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After the degree: research psychology in the 'real world'

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review....1
Introduction....1
Literature Review....4
Western Psychology and the Scientist-Practitioner Model....4
Psychology in South Africa and the Issue of Relevance....9
The Role of Research Psychology....12
Research on Research Psychology....17
Research Questions....20

Chapter 2: Research Design and Methods....21
Research Design....21
Procedure....21
Sample and Sampling....22
Instruments....26
Ethical Considerations....27
Data Analysis....28

Chapter 3: Results and Discussion....29
Career Paths....29
What career paths do former research psychology masters students report following, after completion of their degree?....29
Why (according to their reports) do they follow these particular paths and what made them choose to pursue research psychology at a masters level?....37
The HPCSA Registration Category....42
What are former research psychology masters students' reported HPCSA registration statuses regarding the category of 'Research Psychology', and what do they claim their reason for this is?....42
Do participants perceive the HPCSA 'Research Psychology' category as a relevant category to have as part of the HPCSA, or not, and why?....51
Transformation....59
To what extent (if at all) has demographic transformation been achieved among this group of psychology graduates?....59

Chapter 4: Conclusions....65

References....70

Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review

Introduction

Psychology is a popular subject choice among university students, and has become a well established and respected profession in the working world (Cooper & Nicholas, 2012). Depending on the career route students wish to pursue, there are currently five categories within the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) in which one can register as a psychologist, namely clinical, counselling, educational, industrial, and research psychology (HPCSA, 2013). The focus of this study will be on the category of research psychology, as well as the career paths of students who have completed a masters degree in research psychology which could lead to registration as a research psychologist.

South Africa, like many other countries in the western world, adheres to the scientist-practitioner (Boulder) model when training psychologists (Pillay & Johnston, 2011; Vespia & Sauer, 2006). The basic premise of this training model is that all psychologists should be trained in both research as well as clinical skills, and thereafter generate research as well as tend to patients (Frank, 1984). However, unlike other countries, South Africa has a specific category for psychologists that focus exclusively on psychological research without an applied therapeutic aspect, namely research psychology. Currently, to call oneself a research psychologist, one has to complete a masters degree in research psychology at an HPCSA accredited institution, complete a twelve month HPCSA approved research psychology internship, and pass the National Examination of the Professional Board of Psychology (DHET, 2015). To maintain registration, one has to keep up to date with the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) requirements, as well as pay annual fees to the HPCSA (DHET, 2015).

Despite the category being available for those who wish to register as a research psychologist, there is a discrepancy between the number of students graduating with a masters degree in research psychology, and the number of students who ultimately register as research psychologists. Out of a potentially much larger pool of graduates,

currently only 247 people are registered with the HPCSA as a research psychologist (HPCSA, personal correspondence, 16 July 2015). Research psychology is also the smallest of the five registration categories that fall under psychology within the HPCSA. Cooper and Nicholas (2012) ascertained that a mere 2,7% of the 6469 people registered as psychologists in 2009 were research psychologists. This category has not increased much since then, as it is currently only comprising 3.03% of all registered psychologists (HPSCA, personal correspondence, 16 July 2015). In addition, research psychology in South Africa is a topic that is not widely understood (Pretorius, 2012), with the category sometimes being perceived as inferior to other categories such as clinical psychology (Mdakane, 2013).

Despite this discrepancy, graduates with research psychology masters degrees presumably do obtain employment, however, in many cases it does not seem that they need to be registered as a research psychologist with the HPCSA to do so, otherwise surely many more would be registered. Many people also agree that it is not necessary to be registered with the HPCSA in order to conduct the type of work that research psychology graduates are often employed to do (Laher, 2005). The suitability of having a research category falling under a health professions organisation has also been called into question (Abel & Louw, 2009).

Tracking these former students and determining what line of work they ended up going into as well as what factors encouraged them to pursue their chosen careers would shed more light on what types of career options are available with this degree, as well as what encourages respondents to pursue specific paths. It would also assist in providing career information for students who are interested in pursuing post graduate studies in psychology but are uncertain as to which option to take. Establishing research psychology masters graduates' current registration status, reasons why they chose to register or not, as well as their perceptions of the category would aid in evaluating the relevance of having a category for research psychologists as part of the HPCSA, as well as assisting in understanding the discrepancy between the number of research psychology masters students who graduate and the number who register as research psychologists. If there are a large number of people who are eligible to register, however chose not to, and still do work which is well suited to those with the skills of a research psychologist, it could be indicative that the category

may not be necessary. Finding out how such people are engaged in decision-making about whether to register, or whether or not to stay registered, will provide insights into the perceived value of the registration category from the perspective of the people who could be eligible to occupy it.

