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EXPLORING THE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO SHAPING THE GOALS, ASPIRATIONS AND RESILIENCE OF YOUNG AFRICAN FEMALES IN KWAMASHU TOWNSHIP, DURBAN.

By

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FULL DISSERTATION

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DECLARATION

I Nonkululeko Nothando Nthsyaintshayi declares that:

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2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

South Africa is one of the most economically unequal societies in the world. In trying to redress the inequalities in the education system, the South African government introduced community schools as an alternative for the provision of quality education to disadvantaged communities. These schools have become reservoirs of hope in shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young black females. This study argues that the manner in which young black females are socialised shapes their career goals and aspirations. Its aim is to explore factors that contribute to shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young African females in KwaMashu Township, Durban. These include: family structure, culture, gender, role models and the education system. The study adopted a qualitative research approach.

Data were collected through the use of semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus groups with a number of 15- to 17-year-old black female pupils in grade 11 at Sivananda High School in KwaMashu Township, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. Data were analysed using thematic analysis. Drawing on intersectionality theory, the findings show that the goals, aspirations and resilience of young black females are shaped by an interconnection of several social identities, including race and gender. Young black female pupils cited race, culture and gender as some of the main factors that influenced their career goals and aspirations. Most young black females felt that they were disadvantaged and discriminated against in pursuit of their career choices because of prevalent social stereotypes and cultural beliefs.

The study recommends that the media has a huge role to play in reorienting the minds of young black females by showing them successful black women who are experts in a range of occupations, especially those traditionally dominated by men. In particular it notes that the focus on entertainment, the media and music as the main fields in which women can succeed, to the exclusion of other fields of activity, can prevent women from pursuing other careers. Similarly, men should pursue careers which are regarded as feminine, thus helping to deconstruct the idea that certain career goals are for men only and others are for women only.

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CHAPTER ONE: EXPLORING THE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO SHAPING THE GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS AND RESILIENCE OF YOUNG AFRICAN FEMALES IN KWAMASHU TOWNSHIP, DURBAN

1.1 Background

The legacy of apartheid in South Africa is clearly visible and its footprints are still in existence to this day more than 25 years after the introduction of democracy. The pain and suffering of young black Africans fighting to coexist in a normal society with equal access to basic services and amenities has produced experiences and memories that continue to haunt many people.

Roberts, (2012) argues that when Europeans colonised African states, they viewed natives as unintelligent and inferior, and so exploited them as labourers. Young black high-school pupils took to the streets of Soweto Township in southwest Johannesburg in June 1976 to protest against unequal education (Roberts, 2012). Black schools had been neglected and underfunded by the apartheid government and as a resulted young people in Soweto marched in their thousands against a regime which was preventing them from realising their goals and aspirations.

South Africa is one of the most complex and economically unequal societies in the world. Almost a quarter of its population is unemployed and around 20-30% of residents live in extreme poverty (Statistics South Africa, 2015, cited in Robinson and Diale, 2017). Padagachee and Desai (2013) note that, as the new democracy and the "rainbow nation" were ushered in from 1994, South Africa inherited a legacy of discrimination and inequality especially in the fields of education and career development. This has led to a majority of South Africans, especially among the black population, living in townships and rural areas and receiving education from a historically disadvantaged school system. The experience of this system has played a significant part in shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young African females (Spaull, 2013), most of whom find themselves still disadvantaged decades after the end of apartheid (Fleisch, 2008, cited in Robinson and Diale, 2017).

In trying to redress the inequalities in the education system, the South African government introduced community schools as an alternative to quality education for disadvantaged groups. These have produced hope, shaping the goals and aspirations of young people accordingly and helping them to overcome complex challenges (Speckman and Mandew, 2014). However, although this intervention by the government played an important role, it has not fully empowered young African females, especially those from poor family backgrounds in the townships, to forge their own goals and aspirations and develop resilience.

Dameri, (2017: 208) defines goals as "general guidelines that explain what you want to achieve in your life or community. There are short-term and long-term goals with the latter being the main ones that an individual aspires to."

Accordingly, this study focuses mainly on exploring factors that contribute to the shaping of the goals, aspirations and resilience of young African females in KwaMashu Township, Durban. It seeks to apply ideas of career development, which are generally used to describe and inform the post-school trajectory of white, middle-class high-school pupils, to the experiences of their black peers in the townships.

Irwin and Elley (2018) argues that societal norms and parental expectations play a huge role in shaping the goals and aspirations of young African females, whose choices are further confined by limited financial means and cultural restrictions.

In a report article titled: "Shaping Aspirations and Outcomes: Gender and Adolescence in Young Lives" by Winter (2016), the scholar notes that the aspirations and goals of most young African females in South Africa, especially in the townships, are hugely influenced by gender roles in a society that generally promotes the interests of males over those of females. The way young people are socialised has a great influence on how they shape their goals, aspirations and resilience. For example, in her novel *Nervous Conditions*, Tsitsi Dangarembga (1988) tells the story of a poor African girl named Tambu who struggles to get an education and, in the end, cannot go to school because the money scrounged by her family goes to pay for her older brother's education instead of hers. The author shows how patriarchy can damage the prospects of young African females.

The works of the Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie also indicate the negative impacts of patriarchy and gender stereotypes on how young females make choices about their roles, goals and aspirations, resonating with the experiences of many black South African girls who grow up in townships dreaming of making something of their lives. In the short-story collection *The Thing Around Your Neck* (2010) and the novel *Americanah* (2014), Adichie narrates the challenges that women encounter in patriarchal societies and in relation to dominant forms of masculinity. In this regard, contemporary African women and girls face a similar reality to that experienced generations ago.

In considering these issues, it is important that I reflect upon and state my own position as the author of this study. Having being brought up by women in a home that was dominated by females with only two males in the entire family, it was interesting for me to analyse the interaction between these two genders within the context of a patriarchal society. Despite barriers such as lack of education and skills and the prejudices that they experienced in my community, the women who raised and mentored me remained strong against the odds. So, in conducting this research, I anticipated similar strength and resilience from the young women I met. I grew up in a home of four generations, learning about the lives of my great grandmother, my grandmother, my mother, and my sisters and brothers. Thus, I experienced the triumphs and failures, successes and disappointments, and the happiness and the sadness of four generations of women, which equipped me with a lens that I brought to this study.

This experience further enabled me to identify common threads faced by women across generations in their struggles – threads which have also shaped me. I came to understand that, in contemporary South African society, women constantly have to negotiate their place, whether that is in the corporate world or as a leader; or in an institution such as marriage, and in the role they may play at home. In this regard, research to explore and depict the realities of what it means to be a young black woman can draw much-needed attention to the importance of emancipating women.

Studies of this nature have the potential to influence the formulation and transformation of policymaking processes and policies within the public and private sectors to promote such emancipation. For example, few girls' schools offer technical subjects like technical drawing, limiting pupils at these institutions who may want to pursue careers related to this subject. Such discrimination contravenes South Africa's commitment to gender balance under the United

Nations' (UN's) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which strives to "ensure that, there be inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (Sustainable Development Goals Fund, 2018). Partly as a result of such pledges to gender equality and the actions that have been taken to implement them, literacy rates have greatly increased and more girls than ever are enrolled in school (Sustainable Development Goals Fund, 2018).

Women also face discrimination in employment. Women constitute about 49.55% of the world's population (Bauer, 2016), but a large proportion of these women are unemployed. Redressing this imbalance is not just a matter of social justice. The employment of women can help to boost economic growth. So, it is important that access to opportunities for women be increased. In this regard, young black women in particular deserve the support of their peers, families, communities and local authorities.

South Africa History Online (2000) observes that, historically, women's contributions, especially in the fields of politics, community rights and gender equality, have been broadly ignored across the country. This has a significant impact on the kinds of goals and aspirations produced by young South African females in townships. In general, in South Africa's patriarchal society, the focus is on the men, who have more authority than women; while the women are viewed as subordinates of men whose role is to bear children and care for the home and the family (South Africa History Online, 2000). Against this background, little research has been done on young African females and the prospects of them becoming positive contributors to society, which may be attributed in part to the lack of representation of black women researchers. This study aims to help plug this gap.

1.2 Significance of the study

South Africa is currently at a crucial stage in its efforts to transform its education system to redress past injustices produced by the apartheid system from 1948 (Webster, 2012). Supported by radical education policies and high, visible levels of student activism, young black South Africans are struggling to be provided with quality education that promotes career development. Many young black female pupils and students forge their goals and aspirations in a harsh economic environment where unemployment is high, as well as in the context of a policy environment that seeks to empower the previously disadvantaged (Creed and Watson,

2003, cited in Robinson & Diale, 2017). In general, the country's education system has not changed much in most townships where the legacy of apartheid is still felt. Many schools in these areas are crowded; fail to offer critical elements such as career guidance in their curriculums; and do relatively little to motivate black female pupils. Socio-cultural factors; a lack of role models; inadequate family support; and a lack of transformation in the education system all hinder young African females living in the townships of South Africa, making it more difficult for them to forge their goals and aspirations freely and develop resilience. In this context, this research seeks to identify the factors that shape the efforts of young African females in KwaMashu Township, Durban, to develop their own goals, aspirations and resilience. This study also reflects on whether the factors it identifies may have any significant bearing on how young African females shape their goals, aspirations and resilience in other areas. According to Statistics South Africa (2018), black people constitute the majority – 80.9% – of the total population, out of whom 51% are female and about 21% live in KwaZulu-Natal. However, under 8% of career-development research focuses on this population group of black women in South Africa (as supported by Watson et al., 2010).

1.3 Problem statement

South Africa is one of the leading countries in promoting gender equity by enabling equal access to quality education among women and encouraging their participation in the national economy. According to Chisholm and September (2005), the sphere of gender equity has changed since the abolition of apartheid, although some things have remained the same. Women have increasingly been regarded as equal partners since the end of apartheid but social violence against young girls and women has risen. In addition, high levels of unemployment and chronic poverty among women have become the general rule (Chisholm and September, 2005).

In general, young black females do not receive the same attention and opportunities enjoyed by their male counterparts in relation to their goals and aspirations. The education system; cultural factors; social constructs; and a lack of access to information at school and beyond the school gates make it difficult for young females to realise their dreams and address social ills. Historical injustices; distorted forms of socialisation; economic hardship; unequal educational provision; and cultural factors all militate against young black females in South Africa's townships developing their own goals, aspirations and resilience. Other important factors such as religious ideologies, poverty and the social construction of womanhood also shape the goals

and aspirations produced by young African females. Research by Grobler et al. (2014, cited in Grossen, Grobler and Lacante, 2017) shows that pupils from previously disadvantaged township schools, that is mainly black schools, have lower career-maturity levels than pupils from advantaged and well-resourced schools. Career maturity levels decline sharply from grade 11 to grade 12 at township schools, with dire long-term effects on the subsequent careers of these pupils. This research indicates that culture; gender equity; religion; and the education system are the major determinants in shaping the goals and aspirations of young African women. As a country that has been making tireless efforts towards the empowerment of historically socioeconomically disadvantaged young black women, continuing to develop policies and intervention strategies to aid their empowerment at a mature age would not be progressive or effective enough in mitigating this challenge. It is simply too late. It is therefore critical to carry out such a study that will expose the root cause of the problem. To fully explore and understand why young black women need to be empowered, through this study, factors that shape their goals and aspirations and resilience must be explored first. Once this has been achieved, more effective and context-specific intervention strategies, policies, and frameworks can be built to aid young black women.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to explore factors that contribute to shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young African females in KwaMashu Township, Durban.

The specific objectives of this study are:

- To assess the contributing factors that shape the goals, aspirations, and resilience of young African females in KwaMashu Township;
- To explore the influence of culture and family structure in shaping these goals, aspirations and resilience;
- To assess the role of the state and the Department of Education in shaping these goals, aspirations and resilience through their interactions with black youth in schools; and
- To identify ways of encouraging and inspiring young African women within a township setting.

The study will adopt the use of qualitative research methods of data collection to explore factors that contribute to shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young African females in KwaMashu Township, Durban. The reason for using a qualitative research method is because "it reduces uncertainty about important phenomena or questions and allows deep understanding

of the particular" (Mohajan, 2018). In other words, the goal is to produces knowledge that can reduce uncertainty about the subject of this research (Mohajan, 2018). Another reason for using qualitative methods is that they facilitate the development of concepts which help the researcher to understand social phenomena in natural settings, giving due emphasis to the expressed meanings, experiences and views of participants (Austin and Sutton, 2014).

According to World Health Organization (2019), "young people" are defined as "those persons between the age of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definition by Member States". This definition is not the same as that adopted in South Africa, in which a "young person" is defined as, "any persons between the ages of 14 and 35 years" (National Youth Policy Report, 2015: 10). This definition of "young people" is broader than UNESCO's and it tends to include people from a broader age group with a range of socio-political and historical understandings (National Youth Policy Report, 2015). It is important to note that young people are not a uniform group. Accordingly, a specific cohort group is targeted and defined as part of the broader "youth" category in order to address their specific situations and needs (National Youth Policy Report, 2015)

This research study will adopt the South African definition of young people although specifying a specific cohort age group when considering the young African females who are the subject of the study. The research dissertation uses three theories – intersectionality theory; aspiration adaptation theory; and resilience theory – for its framework. These are discussed in Chapter 2 below.

1.5 Outline of study

The dissertation consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the topic, describing the area of concern; the research problem statement; the significance of the study; the objectives of the study; and the theoretical framework for the study.

Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature, which includes sources, data and statistical information from other scholars relating to factors that contribute to shaping the goals, aspiration and resilience of young females. Various factors that shape these goals, aspirations and resilience are reviewed and discussed.

Chapter 3 looks at the methodology used to achieve the research study's objective. This chapter explains and justifies the reasons for using the particular research method adopted. The chapter also delineates the research setting and study area in which the research was conducted and examines the data collection process and sampling procedure used for the study.

Chapter 4 provides a detailed profile of the study's participants and summarises the findings of the interviews conducted with young African females in KwaMashu Township, Durban.

Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the study findings in relation to local and international literature, then identifies the major conclusions drawn from the research study. It also presents the limitations and scope of the study and areas for future research.

