HEIs) offer academic counselling programs, including academic development workshops and annual events focused on study skills, note-taking, and writing skills. However, it is unclear how effective these programs are. Although students are referred for academic writing assistance, the study did not provide information on the type of intervention used or its effectiveness in addressing academic writing challenges. As a result, the lack of evaluation of these programs raises doubts about institutions' commitment to ensuring inclusion and equal access for all students. Tsikati (2018) argues that evaluating counselling services is crucial for identifying strengths and weaknesses and making necessary improvements.

4.2.2.6 Challenges in Adapting and Coping with Academic Demands.

Participants who referred students highlighted multiple challenges that required counselling services interventions for students from marginalised backgrounds. The participants revealed several insights about adapting and coping. These insights include difficulties adjusting to academic work, adapting to the university culture, fitting in with new peer groups, comprehending academic materials, dealing with program demands,

handling assessment tasks, coping with academic loads and demands, and managing class activities.

Additionally, participants pointed out limited involvement in academic activities, poor quality academic work, insufficient attention, lack of focus on academic work, and not feeling proud to be part of the program. Although the participants did not elaborate on the possible causes of these challenges, they emphasised the significance of effective student support in addressing some of these challenges. The participants shared these narratives.

We mainly referred students for counselling to get help to adjust to academic work and cope with the academic demands. Some get to be acquainted as products of the programme and adapt at the end of the day (LP1).

What informed my decision to refer them for counselling was their poor involvement, poor quality academic work and level of paying attention to the academic work (LP2).

I referred many students because they were not coping with a group situation, not fitting in the group, and not dealing with academic demands, not just academic demands but being able to cope with the material (LP5).

We have such loaded semesters; programmes are all loaded, and sometimes our students suffer. You know we expect our students to be at the university level once registered and that they must get along with the program and run with it. It is not always possible for some students (LP6).

How do they cope with academic and in-class tasks if they had to deal with financial issues? They pay less attention to the little snap/things you give them to do and more to their personal relations (LP7).

Most of the students who were referred were struggling to cope with examinations, tests because they have no time to prepare. They have all those kinds of sufferings to handle (LP8).

Coping and adjusting to the academic environment were identified as crucial concerns. Most referrers indicated that students face multiple challenges that impact their ability to cope with the various academic demands. These findings reveal shortcomings in the existing student support, such as student orientation programs. Many students seem to miss out on programs intended to facilitate a smooth transition and orientation into the university setting. Furthermore, difficulties in coping and adjusting to the university setting suggest that intervention programs may be implemented at the wrong time. The findings also showed a lack of awareness about the available counselling services and an unwelcoming environment, leading students to feel forms of discrimination. Several researchers Agi and Eric (2014); Biasi et al. (2017); Escapa and Julià (2018); Estrella and Lundberg (2006); Getachew (2020); IASAS (2020); Pinto (2019); Weber et al. (2018) emphasise the significance of coping and adapting in academia. It is further reported that adapting and coping with academic demands, workloads, study programs, classroom activities, and modules are crucial to students' academic success (Pinto, 2019; Weber et al., 2018). Issues of being a minority also make students feel inferior and, in some situations, find it challenging to fit in groups, cope, and build relationships with peers and lecturers if they are not supported to develop a sense of belonging. These findings support

Thiemm and Dasgupta (2022), who suggested that being a minority on campus puts students at risk of social isolation and diminishes their sense of belonging. Although referrers emphasised the importance of referring students for counselling support, they expressed less satisfaction with the effectiveness of counselling in addressing academic challenges, leaving room to doubt the contribution of counselling to equity of outcomes because those who fail to cope remain at risk of dropping out of their programs.

4.2.3 Financial Counselling Needs

Financial constraints emerged as the leading cause of distress among students, as indicated by the narratives of counselling beneficiaries who participated in the study. Three sub-themes within this category are outlined below:

4.2.3.1 Struggles with the Tuition Fees. Tuition fees were mentioned by five referrers and three beneficiaries of the counselling services. Referrers indicated that most students referred for counselling had financial issues, specifically related to the payment of tuition fees. The participants expressed dissatisfaction with the funders' failure to fulfil their financial commitments as promised, as well as a lack of coordination between the funding office and the higher education institutions (HEIs). It was disheartening to learn that institutions refused to register students when their tuition fees were not settled. Additionally, beneficiaries revealed that the fund does not cover the costs of failed modules. Referrers emphasise that financial constraints are the primary causes of students' distress. Similarly, students assert they have experienced difficult times due to financial limitations. The statements below outline what the participants stated:

Many students have financial problems in our setting, so I would say that those are some of the categories of the students we refer for counselling (LP1).

We referred them but, to be honest, I cannot tell what happens there. Specifically, students expected the office to settle their tuition on time, but it was a dream each year (LP2).

They struggle between the university and the office responsible for demanding their yearly financial allocations (LP3).

The university does not allow them to register before the office settles their tuition. These indeed put the student in an awkward situation. It could be better if ODS could have a small package where you can assist students with finance (LP6).

I have observed some students who come here stressed, especially if there is money involved, financial issue is the big problem. I have someone from the OvaHimba community who came to me and said, (sir, I was blocked and I could not be allowed register). The student had financial assistance from the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare. Unfortunately, the Ministry did not settle her previous year's tuition fees. The university could not help her to register until the Ministry settles the money owed. She owed the institution more than 50 thousand Namibia Dollar (LP11).

If you have failed courses, you have to pay for them by yourself. That is why many students are still trying to finish their modules to graduate, but it is hard to find the money (SP3).

Some senior students did not get their diplomas/ degrees because of outstanding fees. How can they look for jobs? Some still struggle to find money to pay and do the failed modules. Also, you will not be allowed to register for the new semester if the previous module is not settled. You have to suffer and struggle (SP4).

We came so hopefully but what we go through is a lot. When you want to register, and you are told, you owe the university (SP5).

Narratives from the participants highlighted a lack of commitment to student funding from the responsible office. Participants emphasized that students experience hardship while waiting for the office to resolve their tuition fees. Additionally, participants described the situation as tormenting and stressful because they were denied registration until they paid the outstanding fees. Furthermore, students are expected to cover the costs of failed modules. The narratives revealed the reasons for limited academic progress, prolonged study durations, and high dropout rates among students from marginalized backgrounds. Similarly, Archer et al. (2017); Brown (2018); Browne et al. (2017); Joan et al. (2021); Shankar et al. (2013); Wulz et al. (2018) support the notion that financial challenges are one of the factors that disturb students in their efforts to cope with academic demands.

Meanwhile, Joan et al. (2021) emphasize that financial constraints hinder most students in HEIs from adapting to the university's social, physical, and academic demands. Many students live under pressure due to unpaid tuition and a fear of failing. Student support programs are governed by specific principles and have conditions attached to them. Failing any of the modules has implications for their financial assistance. The NSFAP policy states that loan beneficiaries should submit their academic transcripts to NSFAP (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2005). Participants strongly called for counselling interventions to alleviate students' financial situation. Although students were referred for counselling in this regard, there was little hope for a sustainable solution to the challenges. The narratives also raised questions about the effectiveness of counselling

as an equity measure to support students from marginalised backgrounds. A lack of sustainable solutions to address financial constraints among students in HEIs can be attributed to three classifications of transitions according to Schlossberg: anticipated, unanticipated, and non-event. Students anticipate receiving on-going support, such as financial aid, but they are often unprepared for the conditions attached to these fundings (DeVilbiss, 2014; Anderson et al., 2012; Powers, 2010).

4.2.3.2 Transport challenges. According to the referrers, students frequently approach them with concerns about taxi fares. They struggle to afford taxi fares to commute to and from campus for their classes. Referrers and students who participated in the study expressed similar sentiments, noting that many students face financial difficulties throughout the year due to delays in receiving their allocated funds. Consequently, some students miss classes entirely, while others who are determined to attend their classes are forced to endure long walks. Additionally, students emphasised the financial burden and hardships they experience while trying to obtain their funds. This is what they stated:

Students come with concerns about taxi fares to go to town to inquire about their funds and go to university and go back home every day. Who is responsible for such costs? (LP2).

The students need to have money for transport every day (LP6).

The 7h30 lesson, the fact that some students are coming late, is not because of choice, some walk long distances because they have financial challenges to afford taxi (LP10).

If you ask her, “why did you dodge the class”? She would tell you that “I had no taxi money to come to school (LP11).

We were lost, in the campus and the city. We did not have money to catch a taxi every time (SP4).

One thing is, we suffer, others need taxi money if not in the hostel, this makes them miss classes and fail (SP5).

Students' financial struggles are the main reasons for their distress, poor performance, lack of progress, and dropping out (Francis & Horn, 2016; Shankar et al., 2013). Students who couldn't secure accommodation in the hostels had to commute daily between home and the university. As a result, they missed classes at the beginning of the year. Moreover, instead of investing time adjusting to campus life, they wasted their early days dealing with payment issues for their funds. The experiences of these students support Thiemm and Dasgupta (2022), who emphasise that students from marginalised backgrounds have limited knowledge and information on accessing scholarships and financial aid. Based on the participants' narratives, it is clear that students face difficulties in accessing higher education despite promises of funding. In addition, IASAS, (2020); UNESCO (2009) called for counselling services to help guide students facing challenges and empower them to succeed in their academic journey.

Although referrers referred students for counselling support, students relied on counselling for solutions to their financial matters. The findings revealed minimal solutions in this regard. A lack of solutions implies continued distress among needy students, which inhibits equity. The findings also exposed the limitations of counselling

support officers in coordinating students' funds. Findings concur with Avery et al. (2014), who found that counsellors lack knowledge of students' financial aid procedures. Avery et al. (2014) also maintain that counsellors' limited training in financial aid procedures affects their ability to effectively solve students' financial needs. At the same time, Johnson (2015) alludes to many challenges facing students despite financial assistance. The delays in support intervention cause students to encounter distress, which is tantamount to exclusion and inequitable access. Consequently, this study confirms that students from marginalised backgrounds residing off-campus struggle with transport due to delayed funds and counselling services do not effectively address the root cause of the problem.

4.2.3.3 Pocket Money/Upkeep Challenges. This theme emerged from the narratives of three referrers and three beneficiaries who participated in the study. The beneficiaries expressed dissatisfaction with the unfulfilled financial promises made by the government, while the referrers described the financial limitations they faced in supporting students' day-to-day needs. The participants echoed the students' anticipation of receiving their monthly stipend for their upkeep. Furthermore, the participants highlighted the delays in accessing the funds, which left students unable to sustain themselves and meet their academic needs that required funding. The lecturers who referred students also emphasized that the lack of funds caused distress and hindered students' progress. Here are the statements they made:

The government made a promise for their upkeep throughout the year. Funding has been a problem. Students are here, the academic work has commenced, but

finance is not coming. Where will they get study materials and stationeries (LP3)?

Most students have economic problems; they have no money to sustain their daily upkeep (LP4).

What hinders the marginalised students' progress is finance. They depend on the fund. They are adults and need pocket money. These stress the students so much” (LP5).

The agreement is to receive a monthly allowance for upkeeping, which they always delay. It is supposed to be monthly, but they do not keep up with this promise (SP1).

Students from the marginalised background, the office supposed to cater for us with everything including pocket money (SP2).

Our parents were assured that the GRN would care for all our needs while at UNAM (SP3). They told our parents that they would cover all and give us monthly allowances. Now they are not doing that. Our parents do not believe us when we tell them about our suffering because of their promises (SP3).

Accessing higher education presents its own set of challenges and demands, but financial delays only exacerbate the situation for students. As Belskaya et al. (2016) highlight, counselling service providers have the responsibility to facilitate a smooth transition, enhance coping mechanisms, and help students adapt to their new environment. Therefore, the effectiveness of their interventions in addressing student issues is crucial. The narratives from students clearly demonstrate the struggle they face in accessing their funds, often having to endure multiple visits to the funding office without any immediate

solutions. It is well-known that students from marginalised backgrounds often come from economically disadvantaged families. Unfortunately, the promises of government financial assistance have left parents ill-prepared to support their children in higher education institutions (HEIs). The findings indicate that students from marginalised backgrounds continue to suffer despite receiving financial aid. This aligns with Johnson (2015) assertion that students from low-income backgrounds face numerous challenges even with financial assistance. The prolonged delays in student fund payments reveal a neglectful attitude, lack of accountability, and poor planning from HEIs and the government. Moreover, it highlights a lack of coordination and insensitivity towards the needs of marginalised students. These findings contradict the calls from organisations such as IASAS (2020); UNESCO (2009) to ensure the availability of funds for students in need. In Namibia's case, although funding frameworks exist, their management leaves much to be desired.

4.2.3.4 Financial Literacy. One referrer and three beneficiaries have highlighted poor financial management among students. They have expressed a lack of financial literacy and a need for financial advice before receiving their allowance. The following statements substantiate these findings:

Financial advisors would help students manage their scholarships and loans from the government” (LP3).

Economic or financial advice is needed because students will complain about not having study resources. Still, they have costly phones, have no pen to take notes, but have expensive nails, Brazilians (LP7).

In 2017, students were given cash. The Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare found out that students played with the money, could not even buy laptops, messed /played with the money (SP2).

One thing I can suggest is to educate marginalised students on how to look after their money. When some of us receive the money, we forget quick about our struggles. We try to push ourselves to live like other students. Some of us buy costly clothes and phones; after two to three days, the money is finished, and the situation worsens; maybe we can get some advice on managing the funds (SP3).

Financial advice: The counsellor can offer financial advice; not many students are financial literacy. It will be better to get advice on spending money (SP6).

Students rely on funds as their sole form of financial assistance, but it is disheartening to hear about how they mismanage them. The findings indicate that students' mishandling of funds is influenced by peer pressure and the desire to fulfill their needs and wants in order to fit in with their peers. Higher education institutions (HEIs) are advised to provide access to resources that ensure the physical and emotional well-being of all students (IASAS, 2020; Johnson, 2015; UNESCO, 2009). This study reveals limitations in protecting students' financial resources. Despite the provision of funding for students from marginalized backgrounds, they encounter difficulties in managing the funds. Many students have grown up in poverty and have never had direct experience handling money. For some, holding N\$1,000 in their hands is a completely new experience. This background makes these students vulnerable to mismanaging their funds. Additionally, some students have responsibilities towards their families and may choose to send money to support their impoverished relatives. They may not necessarily spend

the money on personal indulgences. In certain cultures, women are subordinate to men and may not have experience handling money. Given these challenges, it is crucial for students to receive financial literacy education before receiving their allocated funds.

4.2.4 Physiological Needs

Physiological needs were identified as a common theme in the participants' narratives. The majority of participants expressed that certain students sought or were referred to counseling services because of their physiological needs. Participants emphasized that students from marginalized backgrounds often lacked basic necessities, which they considered to be the main causes of student distress. These physiological counseling needs were primarily related to a lack of accommodation, food, and clothing, as detailed below:

4.2.4.1 Accommodation Insecurity. Seven referrers and six beneficiaries expressed concerns about accommodation issues faced by students from marginalised backgrounds. These students shared their experiences of being left stranded in the city, which forced them to rely on relatives and friends for shelter and subjected them to unfavourable treatment. However, three of the participants were grateful for the assistance provided by the counselling team, who helped them secure hostel accommodation. The narratives of these individuals emphasised the crucial role of financial support in addressing accommodation problems. Here are some of the statements they made:

At the beginning of each year, we know we would get these students; we do not even know where they live (LP1).

The university is aware that they have the marginalised scheme but do not prepare accommodation for these students. They go through hell because of shelter in the city (LP2).

Then, we have students who do not have accommodations; I referred most of them to the ODS for accommodation consideration (LP6).

There is a problem; the other problem is coming to Windhoek living with family; they get maltreated, are being asked to baby-sit and do all house chores. Students live in family situations where they suffer (LP6).

Life in the city becomes more complicated. They end up being married or living with boyfriends and even worse (LP7).

One student came complaining that “My stuff was thrown out of the apartment, and the friend did not communicate with me”. These are issues; we must act quickly and help students in the social part of their lives (LP8).

When we have marginalised students before we let them live with friends or relatives and relatives’ friends, we should reach out to see how safe, how are they treated, how comfortable, what are their living conditions (LP9).

Some students are suffering at the hands of their guardians, used as nannies, housekeepers, even sexually abused. We register these students, knowing their backgrounds and situations but not where and how they live (LP11).

Although she did not solve all our problems, she motivated us. Some got accommodation in the hostel (SP2).

Some of us do not stay in the hostel, and we need funds to pay for our accommodations and taxi to and from the university and buy food (SP3).

We have difficulties; relatives are abusing some students. What will you do if you find your things thrown on the street? (SP4)

I was stranded in Windhoek before I got accommodation in the hostel. The social worker helped me with the accommodation problem (SP5).

How will you sit and write a test if you do not know where to sleep? (SP6).

Upon admission, students from marginalised backgrounds anticipated securing accommodation in the hostels. However, only some get such opportunities (SP6).

Moreover, a lack of living space has led to distressing situations for many students from marginalised backgrounds. These students often have to leave their homes and find accommodation in the city to be closer to their places of study. The findings indicate that students, especially those not staying in university accommodation or hostels, have experienced abuse from their guardians. Some students even have to perform household chores in exchange for free accommodation, putting them at risk of further abuse. Additionally, some students face unexpected evictions or have to work as babysitters, which can expose them to sexual abuse.

It is important to note that the lack of accommodation has also led to early and unplanned marriages and cohabitations, further contributing to maltreatment and abuse. The study shows that students from marginalised backgrounds are not given priority for hostel accommodations. Accommodation disputes among students have been found to have negative effects on their psychological well-being, social interactions, and academic

performance (Sweet et al. 2020). Similarly, Goldrick-Rab et al. (2018) argue that accommodation insecurity among lower-income students studying in urban higher education institutions impacts their ability to complete their studies, persevere, and make academic progress.

Participants in the study expressed frustration with the lack of timely planning and preparation in providing accommodations for students, which exposes them to more difficulties and disadvantages. The lack of accommodation also exposes students to maltreatment by their shelter providers, making it even harder for them to pursue higher education and leading to dropouts if they do not receive support.

According to a study by Wulz et al. (2018), providing accommodation is one of the measures to ensure equity for economically disadvantaged students in Europe. The findings highlight the importance of supporting students in securing accommodation, with many expressing gratitude for the assistance they receive. While some students have had their accommodation issues resolved through counselling support, it is important to address the issue of delayed help as a form of inequity in higher education institutions.

The findings stress the significance of a well-planned Student Assistance Program (SAP) that takes into account the individual conditions and diverse needs of students before they reach a point of hopelessness. The suffering caused by inadequate living spaces can be prevented through proactive planning and preparedness, considering the expected number of students and their characteristics and needs. Unfortunately, it is believed that many disadvantaged students who do not receive counselling intervention drop out unnoticed.

4.2.4.2 Food Insecurity. Another issue raised by the participants was the concern for food. Many referrers and beneficiaries who took part in the study stated that most students go to bed hungry and attend classes on empty stomachs. The participants also expressed the need for a feeding scheme or food donations to help alleviate hunger among students while they wait for their funds to be paid. Additionally, they revealed that hunger leads to mental health issues such as poor concentration and frustration. Here are some statements from the participants:

Some come here on an empty stomach while others sleep in the hostel with no meals, affecting concentration and learning (LP1).

Counselling is good, in all sense, but you get to go to the source. Does it help you provide counselling to a child who comes to tell you that I have not had anything to eat for the past weeks or days? (LP2)

Most students' problems here have to do with survival questions. Yes, we need to address the sources. These are pollution from hunger (LP4).

Hunger becomes a mental issue, as they may have had no meals and, as a result, cannot concentrate. I can tell you some even beg for food, which is not good. You know, emotionally trauma is secondary (LP5).

Some students are struggling, and the primary issue is poverty, no food. A feeding scheme is needed. We must not give 5-star meals but just the basics (LP6).

Many students come to class hungry and have walked from Havana to the universities. They don't have anything to eat, so I cannot see it very costly to have a soup kitchen (LP8).

Imagine someone who does not have the necessary means to eat even once a day (LP8).

How will I finish this assignment while I am hungry or do not have this? Without food and cosmetics, the university must look into this; that is why some students drop out (SP1).

We were going through difficulties like a day passing, no bathing, no food. It was so tough as we had no food or toiletries (SP2)

Even if we approach the student support office, sometimes we do not get help because our biggest problem is food and items we need to survive; there was a time they prepared breakfast for us before we went for SBS. We needed food (SP3).

Students work very hard, but there are moments when they struggle with basic needs like food (SP3).

When you are hungry, you cannot concentrate; when unhappy, you keep thinking about the problem and get frustrated. That is why we fail (SP4).

It is not easy; you cannot keep begging for food all the time (SP5).

You become positive and stop thinking about food; sometimes, we need food and relish to sustain ourselves; if the university can develop a charity organization where food items, toiletries, or money can be donated to help us (SP6).

It is disheartening to note that both on and off campus, students suffer from hunger. This is supported by similar findings from (Broton et al. 2018; Goldrick-Rab et al. 2018; Goldrick-Rab & Broton, 2015). Goldrick-Rab et al. (2018) affirm in their report that food

insecurity among students in higher education affects students from marginalised backgrounds and has a negative impact on their academic performance. Based on the participants' perspectives, it is evident that counseling interventions are not very effective in addressing students' food insecurity.

4.2.4.3 Clothing and Toiletries. Although not many, five participants echoed the need for clothing and toiletries, particularly for female students. Participants indicated that students' inability to afford basic needs such as soaps, lotions, deodorants, perfumes, sanitary pads and clothing impacted their focus and destroyed their confidence and self-esteem. These are their views:

You need toiletries; remember we have girls (LP2).

You can easily see; it is not labelling, it's not singling out people, but sometimes you can see distinctive clothing or how they are wearing. Usually, the suffering ones are timid and don't want to be seen. They feel demeaned in class (LP8).

Students need to be given some special treatment, get them even old clothes. In other countries, African students are supported by being given extra special allowance to buy warmer clothes because it is cold (LP11).

We did not have nice clothes like others, and sometimes we shied away from people (SP4).

We had mixed feelings, happy to be at the university, but there was suffering. We could not wait for that money to buy our clothes and nice things (SP4).

It is evident from the statements above that participants described challenges with clothing and toiletries among students from marginalised backgrounds. According to

Sweet et al. (2020), students from marginalised backgrounds face multiple transitions that include changing their traditional dress codes and hairstyles and adapting to city ways of living. Consequently, the need for clothing and toiletries made them struggle to fit in with their peer groups. Sweet et al. (2020) reveal that students face challenges that include peer pressure. It is common in our society that when a person appears less groomed and inappropriately dressed as per the standards set by society or individuals' expectations, some people look down on them. It is overwhelming to hear how some students shied away from people, withdrew from participation and felt inferior due to a lack of toiletries and proper clothing. From the participants' perspectives, counselling services are limited and ineffective in addressing these needs. The study concurs with Goldrick-Rab et al. (2018), who posit that HEIs must strive to meet all the students' basic needs as stipulated by Maslow's hierarchy of needs to achieve equity for all.

4.3 Objective/question 3: Beneficiaries' and Referrers' Satisfaction with Counselling Services as an Equity Measure

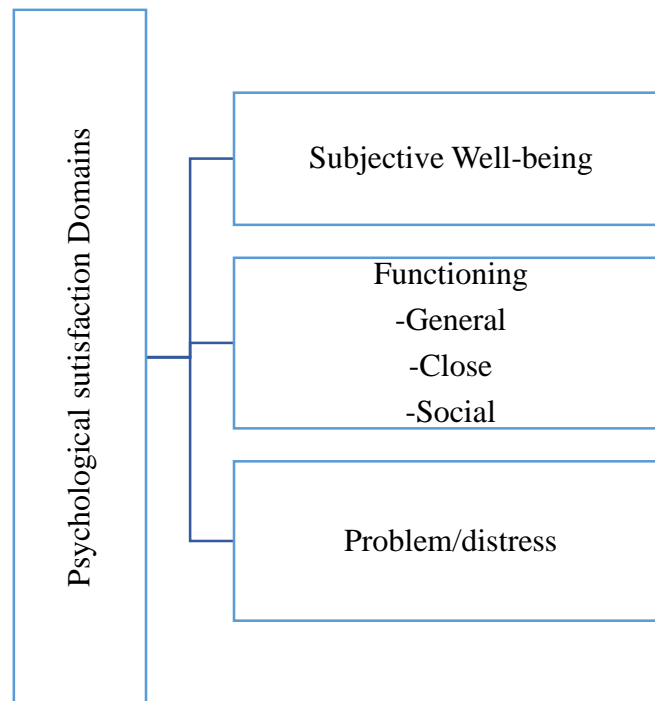
This objective was addressed through mixed methods (both qualitative and quantitative).

Questions: For the qualitative part, under this objectives, participants were asked:

1. To describe their general satisfactions/dissatisfactions with counselling services in addressing the different psychological domains.
2. To share their views on the strengths and shortcomings of the counselling services.

The findings from the semi-structured interviews indicated satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the three psychological domains, namely, subjective well-being, life functioning, and problem/symptoms described by (Sinclair et al., 2005) from the referrers' and beneficiaries' perspectives. The sub-themes are presented below.

Figure 4.19 Referrers' and Beneficiaries' Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction Encounters



The diagram presents the themes discussed under the research question/objective number three. Counselling service effectiveness is expected to improve students' functioning, such as academic performance and progress, increase completion and graduation rates, self-advocacy and peer support (DenoVan & Macaskill, 2017). The participants' expressions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with counselling service effectiveness are presented under the following sub-themes.

4.3.1 Satisfaction and Dissatisfactions on Subjective Well-being

The findings from the semi-structured interviews revealed satisfaction and dissatisfaction with counselling services on students' subjective well-being and are discussed under the following themes:

4.3.1.1 Dissatisfaction with the Delays of Fund Payment. This theme emerged from beneficiaries who participated in the study. Five beneficiaries narrated their ordeals intensified by the delays in their funds from the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare. In their utterance, they expressed dissatisfaction in anticipation of accessing their funds. Most students revealed that they solely depended on the funds for their tuition, transport, upkeep and basic needs such as accommodation and food. This is what some participants had to say:

When I joined the university, I found other students in the same situation, struggling to get their funds (SP1).

The challenges were that the financial allowance we relied on from the Ministry were always delayed. We had to wait for a long time. They also take longer to pay the tuition fee (SP2).

When you go for support, you will be told to hold on and wait, but the student counselling officers do not know much about financial issues (SP2).

We had to go through hell because it was a struggle to get those funds. Some of us do not stay in the hostel, and we need funds to pay for our accommodations, taxi to and from the university and buy food (SP3).

We were referred to the office of the Bursar (finance). Yes, they gave us hope, but that was not enough. The biggest problem was the delay of payments (SP4).

We were so hopeful that the Ministry could pay our money on time. That is what they promised to us. We needed the money to survive, but it took ages (SP4).

Beneficiaries indicate that seeking help from the counselling offices regarding funds yielded no sustainable solutions for student fund payments. The case contrasts the institutions' visions and core values to meet the needs and ensure equity in all practices. These findings coincide with Avery et al. (2014), that college counsellors lack training on financial aid procedures. Thus, they provide superficial assistance when addressing financial aid to needy students. Participants also demonstrated disappointment and a loss of faith in the counselling support regarding their funding. The narratives from the participants showed dissatisfaction with the counselling services among the beneficiaries regarding their subjective well-being. Inferring from the narratives, the crucial issue was a lack of coordination and facilitation of student funds between HEIs and the funding office, which led to poor customer care.

The study discovered that despite being funded, students from marginalised backgrounds are dissatisfied with the payment processes of their funds from the OVP and how HEI facilitate the fund's payment. Similarly, the findings echoed by Dieckmann et al. (2014) highlight delays in students' monthly stipends from the funding office. Similar sentiments were also shared by Cubarrubia and Schoen (2010); Getachew (2020); Johnson (2015); Pinto (2019); Shankar et al. (2013); Sweet et al. (2020), who disclose that students from low-socio-economic backgrounds experience financial constraints even when they are funded. Students demonstrated frustration and dissatisfaction with the administration

of fund payments. They uttered that they endured the struggles repeatedly every year. Payment delays have become one of the primary causes of students' distress, exacerbating basic needs (secondary) and leading to psychological and academic distress (tertiary). The study found that students' financial issues are not given high priority to ensure students' subjective well-being. Drawing from resilience theory, individual's response to challenges depends on their interaction with others, available resources, in this case funds (Southwick et al. 2014).

4.3.1.2 Dissatisfaction with the Delays in Student Identification, Referrals and Interventions. This theme emerged from the statements of six referrers who participated in the study. They indicated that students are identified, referred and receive support after they endured suffering. These findings were validated by the statements below:

But students are referred after so many sufferings. It could be better to identify them early before the nightmare and perhaps guide them as early as possible (LP1).

It is better to have a timely programme right from the beginning to avoid losing potential students due to distress (LP2).

The best time to offer counselling is actually at the beginning. Let us start from the beginning; let us not wait until students are in the middle of the ocean. That is when we want to offer these counselling services (LP2).

The only suggestion is that the university can make it a routine. When admitting students from marginalised backgrounds, each school or department must

identify them as soon as they register. Students must be called as a group in the school and should already be referred for counselling service (LP3).

I was disappointed in myself, why I did not pick this up (LP7).

Lecturers should be very conscious in the classroom, especially those teaching first-year level. That is crucial because students drop out if they cannot cope with the transition from high school to University (LP8).

When they come, and we know that we have these specific groups, we need to start with that group and avail services for free without them looking for such services. (LP9).

The earlier, the better; the challenge we have is that we get to know about these things a bit late; you have to wait until you give a test or you give an assignment; that is when you get to see that there is someone who is getting low marks, that is the problem (LP10).

The participants expressed their dissatisfaction with the delays in identifying distressed students who need to be referred for interventions. They believed that early identification, referrals, and interventions are crucial for supporting students in adapting to the demands of the new university environment. This suggestion aligns with previous research Krubsack et al. (2019); Lancaster, (2008) which highlights the importance of timely identification, referrals, and interventions in preventing student hardships. The participants' narratives clearly revealed that marginalised students often suffer before receiving counselling support. Referrers also reported that needy students are identified late. These findings support the assertions made by Kamunyu et al. (2016), who emphasise

the significance of timely identification and interventions to prevent student distress. Additionally, they highlighted that identifying and referring students for counseling after they have already encountered difficulties exposes them to further hardships in their academic pursuits. The findings indicate that many students do not seek out support, and some who do remain silent and drop out unnoticed. The reasons for not seeking support may be attributed to factors discussed by Sweet et al. (2020), such as prejudice, stereotypes, fear of discrimination, and rejection, among others. It may also be influenced by the accessibility, structure, and processes of the counselling support services.

4.3.1.3 Dissatisfaction with the Support During the COVID-19 Pandemic.

This theme mainly emerged from the referrers, who expressed concerns about counselling provision during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the study did not specifically focus on COVID-19, the participants' concerns were prompted by the sensitivity and impact of the pandemic on students' academic and subjective well-being. They emphasised the need for more referrals and counselling support due to the COVID-19 situation. The narratives also revealed inequity for needy students during the pandemic, with participants describing a lack of pro-activeness and readiness to meet the needs of students in different situations. According to the participants, the COVID-19 situation exposed a lack of accessible learning resources and technological devices. They also highlighted the lack of accommodations in the city when access to hostels was unavailable due to COVID-19.

Furthermore, participants noted that many students who lived in hostels had to find accommodations elsewhere and were not under the care of guardians. While some students struggled with the loss of their parents and family members due to COVID-19, others had to face COVID-19 independently without family support. These situations

often result in prolonged psychological distress. Here are some of the participants' statements:

With online learning, everybody thinks you've got a smartphone which was not the case (LP6).

You know what this COVID-19 is highlighting; it is putting the spotlight on many challenges and exposing the education system (LP7).

They may not have what others have, especially with COVID-19. When we shifted to remote teaching, it is challenging not to afford the needed resources (LP8).

With COVID-19, what are we doing for students who lost their parents (LP8).

Do we know the students who are suffering? It is a long recovery process, therapy, and all those things (LP9).

What support are we providing to students who must be placed on ventilators during COVID-19? Do we know those students? (LP10).

I have a student whose mum and dad passed on because of COVID-19. I do not know, with the COVID-19 situation, how will you support them to ensure they do not drop out? (LP10).

Some students, COVID-19 took their parents; if we are unaware of this kind of stress, how can we help? (LP11).

Findings on technological challenges align with Dimri (2021) assertion that limited internet connectivity hindered access to online counselling services. As a result, many students were left stranded, compromising their well-being and further marginalising

them. Participants highlighted the social, emotional, and psychosocial effects triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasising the need for counselling intervention. Students from marginalised backgrounds faced additional hardships, such as the loss of loved ones, which led to economic marginalisation, inequity, and exclusion. These distressing factors are also reflected in studies by Alipour et al. (2020); Okado et al. (2021) who point out the inadequate social support that contributes to challenges in psychosocial adjustment.

The COVID-19 crisis has exposed inequalities and exclusion in higher education, particularly affecting students from marginalised backgrounds. The findings make it clear that counselling service providers must reconsider and redesign new support methods to ensure equity and inclusion in pandemic situations. Participants questioned the support measures for students in the post-COVID-19 period, expressing concerns about the impact of the pandemic on students and their families. They highlighted various distressing factors, such as grief due to the loss of parents or relatives, personal health issues, and the need for support in their recovery. Participants also expressed concern that many students may not return, emphasising the importance of tracking, reaching out to, and supporting students during and after the pandemic. While the COVID-19 situation exacerbated distress among students, counselling services were largely inaccessible to those from marginalised backgrounds.

4.3.2 Satisfaction and Dissatisfactions in Life Functioning-general

4.3.2.1 Satisfaction with Academic Performance. Participants in the study perceived counselling services as a form of support for students who find themselves in difficult situations that have a negative impact on their overall functioning, including their academic performance. Four referrers who took part in the study reported that some

students who were referred for counselling support were able to adapt to the university environment, improve their attendance in classes, and achieve better grades in continuous assessments (CA). The referrers emphasised that counselling helped students persist in their programs and progress. Similar findings were echoed by four beneficiaries (students) of the counselling services, who expressed satisfaction with the support they received. They reiterated that the counselling support helped them regain their focus, pay attention to their academic work, and feel motivated to work harder, ultimately leading to a new perspective on their school work.

These findings highlight the importance of support services in higher education and indicate that counselling can contribute to academic success and progress among students from marginalised backgrounds. However, despite the positive feedback, the findings also raised questions about why some students were hesitant and resistant to receiving support. Here are some of the narratives shared by the participants:

However, one of the students who could not perform well adapted very well after the referral. She adapted well and performed better. I had a concern with some students. You know, they needed help but were not willing. They did not respond positively to my referrals (LP1).

You will see that very few start to attend classes, performance improved, and they progress, although at a slow pace (LP3).

She improved after the counselling but others not, I am not sure how they do, not all but some students are comfortable for counselling and, those who opened up, qualified for the examination with good marks (LP10).

I have observed students who receive counselling do manage to eventually perform and go through the system (LP11).

When I spoke to the social worker, I regained courage and my performance improved (SP1).

The support we got helped us excel in our academic work. Some finished their studies, and most of us passed our modules/performed better (SP2).

I started to pay attention to my schoolwork. Counselling helped me work hard and improve my performance for the next test, and I passed it very well (SP3).

Although I was a bit hesitant, you get different thinking; it helps you refocus on your schoolwork. Counselling contributed to my academic achievement (SP4).

Despite some uncertainty among students, the study findings substantiate the significance of counselling services on students' functioning in higher education institutions (HEIs). The study also discovers that there are issues in HEIs that impact the academic development, coping, achievement, and progress of students from marginalised backgrounds, which require counselling interventions. Iyeke et al. (2018) find that counselling enhances academic development. Similar sentiments are echoed by Ashipala-Hako (2014), Kishore (2014), Maupa (2020); Thuryrajah et al. (2017), who maintain that counselling support helps students deal with academic challenges that hinder their academic achievement and educational goals. The findings also align with the roles of counselling services stipulated by the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS, 2020), UNESCO (2009); UNESCO (2002), which aim to assist students in overcoming academic barriers to success and help them cope and adjust to the academic

demands of the university environment. The findings demonstrate that primary factors significantly impact most students' general functioning, particularly their academic performance, which calls for well-structured student assistance interventions tailored to their needs. The findings also indicate satisfaction with the effectiveness of counselling in addressing students' psychological distress, which is detrimental to their subjective well-being.

Drawing from person-centred theory, a favourable learning environment helps individuals develop inner motivation to enhance their self-efficacy, which is necessary for academic achievement (Karthikeyan, 2013; Purswell, 2019). It can be concluded that academic performance is a secondary concern for students from marginalised backgrounds. Therefore, if the primary concerns are effectively addressed, their performance may improve.

4.3.2.2 Satisfaction on Students' Retention, Completion and Graduation Rates. Seven participants explicitly stressed the significance of counselling services in higher education. Referrers and beneficiaries demonstrated faith in counselling support because of its power to overcome learning barriers that impede students' academic progress, completion and graduation in their programme. The findings evidenced that some students who benefited from the counselling service adapted to the academic demands improved their self-concept and self-efficacy and gained a sense of belonging. As a result, they completed their programmes within the expected duration. Moreover, some referrers and beneficiaries expressed satisfaction with counselling effectiveness on students' retention and persistence. This is what they had to say:

We had three marginalised students from the Otjozondjupa region, the two who responded well to counselling, performed very well and completed within the four years of the programme (LP1).

Only one case dropped out; counselling was a no-no... others completed or completed within six years of the provision (LP1).

The student who went through counselling overcame the challenges and got into the pool of other students who performed and completed their studies (LP4).

Although the situation at home (where she was accommodated) remained the same, at school, she was focused; got the help, and became part of the university, and you could see the difference; she completed and is now working (LP3).

She progressed, graduated with honours, and is now working (LP7).

Counselling contributed to my being here. Some students left the university; I approached the social worker's office, and I shifted to plan B to go through and finish my study (SP2).

Some finished their studies (SP3).

The counselling support carried/pulled me to this level (SP4).

The findings evidenced accomplishments of educational goals among students, resulting from counselling effectiveness. Most participants highlighted the regaining of focus, student retention, study completion, graduation and employment opportunity. Participants' views imply that counselling positively impacted students' academic situation, instilled motivation and helped students refocus on their academic goals. Escapa

and Julià (2018) share similar sentiments that counselling plays a significant role in addressing barriers to academic success. Similarly, Ciobanu (2013) asserts that counselling services in HEIs develop students' connection to the university, improve the holistic students' university experiences, maximise academic achievement, reduce dropouts and increase chances of success and graduation. Despite satisfaction, the findings revealed that individuals' uncertainties towards counselling services deterred counselling effectiveness.

4.3.3 Satisfactions and Dissatisfactions Life Functional-Close Relationship

4.3.3.1 Satisfaction on Self-Advocacy and Help-Seeking for Financial and Basic Needs. Participants expressed the significance of close relationships in students' life. This theme emerged from the narratives of most participants. Seven referrers described how some students benefited from the support of staff and friends around them. Findings also revealed some confinements among students seeking solutions to their financial and basic needs. Moreover, six beneficiaries also narrated how the situation forced them to reach out to individuals and several offices to find answers to their financial crises.

A student will come and say: (“I cannot cope”), and the performance is poor, cannot manage, she is absent from the class (LP1).

Some of them approached me, “I have this problem, and what is the sustainable solution to this problem”. Someone will come to you diligently and open to talk about his issues seeking support (LP2).

The student came to me and told me what was going on. Sometimes students confide on us lecturers who teach them. They feel relaxed and comfortable to go to lecturers (LP4).

In our department, students come forth most of the time. They would go and say, I have a problem. It is through coming in “mem, I have a problem”. For a student to come out and say, I been abused, it takes a lot of courage to say something like that. Thus, some suffer in silence (LP6).

Ultimately, the student would confide in the lecture where they feel most comfortable. They reveal their problems to those they are comfortable with (LP8).

If you see a student pushing for assistance herself, it indicates that the student wants to get through the system and get it done. They are more serious; they need to be assisted instead of waiting, making them stay (LP11).

As a group, we approached the campus management, who told staff to assist us in buying food and cosmetics. This was a great help (SP1).