As many scholars are well aware, there is also another pressing issue that has arisen within the discipline of psychology. This is the question of the relevance of psychology and how socially valuable it is to the majority of South Africans (Long, 2013; MacLeod, 2004; MacLeod & Howell, 2013; Pretorius, 2012; Rock & Hamber, 1994; Sher & Long, 2012). The relevance debate encompasses many aspects including creating psychological theory that is more Afrocentric in nature, creating emic psychological tests that take into account the language and cultural diversity of the country, doing research that more closely aligns with South African social issues as well as with national and global priorities, as well as empowering and servicing previously disadvantaged groups (Pretorius, 2008, 2012; Seedat & MacKenzie, 2008; Sher & Long, 2012). There is thus a call for the discipline to become more accessible to the general public, and as a result a degree of transformation is needed in what was previously a white dominated category (Sher & Long, 2012). Obtaining demographic information about former research psychology students will provide insights into the transformation of this sub-discipline of psychology, thus contributing to knowledge on issues of redress and equality (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004).

The aims of this research study are thus to track former research psychology masters students and gain an understanding of the different career paths this degree led them to, and why they chose to pursue a particular path. In addition, this research will determine whether or not former research psychology masters students registered with the HPCSA as a research psychologist, and their reasons for doing so or not doing so, thus enabling evaluation of the relevance of the category among those with potential eligibility to occupy it. This study will also seek to evaluate the degree of transformation in this division of psychology, and provide valuable career information for students interested in studying this degree.

Literature Review

Western Psychology and the Scientist-Practitioner Model

Psychology is a discipline born in the late 1800's from the culmination of philosophy, physiology, and various scholars within those fields delving into questions about the mind, mental awareness, perceptions and reality (Weiten, 2004). Wilhelm Wundt consolidated these ideas to form an independent discipline and set up the first psychological research laboratory in Liepzig, Germany in 1879, as well as establishing the first psychological journal in 1881 (Weiten, 2004). Other scholars followed suit and the academic discipline of psychology began to bloom. Prominent psychological advancements in this era included the establishment of America's first psychological research laboratory and formation of the American Psychological Association (APA) in the late 1800's by G. Stanley Hall; Ivan Pavlov's groundbreaking work on classical conditioning in the early 1900's; Alfred Binet's developments in the field of intelligence testing; and of course the well renowned Sigmund Freud's introduction of the unconscious and psychoanalytic theory (Weiten, 2004). Psychology in the early 1900's was buzzing with ideas, theories and discoveries. Academic debates were held about the various schools of thought at that time, namely psychoanalysis, behaviourism, and Gestalt theory (Murray, Kilgour, & Wasylkiw, 2000), and although some psychologists like Freud did practice applied psychology as a large portion of his time involved consulting with patients, he made great contributions towards psychological theory at the same time.

WWII from 1939 to 1945 brought about a change in the field of psychology. Whereas before the war it was predominantly an academic discipline, the war brought with it a need for additional mental health practitioners (Vespia & Sauer, 2006). With soldiers returning from the war with mental conditions that needed attention, psychiatrists were overwhelmed with the sheer numbers of people who required mental health care so solicited the help of applied psychologists to assist during this crisis (Frank, 1984). Although psychologists were doing the work of mental health practitioners by assisting psychiatrists with mental health assessments, diagnosis, treatment and therapy, and were being trained in clinical psychology, psychiatrists still considered psychology an inferior field (Frank, 1984). In addition, there was a divide in the field

of psychology, as applied psychologists did not feel connected to academic psychologists, so had split off in 1937 and formed their own organisation, the American Association of Applied Psychology. In 1942 there was a drive for reunification, and the applied psychologists rejoined the APA in 1945, on the condition that they consider themselves (academic/research) psychologists first, and clinicians second (Frank, 1984).

As psychiatrists did not accept applied psychologists as equals, it became necessary to establish psychology as a science and respected profession in its own right. The research aspect of psychology thus became increasingly important (Frank, 1984). Psychology could define itself as a worthwhile field by the emphasis it placed on research, which was something that did not occur in medical training (Drabick & Goldfried, 2000). In addition, it was thought necessary to bridge the gap that had formed between applied and academic psychologists so that anyone involved in the field could be considered a psychologist despite their employment setting (Frank, 1984). As a result, the scientist-practitioner (Boulder) model was adopted as the main training model in psychology.