1.6 Conclusion

Chapter 1 considered the study's background, including some of the broad factors that contribute to shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young African females in KwaMashu Township, Durban. These include historical factors, such as the apartheid educational system inherited by the South African government after 1994 which has continued to create inequalities within the education sector. The chapter also discussed how patriarchy and ideas of masculinity have shaped and influenced the aspirations and goals of most young African females in South Africa. The chapter presented the problem statement and significance of the study, as well as its main and subsidiary objectives. It further outlined the contents of the study, from Chapter 1 to chapter 5.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the theoretical framework for the study, that is the three theories – intersectionality theory; resilience theory; and aspiration adaptation theory – that it deploys. The chapter further reviews the literature on the factors that contribute to shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young African females. The literature review is divided into four sections: focusing on how achieving gender equality at the regional and global levels can help girls and women to achieve their goals and aspirations, and enable them to be equal participants and contributors to societies and economies across the world; looking at cultural influences in South Africa; focusing on the domestic education system; and considering the impacts of gender and other factors such as race and family on the goals, aspirations and resilience developed by young African females in townships.

2.2 Intersectionality theory

The term "intersectionality" was coined by American professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 (Walby, Armstrong & Strid, 2012). It has been argued (Carastathis, 2014) that the theory of intersectionality originated from the general claim that women's oppression can be captured through analysis of gender alone. In this respect, intersectionality theory offers a theoretical and political remedy to what is perhaps "the most pressing problem facing contemporary feminism, which is the long painful legacy of exclusions" (Carastathis, 2014).

Smooth (2013: 12-13) argues that intersectionality is the assertion that social identity categories such as race, gender, class, sexuality and ability are interconnected and operate simultaneously to produce experiences of both privilege and marginalisation. The theory has transformed old conversations while inspiring new debates across the academy. The core innovation is that intersectionality encourages recognition of the differences that exist among groups, moving dialogue beyond considering only the differences between groups (Smooth, 2013). This notion is actively supported by YW Boston (2017), a group which seeks to create systematic social, gender and social equity in Boston on the premise that "people are often mostly disadvantaged by multiple sources of oppression such as their race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion and other identity markers". In other words, "intersectionality theory looks at how

different power structures interact in the lives of minorities, specifically black women" (Adewunmi 2014: 1).

Figure 1 below shows intersectionality theory in the form of a Venn diagram illustrating how different social categorisations can converge and overlap. This image further illustrates how the multiple, different power structures that women have to navigate overlap and can create (for example, in the middle of the diagram) myriad disadvantageous conditions.

This diagram depicts the social categorisations of race, sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality and disability. In South Africa, most black people are disadvantaged as a result of historical injustices which have shaped the lives of many. In addition, women in a patriarchal society face widespread prejudice in the form of negative preconceptions about their mental and physical capabilities. Furthermore, black women who may not adhere to dominant forms of sexuality and gender may be the targets of hatred and violence. In South Africa, the idea that lesbians can be "cured" by being raped is common. The risk of xenophobic violence poses an additional threat to black women from other countries. Perceptions of, and action, or lack of action in relation to, disability pose further obstacles that can hinder a woman's progress. In all cases, and particularly if women may be placed in more than one of these categories, their wellbeing and safety is under threat.

Figure 2.1: Intersectionality theory
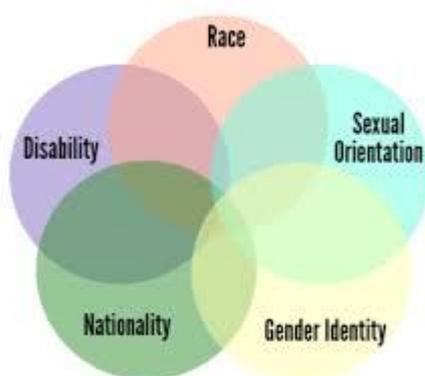
Source: YW Boston, 2017

It has been argued (Carastathis, 2014) that intersectionality theory captures how oppressions are experienced simultaneously and accounts for their experiential and structural complexity (Carastathis, 2014). This framework for thought, which originated from discontent with the

treatment of "women" as a homogenous group, has evolved into a theoretical research paradigm that seeks to understand the interaction of various social identities and how these interactions define societal power hierarchies. Accordingly, intersectionality encourages scholars to embrace the complexities of group-based politics by critically examining the variances in social location that exist among those claiming membership in groups**.**

It is difficult to assess accurately and credibly how young black women are developing at both the personal and societal levels. Accordingly, the theory of intersectionality can help to guide such research by enabling consideration of women's oppression through a number of different lenses. It helps to describe the extent and kind of women's oppression. The strengths of this theory are that: it highlights non-gender-related sources of inequality in society; recognises the complexity of society; shows that experiences are not addictive; and broadens feminist thinking to include non-white and non-middle-class approaches. One of its main weaknesses is that it seems to over simplify the assumption that various axes of oppression work in similar ways.

2.3 Resiliency theory

Resiliency theory provides a conceptual framework for understanding the development of children and adolescents from the perspective of the positive factors that enable individuals to overcome adversity. It is this used to inform the design and creation of interventions that support individual development (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005; Zimmerman and Brenner, 2010). Furthermore, this theory supplies the conceptual scaffolding for studying and understanding why some youth grow up to be healthy adults in spite of their exposure to risks (Prince-Embury, 2008). Resiliency theory focuses attention on the positive, contextual, social, and individual variables that interfere or disrupt developmental trajectories, including risks; problem behaviours; mental distress; and poor health outcomes. These positive contextual, social, and individual variables are called promotive factors (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005). They operate in opposition to risk factors and help youth to overcome the negative effects of exposure to risks. Fergus and Zimmerman (2005) identified two main types of promotive factors: assets and resources.

Positive factors that reside within individuals such as self-efficacy and self-esteem are defined as assets. Resources refers to factors outside individuals such parental support; adult mentors; and youth programmes that provide opportunities to learn and practice skills. Assets and

resources provide youth with the individual and contextual attributes necessary for healthy development. However, many African young women grow up in environments that place many obstacles, such as lack of education and inadequate health facilities, in their path. At the same time, these women may adapt to these harsh realities and remain inspired to succeed. Accordingly, this theory will guide this research study by producing an understanding of how children and adolescents develop and how they can grow up to be healthy adults in spite of their exposure to risks. The strengths of this theory are that it is particularly relevant in South Africa as the country continues to seek to translate social development theory into practice, and grapple with the apparently intractable issues of poverty and underdevelopment. The theory also helps to show how resource-constrained societies in which inequality is rife can mobilise opportunities for individual and broader societal improvement.

2.4 Aspiration adaptation theory

For Rosenfeld and Kraus (2011), bounded rationality theory indicates that humans will continue to produce and seek to realise aspirations at a particular level regardless of the odds they may face. The idea is that if a particular choice promises to enable realisation of the aspiration, it is made without an extensive search for an optimal strategy. The concept can help to explain the resilience of certain groups despite the obstacles that hinder their development. The theory further posits the view that if the path taken fails to realise the aspiration, then the resulting deprivation of self-esteem and sense of worth will lead the individual to adjust their aspiration level and choose among the already available alternative paths on offer to realise the new goal (Selten, 2008). Accordingly, this theory can help to explain the resilience of young women in KwaMashu. The theory is attractive because it entails establishing whether young African women have goals and aspirations, and if so, what influenced them. In addition, the theory posits the useful idea that resilience depends on having aspirations as a motivation.

2.5 Achieving gender equality

The UN's adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015 which includes the 17 Sustainable Development Goals has created important change, specifically at the global level, as significant progress towards the targets of SDG 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment has been achieved (Fukuda-Parr, 2016). In this regard, the Sustainable Development Goals Fund (2019) notes that equal access to primary education between girls and boys has progressed and in some areas has reached parity, although women and girls continue

to suffer discrimination and violence in many parts of the world. This achievement has helped to redress past injustices which excluded women from access to education based on their gender and negatively affected how black girls shaped their goals and aspirations.

If SDG 5 to establish gender equality and empower women and girls is achieved, young black females across the world will no longer be discriminated against in their societies and educational institutions and will be able to decide to pursue any profession or career they choose without fear of racial and/or gender prejudice. In South Africa, the South African Human Rights Commission (2017) notes that equal access to education is guaranteed by Section 5 of the Constitution of 1996 which provides a right to quality basic and further education, and section 8(g) of the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (PEPUDA) of 2000 which states that unfair discrimination based on gender to limit the access of women or girls to education is prohibited. The constitutional support for an end to discrimination and gender inequality not only offers a basic human right to young black females, it also lays the ground for the comprehensive engagement of black women in the economy and society, which fosters development (Sustainable Development Goals Fund, 2019). However, pupils at South African schools continue to face significant challenges such as poor-quality education; inadequate infrastructure; a high ratio of pupils-to-teachers; strikes by teachers; damage to school property by community protestors which prevents pupils from accessing their schools; and the failure of some pupils to proceed to technical colleges or university (South Africa Human Rights Commission, 2017).

At the regional level, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) which is a regional economic community comprising 16 member states (Southern African Development Community) has produced a gender policy that proclaims "member states shall promote the participation of women, men and boys in all education and training programmes and processes in order to strengthen their contribution to, and benefit from, regional and national educational development agendas" (Casazza and Chulu, 2016). The objective of the policy is to increase the number of people who can access education and training programmes, by removing the obstacles caused by gender discrimination, and thus enhance human capital development in the region. This policy goes a long way in shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young black females as it is has been adopted and localised to meet the current challenges faced by these girls and women in the various countries across the region. For example, in Zimbabwe,

female Advanced-level and grade 7 pupils outperformed their male counterparts in 2015 for the second straight year, according to the Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (Mugari, 2016).

2.6 Cultural factors

The term "culture" was defined by Edward B Taylor in his work *Primitive Culture* (1871) "as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs or any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Idang, 2015: 98).

South African History Online (2000) observes that, historically, women's contributions, especially in the fields of politics, community rights and gender equality, and the quest for freedom from subjugation, have been broadly ignored across the country. In general, in South Africa's patriarchal society, the focus is on the men, who have more authority than women; while the women are viewed as invisible subordinates of men whose role is to bear, rear and feed children, and care for the home and family (South Africa History Online, 2000). Historical, cultural and societal expectations intertwined with gendered racial discrimination have played a huge role in how women teach, and pass information to, their daughters on their goals and what they should aspire to be.

2.6.1 Role of family in influencing goals and aspirations

Numerous studies conducted in various societies about factors that contribute to shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young black females have cited family as a crucial factor. In a study aimed to determine the effects of family structure and functioning on the fulfilment of basic psychological needs; life goals; and aspirations of young South Africans. National Research Council (2003) note that "young people or youth – this age is important in one's life because it is at this stage in life that one presents or questions themselves with respect to choices and that is where decisions need to be made regarding life goals and aspirations. It is social environments like family that can reinforce or weaken individual growth processes of young people because choices towards certain goals and aspirations occur within the family setting." Many young black females in South Africa, myself included, have grown up in a family where certain professions are deemed masculine and reserved for men, and hence should not be pursued by females. The implication of such influence is that young women may find themselves pursuing professions or goals which are not self-driven, but which have been forged in line with what the family deems socially acceptable. Through this, the influence of family in

determining goals and aspirations is determined through gender as females are pushed towards careers regarded as feminine like nursing while males towards masculine careers such as engineering.

Another study conducted among black families by Martineau (1997) found that there is a cultural and social belief especially among parents that sons should outperform daughters in science and mathematics and that daughters should outperform sons in English. This thinking is based on the notion that science and mathematics are difficult, technical subjects – so, girls cannot handle them although they can perform better in subjects like English. Martineau (1997) noted that the daughters of parents who held such ideas tended to perform poorly in science and mathematics compared with English, and were more likely to aspire to take professional routes related to the study of English or the arts, rather than ones that required scientific and/or technical knowledge. Li and Kerpelman (2007) note that the relationship between young black females and their parents plays a crucial role in their emotional and self-development, upon which their career aspirations, resilience and goals are founded. In other words, these goals and aspirations are created through a shared view among the parents and the child, which the child either strives to realise or disregards.

2.6.1.1 Family structure

Voydanoff (2001, cited in Davids et al., 2016: 2) defined family structure as "different family forms identified as blended families, single-parent families, married or cohabiting parent families, extended families and child-headed families". Family structure has been an influential factor in shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young black females in South African households. Huang and Glassman (2000, cited in Davids and Roman, 2013) note that much research has shown that, in South Africa, a majority of single black female parents live in poverty; are socially isolated; and demonstrate less emotional and parental care towards their children. This tends to have a relatively negative impact on their young daughters as they grow up and shape their own goals, aspirations and resilience, compared with those raised by both parents. However, this is not always the case. Davids et al. (2016) argue that children from two-parent families may also be negatively affected if they are exposed to continual parental conflicts at home. Shumba and Naong (2012) observe that mothers tend to have greater influence on their daughters' aspirations, goals and in instilling resilience than fathers because mothers provide support that eases children's fears about careers.

Although it may be a generalisation that two-parent families ensure a "stable environment" compared with single-parent families, Davids and Roman (2013) show that the economic, educational and employment achievements of most black children raised in single parent families are low compared with those of children raised in two-parent families. This notion is supported by Dodge and Welderufael (2014) who argue that young black female South Africans who live with both parents are more likely to be at or above their grade level because their career goals and aspirations are largely determined by the presence of, and contributions from, both parents. According to Avert (2017), more than 2 million children orphaned by the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa are vulnerable to educational delays in school; do not fully attend classes; and sometimes enrol late. This would indicate that family does have an influence and the absence of family has a detrimental effect on young people's goals, aspirations and resilience.

Most pupils in South African secondary schools aspire to achieve wealth, a particular kind of image and fame, which are regarded as extrinsic goals, neglecting those goals that are personally meaningful to themselves (Davids and Roman, 2013). In this regard, one of the reasons why young people aspire to achieve goals is the need for "conformity", which can be derived from fame and an acceptable image (Davids and Roman, 2013). This is supported by self-determination theory (SDT) which specifies that individuals are naturally motivated to: function at their fullest potential; work towards a cohesive sense of self; and self-determine (Davids and Roman, 2013). The theory can be used to explain the impact that more supportive families can have in socialising young black females to pursue their goals.

Farinde (2012) argues that young African-American female pupils coming from, for example, two-parent family households, are more likely to achieve better educational outcomes and have greater aspirations to pursue professional goals than those coming from single-headed families. A two-parent family has a better chance of supporting young, black female pupils in developing their cognitive and social skills from an early age and pursuing various career opportunities outside assigned racial and gender roles. The more parents participate and are involved in their daughters' lives, the greater the possibility that the daughters will emulate the positive qualities demonstrated by their parents (Farinde, 2012). In large part, this may be because two parents can pool their resources and share responsibilities in raising their children.