We also approached people like activists and politicians to raise our issue in parliament. We often footed to Kenya's house where their office is to talk to them; their answers were rough. It was tough (SP2).

We approached the campus social worker for help. Whatever we go through (SP3).

When it was time to register, the university hardly listened to us. We had to struggle to get our funds (SP4).

I go to the social worker whenever I have a problem or undergo something. It is better to seek help and not wait until the damage is done (SP5).

There was a time when the union came to our rescue. They approached the office and demanded our tuition payment; this was very helpful (SP6).

The descriptions provided above support Kambouropoulos (2015), who emphasises that students who do not seek help continue to face challenges in higher education institutions (HEIs). The narratives of most participants highlighted the importance of help-seeking and self-advocacy. Students shared their experiences of seeking help and even having to beg for basic needs. On the other hand, referrers confirmed that some students approached them for support. These findings stress the significance of establishing positive relationships with support providers, lecturers, and peers in higher education. Despite their courage in seeking help, it is disheartening to learn that students had to approach different individuals or departments due to a lack of proper structures and programs that encourage them to seek support from the appropriate officials or people. It was overwhelming to discover how students had to advocate for their needs. Furthermore, the findings reveal a lack of clear guidance for students on where to seek help. Participants emphasised that some students sought help from and confided in their lecturers with whom they felt comfortable. The findings are supported by the resilience theory, which suggests that resilience processes are not solely dependent on an individual. Instead, they are closely connected to social relationships that include family, peers, professionals, and institutions (van Breda, 2018a). These students were seen as courageous and open to finding solutions, as some had to suppress their pride, suffer in silence, and go unnoticed.

The students' challenges highlight expressed by the participants revealed some limitations of counselling effectiveness in addressing their needs.

4.4.3.2 Satisfaction with the Peer Support. Peer support emerged mainly from students' narratives; two referrers attested to it. The referrers underscored connecting junior students to seniors for peer mentorship. Meanwhile, students expressed how they survived their hardships through the help and support of their fellow students. This is what some had to say:

I identified some senior students and assigned students who needed support for peer tutoring. They guide them until they settle into the university. I discovered that it helps once a student is allocated to a connecting person. Once they are connected to peers, it is almost as if they relax into the situation. They settled and adopted at the end of the first semester (LP7).

You know, because you've adopted me and we go through, it is like personal tutors amongst each other (LP8).

It is not easy. We rely more on fellow students for help. Fellow students are helping us with food and cosmetics in the hostel (SP1).

I shared my private food with one lady, a fourth-year student. We were helping each other (SP2).

The funds were constantly delayed, and we reached out to friends and fellow students for survival (SP3).

We survived on friends and good Samaritan (SP4).

I relied on my colleagues (fellow students). They give us more support and the lecturers (SP6).

The findings revealed that students sought help from friends and staff with whom they had a good relationship. Besides seeking and receiving help, the narratives described their ordeals and struggles for survival. Participants revealed peer support as one of the effective survival strategies. Findings revealed that students relied on fellow students for food, cosmetics, and academic guidance in most cases. Nonetheless, the findings did not indicate whether students depended on good relations for psychological and academic support. Impressively, students demonstrated a spirit of solidarity, support and love. The findings confirm the views of Ekore et al. (2016) that students seek help freer from peers in distressing situations. The use of peer mentors and personal tutors expressed by referrers substantiated peer mentors' significance in higher education echoed by (Essack, 2012; Keller & Porter, 2020; Mudis & Onyango, 2015; Osodo et al., 2016). Besides, the findings validate the need for a structured intervention programme that facilitates peer relationships to ensure students' subjective well-being.

4.3.3.3 Dissatisfaction Resulting from a Lack of Knowledge and Skills.

Approximately eight referrers who took part in the study voiced a lack of knowledge and skills necessary to make appropriate referrals. They experienced discomfort, helplessness, and fear when faced with distressed students, feeling constrained by their own abilities. The participants acknowledged the significance of identifying and referring students in need of counselling support but also recognised their unfamiliarity with the principles of accurately identifying, referring, guiding, and directing eligible students for such assistance. They believed that counselling should be conducted by trained professionals

who possess expertise in addressing students' emotional and psychological issues. The participants also believed that approaching and aiding distressed students required specific knowledge and skills.

Moreover, the participants observed that lecturers, who often serve as the initial point of contact for students, feel restricted and lack the confidence and skills necessary for making proper student referrals. Although they acknowledged their role as the initial contact for students, they believed that referring and providing counselling services should be carried out by trained professionals to avoid further harm to distressed students. Additionally, they felt that they were not adequately empowered to make appropriate referrals. While some lecturers did not feel empowered and believed that they lacked the ability to make suitable referrals for counselling services, others felt obligated to make referrals despite their limitations.

The participants also voiced concerns about interfering with students' cultural values and beliefs. Their lack of knowledge and understanding hindered their willingness to assist and refer students for counselling support. This concern about cultural interference was a significant barrier in their role as referrers. Here are some excerpts from the participants' narratives:

It is a need across; I feel every lecturer should be empowered to be in a position to refer students for support. It is not easy to approach a student. I did not know how to advise students on certain things; you know, they have unique cultural beliefs, which I do not know and understand (LP1).

We have a structure; being here as lecturers, we are the first contacts. Do we have the skills? I should not be seen taking up duties and responsibilities where I am not fit (LP2).

As a lecturer, I can approach a student, “why are you not attending classes”? He tells you, this and that, I have no skill, I also do not know what to do (LP3).

What are the principles of referring? I do not know. I am not from a counselling background to talk to students and guide them in a certain way. I am sure there must be a way (LP4).

We, lecturers, are not trained counsellors; we cannot sit here with a student whose mother has died. You do not know what to do; some situations depend on culture, which most lecturers have no idea about (LP8).

I am not a counsellor and cannot handle things; thus, if I see that a student has some challenges or is going through social challenges, I cannot handle, I refer (LP9).

I am not qualified to counsel students; I am not a clinical psychologist. I could not answer her suicidal case. I am afraid, what if something happens? (LP10).

I am also not trained to do that (LP11).

I will not attempt to help as I might do more damage (LP11).

The findings support Meador's (2020) assertion that a lack of referral skills can lead to inappropriate referrals or educators choosing not to make referrals. The fear expressed by those making referrals justifies why some lecturers are hesitant to do so.

Some lecturers consider themselves unfit to make referrals. Their perspectives, as conveyed through their narratives, highlight the need for empowering educators with skills related to best practices for effective referrals, as suggested by Krubsack (2019), Meador (2020); Lancaster (2008).

Additionally, a lack of knowledge and skills regarding referral principles discourages lecturers from referring students from marginalised backgrounds for counselling services. The participants in the study described the issues faced by these students as sensitive and believed that they should be handled by experienced individuals. Consequently, they feared causing further harm. Broglia et al. (2017) similarly emphasise that high-intensity support needs in higher education institutions are best addressed by professionals. Their concerns align with the views of Nwonyuku (2018); Yaip et al. (2019), who emphasise the importance of expertise in dealing with emotional and mental issues. These studies also report that some educators are uncertain about identifying mental illness among students and how to assist distressed students. In line with this, Lancaster (2008) proposes that those making referrals should demonstrate genuine interest and helpfulness toward distressed students. However, they can only do so if they understand the principles of referral. He recommends that referrals be based on a mutual decision between the referrer and the student, except in severe cases. This mutual decision requires mutual understanding, knowledge and skills, a good relationship, and trust. Similarly, Krubsack (2019) suggests referral pathways that involve identifying, tracking, referring, and follow-ups. Trained referees would be equipped with the capacity to consider the three conditions for effective intervention, as advocated by Person-Centred theory: unconditional positive regard, empathy, and congruence. These conditions

promote the acceptance and respect of individuals without judgment, the comprehension and appreciation of their emotions, and the genuineness and authenticity of the service providers in both their verbal and non-verbal communication (Purswell, 2019).

Li and Carroll (2020) reveal that cultural insensitivity in higher education hinders the effectiveness of counselling services. The findings indicate dissatisfaction with referral procedures and suggest that training should be provided to educators to equip them with the necessary skills to address and handle issues related to student referrals. Consequently, it can be concluded that a lack of knowledge and understanding regarding student issues and insensitivity to cultural diversity among educators negatively impact the effectiveness of counselling as an equity measure in higher education.

4.3.3.4 Dissatisfaction Resulting from a Lack of Awareness. Students and lecturers who participated in the study expressed dissatisfaction due to a lack of awareness about the counselling services offered by their institutions. This lack of awareness was also observed among the referrers and beneficiaries. Their narratives revealed limited information and awareness about the counselling services available at their respective institutions. Additionally, students and lecturers expressed a lack of knowledge about whom to contact in specific cases, such as where to seek help and who to refer to in different situations.

Furthermore, the study found that some lecturers were unaware of their roles and responsibilities in identifying and referring students for counselling support. While some referrers were aware of institutional referral forms, others lacked this awareness.

Despite the existence of orientation programs, it is concerning to discover that some referrers and beneficiaries are not aware of the location of the counsellors' offices. Eight lecturers who referred students for counselling admitted to being unaware of the prevalence of students from marginalised backgrounds, their needs, behaviours, characteristics, and observable signs that would indicate the need for referrals. As a result, participants emphasised the importance of providing precise information about students' unique experiences in order to provide the necessary support. The following narratives are from the participants:

We need to advertise the services to lectures. How do they advocate the services? How do they promote the services? They need to advertise a bit broadly about their help to students. Many services are not utilized (LP3).

I had never seen the university referral forms (LP4).

Share the information and say, "we are here", that is available, and what we can offer is this, maybe the awareness, or it is me who just imagines that (LP5).

Another issue is that it would be nice to have a list of services we offer from the ODS for everybody to know (LP6).

Suppose there is this situation, who to reach out to. This is how or this is who we have, and these are the services we provide (LP6).

For example, if a student suffers a miscarriage, which affects schoolwork, who to contact? Is it the lecturers' responsibility? or the students' responsibility? HOD or whose responsibility is it if students have a problem where must he go"? (LP7).

There are more programmes, but they are under-utilised... but I think they're not used just because of awareness and lack of proper structures (LP8).

We need to be more sensitised, especially if someone from marginalised communities is in your class (LP8).

Communicated to the students that if you are experiencing trauma, where do you go? Do you go to the counsellor, the Dean of Students? (LP8)

Not only must students be informed, but every one of us should also be informed that if you come across a student like this. I was unaware there was a form to complete when referring students (referrer form). I did not refer them; I wish I knew I could refer them (LP9).

I am simply told, "here is your class" as a lecturer, I have no information about who has what background (LP9).

Some students do not know about counselling; it could be effective if all students are aware of it and encouraged to use the service (SP4).

You will be surprised if you ask some students. Most students attended the orientation but did not know where the office is, even final-year students (SP5).

Some students need help, but they do not know which door to knock on for support; they will ask where to find the office; they think it is only on other campuses and not on their campus (SP6).

Kambouropoulos' (2015) findings reveal that academic staff are some sources of student referrals to counselling services. Consequently, the lecturers' unawareness of their

mandate, referral forms, available services, the prevalence of students from marginalised backgrounds and their needs, counselling office whereabouts and the counselling team raises questions about how the referrals are done and their implication on the counselling effectiveness. It is underscored that a lack of awareness has detrimental effects on counselling effectiveness (Bobga, 2016; Getachew, 2019; Kamunyu, 2016; Kamunyu et al., 2016). Similarly, Dhillon et al. (2008) emphasise that lacking information on practices and prevailing services could impact counselling services' effectiveness.

The study found that some lecturers took issues related to counselling services lightly. It also revealed that referrers (lecturers) lacked cognisance of the available counselling services and procedures despite the prevalence of diverse counselling support in HEIs. It came out that lecturers are reluctant to refer students because their mandates, roles, and responsibilities in directing students for counselling support are poorly defined and communicated. The findings suggest a lack of staff orientation into the available programme and educators' roles. The lack thereof impacts the effectiveness and leads to underutilisation of the services and some needy students not being identified, not adequately referred to and directed, ignored, and perhaps dropping out unnoticed. Kambouropoulos (2015) affirms that a lack of awareness about the available services leads to the underutilisation of such services. The findings concur with Parikh et al. (2021), who reveal educators' minimal involvement and limited roles in referring students for counselling support. Furthermore, findings suggest that individual lecturers are given a choice to choose whether to identify and refer rather than being compelled to do so. Consequently, most students are left unidentified and referred for counselling support, a practice compromising the effectiveness of the counselling services. Moreover, the study

found that most students are not referred for counselling and remain uninformed and unaware of where to seek help despite having student orientation programmes. According to Byrd (2017); Robinson et al. (2016), orientation programmes should be platforms to create awareness about available student support services.

Additionally, a lack of awareness about the prevalence of students from marginalised backgrounds and the observable signs leads to cultural insensitivity. As a result, it might lead to misjudgement and misinterpretations of students' behaviour, leading to inappropriate referrals. The findings support calls made by Meador (2020) that educators require professional development and training to be acquainted with skills to recognise students' signs and behaviour that alert a need for a referral. Furthermore, Tsikati (2018) cautions that educators and counsellors who lack an understanding of students' socio-economic and cultural backgrounds might have difficulties meeting their needs.

4.3.3.5 Dissatisfaction Stemming from a Lack of Clear Referral Policy, Guidelines and Procedures. This theme emerged mainly from the lecturers' narratives who referred students for counselling services. They echoed a lack of clear referral guidelines, policies and procedures for identifying and referring students appropriately. Furthermore, referrers expressed uncertainty about the referral process and revealed a lack of guidance and proper procedures that encourage students to self-seek counselling support. The study found that there are insufficient details on the current intervention processes. Lecturers expressed a lack of detailed information on the procedures concerning the intervention programme. They also indicated a lack of strategies to carry

out the referral process appropriately. Moreover, they gave limited information to explain the programmes students would undergo. These are the discussions from the participants:

There are no clear policies to state what is expected from referrers (LP5).

I've not seen a procedure; you know, yeah...I only know the form used for the earlier alert referrers, but it does not explain how the process works (LP7).

So, it is important to have an effective flow of how the process works. How will the student be assisted? Yes, we want to remain anonymous, confidential or those kinds of things (LP8).

There is no guidance to clarify what happens after you refer the student; it is unclear what happens (LP8).

So, it is important to have an effective flow of how the process works, who the first contact is and what is to happen to the student without judgment (LP8).

Although the programme is in place, are there clear guidelines for how students can be approached or approached the office (LP9)?

Who is there, your first contact? Is it the secretary? Do you make an appointment? Must you explain your problems before you are allowed to see the counsellor? (LP10).

The study's findings contradict Lancaster's (2008) proposed best practice for counselling referrals. Lancaster anticipates that best practices should effectively offer resources, referral strategies, and guidance to address students' emotional distress. However, a lack of guidelines, policies, and procedures leads to lecturers not feeling

obligated to observe, identify, and refer eligible students for support. Similarly, Nwonyuku (2018); Yaip et al. (2019) also indicate that effective referrals require basic knowledge, counselling regulations (policies and procedures), theories, and a multicultural orientation to avoid misinterpreting students' behaviour.

Participants emphasised the importance of guidelines, procedures, and strategies for implementing interventions. However, given the sensitive nature of students' issues, they expressed a need for clear information regarding the counselling officers responsible for handling specific situations and avoiding approaching or referring students to the wrong offices. Various factors that contribute to students' reluctance to seek or respond to counselling referrals were echoed by Bobga (2016), Kambouropoulos (2015), Kamunyu et al. (2016); Martin (2018). These factors include mistrust, doubt, and a lack of confidence in the counsellor's confidentiality and integrity. Thus, wrong referrals can potentially exacerbate these factors and undermine counselling services' effectiveness. Participants called for guidance on carrying out sensitive tasks such as dealing with distressed students and making successful referrals for counselling interventions.

Most participants acknowledged the diverse counselling needs of students. However, they still demonstrated a lack of confidence in making referrals, suggesting that some eligible students missed out on services due to inadequate procedures for seeking such support. Kambouropoulos (2015) indicates that most students who utilise counselling services are mainly referred by sources other than themselves, such as educators.

Furthermore, referrers emphasised a lack of referral processes that adhered to counselling ethics and called for outlined referral processes and ethical conduct regarding confidentiality. These findings contradict Lancaster's (2008) best practices for counselling

referrals, which emphasise the need to adhere to counselling ethics and principles when assisting distressed students. Supported by Kambouropoulos (2015), institutions should communicate their ethical conduct to ensure that counselling beneficiaries follow ethical practices. Thus, a lack of proper guidelines and procedures undermines the effectiveness of counselling services. Similarly, a lack of clear information creates mistrust, doubt, and negative perceptions about the services, which affects the relationships between referrers and students (Bobga, 2016; Kamunyu et al., 2016; Martin, 2018). The key conclusion drawn from the above narratives indicates a lack of policies and procedures, a well-outlined program, an intervention program with systematic guidelines, and a well-defined code of ethics to guide stakeholders (referrers and beneficiaries) in referring and seeking counselling support. Consequently, the absence of these elements leads to the underutilisation of valuable services.

4.3.3.6 Dissatisfaction with Close Relationships Arising from Student Masses in Lecture Venues. Under this category, referrers and beneficiaries shared commonalities in their perspectives on the adverse effects of student masses on counselling effectiveness. Referrers observed a growing number of diverse students and their needs in higher education. They resounded that a large number of students in lecture venues (student masses) impede identification, referral, self-seeking, and adequate counselling support for needy students. In their accounts, referrers revealed that packed venues made locating and guiding eligible students for counselling support difficult. Meanwhile, the beneficiaries of the counselling service reported that some lecturers pay less attention to students' problems and only focus more on content delivery.

Additionally, most participants pointed to the time limit to cover the content, student masses, imbalances in the student-counsellor and student-lecturer ratio and lecturers' workloads as barriers to paying attention to students' needs. They indicated that there are more students and limited time to attend to individual students and their needs. This is what they had to say:

If you have hundreds in one venue; precisely the one that sits in the corner, right in front of you, and they can see you, but you cannot see them (LP6).

Identification can only happen in a situation where a few of them are unless you are really good to spot them out in their masses (LP7).

If you come into a class of 300 students, they are just numbers, they do not have names, it also plays a huge role. More can still be done (LP8).

There is only one social worker who cannot handle more students at once. Theoretically could help, but practically I do not know (LP9).

We also have limited time for content, and we are working with masses of students. It is difficult to identify students who are not focused or struggling, especially those from marginalised backgrounds; I feel helpless (LP9).

We have many issues, not only us from marginalised communities but other students too but only one social worker for all of us (SP2).

Lecturers ignore students' problems. We are a lot of students (SP3).

The classes are full, and some students make noise; aayah... you understand nothing (SP4).

We were a group of students in a similar situation. It is hard for lecturers to give attention to all of us (SP6).

The study found that while students awaited to be spotted by their lecturers, the number of students in venues made it difficult for lecturers to observe and identify students in need. The findings confirm observations made by Broglia et al. (2018); Getachew (2020), and Khairani et al. (2019), who note an increase in mass higher education and the demand for counselling services to meet the diverse needs of students.

Referrers indicated that paying attention to each student was impossible because they had limited time within semesters. Parikh et al. (2021) share that a lack of time and opportunity for lecturers to engage and know about students' mental health issues ensued small fractions of lecturer-directed referrals. Lecturers' workload in packed venues and imbalances in the student-counsellor ratio impacted student-lecturer and student-counsellor relationships, causing students to feel neglected. The findings concur with (Getachew, 2020; Stallman, 2012) that there are imbalances in the counsellor-student ratio in HEIs. Lecturers paying less attention to students' problems and only focusing more on content delivery expose lecturers' attitudes toward the counselling services. Correspondingly, Parikh et al. (2021) note unfavourable attitudes among educators concerning referring students to counselling services. However, it refuted assumptions that lecturers are in constant contact with students and thus have a responsibility to observe, identify and refer students for counselling services (Yaip et al., 2019; Kambouropoulos, 2015). Therefore, most students from marginalised backgrounds sit waiting in vain for referral and reluctantly seek counselling support as their lecturers could not notice them from the masses to refer them. In some cases, students confine themselves

and seek help from individuals they can relate to. However, it is challenging for lecturers to develop close relationships with their students who are “just a number” in large groups. It concurs with many researchers Bobga (2016); Kambouropoulos (2015); Kamunyu (2016); Kamunyu et al. (2016); Martin (2018) and Tsikati (2018), who raised concerns that most students are reluctant to seek counselling support due to several factors such as fear of labels, discrimination and prejudice. Thus, most remain unnoticed in large groups of HEI lecture venues.

4.3.3.7 Dissatisfaction Resulting from a Lack of Representation and Mediation.

Referrers and beneficiaries echoed a lack of representation and mediation in different structures. They pointed to a lack of representation in management structures and committees, a lack of designated offices or visibility of such offices to facilitate students' needs, and a lack of representation of students from marginalised backgrounds in student leadership, such as the Student Representative Council (SRC).

Students revealed a lack of representation from the university in facilitating the payments of their funds. They have funds allocated, but it is disheartening to learn from their narratives that the university and the funding office failed to coordinate timely payments to the students. Subsequently, their utterances expressed anger, disappointment, hardships, distress, and further marginalisation aggravated by poor coordination and facilitation between the institutions. Students uttered humiliation at registrations where they could not register because their debts were not settled. Therefore, this situation prompts further interrogations on equitable access by students from marginalised backgrounds.

They are not represented in the academic staff structures, not represented at student leadership structure; they are not represented anywhere; it is a shock (LP2).

Do we have an office dealing with the marginalised at the university on this campus? (LP2).

Marginalised students are in the university system and are not in leadership structures to feel part of the institution (LP3).

Look at the appointments here. Who is here from their communities to act as their role model? That they are represented in our structures? (LP6).

I do not know how SRC as a student body gets involved. I do not know what they have put in place as the student body (LP9).

The social worker or any official must get involved in facilitating the funds; they must help constantly contact the Ministry to pay and be in contact (SP2).

When campaigning for SRC, if there is a student with special needs, vulnerable or marginalised as they call us, they must also be allowed to participate, even if they do not meet the academic requirements (SP3).

We need a representative to convince the universities to register us even when our tuition fees are not settled (SP3).

Counselling was helpless in this situation. No one helps us go to the vice president's office at the university to inquire about our funding. We struggle because they refuse to register until our outstanding fees are settled (SP4).

The social workers should be behind the students and ensure fair representation in the university structures (SP5).

The study discovered an absence of staff from marginalised backgrounds in the university structure to whom students could relate. The findings agree with Dieckmann et al. (2014), who point out that individuals from marginalised communities remain excluded in various structures and decision-making processes. Similar sentiments were echoed by Wulz et al. (2018), who note an underrepresentation of multiple groups, including students with disabilities and students from marginalised backgrounds, in different structures of institutions. Furthermore, most participants raised concerns about students from marginalised backgrounds not being part of the SRC to have voices in student leadership.

Moreover, beneficiaries expressed a lack of confidence, poor self-concepts, and motivation to participate in student leadership activities. Their narratives echoed dissatisfaction with counselling effectiveness in ensuring fair representation and advocating for students' needs, rights and plight. The findings call for interventions by the counselling officers to motivate and help students develop confidence and feel part of the institutions and a more close relationship and liaison with institutions responsible for addressing students' needs.

Counselling beneficiaries who participated in the study expressed a lack of mediators to facilitate and coordinate the students' issues with various respective offices. They perceived counselling as their mediator and the voice of students. Their expectations from the counselling services were to advocate for students' needs within the university and beyond and contain students' distress. Therefore, failing to facilitate or mediate for student funds affected counselling effectiveness. Similar sentiments were echoed by Cubarrubia

and Schoen (2010) that counselling services should help students develop strong support networks within and beyond the institutions, particularly finding solutions to funding, accommodation and external services.

4.3.3.8 Dissatisfaction Stemming from a Lack of Monitoring of the Referred Cases. This theme emerged from the narratives of five referrers who participated in the study. They revealed a lack of student monitoring and noted shortcomings from the government and HEIs in tracking the welfare and well-being of students admitted through the marginalised scheme and those funded through the Student Support Programme. They raised concerns about students' continuous suffering and the government's silence in finding an amicable solution. Moreover, participants doubted the outcomes of these investments. Below are some extracts from the participants' responses:

We need to monitor students who are funded. Monitoring is essential; as a government, there is a need to ensure outcomes from the investments of their funding programme (LP2). Monitoring is critical. Monitoring is not in place. We need to monitor the programmes put in place (LP2).

We do not see monitoring from the government or the institutions. We need to monitor the programmes put in place to support students (LP4).

Students are suffering here; every year, we hear their concerns; where are the government and the institutions to address these challenges? (LP6).

Once the student has gone through counselling, we need to monitor them. Monitor how the student is feeling after six months or so. Is the student fine now and settled in her schoolwork? (LP8)

They need to monitor their solution and see if it is working; these students have many complaints (LP10).

They also need to monitor and see that a permanent solution is found at the end of the day (LP11).

Counselling must be continuous, and sometimes they must take note of the students visiting the offices to see if they are still with the university (SP3).

Funding and admission through the indigenous category are some forms of equity measures to support students from marginalised backgrounds. It became apparent from the findings that the institutions and the state lack monitoring programmes, which are crucial in determining programme effectiveness and redirecting further improvement. The importance of monitoring the effectiveness of intervention programmes is emphasised (Haywood & Darko, 2021; Murray, 2012). A lack of monitoring resulted in students dropping out due to several factors, despite the funds, leading to a waste of resources. In the UK, disadvantaged groups' fair access to higher education is monitored by a designated office mandated by the government to work with HEIs to ensure maximised access and retention (Murray, 2012). Programme Monitoring is a good practice that HEIs could emulate for equitable access among students from marginalised backgrounds. Conversely, as narrated by participants, a lack of monitoring prompts questions on equity and whether the programmes serve their intended purposes.

4.3.3.9 Dissatisfaction Resulting from a Lack of follow-up. A lack of follow-up emerged from the narratives of lecturers who referred students and students who benefited from counselling services. Some participants pointed to a lack of follow-ups to determine

progress among students from marginalised backgrounds by the government availing funds for students. Participants also echoed a lack of follow-ups by referrers and counsellors who provided counselling services. A lack thereof led to some students dodging their referrals. Some referrers also admitted that they failed to make follow-ups and seek feedback on their referred cases. This is what they had to say:

Does the government also follow up on the programme's outcomes? (LP2).

Universities are not professional counselling services organisations, but there has to be an element of follow-up. I want to see this taking place (LP8).

Give students time to cope and see if they're coping (LP9).

I never followed up on the cases I referred. Sometimes, when I see the student on campus, I ask, did the counsellor contact you? I am not saying we need to know why the student wants to commit suicide, for example, but to follow up on what happened after referring (LP11).

They do not contact students to follow up (SP3).

They do not make a follow-up to see if the problems are solved (SP4).

A lack of follow-up on the welfare and well-being of the funded students also wastes state resources when students do not progress or drop out. Apart from receiving funds, many factors affect students' academic progress, which might require the funders' intervention. Johnson (2015) states that students from marginalised backgrounds struggle despite financial assistance. Furthermore, a lack of feedback deters the purposes of counselling services. It is doubtful to claim the effectiveness of counselling services as an equity measure if there are no follow-ups on interventions.

Although there have been many referral cases, in some instances, referrers could not attest to whether the counselling services received effectively counteracted the challenges encountered by the students. Consequently, it might mean that most students referred do not reach the counselling offices. At the same time, distressed students live with their burning issues unattended and eventually drop out unnoticed.

4.3.3.10 Dissatisfaction Resulting from a Lack of feedback. This theme emerged from the referrers. They voiced a lack of reporting to the referrers on the intervention provided to the referred students. Some pointed out that they made many referrals but received no feedback on the interventions given to the students. Moreover, their narratives echoed concerns that a lack of feedback interferes with students' continuous counselling support, particularly students who do not want to cooperate. The descriptions below validate the findings:

I would expect a counselling service that provides interventions and compiles a report to the department outlining the students' responses, but this is not currently happening (LP1).

Feedback is needed after their interventions to say the student is better. I am unsure if our counselling is helping students, whether they get help or not. Some students are told to return but do not want to cooperate (LP5).

I did not get any feedback, but I have to say, I never had a student who came back to say I have to go back (LP6).

We just need to get feedback, to hear, “we have seen the student, and the student has improved or has not improved and please check on the student and refer the student again...if their problem (LP7).

We refer students with the issues to the program's coordinators, but then we don't hear from them afterwards, with no feedback to the lecturers who referred the student, to indicate that the student is referred to the writing unit, counselling, or the student is being referred for extra classes or alternative modes (LP8).

I was a bit disappointed in the sense, as much as I tried to find out whether something was going on between the student and social worker, I could not get any feedback (LP9).

The problem is that the student I refer; I do not hear anything after that. What happen...? There is no formal response from the counselling office (LP10).

This study recognised limited conversations and an absence of literature on this theme. However, Siddiqi (2005) highlights the importance of feedback on counselling effectiveness. Participants' narratives exposed a lack of formal feedback regarding the counselling interventions from the counselling offices. A lack of feedback increases poor progress and high dropouts. It also makes it challenging to determine counselling effectiveness. Furthermore, the study found a lack of coordination between referrers and counsellors, defeating the purpose of counselling services. Meanwhile, it revealed limited interest by lecturers to follow up and find out the type of intervention students received and determine if the referrals were significant and impactful to the referees

4.3.3.11 Dissatisfaction with Unsustainable Solutions. Lecturers who participated in the study described the cumbersomeness in navigating sustainable solutions to students' needs, particularly regarding funding. Another point raised by participants was the unsustainable solutions students received through material donations. The referrers' perspectives show that there are limited solutions to students' financial issues, accumulating more distress. Referrers expressed dissatisfaction with counselling effectiveness in yielding permanent solutions to student fund payments and their involvement in curbing the slow academic progress of students.

Our intervention has always been materials, not sustainable. Give a three hundred and food items and cosmetics that are not sustainable (LP2).

In my years as a lecturer, I have never seen counselling steps in when we experience students not being able to progress, only academic departments to find the solutions, see how we can get the students through to progress (LP8).

They would tell the student to wait. Sometimes they prolong the waiting or breakthrough for a solution. That lengthy waiting frustrates the students (LP10).

Even the Early Alert Programme representatives find it challenging to navigate through. You may not get an imminent solution that the issues would be sorted; it is the duty of the counselling officers to advocate for solutions to students' needs (LP11).

The role of counselling in ensuring sustainable solutions to students' needs and containing their distress is described by (Ciobanu, 2013; Escapa & Julià, 2018; Hako & Mbongo, 2017; Mngomezulu, 2015; Nkechi et al., 2017; Walker & Mkwanzani, 2015).

The concerns regarding counselling involvement in providing sustainable solutions to students' prolonged and lengthy studies exposed the shortcomings of counselling effectiveness as an equity measure. It further revealed a lack of collaboration and relationships between the academic departments and the counselling service offices in finding sustainable solutions proactively.

4.3.3.12 Dissatisfaction Resulting from Students' Resistance to Referrals. This subtheme occurred in the narratives of five referrers who participated in the study. These participants expressed frustration with some students' resistance to counselling support. The referrers underscored that some students resisted because they did not believe they had problems. Thus, they required persuasion to get counselling support. Moreover, participants stated that some students were confined to the lecturers with little to no faith in the counselling services. This is what the participants had to say:

It is a mixture; there are those students who would agree, first session, they go happily, there are those who, you know, when you refer them, first they are not happy, you call them again until you convince them second or third time then they go (LP2).

I need to refer you, and there was resistance. Instead, the student is confined to me because I am her lecturer. I struggled to get her there (LP5).

I walk with the student to the referral place because sometimes they resist going there (LP6).

Sometimes they are not in the mood and do not believe they have a problem. I take them to the social worker's office, the specific office (LP7).

They get upset if they get the idea that you think something wrong with them. Students become defensive and do not want assistance (LP10).

As indicated by the participants, students' reluctance to seek counselling has negative consequences for the effectiveness of counselling as an equity measure, depriving them of the necessary support. The resistance to referrals and scepticism about their own distress depends on how the student is approached, which speaks to the skills and knowledge required for proper referrals. The findings align with Meador (2020) and Yaip et al. (2019), who argue that effective referrals necessitate a fundamental understanding of referral and counselling regulations, theories, and multiculturalism. Additionally, the findings correspond with Meador (2020), who emphasises the need for educators to undergo training before making referrals in order to ensure appropriate ones. Based on the narratives, it can be inferred that students resist counselling and confide in their instructors, possibly due to concerns about trust, confidentiality, ethics, and fear. As justified by Kambouropoulos (2015), students in higher education institutions resist counselling due to a lack of awareness about privacy guarantees and the levels of confidentiality maintained by referral and counselling teams.

4.3.4 Satisfactions and Dissatisfactions on Social Life Functional

4.3.4.1 Dissatisfaction from Students' Drop out. Four referrers and four beneficiaries expressed dissatisfaction with counselling ineffectiveness as some students could not cope and dropped out of the institutions. The participants pointed to students' inability to cope with studies due to COVID-19 remote teaching, general academic demands, city life, continued poor performance, not being noticed to be referred for

counselling support, and economic limitations. The following narratives validated these findings:

But due to late identification, some dropped out without being identified (LP1).

Counselling is effective, but not all students gain access to it. They drop out because they cannot cope, remember how they get admission, the course choices and poverty (LP2).

Some students continue failing and failing until they exceed their study period or programme faced out or eventually dropped out (LP8).

We have had a few cases, and they have been coming, working very hard, but I had 2 or 3 dropouts. They just drop out because they could not cope. Stakeholders could still do more (LP9).

Last year, many students dropped out due to COVID-19 unnoticed; they cancelled their studies and deregistered (LP10).

Some students dropped out due to online learning; they had no access to the internet and no laptops (SP2).

Truly speaking, some students could not just cope. They surrendered and dropped their courses (SP3).

Because of the suffering, some of the students from marginalised communities went back home to struggle for employment. They could not keep up with the city life (SP5).

Some students give up and drop out. (SP6).

Although all students have dreams of completing and graduating, it is not reassuring to learn from the narratives that despite the financial support and the prevalence of counselling services, some students do not succeed in receiving their desired qualifications. The findings confirm the views of Li and Carroll (2020), who note an increase in student dropout rates but contrasted (Ciobanu, 2013; Wulz et al., 2018), that counselling services curb students' dropout rates in HEIs. It is evident from the above statements that some students suffered in silence and continued failing their courses until they exceeded their study durations. The study found that some students could not adjust to city life, thus, they dropped out and returned home, while some remained until the programmes faced out. This concurs with Sweet et al. (2020), who alluded that students from marginalised backgrounds are prone to drop out due to their various transitions and cultural conflicts in search of education. Findings revealed that some students shield away from help-seeking, continued unnoticed for referrals, and eventually dropped out of the universities. Additionally, participants narrated that while some students lost interest in their programmes, others could not keep up with the online learning due to a lack of resources during the COVID-19 situation; in the absence of counselling support, they dropped out. Students dropping out signals inequity and expose limitations on the prevalence of students' support measures. The study maintains that student support services tailored to the needs of students could be more effective than general counselling services. Besides, (van Breda, 2019; van Breda & Dickens, 2017) maintain that the core principle to resilience and social well-being and welfare is to incorporate integrated interventions.

4.3.4.2 Dissatisfaction due to students Engaging in Inappropriate Behaviour (Crime and prostitution). This theme emerged from the narratives of referrers who referred students for counselling services. The referrers mentioned that some students struggled to provide for their needs and consequently reverted to inappropriate behaviour such as prostitution, cohabitation with fellow students, and getting involved with overage men (sugar daddies) as means of survival. They demonstrated dissatisfaction with students' lack of guidance on social and survival skills in HEIs. Participants also alluded that life in the city redirected students' academic focus. This is what they had to say:

Have them here for two weeks, even a week at the minimum a week and introduce them and help them acclimate to what it's like to be in the city (LP1).

I think they need orientation on that (sugar daddy situation) even in the hostel, some are married by fellow students, there is ugly stuff out there we know about it, and there is nothing much we do (LP7).

In the counselling part on social challenges, the students need to be taught about better living and adapting. Some things are missing in orientation (LP10).

She fell into some dirty work to make the end meets; to make money; sometimes, she would say, "Sometimes I do not understand my clients", and she would tell you, "I have a client I am going" (LP11).

It is worrisome to hear ways students adapt to survive in search of education. The statements above echoed inappropriate behaviour due to a lack of knowledge about city life, inadequate orientation on the social aspects of student lives and economic constraints. Various studies, CCPA (2015); Estrella and Lundberg (2006); Joan et al. (2021);

Muhammad and Kabir (2018) highlight the role of counselling in helping students adapt and adjust to the social cultures of the university environment. Meanwhile, Joan et al. (2021) caution that adjusting to social life without proper guidance and support negatively affects students' social life. Additionally, the findings necessitate advice on appropriate survival and adaptation skills to prevent social influences among students, particularly female students. Moreover, the statements revealed the limitations of counselling effectiveness as an equity measure in this social aspect of students' life.

4.3.4 Objective/questions 4: Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Counselling as an Equity Measure

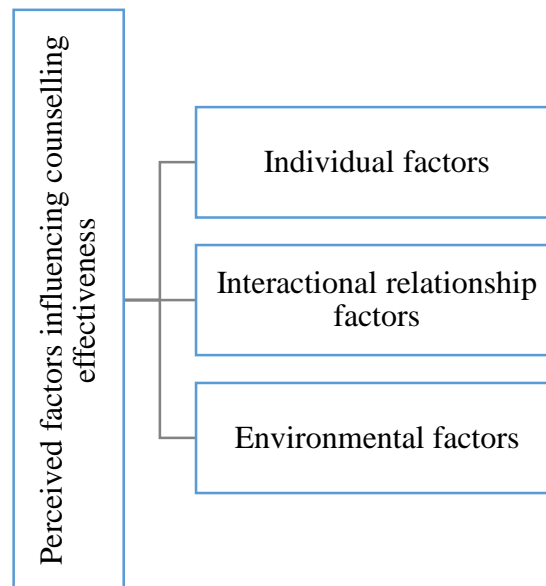
This section presents the various perceived factors influencing the effectiveness of counselling collected through semi-structured interviews with referrers and beneficiaries of the counselling services.

Questions: Under this objective, participants were asked:

1. To give their views on possible factors influencing the counselling services' effectiveness in achieving students' resilience and students' academic performance.
2. To suggest ways counselling can be improved to enhance equitable access to higher education.

The emerging themes pointed to the individual factors, the relational and environmental factors discussed below:

Figure 4.20 Factors Influencing Counselling Effectiveness



The figure presents the themes discussed under the research objective number four as discussed below:

4.4.1 Individual Factors

The participants' narratives pointed to individual factors. The findings reveal that some influencing factors are within the "self" characterised by individuals' culture, responses to referrals, fear of revealing confidential information and expectations and anticipations. The sub-themes are discussed below:

4.4.1.1 Cultural Beliefs, Norms, Customs and Values. Cultural beliefs emerged as a sub-theme on factors influencing counselling effectiveness among students from marginalised backgrounds in higher education institutions. The narratives show that individuals' cultures such as traditions, family beliefs, norms, and values are some of the factors influencing counselling effectiveness.

Referrers acknowledged the uniqueness of children's upbringing systems in different cultural settings and families. They also observed that some students absconded from school to attend mandatory cultural events back home for some time resulting in missed classes and poor performance. Furthermore, referrers admitted that not all cultures believe in and value modern counselling practices. As indicated by literature, Dass-Brailsford (2012) proposes a counselling intervention model that locates individual students and their adversity in their own cultural identity and social background context. Thus, referrers recommend varied approaches to help-seeking in different cultural contexts. Some stated the following:

Marginalised from Otjozondjupa region have their cultures, the way they do their things sometimes override, to adjust to the academic environment, one student just disappeared (LP1).

These things are new to some communities, and we need to normalise it to have a specific day to celebrate the day. What about also finding out about the African ways of counselling? (LP2)

I sometimes wonder some are from a background where you are told that you say nothing outside (LP7).

I have observed students have different backgrounds and raising systems. The upbringing differs, but some do not believe in counselling (LP8).

Depending on things they have gone through, some people cannot get solutions from others if they fail to get them on their own (LP10).