The scientist-practitioner model was based on the premise that psychologists should be both practitioners and researchers (Drabick & Goldfried, 2000). The idea was formalized as the official training model in clinical psychology at the 1949 conference in Boulder, Colorado. It also became the official training model for counseling psychology (Blair, 2010). The idea was that all psychologists should receive an equal amount of training in both the scientific and practical aspects of psychology (Vespia & Sauer, 2006). Ideally, psychologists should have a 50/50 split between the amount of time they spend on doing research, and on tending to patients (Blair, 2010). This would enable psychologists to continually evaluate their practice, and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field (Blair, 2010; Vespia & Sauer, 2006). All psychologists would thus be trained to do research, regardless of whether they were going to focus on research and academia, or become an applied practitioner (Blair, 2010).

Although the scientist-practitioner model is the predominant training model in counties such as the United States of America (USA), Canada, the United Kingdom

(UK), Australia, New Zealand, (Vespia & Sauer, 2006) as well as South Africa (Pillay & Johnston, 2011), there are critiques of the model, which call its practicality into question (Frank, 1984). The main critiques revolve around two issues, firstly, that in a philosophical sense, there is no real need for clinicians to do research, and secondly, that the skills required for doing research and consulting with patients are different, thus requiring different people with different aptitudes to excel at them (Frank, 1984). It thus does not seem fitting to train the same person in both research as well as clinical skills if they clearly have an aptitude or preference for one over the other (Frank, 1984).

According to Frank (1984), people interested in research psychology and those interested in clinical or counseling psychology are inherently different in areas such as vocational interests, needs, personality traits, cognitive abilities, childhood experiences, and even cerebral dominance. In addition, it has been argued that those involved in therapeutic practices do not seem to be interested in doing, or even reading about research, and that researchers could do better research than applied psychologists anyway (Frank, 1984). Practicing psychologists, both clinical and counseling, also have a problem with the lack of time they have to do research, or even keep up to date with relevant research findings. They also may not have exposure to research if they are not affiliated with a university producing research (Blair, 2010). Vespia and Sauer (2006) also acknowledge that students drawn towards the clinical practicing programmes are less motivated to do research, and that some even have a problem finishing their dissertations. Thus although there is an official model for training psychologists, there are critiques regarding how optimal it is.

In South Africa, people are selected for the various psychology masters programmes based on different criteria. According to Louw & Fouche (2001), the selection criteria for clinical psychology students and research psychology students are very different. While both are required to have sound academic and intellectual ability, those wishing to pursue a clinical route should possess characteristics such as empathy, a well-adjusted personality, a high level of maturity, and therapeutic potential, while those wishing to pursue research psychology should have an interest in research, good statistical knowledge and skills, a critical and analytic thinking style, and also have the ability for creative thought (Louw & Fouche, 2001). Studies conducted by Pillay

and Kritzinger (2007), and Pillay and Kramers (2003), echo the point raised by Vespia & Sauer (2006), namely that clinical psychologists sometimes had trouble completing their dissertations. According to Pillay and Kritzinger (2007), almost 70% of students in their study took longer than the stipulated time period to complete their dissertations, while in another study, 14.8% of intern psychologists studied over a 20 year period had not completed their dissertations (Pillay & Kramers, 2003). These findings show that although the scientist-practitioner model may be good in theory, the practicalities of expecting the same person to embody both humanistic and scientific traits are not always realistic. Some people are more humanistic and attune to working with people in a therapeutic sense, while others are more scientifically minded and suited to conducting research (Frank, 1984).

Many authors have recognized that there seems to be a growing divide in psychology and some programmes are stepping away from the traditional scientist-practitioner model (Rice, 1997; Shapiro, 2002; Vespia & Sauer, 2006). In the USA, they have introduced two types of psychology programmes, a PsyD programme and a PhD programme (Rice, 1997). The PhD programmes train in the traditional scientist-practitioner style, with a focus on both practical aspects of psychology as well as research, while the PsyD programmes cater for people who are purely interested in the practical, therapeutic side of psychology and wish to provide clinical and counseling services rather than do research (Rice, 1997). It is thus evident that universities are catering for a potential divide in psychology, and that it is possible that in the future there could be two psychological professions, one scientific and academic, and the other based on a therapeutic practical profession (Rice, 1997).