Shumba and Naong (2012) found that young people coming from relatively poor, single-parent families were deterred from choosing appropriate educational programmes and careers. Most of the children from these families tended to avoid careers which required long periods of training because they lacked the financial means to support themselves. In other words, children and young people from financially disadvantaged backgrounds lack the space and opportunities to make choices about what they may aspire to be and the goals that they may seek to achieve. In this context, young black female pupils from township and rural schools delay in making career choices; and the choices they make are mostly influenced by their families, friends and teachers (Shumba and Naong, 2012). In a study conducted by Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa (2014) at the Durban Institute of Technology among first year students on what influenced them to pursue particular career goals and aspirations, 52.5% of respondents indicated their mothers and 18.75% indicated their fathers. Clearly, mothers exert great influence on their children's goals, aspirations and resilience.

2.7 Role of education

Education is one of the main factors that contributes to shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young African females in South Africa, even for those residing in townships. In South Africa, historical injustices produced by the apartheid regime, which imposed segregation and denied black people access to quality schooling through the 1953 Bantu Education Act, continue to make it difficult for black South Africans, especially females, to shape their goals and aspirations fully and become resilient (Worden 2011). In this regard, inequality within society has exacerbated the plight of young women.

Buthelezi (2009, cited in Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa, 2014) notes that social conditions experienced by young black females in low income communities are a direct legacy of segregationist apartheid government policies which remain embedded in South Africa's education system. Kekana (2003, cited in Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa, 2014) notes that the lack of career guidance, which was, in some cases, non-existent in black African schools, is to blame for the youth's poor career development.

The site of education – the particular school – is an important factor in influencing the goals, aspirations and resilience of young people. In this regard, the kinds of subjects on the curriculum; the quality of the teaching; teachers' attitudes towards female pupils; the nature of

participation in school activities; and school policies, all play a role (Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa, 2014). Social institutions such as schools are clearly crucial in shaping and influencing young people's goals and what they aspire to in life. The policies adopted by the government for the education sector play a significant role in moulding the kinds of people produced by these institutions, including how the reality of life for young black females is shaped. Since the school is a key determinant in shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young girls, any remedial efforts should focus on individual schools, as well as education policies and practices in general.

Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa (2014) also note how culture can shape the extent to which pupils at black schools can access support. Pupils may find it difficult to seek assistance on matters relating to cultural issues from counsellors with different, Western cultural backgrounds. In the context of cultural misunderstandings between pupils and counsellors, many young black female pupils may be discouraged from seeking help to advance their career goals and aspirations for fear of being seen by their peers as stupid or too immature to make decisions (Bojuwoyem, 2002, cited in Bojuwoye & Mbanjwa, 2014).

Martineau (1997) argues that the gender-based division of labour in households or on farms greatly influences young black South African females who carry the values instilled in them at home into the school environment and try to conform to norms of femininity, especially in relation to the fields of study and careers that they choose. This has resulted in most young African female pupils wanting to pursue careers in nursing and teaching because these are regarded as "soft", "feminine" careers for women; while fields like mathematics and chemistry are deemed "hard" and "masculine" and for men (Martineau, 1997).

A similar pattern has been observed in the US, where career aspirations and goals among young black females are also influenced by their schooling experiences. It seems that the quality of the education received has a direct impact on pupils' goals and the careers they choose (Lent et al., 2000, as cited in Farinde, 2012). Farinde (2012) notes that, in order to broaden their career aspirations and goals, black female pupils in the United States (US) need to reduce the gap in school performance that exists between them and other racial groups, especially white male and females, since research has shown that most young African-Americans receive lower marks in mathematics, science and writing subjects. In South Africa, similar results have been observed, especially in rural and township schools. These have been attributed to a lack of understanding among pupils at these schools about the objectives of learning, which are not adequately

defined. As a result, most young black female pupils end up with unrealistic, unmarketable career goals and aspirations (Watson *et al*, 2010).

Rollock (2007, as cited in Farinde, 2012) observes that there is a deepening concern about the silence that surrounds the schooling experiences and achievements of young black females in the US. Much of the available literature seems to suggest that these pupils are doing better than their black male counterparts. When this research is coupled with prevailing societal constructs, the indication is that there is a lack of guidance and direction for African-American female pupils (Farinde, 2012). In fact, young African female pupils are at a higher risk of having their goals, aspirations and resilience impeded by pregnancy; suicide; gangs; poverty; and failing at school (Farinde, 2012).

The relationship between young black female pupils and their teachers is a significant factor in shaping their goals, aspirations and resilience. Farinde (2012) notes that the relationship between teachers and young African-American pupils is relatively weak as a result of prevalent social constructs among these young women. Thus, the nurturing of academic possibilities is inhibited and educational neglect is perpetuated. By contrast, in some parts of the Asia-Pacific region, the majority of the teachers are reported to be females, which seems to favour girls over boys, strengthening and positively influencing young female pupils' goals and aspirations (Goolamally and Ahmad, 2010, cited in Koskei, Ngeno and Simuyi, 2016). Another reason why the relationship between young African-American females and their teachers is weak is because most of the schools in districts with majority black populations in the US have relatively unequal student-to-teacher ratios, that is the number of teacher to the proportion of students is not balanced. There are many students that need the services of few teachers hence makes it difficult to teach. White female teachers dominate the educational sector at the same time that it has been shown that issues of race influence how pupils may perceive themselves in educational institutions (Farinde, 2012). The argument is that if young female black pupils do not see black women represented in positions of authority in the pedagogic setting they feel side-lined and may develop a narrow understanding of their own roles in education and society.

The goals, aspirations and resilience of young African females have for a long time been shaped by role models and mentors outside academia, particularly in the fields of sport and entertainment. However, notwithstanding the value of such figures, it also important to have role models and mentors from within the education system so that young female black pupils

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are exposed to motivated, self-confident women of colour with a visible passion for knowledge (Farinde, 2012). Patton and Harper (2003, cited in Farinde, 2012) argue that being exposed to motivated, self-confident black women helps young African-American female pupils to select a profession and negotiate particular settings more effectively so that they can secure their desired path. In this context, black mentors can disseminate and teach survival skills such as how to maintain a level of professionalism, while at the same time enabling pupils to overcome negative stereotypes that have traditionally been used to characterise African-American women. By contrast, Kincheloe (2010) notes that, some white teachers, especially in urban areas, may demonstrate unconscious bias in how they respond to the plight of young African-American female pupils, interacting with them in ways that are based on stereotypes held by the public. The exposure to such unconscious ideology through their relationships with their teachers may affect how young female African-American pupils shape their goals and aspirations.

In addition, Berry and Candis (2013) note that African-American female pupils who behave in certain culturally scripted ways in the classroom, such as by being confident, assertive, independent, outspoken and challenging the weaknesses in the system, may be ignored by educators who may regard their behaviour as out of alignment with that is expected in the dominant educational culture – in other words, less input and commentary from pupils. This has led to young African-American female pupils getting punished and neglecting their education (Berry and Candis, 2013). The conclusion is that when pupils are learning in an environment which is not attuned to their needs at the cultural level, they seem not to perform as well and their aspirations may be more limited. A particular recommendation from this research is that teachers who are assigned to teach in schools with different cultures than their own should go through cultural orientation training to reduce tensions and misunderstandings in the student-teacher relationship.

2.7.1 Teacher attitudes

The attitudes of teachers, particularly in low-income communities, can have a great influence on their pupils' career goals and aspirations and the subjects that the pupils may choose as their specialist areas of interest. For example, black female pupils in mathematics and science classes receive differential treatment from teachers, with those who may want to pursue careers such as computer programming being ridiculed, as such fields are seen as "difficult" and a male domain (Wong and Kemp, 2017)). Even female teachers tend to favour boys and often believe girls are

less competent in computing. In this regard, expectations within the educational environment combine with societal and parental expectations and beliefs to steer girls away from subjects such as mathematics, computing and the sciences (Wong and Kemp, 2017).

Careers guidance is also deployed by teachers, often repeatedly, to steer young black female pupils away from careers in computing, sciences and engineering, directing them instead to disciplines that are deemed more suitable for women. As a result, girls end up not taking those subjects which are seen as inconsistent with a stereotypical female identity and gendered expectations (Wong and Kemp, 2017). When teachers demonstrate gender bias, it creates problems as they tend to focus on one gender at the expense of another. For example, differential treatment of males and females stunts girls' aspirations in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. Both girls and boys should be given equal opportunities in all subject areas to create equal opportunities for the future and to ensure their aspirations and goals are attained on an equal basis.

2.8 Role of gender

The colonial period in most African countries laid the foundations for unequal treatment of males and females in education, skewing career aspirations and producing unequal access to economic sustainability (Zvobgo, 2004, as cited in Mutekwe and Modiba, 2012). According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2019), gender "is the socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as norms, roles and relationships of, and between, groups of women and men. It varies from society to society and can be changed."

In Zimbabwe, for example, gender equity has not received adequate attention despite the country having one of the best education systems in Africa. The Zimbabwean system borrows from an English model which excluded girls from being educated in preparation for employment (Mutekwe and Modiba, 2012). Rather they were educated for domesticity. Mutekwe and Modiba (2012) argue that the Zimbabwean system was structured to prepare young males for employment and their role as the family-head and breadwinner by teaching them technical subjects such as metalwork, woodwork, agriculture and technical graphics; while the girls were offered domestic science subjects such as sewing; typing; and arts subjects. Burrows (1995, cited in Mutekwe and Modiba, 2012) notes that the actions of a hidden cultural curriculum, which is presented in a manner that emphasises pupils' gender-role differences,

leads to schooling that fails to provide girls with opportunities to compete on an equal level with boys.

Support for this view is provided by cultural transmission theory which suggests that, from birth to death, the social environment emphasises the difference between boys and girls and seeks to make them conform to socially defined and constructed masculine or feminine roles (Mutekwe & Modiba, 2012). In accepting such polarised roles, girls limit their own horizons and become locked into a gender-stratified world of work (Mutekwe & Modiba, 2012).

In the US, for example, it has been noted that, in addition to the racial challenges that young black women face and their impact on how these women shape their goals, aspirations and resilience, gender-induced societal ideologies and constructs also significantly shape these young women's thinking (Farinde, 2012). Farinde (2012) argues that the designation of young black women as part of the "weaker" sex in a patriarchal society exacerbates the challenges they face, defining women's quest for a prominent career as, *de facto*, perverse behaviour. Grevious (1985, cited in Farinde, 2012) argues that, as a result of dominant social perceptions of sex roles in society, young black women continue to pursue relatively low-level occupations, compared with young white women and young black males. In general, women are encouraged to conform to what are regarded as female-appropriate roles and discouraged from pursuing male-designated roles at an early age. Francis (2002, as cited in Farinde, 2012) notes that the goals, aspirations and resilience of young black females are shaped by what they are taught when they are young – that is, that a woman's role is to be submissive and nurturing and that women should not have power and authority. Accordingly, many young black women choose stereotypical feminine professions related to the virtues of creativity and compassion.

Shumba and Naong (2012) found that unlike young South African men who may abandon their career aspirations and goals due to financial concerns, young South African female pupils are more driven by the social good of their career choices. The influence of gender differences on how young African females' goals, aspirations and resilience are shaped starts at pre-school and continues throughout their educational careers (Shumba & Naong, 2012). For example, a Nigerian study found that sex-role stereotypes exist among boys and girls in primary schools and that they aspire to traditional "male" or "female" occupations, indicating that the roles of the parents at home and the teachers at school influence children's perceptions of their ability and, consequently, their career goals and aspirations.

Savickas et al. (2009) state that social norms within the labour market produce particular problems and challenges for people in low-income societies, who must renegotiate the stereotypical forms of labour to which they are exposed in order to engage in different kinds of work. According to Savickas et al. (2009), people in these societies are often manual workers – for example, labourers, domestic workers, and cleaners. Instead of having access to professional jobs, the labour performed by African people was often conceptualised as being instrumental to the country's economy, or as a form of direct service in their own communities. Albien (2013, as cited in Savickas et al., 2009) notes that a dominant form of work among parents in low-income communities is manual labour, which can influence young African female pupils in how they decide upon their career aspirations and goals.

2.9 Other factors

2.9.1 Race as an obstacle

Milan-Tyner (2018) notes that in the US, race is one of the main obstacles for young black women, who must adopt a double consciousness that embraces both their inner, black world and the outer, white one; and a bicultural approach that enables them to inhabit both the African-American and European-American worlds. This bifurcated world view is necessary in order to enter a world of professional work, largely dominated by white people, in which young black women are regarded as outsiders as a result of a history of racial exclusion. Similar patterns may be seen in South Africa as a result of historical injustices. For example, there is a huge social difference between young black females and young white females, with the latter having belonged to a racial group that has dominated many influential positions and retains relatively vast privileges and opportunities (Robinson and Diale, 2017). Such racialised outcomes, which are a legacy of apartheid, have affected how young people view each other; their goals; and what they aspire to achieve, in that society at large continues to assign superior roles to white people and subordinate roles to black people.

Farinde (2012) notes that in the US the media have historically played a great role in producing negative stereotypes of young black women. Similarly, movies, books, comic strips and advertisements have produced negative characterisations of young black women in South Africa, for example, as violent, addicted criminals living on welfare and having babies at a

young age. Such views have played a role in how young black women develop their career aspirations and goals, as they try to gain entry in certain professions, producing a distorted sense of self among this group (Dukes & Gaither, 2017).

Much exposure to negative images makes it hard to develop a solid self-image that opposes societal stereotypes. Acceptance of such negative characterisations can affect feelings of self-worth and produce insecurities about what the future can hold (Dukes & Gaither, 2017). This can lead to young black women asking themselves questions such as: "Am I worthy?" and "Can I truly compete with others when all I am expected to do is fail?"

2.9.2 Importance of role models

In a society in which in individuals are differentiated according to racial and gender categories, young African-American women require African-American female role models to inspire and motivate them to expand their career aspirations and goals, since they can understand the complexity of gender inequality and racial discrimination (Farinde, 2012). The influence of these black female role models should extend beyond the spheres of entertainment and sports, which is where the media stereotypically sites them. Role models are required to introduce valuable knowledge about other careers that may change young black women's thinking and their future aspirations (Matshabane, 2016).

Farinde (2012) argues that most young black women enter the workforce straight from school or higher education, while many young white people have networks in place which provide guidance; social and economic ties; and access to information on how to proceed, which results in them occupying positions of authority in society.

2.9.3 Family factors

Meeuseen, Veldman and Van Laar (2016) note that the existence or absence of barriers within the family deeply influence whether a young African young female forges career aspirations that are aligned with mainstream society's dominant racialised and genderised views of who is best suited to occupy which professions, or whether she defies the norm by deviating towards higher career aspirations. In the US and a number of Caribbean nations, it was found that parents play a significant role in helping to shape the career paths, goals and professional aspirations of

young black women through their expectations; support; socioeconomic status; and own career choices (Farinde, 2012).