Some believe that counselling is a service that is meaningless to them (LP11).

Participants expressed how family beliefs, upbringing, norms, and values influence individual personality. They emphasised that some students were raised in homes where they were unable to discuss their situations. According to the participants, students with such backgrounds rarely seek help or speak out, regardless of the adversity they face, and they have different perceptions toward counselling. These students' characteristics can affect the effectiveness of counselling because their beliefs remain deeply ingrained. It could also suggest that the practices used to identify needs and encourage students to seek support do not work for this particular group. Cultural factors may also come into play for these students. They may not be accustomed to opening up to a stranger when they have problems, as the traditional setup is different. The findings support the need for multicultural sensitivity in counselling, as highlighted by previous studies (Robertson et al., 2015; Tsikati, 2018; Yaip et al., 2019). Resilience theory recognises indigenous knowledge and the social nature of resilience. Thus, multicultural intervention can provide a foundation for understanding cultural resilience processes (van Breda & Dickens, 2017; van Breda, 2018a, 2018b).

Participants also pointed out that, in some cases, culture plays a more significant role than counselling in helping students adapt to a new academic environment. As a result, some students drop out and return home. Referrers argue that counselling is sometimes not culturally sensitive, and they recommend incorporating cultural aspects into the guidance and advising of students. These findings align with Dass-Brailsford (2012), who proposes an intervention model that considers individual students and their adversity within their cultural and social context. Dass-Brailsford also calls for intervention frameworks that are more ecological, culturally sensitive, and empowering

to engage students from low socio-economic backgrounds in counselling support services. Students from marginalised backgrounds strongly adhere to their cultural norms and values, and their personal backgrounds determine their resilience in dealing with a situation. Therefore, for interventions to be effective, it is essential to take into account individual cultural attributes and backgrounds such as beliefs, norms, and values. During a transition, the "self-factor" or personal identity, described in Schlossberg's theory of transition, plays a significant role in individuals' coping mechanisms (Derrick, 2019; Lindstrom, 2019).

4.4.1.2 Responses to Referrals and Counselling. Other individual factors influencing the effectiveness of counselling services pointed to individuals' responses to referrals and counselling support. The study found that some students have negative connotations and perceptions about counselling services. The referrers observed different reactions to referrals and counselling services among students. They indicated positive and negative responses. In addition, referrers observed some students' reluctance, denials and avoidance of approaching counselling offices, while some were willing to seek and receive counselling support. They also echoed resistance and discomfort among students to disclose their problems. In this regard, some had this to say:

We must sensitise students to avoid relating counselling to mental issues only. Most do not want to be seen going to the counselling offices. Sometimes, there is no resistance or hustle from some students after explaining why you refer this person to the dean of the student (LP1).

Some burn inside and out after burning out, and the person is not speaking out; they need to open up, they smile even when not happy unless the person comes to you (LP2).

She did not feel comfortable discussing the situation because of the confidentiality issues; counselling only helps if the student is willing to speak up and get advice (LP3).

When I referred her to the social worker, she was open-minded, willing and ready to get help; she did not resist, we went there together, and later she started going there herself (LP4).

Some have these attitudes, “We do not want people to find out about our business”. There were two students that I referred, and they never went there; maybe they felt shame, they did not want to open up (LP4).

Some students are willing to go for counselling because they are desperate. When you listen to their stories and inform them that you will refer them to the student counsellors who are in a better position to help them, they are mainly willing to go (LP7).

For some students, their interventions worked because they acknowledged their challenges, but some completely refused to acknowledge anything wrong with him. He did not want to engage in any assistance (LP8).

To what extent are students willing to disclose their information? Many times, students must be pushed to reveal the problems they face, this issue of looking weak, all those kinds of things (LP8).

The student with social anxiety never admitted anything; he didn't want to acknowledge that he had a problem. So, what I did as a lecturer was a bit effective (LP9).

They believe or perceive counselling as mentally disturbed or service for the weak people or something (LP10).

Such perceptions need to be changed or painted a different colour. People are hesitant to seek counselling because of negative perceptions (LP11).

You are not mentally sick to get counselling, you are hungry, and they do not have food for you; it does not help to go there (SP4).

It is a pity that some students resist help and suffer in silence because of negative connotations about counselling services. The findings support Stallman (2012), who discovers that students from marginalised backgrounds shy away from seeking counselling support because of fear and discomfort. The findings also exposed limited understanding among students about the significance of counselling support. Participants expressed concerns that some students refuse to acknowledge that they have problems, and these students resist referrals. Most suffer in silence, which defeats the purpose of the available support. The findings corroborate the call made by Meador (2020) to empower educators before they make referrals. He emphasises the need for knowledge and skills before referring and supporting. Lancaster (2008) postulates that reasons for referring a student for counselling services must be made clear to the student. Participants underscored that students responded positively to referrals depending on their challenges and how their referrers approached them. This study found that in some cases, negative

responses to referrals among students inhibited counselling effectiveness. The findings revealed a lack of well-structured programmes understood by stakeholders and encouraging voluntary support seeking among students. Findings also reonate with Person-center theory stresses the need for counsellors and referrers to demonstrate unconditional positive regard, empathy and congruency (Purswell, 2019). In another perspective, resilience theory argues that encountering adversity makes individuals more likely to experience negative consequences (van Breda, 2018b). This emphasises the need for support initiatives that encourage proactive behaviour to reduce prolonged exposure to adversity among students.

4.4.1.3 Fear of Revealing Confidential Information. Fear of revealing confidential information emerged from the narratives of four referrers. They described a fear among students whom they referred for counselling. They resounded fear of confidentiality and of being seen, judged, labelled, stereotyped and discriminated against for visiting the counselling offices. Moreover, students pointed to fear of expressing themselves in English, academic demand and failure. These were their narratives:

Do I go to the head of the department, secretary or the Dean of Students and tell them that I had this problem? Is there some confidentiality? (LP1)

Sometimes they are just afraid of facing the person. Students are afraid to express themselves in English, this is some problems, where is the student supposed to go first without being judged? (LP8)

Others come nicely focused, but then they meet other friends who influence them, either by telling them that the modules are challenging, they get scared (LP9).

The other thing is that some people do not want to be seen going for counselling. They fear that people will start calling them names, laughing at them, labelling them, or grouping them into categories and groups (LP11).

Person-Centred theory in counselling is the solution to effective counselling because it discourages judgements (Hayes, 2015). It became apparent from the participants' narratives that students' fear influenced counselling effectiveness. They pointed out that some students feared being judged by the counsellors, referrers and fellow students. In addition, participants alluded that some students feared facing the counsellors and expressing themselves in English. Moreover, others feared going to the counselling office because of stigmatisation, labelling and discrimination, while some were concerned about confidentiality. Instead, some kept their issues to themselves. Kambouropoulos (2015) echoes similar sentiments that some students resist counselling services because of privacy and confidentiality. The same stances were reflected by Martin (2018), who states that some students are unforthcoming to counselling because of fear. Students seem to lack trust, fear approaching offices and losing their confidential information, and fear labels and stereotypes. According to the Person-Centred theory, as narrated in Hayes (2015), interventions should facilitate trust and the ability to encourage honesty in the process without creating fear of being judged by the service provider.

4.4.1.4 Students' Expectations. Students echoed multiple expectations, such as prompt support from the institutions and the government in their narratives. They expected good relationships and cooperation between government officials and stakeholders in HEIs. These were their statements:

From the vice president's office, they must step up and do more as they promise to cater to our needs, like paying tuition fees, allowances, and accommodation on time (SP1).

They promised they would do everything; you see, you are demanding the person to pass and progress, and you are not providing studying materials and laptops (SP1).

We gave our complaint, it was difficult, my parents had to struggle, and the office was quiet. I came in February, then March, April and May, we received nothing (SP2).

If there can be some senior students to assist the new students with the subjects” (SP3).

The situation is so rough; those who promised to care for your needs are quiet in their offices (SP4).

Providing support during the first year could be the appropriate time (SP6).

It is evident from students' narratives that they enter HEIs with multiple anticipations. They came hoping for prompt payment of their funds to sustain themselves, cater for their learning materials, smoothen their transitions and cope with their new setting. The findings also revealed that students expected to receive timely and continuous support from the institutions, the government, administration officers, and peers. However, their narratives indicated fewer expectations of support from their parents. Similarly, Murray et al. (2016) affirm that students who receive support have a high chance of adjusting to the university's academic, social and emotional demands. Krubsack

et al. (2019) reiterate students' importance of timely and continuous support. Unmet expectations put students in awkward situations and at risk of dropping out. As stated in Schlossberg's theory of transition, unanticipated events in a transition make students perceive their situation as unbearable and have detrimental effects on their transitions (Sweet et al., 2020). Hence, Student Assistance Programme is expected to effectively counteract the un-met crucial needs of students to ensure equity.

4.4.2 Interactional relationship factors

The participants' narratives mentioned factors pointing to students' interactional relationships with counsellors and referrers specifically alluding to counsellors' skills and expertise, personality, attitudes and work overload. The sub-themes are discussed below:

4.4.2.1 Student Relationships with Counsellors

4.4.2.1.1 Counselling Skills and Expertise. Under this sub-theme, referrers expressed concerns about the limited expertise of counsellors to what they have been trained for and students' diverse counselling needs. Participants' narratives also demonstrated faith in counsellors' capacity to deal with specific psychological and emotional distress. Still, they doubted the counsellors' abilities to tackle economic, academic and legal-related struggles. Referrers also underscored the importance of cultural sensitivity in counselling. This is what they echoed:

We need advisors in different fields; I know the social workers deal with social and emotional support, but you also need someone who can give academic, economic and legal advice (LP2).

In other areas, we have lecturers in various fields at the university who can assist students as part of community work, for example, language, finance, legal, psychology, and education (LP3).

Students come with academic, financial and legal problems, and most social workers are primarily trained to deal with social and psychosocial issues (LP4).

The social worker is an expert and has experience dealing with student issues (LP5).

Yeah! I referred students for counselling because counsellors would go deeper; they know how to get to the roots of why the student is not focused (LP5).

You should assist the student to water through the storms, in any area, or any problems and be sensitive to cultural norms (LP8).

As experienced counsellors during the initial talk, they should be able to figure out that there are issues that need to be addressed, and students get confined to them (LP9).

The statements above suggest limitations on the counsellors' capacity to handle multiple issues beyond their training scope. Getachew (2020) indicates that there is a need for different counsellors with varying specialisations and be proportional to the students. Participants underscored the significance of multi-counselling teams. Counsellors' knowledge and expertise and a good relationship with fellow counsellors, referrers and students influence counselling effectiveness as an equity measure.

Thomason (2011) recommends counselling best practices such as building relationships with stakeholders such as local native communities and lessening

administrative impediments to student care and support. The findings also confirm literature by Arifin (2018); Getachew (2019); IACS (2011); Murray et al. (2016), who linked the roles of counselling with solving social, psychological and personal distress that are barriers to academic coping, performance and adaptation to the university environment.

4.4.2.1.2 Counsellors Personality. Eight referrers expressed negative utterances toward supporting students in need. Although not directly, the expressions showed some negative attitudes from some referrers. Some referrers demonstrated bitterness and related the support of students to babysit them. The narrative showed a lack of interest in helping students as can be seen in the following statements:

If you come to university, you have to accept the responsibility to work hard; we cannot drag quality down. Do we think everybody is a university student? (LP2).

I am a lecturer, not a social worker; if you come to me, I am hardcore about their problems. I am bad and do not consider others different (LP3).

I do not want to carry their burdens; some burdens are too heavy (LP4).

They are like babies; they want to remain ignorant, babied further, and not grow up. They need to reach their level. I do not teach at the level they want to be. I am forced to lower my standards (LP5).

I remember specific comments from one colleague (referrer stated) “We do not have time to babysit students”, her attitude (LP6).

So, the student comes in, and most lecturers have that attitude; “I am going to my class; I am teaching my subject (LP7).

We do not have time to look at who has problems. “You should come out on your own if you have problems (LP8).

I am not interested in how students feel, what problems they have if I deliver my message/my content (LP10).

It is a pity to hear the negative expressions of some lecturers. Evidently, most students drop out unnoticed due to some lecturers’ attitudes. They echoed strong resistance and a lack of understanding toward counselling services to support the students. The findings concur with Parikh et al. (2021) that a lack of time and opportunity to know more about student mental health issues resulted in unfavourable attitudes among educators toward counselling services which deters educators-directed referrals. While some felt burdened to refer students, others did not want to hear or deal with students’ problems. Some grumbled that providing support to needy students is tantamount to babysitting them. According to some referrers, the university is not meant for everyone. Therefore, they advised students to take responsibility for their issues and studies regardless of their backgrounds. The findings contrast Bartlett and Freeze (2019) and Yaip et al. (2019), who underscore lecturers’ obligation to observe, identify and refer students for counselling services. Participants echoed forms of rejection and stigmatisation in their discussions, making students feel inferior. These kinds of attitudes in university communities influence counselling effectiveness. Reiterating the advocacy of the person-centred theory, counsellors’ practices are to be guided by the three conditions, namely, unconditional positive regard, empathy, and congruency to achieve positive results.

4.4.2.1.3 Counsellors' Attitudes Toward Students. This sub-theme emerged from almost all participants of the study. Participants expressed satisfaction with the good relationship they had with some counsellors. They underscored the importance of counsellors' attitudes and relationship with students on counselling effectiveness. Lecturers and students shared commonalities toward counsellors' attitudes. Below are their narratives:

We need people with the right skills, focused on serving others with the right attitudes. Let us have times for consultation, but flexible enough to accommodate all (LP2).

They must give continuous support until the person is strong enough; not only one session come in and go out, let us provide ongoing support (LP4).

You need a person willing to find alternative solutions (solution-oriented) (LP7).

If the problem affects the students, counsellors should provide continued support.

If the student is supported throughout, they remain focused (LP8).

The list of marginalised students should be given to counsellors. Once they have it, they should call the students and ask if they have a problem. Brainstorm and establish a relationship with them, so they know where to go when they start experiencing problems. In a way, the earlier, the better (LP9).

We were helped. She is such a mother. Each time we knocked at her door; she was willing to assist. Most of the time, she did not have means, but she tried” (SP1).

I am impressed with how she handled my situation; she handled it professionally (SP2).

The one that has students at heart. The one that is open to every student. The ones that do not give up on student issues (SP3).

She is kind and like a mother; what motivated me was the service I received the 1st time; she is interactive, open and welcoming (SP4).

I was not open because it was my first time; she asked questions like where do you stay? She did not understand my situation and later understood (SP5).

I will always use the service because the social worker is welcoming and helpful. She will not give you a solution but advise you to find your solution (SP5).

Effective counselling, in my view, is the one that attends to student needs when students call for help; they should not only refer students around or recommend but should take part in assisting the students (SP6).

The study raised similar concerns as those presented by Bobga (2016); Broglia et al. (2018); Joan et al. (2021); Stallman (2012), regarding the crucial role of counselors' attitudes in the effectiveness of counseling. The narratives provided by participants showcased their perceptions of the appropriate attitudes that facilitate effective counselling. They emphasised various personal traits that attract and put students at ease, underscoring the importance of establishing a good relationship, adopting the right attitude, and being flexible and accommodating to the needs of all students. The narratives clearly indicate that counsellors' characteristics are essential in measuring counselling effectiveness as an equity measure. Although participants shared similar perspectives on

certain aspects, they also held different views on others. Referrers emphasised the significance of developing a good relationship with students, which aligns with the findings of Southwick et al. (2014), who stated that individuals' response to stress and trauma depends on their interactions with others, available resources, culture, religion, organizations, communities, and societies.

Some beneficiaries expressed satisfaction with counsellors who displayed caring, compassionate, empathetic, welcoming, open, professional, determined, and solution-oriented attitudes. They also revealed that effective counsellors were prompt in their availability to mediate and facilitate amicable solutions. Interestingly, the findings revealed that the attitudes of counsellors determine whether students would seek support again or not. Similar viewpoints were echoed by Musika and Bukaliya (2015), who stated that counsellors' characteristics, interpersonal relationship skills, and positive personalities are key factors in counselling effectiveness.

4.4.2.1.4 Counsellors' Work Overload. This theme was derived from the narratives of six referrers who participated in the study. They echoed a shortage of counselling staff due to the rising number of diverse students and their unique counselling needs in HEIs. This is what they had to say:

How they handle other matters, I do not know. But I am sure they know how to listen and direct the students. Given the diverse needs of students, one person doing this can be challenging (LP3).

I think it is too much. All students with social and emotional issues such as abuse, rape, pregnancy, and relationships go to the social worker (LP4).

We can also use students in those fields as interns to assist the overworked social workers (LP6).

Do we have enough counsellors? In my opinion, ODS is one department at the university that is seriously understaffed and underprovided (LP7).

There might be an element of not enough counsellors available to cater to every student about the services. We cannot be selective to offer our services. We need to provide our services to all (LP8).

We need to have a counsellor per faculty who could attend the faculty and departmental meetings to listen to students' issues. The services would be closer to the students; it could make a difference in accessing these services (LP8).

There are many problems and few counsellors available, but they should provide the services to anyone, no matter who and what? Can they provide the services to everyone in the same manner? (LP9)

The narratives above substantiate the work overload of many counsellors in HEIs. Similar findings were uttered by Bobga (2016); Broglia et al. (2017); Joan et al. (2021); Stallman (2012), who indicate that counsellors' work overload is one factor that impacts the counselling service effectiveness. Counsellors' work overloads debilitate their ability to consistently provide effective counselling to the masses of students. The work overload also hinders counsellors and students from developing good relationships because most students only get a once-off counselling session. It is also indicated that Browne et al. (2017); Stallman (2012) share similar perspectives that the counsellor-student ratio limits consultations and inhibits counselling effectiveness.

4.4.2.2 Student Relationship with referrers. On the contrary, some referrers' accounts demonstrated positive attitudes and good student relationships. Their discussions showed compassion and empathy in dealing with distressed students and their challenges. Some expressed how they offered support in kind, making students confide in them. Referrers also revealed their constant efforts to ensure students' well-being. The following narratives substantiated the findings:

Sometimes when we see students suffering, we reach out and donate what we can in our capacity (LP1).

Some confined on me and always used to come and have tea in my office. I made sure I had some pieces of bread (LP2).

Very important also is that I do not send students. I walk with that student to the counselling office (LP8).

I would call students in after the test; whoever did very bad, I would call them in and ask where the problem was? I talked to them about time management (LP9).

I checked if he was in class and asked if he was okay. I told him that he should call me anytime or see me. I can do it because I have a smaller class; I always talk to them personally for a few minutes (LP10).

I am very neutral because I make it my responsibility to refer the student. You do not just refer and say goodbye when you refer a student (LP11).

Interestingly, some referrers demonstrated empathy and compassion toward students. The findings revealed that constant contact and communication helped lecturers understand students' needs and develop good relationships. Besides, the findings

resonated with Iyeke et al. (2018), who underscore that academic success depends on students' interaction with their lecturers. Thiemm and Dasgupta (2022) share similar sentiments that a lack of relationships with staff hinders the success of students from marginalised backgrounds in HEIs. Moreover, from the narratives of some referrers, mutual connections and caring were noticeable through their commitments to reach out with donations, parental and academic guidance and their actions to take students directly to the counsellor's office. The findings resonate with Krubsack et al. (2019), who recommend referrals to walk with the student to the counsellor's office and brief the counsellor about the situation. Taking such responsibility ensures that the student reaches the office and receives the needed support. It is evident from the findings that in higher education settings, students thrive when they have a good relationship with a team of elders and peers caring about their needs, such as the caring and empathetic social worker/counsellors, lecturers, support staff and fellow students.

4.4.3 Institutional Environmental factors

From the social work perspective, resilience theory considers both people and the structures to address challenges and harness well-being (van Breda, 2017). Students from marginalised backgrounds come with challenges and strengths and require the environment to be conducive to facilitating their reliance, coping and success. Walker and Mkwanzani (2015) underscore the significance of preparing the environment before admitting students from marginalised backgrounds to avoid further marginalisation. Under this theme, participants related to the location of the counsellors, visibility, accessibility to counselling services and institutional policy development and implementation.

4.4.3.1 Location of the Counselling Office. In some discussions, two participants expressed discomfort about the location of the counselling offices on campus. They had this to say:

On our campus, it is at the girls' block, not necessarily that boys should be discouraged from going to the girls' hostel; depending on culture, some might shy away (LP2).

They should have sessions with the counsellor and have effective communication in an environment where students feel comfortable and safe to say what they want (LP6).

Although only a few participants expressed this concern, it is important to acknowledge that some students may feel discouraged from seeking or responding to referrals because they feel uncomfortable accessing counselling offices. These findings are consistent with the research conducted by Kamunyu et al. (2016), who found that the location of counselling offices can hinder students from seeking support. This supports Astin's IEO model and the resilience theory, which offer a framework for examining the influence of the university environment on student development, identifying necessary interventions and their implementation strategies to achieve desired outcomes, and assessing the level of student engagement required.

Although not many participants raised this concern, it is worth noting that some students are discouraged from seeking or responding to referrals at times because they are not comfortable entering the offices. The findings concur with Kamunyu et al. (2016), who discover that the counselling office location can inhibit students from seeking

support. Supporting Astin's IEO model that offers opportunities to explore the influence of the university environment on student development, determine the kind of interventions needed and their strategies for implementation to attain the desired outcomes, and the depth of student involvement required.

4.4.3.2 Visibility and Accessibility of Counselling Service. Some narratives, mainly from referrers, echoed concerns about the limited visibility of counsellors' activities on campuses. They expressed the significance of counsellors' presence on each campus. Participants indicated a lack of awareness about counsellors' activities. They stated the following:

In my honest opinion, the counselling office is mute; while it is supposed to be the most active, we only see them in meetings at the beginning of the year. Where are their annual reports? (LP2).

Another thing is we need to cut the distance between the ODS and the students. It has not been brought closer to the students to feel that the office is meant to handle our issues (LP4).

An office of that magnitude should not have consultation hours but be open throughout. Students on campus need to be in touch with the social workers (LP5).

The distance, between Campuses, is costly. Do we need a counselling service officers on all campuses (LP6)?

We only see them during the career fair and cultural festivals. I feel their emphasis is not visible, and their roles are not visible enough (LP9).

They need to be more available for students. They need to be more visible and inform the academic side about their roles. We do not know what they are doing (LP10).

A lot must be done to change or make the system popular. I have never met counsellors; what about students? I do not even know who our counsellors are. They need to be visible on the campuses (LP11).

The roles of counselling services and their significance in education were echoed by many researchers (Ashipala-Hako, 2014; BACP, 2017; Escapa & Julià, 2018; Hako & Mbongo, 2017; Mbongo et al., 2016; Walker & Mkwanzani, 2015). From the narratives, referrers acknowledged the usefulness of counselling services but revealed insufficient activities to popularise the roles of their offices. Furthermore, they noted a lack of counselling offices on some campuses. Thus, students have to spend money or walk to access the service, which sometimes discourages students from reaching out for support. Similar findings were echoed by Avery et al. (2014), that despite students' greatest needs, some students have limited access to counsellors.

Kamunyu (2016) maintains that counselling services that are readily available when needed, are more effective for students than those available later. Participants expected students to have a sense of ownership of the office and easy accessibility to the services. The referrers perceived the office to be the voice of the students, however, participants revealed muteness, a lack of interaction and distant relationships between the office and the students. It became clear that referrers considered ongoing support more helpful. They indicated that most students only see the social worker once in most cases. According to the participants, having counselling services on campuses allows continued

support and enables the social worker to develop better relationships and constantly monitor students' improvement.

4.4.3.3 Policy Development and Implementation. Participants revealed a lack of policy to guide the referral process. Thus, participants called for policies to be availed to all stakeholders involved in referring students for counselling support. As stated below:

I think we need to, or the policy issue needs to be clarified explicitly. Who is in a position to make a referral (LP2)?

There is no clear policy and mandate on what should happen regarding students' referrals. It is up to individual lecturers who want to do it. If policies are available, they must be shared with all staff (LP5).

Referrers revealed a lack of policy to guide referral practices. Policies inevitably compel and encourage efficiency in handling students' sensitive issues. Although HEIs have some policies and guidelines in place, the findings reveal a lack of awareness and limitations on policy dissemination and implementation. Thus, suggesting a need to extensively share the referral policies and guidelines with all involved stakeholders. It is vital to develop policies and make them available to smoothen counselling practices and enhance effectiveness. These findings support calls that effective referrals require proper regulations (Nwonyuku, 2018 and Yaip et al., 2019).

4.5 Summary

This chapter presents and discusses the qualitative findings from Phase 1 of the study in a more academic manner. It explores additional themes that have emerged and

relates them to existing theories and literature. The participants' narratives are presented verbatim to convey their original views and experiences accurately.

The experiences of both referrers and beneficiaries from the participating institutions primarily revolve around the financial, physiological, psychological, and academic needs of students from marginalised backgrounds. Of particular concern are the delays in fund payments, which are identified as the main cause of student distress. This issue, in turn, leads to secondary (physiological) and tertiary (academic and psychological) distress, underlining the urgency of the problem.

In contrast, both referrers and beneficiaries from the participating institutions express discontent and highlight limitations in the effectiveness of counselling. These limitations, including a lack of knowledge and skills among referrers, referral policies and procedures, representation in decision-making structures, feedback, monitoring, follow-up, and delays in referrals and interventions, have a significant negative impact on students' well-being and functioning, contributing to various psychological problems.

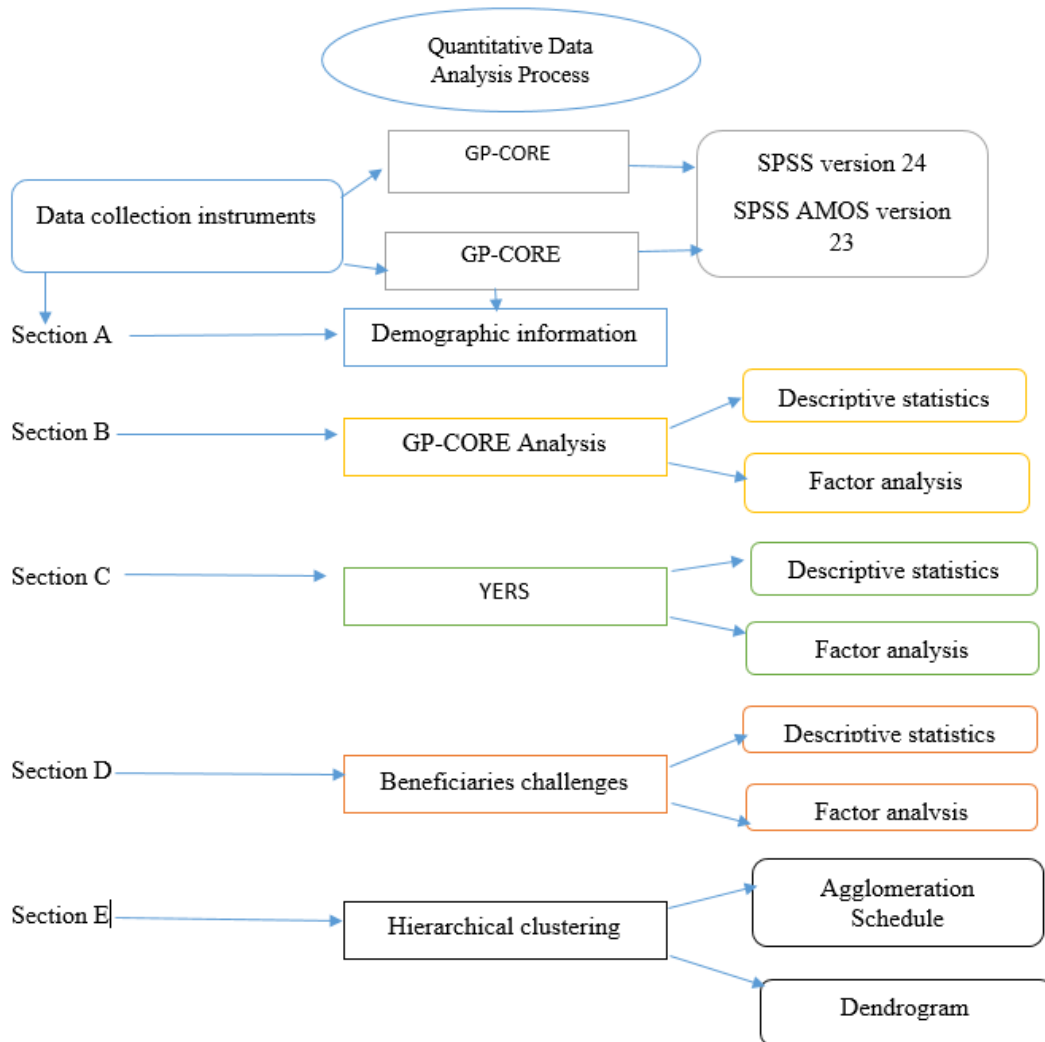
Further on, the chapter presents and discusses the factors that influence the effectiveness of counselling as an equity measure, which in turn leads to students' resilience and academic performance. These factors include individual characteristics, interactional relationships, and institutional environmental factors. The discussion covers aspects such as training and expertise, workload, personality, attitudes, students' responses to referrals, location, visibility, accessibility to services, as well as policy development and implementation. The next chapter will present and discuss the quantitative results of Phase 1 of this study.

Chapter Five

5. Presentation and Discussion of Quantitative Results

This chapter presents the results of the quantitative analysis that aimed to determine the effectiveness of counselling services for beneficiaries, focusing on their satisfaction, resilience, and academic performance. The chapter addresses three research objectives, two (2) and four (4), including determining beneficiaries' satisfaction, determining the factors influencing the counselling services' effectiveness and proposing a model for developing Student Assistance Programme (SAP) for effective student services.

Figure 5.21 Quantitative data analysis



Note: A brief summary of the quantitative data analysis

Table 5.21 outlines briefly the summary of quantitative data analysis. It provides an overview of the various analysis of each section of the questionnaire.

Two validated structured instruments, the General Population Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation (GP-CORE) and the Youth Ecological Resilience Scale (YERS) by van Breda (2016) were combined to measure the outcomes of the counselling services.

The GP-CORE was used to determine the beneficiaries' satisfaction with the services, and the YERS aimed to identify the factors influencing the counselling services' effectiveness as equity measures to support students from marginalised backgrounds.

The chapter is divided into five sections. Section A presents and discusses the demographic variables and descriptive statistics. Section B presents quantitative data from the GP-CORE instrument explained in Chapter Three to measure and determine the psychological domains for satisfaction with counselling services. Meanwhile, Section C; provides insights into the factors influencing the counselling services' effectiveness as equity measures to support students from marginalised backgrounds. Section D presents and discusses descriptive statistics of beneficiaries' challenges, and lastly, Section E presents and debates the hierarchical Clustering of Factors related to Counselling Service Effectiveness.

Moreover, the chapter provides a detailed discussion of the data analysis approach, including the measures taken to ensure the validity of the results. The analysis used Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to validate the instrument's use, focusing on the sample size and the strength of the relationship among the variables. Exploratory Factor Analysis was conducted using Principal axis factoring with Varimax Rotation to simplify the interpretation of the factors and limit their location within the factor space. The final section of the chapter presents the results of the dendrogram analysis that represents the hierarchical clustering of factors that have emerged based on their similarity or dissimilarity.

5.1 Section A: Demographic Information

The demographic information collected through the questionnaire in this study includes a range of variables that provide insights into the characteristics of the study sample. These variables include age, gender, counselling status, ethnic group, region, home language, counselling referral, the period in which counselling was received, study year at university, number of counselling sessions in a year, and persons the respondent is living with while attending university. Table 5.14 on the next page presents the results.

Table 5.13 Descriptive of the Raw Demographic and Counseling-Related Variables

Variable	Description	N	%	Variable	Description	N	%
Age group	<= 20 years	2	2.4%	Gender	Male	19	22.4%
	21 - 25 years	40	47.1%		Female	66	77.6%
	26 - 30 years	29	34.1%		Total	85	100.0%
	31+ years	14	16.5%	Counselling Status	No Counselling	18	21.2%
	Total	85	100.0%		Attended/Completed	67	78.8%
			Total		85	100%	
Region	Erongo	1	1.2%	Ethnic Identity	Baster	2	2.4%
	Hardap	2	2.4%		Coloured	1	1.2%
	Khomas	15	17.6%		Damara/Nama	3	3.5%
	Kunene	45	52.9%		Herero	24	28.2%
	Ohangwena	11	12.9%		Himba	18	21.2%
	Omaheke	1	1.2%		Kavango	1	1.2%
	Omusati	5	5.9%		San	32	37.6%
	Oshana	1	1.2%		Zemba	4	4.7%
	Oshikoto	1	1.2%		Total	85	100.0%
	Otjozondjupa	3	3.5%				

	Total	85	100.0%		Doctor	1	1.5%
Home Language	Afrikaans	3	3.5%	Referred to counselling By	Friend	15	22.4%
	Khoekhoe gowab	35	41.2%		Lecturer	21	31.3%
	Otjiherero	46	54.1%		Self	25	37.3%
	Rukwanga li	1	1.2%		SRC	5	7.5%
	Total	85	100.0%		Total	67	100%
Accommodation	Family members	19	22.4%	Period Counselling Received	Year 1	25	61.00%
	Friends	1	1.2%		Year 2	8	19.50%
	Hostel	16	18.8%		Year 3	6	14.60%
	Own	15	17.6%		Year 4	2	4.90%
	Parents	11	12.9%		Total	41	100.0%
	Siblings	23	27.1%		Study Year	Year 1	7
Total	85	100.0%	Year 2	17		25.4%	
Yearly counselling sessions	None	18	21.2%	Year 3		27	40.3%
	Once	45	52.9%	Year 4		16	23.9%
	Twice	17	20.0%	Total	67	100.0%	
	More than two	5	5.9%				
	Total	85	100.0%				

In Table 5.13, the results are interpreted as a summary of demographic and counselling-related variables of a sample of eighty-five (85) students from marginalised backgrounds studying at the participating Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Namibia.

5.1.1 Gender

Most respondents were female (77.6%), while only 22.4% were male. This may be due to societal norms that discourage males from seeking help for mental health issues. The results are consistent with other studies that have found that females are more likely to seek counselling services than males (Kamunyu et al., 2016).

5.1.2 Age

The majority of respondents were between 21-25 years (47.1%), followed by 26-30 years (34.1%) and 31+ years (16.5%), and only two respondents (2.4%) were aged 20 years or below. The age distribution of respondents was skewed towards the younger end, with 47.1% of respondents aged 21-25 years. Results are consistent with the age distribution of university students in Namibia, where most students are in their early to mid-twenties (UNAM, 2017). It is important to note that younger individuals may be more vulnerable to mental health issues due to the stress of transitioning to university life (van Breda, 2018b)

5.1.3 Ethnic Identity

The largest local ethnic group represented in the sample was the San (37.6%), followed by the Herero (28.2%), Himba (21.2%), Zemba (4.7%). This is consistent with the ethnic diversity of Namibia as a whole, where there are over 11 different ethnic groups. It is essential to understand the cultural factors that may influence help-seeking behaviour among different ethnic groups to promote counselling services effectively (Choi & Doh, 2019).

5.1.4 Region

Most respondents were from the Kunene Region (52.9%), followed by Khomas (17.6%), Ohangwena (12.9%), and the remaining regions had fewer respondents. The results reflect the distribution of marginalised communities across the country, with the Kunene Region having the largest population of the nomadic ethnic groups; however, ensuring all students have equal access to counselling services is important.

5.1.5 Home Language

Home language: Otjiherero was the most frequently spoken home language (54.1%), followed by Khoekhoegowab (41.2%) and Afrikaans (3.5%). This is consistent with the ethnic diversity of Namibia and the major languages spoken in the Kunene Region. It is vital to ensure that counselling services are provided in various languages to accommodate the needs of different ethnic groups (Robertson et al., 2015).

5.1.6 Accommodation

The largest group of respondents were living with siblings (27.1%), followed by family members (22.4%), and hostel accommodation (18.8%). Few respondents reported living with friends (1.2%), their parents (12.9%), or on their own (17.6%).

5.1.7 Study Year

Most respondents were in their third year of university (40.3%), followed by second year (25.4%), fourth year (23.9%), and first year (10.4%).

5.1.8 Counselling Referral

Respondents were referred to counselling by various sources, with the majority of respondents having been self-referred (37.3%) or referred by lecturers (31.3%), followed by friends (22.4%) and the Student Representative Council (SRC) (7.5%). This suggests that it is important to promote awareness of counselling services among all university community members, including faculty and staff to encourage referrals and help-seeking behaviour.

5.1.9 Counselling Status

Most respondents (78.8%) had attended or completed counselling. Although the sample was for students who received counselling support, 21.2% indicated they had not

received any counselling. The responses suggest that some beneficiaries did not perceive the support they received as counselling or perhaps were shy to reveal that they received the counselling services. Some students shy away from counselling services due to the stigma associated with mental ill health and the terminologies used to describe the therapy (Kamunyu et al., 2016; Manana, 2017). However, the fact that 21.2% of respondents indicated not receiving any counselling may mean a need for distinguishing the various support services (psychological and non-psychological) offered to students, name change and improved access to and promotion of counselling services on campuses (Byrd, 2017; Robinson et al., 2016).

5.1.10 Number of Counselling Sessions in a Year

Most respondents reported attending counselling once per year (52.9%), followed by twice (20.0%) and more than twice (5.9%).

5.1.11 Period/year Counselling was Received

Most respondents received counselling in their first year of studies (61.0%), followed by second year (19.5%), third year (14.6%), and fourth year (4.9%). This may indicate that the transition to university life is a particularly stressful time for students and that early intervention is important (Krubsack et al., 2019; Lancaster, 2008; Lemberger et al., n.d.; Yaip et al., 2019).

The percentages indicate that counselling may be crucial for students in their first year of education, as over 60% of the total number of students who received counselling was during their first year. The results may indicate that students new to higher education are particularly vulnerable and may benefit from additional support to succeed academically.

Notably, the number of students receiving counselling decreased each year, suggesting that students may become less likely to seek out or receive this type of support as they progress through their education. The results concur with Sweet et al. (2020), that students from marginalised backgrounds transit from high school to university less prepared and are confronted with many events that require continuous support.

In conclusion, the study provides valuable insights into the demographic information of students from marginalised backgrounds in HEIs in Namibia and their satisfaction with counselling services. The study highlights the importance of considering the cultural factors that may influence help-seeking behaviour among different ethnic groups and the potential benefits of offering additional support and resources to vulnerable students, particularly those in their first year of education.

5.2. Section B: Satisfaction with Counselling Services Offered

This section presents the results from Section B of the questionnaire, based on the General Population- Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation (GP CORE) scale. The GP CORE measure assessed the psychological domains for satisfaction with counselling services, the tool was used to collect data, and the analysis focused on positively and negatively worded items. The positively worded items on the measure comprised eight items focusing on subjective well-being, general functioning, and close functioning, while the negatively worded items focused on problem/distress and social functioning.