It thus seems that the purpose of the research psychologist could be to play the role of the ‘scientist’ in the scientist-practitioner model, while those with an aptitude for tending to patients and counseling people would play the role of the ‘practitioner’. Thus having a category in which research psychologists can register, as in the HPCSA, does seem like a logical move forward for psychology. What is puzzling is that South Africa has created a category for these types of psychologists, while the seemingly more ‘advanced’ western countries have no such category.

Typically, there is not a separate discipline for research psychologists in the USA like there is in South Africa (Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards, personal correspondence, 28 April 2015). The titles 'Research Psychologist', and 'Academic Psychologist' seem to be used interchangeably (Radeke & Mahoney, 2000). Although it differs from state to state, only those who provide health services to the public need to be licensed in order to practice. Academic or research psychologists do not need a license to practice, unless they are supervising students that are providing service to the public, or if they are involved in very applied research (Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards, personal correspondence, 28 April 2015).

In the UK, the British Psychological Association (BPS) is the professional body for psychologists, while practicing psychologists are regulated by the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) (HCPC, personal correspondence, 29 April 2015). The HCPC have various modalities and protected titles, however, 'Research Psychologist' is not one of them (HPCP, 2015). The different areas in psychology according to the BPS are clinical psychology; counseling psychology; educational psychology; forensic psychology; health psychology; neuropsychology; occupational psychology; sport and exercise psychology and academia, research and teaching (BPS, 2013). Here again it can be seen that research psychology and academic psychology are clustered together in the same category.

Similarly in Australia, research psychology does not form part of the nine areas endorsed by the Psychology Board of Australia, namely counseling psychology; clinical neuropsychology; clinical psychology; community psychology; educational and developmental psychology; forensic psychology; health psychology; organizational psychology and sport and exercise psychology (APS, 2015). It thus seems that having a specific category for research psychology is rather unique to South African Psychology and the HPCSA. It is hard to determine whether the existence of a protected title and registration as a 'Research Psychologist' could potentially be a new innovation in the application of the scientist-practitioner model, or an unnecessary registration category that is ill fitting as part of a health organisation.

Psychology in South Africa and the Issue of Relevance

Psychology has been taught in South Africa for many years, however, it was taught in philosophy departments prior to 1917 (Cooper & Nicholas, 2012; Richter et al., 1998) In 1917, R.W. Wilcocks was appointed the Professor of Logic and Psychology at Stellenbosch University, and established an experimental laboratory (Cooper, 2013; Cooper & Nicholas, 2012; Nicholas, 2013) The first independent department was founded in 1926 at Rhodes University (Richter et al., 1998). Since then, it has become one of the most popular courses taught at South African universities. All seventeen universities in the country offer psychology courses at both the undergraduate and post graduate level, while fifteen of them offer HPCSA accredited programmes that could lead to statutory registration (Cooper & Nicholas, 2012).

Psychology became a certified profession in South Africa in 1974 with the promulgation of the Medical, Dental and Supplementary Health Service Professions Act, No 56, (Abel & Louw, 2009). This act introduced the five categories previously mentioned, wherein one can register as a psychologist, namely clinical, counselling, educational, industrial and research psychology (HPCSA, 2013). In addition, intern psychologists, student psychologists, registered counselors, psychometrists and psychotechnicians also form part of the collection of professional categories administered by the Board (HPCSA, 2013).

The field, however, has been continually criticized for being dominated by western views and ideologies, as well as being a profession tainted by its involvement with the apartheid era (Pretorius, 2012). Psychology as a discipline has been closely aligned with the socio-political status of the country and has a history of discriminating against people of colour, rendering it a profession dominated by white people (Louw & van Hoorn, 1997). Psychometric measures were used in the Apartheid era to justify separate development and discrimination against black people by incorrectly interpreting psychometric test results in an attempt to prove white intellectual superiority (Foxcroft & Davies, 2005). Psychology was also criticized for being Eurocentric in nature, focusing on white middle-class clientele, rather than addressing the social needs of the country (Rock & Hamber, 1994).