Benner, Boyle and Sadler (2016) note that when parents have high educational and academic expectations of their children, young African-American female pupils often strive for success to please them. Clearly, it is important for parents to encourage the belief in their children while they are young that educational success is attainable and possible despite societal expectations.

In a research study conducted in South Africa on factors that influence young pupils' career choices and aspirations, Shumba and Naong (2012) found that, family (30.83%) is the greatest influencer in determining school pupils career goals and aspirations. This is followed by the learner-self (30.08%), that is, the phase when a school pupil can identify their preferred goals; and teachers (20.30%) (Shumba & Naong, 2012). This is shown in table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Career aspirations and goals

Who most influenced your career goals and aspirations	KwaZulu-Natal		Eastern Cape		Western Cape		Total	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
No one	16	12.03	12	9.02	12	9.02	40	30.08
Family members	14	10.53	16	12.03	11	8.27	41	30.83
My teachers	8	6.02	10	7.52	9	6.77	27	20.30
Friends and acquaintances	6	4.51	3	2.26	3	2.26	12	9.02
Others	5	3.76	5	3.76	3	2.26	13	9.77
Total	49		46		38		133	100

Source: Shumba and Naong, 2012

2.10 Conclusion

The literature review above provided information and scholarly evidence regarding factors that contribute to shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young African females. It considered the role of family influence in shaping the goals and aspirations of young females in African families in South Africa and America. It looked at the impacts of the nature or type of family structure – for example, single-parent family, nuclear family and extended family – in

shaping the goals and aspirations of young black women. It was found that cultural values, norms, stereotypes, ideologies, and economic considerations all contribute to shaping the goals and aspirations of young black females, thereby increasing or decreasing their chances of successfully pursuing a career. The literature review further considered the role of education in influencing the goals and aspirations of young African females, as education forms the basis upon which many young people's goals and dreams are shaped. In this regard, the attitude of teachers towards African female pupils was also seen as shaping their choices about which studies and careers they should pursue.

The literature review also covered other factors such as race, role models and family factors and how these are intertwined in influencing how the goals, aspirations and resilience of young African women are shaped. It was also noted that the contribution of women to South African development and industrialisation efforts is crucial. In this regard, unless young black women's presence in the world of work increases significantly, they will remain marginalised within South African society.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology used in this study. The research was conducted through interviews to understand the factors that contribute to shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young African females in KwaMashu Township, Durban. This chapter justifies and explains the reasons for using the specified research method. It starts by providing an overview of the research setting and study area. It then examines the data collection processes and considers the sampling procedures used for the study. It describes the techniques of analysis used to make sense of the collected data collected. In conclusion, it highlights the ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

3.1 Study Area

KwaMashu Township, Durban

The study was conducted in KwaMashu, a township located in the eThekwini municipality on the east coast of South Africa in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (Godehart, 2006) which is approximately 20km north of Durban's central business district (CBD). Figure 3.1 shows the location of KwaMashu, which is demarcated by the solid lines around it, in Durban. Isivananda Technical High School is in KwaMashu. The township was built as part of the Group Areas Act project under which African people were uprooted from Cato Manor to a former sugarcane farm where the first KwaMashu house was built in 1958. It covers an area of approximately 15 square kilometres of hilly terrain, which makes development there relatively expensive. It is located to the northwest of Durban, off the main existing transportation routes (Leon, 2007). KwaMashu is close to the north of the city where much of the city's development has taken place. In the north, residential, commercial and office blocks have been developed in La Lucia, Umhlanga and Mount Edgecombe and Bridge City (Ncube, 2013). Thus, KwaMashu is well positioned to connect with these areas. Of interest is the Phoenix industrial area which is close to the future proposed Dube TradePort and King Shaka International Airport at La Mercy and may provide a source of much-needed employment (URP, 2001). According to Musakwa (2009), KwaMashu is an impoverished area beset by unemployment and inequality. According to the Census of 2011, KwaMashu has a total population of about 175,663 people, comprising 92,842 males and 82,822 females with black Africans constituting the majority of the

population (173,568) followed by Asians (1,457), and coloureds (303), with other groups and whites in the minority (145) (City Population, 2013).

Figure 3.1: Location of KwaMashu, Durban

Source for map data: AfriGIS, 2019

3.2 Research Design

The research design of a study provides its rationale in terms of the methods and techniques for data collection and interpretation that are employed (Mason, 2002). It serves as a bridge between the research questions and the execution or implementation of the research strategy, which means it impacts on what is to be studied and the way it must be studied (Mason, 2002). This study uses a qualitative research method.

The qualitative research method facilitates the development of concepts which help the researcher to understand social phenomena in their natural settings, giving due emphasis to the expressed meanings, experiences and views of participants (Pope and Mays, 1995). This view is supported by Creswell (2009), who argues that qualitative research is characterised by its objectives, which are to understand social life, and its methods, which contrast with those employed in qualitative research, in which numbers form the basis of the data analysis. Rahman (2017) argues that qualitative research has an advantage in that it produces a lot of detailed information about participants' feelings, opinions and experiences that can help to explain the

meanings of their actions. Rubin and Babbie (2013) note that qualitative research has smaller sample sizes which enables the researcher to become more familiar with the information gathered and the context of the participants.

This study sought to understand the subjective factors that contribute to shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young African females in KwaMashu Township, Durban. The qualitative descriptive approach enabled collection of in-depth information about their goals and aspirations. Babbie and Mouton (2001) note that in-depth interviews are the most used and preferred qualitative data collection method. In the context of a study that is concerned with identifying the factors that contribute to how the goals, aspirations and resilience of young African females are shaped, the qualitative descriptive approach allows for an in-depth study of selected issues.

3.3 Sampling procedure

Vehovar, Toepoel and Steinmetz (2016) define a sample as "a subset of a population and we survey the units from the sample with the aim to learn about the entire population". This research study was conducted using non-probability sampling methods. This is a deviance from probability sampling and means that units are included with anonymous probabilities and that some of these probabilities are known to be zero (Vehovar, Toepoel and Steinmetz, 2016). This study's adoption of this method is supported by Creswell (2009) who argues that the use of non-probability sampling technique is based on what the researcher is investigating and hence should not be considered a random technique. This research was done using purposive and snow-balling sampling techniques.

Purposive sampling according to Teddie and Yu (2007) is a non-probability sampling method that is chosen based on the characteristics of the population being surveyed. This sampling technique was used in this research because it allowed the researcher to make judgements about the experiences of young African females in KwaMashu Township, Durban. Palinkas et al. (2015) note that the purposive sampling method is used because of its ability to identify and select information-rich cases, making the most effective use of limited resources by selecting individual participants or groups who are of particular interest in relation to the phenomenon being studied.

The purposive sampling inclusion criteria for this study were race, gender and age. To be eligible for this study, the participants had to be young, African, black and female, and between the ages of 14 and 18. According to South Africa's National Youth Policy (2014) young people are defined as "people aged between 14 to 35 years", but for the purpose of this study young African females within the age group of 14 to 18 years were selected as participants. In addition, the participants had to be residing in KwaMashu, Durban.

The purposive sampling technique was chosen because the researcher wanted to ensure that she recruited participants with experience of the topic of interest. The samples for qualitative inquiry are generally assumed to be selected purposefully to yield cases that are "information rich" (Patton, 2001).

This study also used snowball sampling, which is defined by Vogt (1999, as cited in Gilbert, 2001) as "a technique for finding research subjects. One subject gives the researcher the name of another subject, who in turn provides the name of a third, and so on." Gilbert (2001) notes that snowball sampling involves identifying respondents who are then used to refer researchers on to other respondents. The advantage of using this sampling technique was that it enabled the researcher to reach a population that is hard to reach, that is, young African females who might be deprived, socially stigmatised and vulnerable (Gilbert, 2001). Snowball sampling was important because it helped produce the necessary sample size after a few participants were first identified using purposive sampling.

3.4 Data collection process

Data collection is a process of gathering material from all the appropriate sources to find answers to the research problem, test the hypothesis and evaluate the results (Tongco, 2007). The study collected data using semi-structured interviews. Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick (2008) argue that semi-structured interviews consist of numerous important questions which help to define the area to be explored, but also enable the interviewer or interviewee to deviate in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail. Flick, von Kardorff and Steinke (2004) note that in semi-structured interviews additional questions might be asked to gain greater clarity on certain concerns. Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick (2008) further note that the flexibility of this method, compared with structured interviews, facilitates the discovery and analysis of information that may be considered vital by the participants but which may not

previously have been considered valid or relevant by the researcher. Semi-structured interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis with ten participants. Only ten participants were interviewed in this way due to limited resources and time constraints. Samples in qualitative studies are usually small because the ambition is not to generalise the findings. In this regard, the number of participants in this study enables the production of outputs that can be used to make decisions.

The survey participants' responses were recorded and transcribed verbatim to provide an accurate picture of the respondent's viewpoints and thoughts on the factors that contribute to shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young African females in KwaMashu Township, Durban. These interviews were conducted at Isivananda Technical High School, which provided a convenient, safe meeting place to conduct interviews without disturbance. In circumstances in which the hall was being used or not available, and in cases in which the participants preferred to be interviewed at their houses, alternative arrangements were made to ensure the participants were interviewed in environments in which they were comfortable.

All participants who took part were asked to give their permission to being audio recorded and had to show this permission clearly by signing an informed consent form .In this regard, any further responses that were regarded as of importance and relevant in relation to the holding of the interviews were noted.

3.5 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used for this study. According to Maguire and Delahunt (2017), such analysis entails identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. One of the advantages of such analysis is that it constitutes a method rather than a methodology. In other words, thematic analysis is not tied to a theoretical perspective and is thus quite flexible. Maguire and Delahunt (2017) state that the main aim of thematic analysis is to identify themes, that is, patterns in data which are of interest; and use these themes to address the research under study. Accordingly, thematic analysis is not about just summarising the data; it is also about interpreting and making sense of the data collected, and should go beyond using the main interview questions as themes (Clarke and Braun, 2013, as cited in Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). In order to understand the factors that contribute to shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young African females

in KwaMashu Township, Durban, the study followed the five procedures outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006):

3.5.1 Familiarisation and immersion

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews as part of the data-collection process and the interviews were transcribed. After this, the researcher proceeded to check the data transcribed against the original recorded interviews and the notes written during the interviews. The transcripts were read numerous times so that the researcher became familiar with and clearly understood the data.

3.5.2 Inducing themes

The starting point is to use themes in interviews. These are then polished by identifying new patterns that arise during data collection. These themes were created by noticing and identifying the repetition of specific content within the data.

3.5.3 Coding
Relevant sections of the data collection were marked in order to obtain codes. This was done on electronic versions of the interview transcripts by highlighting the relevant text.

3.5.4 Elaboration
The data was explained by themes and sub-themes, thus allowing the researcher to make comparisons and produce correspondences among the themes.

3.5.5. Interpretation and checking

Gaps in the research under study were identified and efforts to repair these data were made by checking them and understanding the interviews against the information proposed by the theoretical framework, objectives, literature review and context.

3.6 Trustworthiness of the study

Qualitative research has long been regarded as "soft" science which lacks scientific rigour in its methodological approach compared with quantitative research (Cope, 2014). In this regard, quantitative research perspectives must have rigour and validity, while qualitative research

should display the properties of credibility and trustworthiness (Cope, 2014). Lincoln and Guba (1985, as cited in Cope, 2014) propose a number of criteria to evaluate the trustworthiness of qualitative research: credibility; dependability; confirmability; and transferability.

Polit and Beck (2012, cited in Cope, 2014, p. 89) define credibility as "the truth of the data or the participant views and the interpretation and representation of them by the researcher". They observe that research findings are credible when they convince and are believable to other readers, rather just the researcher him or herself. This means the researcher enhances credibility by describing his or her experiences and then verifying these research findings with participants (Cope, 2014). Once the shared human experience is recognised by the people who shared the same experience, the study will be considered credible (Cope, 2014). To ensure the credibility of findings for this study, relatives, friends, and family members were not interviewed and all participant-interview recordings were kept by the supervisor in a safe place under lock and key.

Another issue is that of dependability, which means "the constancy of the data over similar conditions" (Polit & Beck, 2012, as cited in Cope 2014: 89). For dependability to be attained, the researcher has to agree with the decision paths taken at each phase of the research process and the descriptions and findings should be similar participants in similar conditions (Koch, 2006, as cited in Cope, 2014). To maintain dependability in this research study, an inquiry audit was implemented and the themes that emerged were checked by the supervisor.

Cope (2014: 89) states that, confirmability is the "researcher's ability to demonstrate that the data represent the participants' responses and not the researcher's biases or viewpoints". To ensure confirmability of research findings, the researcher described her experiences as a researcher and verified the findings with the participants. The researcher provided an audit trail detailing the stages of data analysis undertaken to ensure rational decisions were made to ensure the findings accurately showed the participants' responses (Shenstone, 2004).

According to Cope (2014: 89) transferability refers to "findings that can be applied to other settings or groups". For this study to be transferable, it had to make sure the results had meaning to individuals who were not directly involved in the study and that the readers of the study could associate the results with their own experiences. Shenstone (2004) argues that when conducting qualitative research, the researcher should demonstrate that his or her findings are applicable to other contexts, situations or populations under study.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Silverman (2009) states that when conducting research, it is important to take note of research ethics and the challenges to these. Thus, universities and research institutions tend to go the extra mile to protect the dignity and safety of participant. Ethical clearance to conduct this research study was obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, (see Appendix A). Permission was obtained from the Provincial Department of Education to conduct research in the area (see Appendix B); and young African females were asked permission to be enrolled as participants in the research study and to indicate their consent by signing an informed-consent form with an ethics approval number. All participants were asked for permission to allow or disallow the use of an audio recorder during semi-structured interviews, and nobody chose to disallow this.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants. This informed consent specified that their participation in the research study was totally voluntary and that no monetary compensation would be given. If there were any questions that the participants did not understand they had a right to ask further questions; and where clarification was required, it was provided. Participants were also made aware that they could withdraw their participation any time they wanted during the course of the study.

3.7.1 Confidentiality, privacy and no harm to participants

Steps were taken to ensure that all participants who took part in the study enjoyed the protection of confidentiality and privacy. Confidentiality. According to Baines and Taylor (2013) refers to "the specific steps researchers implement to keep information about participations unknown to others, to the extent possible". The researcher ensured that pseudonyms were used instead of the participants real names in all documents to protect them from harm. During data collection, participants were interviewed in safe places where other people could not see or hear them. For their privacy, the participants' data was held on electronic document files protected with a password and safely stored under the protection of the supervisor.