Table 5.14 Descriptive Statistics of Satisfaction with Counselling Services using the GP-CORE on the psychological domains

Code	not at all		occasionally		sometimes		often		most/all the time		Positive wording	MMS	Domain-cluster
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	Sign	%	
secB_3	10	15.6%	13	20.3%	21	32.8%	6	9.4%	14	21.9%	+	52.9%	Subjective well being
secB_6	8	12.5%	11	17.2%	24	37.5%	6	9.4%	15	23.4%	+	53.1%	Functioning-general
secB_14	11	17.2%	10	15.6%	26	40.6%	7	10.9%	10	15.6%	+	57.1%	Functioning-general
secB_4	12	18.8%	28	43.8%	14	21.9%	6	9.4%	4	6.3%	+	56.1%	Functioning-general
secB_9	11	17.2%	31	48.4%	13	20.3%	4	6.3%	5	7.8%	+	54.0%	Functioning-general
secB_13	12	18.8%	11	17.2%	27	42.2%	4	6.3%	10	15.6%	+	56.6%	Subjective well being
secB_2	9	14.1%	2	3.1%	36	56.3%	13	20.3%	4	6.3%	+	58.1%	Functioning-close
secB_8	11	17.2%	9	14.1%	33	51.6%	6	9.4%	5	7.8%	+	62.6%	Functioning-close
secB_11	13	20.3%	6	9.4%	39	60.9%	4	6.3%	2	3.1%	-	68.0%	Problems-depression
secB_5	15	23.4%	7	10.9%	37	57.8%	3	4.7%	2	3.1%	-	69.3%	Problems-physical
secB_7	15	23.4%	6	9.4%	37	57.8%	5	7.8%	1	1.6%	-	70.7%	Problems-physical
secB_10	14	21.9%	6	9.4%	39	60.9%	2	3.1%	3	4.7%	-	71.2%	Functioning-social
secB_12	13	20.3%	6	9.4%	35	54.7%	6	9.4%	4	6.3%	-	71.0%	Functioning-social
secB_1	17	26.6%	5	7.8%	30	46.9%	3	4.7%	9	14.1%	-	71.9%	Problems-anxiety

Table 5.14 displays the descriptive statistics generated from the GP-CORE. The table offers an overview of the participants' responses, showing the percentage and Mean Maximum Score (MMS) for each domain cluster. It is worth noting that there is a difference in the MMS between the positively worded and negatively worded items. This distinction is visually represented by highlighting the disparity in scores. Lower scores are shown in red, while higher scores are depicted in green on the MMS. Specifically, the positively worded items have lower scores, while the negatively worded items have higher scores. These findings indicate a noteworthy level of dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of counseling services among the respondents.

Table 5.15 Descriptive statistics of the GP CORE statements

Code	GP-Core Statement	Descriptive Statistics				
		Mean	Max	Min	Std. Dev.	MMS %
	I have.....					
secB_3	felt ok about myself	3.64	6	1	2.14	52.9%
secB_6	been happy with the things done	3.65	6	1	2.16	53.1%
secB_9	been able to do most things i needed to	3.70	6	1	2.12	54.0%
secB_4	felt able to cope when things go wrong	3.81	6	1	2.10	56.1%
secB_13	felt optimistic about my future	3.83	6	1	2.09	56.6%
secB_14	achieved things i want to	3.86	6	1	2.05	57.1%
secB_2	felt i had someone to turn to for support when needed	3.90	6	1	1.99	58.1%
secB_8	felt warm or affectionate for someone	4.13	6	1	1.81	62.6%
secB_11	felt unhappy	4.40	6	1	1.58	68.0%
secB_5	been troubled by aches pains or other physical problems	4.46	6	1	1.61	69.3%
secB_7	had difficulty getting to sleep or staying asleep	4.536	6	1	1.556	70.7%
secB_12	been irritable when with other people	4.55	6	1	1.55	71.0%
secB_10	felt criticised by other people	4.56	6	1	1.62	71.2%
secB_1	felt tense anxious or nervous	4.60	6	1	1.51	71.9%

Note: MMS: Mean Max Score calculated by $(\text{Mean} - \text{Min}) / (\text{Max} - \text{Min}) \times 100$

Tables 5.15 present the distribution of Mean Max Score (MMS) percentages of respondents on the 14 items of the GP-CORE. The table indicates that positively worded items had a lower MMS, ranging from 52.9% to 62.6%, whereas negatively worded items had a higher MMS, ranging from 68.0% to 71.9%. These results suggest dissatisfaction with counselling effectiveness in addressing some psychological domains. Furthermore, the relatively high MMS% for the negatively worded items suggests that student distress was prevalent despite the availability of counselling services.

5.2.1. Positively Worded Satisfaction Encounters

Positively worded are positive statements in the GP CORE measure. The measure comprises eight (8) positively worded items focusing on the following psychological domains: Subjective well-being two (2), functioning general two (2) and functioning close four (4) items, respectively.

5.2.1.1 Subjective Well-being. Items three (3) and thirteen (13) on the scale address the subjective well-being domain and had an MMS ranging between 52.9% to 56.6%, respectively. The scores indicate lower Subjective Well-being (SWB), implying that students do not experience Life Satisfaction (LS). The lower MMS on Positive Affects (PA) indicate significantly Low Life Satisfaction among students from marginalised backgrounds. In this study, low SWB and LS could be attributed to financial and physiological distress characterised by low optimism and worries about insecurity about accommodations, food, clothing, toiletries, transport, unpaid tuition fees and delayed pocket/upkeep money discussed in Chapter Four. The findings concur with Proctor (2016) who states that a lack of happiness and frequent emotions lead to dissatisfaction with life, resulting in low SWB.

5.2.1.2 Functioning – General. In the context of this study, functioning-general relates to students' satisfaction with academic achievement, coping with academic demands, settled in the university setting, academic excellence, success and progress. Items four (4), six (6), nine (9), and fourteen (14) are positively worded items that address satisfaction with functioning-general. Functioning-general had low MMS ranging between 53.1% to 57.1%, implying low satisfaction despite attending counselling services. This observation substantiated the need for effective interventions to enhance students' satisfaction with their functioning general domain. According to Yates et al. (2015), the most effective interventions should focus on multiple mechanisms and levels of action to address distress and promote individual resources to safeguard general life functioning.

5.2.1.3 Functioning -Close relationship. Items two (2) and eight (8) of the GP CORE are positively worded and address functioning close in the psychological domain. The MMS score ranged between 58.1% to 62.6%, mild to moderate. Despite having counsellors, social workers, lecturers, support staff and peers, the positively worded had a low MMS, also showing less satisfaction with counselling services. The findings agree with Proctor and Linley (2014) who assert that individuals with strong relations with adults and peers develop a sense of purpose and meaning in life. Low MMS on students' functional close domain signifies a lack of meaningful relationships between students, their peers and adults in the university environment. The results substantiate findings from semi-structured interviews that pointed to a lack of role models and mediators to facilitate and coordinate students' funds and a lack of representatives in leadership and academic and administrative positions. The findings also corroborated the need for a Student Assistance Programme (SAP) to facilitate students' relationships and boost students' satisfaction and resilience amid adversity.

5.2.2. Negatively Worded Dissatisfaction Encounters

The GP CORE comprises six (6) negatively worded items focusing on the following psychological domains: Problem/distress five (5) and social functioning one (1) item, respectively. The Mean Maximum Score (MMS) on the negatively worded items were high than the positively worded items. The high MMS on the negatively worded items also signifies significant dissatisfaction with counselling services' effectiveness among the respondents.

5.2.2.1. Problems- Depression. On the GP CORE measure, item eleven (11) focuses on problems of depression which is a psychological health issue (I have felt

unhappy) (Lorentzen et al., 2020). Unhappiness among students signifies counselling limitations to buffer factors leading to students' prolonged distress leading to mental health issues such as stress and depression. The result shows high MMS of 68%, indicating a significant dissatisfaction with counselling effectiveness in counteracting depression. More respondents indicated to have experienced depression. Results concur with (Flatt, 2013; Francis & Horn, 2017) that most students sought counselling services due to depression.

5.2.2.2. Problem-Physical. Two (2) items on the measure address problem physical or psychological domain. The MMS on these items are high and ranged between 69.3% to 70.7%, respectively. The results also validate the prevalence of physical distress, which could be associated with food and accommodation insecurity and the emotional and physical abuse they encounter, discussed in Chapter 4. A high MMS on these items shows dissatisfaction and limitations with counselling effectiveness in counteracting students' physical problems. Implying that despite the intervention, respondents indicated experiencing some physical health problems and insomnia. Besides, Kamunyu (2016; Shankar et al. (2013) indicate that students encounter physical distress, such as hunger, and illnesses requiring HEIs interventions. Meanwhile, Broglia et al. (2018); Brunner et al. (2014); Keller and Porter (2020) allude that students in higher education experience different sorts of abuse, including physical and sexual assaults.

5.2.2.3. Problems –Anxiety. One (1) negative worded item on the GP CORE measure (I have felt tense, anxious and nervous) addresses problem anxiety in the psychological domain. The results indicated a high Mean Maximum Score (MMS) of 71.9%. The high score on this negatively worded item shows a significant dissatisfaction

among respondents on counselling effectiveness to counteract the problem anxiety domain. The results share commonality with interview findings that most students are referred for counselling due to psychological distress such as anxiety, stress, depression and mental confusion. Similar sentiments were echoed by Bernhardsdóttir and Vilhjálmsson (2013); Ekore, (2016), that students experience anxiety and mental disorder affecting their academic performance.

5.2.2.4. Functioning – Social. Items ten (10) and twelve (12) in the GP CORE address social functioning in the psychological domain. The items show a high MMS ranging between 71.0% to 71.2%, respectively. The respondents revealed dissatisfaction with their social functioning aspect. Further, Brunner et al. (2014); Johnson (2015) underscore different social adversity facing students in higher education. Meanwhile, findings from Proctor and Linley (2014) indicate that students with high levels of life satisfaction benefit from adaptive psychosocial functioning, intra and interpersonal and social relationships, academic success and overcoming distress compared to those who are dissatisfied. Similarly, Cummins (2018) points out that relationship with different groups is one of the “Golden Triangle of Happiness”, attributing to the factors that enhance resilience. The high MMS on these negatively worded items concur with Flatt (2013), that students from racial minorities suffer from unconscious racial prejudice from their peers, also called macroaggression. The high scores items (I have felt criticised by other people, 71.2%, and I have irritable when with others, 71.0%) show counselling limitations to counteract the social distress, which confirms issues of discrimination, stereotype experienced by students from marginalised backgrounds (Dieckmann et al., 2014).

In summary, the results revealed low satisfaction levels with subjective well-being, general functioning, and close functioning domains, indicating low life satisfaction, a lack of optimism, worries, and meaningful relationships between students, their peers, and adults. Conversely, the MMS on negatively worded items was high, suggesting significant dissatisfaction with counselling services' effectiveness in counteracting depression, physical problems, and anxiety. The results also validate the prevalence of physical distress associated with food and accommodation insecurity and emotional and physical abuse.

The study suggests that effective interventions are needed to enhance students' satisfaction with university counselling services. Effective interventions should focus on multiple mechanisms and levels of action to address distress and promote individual resources to safeguard general life functioning. The study also emphasises the need for Student Assistance Programs (SAP) to facilitate students' relationships and boost their satisfaction and resilience amid adversity.

5.2.3 Factor Analysis Results

The GP CORE measure assessed the psychological domains for satisfaction with counselling services, the tool was used to collect data, and the analysis focused on positively and negatively worded items. The positively worded items on the measure comprised eight items focusing on subjective well-being, general functioning, and close functioning, while the negatively worded items focused on problem/distress and social functioning. The study uses factor analysis to assess the underlying factors further.

Figure 5. 22 Presents the Model Diagram and its Fitness Parameters

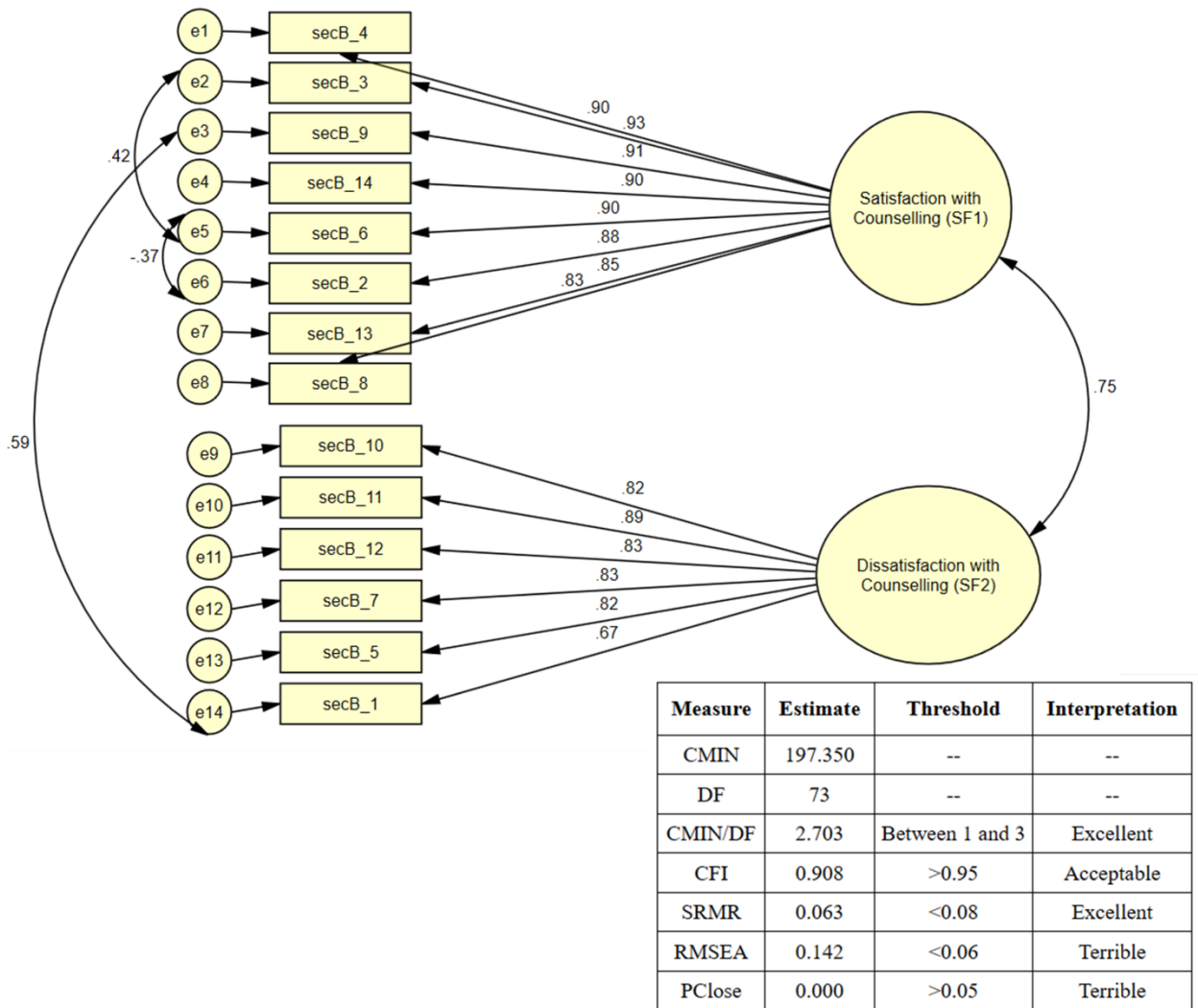


Figure 5.22 indicates that satisfaction with counselling services is strongly associated with positively worded GP CORE measures, including secB_3, secB_4, secB_6, secB_8, secB_9, secB_13, and secB_14, as evidenced by the high positive estimates and statistically significant p-values. These GP CORE measures represent various mental health and well-being aspects, such as self-esteem, resilience, and positive emotions. The standardised regression weights further support these findings, indicating that satisfaction with counselling services is strongly and positively correlated with these

GP CORE measures. On the other hand, dissatisfaction with counselling services is associated with lower scores on secB_1, secB_5, secB_7, secB_11, and secB_12, indicating that it has a negative impact on various aspects of psychology, such as emotional regulation, social support, and personal growth.

The findings suggest that satisfaction with counselling services is an important predictor of positive psychological outcomes, while dissatisfaction with counselling services may have adverse effects on emotional health.

The 12-item GP CORE measures relate that functioning, well-being, and social relationships are positively associated with the domain cluster of functioning-general, functioning-close, and subjective well-being. These items have mean scores ranging from 3.64 to 4.13, indicating that participants generally reported moderate to low levels of satisfaction with functioning and well-being. On the other hand, there are three items related to problems with depression, anxiety, and physical health that are negatively associated with their respective domain clusters. These items have mean scores ranging from 4.40 to 4.56, indicating that participants generally reported higher levels of problems in these areas, indicating low satisfaction with problems (physical, depression and anxiety).

The study found that satisfaction with counselling services is strongly associated with positive mental health and well-being aspects, as indicated by high positive estimates and statistically significant p-values. The standardised regression weights also support this finding, suggesting that satisfaction with counselling services strongly correlates with various positive aspects of mental health, such as self-esteem, resilience, and positive emotions (Cummins, 2018; Tapia-Fonllem et al., 2013; de Villiers, 2014). Furthermore,

dissatisfaction with counselling services is associated with negative impacts on various aspects of mental health, such as emotional regulation, social support, and personal growth. The findings suggest that satisfaction with counselling services significantly predicts positive mental health outcomes, while dissatisfaction with counselling services may have adverse effects on mental health (Cummins, 2018; Tapia-Fonllem et al., 2013).

Overall, the findings suggest that satisfaction with counselling services is critical in promoting positive psychological health outcomes and that addressing multiple aspects of subjective well-being is important for achieving optimal psychological health outcomes. The findings underscore the need for continued investment in counselling services and a holistic approach to psychological health and well-being. The results of this study support previous research that has shown the importance of counselling services in promoting positive mental health outcomes. For example, a study by (Bernhardsdóttir and Vilhjálmsón (2013); Ekore et al. (2016) found that counselling interventions can significantly positively affect various mental health outcomes, such as reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety and improving overall well-being.

5.3 Section C: Beneficiaries' Resilience Based on the YERS Scale

This section presents the findings from Section C of the questionnaire. It is based on the Youth Ecological Resilience Scale (YERS) for a sample of marginalised students at selected HEIs in Namibia. The YERS is a validated instrument to measure young people's ecological resilience. The YERS assesses the resilience of youth in various domains, such as community relationships, family relationships, distress tolerance, empathy, self-efficacy, and spirituality, among others. Table 5.17 provides information about Cronbach's alpha, mean, standard deviation, number of items, Standard Error of the

Mean (SEM), and Minimum Mean Score (MMS) for each of the 20 components of the Youth Ecological Resilience Scale (YERS).

Table 5.16 Descriptive Statistics for the Youth Ecological Resilience Scale (YERS)

Code	Section Component's	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean	Std. Dev	No. of Items	SEM	MMS
YERS_09	Social Activities	0.69	18.98	4.82	6	2.7	63.3%
YERS_07	Community Safety	0.6	9.61	3.02	3	1.91	64.1%
YERS_18	Bouncebackability	0.54	16.34	3.3	5	2.24	65.4%
YERS_08	Family Financial Security	0.41	13.34	2.55	4	1.95	66.7%
YERS_21	Distress Tolerance	0.73	27.38	5.37	8	2.78	68.5%
YERS_12	Interdependent Problem-Solving	0.76	13.73	3.64	4	1.8	68.7%
YERS_11	High Self-Expectations	0.75	20.78	4.71	6	2.37	69.3%
YERS_20	Self Esteem	0.76	38.53	7.06	11	3.49	70.1%
YERS_02	Friends Relationships	0.82	21.92	4.41	6	1.85	73.1%
YERS_03	Teacher Relationships	0.93	22.41	5.44	6	1.49	74.7%
YERS_10	Interdependent Problem-Solving	0.63	18.85	2.87	5	1.76	75.4%
YERS_01	Family Relationships	0.76	22.8	3.99	6	1.94	76.0%
YERS_06	Love Relationships	0.86	19.07	3.57	5	1.35	76.3%
YERS_04	Community Relationships	0.75	23.92	3.02	6	1.51	79.7%
YERS_13	Self-Efficacy	0.8	28.24	4	7	1.8	80.7%
YERS_14	Resourcefulness	0.7	28.55	2.79	7	1.52	81.6%
YERS_22	Spirituality	0.83	24.67	4.08	6	1.68	82.2%
YERS_19	Optimism	0.5	20.66	2.48	5	1.75	82.6%
YERS_05	Role Model Relationships	0.92	25.54	4.44	6	1.29	85.1%
YERS_16	Empathy	0.88	34.18	3.42	8	1.21	85.5%
YERS_15	Teamwork	0.83	21.82	2.2	5	0.91	87.3%
YERS_17	Positive Learning Experience	0.7	26.64	2.48	6	1.35	88.8%

Table 5.16 presents the descriptive statistics for each of the 20 components of the Youth Ecological Resilience Scale (YERS) used to assess the resilience of students from marginalised backgrounds in HEIs. The results indicate that students possess moderate to high levels of ecological resilience, with mean scores ranging from 9.61 to 38.53 and standard deviation ranging from 2.20 to 7.06. The SEM values range from 0.91 to 3.49, indicating some measurement errors associated with the YERS scores. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients range from 0.41 to 0.93, indicating moderate to high levels of internal consistency across most components of the YERS. However, the Family Financial Security component (YERS_08) has relatively low reliability, suggesting that this component may not be a strong indicator of ecological resilience among Students from marginalised backgrounds. The SEM values range from 0.91 to 3.49, indicating some measurement errors associated with the YERS scores.

The sample of students from marginalised backgrounds generally possesses moderate levels of ecological resilience in various domains, with most components in the range of 16 to 28, indicating moderate resilience. The MMS values range from 63.3% to 88.8%, indicating that most components have a relatively high minimum score. This suggests that most students from marginalised backgrounds in HEIs in this sample possess some degree of ecological resilience in these domains. However, some components, such as Self-Esteem (YERS_20), Empathy (YERS_16), Resourcefulness (YERS_14), and Distress Tolerance (YERS_21), show higher mean scores than others, suggesting that these domains may be significant for promoting resilience among students from marginalised backgrounds.

Table 5.16 also provides insights into the ecological resilience of students from marginalised backgrounds in HEIs, specifically, the student's ability to cope with challenging circumstances and adapt to environmental stressors.

The results indicate that the students scored moderately on the "Bouncebackability" component, with a mean score of 16.34 and a standard deviation of 3.3. Additionally, the students demonstrated good internal consistency in their "Community Relationships" assessment with a mean score of 23.92, a standard deviation of 3.02 and a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.75. Similarly, the students demonstrated moderate internal consistency in their "Community Safety" assessment, with a mean score of 9.61, a standard deviation of 3.02 and a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.6.

The study also found that the students scored well in the components of "Self-Efficacy," "Team Work," and "Spirituality," with good internal consistency demonstrated by Cronbach's alpha scores of 0.8, 0.83, and 0.83, respectively. The students also scored well on the "Distress Tolerance" component, with a mean score of 27.38 and a standard deviation of 5.37, indicating good internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.73. Moreover, they showed a strong sense of "Empathy," with a mean score of 34.18, a standard deviation of 3.42 and very good internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.88. However, the "Family Financial Security" component had poor internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.41 and a mean score of 13.34 with a standard deviation of 2.55. The students demonstrated good internal consistency in their "Family Relationships" assessment, with a mean score of 22.8, a standard deviation of 3.99, and a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.76. Similarly, the "Friends Relationships"

component had good internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.82, a mean score of 21.92, and a standard deviation of 4.41.

The findings align with the factors suggested by van Breda (2018b) regarding resilience among South African youth. The results support the argument that resilience involves personal, relational, cultural, and contextual factors enabling individuals to cope with adversity and achieve positive outcomes (van Breda, 2018b).

The following sub-section presents the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)/Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) computed composite Youth Ecological Resilience Scale (YERS) factors using EFA and CFA in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Analysis of Moment Structure (SPSS AMOS) to develop a CFA model fit that was used to impute four tertiary-level domain factors of resilience relevant for youth facing marginalisation and exclusion.

5.3.1. Factor Analysis Results

Figure 5.23 Presents the Model Diagram and its Fitness Parameters

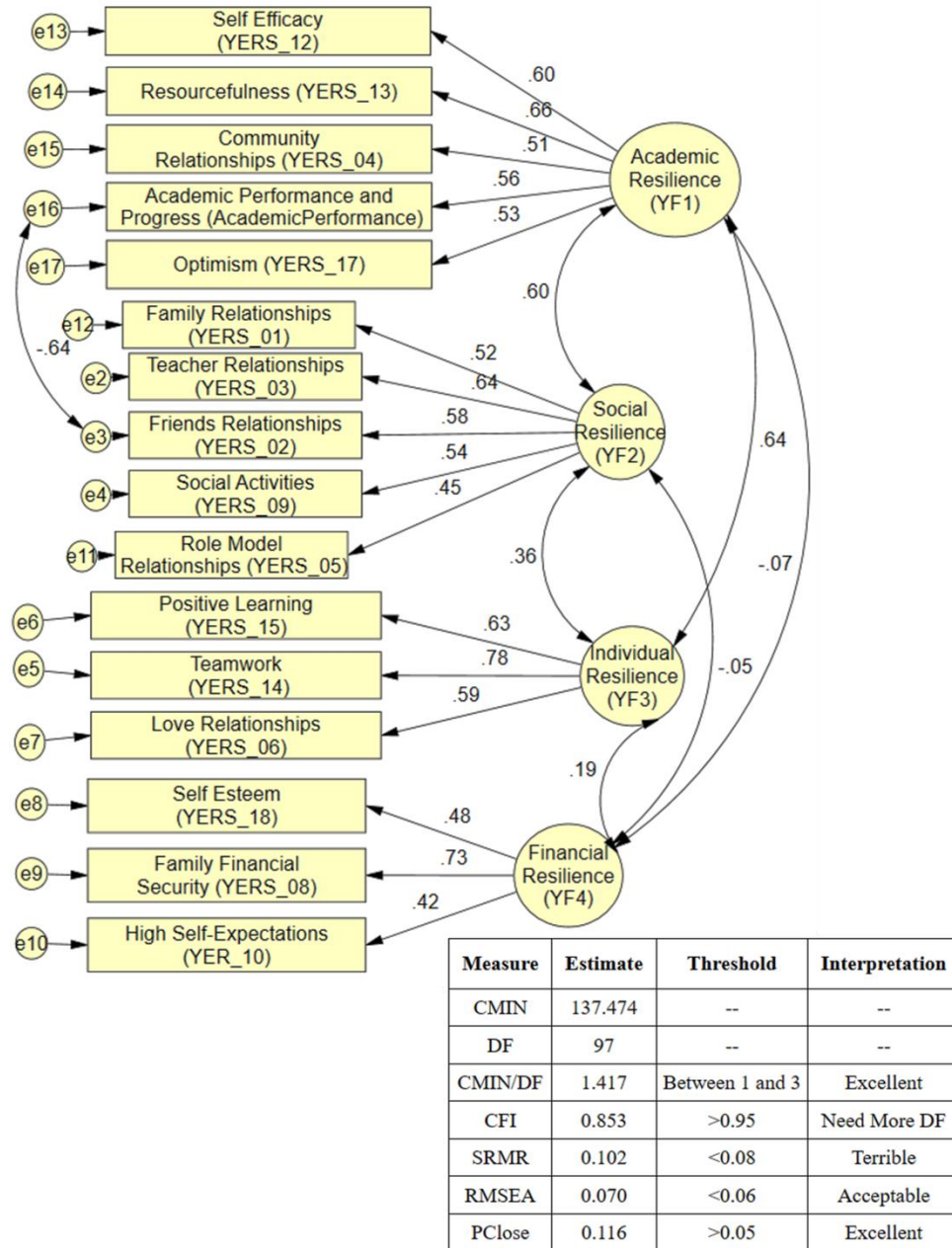


Figure 5.23 shows the standardised regression path weights for the model with variables related to resilience (Social Resilience, Financial Resilience, Individual Resilience, and Academic Resilience) and Academic Performance and Progress. As

advocated by van Breda (2018a), relationship that is centred upon support and social connectedness is the source of resilience among youth and in this study, among students from marginalised backgrounds.

The standardised regression weights show the strength and direction of the relationship between each predictor variable and the criterion variable, controlling for the effects of other predictors. The regression results suggest that various factors are associated with different types of resilience. Social resilience was significantly linked to friend relationships ($\beta = .735, p < .001$), social activities ($\beta = .744, p < .001$), role model relationships ($\beta = .578, p < .001$), family relationships ($\beta = .598, p < .001$), and teacher relationships ($\beta = 1.000, p = 1.000$).

Financial resilience was significantly linked to family financial security ($\beta = .627, p = .036$) and high self-expectations ($\beta = .659, p = .016$). Individual resilience was significantly linked to teamwork ($\beta = 1.097, p < .001$), love relationships ($\beta = 1.343, p < .001$), and positive learning ($\beta = 1.000, p = 1.000$). Academic resilience was significantly linked to resourcefulness ($\beta = .822, p < .001$), community relationships ($\beta = .644, p < .001$), optimism ($\beta = .574, p < .001$), and self-efficacy ($\beta = 1.000, p = 1.000$). Academic performance and progress were significantly linked to academic resilience ($\beta = 6.385, p < .001$).

In this model, Social Resilience was positively associated with Friends Relationships, Social Activities, Role Model Relationships, and Family Relationships, indicating that individuals with higher levels of social resilience tend to have better relationships with friends, engage in more social activities, have positive role models, and have positive relationships with family (Francis & Horn, 2016). Similarly, Financial

Resilience was positively associated with Family Financial Security and High Self-Expectations, indicating that individuals with higher levels of financial resilience tend to have greater financial security in their families and have higher expectations for themselves.

Individual Resilience was positively associated with Teamwork, Love Relationships, and Positive Learning, indicating that individuals with higher levels of individual resilience tend to have better teamwork skills, positive relationships with significant others, and engage in more positive learning experiences. While Academic Resilience was positively associated with Resourcefulness, Community Relationships, Optimism, and Self Efficacy, indicating that individuals with higher levels of academic resilience tend to be more resourceful, have better relationships with their community, have a positive outlook, and believe in their ability to succeed academically.

Resilience is a multidimensional construct that includes social, financial, individual, and academic factors and can lead to positive outcomes, including academic success and well-being (BACP, 2017; Essack, 2012; IASAS, 2020). Academic Resilience was positively associated with Academic Performance and Progress, indicating that those with higher academic resilience tend to do better in their studies. The results align with previous research on resilience, which emphasises the importance of individual and environmental factors in promoting resilience in young people (Broglia et al., 2018; Choi & Doh, 2019; Essack, 2012; Nwonyuku, 2018).

Academic resilience involves individual and contextual factors contributing to academic success, such as resourcefulness, community relationships, optimism, and self-efficacy (Broglia et al., 2018; Essack, 2012; Nwonyuku, 2018).

Previous studies also suggest that social support and financial resources are essential for social and financial resilience, respectively (Derrick, 2019; Getachew, 2020; Lindstrom, 2019; Powers, 2010). Individual characteristics, such as emotional regulation and problem-solving skills are crucial for individual resilience, including love relationships, teamwork, and positive learning (Francis & Horn, 2016; Hayes, 2015). According to van Breda (2018a), the central focus of resilience theory is the resilience processes that intercede adversity and outcomes, resilience is needed where there is adversity.

5.4. Section D: Descriptive Statistics of Beneficiaries' Challenges

The section provides data collected from Section D of the questionnaire that looked at the various challenges that beneficiaries face in pursuing their studies at university.

Table 5.17 Beneficiaries' Challenges

	Time using the Counselling Services				Total
	Never	Current year counselling (year one)	Counselling done last year (year two)	Counselling done two years ago (while in year three)	
	MMS %	MMS %	MMS %	MMS %	
Academic Performance (as percentages)	61.4%	58.67%	73%	71%	62%
secG_48_Challenges financial challenge	60.5%	48.50%	69%	62%	59%
secG_49 lack of support from family	56.0%	50.00%	75%	81%	52%
secG_50 lack of support from university management	59.0%	58.25%	58%	67%	57%
secG_51 lack of support from student support services	52.0%	44.50%	75%	79%	51%
secG_52 lack of support from lecturers	55.0%	74.00%	75%	69%	54%
secG_53 lack of support from peers	58.0%	50.00%	88%	56%	53%
secG_54 discrimination	43.5%	43.00%	75%	50%	44%
secG_55 homesick	54.5%	44.50%	44%	64%	53%
secG_56 hunger	53.0%	44.50%	75%	64%	54%
secG_57 being bullied at university	35.0%	40.67%	63%	56%	37%
secG_58 accommodation	58.0%	62.50%	67%	54%	58%
secG_59 cannot cope with assignments' due dates	58.0%	50.00%	63%	67%	58%
secG_60 cannot cope with academic demands	50.5%	44.50%	56%	46%	47%
secG_61 failed tests	56.7%	64.67%	63%	51%	57%
secG_62 repeating modules	44.7%	68.67%	75%	58%	49%
secG_63_Anxiety Fears lack of confidence	42.5%	46.33%	63%	62%	39%
secG_64 feeling less important	39.0%	64.00%	100%	62%	36%
secG_65 feeling less capable of completing my study	38.0%	42.67%	75%	58%	35%
secG_66 fear of failing	48.5%	45.75%	75%	37%	46%

The table shows the Mean Maximum Score (MMS) on the students' challenges. The Mean to Maximum Score (MMS) is a method used to calculate the average score of a group of respondents on a Likert scale. In the presented table, MMS is used to show the average score of students who have used counselling services at different time intervals concerning various academic and non-academic challenges they face.

The results of the MMS indicate that the students who used counselling services in the current year had a lower average score in academic performance (58.67%) compared to those who sought counselling in the previous year (73%) and two years ago (71%). This could suggest that counselling services may not immediately impact academic performance but can potentially help students in the long term. Additionally, students who sought counselling in the current year also had a lower MMS in several other areas, such as financial challenges, lack of support from family and peers, feeling less capable of completing their studies, and fear of failing. These results could suggest that students seeking counselling services in the current year may be experiencing more immediate and acute challenges than those who sought counselling services in previous years.

Overall, the table suggests that counselling services have helped improve academic performance and reduce the level of challenges students face in different categories. Students who used counselling services had higher MMS percentages compared to those who never used them. However, there is still room for improvement in some categories, as some MMS percentages remain relatively low even when students have used counselling services.

Several studies have examined the impact of counselling services on academic and non-academic outcomes among university students. For example, studies found that

counselling services had a small but significant positive impact on university students' academic performance, psychological health, and overall well-being (BACP, 2017; Devi, 2013; Francis & Horn, 2016; Odhiambo, 2014; Simpson & Ferguson, 2014). However, the results of these studies should be interpreted with caution, as several factors could influence the effectiveness of counselling services, such as the quality of counselling services, the severity of the challenges faced by the students, and the willingness of students to seek help (Zainudin & Yusop, 2018).

In conclusion, the results of the MMS presented in Table 5.18 suggest that counselling services may have a long-term impact on academic performance and other outcomes. However, students seeking counselling services in the current year may face more immediate and acute challenges than those who sought counselling services in previous years. These findings highlight the importance of providing quality counselling services that can effectively address the challenges faced by university students and promote a culture of seeking help among students.

5.4.1. Factor Analysis Results

This research aims to investigate the effectiveness of university counselling services in improving the academic performance of students from vulnerable and marginalised communities. To achieve this objective, a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax Rotation and Kaiser Normalization was conducted to identify underlying factors that explain the intercorrelations among a set of variables. The factor matrix obtained from the analysis is presented in Table 5.19.

Table 5.18 Principal Component Analysis (PCA) of the Beneficiaries

Statement	Component Factor					KMO	Communalities
	Anxieties Fears	Vulnerabilities	Support Structure	Coping	Remedial Support		
Secg_48_Challenges financial challenge		0.505					0.583
Secg_49 lack of support from family			0.716				0.759
Secg_50 lack of support from university management			0.715				0.65
Secg_51 lack of support from student support services		0.679					0.724
Secg_52 lack of support from lecturers					0.429		0.751
Secg_53 lack of support from peers			0.712				0.703
Secg_54 discrimination		0.719					0.685
Secg_55 homesick				0.546			0.563
Secg_56 hunger		0.563					0.648
Secg_57 being bullied at university		0.852				0.746	0.752
Secg_58 accommodation				0.593			0.473
Secg_59 cannot cope with assignments' due dates				0.569			0.643
Secg_60 cannot cope with academic demands				0.647			0.638
Secg_61 failed tests					0.779		0.775
Secg_62 repeating modules					0.820		0.735
Secg_63_anxietyfears lack of confidence	0.864						0.831
Secg_64 feeling less important	0.767						0.649
Secg_65 feeling less capable of completing my study	0.837						0.726

Secg_66 fear of failing	0.653					0.447
Eigenvalues	6.001	2.487	1.711	1.337	1.201	
% of Variance	31.58	13.09	9.00	7.04	6.32	
Cumulative %	31.58	44.67	53.68	60.71	67.03	

Table 5.18 shows five identified components, which are anxieties and fears related to academic performance and personal well-being, vulnerabilities and challenges faced by students, the availability and quality of support structures for students, coping strategies used by students, and the need for remedial support. The communalities in the table represent the variance of each variable that can be accounted for by the five extracted components. The higher the communalities, the more the variable is related to the underlying factor structure. Most communalities are above 0.5, indicating that most variables are highly related to the five extracted components. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure (KMO) of sampling adequacy for this analysis is 0.721, which is above the recommended value of 0.6, indicating that the sample size is adequate for the analysis.

The five components can be interpreted as valid underlying factors explaining the observed relationship among the variables. The eigenvalues represent the variance explained by each component. The components have eigenvalues greater than one, suggesting they can be retained. The total variance explained by the five components is 67.03%, which is considered good for this type of analysis. The KMO, communalities, and eigenvalues suggest that the factor analysis has produced a reasonable solution.

The first component, anxieties and fears, is heavily loaded on variables such as a lack of confidence (0.864), feeling less capable of completing my study (0.837), feeling less important (0.767), and fear of failing (0.653). This suggests that students experience anxiety and fear related to their academic performance and self-worth.

The second component, vulnerabilities, is loaded on variables such as being bullied at university (0.852) and hunger (0.563). This component suggests that students may face external challenges and vulnerabilities that affect their academic success.

The third component, support structure, is loaded on variables such as a lack of support from university management (0.715), lack of support from student support services (0.679), lack of support from lecturers (0.429), lack of support from family (0.716), and lack of support from peers (0.712). This component highlights the importance of a supportive environment for students' academic success. The fourth component, coping, is loaded on variables such as financial challenges (0.505), cannot cope with academic demands (0.647), homesick (0.546), accommodation (0.593), and cannot cope with assignments due dates (0.569). This suggests that students may struggle with coping mechanisms to deal with academic and personal stressors. The fifth component, remedial support, is loaded on variables such as discrimination (0.719), failed tests (0.779), and repeating modules (0.820). This component suggests that students may require remedial support to overcome academic challenges.

Overall, the rotated component matrix provides insight into the factors that may impact students' academic success and well-being. By understanding these factors, universities and support services can develop targeted interventions to support student success. The factor matrix provides valuable insights that can inform interventions and support strategies for students experiencing challenges and anxieties in their academic journey. For example, universities can design interventions to address specific challenges faced by students from marginalised backgrounds, such as financial challenges, a lack of support from family and peers, and experiences of discrimination and marginalisation in the university environment.

Previous research by Brunner et al. (2014); Dieckmann et al. (2014b); Getachew (2020); Pinto (2019) has shown that vulnerable and marginalised students may face discrimination and prejudice in higher education, which is consistent with the findings of this study. For example, the variable "discrimination" has a high loading on Factor 1 (Anxieties and Fears), indicating that it is strongly related to anxieties and fears related to academic performance (Choi & Doh, 2019). This suggests that discrimination may be a significant source of stress for students and should be addressed by universities to ensure a supportive and inclusive learning environment (Brunner et al. 2014; Dieckmann et al. 2014b; Getachew, 2020; Pinto, 2019).

Additionally, the factor matrix and the results of PCA can provide valuable information for educators and policymakers to identify the challenges and support needs of students in higher education. By understanding the underlying dimensions of student challenges, universities can develop targeted interventions and support programs that address the specific needs of their student populations (Byrd, 2017; Kamunyu, 2016; Robinson et al., 2016). Therefore, universities must ensure a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students, especially those from vulnerable and marginalised backgrounds. The results of this study can provide valuable information for educators and policymakers to identify the challenges and support needs of students in higher education, which can lead to the development of targeted interventions and support programs that address the specific needs of their student populations.

5.5. Section E: Hierarchical Clustering of Factors Related to Counselling Services Effectiveness

This section presents the Hierarchical Clustering of factors influencing counselling effectiveness aimed at suggesting models for developing the Student Assistance Programme (SAP) and guidelines for implementation. The hierarchical clustering algorithm was based on the Agglomerative Hierarchical Clustering (AHC) table. It was used to iteratively group the cases based on their proximity until they were in a single cluster.

The section further presents the results of the dendrogram analysis that represents the hierarchical clustering of factors that have emerged from findings based on their similarity or dissimilarity.