This is illustrated through the multitude of psychological boards and associations that have been in control over the years, some of them more racially tolerant than others (Louw & van Hoorn, 1997). The South African Psychological Association (SAPA) was the dominant association until 1961, when it considered an application from a person of colour, and a group of Afrikaans speaking racist psychologists split off in protest, forming their own association, the Psychological Institute of the Republic of South Africa (PIRSA) (Louw & van Hoorn, 1997). These two associations united again in 1983 as the Psychological Association of South Africa (PASA), however they failed to attract black membership (Louw & van Hoorn, 1997). The dissatisfaction with this association and its continued domination by white Afrikaner males lead to two separate associations developing, the Psychology and Apartheid Committee, lead by black psychologists, and the Organisation for Appropriate Social Services in South Africa (OASSSA) (Seedat & MacKenzie, 2008). In the early nineties, the three organisations united, PASA dissolved and PsySSA was formed, bringing the associations together (PsySSA, 2013; Seedat & MacKenzie, 2008). PsySSA's main focus is to regulate psychology regarding issues such as professional roles, registration, development, fee structures, licensing of psychological tests and mental health policy and unlike some of the associations in power in the past, it has dedicated itself to addressing issues facing a post-Apartheid South Africa (Seedat & MacKenzie, 2008; PsySSA, 2013). However, in order to use the professional title of 'Psychologist', an individual has to be registered with the HPCSA, while registration with PsySSA is voluntary.

As historically, psychology was very focused on, and dominated by, the white minority, it did not take issues relating to the entire South African population into consideration. From South Africa's racially tainted past, a much-publicized debate about the relevance of South African psychology has emerged (Long, 2013; MacLeod, 2004; MacLeod & Howell, 2013; Pretorius, 2012; Rock & Hamber, 1994; Sher & Long, 2012). The essence of this debate is how psychology should implement changes in the discipline to make it more socially valuable and relevant to the needs of everybody in South Africa, and not just the select few as it has in the past (Sher & Long, 2012). This debate includes many aspects of psychology, namely psychological services, training, theory, curricula, psychometric testing, selection criteria and research (Pretorius, 2008, 2012; Seedat & MacKenzie, 2008; Sher & Long, 2012).

Additionally there is a call to transform the type of services provided so that people in urban areas and informal settlements can have access to more affordable and suitable psychological treatment options (Mayekiso, Strydom, Jithoo, & Katz, 2004). It has also been said that South Africans need to start developing a South African psychology which is Afrocentric in nature rather than Eurocentric as it is in its current form (Pretorius, 2008). South African based theory and university curricula should be developed, as well as emic psychometric tests that take into account the diverse language abilities and cultural differences that are pertinent in South Africa (Pretorius, 2012). There is thus an opening for research psychology professionals and psychometrists to spearhead these much needed developments (Pretorius, 2012).

Additionally, there has been a call to tailor post graduate selection criteria in order to train students who are more representative, both linguistically and culturally, of the entire South African population, and thus better suited to offer psychological services to the wide range of South Africans who were previously margianialised. (Mayekiso et al., 2004; Rock & Hamber, 1994). Although psychology was historically dominated by males, particularly white males, it has over the years become increasingly feminised and is now dominated by females rather than males (Richter & Griesel, 1999; Skinner & Louw, 2009). The population of psychologists in South Africa is currently skewed towards white Afrikaans or English speaking females, who are predominantly middle class and practice in urban areas (Louw & Machemedze, 2015). Thus despite the change in gender dominance, the field of psychology still has a way to go before being truly representative of the cultural diversity in South Africa. Ahmed and Pillay (2004) also raise issues regarding language and the ability of psychologists to communicate with the general public in their language of choice. Although Ahmed and Pillay (2004) focus on the ability of clinical psychologists to communicate with patients, the issue of language proficiency stretches to research psychologists as well, particularly regarding practices of data collection and fieldwork. Thus obtaining demographic information such as race and gender, as well as language proficiency of research psychology graduates, will assist in understanding if equality and redress is apparent in this sub-discipline of psychology.

The Role of Research Psychology

Despite psychology being taught in South Africa since the early 1900's, specific training at a masters level in the discipline of research psychology is relatively new. There were no official training programmes for research psychology as recently as the 1980's, and it is considered a relatively young discipline that is currently under-represented (Van der Westhuyzen & Plug, 1987; Fouche & Louw, 2002). Although a number of universities have introduced a masters degree that is focused on research psychology, there are presently only six whose research psychology masters degrees are accredited with the HPCSA and can lead to registration as a research psychologist. These six universities are the North West University (NWU), University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN), University of Pretoria (UP), University of South Africa (UNISA), University of the Western Cape (UWC), and the University of Witwatersrand (WITS), (HPCSA, personal correspondence, 06 October 2014). Prominent universities such as the University of Stellenbosch, and the University of Cape Town (UCT), do offer a research psychology masters degree, however, the degrees that they offer are not HPCSA accredited (UCT, personal correspondence, 01 September 2014; Stellenbosch University, personal correspondence, 09 September 2014). The fact that these, and some of the other, highly rated universities are not concerned with not having an HPCSA accredited degree, calls into question the necessity of the registration as it is possible that the jobs undertaken by research psychology graduates can be done regardless of whether they are registered with the HPCSA or not.