3.8 Limitations
The limitations of this study include the characteristics of the participants, all of whom lived in KwaMashu Township area, Durban, the residents of which generally hail from a single

racially, economically and socially defined class. In this regard, it should be noted that the use of a qualitative approach can provide depth, but not the breadth offered by a quantitative approach.

The participants of this study were young African Zulu-speaking female pupils from KwaMashu Township. Therefore, the interviews were conducted in isiZulu, which is also the home language of the researcher. In this regard, and in order to ensure that meaning was not lost in translation, the researcher sought clarity and further explanation of any words that were not understood instead of making assumptions about the meaning. This helped to ensure there was clear communication between the participants and the researcher.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter looked at the study area in which the research was conducted, which is KwaMashu Township in Durban. It noted that the research design is a crucial aspect of a study since it provides the rationale. In this case, qualitative-research methods of data collection techniques and interpretation were adopted. The use of these research methods is justified and explained. The chapter also focused on the trustworthiness of the study and how it took ethical considerations into account. Lastly, it looked at the limitations of the study and how these were addressed.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to review the factors that contribute to shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young African females in KwaMashu Township, Durban. Research data was collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews and focus groups with young African females between the ages of 15 and 17. Ethical approval for this study was granted by the Department of Basic Education (Ref.: 2/4/8/1744) and the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Protocol approval reference HSS/1497/018M). This chapter intends to present and analyse the findings from the in-depth interviews and focus groups. It provides a demographic profile of the participants; discusses the findings from the study according to the themes that arose from the interviews; and outlines the themes in table form and discusses them. The sample for this study is ten young female Africans in grade 11.

4.2 Demographic profile of participants

The demographic characteristics of the participants are shown in Table 4.1 below. All of the participants in this study showed that they were matric pupils living in Inanda, Ntuzuma and KwaMashu Township. This is often referred to at the INK region, a combination of the three townships. The participants were ten young black females who came from different households. Four participants confirmed that they were living with a single parent, in each case, their mother. Only two of the participants reported they were living with both their mother and father, as well as one or more siblings – what is commonly referred to as a nuclear family. The remaining four participants lived with grandparents, siblings and close relatives, with the fathers absent. The home language of all the participants was isiZulu and the sample was drawn from one school, Sivananda High School, in KwaMashu, Durban.

Indepth interview number	Age	Student grade	Gender	Race	Family structure	Household head gender
1	16	11	Female	Black	Grandparents & relatives	Male and Female
2	16	11	Female	Black	Single parents	Female
3	16	11	Female	Black	Nuclear family	Male and Female
4	17	11	Female	Black	Single parents	Female

5	15	11	Female	Black	Grandparents & relatives	Female
6	16	11	Female	Black	Single parents	Female
7	16	11	Female	Black	Single parents	Female
8	17	11	Female	Black	Grandparents & relatives	Female
9	16	11	Female	Black	Grandparents & relatives	Male and Female
10	16	11	Female	Black	Nuclear family	Male and Female

Table 4.1 shows that most student participants were very interested in pursuing career goals which are regarded as masculine careers, that is in mathematical and science-related fields, such as electronics, computer science and dentistry. All participants who stated that they came from single parent family households said these households were headed by women. A majority of the fathers were absent from their children's lives, which is an experience that has influenced young black females in their choice of career goals and aspirations. Research studies have found that females with no or minimal contact with a father figure are at greater risk of experiencing a decline in cognitive development, as well as unsatisfactory academic performance at school. (Krohn & Bogan, 2001: 149).

Absent fathers are those who have little to no regular contact or interactions with their children. As a result, these men do not play a notable or effective role in the development of their children. Absence can present itself in different forms, all of which have an effect on females to different degrees. The separation of a nuclear family unit, a deceased father and abandonment are all forms of absence that can affect the development of young females; their perceptions of men; and their academic performance. The presence of a father in a girl child's life has an important role to play in her achievement in mathematics (Adams & Milner, 1991. Schrepf, 1984).

Four of the ten participants in this study have a father figure in their lives, of whom two have pursued a career involving maths and science. The remaining six participants are all without present, active father figures, yet went on to perform well in mathematics and science subjects. This could suggest that young, black females can perform academically notwithstanding the absence/presence of a father figure and the impact of this on family structures. In this regard,

the will to achieve and the need to escape adversity, as well as a lived reality permeated by hardship, may equip black women with the attributes of resilience at a tender age.

4.3 Generating meaning

In seeking to make sense of the data, I immersed myself in the information to identify themes and the connections between them, thus identifying sub-themes. To find, analyse and report on the emerging themes and patterns, I used thematic analysis as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Overarching themes	*Theme 1: Contributors shaping goals, aspirations and resilience* *Theme 2: Understanding one's own goals*
Research question 1: • What is the influence of culture and gender in shaping goals, aspirations and resilience? • What is the influence of family structure in shaping goals, aspirations and resilience? • What is the influence of the education system in shaping goals?	*Theme 3: Influence of culture and gender in shaping goals and aspirations* *Theme 4: Influence of family structure in shaping goals and aspirations* *Theme 5: Influence of the education system in shaping goals and aspirations* *Theme 6: Role models as an influence in shaping goals and aspirations*
Research question 2: What ways can be found to encourage and inspire young black women in the township?	*Theme 7: Intervention strategies to emancipate young black women in township areas.*
Research question 3: What role does the state and the Department of Education play in shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young black women in the township through their interactions with black youth in schools?	*Theme 8: Ways of encouraging and inspiring young African women within a township setting.*

Research question 4: In what ways can the advancement and emancipation of young African women be achieved in a township setting?	*Theme 9: Efforts to emancipate young black women through rethinking cultural norms, and the collaboration of school, home and state*

4.4 Thematic presentation of the findings

4.4.1 Contributory factors shaping goals, aspirations and resilience

Participants expressed a range of views on what influenced or contributed to their career goals and what they aspired to be, with some of them expressing uncertainty about the factors that had contributed to the shaping of their career goals. During the interviews, participants said that the support and influence of their families and school teachers, as well as their personal motives had contributed to the shaping of their career goals, aspirations and resilience. At the same time, other factors were described that could impede young black females in their efforts to achieve their goals, such as, for example, gang violence, which resulted in one of the respondents missing some school days.

This study's presentation of the participants' descriptions of the factors that influenced how they set their goals and aspirations offers an empathetic view of their situation and their progress in setting and achieving these goals. Accordingly, a number of verbatim extracts on the factors identified by the participants as contributing to shaping their goals, aspirations and resilience are included below.

One participant was certain about the factors that had contributed to shaping her goals, aspirations and resilience:

> I think definitely family support and influence, school teachers and planning as myself. (Participant 1, Sivananda High School)

Family plays an important role in shaping aspirations. In this regard, the particular conduct of family members can have a crucial bearing. This is in line with Shumba and Naong (2012) who

observe that mothers tend to have a greater influence on shaping their daughters' aspirations and goals and instilling resilience than fathers, because mothers provide support that eases children's fears about their careers. This finding resonates with self-determination theory, which states that people both want to self-determine (decide what to do) and self-actualise (decide what they what to become). In this context, the family should be solid as a construct with the potential to help realise the aspirations of its members. Hence, when government and other practitioners formulate policies and craft laws to help young African females from disadvantaged backgrounds, like those from KwaMashu Township, Durban, they must take account of the importance of family in shaping aspirations.

Reflecting on the experiences of the respondents, it is evident that the connection between policy and practice is weak in relation to family or parental involvement in the education of children and how they are reared. The South African Schools Act of 1996 identifies parents as a key contributor to their children's development. The Act advocates for the active involvement of parents in their children's lives as families are considered the primary educators of children before they enter schooling (Heystek, 1999).

Practitioners should be aware of the importance of family in shaping children's aspirations. Parental involvement plays a critical role in the development of a child's character; the adoption of good and bad habits; and the traits the child learns and takes forward into their schooling career, shaping and channelling their thoughts and their decisions on who or what they aspires to become and how they envision their future self. The principles promoted by the South African Schools Act of 1998 can therefore reinforce the impact and role of family in moulding and producing youth with brighter future prospects. In this regard, before the process of shaping aspirations has begun, the influence of the family should already have contributed to building an individual who is curious; strives for excellence; constantly seeks to improve themselves and their performance; is disciplined; and is ready to challenge themselves.

Another participant was sure about what had shaped her career goals, aspirations and resilience. She said that she knew she wanted to become a psychologist after watching one of her role model's acting as one on her favourite television show, *Generations*. She said:

It is by identifying a role model for myself that I can look up to and follow in her footsteps. Like my role model was a character on a show called *Generations*. She was a psychologist and I was like, "wow, that's me in the future". (Participant 2, Sivananda High School)

Another participant identified a different influence:

The library, it is a place where I get knowledge, a place where my mind is opened up to more things and shows me that there is more out there than what I see and experience every day. The library and the information I discover makes me realise that the world is big and I can dream bigger. My background also helps me shape my goals. I don't come from a good background, so in order for me to lift my family out of poverty, I know that I have to work towards careers that are harder so that I earn a lot of money to get my family out of poverty, like engineering. The knowledge I've been exposed to at school also contributes to it. You learn a lot at school. You learn what you like and don't like. My community is also a factor in that they expect a lot from me. So, I have a high standard to live up to. Even other children's parents add more pressure on me by comparing their children to me. So, I always have to do my best so I can be a good example to everyone. (Participant 3, Sivananda High School)

This participant emphasises how important the library is to her as a place where she acquires knowledge about life beyond her everyday experiences, expanding her horizons and informing her career aspirations. This function of libraries indicates how multiple experiences and realities may be derived in everyday life from a range of pursuits. The presence of adequately equipped libraries in primary and secondary institutions, particularly in schools in rural and township areas, is important. A library, as knowledge repository and resource, can equip pupils from all walks of life with a wealth of knowledge and information on an equal basis. The lived experience of participant 3, who described how a school library enabled her to broaden her sense of the possibilities of what she could achieve, is supported in the literature. Morgan (1929) notes that school libraries promote the development of a sense of spiritual and intellectual adventure among children.

In this context, the function of a school library may be viewed as going beyond merely developing the intellectual ability of pupils. It helps individuals to foster a sense of their intrinsic value. For an individual living in the township setting, the experience of being in a library environment entails acquiring exposure to knowledge and information that could potentially change the trajectory of their lives. It also entails gaining a range of skills, including the capacity to conduct research, solve problems and work autonomously. This improves opportunities for disadvantaged pupils in the township environment to pursue future goals such

a tertiary academic career, as well as providing valuable skills that may prove an asset to potential future employers. In this regard, participant 3 mentions her poor background – she does not want to roll back or regress into poverty. To counteracts that regression, she aspires to do engineering.

Clearly, education offers both a source of hope for a better future and a toolkit for navigating adversity. Participant 3 mentions that she comes from a poor background, and that she doesn't want to regress into poverty. She also notes her desire to prevent her family from regressing into poverty – and this may be interpreted as an indicator of her drive to take agency – by planning ahead for a career that will ensure resilience should she and her family face future adversity. In this context, it is as a result of being in the schooling system that she is able to set goals that are beyond her immediate aspirations. Education has enabled her to aspire to pursue engineering as a tool to fulfilling the greater goal of lifting her family out of poverty. This suggests that education not only has a positive impact in shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young black girls in township areas, but also provides a tool for navigating transitional pathways and fostering improved resilience

Schools are a repository of abstract knowledge and shared, lived experiences – pupils learn what they want and don't want, and they learn from others. Schools have been shown to shape goals and aspirations through the process of learning. After all, by their nature, schools are hubs of learning. The participants' reflections also suggest that the school environment is a place where one's character is built. At school, they can foster vital traits and skills such as independence; problem-solving; critical thinking; time-management; learning how to prioritise; and choosing right from wrong in the near future, as well as in relation to the bigger goals that lie ahead. When home life fails to provide an environment that encourages productivity or supports constructive or developmental activities, the school offers a space for student development. In this regard, the evidence has shown that a safe, supportive schooling environment can mitigate the impacts of risk in other areas, protecting and promoting resilience among pupils (Henderson 2012)

Townships are predominantly characterised by high levels of poverty and illegal activity; high levels of unemployment among parents of pupils in local schools; and under-resourced schools with poor facilities and overcrowded classes (Mampane & Bouwer, 2011). Against this background, schools provide a crucial proving ground for individual development. At school,

most of the individual pupil's time is spent learning survival skills and strategies, and coping and growth strategies, from peers who come from similar or different backgrounds. The daily interactions of the high school pupils allow this group of vulnerable youth to form a network for sharing resources; providing support; and sharing knowledge, allowing them become increasingly self-sufficient and resourceful.

All the young black female pupils in this study said that many of their goals and aspirations and ideas of resilience had been shaped in opposition to family and societal pressures. For example, some of their academic and career aspirations related to fields and professions regarded as masculine because they are male-dominated. In this regard, some of the participants were considering becoming, for example, computer scientists, engineers or surgeons, etc. The discussions around the factors that had shaped their goals, aspirations and resilience provided the pupils with an opportunity to reflect and consider how their career plans had been constructed under the influence of role models, family and other agents.

In this context, it is noteworthy that respondents who had been told that the careers to which they aspired were in male-dominated industries, and had been discouraged from pursuing them as a result, indicated that this pressure had produced resistance. These young black female pupils said that such opposition to their aspirations had only further motivated them to pursue these careers and disprove the social norms to which their families and the local community subscribed. In addition, in the absence of validation among their families and community, these young women drew their determination to continue pursuing their desired careers from external role models.

These positive role models, to whom the young black females had been exposed via television or other media, or at career expos and on career development platforms, appeared to embody the possibility of success beyond adversity, equipping the pupils with the capacity to think beyond immediate societal and structural barriers. Such responses are in line with self-determination theory, which speaks to the exploration of an individual's intrinsic growth patterns and natural psychological needs as the foundation of self-motivation and personality development, and to the conditions that support and promote this positive process (Harter, 1978; and White, 1963).

It should also be noted that most of pupils who participated in this study aligned their career goals and aspirations towards professions which they felt would allow them to command a high salary, as well as offering the opportunity to give back to their community – for example, as a psychologist, a surgeon or a psychiatrist.