Table 5.19 Agglomeration Schedule

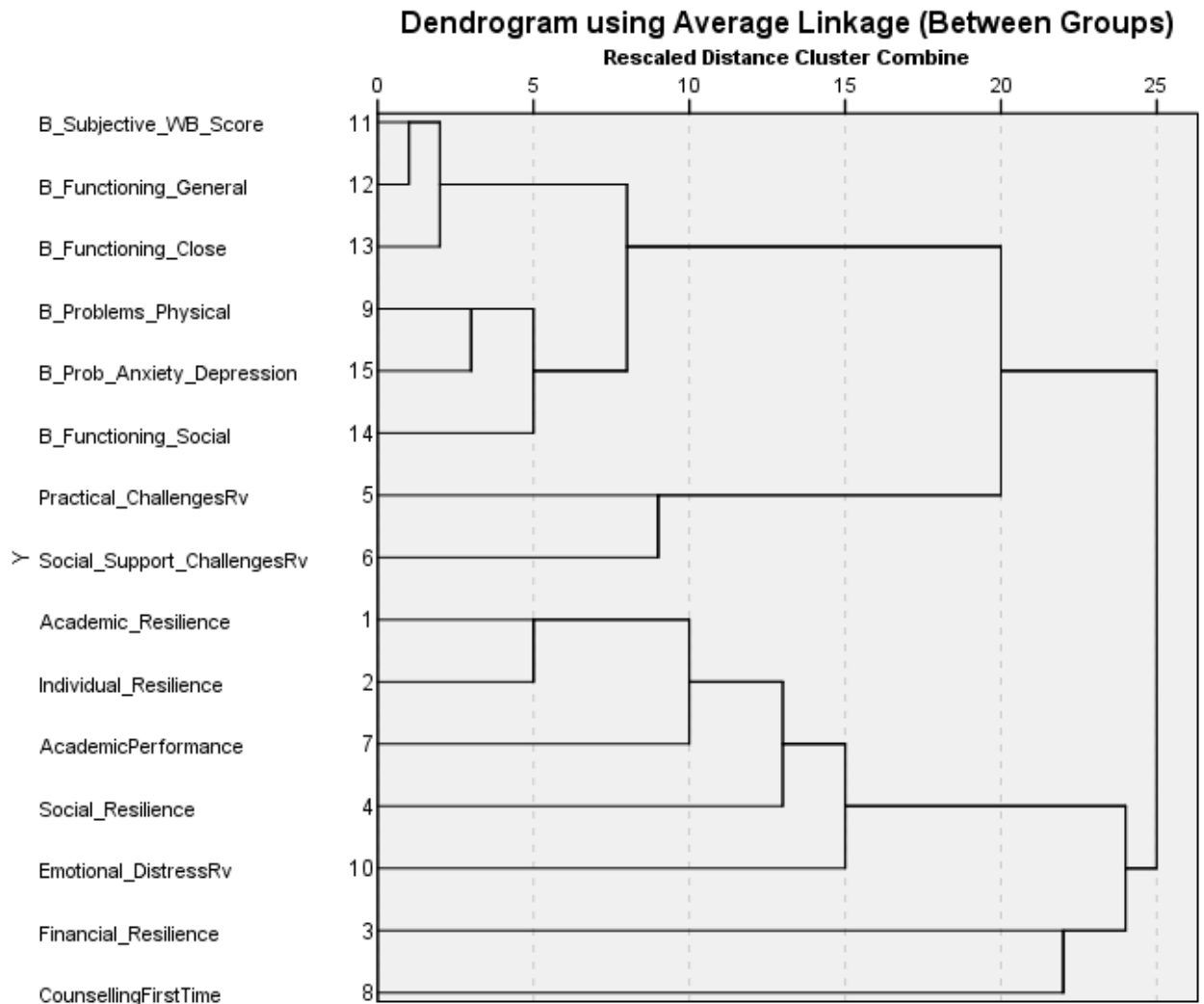
Stage	Cluster Combined		Coefficients	Stage Cluster First Appears		Next Stage
	Cluster 1	Cluster 2		Cluster 1	Cluster 2	
1	Academic Resilience	Social Resilience	436.912	0	0	4
2	Individual Resilience	Financial Resilience	2561.366	0	0	4
3	Subjective Well-being	Functioning General	10069.444	0	0	7
4	Academic Resilience	Individual Resilience	11482.573	1	2	9
5	Problems Physical	Problem Anxiety Depression	11666.667	0	0	8
6	Practical Challenges rv	Social Support Challenges rv	16183.111	0	0	11
7	Subjective Well-being	Functioning Close	18993.056	3	0	12
8	B_Problems_Physical	B_Functioning_Social	19930.556	5	0	10
9	Academic_Resilience	CounsellingFirstTime	36316.801	4	0	14
10	B_Problems_Physical	Emotional_DistressRv	39896.296	8	0	11
11	Practical_ChallengesRv	B_Problems_Physical	55172.111	6	10	12
12	Practical_ChallengesRv	B_Subjective_WB_Score	72970.519	11	7	13
13	Practical_ChallengesRv	Academic Performance	107251.198	12	0	14
14	Academic Resilience	Practical_ChallengesRv	233692.214	9	13	0

The Agglomeration Schedule in Table 5.19 presents the iterative process used by the algorithm to reduce all the data points to a single cluster. It also shows a detailed record of the hierarchical clustering process, which enables readers to follow the progression of clusters and comprehend how they are merged into larger clusters based on their similarity coefficients. The table depicts various stages of the clustering process, along with the

merged clusters, their coefficients, and the next stage where the next combination occurs. Each table row represents a stage of the clustering process, with the first two columns showing the clusters being merged in that stage. The third column shows the similarity coefficient between the two clusters, with higher values indicating greater similarity. The fourth and fifth columns indicate the stage where each of the two clusters first appeared in the clustering process. The last column shows the next stage in the clustering process, where the next set of clusters will be merged.

Dendrogram was constructed to visually represent the clustering process. At the first level of the dendrogram, Academic_Resilience and Social_Resilience were merged with a coefficient of 436.912, indicating a strong similarity between these two items in terms of their relationship with resilience. At the second level, Individual and Financial Resilience were merged with a coefficient of 2561.366, suggesting that they share similar attributes that contribute to resilience. At the third level, B- Subjective Well-Being Score and B-Functioning-General were merged with a coefficient of 10069.444, implying a close relationship in terms of their association with well-being. The dendrogram's remaining levels depict items' merging with increasing agglomeration coefficients. Overall, the dendrogram indicates that multiple clusters of items are closely related in terms of their attributes, and these clusters become more inclusive as the coefficients of agglomeration increase. At each iteration, the algorithm merges the two closest clusters into a new cluster until all cases are merged into one cluster. The final dendrogram model is depicted in Figure 5.24.

Figure 5.24 Hierarchical Cluster Dendrogram Model



The dendrogram in Figure 5.24 also reveals specific clusters of items closely related to each other in terms of their attributes. For example, Cluster 2 includes B_Functioning_General and B_Functioning_Close, both indicators of an individual's overall functioning in different areas of life. Cluster 3 includes B_Subjective_WB_Score and two indicators of emotional distress and anxiety/depression, suggesting that these factors are related to an individual's overall sense of well-being and emotional state. Cluster 4 includes Academic_Resilience and Individual_Resilience, which are both

indicators of an individual's ability to persevere in the face of adversity. Cluster 5 includes two indicators of physical problems and social functioning, suggesting that an individual's physical health can affect their social functioning. Other clusters highlight the relationships between an individual's ability to navigate practical or social challenges and their academic performance, emotional state, or overall well-being.

Based on the agglomeration schedule and dendrogram, it can be seen that academic resilience is strongly related to individual resilience and counselling as a first-time measure. Besides, practical challenges and social support challenges are related to each other. B-Subjective Well-Being score is related to functioning in general and functioning in close relationships.

These findings are consistent with previous research that suggests that counselling and resilience-building strategies can enhance student resilience and academic performance (Southwick et al., 2014). These studies support the recommendation that an integrated approach to counselling should be used in promoting academic performance, incorporating resilience-building strategies.

Regarding the relationship between practical and social support challenges, (Southwick et al., 2014; van Breda, 2018b) highlight the importance of practical and emotional support in promoting resilience. Therefore, interventions that target both of these areas may be effective in promoting student resilience. However, other studies have suggested that practical support may be more important than emotional support in promoting (Proctor, 2016; Proctor & Linley, 2014; Weber et al., 2018). These opposing findings highlight the need for further research to determine the most effective approach to promoting student resilience.

Finally, the interrelatedness of different factors influencing student resilience suggests a comprehensive approach to Student Assistance Programme (SAP) development and implementation. This recommendation is consistent with previous studies that have suggested comprehensive programmes that include a range of more effective interventions in promoting student well-being (Deno Van & Macaskill, 2017; Yates et al., 2015).

The dendrogram and agglomeration schedule reveal significant clusters of related attributes that can inform the development of a Student Assistance Programme (SAP) to promote student resilience and academic success. These findings suggest an integrated approach to counselling and resilience-building strategies to enhance academic performance. SAP may include interventions such as mentorship, coaching, peer support, and access to resources that provide practical and emotional support to students. Additionally, SAP development should consider the interconnectedness of factors influencing student resilience, such as social functioning and physical health.

These findings are critical to developing and implementing a SAP that takes a holistic approach to supporting students in their academic pursuits. Based on these findings, the study proposes to develop a SAP that includes counselling services, resilience-building strategies, and social support interventions. Additionally, SAP development may involve collaborating with academic departments, social support programs, and community resources to create a comprehensive approach to promoting student success.

5.8 Summary

In summary, the results revealed low satisfaction levels with subjective well-being, general functioning, and close functioning domains, indicating low life satisfaction, a lack of optimism, and meaningful relationships between students, their peers, and adults. Conversely, the MMS on negatively worded items was high, suggesting significant dissatisfaction with counselling services' effectiveness in counteracting depression, physical problems, and anxiety. The results also validated the prevalence of physical distress associated with food and accommodation insecurity and emotional and physical abuse.

Most beneficiaries' resilience levels remained unchanged, and their academic performance did not improve significantly after attending counselling services. Moreover, the study's findings suggest that counselling services' effectiveness in enhancing resilience and academic performance may be limited. The agglomeration schedule and dendrogram provide valuable insights into the factors influencing student resilience and academic performance and model the development and implementation of the SAP in HEIs in Namibia.

In conclusion, this chapter provided a comprehensive analysis of the quantitative data collected to determine the effectiveness of counselling services for beneficiaries, focusing on their satisfaction, resilience, and academic performance. The findings suggest the need for continuous and appropriate support services that address the factors that hinder students' resilience, academic performance, and satisfaction with counselling services. The next chapter presents the merging of qualitative and quantitative data, conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter Six

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Chapters four and five presented and discussed the qualitative and quantitative findings of Phase 1 of the study. This chapter is divided into four sub-sections A, B, C and D. In sub-section A, the researcher presents conclusions drawn from research Objective 1, describing participants' experiences of counselling services effectiveness. In sub-section B, the researcher merges qualitative and quantitative data to converge and diverge findings and concludes to determine beneficiaries' satisfaction with counselling services and the factors influencing counselling effectiveness on students' resilience and academic performance. Furthermore, sub-section C presents the recommendations for policy and further research on findings from different objectives. Finally, sub-section D of Chapter Six presents the study's contributions to the body of knowledge and the way forward.

6.1 Conclusions

Higher education remains the pathway to rewarding career opportunities and contributes to individuals' physical and cognitive well-being (Department of Business for Innovation and Skills, 2014). The Government of the Republic of Namibia ensured inclusion and equity for students from marginalised backgrounds in HEIs. Subsequently, this resulted in counselling services provided in HEIs to ease and guide students' transition into university life, strengthen students' resilience, and enable them to cope with the academic demand and pressure during their years of studies at the university (UNAM, 2019). The analysis evidenced a mismatch between students' needs and the available counselling services. Despite the funding programmes, students continue to endure

hardships. Delays in fund payments, poor academic achievement, low graduation rates, high dropout rates, and psychological health issues remain on the increase among students (National Planning Commission [NPC] NDP5 Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2017/2018 to 2021/2022; Kxoa/Ui/o/oo, 2016). Moreover, counselling services remain underutilised by some students who hesitate to seek counselling voluntarily despite being aware of professional counselling services (Joan et al., 2021; Kamunyu et al., 2016).

The study was based on the current situation of students from marginalised communities underperforming and dropping out despite available campus-based services. In most cases, the neediest students, particularly students from marginalised backgrounds, are identified late, while some drop out without being detected to be referred for counselling support. The current study was carried out in two phases, of which the first was a situational analysis that focused on the following objectives:

- To explore and describe the experiences of beneficiaries and referrers on the effectiveness of counselling services, an equity measure.
- To determine the beneficiaries' satisfaction with counselling services offered.
- To determine the beneficiaries' and referrers' satisfaction with counselling services as an equity measure.
- To determine the factors influencing the effectiveness of counselling as an equity measure leading to students' resilience and academic performance.

The second phase develops the Student Assistance Programme (SAP) and guidelines for implementation. The second phase was the main focus of the study, which sought to develop an empirical evidence-based SAP and its strategies for implementation

to maximise student support and ensure equitable and inclusive access. Nwonyuku (2018) alludes that students' support programmes must be proactive and preventative in helping students gain self-awareness, and positive attitudes toward success, develop resilience and be tailored to the needs of individual students. He further cautions that it should not be offered as a reaction to students' failures. Sweet et al. (2020) mention that student support should also consider that students from marginalised backgrounds transit from high school to university less prepared and are, in most cases, the first generation in their families to attend university. They assert that the students bring unique perspectives on their affective, behavioural and cognitive domains.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the study employed a convergent mixed methods design, also referred to as pragmatic parallel mixed methods design or triangulation (Mertens, 2015). Convergent parallel allows the researcher to compare different findings on a single phenomenon to develop and draw corroborated conclusions. This strategy allowed the researcher to collect qualitative and quantitative data independently but concurrently, analyse them separately, and merge the results to confirm or disconfirm each other (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Eleven individual semi-structured interviews were conducted from the referrers' sample, and by the eleventh interview, data saturation was reached; there were no new insights. A subset of beneficiaries from the quantitative sample indicated a willingness to be interviewed. On the beneficiary sample, the researcher targeted ten, but four withdrew from participating in the interviews.

Consequently, six semi-structured interviews were conducted with the beneficiaries. In total, there were seventeen semi-structured interviews from two different perspectives.

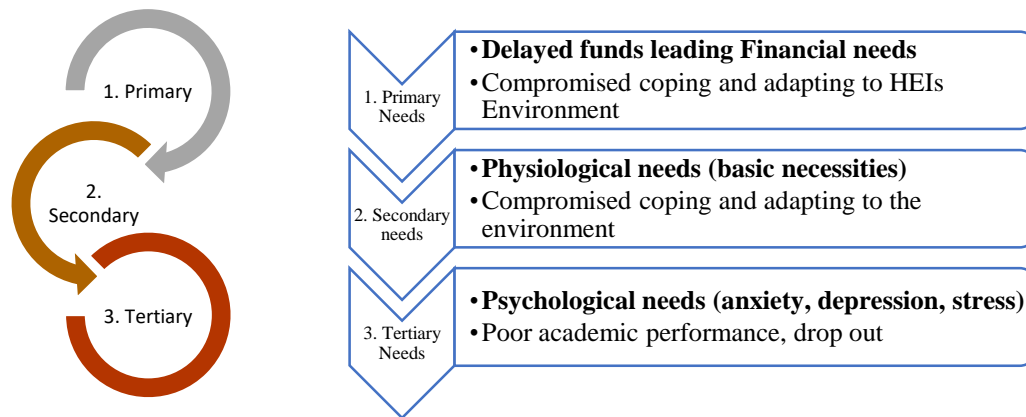
The literature review in Chapter Two revealed that despite financial support for students from marginalised backgrounds, students endure much distress in search of higher education. The literature also revealed multiple factors influencing counselling service effectiveness in higher education. However, there are limited studies on counselling effectiveness as an equity measure to support students from marginalised backgrounds. Conclusions and recommendations are presented following the research objectives.

6.1.1 Objective/question 1: Experiences of Beneficiaries and Referrers on the Effectiveness of Counselling Services as an Equity Measure

The objective was to explore and describe the experiences of beneficiaries and referrers on the effectiveness of counselling services as an equity measure. The shared experiences from the participants were mainly directed to counselling effectiveness in lessening the financial, physiological, psychological, and academic distress observed among students from marginalised backgrounds. The identified needs are critical in academic persistence, performance, progress, and completion, as well as in determining equity and inclusion in HEIs. Participants shared common experiences, and the conclusions drawn from their experiences are presented below.

Beneficiaries and referrers underscored financial, psychological, physiological, and academic distress. Their findings classified the students' needs into three levels with different levels of counselling effectiveness, namely, primary, secondary, and tertiary.

Figure 6. 25 Three levels of students’ needs



The figure 6.25 depicts the three levels of students’ needs and distress derived from the findings as discussed below. The study acknowledges that counselling referrals were prompted by various challenges, including financial, physiological, psychological, and academic difficulties (Kamunyu et al., 2016). While most referrals were made in response to observable academic and psychological concerns, the beneficiaries considered these concerns as tertiary, compared to the primary issue of financial distress. Beneficiaries’ narratives highlighted the significant distress caused by delays in the disbursement of funds. This financial hardship led to secondary challenges, such as inadequate food, toiletries, accommodation, transportation fares, and clothing. The hardships are what Schlossberg’s theory terms as events and non-events in a transition affecting coping and adapting in HEIs. Consequently, failure to address these secondary needs resulted in tertiary needs characterised by psychological issues that negatively impact academic performance.

6.1.1.1 Primary Needs. These are needs derived from financial constraints. Despite funding allocations, students struggle to access their awarded funds timely. The study found delays in students’ fund payments which aggravate students’ economic

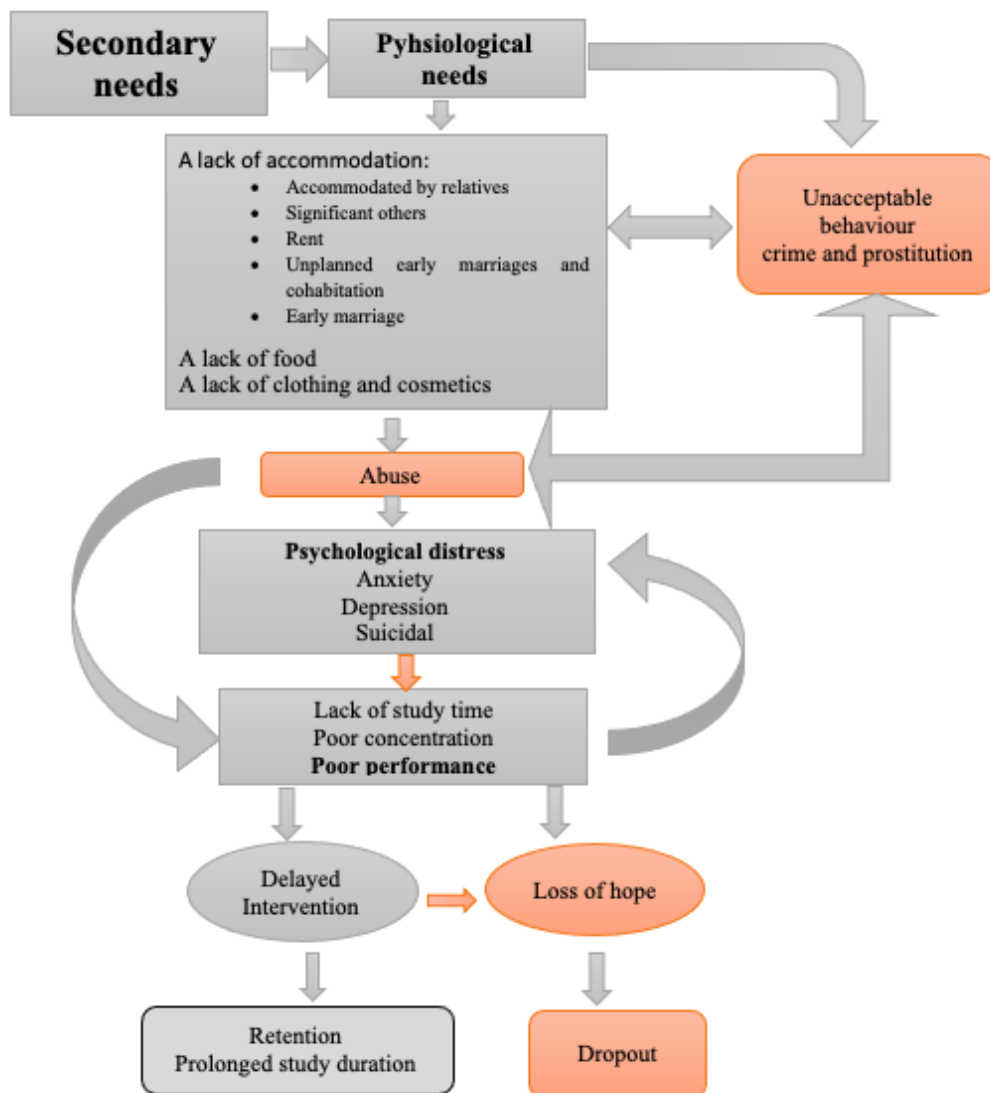
challenges. To this account, the study found shortcomings in the counselling services in facilitating these critical needs. Moreover, the study found a lack of financial literacy among students, translating into economic constraints.

6.1.1.2 Secondary Needs. The second class of needs expressed from the study's findings fall into the basic needs categories, which became secondary needs. According to Johnson (2015), a lack of basic needs such as shelter, food, safety and resources for survival exacerbates students' psychological and social distress. Johnson (2015), thus cautions that institutions must consider students' basic needs to harness inclusion and diversity. This level includes physiological (basic) needs such as food, accommodation, toiletries, clothing, and stationaries. Although students receive funds, the study found that lacking basic needs torments them. Based on the findings, students knocked door to door for food, soaps, and sanitary pads and mainly depended on good Samaritans and peers. These challenges denote limitations on counselling effectiveness as an equity measure.

As the literature (Chapter Two) indicates, most students from marginalised backgrounds encounter multiple transitions. Students from marginalised backgrounds are the first generations from their families to enter universities and they relocate from their traditional settings to seek higher education. Given the students' backgrounds and factors described above, most have no closer families and relatives in cities (Horton, 2015; Matengu et al., 2019; Larose & Tarabulsy, 2018). Accommodation emerged as one of the major causes of distress among students, substantiating the significance of prioritising hostel accommodation for students from marginalised backgrounds. Albeit the few positive experiences with accommodation through counselling support, the study confirmed that a lack of accommodation and living space results in student abuse and maltreatment, which risk their academic performance.

Similarly, Wulz et al. (2018) indicate that one of the counselling activities to ensure equitable access to higher education is to facilitate accommodation for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Subsequently, the study found deficiencies in counselling effectiveness to prioritise accommodation for students from marginalised backgrounds. Based on the findings, the diagram below outlines the impact of physiological needs on students at the university.

Figure 6.26 Secondary level (physiological/basic) needs



The diagram shows the flow of the secondary needs and how they related to the drop out or retention of students in HEIs. The study resolves that most students who did not secure hostel accommodation encounter a lack of shelter in the city. Consequently, a lack thereof pushes them to reside with relatives, and significant others, rent and cohabit or end in unplanned early marriages. Given the financial constraint described above, students engage in unacceptable behaviour such as prostitution, crime and others for survival.

Moreover, the study found that some students encounter sexual and domestic abuse from their providers when searching for accommodation or funds to pay rent. In some cases, they serve as house helpers and nannies in return for free accommodation. As depicted in Figure 6.24, the experienced abuse and unacceptable behaviour translated into tertiary needs (psychological distress) such as anxiety attacks and depression, and some became suicidal. Some identified and referred receive counselling, regain motivation, and hope to persist. In contrast, unidentified students struggle to cope with academic demands and eventually drop out.

Despite the severity of needs at the secondary level, the study found limitations on counselling effectiveness in facilitating this critical level. The study concludes that students struggling with needs at primary and secondary levels are hardly identified for referrals and thus rarely receive the needed support. The findings substantiate a need for counselling effectiveness in facilitating students' basic needs.

6.1.1.3 Tertiary needs. The study findings resonate that the accumulation of primary and secondary needs cascaded into the tertiary needs characterised by anxiety, stress, depression, and mental confusion. The person-centred theory provides a better understanding of the expected roles of counselling services. It advocates for non-

judgmental counselling support, encouraging self-healing and enabling individuals to develop resilience, self-concepts, self-acceptance, self-efficacy, and self-growth amidst challenges (Hayes, 2015; Witty, 2015). Students who portray obvious distress signs mentioned above are easily identified and referred for counselling support, making counselling services more effective in addressing students' tertiary needs (psychological distress) than primary and secondary needs. Counselling comes in to help bounce back and help them recover as narrated by van Brenda's resilience theory.

It is evident from the participants' experiences that students had unmet anticipations. Schlossberg's theory of transition underscores that an unmet anticipated event in a transition could be detrimental to students' self-efficacy development and resilience abilities (Khairani et al., 2019). In addition, delays in fund payment and a lack of accommodation, coupled with the delay in identifying, referring, and providing counselling services contributed to prolonged exposure to distress among students from marginalised backgrounds. The abovementioned challenges justify the low progress, completion, graduation and high dropouts among students from marginalised backgrounds.

Although numerous studies have demonstrated the significant effects of counselling services on academic, social, and psychosocial issues (Agi & Eric, 2014; Biasi et al., 2017; Escapa and Julià, 2018; McKenzie et al., 2015). The present study found that counselling services had limitations in proactively addressing students' financial and physiological needs (Primary) to help them cope and adapt, which impacted their psychological well-being, affecting their academic performance.

The study further concludes that counselling services are mainly effective at the tertiary level and less effective at the primary and secondary levels. Counselling services

were found to be more effective in responding to psychological distress that affected students' academic performance. Based on the findings, counselling effectiveness could be improved by establishing a comprehensive SAP that encourages collaboration between academic and non-academic staff and psychological health professionals to address all students' needs at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

Moreover, notwithstanding that some students from marginalised backgrounds get admissions with lower English scores, the study found that despite different English courses in the different years of their studies, English Communication and Study Skills, English for General Communication and English for Academic Purposes, students still struggle to cope with English Language and Academic Writing and the relevant study skills to manage and cope with university academic demand.

6.1.2 Objectives/question 2 and 3: Determine the Beneficiaries' and Referrers'

Satisfaction with Counselling Services

6.1.2.1 Merging the Qualitative and Quantitative Data. From pragmatic epistemology, knowledge is based on experiences and social experiences influence how individuals perceive the world (Hall, 2013). Pragmatists believe that individuals possess unique knowledge from their unique experiences. Thus, the knowledge created from social experiences is socially shared. Pragmatists believe that knowledge is constructed to understand one's existence better. Therefore, pragmatist studies use empirical data to solve real-life problems (Hall, 2013). Pragmatists underscore the importance of using multiple approaches to inquiries (Hall, 2013). The current study used a convergent mixed methods design to collect quantitative and qualitative data sets concurrently and separately analysed.

The purpose was to allow the researcher to compare and triangulate different findings to understand better the experiences, satisfaction and factors influencing counselling effectiveness from the perspectives of the referrers and the beneficiaries (Maree, 2021). Furthermore, the purpose was to gain insights and details on the subjective and objective views of the participants, validate the data and develop and draw well-corroborated conclusions (Mertens, 2015; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The merged quantitative data were collected using two validated scales: the General Population Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation (GP-CORE) and the Youth Ecological Resilience Scale (YERS) described in Chapter Three. The qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with beneficiaries and referrers.

A component design was used to combine the data set. The researcher used a side-by-side approach to look at the sets of findings and compare them against each other for similarities, differences, convergent and divergent to ensure certainty of conclusions. The side-by-side comparison provides insights and overviews of how participants perceived the effectiveness of counselling services as an equity measure objectively and subjectively (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Table 6. 20 Side by Side Comparing and Relating Beneficiaries' and Referrers' Satisfactions and Dissatisfactions of Counselling Services

Objectives	Variables	Side by side, comparing and relating the findings	
		Quantitative	Qualitative
Objectives 2 and 3: Determining beneficiaries' satisfaction (QUAL & QUANT)	Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (61.0%) indicated that they received counselling during year one of their studies, followed by year 2 (19.5%), year 3 (14.6%), and year 4 (4.9%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Providing support during the first year could be the appropriate time (SP6).</i> <i>I always remember my first year. You want to ask people around, but you are afraid, and my English is somehow not so good (SP1).</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (37.3%) self-sought help (21.2%) indicated they had not received any counselling. Only (18.8%) of students live in the hostel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ultimately, the student would confide in the lecture where they feel most comfortable. They reveal their problems to those they are comfortable with (LP8).</i> Students described their experiences seeking help and begging for basic needs. (Reached out to individuals (lecturers, peers and officers) for funds payments and physiological (basic needs) and not when they are overwhelmed by psychological distress Some students do not reach out for support. They suffer in silence until they drop out. <i>You are not mentally sick to get counselling, you are hungry, and they do not have food for you; it does not help to go there (SP4).</i> Some shied away from acknowledging that they received counselling support despite receiving the support. Among the basic needs, findings revealed a lack of accommodation among students leading to dissatisfaction with subjective well-being.

	Satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mean scores ranging from 3.64 to 4.13, indicate that participants who received counselling generally reported positive levels of functioning-general. • Academic performance and social adjustment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I have observed that students who receive counselling do manage to perform and go through the system eventually (LP11).</i> • <i>When I spoke to the social worker, I regained courage, and my performance improved (SP1).</i> • Satisfaction with the impact counselling service has on academic performance.
	Dissatisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positively worded items had lower MMS ranging from 52.9% to 62.6%, indicating dissatisfaction with Subjective Well-being. • High level of problems in depression, anxiety and physical and psychological domains, with the mean score ranging between 4.40 to 4,56, respectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings reveal dissatisfaction in the various psychological domains such as subjective well-being, functioning-close, functioning social and psychological problems exacerbated by (primary needs) financial insecurity caused by delays in funds payment and physiological/basic needs such as hunger and maltreatment due to a lack of accommodation. • Un anticipated events, unmet anticipations and non-event • Lack of awareness • Lack of role models • Lack of mediators or coordinators to facilitate funds payments

Table 6.20 presents the side by side component analysis, that involves comparing and relating Beneficiaries' and Referrers' Satisfactions and Dissatisfactions on Counselling Services.

Table 6. 21 Summary of Comparisons on Satisfaction and Dissatisfactions

Psychological Domains	Satisfaction	Dissatisfaction
Subjective well-being +Felt ok about myself (LS) +Felt optimistic about my future (LS)	Subjective well-being	Subjective well-being Unmet anticipations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delays of funds payment • Physiological needs (food, toiletries, accommodation, transport) • Delays in student identification for timely support • Lack of support received during the COVID-19 pandemic
Social life functional -Felt criticized by other people (HS) -Been irritable when with other people (HS)	Social life functional	Social life functional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students drop out • Students engage in inappropriate behaviour
Life functioning-general +Been happy with the things I have done (LS) +Achieved things I wanted to (LS) +Felt able to cope when things go wrong (LS) +Been able to do most things I needed to (LS)	Life functioning-general <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic performance when support is received • Student retention 	Life functioning-general
Life functioning close relationship + Felt I had someone to turn to for support when needed (LS) + Felt warm or affectionate for someone (LS)	Life functioning close relationship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-advocacy and Help-seeking for funds payments and basic needs • Good peer relationships and support on basic needs • Help from individual staff 	Life functioning close relationship Dissatisfaction resulting from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of knowledge and skills causing uncertainty among referrers • Lack of peer support on academic challenges • Lack of awareness • Lack of clear referral policy, guidelines and procedures

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student masses in lecture venues • Lack of representation and mediation for financial needs • Lack of monitoring of the referred cases • Lack of follow-ups on the referred cases • Unsustainable solutions • Fear of opening up due to mistrust • Students' resistance to referrals • Negative attitudes, unwillingness/ lack of empathy <p>+ Felt I had someone to turn to for support when needed (LS)</p>
<p>Mental and physical Problem (depression and anxiety)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Felt tense, anxious and nervous (HS). - Been troubled by aches, pains or other physical problems -Has difficulty getting to sleep or staying asleep (HS) -Felt unhappy (HS) 	<p>Mental and physical Problem (depression and anxiety)</p>	<p>Mental and physical Problem (depression and anxiety)</p>

Figure 6.27 Satisfaction and dissatisfaction with counselling services



Table 6.21 and Figure 6.27 summarise the satisfaction and dissatisfaction from the study findings. Based on the quantitative and qualitative results, numerous dissatisfactions and few satisfactions were expressed. The satisfactions represent the benefits, while the dissatisfactions highlight the shortcomings of counselling services' effectiveness as an equity measure. The findings from the GP- CORE showed different MMS scores. The low scores on the positively worded reflected dissatisfaction with the different psychological domains (Subjective Well-being, Functional general and functional close relationship. Meanwhile, the high score on the negatively worded

reflected dissatisfaction with problems (depression, physical, anxiety and social functioning).

6.1.2.2 Referrals and Beneficiaries' Satisfaction on Psychological Domains. On satisfaction notes, as shown above, the findings demonstrated improved performance that led to student retention, completion and graduation of students who positively responded to counselling referrals. Also, satisfaction was expressed through solidarity when students stood together to advocate for their funds' payments, struggles for basic needs and peer support on basic necessities. Despite the hardships, most students showed courage, willingness to succeed, and perseverance. Although there were unsustainable solutions for their basic needs, some students persevered as they relied on self-advocacy, help-seeking, and peer support. A total of 37.3% indicated self-help seeking. The qualitative findings clarified that most students knocked from door to door and were confined to individuals advocating for their funds' payment and seeking basic needs such as food, accommodation and cosmetics. Thus the study concludes that not all students shied away from help-seeking.

6.1.2.3 Referrals and Beneficiaries' Dissatisfaction with Psychological Domains. Contrarily, participants echoed dissatisfactions summarised in Table 6.22 and Figure 6.26. Delays in the funds' payment became the unmet anticipations that led to dissatisfaction with subjective well-being. Based on the findings, the study highlighted a lack of referral guidelines, ethical conduct, policies and procedures. Subsequently, it was concluded that there are uncertainty and hesitancy among referrers in identifying, approaching, dealing and referring distressed students, compromising counselling effectiveness.

The study also concludes that a lack of awareness among referrers and beneficiaries on the prevailing counselling services deterred counselling effectiveness.

Furthermore, counselling effectiveness was negatively affected by a lack of understanding about referrers' roles and responsibilities concerning student identification and referrals, the alerting signs and symptoms, the referral forms and procedures and the whereabouts of specific counselling offices to refer students with different needs. Findings evidenced that some students sought support from offices not designated for student support, resulting in dissatisfaction with the services they received. Also, findings signify a "one size fits all" and counsellors are perceived as the "jack of all trades". All issues seem to be referred to the counsellors, even in situations that require academic and specific subject matter expertise interventions.

The other significant dissatisfaction from the findings on counselling effectiveness as an equity measure was a lack of representation characterised by a lack of role models from their communities to whom students could relate, a lack of voices in student leadership, and a lack of mediators to facilitate student needs on or off-campus. Good relationships with role models are positively associated with social resilience.

Based on findings, student masses and limited time during a semester direct lecturers' focus on content delivery and less interest in students' issues. This resulted in a lack of monitoring of students' progress and well-being, a lack of follow-ups and feedback from counselling service providers to referrers and vice versa, and students to referrers.

The study found a lack of proactiveness from counselling services; for example, unanticipated events such as the COVID-19 pandemic posed suffering among students from marginalised backgrounds. Problems with depression, anxiety, and physical health have mean scores ranging from 4.40 to 4.56, indicating that

participants generally reported higher levels of problems in these areas, some of which were exacerbated by COVID-19 and other psychosocial factors.

6.1.3 Objective/question 4: Factors influencing the effectiveness of counselling as an equity measure leading to students' resilience and academic performanc

Table 6.22 Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative for Objective Number Four

Objectives	Variables	Quantitative results	Qualitative findings
Objective 4: Determine the factors influencing the counselling services' effectiveness (QUAL & QUANT)	Demographical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most respondents received counselling in Year 1 of their studies (61.0%), followed by Year 2 (19.5%), Year 3 (14.6%), and Year 4 (4.9%). • Most respondents were in their third year of university (40.3%), followed by the second year (25.4%), fourth year (23.9%), and first year (10.4%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students enter university with different challenges and anticipations. • Students become resilient as they adapt to the university environment. • Find ways to cope and survive.
	Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate level of ecological resilience with the mean score ranging between 9.61-38.53 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some persevere and progress without support • Some dropout unnoticed • Some receive support and improve • Some receive support but do not persevere, depending on how they respond, the quality of support and the relationship with the service providers.
External Resources:	Social resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social resilience was significantly linked to friend relationships ($\beta = .735$, $p < .001$), social activities ($\beta = .744$, $p < .001$), role model relationships ($\beta = .578$, $p < .001$), family relationships ($\beta = .598$, $p < .001$), and teacher relationships ($\beta = 1.000$, $p = 1.000$). 	<p>Individual, Environment and Interactional Relationship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We need people with the right skills, focused on serving others with the right attitudes (LP2).</i> • Expected good relationship with lecturers, counsellors • Social activities/wellness in the environment

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The one that has students at heart. The one that is open to every student. The ones that do not give up on student issues (SP3).</i> • A need for empathy, congruency, unconditional positive regards • Highlights lack of role models, representation, mediators • Relocate far from their families and thus, rely on friend/peer support for social and basic needs • Multicultural or cultural support, support from people of their communities • <i>Who is here from their communities to act as their role model? That they are represented in our structures? (LP6).</i>
Internal and External resources	Financial resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial resilience was significantly linked to family financial security ($\beta = .627$, $p = .036$) and high self-expectations ($\beta = .659$, $p = .016$) 	Individual and Environmental Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very few receive financial support from family, most depend on the funds provided through the Office of the Vice President • Unmet expectations put students in awkward situations • Non-events • Anticipated financial support • Delays in fund payment

Internal and External Resources	Individual resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual resilience was significantly linked to teamwork ($\beta = 1.097$, $p < .001$), love relationships ($\beta = 1.343$, $p < .001$), and positive learning ($\beta = 1.000$, $p = 1.000$). 	<p>Individual, Relationship and Environmental Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer coaching to develop individual self-concepts and acceptance
Internal and External Resources	Academic resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic resilience was significantly linked to resourcefulness ($\beta = .822$, $p < .001$), community relationships ($\beta = .644$, $p < .001$), optimism ($\beta = .574$, $p < .001$), and self-efficacy ($\beta = 1.000$, $p = 1.000$). Academic performance and progress were significantly linked to academic resilience ($\beta = 6.385$, $p < .001$). 	<p>Individual, Relationship and Environmental Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight a need for academic peer support, (peer tutoring and mentorship). Highlight a need for study methods/strategies, strategies for coping and adaptation. Highlight a need for academic support from subject experts, lecturers, and peers. Develop self-efficacy. Improvement in English language proficiency.
Internal and External Resources	Students challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anxieties and fears are heavily loaded on variables such as lack of confidence (0.864), feeling less capable of completing my study (0.837), feeling less important (0.767), and fear of failing (0.653). Vulnerabilities are loaded on variables such as being bullied at university (0.852) and hunger (0.563). 	<p>Individual, Relationship and Environmental Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fear of approaching counselling service providers Fear of revealing their personal and home situation Unsustainable support for basic needs from individuals they confined to Delays in funds payment

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the support structure is loaded with variables such as lack of support from university management (0.715), lack of support from student support services (0.679), lack of support from lecturers (0.429), lack of support from family (0.716), and lack of support from peers (0.712). • coping, is loaded on variables such as financial challenges (0.505), cannot cope with academic demands (0.647), homesick (0.546), accommodation (0.593), and cannot cope with assignments due dates (0.569). • discrimination (0.719), failed tests (0.779) and repeating modules (0.820). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No one to co-ordinates the funds' payment • Lack of academic support from subject matter experts • Student masses • Relocate and live far from families • Peers provide basic needs but not academic support • Find it difficult to study and concentrate on an empty stomach. • Use the time to beg for food and engage in unappropriated activities for survival leading to less time on academic activities.
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6.1.3.1 Resilience. Table 6.23 summarised the factors influencing counselling effectiveness leading to students' resilience and academic performance from the study findings. Based on the quantitative and qualitative results, the study found significant relationships between different variables for the Youth Ecological Resilience Scale (YERS). Moreover, the study found challenges facing students and how they negatively affected students' academic performance.