According to the HPCSA, the role of a research psychologist is to be "involved in planning, developing and applying psychological research methods which have broad scientific validity among scientific peers" (HPCSA, 2014, p. 13).

The specific scope of practice of research psychologists according to the Department of Health is presented below.

> In addition to the scope of the profession as prescribed in the regulations, the following acts fall within the scope of practice of research psychologists:

(a) planning, developing, and applying psychological research methods; performing assessments relevant to the development of research for research purposes, including the development of psychological measures; researching, monitoring, and evaluating psychological interventions;

(b) advising on the development of policies, based on psychological theory and research; designing, managing and evaluating measurement and intervention programmes;

(c) training and supervising other registered psychological practitioners in research psychology;

(d) designing, managing, conducting, reporting on, and supervising psychological research; conducting psychological practice, and research in accordance with the Ethical Rules of Conduct for Practitioners registered under the Health Professions Act, 1974; adhering to the scope of practice of research psychologists; referring clients to appropriate professionals for assessment or intervention; and

(e) providing expert evidence and / or opinions. (Department of Health Form R.704, 2011).

From the above definitions it can be inferred that, as far as the HPCSA is concerned, the role of a research psychologist is to be working in the service of psychology. Activities include creating and applying research for psychological development as well as the development of psychometric measures, assisting with policy development, and conducting monitoring and evaluation of interventions. In addition, they are to supervise and train others in the category and provide expert advice and opinions. All this should be done according to specific ethical principles while always adhering to the scope of practice of research psychologists. Should they encounter individuals who need other psychological services, they should refer them to the appropriate professionals.

This scope seems rather limited in nature, and it is highly likely that graduates conduct activities and occupy roles that go above and beyond those described in the scope of practice. It is possible that the scope is too narrowly framed for the careers that those who graduate with research psychology masters go on to pursue, or that they choose to register as a researcher with other research organisations rather than the HPCSA. This idea is reflected in a study conducted by Laher (2005), who stated that one of her findings was that "the HPCSA disempowers research psychologists as guidelines are too restrictive". An example of this is how research psychologists are able to create psychometric measures, however need an additional HPCSA registration as a psychometrist in order to administer them (Laher, 2005)

Although it is an under-researched category, some South African scholars have opinions about the role that research psychology should be playing in South Africa and how it could enhance South African Psychology. According to Pretorius (2012) the research psychology category is one that is highly undervalued, and could play a pivotal role in South African society. In her own words, "it is highly important for the needs of the profession and society as a whole that research psychologists develop psychometric instruments (cf. Pretorius, 2008), contribute to theory development, and assist with programme development and evaluation, etc." (Pretorius, 2012, p. 517). Fouche and Louw (2002) recognize that the research psychology category is severely under-represented, and raise concerns that without it, psychology could fail to grow so suggest steps that could be taken to increase interest in the category. In the previously mentioned study conducted by Laher (2005), activities that research psychologists should be partaking in include developing new theories, evaluating existing psychological theories, supporting practitioners, enhancing quality of research output, and supervising and training other research psychologists. In addition, developing and evaluating psychometric tests was mentioned (Laher, 2005).

Other sources provide slightly different definitions of what a research psychologist is. According to (GoStudy, 2014), "Research psychologists apply skills in statistics, research design, computing and data analysis in an attempt to answer a variety of questions. They may work in government departments, management institutes, market research, media or public opinion research". According to a description on the Baylor University (Texas) website, "Research Psychology is not itself a field or job, but a

category of exciting research opportunities within psychology… Research psychologists are found in several different work settings. The vast majority work in universities and colleges either as teaching faculty or as full-time researchers… Many other research psychologists are employed by state and federal governments, the military, or large corporations and businesses. Psychologists might be involved in polling political attitudes, testing a new drug, engineering and designing buildings or automobiles, surveying the best marketing strategy, or exploring the most efficient means of turning out a particular product." (Baylor, 2015)

These descriptions are a lot wider than the scope of practice as defined by the HPCSA, and extend the employment settings far beyond that of psychological services. The description provided by Baylor University is of course from an American perspective, where, like the rest of the world, there is no specific category in which research psychologists have to register in order for them to be considered a research psychologist. This again raises the question as to why South Africa has this category, whereas other more developed nations in the world do not. There are job adverts for research psychologists overseas, even one with the CIA, however the requirement is a PHD in psychology rather than registration with a health professions board (CIA, 2015).