4.4.2 Understanding one's own goals

When the participants were asked to describe their goals, most described a mixture of short- and long-term goals. Most said their short-term goal was to pass matric because this would open more opportunities for them to further their studies at universities or Technikons, and pursue their career choices. Most participants believed that passing matric was very important in order for them to achieve their goals and aspirations. For example:

> Well, my short-term goals are that I want to pass matric with excellent results, so that I can get accepted into institutions of higher education of my choice. I want to study at UKZN, I want to be a psychiatrist and that is my long-term goal. (Participant 2, Sivananda High School)

Passing matric was perceived by the respondents as a gateway to, or a key component in, accessing a reputable higher education institution and finally having access to their dream career. Passing matric and entering tertiary education institutions also represents an important achievement for these pupils because it would indicate they had finally accessed institutions attended by pupils who may be deemed more fortunate, having attended model-C schools and having had access to quality education. For these township pupils, access to tertiary institutions means competing on a level playing field that does not discriminate on the basis of family background, financial status and the standards of past schooling.

> My goals are to finish school and to pass matric with flying colours. I would also really love to be part of an organisation as a short-term goal ……My goal is to also inspire the girls around me at home to go to school and make something of themselves instead of them making fun of me for loving school so much. Here at school, electronics is not offered as a subject, but I would like to sharpen my skills of being good with fixing electronics and gadgets without being taught. No one teaches me and everything I know with fixing appliances has been self-taught. So, I would like to improve that skill of mine. My goal is to be able to develop resilience when things get hard as well as to learn more respect for adults and people that are younger than me. My goal is to learn to be patient. (Participant 3, Sivananda High School)

Participant 3 aspires to be part of an organisation that can help her achieve her goals and aspires of becoming a specialist in electronics, which is a male dominated field. She goes on to affirm that girls are role models (or want to be) in their communities. She then indicates that she is learning things by herself and wants to learn respect for both those who are younger than her and adults, including by becoming more patient. Patience also will help her in achieving her long-term goals and aspirations. Indeed, without patience she will not be able to achieve her goals since there is much to learn and experience. However, other participants indicated that they had goals that were not intrinsically driven; and were rather motivated by their need to make their parents happy.

> My main goal is to go to Witwatersrand School of Medicine to study dentistry in Johannesburg. I want to make my parents proud. (Participant 4).

Jodl *et al*. (2001: 1,248) argues that parents are important role players in shaping young black females' goals and aspirations since they exert pressure inadvertently and unintentionally. For example, parents may encourage their child to become a surgeon or medical practitioner by watching a particular television show. Thus, children's self-perceptions and task values are impacted, and they start believing what they have been told by their parents (Jodl *et al*., 2001: 1,248).

4.4.3 Influence of culture and gender in shaping goals and aspirations

The impact of culture has persisted through generations, continuing to place women in inferior or subordinate positions, rather than emancipating them. More than half of the ten participants interviewed indicated culture as a contributing factor towards shaping their goals and aspirations.

Farinde (2012) notes that young black women from strong cultural backgrounds indicate that they understand that a woman's role entails being a housewife whose main responsibility is to bear children and take care of family and the needs of their husbands. Indeed, gender and cultural background are viewed as interconnected – if an individual is female and comes from a strong cultural background, their family is likely to encourage them to pursue traditional women's professions such as nursing and teaching rather than pure science- and mathematics-related careers such as engineering, architecture and mechanics.

In this study, participants also indicated that they believed that an individual's gender and cultural background plays a role in shaping their goals and aspirations:

> As my grandmother has raised me, she has played a big role in shaping the person I have become. I have seen her raise me and take care of me and my cousins. She is a strong woman and without her, we would be nowhere. She always shares stories of how hard women have it in this world. She always tells us that the problem is that women want to become men now, women want to do everything that men are doing and that's not how things were meant to be because, culturally, men have to be the heads, they are supposed to do the hard jobs. Not women. There are roles that only women could do, sacred jobs like midwives who bring children into this world. She inspired me to want to become a nurse. (Participant 8)

Participant 8 stated that her grandmother thinks that women want to be men now and want to compete with men in fields traditionally reserved for men. In this respect, the grandmother's advice promotes gender stereotypes and an idea of masculinity that sees men as the providers and as superior to women. In other words, the participant's grandmother wants her to conform to traditional gender stereotypes which have seen women being classified as "weak" and "soft" and thus best equipped to engage in professions like nursing that require empathy.

Personally, I think the participant should be allowed to pursue a career of her choice regardless of the gender stereotypes attached to professions and that she should accordingly set an example to other young black females at her school and community. This personal view reflects intersectionality theory which argues that women's oppression is captured by analysing gender and other factors like social equity and race together. It recognises that there are various power structures that exist and that women have to navigate their way through these, which can make it hard for them to achieve their goals and aspirations (Adewunmi, 2014, p. 1).

> Yeah, because when I think of it, my family does not want me to travel and explore opportunities outside of Durban after I finish school. They fear for my safety and well-being because I'm a girl. They think I'm weak because I'm a girl and they think I won't cope for the same reason. Those are the kinds of things they are telling me. They discourage me from going overseas and all those things. (Participant 2)

Participant 2's assertion is supported by Farinde (2012) who argues that cognitive and social-skills development among young African-American female pupils from two-parent family households equips them with stronger aspirations and the probability of better outcomes compared with their peers from single-headed families. When both parents are involved in their child's life, they pool their resources to help improve that life.

For participant 2, her situation is exacerbated by family fears that, since she is a female, she will be unable to cope in an alien environment – and so her drive to explore and seek opportunities outside Durban where she stays is heavily criticised. Intersectionality theory explains the obstacles that she faces in the context of how patriarchal society discriminates against young black women though negative characterisations of their mental and physical capabilities (Smith, 2013).

Other pupils focused less on broad issues of gender and culture and more on how local pressures had shaped their view of their goals and aspirations.

> I don't believe that it is harder to achieve my goals because of my race and gender, but I can say that it can be hard to achieve my goals because of where I live because there aren't many like-minded people like me who really enjoy school. (Participant 1)

There is some assertiveness here – boldness akin to confidence – that is nevertheless hampered or undermined by a paucity of like-minded people. The participant's belief and confidence may be viewed as an example of resilience theory which states that there are positive, contextual "promotive" factors which operate in opposition to risk factors to overcome negative responses such as low self-esteem and self-efficacy (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005). Participant 1's attitude and thinking also resonate with aspiration adaptation theory which states that humans have an aspiration level despite the difficulties they may face. For Selten (2001), if a particular choice promises to enable realisation of the aspiration, it is made without an extensive search for an optimal strategy. For example:

> I don't think so. It's just passion that pushed me in that direction and the subjects that I am good at, at school. I didn't consider my gender, I just thought of something I saw myself in, still doing in the long term as well. (Participant 4)

In general, the views expressed by the young black female pupils indicated gender and culture as among the main factors that influenced their career goals and aspirations. In this regard, the Center for Gender in Organizations (2015) notes that few women make it into leadership positions because, as they grow up, they are socialised into certain gender roles and inducted in particular societal expectations, such as that, for example, men are leaders while women are caregivers. This message is spread through the media and women further tend to lack role

models who contravene generally accepted gender stereotypes. This view is supported by intersectionality theory which argues that women are oppressed as a result of a number of different power structures interconnected in relation to how ideas of gender, class, race and sexuality can discriminate against certain groups, in particular "black women" (Smooth, 2010). For example, participant 2 said:

> At home and around my area when I talk about my goal of wanting to be a psychiatrist, you can hear that black people don't believe in talking about their problems firstly, and even worse, they don't believe in counselling. On top of that, they don't believe in taking out money to pay someone to help them manage their challenges. So as a result, from the area that I live in, I am discouraged from the career I wish to go into. (Participant 2)

Participant 3 said that culture had impacted her career goals and aspiration as she had to spend most of her time at home doing chores and undertaking other household responsibilities, since her family believed that, one day, she would get married, have children and take care of her husband. Hence, the family did not see any reason for educating her. She said:

> Yes, because as a girl, you are put under a lot of pressure to be domesticated first before sharpening your skills and the things that could take you further in life. It's like some parents train their girls more to be wives than they train their girls on how to become successful. I think that's the danger of cultural beliefs. Why must I aspire to marry before I can aspire to make something of myself? (Participant 3)

This participant indicates that she has adopted a rebellious position and expresses her unwillingness to adapt to societal expectations that young black females should behave and act in certain ways. This is radical thinking as it contradicts and challenges the patriarchal idea that women should be socialised and raised to become wives rather than pursue career goals and their own aspirations. However, this participant's position is supported by the adoption of Sustainable Development Goal 5 which specifically addresses issues of gender equality and women's empowerment (Fukuda-Parr, 2016). This goal supports young women in accessing opportunities such as education, especially in communities in which women have suffered discrimination, violence or inequalities.

The participants were asked if being young black and female made it harder for them to pursue their goals and aspirations. In response, most participants noted interconnections between culture, role models and gender as factors influencing how they determined their goals and

aspirations. This finding accords with Dass-Brailsford's (2005) analysis of what he calls "kinship bonds" – the ties that create the unique cultural identity of African communities. In this context, young black female pupils in KwaMashu township are socialised to identify with specific cultural values which are confirmed by their parents and/or their cultural group, thereby shaping their career identities. For example:

> I would say it [culture] plays a large part because, in my home, a girl is not allowed to have sexual intercourse until marriage. It is completely frowned upon. You go through virginity testing and there are traditional ceremonies that can't be done for you that are important if you are no longer a virgin like *Umemulo* or *Umhlonyane*. I'm not complaining, but this teaches you as a girl to hold yourself up to high regard. (Participant 4)

Personally, I think cultural practices such as virginity testing should be stopped because they sexualise young girls and women. It makes them seem as if they are being preserved for men and do not have control over their bodies, which are seen merely as objects to pleasure men. However, I think these cultural practices can have their advantages in that they may discourage young female pupils from engaging in premarital sex in an effort to preserve and respect their culture.

However, such cultural practices can also encourage young black female pupils who are no longer virgins to feel as if they have already failed in life, which may adversely affect their focus on their career goals and limit their aspirations. The potentially adverse impacts of culturally defined gender roles also seems evident in participant 2's response on this issue:

> In an example where if a mother is the only one taking care of a family and maybe she gets sick, it is expected that a girl child steps in. She might also have to leave school and take care of the mother and manage the whole household. That is still happening till now. I see it with my peers, and they lose valuable time at school because of these hard circumstances. (Participant 2)

However, this participant also identifies some benefits for herself in gender stereotyping, "because psychiatrist is an industry that is dominated by females, so my gender encourages me to go for my goal in this situation". The participant believes her gender positively influences her career goals because her area of interest is female-dominated. She further notes that race does not have any impact in relation to her choice. In relation to the issue of race another participant said:

Yes, but I feel that for myself, in my mind I'm not my age. I feel that I'm more mature than my age, so it frustrates me when I'm not being taken seriously because I'm young and a girl. I don't think my race has an effect that much right now because I'm constantly surrounded by other black people most of my life at home and school, so I haven't had that much experience with other races. (Participant 4)

These views stand in contrast to the situation in the US, where, Milan-Tyner (2018) notes, race is one of the main obstacles for young black women, who must adopt a double consciousness that embraces both their inner, black world and the outer, white one; and a bicultural approach that enables them to inhabit both the African-American and European-American worlds. Similar patterns may be seen in South Africa as a result of historical injustices. For example, there is a huge social difference between young black females and young white females, with the latter having belonged to a racial group that has dominated many influential positions and retains relatively vast privileges and opportunities (Robinson and Diale, 2017).

4.4.4 Influence of family structure in shaping goals and aspirations

The survey participants indicated that family structure had affected them and shaped their goals and aspirations in a number of ways. For example, one participant said:

At home, I feel that the level of support is on and off. At home, I live with my mother, my stepfather and two younger siblings. Both my parents are unemployed. They both lost their jobs in 2014. My father has been very stressed since this has happened. Unfortunately, he takes this stress out on my mother, then my mother takes that stress out onto me. The environment at home is very tense and hostile. My stepsister from my stepfather's side and I try to be close, my stepfather tried to drive a wedge in between us every time. It's as if they don't want us to be happy. Being at home disturbs me. My biological father told me that he has enough kids to worry about, he doesn't need me to come into his life and add more stress to worry about. He doesn't need me to add to that. (Participant 1)

Participant 1 presents as an example of how family can play a negative, disruptive role in shaping aspirations. The role of the father here is questionable. He is not providing a positive father figure or productive counsel. Participant 1 therefore lacks the support and necessary guidance required for her to shape her goals and aspirations. The hostility created by her parents may discourage her from seeking advice from them as her elders – and, as a result, she may seek advice from people who not only lack the necessary knowledge and experience, but who may also not have her best interests at heart. The case of participant 1 is particular troubling

since both her parents are reported to have been people who took up science subjects earlier in their lives – which means they are aware of the dedication and discipline required to excel in these subjects. Participant 1 feels abandoned by her parents, who make her feel worthless even as she tries hard to do better and be the best possible version of herself. In this context, she feels that uniting with her step-sister makes her worth more. Such experiences are likely to play back and disturb the pupil when she is in class, disrupting her productivity. These home experiences may also cause lifelong trauma that will affect her when she is older and trying to create bonds and relationships with other people outside her immediate family.

Instead of providing a nurturing environment that serves as an extension of the positive values instilled at school and enables learning, participant 1's home offers an experience of fairly unremitting hostility. By contrast, participant 3 described her family as "very supportive indeed":

> I couldn't ask for anything more. They give me all the support I need and go the extra mile. My family isn't too cultural in their approach to me. At home, they make me do chores that are in line with the person I'm going to become in the future. (Participant 3)

Young African females who grow up with both parents are more likely to receive effective emotional and financial support since two parents have more time and resources than one. In this regard, Li and Kerpelman (2007) state the relationship between young black females and their parents plays a crucial role in their emotional and self-development. When the family is supportive it helps the young, black daughters to construct career goals and aspirations and develop resilience.

In this regard, the encouragement and support of mothers can be particularly influential:

> At home, mother is sick, and bed ridden. She is the only adult in the house to take care of us. However, because she is always in bed lying down with no energy, she has now become the child that needs to be taken care of. My brother is in university right now and he is studying accounting. My mother is always telling me to look to my brother as a good example – that I must also focus on getting an education. She always tells us that maybe when she was young and had she have focused on her education, she would have been able to get the family out of poverty. She always tells us to focus on getting an education so that we do not become a nothing like her. She always tells us that we are our family's only hope. (Participant 7)

The advice given by the mother is important and play a huge role in influencing the young female participant to behave well and look up to her brother as a good example and get educated. The mother regrets not getting a proper education herself as this could have helped her bring the family out of poverty. The mother regards education as a bridge that can reduces poverty gap.