6.1.3.1.1 Social resilience

Figure 6.28 Factors influencing social resilience among students

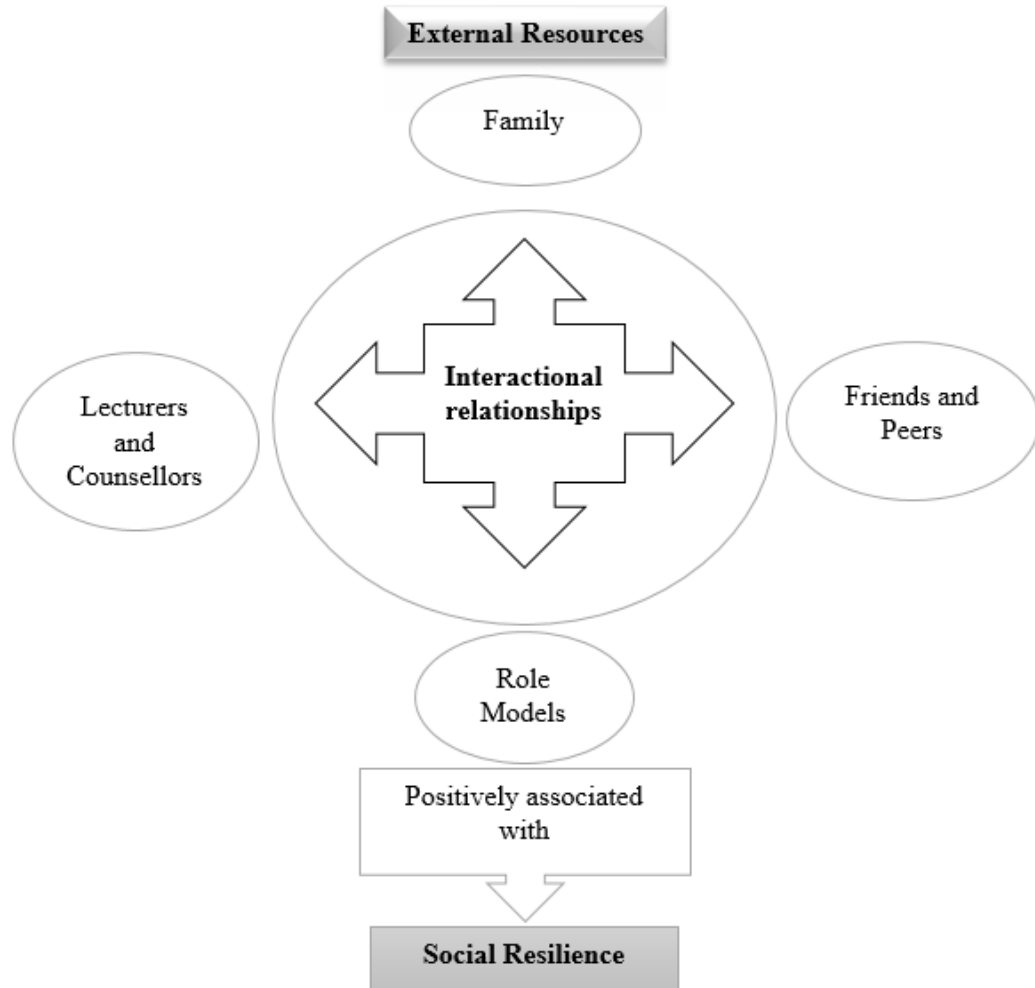


Figure 6.28 presents the factors influencing social resilience. The study found a relationship between external resources of interactional relationships nature such as family, friends/peers, lecturers and role models with social resilience. Consequently, individuals with better relationships with friends, engage in more social activities, have positive role models, and have positive relationships with family tend to have higher levels of social resilience. This is supported by the resilience theory advocated by van Breda (2018a), who maintains that the most significant source of resilience is relationship-centred support and social connectedness with one's cultural heritage.

6.1.3.1.2 Individual resilience. Similarly, Individual Resilience was positively associated with internal and external resources of individual and interactional relationship nature such as Teamwork, Love Relationships, and Positive Learning. Indicating that better teamwork skills, positive relationships with significant others, and engaging in more positive learning experiences lead to higher levels of individual resilience. Findings signify the importance of relationships between students, referrers, counsellors, peers, family members and significant others.

Figure 6. 29 Factors influencing Individual resilience

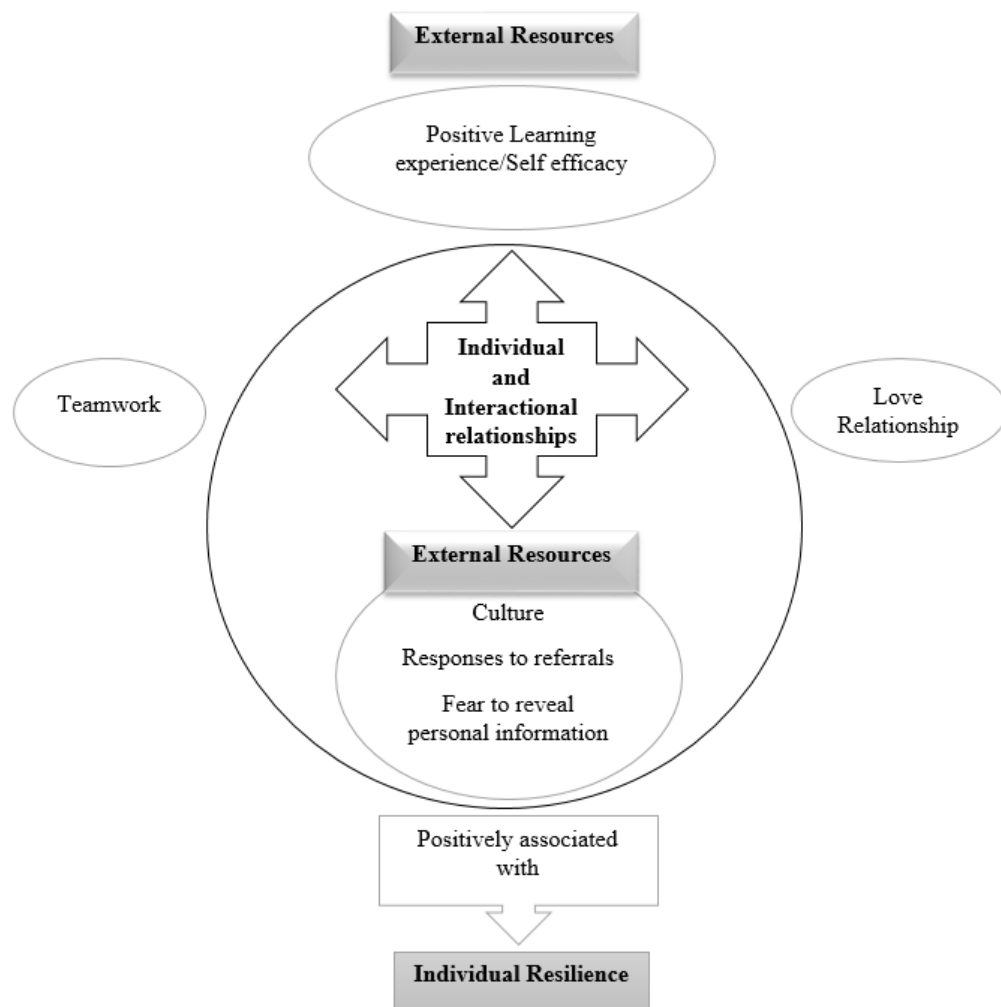


Figure 6.29 presents the factors influencing individual resilience. The study concludes that counselling effectiveness could be influenced by individual factors such

as cultural beliefs, norms and values, how individuals respond to counselling, fear of exposing confidential information and being judged, and students' expectations. The study further concludes that some students were reluctant to seek or respond to counselling support because of cultural differences between students and counsellors, trust issues, not culturally believing in the service provided, first-time encounters, fear of approaching the counsellors including language barriers, as one stated: *Sometimes they are just afraid of facing the person., afraid to express themselves in English, this is some problems, where is the student supposed to go first without being judged?* (LP8)

The findings underscored counsellors' limited expertise while expected to handle multiple student distress beyond their scope of training. Additionally, the workloads due to student masses influence how service providers effectively offer counselling support to the students. Students' expectations and perceptions: *You are not mentally sick to get counselling, you are hungry, and they do not have food for you* (SP4), substantiate the negative connotations of how the term counselling is perceived.

The findings suggest a need for multiculturalism, a team of experts, and alternative support services. In addition, results emphasise the importance of considering person-centred and non-judgemental support interventions with empathy, congruency and unconditional positive regard. Furthermore, the findings highlight a need to reassure trust and confidentiality. Also, to understand students' expectations and proactively anticipate their needs.

6.1.3.1.2 *Financial resilience.*

Figure 6.30 Factors Influencing Financial Resilience

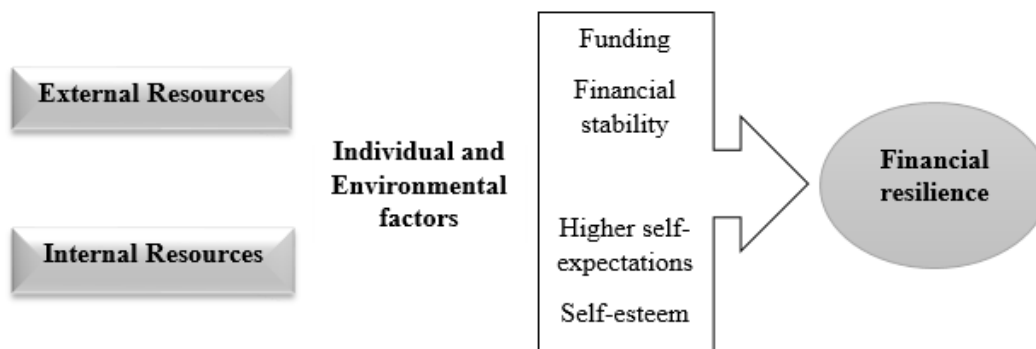


Figure 6.30 presents the factors influencing financial resilience. The study found a positive relationship between Financial Resilience with external and internal resources of Individual and environmental nature such as Family Financial Security, Self-Esteem and High Self-Expectations. Moreover, the association indicates that individuals with greater financial security have higher expectations for themselves and higher levels of financial resilience. The study concludes that the delays in the students' fund payments negatively affected their financial security and lowered their self-expectations in HEIs.

6.1.3.1.3. *Academic resilience.* Moreover, the study found a significant positive relationship between Academic Resilience and variables such as Resourcefulness, Community Relationships, Optimism, and Self Efficacy. The relation indicates that more resourceful individuals have better relationships with their community (environment), have a positive outlook, believe in their ability to succeed academically have a higher level of academic resilience. A lack of resourcefulness with study skills, ability to cope in the academic setting, and lack of self-efficacy and

optimism among students from marginalised backgrounds led to poor academic performance, progress and completion.

Figure 6. 31 Factors Influencing Academic resilience

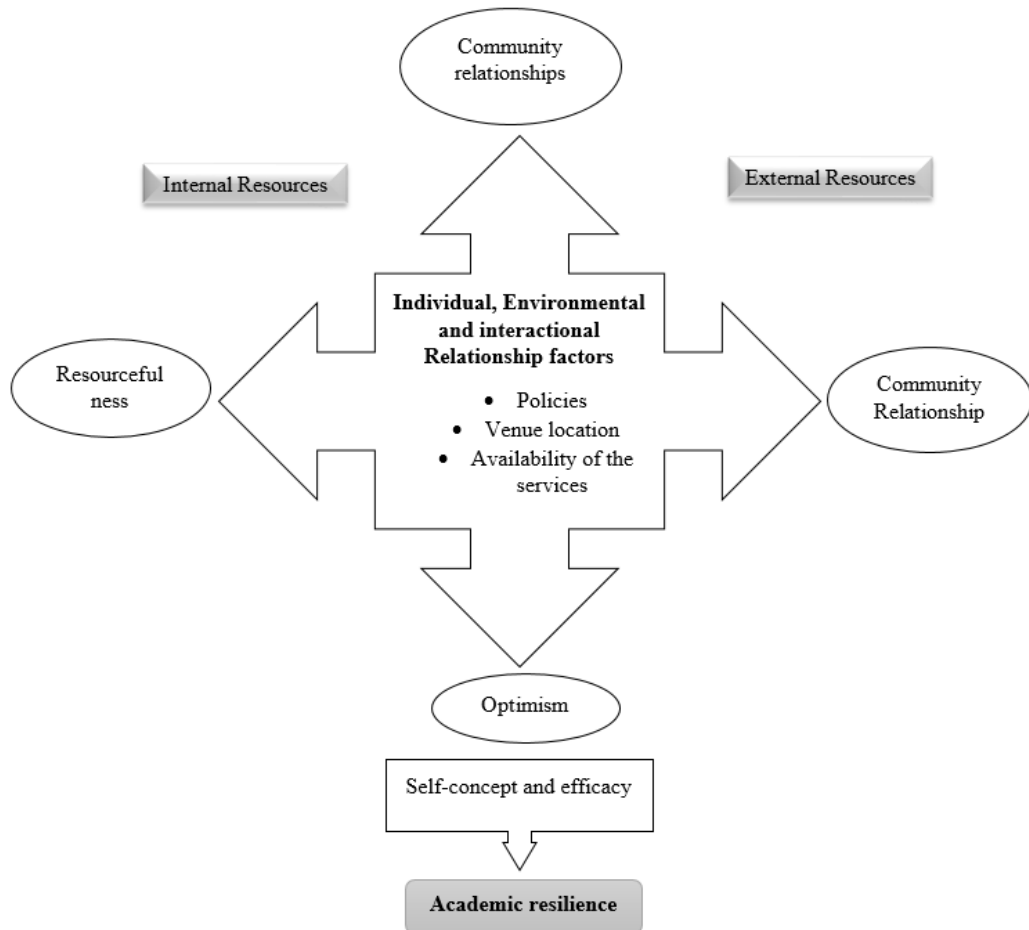


Figure 6.31 presents the factors influencing academic resilience. Based on the findings, the study concludes that there is a positive relationship between internal and external factors of environmental, individual and interactional relationship such as the location of the counselling office, visibility and accessibility of the services and the guiding policies and procedures with academic resilience. Despite available services, the study concludes that the office's location made it difficult to access the office; some referrers had limited access to the available policies and procedures and thus felt less guided in their practices.

6.1.4 Students challenges

Although the counselling results may not be immediately observed, the study underscored that it has long-term effects on student resilience and academic progress. Thus, most studies sought counselling in their first years and less in later years. Therefore, there is a need to provide timely support as the first year seems to be more crucial with more challenges. Moreover, the study concludes that continuously monitoring students' progress throughout their studies is necessary.

The study concludes that poor academic performance causes anxiety, fear, a lack of confidence, and low self-worth. At the same time, students who experience anxiety, fear and a lack of confidence are at-risk of poor academic performance among students and vice versa.

Moreover, the study concludes that a lack of basic needs, such as hunger, may lead to students being bullied and discriminated which aggravates their vulnerability, causing them to feel inferior among other students and resulting in poor academic performance.

The study further highlights the importance of a supportive environment for academic success and support structures to address academic, social and financial needs. Also, to strengthen support from family, university management, student support providers, lecturers and peers and their contribution to students' academic performance.

The findings suggest a need to understand the unique needs of students and develop effective multicultural interventions that are person-centred in a supportive environment with diverse support teams. The study also concludes that more is needed to strengthen students coping mechanisms to deal with academic and personal stressors. It is crucial to consider Schlossberg's four sets of factors that influence an

individual ability to cope in a transition, such as the situation, the self, the support and the strategies (Hayes, 2015).

The findings also suggest a need for HEIs to adopt a Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) model to frame their support activities and address exclusion among students from marginalised backgrounds. Namibia could take good examples from the European Union (EU) HEIs have adopted the DEI model using varied strategies such as financial support, counselling and mentoring, non-discrimination assurance and collaborations with various stakeholders (Jørgensen, 2019).

6.2 The Conceptualisation Model

To gain a deeper understanding of the findings of the current study, the researcher chose to utilize the Astin I-E-O model, as detailed in chapter two. This specific model offers a more comprehensive depiction of the factors that impact the efficacy of counseling interventions. By incorporating various theories employed in the present study with the Astin model, the researcher has developed a model which is visually depicted in the diagram below.

Figure 6.32 Conceptualisation Model

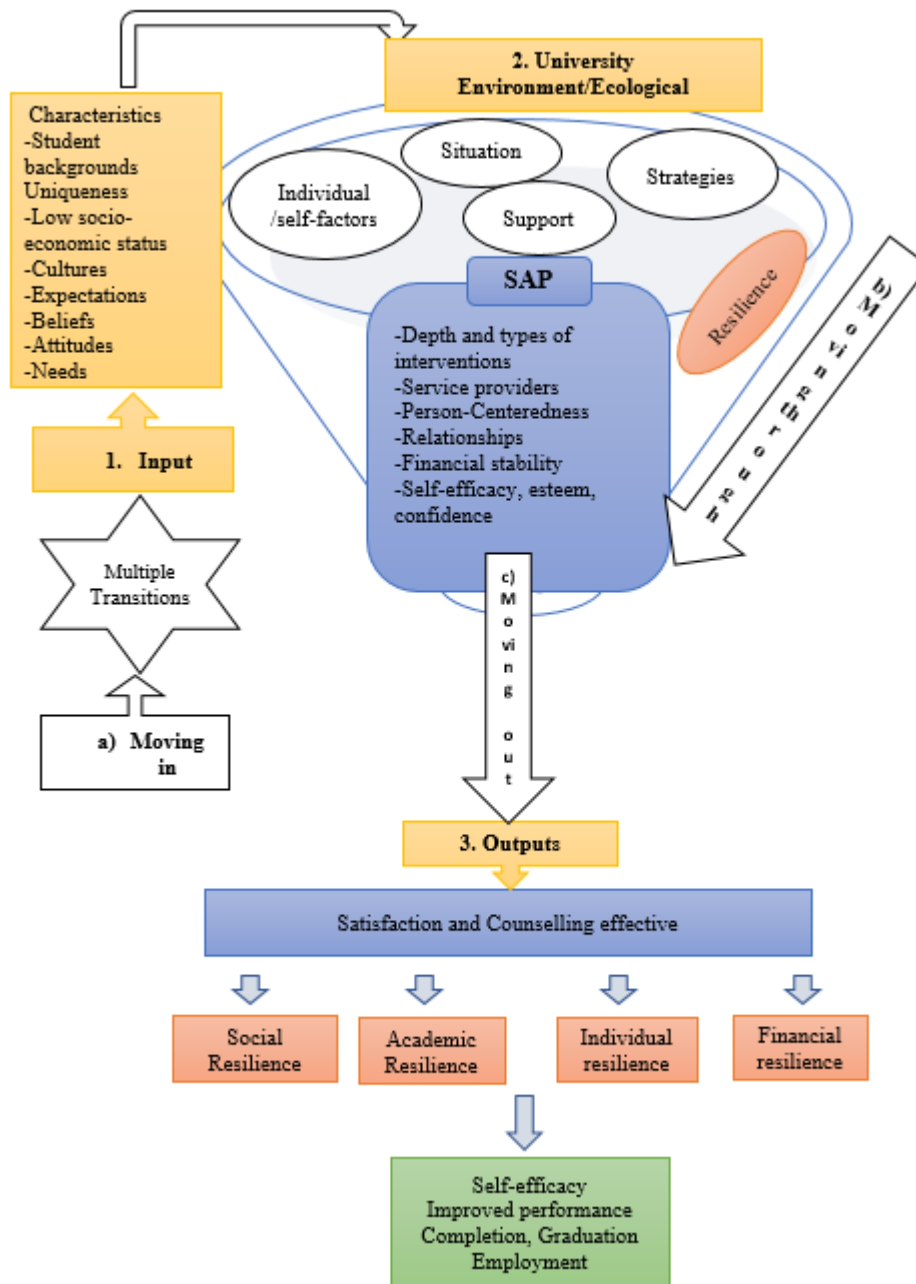


Figure 6.27 shows Astins' Model that conceptualise and summarised the theories, research questions and objectives and the findings to guide the development of SAP.

6.2.1 Input

Some students from marginalised backgrounds gain access to the university through the Indigenous admission category and other entries outlined in the undergraduate student recruitment, admission, and registration policy (University of

Namibia, 2021). This initiative aims to maximise the accessibility of higher education in accordance with national and international policies and frameworks (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 1998; Ministry of Education, 2013). The university also implements measures to ensure equal access and inclusion, as outlined by the SDG goals, particularly goal four. Counselling support serves as the primary source of psychosocial and academic assistance in higher education institutions, catering to the unique needs of these students.

During the moving-in phase, students from marginalised backgrounds experience multiple transitions and bring unique characteristics shaped by their experiences, low socio-economic status, financial instabilities, beliefs, cultures, expectations, and attitudes to the university environment (Bartholomew et al. 2019; Ndimwedi, 2016). The findings suggest that their unique Input to the university environment puts them at risk and may impact their coping ability, self-efficacy, self-concepts, resilience, and academic achievement. Therefore, the intervention program, specifically the SAP, should consider these multiple transitions and all potential factors that could affect their progress and transitions within the university.

6.2.2 Environment

As students transition into university, they may encounter various internal and external factors in HEIs' environment that can lead to distress. These factors include unmet expectations, exposure to new cultures, peer pressure, discrimination, stereotypes, feeling overwhelmed, hunger, changes in roles and routines, academic demands, and other challenges. On the other hand, positive factors contribute to resilience, such as finding new support systems, making friends, acquiring new skills and knowledge, and having mentors and coaches, the interventions, policies and the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) model in practices.

Schlossberg's theory of transition particularly the 4s can be applied to the university environment, where students' perceptions of themselves, their reactions to the transition, the strategies they use, and the support they receive all influence their resilience abilities. Therefore, it is crucial to implement a Student Assistance Programme (SAP) to help alleviate distressing factors and support students in developing and maintaining resilience. Despite the availability of counselling services, research indicates that student distress remains prevalent. Furthermore, the study reveals low scores on positively worded items of the GP-CORE, indicating dissatisfaction in various psychological domains, including Subjective Well-being, Functional general, and functional close relationship. Conversely, the study found high scores on negatively worded items, reflecting dissatisfaction with issues such as depression, physical health, anxiety, and social functioning.

The study found that counselling effectiveness depends on various elements within the university environment and beyond. Among others are the type of support programmes, students, referrers and counsellors' characteristics. The study found individual, interactional relationships and institutional environment factors influencing counselling effectiveness that need to be considered in providing student support. Moreover, findings substantiate the importance of person-centred support and capitalising on individual resources such as strengths, ability and resilience. The study also corroborates the importance of relationships in developing personal resilience and the need for Diversity, Inclusive and Equity (DEI) in the support provision.

Based on the findings, students sought support and confided in individuals who were more approachable, empathetic, unconditional positive regard, congruency, understanding, and willing to help. Results corroborate the calls for person-centred support services that capitalise on counsellor and client relationship,

multiculturalism/cultural sensitivity, positive experience, openness and non-judgmental counselling service (Hayes, 2015). Similarly, the findings indicate that counselling effectiveness depends on students' willingness, responses, openness, and confinement with the service providers.

The study also concludes that the university environment, policies, and office setups influenced the effectiveness of counselling services. Moreover, procedures and approaches to referrals, accessibility, visibility, awareness, knowledge and skills, role models, and the types of needs influence students' willingness to self-seek and respond to referrals, develop mutual relationships and confide to the service providers.

6.2.3 Outputs

As they move out, the depth and type of intervention, students' responses and willingness, the depth of the relationship, and who provides the service determine counselling effectiveness. Counselling effectiveness as an equity measure is characterised by the extent to which students respond to the interventions and the quality of student outputs or the desired outcomes such as self-efficacy development, resilience in various aspects and would be reflected by subjective well-being, improved performance, progress, completion, and graduation.

The study proposes a Student Assistance Programme (SAP) that provides quality, person-centred, and equitable counselling services that respond to students' unique needs, enhance their resilience, self-efficacy and support their academic success. The proposed SAP emphasises the need to provide ongoing support, cultural sensitive, person-centred and resources that cater to students' diverse backgrounds and experiences, creating a supportive and inclusive environment that fosters their personal and academic growth.

6.3 Recommendations

HEIs have made significant efforts to ensure equitable access and inclusion of students from marginalised backgrounds by establishing counselling services. The study considered the significance of counselling services and their massive contributions to the inclusion and equitable access to higher education among students from marginalised backgrounds. However, it also took cognizance of the constant generational changes, new trends and perspectives in the student population and their diverse needs. The study also acknowledges the on-going paradigm shifts in policies and practices that require significant empirical and evidence-based transformation and innovations.

Based on the research findings, the study made recommendations linked to the research objectives. The proposed recommendations are for policy, practices, and further research. Moreover, they can be considered conditionally, supplementary, or perpetually in HEIs in Namibia and beyond. The recommendations are for consideration at different levels, such as governmental, ministerial institutions, specific campuses, DSA/ODS, referrers, student support service teams and peers.

6.3.1 Recommendation for HEIs Practices

6.3.1.1 Objective/question 1: The Experiences of Beneficiaries and Referrers on the Effectiveness of Counselling Services as an Equity Measure.

Although counselling is critical in HEIs, findings indicate that students from marginalised backgrounds need support interventions beyond counselling services to ensure equitable access and inclusion. Based on the results of this study, students' distress is triggered by factors classified as primary, secondary and tertiary and characterised by financial insecurity and psychological, physiological, social and academic challenges.

Inclusion means removing barriers that prevent individuals from thriving and achieving their full potential (Hausiku, 2017). It also means transforming education systems and the learning environment to respond to student diversity (Matengu et al., 2019). Inclusive education is where every student experiences equitable access to quality education and achieves academic success (Matengu et al., 2019).

Findings revealed delays in student funds payment. To avert delays in student funds payment, the study recommends HEIs dedicate personnel to represent students and serve as a mediator to facilitate students' internal and external financial issues. The personnel would liaise with the funding office to ensure that students' tuition and pocket money are timely paid. Facilitating student funds would avoid registration delays and unnecessary frequent visits by students to the funding offices that yield no solutions. In addition, the study recommends that the Ministry of Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare to continuously monitor the welfare, well-being and academic progress of students under their funds and honour their obligations to make payments of students' funds timely.

Despite student funding, the funds are insufficient to meet students' daily needs and upkeep, particularly the students' physiological needs such as food, toiletries, accommodations and transport. The findings also indicate that some students attend classes on empty stomachs.

To ameliorate this need, the study recommends HEIs initiatives in collaboration with the existing institutions' programmes to facilitate students' basic needs through donations. For example, to source donations and sponsorship from staff, donors and business communities to fund and establish university feeding programmes. Also, to seek donations of items such as toiletries, stationaries, clothes and blankets for the needy students. The study also recommends that institutions

establish relationships with organisations around campuses to organise weekend or holiday jobs for students in need. Alternatively, HEIs should extend initiatives such as the student breakfast and soup projects beyond the examination period. Such initiatives to be expanded to offer cheaper meals or bread twice or three days a week would make a difference to the students in need.

Based on the findings, only 18.8% of beneficiaries who participated in the study had hostel accommodation. To prevent student abuse, exploitation, and maltreatment in the hands of their providers, relatives, and significant others, the study recommends prioritising students from marginalised backgrounds for hostel accommodation. The study recommends HEIs DSA/ODS to facilitate cheaper accommodation around campuses for students from marginalised not residing in the hostel and struggling to find safer living space. The study also recommends a systematic approach to recruiting students from marginalised backgrounds into higher education. This allows HEIs to be aware of the students' intake, encourage proactive planning, and timely allocation of hostel accommodation each year.

The findings indicate poor academic progress, a lack of English Language proficiency and academic Writing and studying skills. Thus, to improve students' academic progress in courses regarded as “gatekeepers” and a lack of English proficiency. The study strongly recommends thorough investigations to understand the causes of poor progress.

Supports to focus on interventions that capitalise on students' inner resources, inner motivation, self-efficacy and resilience. The teams should include but not be limited to academic staff, peers and industry experts. The team should provide academic support programmes where students receive academic mentorship and tutorials from tutors, lecturers, and peers with well-established monitoring and follow-

up systems. The study also recommends peer support groups, peer coaching and strong involvement of academic staff to provide remedial in their respective courses. Furthermore, the study recommends ongoing study skills; peer support (coaching and mentoring); work planning, organising and managing skills; time and self-management and academic assessment preparation. Finally, the study recommends to the marginalised communities that successful and respected members of these communities to be more visible and serve as role models and motivational speakers to inspire students from their communities.

To advance English Language Proficiency and Academic Writing challenges. The study recommends well-defined and comprehensive programmes in the early years of their study programme to provide the following skills: academic writing, supplementary English tutorials, specific course/modules contents tutorials and academic coping strategies.

The study revealed the underutilisation of counselling services stemming from misconceptions and negative connotations related to mental health and the names of therapies. Thus, the study recommends distinguishing between clinical and non-clinical support services and suggesting a name change to the support services. Instead of referring to student supports as counselling support, the study proposes that the services be referred to as Student Assistance programmes (SAP) with different domains addressing economic, psychological, physiological, social and academic needs.

6.2.1.2 Objective/question 2 and 3: Beneficiaries' and referrers' satisfaction with counselling services as an equity measure. Student satisfaction in different psychological domains warrants persistence, curbing dropout and ensuring student inclusion. Students' happiness, development and success depend upon their ability to

deal with university challenges (Khairani et al., 2019). The role of counselling service is to remove challenges to ensure equity, inclusion and life satisfaction (Iyeke et al., 2018).

The study found dissatisfaction in the various psychological domains (subjective well-being, function-general, close relationship and social as well as anxiety, depression and physical). Thus, to enhance satisfaction with counselling services, the study recommends alternative support services that consider person-centred principles and practices and are culturally sensitive to improve subjective well-being, functioning (general, close relationship, social) and problems (anxiety, depression and physical) of all students. The support provided should capitalise on individual strength with empathy, congruency and unconditional positive regard (Hayes, 2015). Furthermore, the study recommends frequent and ongoing evaluations, reviews and feedback on the counselling support programmes from different perspectives to determine and ensure their effectiveness.

The findings revealed a lack of motivation and optimism among students. To maintain students' motivation and resilience, the study recommends ongoing motivational speeches from social groups, successful peers, successful individuals from similar backgrounds, religious leaders, and potential community role models, mentors and coaches. In addition, the study recommends that HEIs maintain student relationships by involving fellow students from similar backgrounds to serve in peer support groups.

Furthermore, the findings revealed uncertainty and fears about dealing with distressed students among referrers. The study recommends staff empowerment through staff development training to curb uncertainty and develop confidence among staff to identify and refer students confidently. For effective identification and

referrals, the study recommends staff development training to empower staff with the necessary student support skills, such as identifiable signs, ways to approach and deal with distressed students, referral procedures and protocols and referral ethical conduct.

In addition, it is recommended that clear referral guidelines and comprehensive procedures guide staff who are not mental health professionals. The study further suggests that service providers provide clear guidelines on appropriate ethical conduct in approaching, dealing with, and referring distressed students.

The findings revealed a lack of role models to whom students could relate. To address the lack of role models, HEIs, through affirmative actions and employment equity, should also grant employment opportunities to graduates from marginalised backgrounds to be visible in the staff structures and serve as role models to whom others could relate.

The study revealed counsellors' work overload and limited expertise in field-specific areas. The study recommends that HEIs use academic staff to support students in different areas based on their fields of expertise as community engagement, for example, those in finance, to offer financial literacy to students before receiving their funds. Furthermore, HEIs use external experts, volunteers and trusted community members.

6.2.1.3 Objective/question 4: Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Counselling as an Equity Measure Leading to Students' Resilience and Academic Performance. Based on Kambouropoulos (2015), counselling is a sensitive practice, and different cultures have unique approaches to counselling practices. Given the unique and diverse backgrounds with diverse world perspectives and world views, the study strongly recommends a more multi-culturalism and person-centredness approach to student support. Multi-culturalism and person-centredness consider

diversifying student support services borrowing from diverse cultural counselling practices.

Also, given individual uniqueness, and their unique characteristics, the study calls for person-centred and non-judgement support services tailored to the unique needs of individual students. It should allow individuals to use their innate strengths to develop a positive self-concept, self-esteem, self-image, self-confidence, self-worth, acceptance, and self-efficacy for their academic achievement. The study also recommends that HEIs identify the relevant and appropriate support teams within and beyond the institutions to provide context-based and field-specific support. Also to incorporate cultural counselling in the modern counselling practices and avail role models, mentors, coaches, peer groups, and motivational speakers from students' communities with whom they can relate and identify.

Based on the findings, multiple factors influence students' individual, social, financial and academic resilience. Thus, the study recommends that the university environment be the avenue for all to thrive. Counselling effectiveness as an equity measure should be reflected by student success which is the desired out.

6.2.1.4 Objective/question 5: Suggest Models and Develop a Sustainable Student Assistance Programme and Implementation Strategies. To create a conducive learning environment, the Sector Policy on Inclusive Education directs all education institutions to adopt flexible approaches to plan and develop programmes and monitor and evaluate them purposefully (Ministry of Education, 2013). Furthermore, the policy aims to expand access and ensure quality education for all. Assessing the effectiveness of counselling services provides the opportunity to identify strengths and shortcomings of the services and recommend service improvement.

The study found some limitations to the current counselling services in HEIs in Namibia. The dendrogram and agglomeration schedule reveals significant clusters of related attributes that informed the development of the Student Assistance Programme (SAP). These findings suggest an integrated approach to counselling and resilience-building strategies. The study adopted Astins' IEO Model interlinked with resilience and Carl Roger's Person-Centred theory to develop the Student Assistance Programme (SAP) (described in Chapter 7). Person-centered and multi-cultural sensitive SAP as an alternative support service (Guided by the three elements of the Person-centred theory) aiming to:

- Effectively address students' primary (financial insecurity), secondary (physiological/basic needs) and tertiary (social, academic and psychological) needs.
- Ensure coping, adapting, satisfaction, resilience, and academic performance.
- Ensure equitable access and inclusion by increasing persistence, retention, completion, and graduation.

SAP team members should be multi-culturally sensitive, open-minded, understanding, empathetic, optimistic, willing, and motivating. With such qualities, they could empower students with the assets they need to develop and maintain resilience and cope with adversity.

6.3.2 Recommendation for Policy

To ensure equitable access and the inclusion of students from marginalised backgrounds in HEIs in Namibia, the Government of the Republic of Namibia should enforce and monitor the implementation of mandatory national legal frameworks at all levels of education, including HEIs.

Meanwhile, HEIs should recognise the urgency of a knowledge-based society, advocated by Namibia Vision 2030. They should take cognisance of the call by the Harambee Prosperity Plan on improved coverage and reach of the School Feeding Programme. The study resolves that hunger does not end at primary or secondary school. Despite funding for students from marginalised backgrounds, a lack of basic needs such as food and accommodation remain barriers to academic success. Therefore, the study recommends HEIs adopt the national feeding programme policy and extend it to the university as an equity measure for inclusion to come up with University Nutrition Programmes.

In support of students from marginalised backgrounds, HEIs should recognise and reinforce the implementation of the National Policy on Orphan and Vulnerable Children, Educational Sector Policy on Orphan and Vulnerable Children, Education Sector Policy on Inclusive Education and National Policy Options for Educationally Marginalised Children (Ministry of Education [MoEAC], 2013). Integrate National Policies calling for the education of students from Marginalised communities on the existing institutional policies. These policies would serve as a stepping stone to compel institutions and staff to redirect their efforts in ensuring diversity, equity, and inclusion. HEIs to develop and implement institutional policies on inclusive education practices.

Given that most marginalised students lack information about what to expect at university, the Life skills curriculum at school and co-curricular should be revised to include topics to prepare learners for HEIs.

The study recommends HEIs management and staff to be familiar with the conventions and declarations supporting education as a human right, particularly the ACHPR of 1981, the ACRWC of 1990, the WCEFA of 1990, the WEF of 2000,

WDHE for the Twenty-First Century and UNDP Sustainable Development Goal 4 and the Education 2030 Framework for Action (UNESCO-UIS, 2018; Dieckmann et al., 2014). The understanding would strengthen the commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion of students from marginalised backgrounds.

In addition, they should be sensitised to be conversant with international conventions that are instrumental to the education of indigenous people, such as the UN Declaration on the right of indigenous people of 2007, ILO169, the UN Convention on the rights of the child (1989) and the Dakar Framework for Action.

HEIs should develop comprehensive SAP identification, referral, and intervention policies with clear guidelines for implementation. Where necessary, they should also revisit, design, and monitor the implementation of psychological and non-psychological support policies and practices such as counselling, mentorship, and coaching policies.

6.3.3 Recommendation for Further Research

There is limited literature concerning student support in HEIs in Namibia. Furthermore, there is a need for more studies to evaluate institutional efforts toward inclusion and equitable access for all students. On-going assessment of the effectiveness of prevalent services remains crucial. Therefore, the study recommends further research on the following:

- Future research should explore strategies for addressing the financial, social, and academic challenges faced by students from marginalised backgrounds in HEIs.
- Examine cultural perspectives on help-seeking behaviour among students from marginalised backgrounds.

- Discover culturally appropriate methods of delivering counselling support, particularly to marginalised communities.
- Conducting tracer studies to track the whereabouts of individuals from marginalised backgrounds who have dropped out of higher educational institutions (HEIs) to gain insights on how HEIs can effectively meet their needs.
- Research to evaluate the effectiveness of counselling services, using a standardised measure such as CORE-OM extended to all counselling services beneficiaries.
- Conduct destination studies on individuals who have successfully advanced and obtained their degrees to serve as exemplary figures for others.
- Expand the sample to include the perspectives of counselling service providers, funders and HEIs management.
- The study also recommends further research to understand the causes of delays in student funds payments.
- Finally, other studies to determine the effective implementation of SAP to benefit all students.

6.4 Contribution to the Body of Knowledge

- The study created awareness about the needs of students from marginalised backgrounds in HEIs.
- The study highlighted the strengths and limitations of counselling services as an equity measure.
- The study contributes to the evaluation of institutional support services for future improvement.

- The study highlighted students' needs that require intervention and proposed improvements in student support services.
- The study contributes to the limited literature for future researchers in the field.
- The study proposed a structural model for more effective counselling services.
- The study develops the Student Assistance Programme (SAP) and Strategies and guidelines for implementation.

Chapter Seven

Objective /question 5: The Student Assistance Programme (SAP) Development and Guidelines for Implementation

The study explored the effectiveness of counselling services as an equity measure to support students from marginalised backgrounds. Chapter Six presented the summary of merged findings from both qualitative and quantitative data. This chapter addresses Research Objective Five, which aims to develop a sustainable and culturally sensitive Student Assistance Programme (SAP) with strategies and guidelines for implementation. The SAP responds to counselling service shortcomings revealed from phase one (situation analysis) of the study. This chapter describes the evidence-based SAP with its strategies and guidelines for implementation developed from the study.

The study aimed to propose models to develop the SAP with its strategies and guidelines for implementation to ensure timely identification through self-seeking and referrals, intervention, and continuous student support to ensure equity and inclusion. The SAP can effectively be implemented with the help of HEIs' management and a team of internal and external psychological health professionals, academic and support staff, peers and interested stakeholders such as members of communities and traditional experts. Astin's IOE and the DEI models, combined with person-centred theory, resilience theory and Schlossberg's theory of transition, have provided a conceptual understanding of the desired SAP in HEIs.

7.1. The SAP Development

As discussed in Chapter Three, the SAP development undertook a two-phase approach with five steps, as shown in Diagram 3.17 in Chapter Three. Phase 1 consists of two steps. The first step was the situation analysis that employed a convergent

mixed method approach to collect qualitative and quantitative data. Step 2 of Phase 1 involved the data conceptualisation that informed and substantiated the need for SAP development. Phase 1 of the study covered the first four research objectives. Phase 2 consisted of three steps, the last steps (4 and 5) did not form part of this study but are to be considered later. In addition, Phase 2 addressed objective number five, which aims to develop the SAP and its strategies for implementation.