The HPCSA is not necessarily the only regulating body that people with training in research psychology could chose to join. Depending on their chosen profession, it is possible that instead of registering with the HPCSA, people who graduate with the skills of a research psychologist choose to register with other research related organisations instead. In addition, it is possible that they were once registered with the HPCSA as a research psychologist, however allowed their registration to lapse, either because they felt that they no longer needed the registration, or that another organisation was more suitable. There are a variety of different industry related research organisations that one can register with in South Africa, such as the South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA), the South African Marketing Research Association (SAMRA), or the South African Research & Innovation Management Association (SARIMA).

SAMEA is dedicated to developing the profession of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in South Africa. Its main objective is to create a communication platform that will enhance and develop the field of monitoring and evaluation in South Africa (Roefs, 2014). SAMRA is the main association for marketing research professions in South Africa. It was founded in 1963 when the profession was relatively new (SAMRA, 2014). It is a non-profit establishment with members from organisations that conduct marketing research, as well as independent members, on both the user and supplier side of marketing research. Their main objectives are to 'grow the marketing research, social research and opinion polling research industry', 'enhance quality and professionalism', and 'deliver stakeholder value' (SAMRA, 2014). SARIMA, on the other hand, is focused on economic and social development through research and innovation (SARIMA, 2015). It is possible that graduates have chosen to join organisations such as these that are more geared towards their profession than the HPCSA is.

It is also possible that former research psychology students are undertaking roles that fit the HPCSA scope of practice, however, are finding that registration as a research psychologist with the HPCSA is not a prerequisite for doing this type of work. It has been suggested that only students who wish to work with psychological tests would have a need to register with the HPCSA (Laher, 2005). However, the practice of psychometric testing, as previously mentioned, was historically used to justify Apartheid practices, and thus remains a highly controversial and mistrusted field (Foxcroft & Davies, 2005). One of the major issues of psychometric instruments is the applicability of westernized instruments in a highly socially, economically, educationally and culturally diverse and unequal nation such as South Africa (Foxcroft & Davies, 2005). This gives much justification to Pretorius' (2012) appeal for research psychologists to develop more appropriate measures. However, there is also an appeal for research to focus less on such structured, Eurocentric models focused solely on the development of psychometric tests, to rather be more community based, focusing on issues that are pertinent to the social development of South Africa (Rock & Hamber, 1994). There is also a plea for psychology to focus less on the clinical and medical discourse, and more on the societal issues faced by South Africans, including topics such as crime and violence, poverty, the HIV/AIDS problem, human rights and discrimination, ensuring adequate education and well-

being of students, and cross cultural interventions (Pretorius, 2012). Research in these areas could help govern policies that could aid in alleviating these issues, as well as directing resources to where they are needed the most. If research psychologists should be focusing their attention on community based, social issues, then the question of the relevance of having a 'Research Psychologist' category as part of a health organisation such as the HPCSA becomes of paramount importance (Abel & Louw, 2009). If psychological research is focused less on the clinical discourse, it is possible that this type of work can be done by anyone with appropriate social scientific research training with a psychological background, regardless of whether or not they are registered with a health organisation. Tracking these former students and examining their subsequent career paths, as well as their perceptions on the HPCSA registration category would thus assist greatly in providing information in this area, and reasons as to why so few are currently registered with the HPCSA.

Research on Research Psychology

Psychology in South Africa as a discipline is a topic that has not received a lot of attention, with a mere 1% of publications in the South African Journal of Psychology (SAJP) from 2007 to mid-2012 focusing on it (MacLeod & Howell, 2013). As mentioned by Fouche and Louw (2002), research psychology is particularly under-represented. There have not been very many studies done on this topic at all, creating a knowledge gap for this kind of research. Studies that have been found that are similar in nature, were conducted quite a number of years ago.