The pressure to succeed can be quite strong, as another participant noted:

> It's a bit intense. My mother regards herself as a failure because, of all her siblings, she is the one that is least successful. Most of her side of the family went to school and took hard degrees. Two of her siblings are doctors, their families are thriving and their children seem to be doing well too. Their lives are so good. When the time came to choose my subjects at grade 9, she kept saying I must study so I can be like them. I must be a doctor too so that I can lift up my family's name. I've never been good in maths but the pressure made me choose it as a subject. I'm getting better now at it. I can see that I may actually be able to become a doctor so that she can finally be proud of me as her daughter. (Participant 10, Sivananda High School)

Participant 10 is greatly influenced by the educational and career outcomes of her close family members, especially on the maternal side, who are professionals with degrees in subjects such as medicine and who have better living standards because they have good jobs. Research in South Africa has shown that, of all the factors that have been identified influencing young female pupils in theirs career choices and aspirations, family, at 30.83%, is the greatest (Benner, Boyle and Sadler, 2016). For participant 10, the example of family has equipped her with the tenacity to take maths as a subject, despite its difficulty, in pursuit of her goal of becoming a doctor.

4.4.5 Influence of the education system in shaping goals and aspirations

The evidence from this study indicates that the school attended plays a role in shaping young black female pupils' goals and aspirations. In addition, participants indicated that the South African education system itself also contributed significantly in shaping their goals.

Participants were asked if they thought the government was active enough in township schools. One responded:

No, because in township schools, families pay school fees, yet our facilities are still so bad. The toilets are always in a terrible condition since I got to this school. We are still having to share textbooks and it becomes hard when we have tests and one person has to go home with the book and I'm left stranded to study without the textbook that should be helping me to study and prepare for the test. The book also has missing pages and we are always reporting this, but the situation is the same. The schools that are not in the townships are much better resourced as compared to our government schools in the townships. (Participant 2)

Another participant said that the South African education system had not done justice to those residing in black townships because the quality of education on offer in schools in these areas was not equal to that offered by private schools, which are mostly white-dominated. In this regard, inadequate infrastructure and resources can shape aspirations and the achievement of goals among pupils in township schools. Participants in this study reported that they only had a single computer lab, which was only made available for use by pupils studying information-technology (IT) related subjects. As a result, the rest of the school's student population either had little or no knowledge of computers. The lack of IT skills may prevent them from adapting effectively at higher education institutions and damage the employability of pupils leaving school to enter the work force or become entrepreneurs. The relative lack of computers also limits the number of pupils likely to gravitate to IT-related jobs, further reducing the number of pupils from townships likely to choose STEM-related careers. In this regard, notwithstanding the many career days and motivational talks that may be held to educate and encourage pupils, the lack of adequate infrastructure and resources can clearly hinders individual development. As one participant noted:

I've personally given up on the quality of education in government schools. White schools are so much better. Our schools in township areas have only two sport codes in this school. We only have netball and soccer whereas white schools have so many other activities and that is really helpful because it accommodates for all kinds of students. Some students here in our school could be chess masters. But we will never know because they have never been exposed to it at school. At white schools they probably even have proper coaches. We don't. As students we have different talents. Mine is leadership, for another person it is sport, debate or is an excellent writer. We don't have people to come to our schools to help groom those talents. So yes, I'm schooling at a government school but…aaah….it is because I'm forced to. I feel like students are at a great disadvantage (Participant 1)

This response indicates that the education system is viewed as a critical determinant in shaping the goals and aspirations of young black females. However, in this regard, it is worth noting

that the importance and the role of schools in the development of children tended to be treated with greater disregard by unemployed parents, according to the participants' responses.

Notwithstanding, the negative comments on the education system noted above, there was also some positive feedback on the government's role in shaping young black females' goals at school:

> They have provided us with books and sometimes they bring speakers to our schools to speak to us about healthy eating, how to prevent pregnancy and how to protect yourself from HIV/AIDS. (Participant 4)

In addition, the benefits of a shared learning environment were highlighted:

> When you're sitting at home and you hire a tutor to teach you, it's different than when you're in a schooling environment where you are exposed to so many people with so many different ideas. You get inspired to push harder from watching other students as well, then you start setting bigger goals. (Participant 2)

The benefits of school were also identified as extending beyond the shared learning experience to the general importance of some of the subjects taught in relation to personal development:

> Well, I can say the school has helped me a lot. The subject we do called Life Orientation. LO is the subject of life. It helps to manage the emotional side of who you are. The teachers have also played a role in opening my eyes. If I wasn't exposed to education, I wouldn't know that I could make a successful career out of the self-taught skill I've learnt of fixing appliances and electronics. (Participant 3)

Participant 4 said: "The teachers provide inspiration when they can. The things we are taught in Life Orientation also open our eyes. So far that's it."

Notwithstanding the negative coda to the last comment, these views show that, in general, the participants believe and trust in South Africa's education system. For example, one respondent indicates that Life Orientation helped her to learn about issues she would have not known about if she had not gone to school.

In relation to the pedagogic inputs at school, good teachers positively inspire pupils to do better in their studies, which can help them to forge stronger career goals and aspirations. Such teacher also make it easier for female pupils to seek and/or acquire relevant information about

the goals that they may want to pursue after high school. The other side of the coin is that bad teachers can act as a disincentive to learning and impede the growth of the self-confidence that is necessary to develop strong career goals and aspirations:

> You know, sometimes maybe when we think about the education system, we think about the things we learn when we are sitting in the class only. But maybe we should also look at the teachers, how teachers behave and what teachers say to us. Sometimes teachers say very mean things to us as students by calling us "*domoroza*" which means "you retard". A few teachers here at school say that word to students. When a teacher says that to you, it affects your self-confidence, you are now embarrassed, and you can't focus anymore because the whole class laughed at you. (Participant 9, Sivananda High School)

The frustration can extend beyond the behaviour of the teachers in the pastoral context, to their actual teaching methods:

> My long-term goals are to pass matric, pass my studies in university and to get a driver's licence soon, as well as to be a surgeon because I'm in the science field. My medium-term goals are that I want to change schools and I want to leave home maybe next year. I've told myself that I will repeat grade 11 because I feel that this year has already been a waste. The way we learn here at school doesn't satisfy me. I just want to start from scratch. (Participant 1)

Participant 1 indicates great dissatisfaction with how her school is managed and its teaching. She feels the education she is receiving is not preparing her to enter university. Her dissatisfaction with the school and its pedagogy stems from a fear that, in her drive to become a surgeon, she may not be able perform at the same level as pupils who come from model-C schools with properly equipped science laboratories. In addition, she is concerned by an apparent lack of teacher involvement and engagement in the success of their students.

Participant 1 aspires to become a surgeon and wants to change school so that she can learn at a better one with better educational resources, which would help her to make her dream come true. Her current school caters to a historically disadvantaged community. In this regard, intersectionality theory supports her view by proposing that gender and class are interconnected and operate simultaneously to produce experiences of marginalisation (Smooth 2010, 12). Participant 1 thinks she has not learned much compared with her peers in other schools in medium density areas, hence her expressed desire to restart the year again from scratch.

This participant's thinking is also aligned with aspiration adaption theory, which states that humans forge aspirations despite the odds they may face (Rosenfeld and Kraus, 2011). The strength of participant 1's aspirations are indicated by her decision to repeat her grade in order to attain her goals. On one hand, she is resigned and resentful, on the other she continues to hope.

One of the challenges faced by the participants was the overcrowded educational environment. As one of the teachers noted:

> You know, it's very hard when there is only one of you, and there's a class of 45 who need your attention. Of that 45, there will be those who you can see are not interested in being here at school. Those will sleep and they will make noise and disrupt the class. That is a big problem. I don't know if their parents tell them how important school is or about how to conduct yourself in the class. There will be days when you ask if people have any questions and they will just have blank stares on their faces, so you don't know if you should repeat yourself or if you should move on. If I move on, I'm leaving the shy ones behind, but I won't know that they are being left behind because they are quiet. (Focus group, Sivananda High School)

In this focus group session, which included all the pupils participating in the study and one consumer studies teacher, there was shared dissatisfaction among the pupils about the schooling environment. The teacher also stated her frustration at the overwhelming number of pupils in her class. Given the pupil-to-teacher ratio, she lacks the capacity to attend to the needs of each pupil properly, with the shy pupils in particular falling between the cracks. As a result, overall student academic performance suffers.

In this context, although school should be a place that represents hope, it can also undermine the hope of ever leaving undesirable circumstances. It can further sensitise pupils to the inequities within the education system, and how these may damage their prospects of competing with pupils from better-off educational and family backgrounds.

Clearly, the factors that may contribute to the poor performance and demotivation of pupils are multidimensional. So, interventions and policy must speak directly to the range of challenges that may prohibit growth, development and transformation, including within the communities and homes where the pupils live (Balfour et al., 2008: 99). According to self-determination theory, which conceives motivation as a social construct, people are influenced and moved by

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multiple, different factors which can produce a range of contrasting experiences and consequences (Balfour and De Lange, 2012).

4.4.6 Influence of role models in shaping goals and aspiration

Most of the role models chosen by the participants in their decision-making about their careers were derived from popular media. One participant said:

> This one time I was watching a television show called TLC and I saw a female surgeon. Maybe that may have inspired me to want to become a surgeon. I was most impressed because she was a black woman who was quite young, so I saw that it is possible for me to achieve it too. (Participant 1)

Clearly, many young African females are persuaded to pursue certain careers because of what they see on television and experience through social media. For participant 1, the presence of a young black woman surgeon on a television show indicated that it was possible to pursue whatever career one chose regardless of one's gender or race.

In responding to a question about what factors had helped to shape her goals, another participant said:

> It is by identifying a role model for myself that I can look up to and follow in her footsteps. Like my role model was a character on a show called *Generations*. She was a psychologist, and I was like, "wow, that's me in the future". (Participant 2)

Matshabane (2016) notes a lack of role models for black women, especially in the professional and technical sector, for example, in the fields of mathematics, engineering, medicine and science, which are dominated by men, although they may also include white women. In this regard, most of the role models to which young black females are exposed have achieved success in the sport and entertainment sectors rather than in the professions. As a result, many young black females, especially in township communities, want to become soccer stars, actresses, disk jockeys or television presenters, while in the white community it is quite different.

The Center for Gender in Organizations (2015) notes that there are fewer woman of colour in the US occupying positions of authority. even in women-dominated industries, apart from in those professions which are regarded as feminine, such as teaching.

4.4.7 Ways of encouraging and inspiring young black women in a township setting

One participant said:

> I definitely believe that firstly, government can open centres where women know can go to not only for information but is also a safe haven for women in trouble and seeking guidance out of financial trouble before they can get into things like debt because they are maybe desperate. A place that provides emotional trauma and support where women feel safe. (Participant 9)

Most of the participants advocated working hard as an effective way of ensuring that they realised their goals and aspirations. For example, participant 1 noted: "I try and go over my work when I get home if I am not disturbed."

She also recommended that the government should establish personal development and career counselling centres in township areas:

They could also bring in professionals and skilled people to educate and train us on important things we need to know and to grow to become better people. (Participant 1)

In response to the question about what the government should do to help pupils realise their goals and aspirations, another participant said:

> Firstly, schools should allow more personal development programmes to come to schools to speak to students often. Our school should allow us more computer time and access to the internet so that we can research more on beneficial things. There is Wifi here at school, but we don't have access to the internet. Help with applying at universities would also be helpful. (Participant 2)

In order to satisfy participant 2's demands, the government would have to allocate more resources to these schools.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the factors that contribute to shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young African females in KwaMashu Township, Durban, as described by the participants in the study. It indicated the six overarching themes that emerged from the participant interviews, and presented data to explore these in more detail.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Young black females in South Africa have been marginalised and excluded in the post-1994 dispensation because of inadequate education and a lack of proper skills. However, over past years, the number of black females pursuing professional careers and enrolling in higher tertiary education has increased. Drawing from intersectionality theory, this study aims to explore overlapping factors that contribute to the shaping of the goals, aspirations and resilience of young African females in KwaMashu Township, Durban. This chapter presents the findings and conclusions of this study which used thematic analysis to unpack and make sense of the data. It also discusses the recommendations made by the young black female pupils who participated in the study.

5.2 Objectives, theoretical outline and methodology

The overall intention of the research was to explore the factors that contribute to shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young African females in KwaMashu Township, Durban. The researcher further tried to scrutinise the reasons why young African female pupils wanted to pursue or attain certain goals and aspirations. Resiliency theory, intersectionality and aspiration adaptation theories were applied as theoretical paradigms to dissect the research problem. Intersectionality theory enabled the phenomena under study to be analysed in relation to the history and multi-layered nature of black women's oppression (Carastathis, 2014). Resilience theory is concerned with understanding the development of children and adolescents and designing interventions that promote positive, contextual "promotive" factors which operate in opposition to risk factors to overcome negative responses such as low self-esteem and self-efficacy. Aspiration adaptation theory states that humans have an aspiration level despite the hardships they may face. In the context of these theoretical paradigms, this research on young African female pupils in KwaMashu Township seeks to adds to the growing knowledge on how such pupils shape their goals and aspirations and develop resilience.

Young African female pupils in township produce goals and aspirations that they seek to attain in order to improve their livelihoods. These are shaped by a range of factors including family, culture, role models and their schools.

The methodology section above illustrated and described the rationale which led to this research question. It explained how the fieldwork and study was conducted, including in relation to ethical issues. This study utilised in-depth interviews, which is a qualitative method.

5.3 The role of family in shaping aspirations

Evidence that emerges from this study shows that the family has a role to play in shaping aspirations. The family can play a supportive role as an anchor for black pupils. This may take the form of psychosocial support, material support, advice and so on. This study found that young African female pupils who came from supportive, single-parent or two-parent families had clearer goals and aspirations than those from unstable families.

Thus it was found that family is an important role player in shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young African female pupils from KwaMashu Township, in Durban. When the family was supportive and encouraging, it supported the production of motivation and resilience among young black female pupils and their efforts to trying and achieve more in life. In this respect, close family members potentially provided the strongest role models.

Family represents an integral part of the lives of young African female pupils in townships. If the family falls apart, it affects the goals, aspirations and resilience of these young people.

5.4 The role of teachers

This study shows that teachers play an important role in shaping the career goals, aspirations and resilience of young African female pupils. Ahmad (2017) notes that teachers, as mediators between the system and the pupils, play an important role in shaping young people's goals in life outside the household. Teachers, especially those who have a positive attitude towards pupils, can motivate and encourage them to do better and work towards achieving their goals in life.