7.1.1 Justification for SAP Development

Although the findings from the situational analysis (Phase 1 of the study) indicate the significance of counselling services, the study suggests that in addition to counselling services, students from marginalised backgrounds require additional support. The dendrogram and agglomeration schedule reveals important clusters of related attributes that can inform the development of a Student Assistance Programme (SAP) to promote student resilience and academic success. These findings suggest an integrated approach to counselling and resilience-building strategies. Further, these findings are critical to developing and implementing an SAP that takes a holistic approach to supporting students in their academic pursuits. Therefore, SAP development should consider incorporating counselling and resilience-building interventions to address students' challenges. Additionally, SAP development may involve collaborating with academic departments, social support programs, and community resources to create a comprehensive approach to promoting student success. As the study recommends, the Student Assistance Programme (SAP) in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) must be developed to address psychological, physiological, financial, social, and academic needs. The SAP would ensure equitable access and inclusion as it aims to improve students' resilience, persistence and academic achievement.

Table 7.23 Key Findings Justifying the SAP

Evidence from the Need Analysis	Guided by Schlossberg’s van Brenda’s Resilience and Roger’s Person-centred theories: to address challenges from the need analysis
Q1 Experiences on counselling efficacy as an equity measure	SAP interventions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling limitations to addressing the financial and physiological needs • Drop out and poor academic progress and achievements • Delays of funds payment • Unmet physiological needs (food, toiletries, accommodation, transport) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person-centred support (congruency, unconditional positive regards and empathy). • Proactive institutional support • Holistic support to address both primary, secondary and tertiary needs. • Academic and non-academic supports • Fast-track student fund payments. • Increased coordination and collaboration between stakeholders
Q2 and 3 Dissatisfaction factors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of knowledge and skills causing uncertainty among referrers. • Lack of peer support on academic challenges. • Lack of awareness regarding their prevalence. • Staff development trainings • Clear referral guidelines and procedures • Multi-support teams (peer, mentor, coaches, professionals and trusted community members). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff development trainings • Clear referral guidelines and procedures • Multi-support teams (peer, mentor, coaches, professionals and trusted community members) • Make use of internal and external support teams • Make use of internal academic staff expertise • Timely student identification and interventions. • Incorporating cultural in the model counselling practices.
Q4. Factors influencing counselling efficacy on resilience and academic achievement	Personal characteristics, interactional relationship and the environment

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misconceptions about counselling services • Fear and resistance to revealing their situations • Trust, norms, values and beliefs • Anxiety, fear, and lack of confidence affecting academic performance • Self-esteem, confidence, efficacy • Adapting, coping, and resilience • Visibility and awareness of the services • Policies and guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name changed from counselling to SAP and not counselling • Culturally sensitive interventions • Clear SAP principles of ethics • Make use of community-based role models. • Integrate cultural factors into modern counselling support. • Use of community elders • Awareness programme • On-going service evaluation and programme reviews • On-going monitoring
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Table 7.23 outlines the key findings from the research objectives/questions that justify the need for SAP. The programme development was framed around Astin's IEO model interlinked with Carl Roger's person-centred theory, resilience and Schlossberg theory of transition. It followed the guidelines outlined in the SAP guidebooks (Borsato & Alvos, 2015; Wright, 2013). Moreover, it followed a systematic process adopted from various SAP programmes such as the Virginia Department of Education and SAMHSA of the University of South Carolina (Taylor & Baker, 2012; Wright, 2013). The guidebooks offer processes, strategies, tools, and relevant resources for educational institutions implementing evidence-based SAP to support students in need.

Figure 7.33 SAP Outline

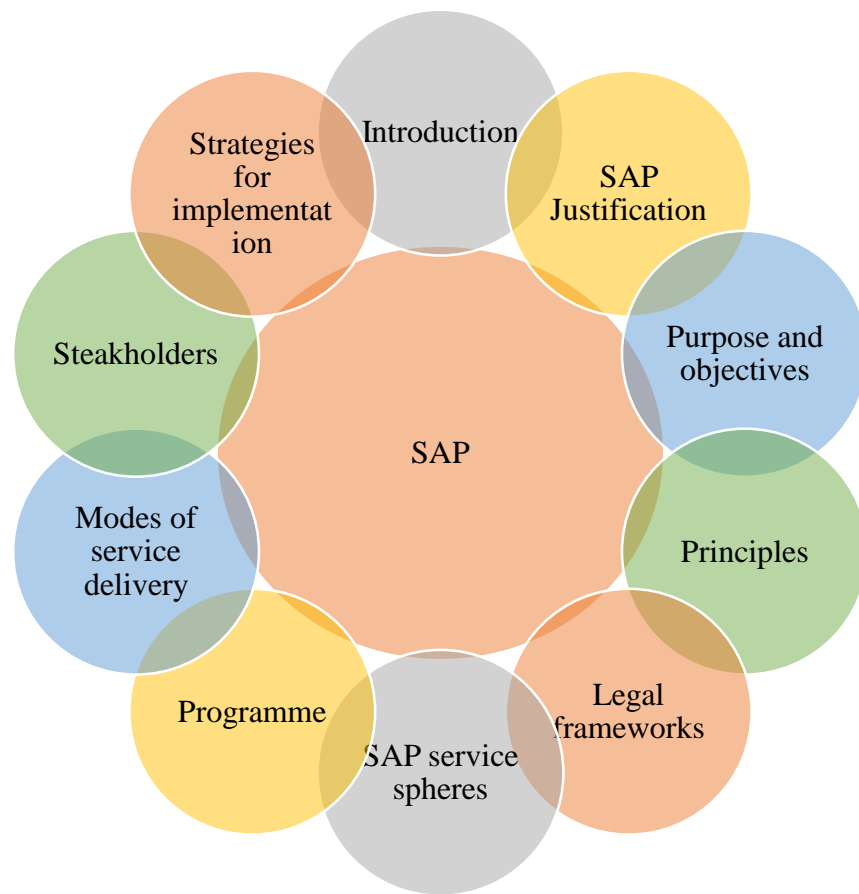


Figure 7.33 presents the outline of the SAP. The programme consists of an introduction, the purpose and objectives, principles, legal frameworks, the services spheres, the actual programs and the key stakeholders and strategies for implementation. The SAP will be housed in the DSA/ODS in HEIs. Its emphasis will be on early detection, intervention, and preventing barriers to academic success (Taylor & Baker, 2012). Although some SAPs in HEIs are mainly designed to assist educational leaders, educators and youth officers (Student Assistance Center at Prevent, n.d.; Wright, 2013), this programme would be helpful to the professional counselling teams, HEIs management, academic peer support groups, and the academic and support staff. Moreover, the programme would benefit students from

marginalised backgrounds and all at-risk students in HEIs in Namibia. The present study only designed the programme and its implementation strategies.

Figure 7.34 SAP in HEIs structure

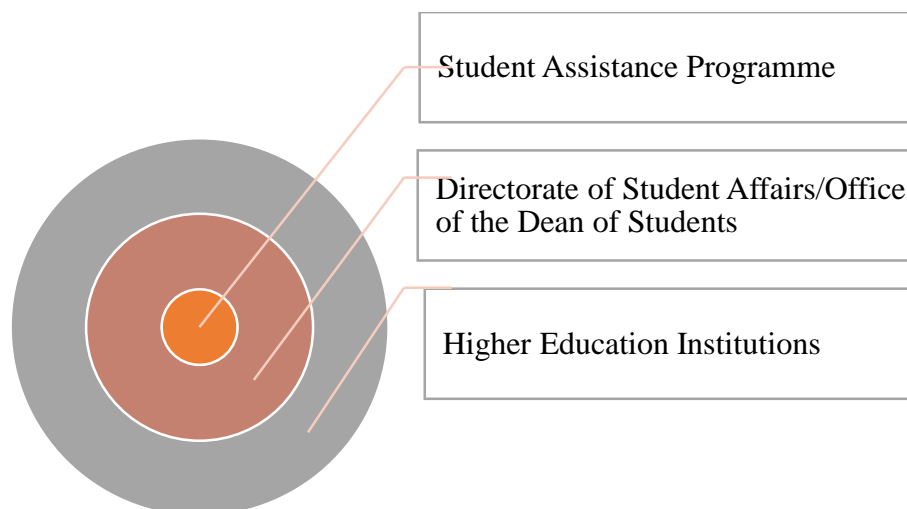


Figure 7.30 above indicates that the SAP will be an institutional program governed by institutional policies and run through the Directorate of Students Affairs and Services, also known as the Office of the Dean of Students in some institutions.

7.2 The Purpose and Objectives of the SAP

The purpose of the SAP is to improve student support services, reinforce HEIs' commitments to equitable access and ensure the overall university experience for all students. The objectives of the current SAP were necessitated by shortcomings identified from the situation analysis in Phase 1 of the study. It was informed by the conclusions and recommendations from the study. Therefore, the SAP aims:

- To smoothen students' transition into HEIs (fostering coping, adapting)
- To prevent and manage, while capacitating students with inner resources to recover, bounce back from adversities.

- Strengthen students' internal resources such as self-concepts, self-efficacy, self-confidence and motivation.
- Promote academic achievement and success.
- To effectively address students' financial, physiological/basic needs, psychological, social and academic needs.
- To maximise student support services utilisation.
- To promote student satisfaction on different psychological domains while in HEIs.
- To increase equity of access and outcomes among students from marginalised backgrounds.

7.2.1 SAP Goals

- The goal is to ensure coping, adapting, satisfaction, resilience, and academic performance.
- Furthermore, to ensure equitable access and inclusion by increasing persistence, retention, completion, and graduation.

7.3 SAP Principles

The principles of ethics discussed below are the foundation on which the SAP is based to ensure student support effectiveness, sustainability, and student satisfaction.

7.3.1 Autonomy and Voluntary Participation

The principle of autonomy in the SAP applies to an individual's freedom to decide whether or not to participate in the programme (Claire et al., 2013). Participation will be voluntary, and it remains the students' choice, action, and decision to agree to take part in the SAP. Interested students will attend an information

session where the details of SAP, such as the services, durations, and benefits, will be explained. Moreover, information brochures and booklets will be distributed to ensure students understand the programme and make informed participation decisions. Participants in the SAP will sign an informed consent to indicate that they understand what has been explained (Claire et al., 2013). Despite consent forms, it remains up to the students to participate, continue or withdraw from the programme.

7.3.2 Justice

The principle of justice in this programme ensures that all participants are treated equally. No participant will be discriminated against because of their socio-economic background, gender, disability, race, or other characteristics. All participants' rights and dignity will be equally respected.

7.3.3 Confidentiality

According to Caldicott and Manning (2013), it is imperative to safeguard confidential information beyond the support team. Protecting the personal information of students participating in the SAP is a priority.

7.3.4 Appropriate Caring and Supporting

Although participation will be voluntary, the student support team must anticipate all possible situations where the participants' well-being could be compromised because of traumatic experiences. All participants' needs and well-being throughout the programme will be a priority. Therefore, an appropriate arrangement, such as prompt referral to counselling professionals or medical care, will manage any negative consequences (Claire et al., 2013).

7.4 SAP Modes of Service Delivery

The SAP takes three modes of intervention, namely, internal, external and combined service delivery modes.

Figure 7.31 SAP Modes of Service Delivery

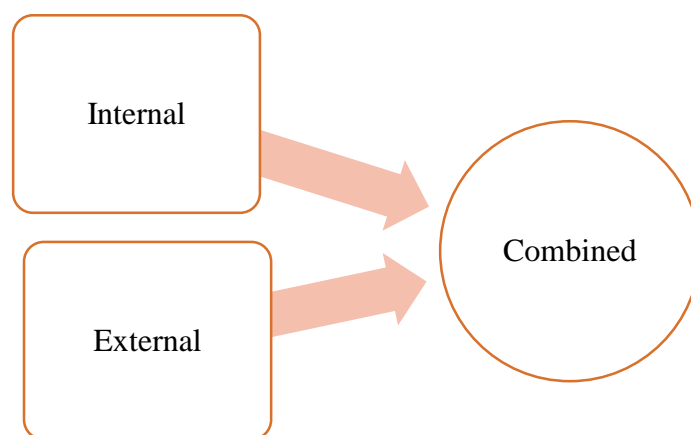


Figure 7.31 indicates the modes of service delivery in the SAP, discussed below.

7.4.1 Internal SAP Mode of Service Delivery

These are the on-campus services run on-site and internally by the institutions and are provided by staff employed by the institution. These services are governed by institutional policies and guidelines and are offered with no charges to the students (Dartey, 2016).

7.4.2 External SAP Mode of Service Delivery

Using external service providers creates an opportunity to integrate traditional and non-traditional services for the well-being of students. These are off-campus services offered by external stakeholders contracted or temporarily consulted to provide specialised or professional services within the service parameters of the SAP. Some of these services may be sought through referrals and approvals by institutional

authorities, service recipients, student sponsors, parents, or guardians, as there might be charges for the services.

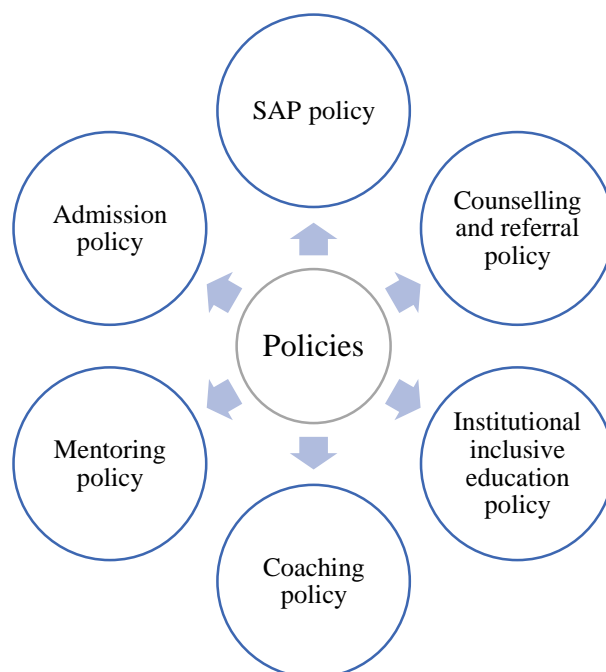
7.4.3 Combined SAP Mode of Service Delivery

These are services provided by internal and external service providers. Students might be referred off-campus for special services that are unavailable, depending on their needs, to supplement the on-campus support.

7.5 SAP Legal Frameworks

In addition to the national and international legal frameworks calling for education for all, there is a need for institutional, legal frameworks to govern the implementation of the program for the SAP to be effective. In addition, the legal frameworks serve as the guidelines on which members of the support teams would base their support interventions. The needed policies that are not available will have to be developed through the ODS/DSA.

Figure 7.35 SAP regulatory framework



The diagram shows the necessary regulatory framework for effective SAP implementation. Some policies such as mentoring, coaching and admission policies are already available. Meanwhile, the SAP policy, counselling and referral as well as the Institutional inclusive education policy are to be developed.

7.6 The SAP Scope of Services

Two spheres in the SAP distinguish the type and scope of services under the programme. The identified domains set service parameters of student assistance to benefit students from marginalised and at-risk students in Namibia HEIs. The programme comprises clinical and non-clinical services as outlined in the diagram below:

Figure 7.36 SAP service spheres

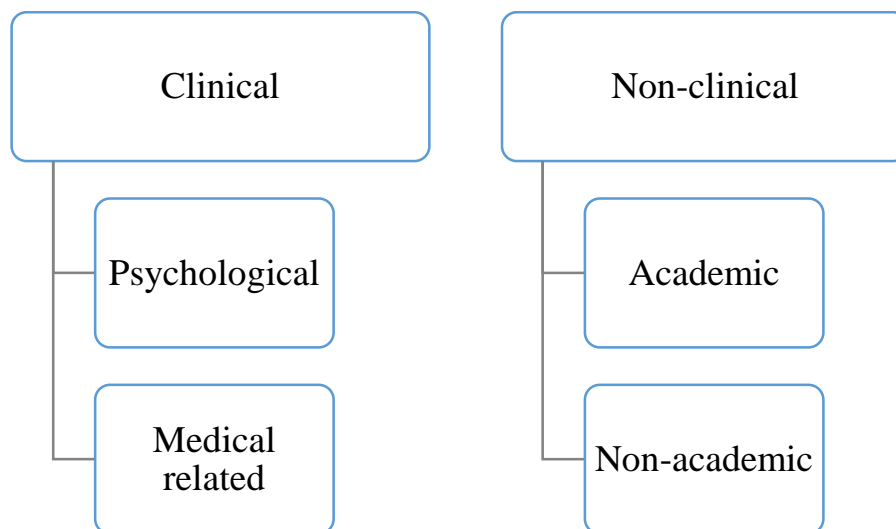


Figure 7.36 depict the scope and spheres with in the SAP as discussed below.

7.7 SAP Clinical Services

Findings from the study evidenced that students in higher education experience psychological health challenges that lower their psychological resilience to cope with their academic work in the face of adversity (McKenzie et al., 2015). Such distress

requires professional interventions. Consequently, the SAP would provide designated services that address the psychological needs of students. The clinical services are on-going psychological-wellness and non-academic programmes within the SAP, designed to support students with psychological health issues that require psychological health professionals and medical intervention. Clinical services address what was termed as the tertiary needs of students in the current study, mainly resulting from the unmet primary and secondary needs. Identified psychological health (psychological) issues from the situational analysis of this study include but are not limited to stress, anxiety, depression, suicide and mental confusion. The services in this sphere are counselling, medical assessment and diagnosis, rehabilitation, and medical health services. Access to these services is on voluntary help, self-seeking, and referral basis.

Figure 7.37 SAP clinical services

SAP clinical services	Psychological
	Counselling services
	Medical
	Medical assessments and diagnosis
	Rehabilitations
	Medical health services

7.7.1 Counselling Services

The purpose of counselling services under the SAP is to counteract students' psychological and psychological health distress, increase psychological resilience and maximise coping, retention, academic performance, progression, completion and graduation rates among the students population, particularly students from marginalised backgrounds (McKenzie et al., 2015; Murray et al., 2016). Counselling

services in the SAP take a person-centred approach tailored to individual needs and cultural contexts.

7.7.2 Medical Assessment and Diagnosis

Findings revealed a need for medical assessment and diagnosis. The study found that some students appeared stressed, anxious, depressed and mentally confused: *She was confused and looked mentally disturbed*. Some of these conditions require medical assessment for proper intervention and treatment. Thus, the SAP made provisions to allow appropriate medical evaluation and diagnosis by medical professionals.

7.7.3 Rehabilitation

Students diagnosed with different conditions might require clinical rehabilitation services to regain their mental well-being. The SAP includes a rehabilitation programme, off-or on-campus, by professionals or the preferred and trusted traditional practitioners.

7.7.3 Medical Health Services

In the SAP, medical health services fall under the clinical sphere. These services require medical professionals, whether internal through the clinics or external consultations, depending on the severity of the case, it also includes the use of trusted community traditional healers if preferred by the student/guardians.

7.8 Clinical SAP key stakeholders

Figure 7.38 Clinical SAP Key Stakeholders

On-campus	Off-campus	Combined
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Counsellors •Psychologists •Social workers •Nursing staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Medical Doctors •Trusted Traditional healers/practitioners •Psychologists •Nursing staff •Specialists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Medical Doctors •Trusted Traditional healers/practitioners •Counsellors •Psychologists •Social workers •Specialists •Para-medics •Para-professionals

7.9 Non-clinical services

Non-clinical assistance under the SAP is a well-defined on-going academic, social, and pastoral support programme tailored to the unique needs of students in HEIs. These support services aim to meet students’ personal and academic requirements to achieve their academic aspirations and personal growth and development (Dhillon et al., 2008). These services include but are not limited to the university environment, academic and social life orientations, continuous academic support, English language and academic writing, financial service support, basic needs and post-university preparation.

Figure 7.39 Non-clinical/psychological SAP services

SAP Non-clinical services	Academic
	University Orientation (environment, academic)
	Continuous academic support
	English language and Academic writing (in place)
	Non-academic
	Social life orientation
	Financial support facilitation services
	Basic needs services
	Post-university preparation

7.9.1 Academic

7.9.1.1 University Orientation. University orientation programme in the SAP includes information sharing about institutional structures, services, facilities tours, detailed academic information such as specific academic programmes, modules, pre-requisites, exemptions, cancellations, fees, class attendance, academic programme, applicable regulations and all relevant academic information stipulated in the (university general yearbooks). It aims to familiarise students with the university environment and academic expectations for easy adaptation, smooth help-seeking and navigation to their new setting. University environment orientation in the SAP is not a once-off programme. The idea is to have it reoccur twice in the first semester. Voluntary at the beginning of the first semester after late registration and the second session after a few weeks of semester one to accommodate those who missed the first session. Participants can be rewarded a certificate of participation to encourage more students to participate in the programme.

7.9.1.2 Continuous Academic Support. This domain aims to provide academic support to help students cope with academic loads and demands and increase academic performance, excellence, persistence, retention, progress, success, and graduation rates. Continuous academic support is characterised by academic tutorials, study skills, assessment preparation, mentoring, coaching, and peer support. This support is offered through mini-workshops, group remedial, individual or group consultations and presentations. On-line platforms for virtual sessions could also be organised. Academic staff can organise community engagement in the SAP to provide continued support, mentorship and coaching in their fields of expertise. Similarly, peer volunteers will serve as peer mentors and coaches.

7.9.1.3 English Language Support and Academic Writing. The findings indicated that language is the main challenge among students. Thus, this on-going voluntary assistance programme in the SAP aims to help students improve their English language proficiency at university. It also includes academic writing support, different levels, and the reference styles prescribed by their respective faculties or departments.

7.9.2 Non-academic

7.9.2.1 University Social Life Orientation. This programme aims to expose students to different social aspects of being a university student. The situation analysis revealed that some students fall victim to abuse and unacceptable behaviour and find it difficult to cope with life in the city. Astin's IEO model speaks of "inputs". In contrast, Schlossberg's theory of transition tells of different anticipations and shifts in individuals' roles as they move in, through and out of the transition (Byrd, 2017; Hashim, 2019). The SAP recognises the unique "inputs" of students from marginalised backgrounds and their unmet anticipations as they transition into the new environment

with distressing factors. Therefore, social orientation aims to equip students with social skills and better survival strategies in the city. Internal and external support teams such as psychological health experts, motivational speakers, religious leaders, police officials and community leaders can be identified. The SAP team is expected to organise occasional cost-free social gatherings, lectures, and student social engagements.

7.9.2.2 Financial Services Facilitation. Finance is identified as the primary need and the major cause of students' distress. Under this assistance, students are introduced to different funding opportunities and assisted on how to apply for funding. A designated staff to coordinate and facilitate student funds with funding offices. Moreover, this service domain includes financial literacy to help students supplement their funds and manage their finances. Academic staff in different fields such as finance, law, business, and other areas within the university may also extend their community engagement by providing financial, entrepreneurial, legal and any relevant advice. They may also collaborate with external stakeholders to support students.

7.9.2.3 Basic needs services. The findings pointed to a lack of basic needs among students from marginalised backgrounds. Therefore, it is essential for institutions, through their social responsibilities, to find ways to support students in need of basic needs. This programme sources donations and sponsorships of various items to supplement students who struggle with basic needs such as food, clothing, and accommodation. It includes a feeding programme sustained through different means such as sponsorship, contributions, and other university initiatives. It also includes handing out donated and sponsored clothes, blankets, shoes and toiletries, cosmetics such as sanitary pads for girls, soaps, and lotions. As part of community engagement, staff can organise fundraising events to support needy students. Through

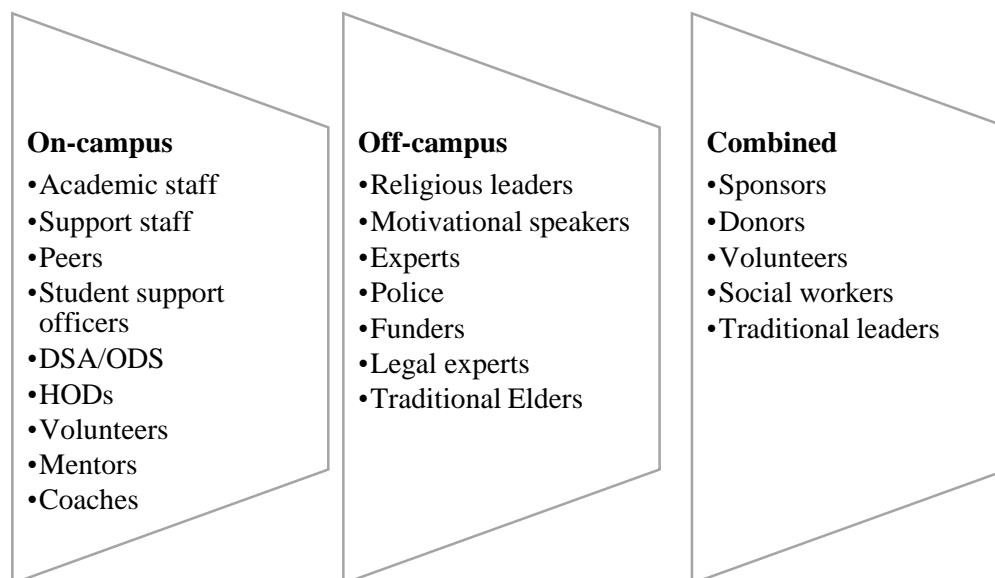
this programme, students are also assisted in finding safe accommodation in the hostels and cheaper dormitories and rooms.

7.9.2.4 Post-University Preparation. This programme domain aims to equip students with the soft skills required in the job market. It also seeks to prepare students for job hunting, such as applications, form filling, communication, and interview skills. The programme further exposes students to business ideas and funding opportunities.

7.10 Non-clinical Stakeholders

As is the case with the clinical assistance programme, the non-clinical assistance uses the same mode of service delivery, on campus, off-campus and combined, and the key stakeholders are outlined in Diagram 7.38 below:

Figure 7.40 Non-clinical SAP key stakeholders



7.11 SAP Guidelines and Strategies for Implementation

The strategies for implementing the SAP are guided by the resilience theory, particularly the Person-in Environment framework model advocated by (Van Breda,

2017, 2018b). The model considers three factors in developing support programmes: the individual, the interactional, and the social environment (relational and environmental factors). To strengthen students' resilience, self-esteem and self-efficacy, the support programme needs to strengthen relationships through interactions with various teams in a given environment (Van Breda, 2017).

The guidelines for implementation are also guided by the components recommended for effective SAP and are considered critical to providing the necessary services. In this programme, clinical and non-clinical support services are through the components of implementation guidelines discussed below. The components include institutional policy development and enforcement, stakeholder identification and assigning roles, staff development, awareness, accessibility procedures, direct services to students, cooperation and collaboration, monitoring (follow-up and feedback), evaluation and improvement.

Figure 7.41 SAP guidelines

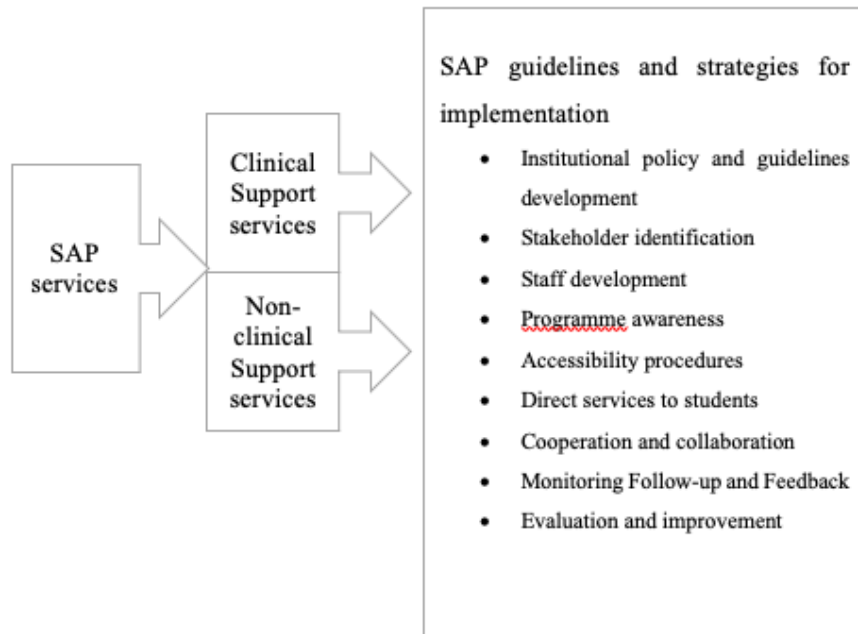


Table 7.24 Guidelines for Implementation

Guidelines 1 Review and develop institutional policy and programme procedures and guidelines		
Objectives	Activities	Key players
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To guide the SAP implementation and encourage professional conduct. 	Conduct policy reviews, development Develop referral procedures and guidelines.	ODS/DSA management
Guideline 2 Identify the key stakeholders for the SAP programme		
Objectives	Activities	Key Players
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide appropriate student assistance. To identify and refer students. To coordinate and facilitate the SAP. 	Define tasks and assign roles to stakeholders.	ODS/DSA management
Guideline 3 Staff development programme to capacitate and empower staff		
Objectives	Activities	Key Players
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To empower staff with the necessary student assistance knowledge and skills. 	Training Workshops	Programme coordinators and facilitators or identified officials
Guideline 4 Create Programme awareness internally and externally		
Objectives	Activities	Key Players

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To sensitise stakeholders and maximise SAP prompt services utilisation. 	Awareness campaigns Information dissemination (booklets/online)	Programme coordinators and facilitators or identified officials
Guideline 5 Prepare the environment and accessibility procedures		
Objectives	Activities	Key players
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline access and referral procedures 	Share referral guidelines and self-seeking procedures	Programme coordinators and facilitators or identified officials
Guideline 6 Provide direct services to students		
Objectives	Activities	Key players
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide support and develop a relationship Prevent/manage/Contain 	Interaction, Intervention, Support, Mentorship and Coach	The identified key stakeholders (on or off campus or combined) Beneficiaries
Guideline 7 Develop an external network for cooperation and collaboration		
Objectives	Activities	Key players
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To seek external services off-campus To coordinate external support such as funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referrals, Facilitate, Collaboration Consultation 	Identified key stakeholders
Guideline 8 Monitoring and continuous support		
Objectives	Activities	Key players

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect, review, improve and track progress and guide further assistance where necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring, Reporting, Follow-up Assessment, Evaluation, Reflection, Participants' feedback 	Identified key stakeholders Programme coordinators and facilitators or identified officials
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7.11.1 Guidelines for SAP Implementation

The guidelines in this SAP originate from the recommended SAP development manuals such as Student Assistance Programming: Creating favourable conditions for learning (Wright, 2013), Student Assistance Guidebook (Student Assistance Center at Prevent, n.d.) and Student Assistance: A Guide for School Administrators (SAMHSA) (Robert et al., 2019). However, the guidelines were adapted to suit the context.

7.11.1.1 Guideline 1 Identify National and Institutional Policies and Procedures. Guidelines under this implementation strategy include identifying the relevant national and institutional policies to guide the implementation of the SAP. Review, adapt and develop policies aligned with the SAP's goals where necessary. Adapting the existing policy is crucial to establishing SAP that curbs barriers to learning affecting many students, including students from marginalised backgrounds (Robert et al., 2019; Wright, 2013).

- The policies guiding the SAP must:
 - guide student admission, adaptation, and progression;
 - outline the institutional roles in ensuring equity, inclusion, and celebrating diversity;
 - inhibit discrimination and exclusion;
 - clarify institutional commitment to providing the necessary support, safety, and maintain a positive learning environment for all;

- promote a sense of belonging to the institution among students and staff;
and
- prevent and intervene in violations of the code of conduct, ethics and create a disciplined learning environment.

The national and institutional policies must contain a statement of commitment to student support with a well-defined purpose and responsibilities of key stakeholders.

In addition, the institution must avail SAP policy with specific structures, guidelines, and procedures. Below are some of the characteristics of effective SAP policy and procedures as postulated (Robert et al., 2019; Wright, 2013).

- Clarify procedures for student identification, dealing with distress disclosure and emergencies that might arise.
- Clarify all intervention procedures.
- Confidentiality and ethical conduct of students and staff.
- Detailed processes and participants' rights in the programme.
- Integration of SAP services with other institutional support structures such as student support groups, academic clubs, and extracurricular activities).
- Outline the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder.
- Clarify procedures on crisis management (severe clinical support needs).
- Staff development for policy and procedure implementation.

- Clarify procedures on internal and internal referral and self-referral (self-help seeking) processes.
- Clarify procedures for coordination and collaborative activities between internal and external stakeholders.

7.11.1.2 Guideline 2 Identify the Key Stakeholders for the SAP Programme.

Guidelines to achieve the objectives of this strategy are presented below:

- In addition to well-defined policies, there is a team of professionals and experts to manage, coordinate, facilitate and provide the necessary student support in the different SAP domains.
- The key stakeholders are classified as internal and external stakeholders, clinical and non-clinical, on-campus and off-campus, academic and non-academic teams.
- The stakeholders must include trusted members of various communities with an understanding of cultural context.
- Different campuses need SAP coordinators with clarified roles and responsibilities and must be sensitive to cultural diversities.
- The SAP internal team falls under the existing general student affairs and services top leadership and management.
- The existing team of internally qualified psychological health professionals can share the roles of SAP coordinators and facilitators.
- Identified external professionals and experts to attend to external referrals

- The SAP further requires the services of academic staff who could serve in the programme as part of their community engagement.
- It also requires identified peers from student leadership, and former SAP student beneficiaries after implementation who volunteers to serve as peer supporters in the programme.
- External and internal volunteers, sponsors, and donors.
- The roles of each team member must be clearly outlined.

Table 7.25 SAP teams and their roles

SAP team	Possible roles
Management	Provide overall leadership
Campus coordinators and facilitators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide psychological health and social support. • Coordinate both clinical and non-clinical services. • Coordinate policy recommendations, social-emotional programmes, and staff development on SAP-related issues. • Develop campus-based SAP structure. • Identify students from marginalised backgrounds. • Profile the at-risk students. • Liaise with academic and non-academic team. • Manages campus SAP and related services. • Develop and give in-service training where necessary.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult and liaise with internal and external academic and non-academic staff and stakeholders. • Determine SAP camp's budgeting needs.
Counsellors, psychologists, social workers, Traditional elders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-campus or off-campus psychological-health support such as counselling and rehabilitation support. • Non-clinical social support
Nurses, medical doctors Traditional healers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment and diagnose • Medical support
Academic staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific academic support in their areas of expertise • Mentorship • Coaching • Social support, advice, and motivation
Peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer support • Peer mentorship • Peer coaching • Peer advice and motivation

7.11.1.3 Guideline 3 Staff Development Programme to Capacitate and Empower Staff. The following guidelines explain the relevance of staff development in the SAP. Staff development helps in establishing consistency in working with students in need. It is crucial to empower staff particularly those not trained in dealing with students' psychological and social issues. They require on-going training with basic skills to appropriately identify and respectfully connect students for support. A situation analysis

should be conducted with SAP stakeholders to ensure that appropriate skills development training is provided.

As recommended by Robert et al. (2019), staff development in the SAP must:

- Be supported by institutional leadership.
- Emphasise the role of SAP services in relation to academic achievement.
- Sensitise the nature of academic and non-academic barriers to learning and their impact on the academic success of students.
- Emphasise the need and expectations for the respect of all students.
- Ensure that staff can identify and refer students effectively to the SAP.
- Clarify stakeholders' roles in the SAP.

Staff development training contents should cover the following aspects:

- The SAP services
- The role of clinical support services in SAP
- The roles of non-clinical support services in SAP (academic and non-academic).
- Observable signs of distressed students.
- Ways to approach and handle distressed students.
- Attending to self-disclosure/self-help-seeking cases and the traumas that might emerge.

- Multi-culturalism and the unique needs of students from marginalised backgrounds (primary, secondary and tertiary).
- Effects of transitions and helping students to cope in a new setting
- The referral procedures and referral protocols
- Referral ethics and confidentiality
- Any relevant information related to the SAP

7.11.1.4 Guideline 4 Create Programme Awareness Internally and Externally. In addition to staff development, SAP needs extensive marketing and awareness creation internally and externally. Awareness and marketing of the SAP information and services aim to help all stakeholders understand the scope, purpose and accessibility (Robert et al., 2019; Student Assistance Center at Prevent, n.d.; Wright, 2013). The guidelines below explain ways to market and create awareness about SAP.

- Awareness must begin with on-campus SAP team members and be extended to the entire staff and stakeholders.
- Publish articles in local newspapers.
- Produce SAP handbooks for specific groups (students, stakeholders, schools, HEIs, public).
- Add SAP on HEIs Web sites and regularly updated.

- Handout pamphlets, flyers, brochures and leaflets about SAP at educational-related gatherings such as career fairs, conferences, meetings and during registration
- Have presentations on SAP on available platforms when the agenda allows
- School visits by SAP teams to create awareness

7.11.1.5 Guideline 5 Prepare the Environment and Accessibility Procedures.

To maximise access and utilisation of the SAP services, all stakeholders need to understand procedures on how to access the programme. There must be well-established guidelines to be followed when referring students and when students self-seek help.

- Designated offices and easy access to each service within the SAP
- Easy access to campus coordinators' offices
- Available contact numbers of identified team members on campus

Figure 7.42 SAP Accessibility and referral process

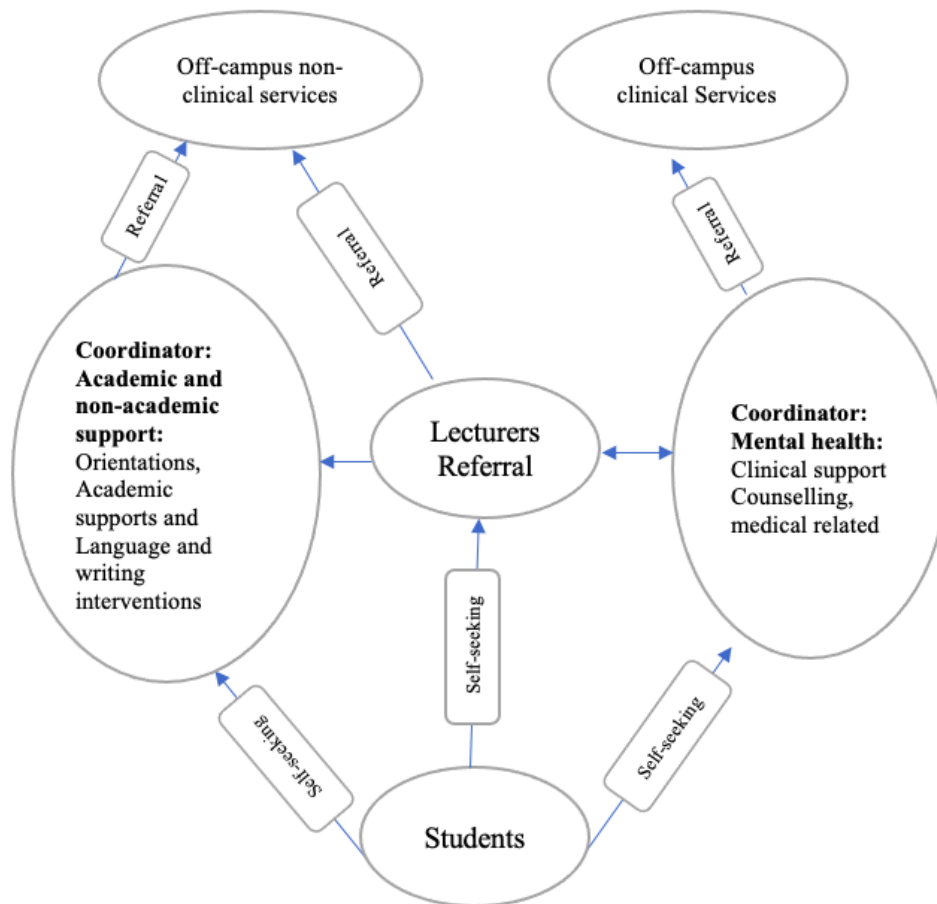


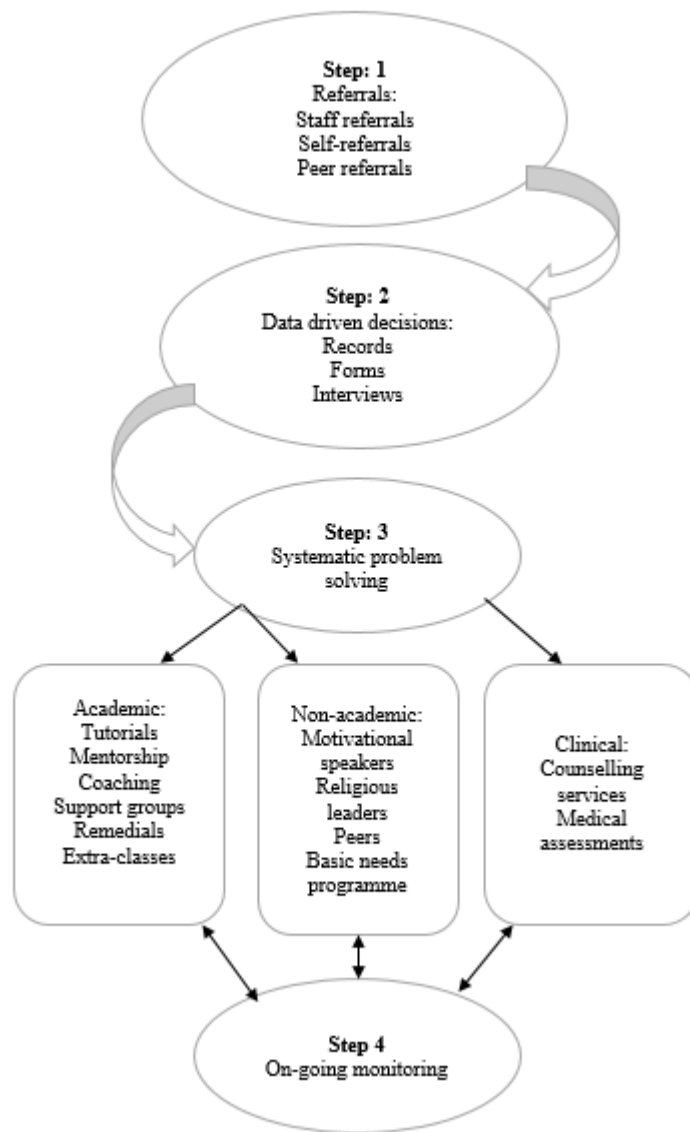
Diagram 7.40 indicates the routes to access the SAP services. Students can approach service providers directly, self-seek help through the lecturer or be referred for the needed services.