As intermediaries in the classroom, teachers have a particularly strong influence. In this context, they should not use this platform to discourage pupils, but rather to help them towards achieving their desired goals and aspirations.

Some teachers treat pupils who they perceive as under-performing in class poorly, giving them names such as "*domoroza*" which means "retard". Such behaviour, which damages the pupil's confidence and participation must be condemned. Teachers should be reoriented and trained on how best to help their pupils achieve their goals and on the need to avoid discrimination in the classroom.

5.5 The role of the library

This study's findings show that libraries have a crucial role to play at school and in the community. One student said that she had found all the information she needed regarding her career goals and aspirations in the library.

However, although the school library appears to have a valuable contribution to make, few pupils have mentioned it as an integral part of their education, instead citing other factors as contributing to their goals, aspirations and resilience. Nevertheless, in patriarchal societies in which young African females are socialised to be mothers and caregivers in the family, libraries have an important role to play as places that can offer them the time and space to study and share information that may help them achieve their goals.

5.6 The role of the school/education system

Evidence from the study shows that the school and the education system within which it is located play a role in shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young African females. In this respect, township schools are under-resourced compared with those in medium and low-density suburbs, thus limiting pupils' career choices due to inadequate infrastructure and resources and a lack of exposure to appropriate sources of knowledge.

South Africa's education system with its mix of resource-starved public schools and well-resourced private schools reflects the huge inequality between rich and poor in the broader society. In this context, pupils would prefer to be educated in private schools because they do not have confidence in the public schools. Against this background, public schools and the government-run education system should be changed and aligned to meet the country's overall economic challenges and technological demands.

5.7 The role of role models within and outside the household

Findings from the study show that role models have a great impact on influencing how young African females in KwaMashu Township shape their career goals and aspirations. Most of these role models are prominent media figures. For example, one African female teenager who aspired to become a surgeon derived her goal from watching a black woman surgeon on a television show. Family members may also be regarded as role models, particularly those with relatively high living standards who are regarded as having achieved success. The findings indicate that the media, if used positively, can influence young African females to pursue career goals and aspirations that can change their lives.

5.8 Discussion

Most of the participants in the study viewed gender, family structure, educational system, role models and culture as among the contributing factors that had influenced how they had arrived at their career goals and aspirations. This view is supported by the Centre for Gender in Organizations, (2015) which notes that few women achieve leadership positions because, as they grow up, they are socialised into particular gender roles, such as, for example, that men are leaders while women are caregivers.

However, this study indicated that the impacts of socialisation on how young black females shaped their goals, aspirations and resilience varied significantly, particularly since these included how they had been raised; the environment in which they grew up; and, to an extent, the continuing influence of past historical injustices. Young black women have further emphasised the impacts of culture, gender, the education system, role models and family structures (Berry and Candis, 2013). The study itself found that three of the participants indicated that their goals, aspirations and resilience had been shaped by their gender and culture. In other words, they acknowledged the impact of the idea of "feminine" careers, which include nursing and teaching, and "masculine" ones, that is those which are deemed more difficult and require greater skill, such as, for example, in the sciences, mathematics and information technology.

Several research studies conducted in township communities have shown that family and teachers play a crucial role in how young black female pupils shape their goals and aspirations (Shumba and Naong, 2012). Among the sample in this study, only two participants admitted

to negative experiences with teachers at school. These participants reported that some teachers are known to belittle pupils, embarrassing and damaging their enthusiasm, confidence and ability to interact meaningfully in class and the school as a whole. Participants reported that they have been called "*domoroza*" or "*domo*", a slang term made popular by a young black, female musician, Thandeka "TDK Macassette" Mkhwanazi, which means "crazy, stupid or retarded". This term gained much popularity in townships because it was coined by a singer to whom they can relate. Its reach was spread due to the popularity among black youth of the new *Gqom* music genre espoused by Mkhwanazi. The use of such disparaging language in a stressful environment in which the individual pupil's mental capacity is being constantly assessed and challenged by formal standardised tests, as well as by teachers and peers, can damage their confidence and performance, rendering them vulnerable to embarrassment, bullying and ridicule.

In this regard, it seems clear that the discourse around the impact of the education system on young black youth in township schools should not only be limited to issues of providing learning materials; adequate infrastructure; a progressive curriculum; and properly qualified teachers. Training is also required to sensitise teachers to pupils' learning strategies and make them aware of their power to shape the minds of young black people and thus either broaden or limit their horizons.

The study further found that young black female pupils who came from supportive families found it easier to pursue their career choices than those who came from unsupportive families. It was also found that hope sprang even among those who faced straitened circumstances. For example, one particularly resilient participant indicated that while she understood the factors that constrained her, she was determined to pursue her personal development along her path to achieving her aspirations. In this regard, personal will and drive may be seen as a key determinant in one's ability to achieve one's goals beyond the availability, or lack of availability of, institutional, social or financial support.

Other studies suggest that the factors influencing young black female pupils in townships are not limited to these, and include a lack of real role models and financial resources to inspire and fund black women, as well as the prioritisation of the interests of male children at the expense of female children, as is narrated in the novel *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga (2009).

Meanwhile, this study further found that culture is one of the main factors contributing to how goals and aspirations are shaped, especially for young black females who come from families with strong cultural beliefs that a woman's role is as a housewife whose main duties are to bear children and care for the family and the husband's needs. Davids et al. (2016) note that culture, especially the influence of the family structure and its functionality, affect the life goals and aspirations of young black females in South Africa as they reflect upon who they are and make choices about their career goals accordingly. As an example of such reflection and decision-making, one of the participants in this study said that she felt like she had wasted a whole year despite receiving good grades, and was planning to repeat the same grade in the following year so that she could improve her marks in order to realise her career goals and aspirations.

In relation to the role of family in generating cultural expectation, this study found that some parents held cultural and social belief that their daughters should not outperform or achieve more than their sons in certain subjects such as mathematics and sciences, because these were regarded as more challenging and it would be unattractive for a black woman to pursue careers in these fields (Martineau, 1997). In this regard, some recent studies have shown that some young black females are increasingly challenging the norms of the past and pursuing careers and professions traditionally mainly occupied by males.

Family structures have also changed and those with single-headed parents are usually at the risk of not having enough resource; of being isolated; and of receiving little encouragement and monitoring of their studies, which influences how they shape their career goals and aspirations. Huang and Glassman (2000, as cited in Davids and Roman, 2013) argue that most single black female parents live in poverty and care less for their children, which has an impact on how their daughters grow up and shape their goals and aspirations, compared with children raised by both parents. A two-parent family has a better chance of supporting young, black female pupils in developing their cognitive and social skills from an early age and pursuing various career opportunities outside assigned racial and gender roles (Farinde, 2012).

Intersectionality theory suggests that the oppression of women is not shaped by gender alone but rather by a set of social identities in which factors of race, gender, sexuality, class and ability interconnect (Smooth, 2010). This is supported by Wong and Kemp (2017), who state that, in low-income community schools, black female pupils who are interested and passionate

about mathematics and sciences usually receive differential treatment from teachers and may even be ridiculed since these subjects are regarded as a male domain. In this regard, black women in South Africa have been discriminated against and treated unequally for a long time. Increased access to high quality education for black women should be prioritised and they should be supported in their career goals and aspirations from a young age.

Role models have been found to be of great importance in influencing how young black females shape their goals and aspirations. Having someone to look up to and emulate is clearly important. Many of the participants reported that they had been inspired by role models to pursue their career goals and that they saw themselves emulating these role models. However, according to Farinde (2012), young black females lack the example of a wide range of successful black female identities who can inspire and motivate them to expand their career choices, goals and consider a broader selection of educational and professional possibilities. In this respect, research studies show that most young black females indicate that in the main they are inspired by black women in the entertainment and sport sectors. This study noted that the absence of a role model can limit and minimise the efforts made towards realising career goals and aspirations. The study also found that the initial role models for young black females are their mothers and sister; and that only later do they identify an outsider as a role model for shaping their career goals and aspirations.

5.9 Recommendations

Participants were asked what they think the government could do to help young black girls in township areas with their goals and aspirations. They proposed a wide range of suggestions. The pupil participants suggested that the government should establish information and counselling centres in township areas. They suggested that professionals and skilled people should come to educate young black females and train them on how to become better people. The participants further suggested that the government should encourage schools to develop personal development programmes and engage with their needs and concerns more effectively. They also stated that their schools should facilitate greater access to computers with internet connections so that they could conduct more research on their career goals and aspirations. They said improved access to the internet would help them in applying to universities.

Some participants suggested that government schools in townships should increase the number of sports available, increasing exposure and opportunities for pupils. Young black females also said they that, at home, should be treated the same as the male children so that they are not required to spend too much time doing home chores and can rather focus on their studies. They further noted the lack of support for black girls who are raped or become pregnant and advised that the government should establish services to support these girls in accessing a decent education and recovering from trauma. It was also noted that there is a need to shun cultural practices that have a negative impact on young black females, such as virginity testing which seems to commodify black women as objects that are only there to satisfy men needs.

To achieve their goals and aspirations, young black female pupils should be given equal opportunities and access to the same resources as male pupils. Pupils should not be discriminated against based on their gender; and teachers should be trained to promote equality across their cohorts and enable pupils to pursue their career of choice regardless of gender, in particular by refraining from limiting black females in their choice of career goals. This study also found that the country's education system is inequitable, with those living in poor communities receiving poor-quality education compared with those residing in middle-upper class communities. Accordingly, the government should promote equal basic education for all to reduce existing inequalities.

Young black females are often portrayed negatively in the media as uninformed individuals who just end up as young mothers. In this context, the media has a role to play in communicating a positive image of young black women, for example, as caring, loving, and professional, instead of perpetuating and entrenching negative assumptions about them. In addition, greater emphasis ought to be put on the power for good that may be exerted within the family. African cultural values place a great emphasis *on ubuntu*, discipline, self-respect and respect for elders.

However, there are other principles, which have not been woven into traditional African thought, which should be taught. For example, women have been culturally conditioned to believe that men are the providers. According to this belief, women may not be ambitious. In addition, the emphasis on the importance of caring for the family limits how much they can achieve. In general, this framework of thought and behaviour prohibits the idea that women

can be and do more than their immediate circumstances or reality prescribe. The outlook undermines the very idea of aspiration.

Against this background, family may play a crucial role in weakening the hold of cultural beliefs that are not emancipatory and transformative in their nature and helping to realise the full developmental potential of black youth. In this respect, there is a need to look at teachings that advance a child's capacity to manage themselves and develop into individuals with resilience. Such cannot be taught in families by corporal punishment but only through active involvement in, and commitment to, the lives of the young. This role should be fulfilled by engaged, supportive parents or guardians who can contribute meaningfully and constructively to their children's development.

This research shows that young black females aspire to pursue careers and goals just like any other person, although they lack a strong support system to help them realise their goals. Beyond anticipated outcomes influence by factors such as gender and the past, the study shows that a number of other key determinants may shape young black females' career aspirations, including: how well they perform at school; self-realisation and actualisation; emotional maturity; the will to do and be more; an enabling schooling environment; and the presence of a strong family structure.

Culture is dynamic, and accordingly some young black females defy past and present cultural norms and aspire to pursue careers in male-dominated sectors. The main impediments to such goals are the kinds of family structures that they experience and the ways they have been socialised. Issues of race also contribute to how young black females see themselves and the goals that they aim to pursue, although these appear to be of less relevance to some participants. Against this background, the government should promote context-specific training for teachers so that they can properly educate vulnerable black township youth who have to navigate a unique set of obstacles and adversity before even walking into the classroom. For example, many of them come from abusive backgrounds; are neglected by their parents; have not had enough food to eat; are living without water or electricity at home; come from child-headed households; or simply lack support at home. In this context, a blanket approach to teacher training cannot provide the pedagogic skills required. Context-specific training is required to produce resilient, trained and equipped youth who are capable of surviving and thriving in the face of adversity, rather than a generation of victims.

5.10 Conclusion

Young black females in South Africa face many intertwined challenges which contribute towards shaping their goals and aspirations. Broadly, within the present patriarchal society with its legacy or oppression based on race, black women are marginalised and their contribution to the economy is limited. Intersectionality theory suggests that the oppression of women is not shaped by gender alone but rather by a set of social identities in which factors of race, gender, sexuality, class and ability interconnect (Smooth, 2010). This is supported by Wong and Kemp, (2017) who state that, in low-income community schools, black female pupils who are interested and passionate about mathematics and sciences usually receive differential treatment from teachers and may even be ridiculed since these subjects are regarded as a male domain. In this regard, black women in South Africa have been discriminated against and treated unequally for a long time. Increased access to high quality education for black women should be prioritised and they should be supported in their career goals and aspirations from a young age.

The study also concludes that there is need to shun cultural practices that have a negative impact on young black females, such as virginity testing which seems to commodify and present young black women as objects that are only there to satisfy men's needs. In addition, in order to achieve their goals and aspirations, young black female pupils should be given equal opportunities and access to the same resources as their male peers. Also, pupils should not be discriminated against on the basis of their gender; and teachers should be trained to treat pupils as equal and to encourage them to pursue their career of choice regardless of gender, in particular by refraining from limiting black females in their choice of career goals

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APPENDICES

Appendix A; Ethical Clearance letter of approval by the UKZN Ethics committee

UNIVERSITY OF ™
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

25 June 2019

Ms Nonkululeko Nothando Ntshayintshayi (212526987)
School of Built Environment & Development Studies
Howard College Campus

Dear Ms Ntshayintshayi,

Protocol reference number: HSS/1497/018M
Project title: Exploring the factors that contribute to shaping the goals, aspirations and resilience of young African females in KwaMashu Township, Durban

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 30 August 2018, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only <u>valid for a period of 1 year</u> from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

....
Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Professor Oliver Mtapuri
cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Ernest Nene Khalema
cc School Administrator: Ms Angeline Msomi

Appendix B: Approval to conduct study by the provincial Department of Education

education
Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma	Tel: 033 392 1063	Ref.:2/4/8/1744

Ms NN Ntshayintshayi
E184 Ntuzuma
PO KwaMashu
Ntuzuma Township
4360

Dear Ms Ntshayintshayi

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"EXPLORING THE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO SHAPING THE GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS AND RESILLIENCE OF YOUNG AFRICAN FEMALES IN KWAMSHU TOWNSHIP, DURBAN",** in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 04 March 2019 to 01 August 2021.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Pinetown District
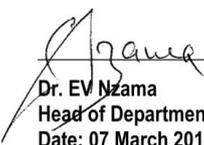
Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 07 March 2019