- With psychological distress such as stress, anxiety, depression, or psychological disturbance, they can approach (self-seek) or be referred to the clinical support team.

- With non-clinical (academic and non-academic) issues such as coping, adjustment, performance social issues such as finance and basic needs, they can approach the non-clinical support team.
- Although access to the SAP is voluntary, HEIs need to extensively create awareness, share information, and encourage self-help seeking among students as early as possible and direct them where to seek the desired support.
- Students must have easy access to the services and institutions must proactively prepare to meet the needs of students self-seeking and being referred for SAP services.
- The office environment must be accessible without fear of being judged for seeking support.
- Access to the SAP must not pose financial demand directly or indirectly e.g cost of transport
- Through staff development training, lecturers as the first point of contact and the SAP team must be sensitised and empowered to be alert and promptly identify, refer, receive, and support needy students.

7.11.1.6 Guideline 6 Provide Direct Services to Students. The purpose of SAP is to provide evidence-based support. Linking to the study findings, some students shied away from seeking support and resisted referrals to counselling support due to fear of judgement, negative connotations, and perceptions. Therefore, it is crucial to follow a systematic approach to providing services. The diagram below outlines the SAP services provision.

Figure 7. 43 Outline of the SAP services provision



Step 1 SAP are more effective when students are given opportunities to understand when and how to connect with SAP and do so when they feel they would be taken seriously to receive help from someone who really cares (Wright, 2013). Thus, students must gain access to SAP in multiple ways as possible.

Step 2 This depends on the case, especially in clinical situations. Screening and interviewing the student might be required to ensure that the student receives the needed support. Records must be kept, and the student must be directed to the appropriate SAP team.

Step 3 This is the actual intervention programme. As indicated, there are specific activities offered by different teams of experts depending on the identified needs. It is up to the teams to plan specific programmes and work out the duration of each intervention.

Step 4 On-going monitoring and continuous support may also depend on the duration of the intervention. It can be done daily, weekly, or monthly. SAP teams must also make follow-ups and provide feedback.

- The SAP services must be well-defined and classified as clinical and non-clinical.
- The counselling support must only apply to psychological cases and is to be provided by the SAP clinical support team such as SAP clinical coordinator psychologist, counsellors, social workers, nursing staff and medical doctors.
- To smoothen accessibility on campuses where there are health facilities (on-campus clinics), counselling offices must be located there.
- In campuses where such facilities are not available, an appealing name must be identified for the on-campus clinical support offices e.g. Student Wellness Centre rather than being identified as the counselling or social workers office.

- Academic and non-academic must be provided by the identified non-clinical SAP support team such as the SAP academic coordinators, lecturers, SRC, peers, student support officers, and identified support services officials.
- Specified activities under each service as discussed in the SAP document.
- All clinical-related cases must be referred and handled by trained psychological health professionals.

7.11.1.7 Guideline 7 Develop External Network for Cooperation and Collaboration. The mode of service delivery in the SAP includes on-campus, off-campus, and a combination. The guidelines under these strategies are as follows:

- Coordinate all student affairs and services internally and externally.
- SAP coordinators must facilitate student funding processes.
- Coordinate student recruitment and registration process.
- Identify, solicit, and direct students for possible funding opportunities.
- Organise financial education.
- Establish relations with external medical and psychological health experts for easier off-campus referrals.

7.11.1.8 Guideline 8 Monitoring and Evaluation. To monitor the effectiveness of the SAP, there should be continuous monitoring programmes. Guidelines for monitoring and evaluation:

- The SAP team can develop or adapt measures such as the CORE-OM or other validated measuring instruments to evaluate the SAP's effectiveness.
- They must also develop beneficiaries' and referrers' feedback forms and analyse the feedback provided for improvement.
- All cases in the SAP will last for a year. Thus, the intervention programmes must be closed at the end of the year. Records of students with unresolved issues should be kept for further interventions in the following year. However, new evaluations through interviews would be needed to inform the necessary intervention for the new year.

7.12 Summary

In conclusion, this chapter presented the SAP and its guidelines for implementation. The study adopted SAP to address clinical, non-clinical, academic, and non-academic challenges that hinder students' academic achievement, particularly students from marginalised backgrounds in HEIs. The SAP is an on-going comprehensive university-based prevention and early detection framework. It allows the integration of cultural counselling practices through trusted external stakeholders identified by the SAP coordinators. It should not be perceived as a one-size-fits-all but should be adopted to suit individual institutions' needs and contexts. The SAP implementation is not part of the current study's objective, but the guidelines for implementation are provided.

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9. Annexures

9.1 Annexure 1 Ethical Clearance Certificate



ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: FOE-013-2020

Date: 31-06-2020

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Research Ethics Committee (UREC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee sitting with the Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Title of Project: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COUNSELLING SERVICES AS AN EQUITY MEASURE TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE AND MARGINALISED STUDENTS AT TWO SELECTED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN NAMIBIA

Nature/Level of Project: DOCTORAL STUDY-HON-HEALTH

Researcher: MIRJAM SHEYAPO

Student Number: 200215094

Faculty: FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Supervisors: DR C HAIHAMBO YA OTTO

Take note of the following:

- (a) Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the UREC. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
- (b) Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the UREC.
- (c) The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the UREC (through the Chairperson of the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by UREC.
- (d) The UREC retains the right to:
 - (i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
 - (ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

REC wishes you the best in your research.

REC Chairperson

Prof CJ Wilders

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CJ Wilders", is written over the printed name of the REC Chairperson.

9.2 Annexure 2 Permission Letter 1

CENTRE FOR POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

University of Namibia, Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia
340 Mandume Ndemufayo Avenue, Pioneers Park
☎ +264 61 206 3275/4662; Fax +264 61 206 3290; URL: <http://www.unam.edu.na>



28 September 2020

RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER

Student Name: MIRJAM SHEYAPO
Student number: 200215094
Programme: DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION (INCLUSIVE EDUCATION)

Approved Research Title: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COUNSELLING SERVICES AS AN EQUITY MEASURE TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE AND MARGINALISED STUDENTS AT TWO SELECTED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN NAMIBIA

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I hereby confirm that the above mentioned student is registered at the University of Namibia for the programme indicated. The proposed study met all the requirements as stipulated in the University guidelines and has been approved by the relevant committees.

Permission is hereby granted to carry out the research as described in the approved proposal.

Best Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Seth J. Eiseb", written over a horizontal dashed line.

Dr. Seth J. Eiseb
Acting Director
Centre for Postgraduate Studies
Tel: +264-61-206 3414
Email: directorpgs@unam.na

9.3 Annexure 3 Permission Letter 2



**NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY
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Office of the Registrar

24 November 2020

Ms. Mirjam Sheyapo
Email: msheyapo@unam.na
Windhoek
NAMIBIA

Dear Ms. Sheyapo,

RE: CONSENT TO CONDUCT YOUR RESEARCH WITH THE NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY STAFF AND STUDENT

The email dated 06 October 2020, has reference.

Approval is hereby granted for you to conduct the research on *"The Effectiveness of Counselling Services as An Equity Measure to Support Vulnerable and Marginalised Students At Two Selected Higher Education Institutions in Namibia"*

Any information gathered during the research is to be used for the purpose of the study only and must be treated as confidential. The results of the study should be shared with the University. Individual information of staff and students will not be made available, nor will biographical information of students be made available in such a way that individual students can be identified.

I wish you all the best with your research.

Yours sincerely,

**Ms. Selma Heelu
ACTING REGISTRAR**

CC: Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation
Assistant Registrar



9.4 Annexure 4 Questionnaires

Students (Beneficiaries) questionnaires

Section A: Questions about you

	Male	Female			
1 What is your gender?					
2 How old are you?					
3 Which region are you from?					
4 What is your home language?					
5 What is your local tribe?					
6 Where are you living now?	1. Parents				
	2. Siblings				
	3. Other family				
	4. Grandparents				
	5. In forester				
	6. Own my own				
	7. Other: _____				
7 Who referred you to counselling?	Self	Friend	Lecturer	Family	Other
8 Number of Counselling Sessions per year					
9 Your study year?	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Rep. Yr.
10 Period when counselling was first received	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Rep. Yr.
11 What is the status of your counselling	Ongoing		Complete		Quit

Please complete Section B if you have received support or counselling from the university.

Section B: GP- CORE Questions

Over the last week	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; text-align: center;"> <div style="transform: rotate(-45deg); font-size: small;">most/all of the time</div> <div style="transform: rotate(-45deg); font-size: small;">often</div> <div style="transform: rotate(-45deg); font-size: small;">sometimes</div> <div style="transform: rotate(-45deg); font-size: small;">occasionally</div> <div style="transform: rotate(-45deg); font-size: small;">not at all</div> </div>				
	1	2	3	4	5
1 I have felt tense, anxious or nervous					
2 I have felt i had someone to turn to for support when needed					
3 I have felt ok about myself					
4 I have felt able to cope when things go wrong					
5 I have been troubled by aches, pains or other physical problems					
6 I have been happy with the things I have done					
7 I have had difficulty getting to sleep or staying asleep					
8 I have felt warm or affectionate for someone					
9 I have been able to do most things i needed to					
10 I have felt criticised by other people					
11 I have felt unhappy					
12 I have been irritable when with other people					
13 I have felt optimistic about my future					
14 I have achieved things i wanted to					

SECTION C: YOUTH ECOLOGICAL-RESILIENCE SCALR:					
FACTORS INFLUENCING EFFECTIVE RESILIENCE COUNSELLING					
Family relationships (Client factor) (Remember to focus on how things are in your family today)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My family really tries to help me.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I get the emotional help and support I need from my family.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I can talk about my problems with my family.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I sometimes hurt other people's feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My family is willing to help me make decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I feel cared for/loved by my family.	1	2	3	4	5
Relationships with friends	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
7. I have friends about my own age who really care about me.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I have friends about my own age who talk with me about my problems.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I have friends about my own age who help me when I'm having a hard time.	1	2	3	4	5
10. My friends try to do what is right.	1	2	3	4	5
11. My friends do well in school or work.	1	2	3	4	5
12. My friends are sensitive to my needs.	1	2	3	4	5

University relationships		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
(Only answer the following questions if you currently attend university)						
13.	At my university, there is a lecturer who really cares about me.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	At my university, there is a lecturer who notices when I'm not there.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	At my university, there is a lecturer who listens to me when I have something to say.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	At my university, there is a lecturer who tells me when I do a good job.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	At my university, there is a lecturer who always wants me to do my best.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	At my university, there is a lecturer who believes I will be a success.	1	2	3	4	5
Relationships with people in the community		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
(These questions exclude your family – so people other than your family. If you living in a children's home, these questions are about your relationship with the people who live in the community where you live when you are not at the hostel.)						
19.	I feel part of the community where I live.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I care about my community.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	I am always honest with people.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	People in my community look out for me.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	I am close to people in my community.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	I try to help others in my community	1	2	3	4	5

Relationships with Role models		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
(The following questions ask you about an adult in your life, other than your parents, teachers or caregivers)						
25.	There is an adult in my life who really cares about me.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	There is an adult in my life who notices when I am upset about something.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	There is an adult in my life who I trust.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	There is an adult in my life who tells me when I do a good job.	1	2	3	4	5
29.	There is an adult in my life who believes that I will be a success.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	There is an adult in my life who always wants me to do my best.	1	2	3	4	5
Love relationships		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
(Only answer the following questions if you are currently in a romantic relationship with someone)						
31.	When I have free time I spend it with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5
32.	I often show my partner affection.	1	2	3	4	5
33.	I often share very personal information with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5
34.	I understand my partner's feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
35.	I feel close to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5
MY SITUATION (contextual factor)						
Feelings about my community		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
36.	There is a lot of crime in the community where I live.	1	2	3	4	5
37.	It is safe to walk around in my community at night.	1	2	3	4	5
38.	There is a big drug problem in my community.	1	2	3	4	5
39.	I feel safe and secure in my community.	1	2	3	4	5
Financials		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
40.	My family worries a lot about money.	1	2	3	4	5
41.	There is often not enough money for food.	1	2	3	4	5

42.	My family has enough money to live comfortably.	1	2	3	4	5
43.	We often argue about money in my family.	1	2	3	4	5
Activities I'm involved in		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
44.	I participate in group sports regularly.	1	2	3	4	5
45.	I am a regular member of a club.	1	2	3	4	5
46.	I participate regularly in a dance or music group.	1	2	3	4	5
47.	I enjoy doing activities with others.	1	2	3	4	5
48.	I participate regularly in a community organisation serving others.	1	2	3	4	5
49.	I have a hobby that I do regularly with other people.	1	2	3	4	5
RELATIONSHIP TO ACCOMMODATION FACILITY (contextual factor)						
Relationships with hostel matrons/parents/guardians /peers		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
50.	There is always a person around when I am in need.	1	2	3	4	5
51.	I can share my joys and sorrows with at least one of the people I live with.	1	2	3	4	5
52.	The people I live with care about my feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
53.	There are times when I get angry with the people I live with.	1	2	3	4	5
54.	I am helped and encouraged to do my best by the people I live with.	1	2	3	4	5
Experiences of being in the current accommodation facility		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
55.	I enjoy my time where I live.	1	2	3	4	5
56.	I hate staying at the place I live.	1	2	3	4	5
57.	My stay here is a good experience for me.	1	2	3	4	5
58.	I feel happy where I live.	1	2	3	4	5
59.	My stay here is horrible.	1	2	3	4	5

Feelings about leaving the accommodation facility		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
60.	I feel that I am ready now to leave my current accommodation.	1	2	3	4	5
61.	I am worried about going back home.	1	2	3	4	5
62.	The current accommodation has prepared me for life after university.	1	2	3	4	5
63.	I wish I could stay here longer.	1	2	3	4	5
Feelings about contacting the caretakers/parents/guardians/lecturers/counsellors after I leave. (Counselor factor)		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
64.	I feel free to contact the counsellors, once I have left.	1	2	3	4	5
65.	I think I will always feel welcome at this accommodation facility.	1	2	3	4	5
66.	I know if I am in trouble in the future I can call on the counselors.	1	2	3	4	5
67.	The support network here is not for people who have already left the university.	1	2	3	4	5
68.	I will not contact the counsellors if I have a problem in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
MY INTERACTIONS WITH THE WORLD AROUND ME						
Solving problems and making decisions		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
69.	In general, I do not like to ask other people to help me to solve problems.	1	2	3	4	5
70.	I like to get advice from my friends and family when deciding how to solve my personal problems.	1	2	3	4	5
71.	I would rather struggle through a personal problem by myself than discuss it with a friend.	1	2	3	4	5
72.	I prefer to make decisions on my own, rather than with other people.	1	2	3	4	5
73.	I do not like to depend on other people to help me to solve my problems.	1	2	3	4	5

Belief in my ability		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
74.	I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.	1	2	3	4	5
75.	It is easy for me to stick to my plans and accomplish my goals.	1	2	3	4	5
76.	I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.	1	2	3	4	5
77.	I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.	1	2	3	4	5
78.	When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.	1	2	3	4	5
79.	If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.	1	2	3	4	5
80.	I can usually handle whatever comes my way.	1	2	3	4	5
Using what I have to get things done		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
81.	I am positive when things go wrong.	1	2	3	4	5
82.	I cope with difficult situations.	1	2	3	4	5
83.	I am always punctual.	1	2	3	4	5
84.	I usually manage one way or another.	1	2	3	4	5
85.	I look for positive aspects of new situations.	1	2	3	4	5
86.	I am resourceful in new situations.	1	2	3	4	5
87.	I am efficient in difficult situations.	1	2	3	4	5
88.	I work through long, difficult tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
Teamwork		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
89.	I am generous and helpful to others.	1	2	3	4	5
90.	I am an effective team member.	1	2	3	4	5
91.	I cooperate well with people.	1	2	3	4	5
92.	I work well with people.	1	2	3	4	5
93.	I consider the feelings of other people when I work with them.	1	2	3	4	5

Understanding others		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
94.	I feel bad when someone gets their feelings hurt.	1	2	3	4	5
95.	I try to understand what other people feel and think.	1	2	3	4	5
96.	I am sensitive to what, how and why people feel and think the way they do.	1	2	3	4	5
97.	I care about others and show interest and concern for them.	1	2	3	4	5
98.	I try to understand what others are feeling.	1	2	3	4	5
99.	The needs of others are important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
100.	I care about others.	1	2	3	4	5
101.	Being concerned for others makes me feel good about myself.	1	2	3	4	5
PERSONAL (client factor)						
Feelings about learning		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
102.	I learn a lot in my school classes.	1	2	3	4	5
103.	I look forward to the opportunity to learn something new.	1	2	3	4	5
104.	I like to be challenged so I can learn new things.	1	2	3	4	5
105.	It is fun to learn new things in class.	1	2	3	4	5
106.	I put a lot of effort into learning.	1	2	3	4	5
Expectations of myself		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
107.	I always do my best.	1	2	3	4	5
108.	I make the most of every opportunity.	1	2	3	4	5
109.	I don't always put in my best effort.	1	2	3	4	5
110.	I strive to excel in all my tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
111.	I work hard to receive outstanding results.	1	2	3	4	5

Ability to bounce back		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
112.	I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times.	1	2	3	4	5
113.	I have a hard time making it through stressful events.	1	2	3	4	5
114.	It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event.	1	2	3	4	5
115.	It is hard for me to snap back when something bad happens.	1	2	3	4	5
116.	I tend to take a long time to get over setbacks in my life.	1	2	3	4	5
Hopefulness for the future		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
117.	In uncertain times, I usually expect the best.	1	2	3	4	5
118.	I'm always hopeful about my future.	1	2	3	4	5
119.	I am excited about what my future holds.	1	2	3	4	5
120.	Sometimes I have bad thoughts.	1	2	3	4	5
121.	My future feels bright.	1	2	3	4	5
Feelings about myself		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
122.	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	1	2	3	4	5
123.	Sometimes I do not tell the truth.	1	2	3	4	5
124.	At times, I think I am no good at all.	1	2	3	4	5
125.	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	1	2	3	4	5
126.	Sometimes I am not completely honest when I fill in a questionnaire.	1	2	3	4	5
127.	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	1	2	3	4	5
128.	I certainly feel useless at times.	1	2	3	4	5
129.	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	1	2	3	4	5
130.	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	1	2	3	4	5
131.	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	1	2	3	4	5

Dealing with stress		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
132.	Feeling distressed or upset is unbearable to me.	1	2	3	4	5
133.	I can't handle feeling distressed or upset.	1	2	3	4	5
134.	Sometimes I get very angry.	1	2	3	4	5
135.	There's nothing worse than feeling distressed or upset.	1	2	3	4	5
136.	I'll do anything to avoid feeling distressed or upset.	1	2	3	4	5
137.	I'll do anything to stop feeling distressed or upset.	1	2	3	4	5
138.	I sometimes feel pushed to hit someone.	1	2	3	4	5
Spiritual life		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
139.	It is important for me to spend time in private spiritual thought and meditation.	1	2	3	4	5
140.	I try hard to live my life according to my religious beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5
141.	The prayers or spiritual thoughts that I say when I am alone are as important to me as those said by me during services or spiritual gatherings.	1	2	3	4	5
142.	I enjoy reading about my spirituality and/or my religion.	1	2	3	4	5
143.	I was always a happy child.	1	2	3	4	5
144.	Spirituality helps to keep my life balanced and steady.	1	2	3	4	5
145.	My whole approach to life is based on my spirituality.	1	2	3	4	5

Academic vulnerability	0	1	2	3	4
146. Number of modules failed since enrolment	Four or more	Three modules	Two modules	One module	Zero module
147. Number of modules completed with distinction	Zero	One module	Two module	Three or four modules	Five or more modules
148. Satisfaction with academic progress throughout your study	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Challenges faced while at university	1 not at all	2 a little bit	3 somewhat	4 a lot	
149. Financial challenge					
150. Lack of support from family					
150. Lack of support from university management					
151. Lack of support from student support services					
152. Lack of support from lecturers					
153. Lack of support from peers					
154. Discrimination					
155. Homesick					
156. Hunger					
157. Being bullied at university					
158. Accommodation					
159. Cannot cope with assignment due dates					
160. Cannot cope with academic demands/workloads					
161. Failed tests					
162. Repeating modules					
163. Lack of confidence					
164. Feeling less important					
165. Feeling less capable to complete my study					
166. Fear of failing					

9.5 Annexure 5 Beneficiaries' Interview Guides

STUDENTS'INTERVIEW GUIDE

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COUNSELING SERVICES AS AN EQUITY MEASURE TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE AND MARGINALISED STUDENTS AT TWO MAJOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The Purpose of the Study

Statistics reveal poor academic achievement amongst students from vulnerable and marginalised backgrounds in Higher Education Institutions in Namibia (HEIs). The purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of counselling services offered as an equity measure to support vulnerable and marginalised students in HEIs.

General information

You are being asked to participate in this study because you have referred students for counselling at your institution. The researcher thus, wishes to tap from your experience and views on the effectiveness of the counselling service offered at your institution.

There are no right or wrong answers, therefore your honesty and insight on the phenomenon will be highly appreciated. The interview will take 1 hour.

Please take note:

1. Your answers will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for study purposes.
2. Your name will not be required and will not be used at all therefore, feel free to answer the questions.
3. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the study

Research objectives and Interview questions
1. Explore and describe the experiences of referrers and beneficiaries on the effectiveness of counselling services, an equity measure. (QUAL).
<p>1.1 Share your experience/encounters on the counselling services.</p> <p>1.2 Describe your situation before and after the counselling support.</p> <p>1.3 What are your views on the current referral procedure at your institution?</p> <p>1.4 Would you seek/attend counselling? (why and why not) (please justify)?</p>
2. Determine the beneficiaries' and referrers' satisfaction with counselling services as an equity measure (QUAL).
<p>2.1 Describe your general satisfactions /dissatisfaction with the overall counselling services in relation to the following psychological domains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your Subjective well-being • Your general life functioning • Your social relationship • Problems (depression and anxiety) <p>2.2 Describe the strengths and shortcomings of the available counselling services in your institution?</p>
3. Determine the factors influencing the effectiveness of counselling as an equity measure leading to students' resilience and academic performance (QUAL).
<p>3.1 In your views, what are possible factors influencing the counselling services effectiveness in achieving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students' resilience • Students' academic performance <p>3.2 Would you agree or disagree that enough is being done for marginalised students, to ensure equitable access to higher education?</p> <p>3.3 What other support do you think students need?</p> <p>3.4 How can counselling be improved to enhance equitable access to higher education?</p>
4. Any other suggestion

9.6 Annexure 6 Referrers' Interview Guides

LECTURERS'INTERVIEW GUIDE

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COUNSELING SERVICES AS AN EQUITY MEASURE TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE AND MARGINALISED STUDENTS AT TWO MAJOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The Purpose of the Study

Statistics reveal poor academic achievement amongst students from vulnerable and marginalised backgrounds in Higher Education Institutions in Namibia (HEIs). The purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of counselling services offered as an equity measure to support vulnerable and marginalised students in HEIs.

General information

You are being asked to participate in this study because you have referred students for counselling at your institution. The researcher thus, wishes to tap from your experience and views on the effectiveness of the counselling service offered at your institution.

There are no right or wrong answers, therefore your honesty and insight on the phenomenon will be highly appreciated. The interview will take 1 hour.

Please take note:

1. Your answers will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for study purposes.
2. Your name will not be required and will not be used at all therefore, feel free to answer the questions.
3. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the study

This is the end of our interview and I sincerely thank you for your participation and time.

Research objectives and Interview questions
1. Explore and describe the experiences of referrers and beneficiaries on the effectiveness of counselling services, an equity measure. (QUAL).
<p>1.1 Share your experience/encounters of referring students for the counselling services.</p> <p>1.2 Describe the situation of the students before and after you referred them for the counselling support.</p> <p>1.3 What are your views on the current referral procedure at your institution?</p> <p>1.4 Would you still refer students for counselling? (why and why not) (please justify)?</p>
2. Determine the beneficiaries' and referrers' satisfaction with counselling services as an equity measure (QUAL).
<p>2.1 Describe your general satisfactions /dissatisfaction with the overall counselling services in relation to the following psychological domains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjective well-being of students • Students' general life functioning • Students social relationship • Problems (depression and anxiety) <p>2.2 Describe the strengths and shortcomings of the available counselling services in your institution?</p>
3. Determine the factors influencing the effectiveness of counselling as an equity measure leading to students' resilience and academic performance (QUAL).
<p>3.1 In your views, what are possible factors influencing the counselling services effectiveness in achieving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students' resilience • Students' academic performance <p>3.2 Would you agree or disagree that enough is being done for vulnerable and marginalised students, to ensure equitable access to higher education?</p> <p>3.3 What other support do you think students need?</p> <p>3.4 How can counselling be improved to enhance equitable access to higher education?</p>
4. Any other suggestion

9.7 Annexure 7 Consent Letter

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM



TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COUNSELLING SERVICES AS AN EQUITY MEASURE TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE AND MARGINALISED STUDENTS AT TWO SELECTED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN NAMIBIA

REFERENCE NUMBER: 200215094

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: MIRJAM SHEYAPO

ADDRESS: P. O. BOX 21953 WINDHOEK

CONTACT NUMBER: 0811274931

The purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of the availed counselling intervention programmes as an equity measure to support vulnerable and marginalised students. The researcher further aims to develop an early intervention program to facilitate the transition, develop students' resilience, promote equity and enhance academic achievement for vulnerable and marginalised students.

You are invited to take part in this research project. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please ask **Ms Sheyapo** any questions about any part of this project that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied and you clearly understand what this research entails and how you could be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to decline to participate. Should you opt not to participate in this research, there will be no negative consequences in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you originally agreed to take part.

I..... (**grant or not grant**) permission to the researcher to audio record the interviews.

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Namibia.

What is this research study all about?

The study will be conducted at Higher Education Institutions in Namibia, namely; the University of Namibia (UNAM) and Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) campuses that provide education to students from diverse backgrounds. The study wishes to include all lecturers from participating HEIs who referred students or provided support/counselling services. A maximum of 300 undergraduate students who due to any situation became vulnerable and benefited from psychosocial and academic support/counselling services as well as students from marginalised backgrounds will form the sample of the study.

Why have you been invited to participate?

You are invited to participate in this research because you are in a position to provide information, which is of significant importance towards the study.

What will your responsibilities be?

You are kindly urged to provide information by completing the questionnaire. (The questionnaire will not take longer than 30 minutes). and or Also to participate in semi-structured interviews.

Will you benefit from taking part in this research?

The study has no personal benefits to participants, however, findings may help improve the support and the counselling services offered in Higher Education Institutions, as well as add to the limited knowledge and literature in the field of Education Psychology and Inclusive Education. Findings will also help improve student support in higher education.

Are there any risks involved in your taking part in this research?

Participants are reassured that there is no foreseeable harm that will result from participating in this study.

If you do not agree to take part, what alternatives do you have?

Participation in the study is voluntary. Participants are also free to withdraw from the study at any time, even when they have given consent earlier or when data collection has commenced. Withdrawing from the study will have no negative consequences for the participants.

Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs involved?

There will be no form of payment given for participating in this study. The researcher is responsible for all costs involved in the research process.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

As a participant, you have the right to withdraw at any given point in time during the study. You can contact the Centre for Research and Publications at +264 061 2063061; pclaassen@unam.na if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the investigator.

You will receive a copy of this information and a consent form for your own records.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I agree to take part in a research study entitled:

I declare that:

I have read or listened to this information and consent form and it is written in a language I understand and feel comfortable with.

I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.

I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurized to take part.

I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalized or prejudiced in any way.

I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the study doctor or researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 2021.

Signature of participant Signature of witness

Declaration by investigator

I *MIRJAM SHEYAPO* declare that:

I explained the information in this document to

I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.

I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above

I did/did not use an interpreter. (*If an interpreter is used then the interpreter must sign the declaration below.*)

Signed at Windhoek on 21 June 2021.

Signature of investigator

Signature of witness



9.8 Annexure 8 YERS Authorisation Letter



Girls & Boys Town South Africa – Evaluations & Research Division
11 Lemon Street, Sunnyside, Auckland Park, 2092
P.O. Box 91661, Auckland Park, 2006
Tel: 011 482 2655 **Fax:** 011 482 6146 **Hotline:** 0861-58-58-58
Chief Executive Officer: Lee Loynes
Email: jds@gbtown.org.za **Website:** www.girlsandboystown.org.za

2017

Dear Dr

We are pleased to share the Youth Ecological-Resilience Scale (YERS) tool with you from the *Growth Beyond the Town* research study.

The YERS is a self-administered quantitative questionnaire designed to measure resilience of youth who are about to disengage from care and youth more generally. The tool was designed to be completed by youth between the ages of 14-21 years old upon their disengagement, but can be utilised more generally for youth aged 14-25 who are transitioning from adolescence towards young adulthood. It must be administered in written form and it should be completed with supervision of a fieldworker. If participants do not have sufficient ability to complete the questionnaire themselves, interviewer-assisted or interview-administered forms should be used.

The YERS is shared under the following terms of agreement:

1. You agree not to use the YERS for any commercial purposes, or in research or other work performed for a third party. If other off-site collaborators are involved with your project, their use of the scale is restricted to the project, and the signatory of this agreement is responsible for ensuring that all collaborators adhere to the terms of this agreement.
2. The YERS must be protected from unauthorized distribution or the possibility of modification.
3. The YERS may be modified only with the written permission of Prof Adrian van Breda or Ms Sasam Reuben. However, we request that no more than 50% of the YERS be modified. If you wish to make modifications to the questionnaire (e.g. to adapt the formatting, omit non-relevant sections, incorporate the tool into your own tools, or prepare a translated version of the tool) please submit a brief proposal to the above mentioned individuals setting out how you plan to do this.
4. In any publication, or report resulting from use of the YERS, you may not publish or partially reproduce the tools without first securing permission from the authors.

If you agree to the terms of this agreement, please email a signed copy to sreuben@gbtown.org.za and avanbreda@uj.ac.za. Upon receipt of the signed agreement, we will email you a copy of the YERS.

We are looking forward to your using the YERS in another research project and believe this is an important step in widening resilience research on youth in transition.

Sincerely yours,

Chief Executive Officer: Lee Loynes
Postal Address: P.O. Box 91661, Auckland Park, 2006

Registered Address: 11 Lemon Street, Sunnyside, Johannesburg, 2092.
Email: jds@gbtown.org.za

Trustees: DJ Bergman EJ Coleman (Alternate) DP Daniels (Chairperson) Mj de Klerk PJ Dillon RJ Gore (Alternate) RS Halkett (Vice-Chairperson) SD Kau L Loynes (Chief Executive Officer) FL Mazibuko (Secretary) GE Pieterse (Alternate) PD Pillay JP Sibanyoni



Registered as a NPO (Act 71 of 1997) - 009 244 NPO Registered as a Welfare Organisation (Act 100 of 1978) Registered as a PBO in terms of the Income Tax Act 1962 SARS REF NO. 14/1/132379

The Growth Beyond the Town Research Team

Prof Adrian van Breda
Department of Social Work
University of Johannesburg

Ms Sasam Reuben
Senior Researcher
Girls and Boys Town

9.9 Annexure 9 GP CORE authorisation

 Chris Evans <CSTweb@psyctc.org>     
To: Sheyapo, Mirjam Mon 6/3/2019 8:51 PM



 Show all 2 attachments (420 KB)  Save all to OneDrive - Unam  Download all

I am very sorry to be slow on this: work overload. I am enclosing the English language version of the GP-CORE and a copy of the first paper about it. There is no manual for it but I am happy to try to answer any questions you might have. There is an official translation of the CORE-OM into German so it would not be difficult for me to produce a German language PDF of the GP-CORE for you as I see that German is one of the languages used in Namibia. Sadly, none of the other languages are ones for which we have translations yet. I would be happy to support you in doing translations if you, or anyone else in your Department or University, wanted to do that. Translations MUST be done with us (specifically with me!), making a translation not with us and not to our translation specifications is a copyright violation and we are starting to make it clear to journals when this happens and will be seeing papers retracted that used unapproved translations.

If you do want to do a translation, do come back to me and let's discuss what's involved.

Very best wishes,

Chris

From: Chris Evans <CSTweb@psyctc.org>
Sent: Monday, July 1, 2019 2:25 PM
To: Sheyapo, Mirjam
Subject: Re: Contact from the CST contact us page

----- Original Message -----

> From: "msheyapo" <msheyapo@unam.na>
> To: "cstweb" <CSTweb@psyctc.org>
> Sent: Sunday, 30 June, 2019 21:24:52
> Subject: Re: Contact from the CST contact us page

> Dear Prof Evans

>

> I am excited to receive a response from you. Thank you very much
> for
> the information.

You are very welcome Mirjam.

> I would like to make use of the GP-CORE measure the English
> version
> for my Phd data collection at the University of Namibia.
Therefore, I
> am requesting for a written authorisation.

You don't technically need it: all our instruments are released
under a Creative Commons licence, see
the copyright declaration link at the bottom of the PDF I sent you.

However, if you need this for some bureaucracy somewhere then do
give them this Email as well as that
copyright/licensing link. They can contact me directly if they
want.

> Kindly advice me accordingly if there will be any payment to be
> done
> and how for using the measure.

No payment: we have never charged for any of our instruments.

Good luck with your work. As far as I know, yours is probably the
first use of a CORE instrument in
Namibia so this is great to hear. If you do create a report or
publication, I would love to have a copy.

Very best of luck with whatever you are doing,

9.10 Annexure 10 GP COR Licensing

CORE instruments move to Attribution-NoDerivatives licence

Licensing to date (31st December 2014)

The Core System Trust (CST) holds the copyright in the CORE instruments. To date the instruments have always been free to reproduce *on paper* provided that they were not changed, the reproduction was not for profit and copyright was acknowledged.

To date, CST has licensed essentially a single provider - Core Information Management Systems Ltd (CIMS) - to reproduce the CORE instruments *in software*. The rationale for this has been the high initial investment required to develop the software and the need to provide training and ongoing support to users, the costs of which had to be supported by a relatively limited number of users (themselves mostly poorly funded).

CST has in addition, over the years also licensed the reproduction of CORE instruments in software to a number of researchers and CIMS has sub-licensed the reproduction of CORE instruments in software to a number of organisations.

New licensing arrangements from 1st January 2015

CST and CIMS are now agreed that the widespread usage of outcome measures has matured to the point where any organisation should be free to reproduce CORE instruments in software, as well as on paper, under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-ND 4.0) licence without payment of any licence fee (see

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/>

for a human readable summary of this and

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/legalcode>

for the licence itself). We hope this will make it even easier for people to use the instruments.

Limitations on changes to the instruments

Under the terms of this licence the instruments may not be changed in any way and then redistributed. The object of this limitation is to ensure that scores will remain comparable. It would be a breach of the licence to change the order of the items or to cut any items or add any new items or text but the inevitable small differences in how different software displays the text is not a copyright violation.

Limitations on translations

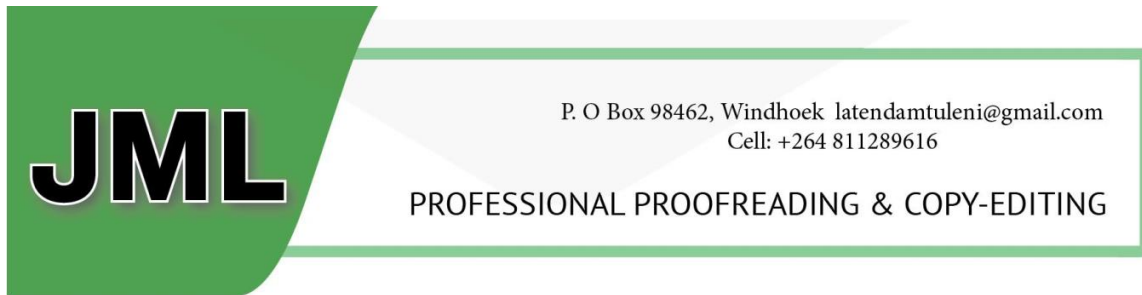
Where a translation of an instrument has not already been done to our requirements an independent translation *is* a copyright violation as it changes the instrument. We are, as we always have been, keen to work with anyone wanting to translate the instruments but this must be done in collaboration with CST and to our quality standards for translations.

CORE Instruments

CORE Instruments include the CORE Outcome Measure and all derivative works produced by CST whether by shortening (CORE-SFA, CORE-SFB, GP-CORE, CORE-10, CORE-5), adaptation/extension (LD-CORE, YP-CORE) or by approved translations.

Statement from CST and CIMS 1st January 2015. For more information see www.coresystemtrust.org.uk

Annexure 9.11 Annexure 11 Language Editor's Certificate



9 August 2023

To whom it may concern:

RE: Confirmation of proofreading and editing

This letter serves to confirm that the document detailed below has been proofread and edited by Dr Justina Amakali. The editor has concentrated on the following: spelling, grammar, accuracy, consistency, tone, structure, cohesion, and references.

Upon completion of editing, two documents were sent to the author, the document with the tracked changes and the ready-to-submit document.

TITLE: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COUNSELLING SERVICES AS AN EQUITY MEASURE TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE AND MARGINALISED STUDENTS AT SELECTED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN NAMIBIA

STUDENT NAME: MIRJAM SHEYAPO

STUDENT NO.: 200215094

Regards,

Dr Justina Amakali

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Amakali', is placed below the typed name.

Justina Amakali, PhD (English Studies) UNAM; MPhil (Second Language Studies) Stellenbosch University; B. Hons (ETD)UJ; Further Diploma (English Language Teaching) UJ; Diploma (Proofreading & Copy-editing) Black Ford Centre, UK.