Many years ago Bedell and Phanyane (1998) conducted a study to present a discussion about employment opportunities for research psychology graduates, as well as where skills learnt during the degree could be useful, and provide various information, such as potential employers, to job seekers. To obtain data they employed various methods such as contacting potential employers, and searching through literature and job adverts. They identified a number of sectors that research psychology graduates could occupy, both public and private, such as government; marketing; human resources; NGO's and tertiary education (Bedell & Phanyane, 1998). Although they identified a number of positions that research psychology

graduates could occupy, such as market researchers; general researchers; training officers; business analysts as well as working in academia, they also mentioned employers did not specifically look for research psychologists, but rather people who possessed the skills learned during the course of the degree (Bedell & Phanyane, 1998). This indicates that while having a masters in research psychology is potentially valuable in the workplace, the title of 'Research Psychologist' is not necessarily required if one has the same skills.

In the same year as Bedell and Phanyane (1998), Richter et al. (1998) released an article about a study investigating employment opportunities for psychology graduates. Their study, however, was not limited to research psychology and instead focused on psychology in general, but similarly, focused on collecting data from newspaper adverts. They found a number of different job adverts for psychologists in areas such as human resources; research; education; social development and health, however they only discovered one advert that indicated that employers were specifically looking for a 'Research Psychologist'.

Subsequently, Fouche and Louw (2002) conducted a study examining psychology graduate students, as well as academic and non-academic psychologists. The main findings included determining that there was a shortage of psychologists that could speak an African language, as well as male psychologists. They also found that not many psychologists who were not academics had obtained a PhD. In addition, they found that the research psychology category was highly under-represented compared to the other categories, despite it supposedly forming the basis of psychology (Fouche & Louw, 2002). They suggested that there was a lack of career opportunities for research psychologists, and made recommendations as to how the category could be augmented. Ideas included placing more emphasis on training research psychologists rather than clinical or counseling psychologists, investigating job opportunities for research psychologists, and creating a more positive attitude towards the field.

As previously mentioned, Laher (2005) conducted a study examining the status of research psychology in South Africa. A number of data collection methods were used including asking universities about their programmes and former students, surveying people registered as research psychologists with the HPCSA, and consulting HPCSA

documentation. Results showed that although the field of research psychology still exists, HPCSA registration does not seem to be essential if one wants to pursue a career in research (Laher, 2005). Although the title of 'Research Psychologist' could be perceived to provide one with a certain amount of credibility, it did not seem to affect employment opportunities (Laher, 2005). She said that results showed that research psychology was currently sidelined in the country, and that more should be done to create awareness about the category and the roles it could play in moving psychology forward in South Africa (Laher, 2005).

Considering the lack of research on the discipline of psychology, and the questions surrounding research psychology as a sub-discipline, there is a major gap in knowledge surrounding this topic. This study could thus provide valuable insights into the relevance of research psychology as a discipline, as well as the relevance of the HPCSA category as it currently stands. The apparent lack of interest in this category makes one wonder what trained graduates in research psychology actually end up doing as a career, and question whether the category is a relevant category to have at all as part of a health organisation (Abel & Louw, 2009). Tracking former research psychology masters students and determining what sort of careers they ended up going into would provide valuable information to future students of psychology. Describing the demographic distribution of the sample could also aid in understanding whether transformation in this sub-discipline is being achieved.

Research Questions

With the above issues in mind, the following research questions were formulated.

1. **Career Paths**
    a. What career paths do former research psychology masters students report following, after completion of their degree?
    b. Why (according to their reports) do they follow these particular paths and what made them choose to pursue research psychology at a masters level?

2. **The HPCSA Registration Category**
    a. What are former research psychology masters students' reported HPCSA registration statuses regarding the category of 'Research Psychology', and what do they claim their reason for this is?
    b. Do participants perceive the HPCSA 'Research Psychology' category as a relevant category to have as part of the HPCSA, or not, and why?

3. **Transformation**
    a. To what extent (if at all) has demographic transformation been achieved among this group of psychology graduates?

Chapter 2: Research Design and Methods

Research Design

This study was conducted in a manner typical of a quantitative-descriptive study (Fouche & de Vos, 2005), however, the overall design of the study should be considered a mixed methods design, specifically, a concurrent mixed analysis (Onweugbuzie & Leech, 2004). A self-generated survey was created using a mixture of forced choice and open ended questions, and administered online to collect self-report data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). The study was considered descriptive as it examined an existing phenomena rather than trying to establishing a link between variables, or a cause and effect relationship as in correlational and experimental designs respectively (Salkind, 2006). Although the survey was administered in a typically quantitative manner in that it was administered online in a survey format with the objective of gaining as many responses as possible, a number of open ended questions were included to elicit more in-depth responses. It is thus a concurrent mixed analysis as the quantitative and qualitative data types were collected at the same time using the questionnaire, and analysed within the same analytical framework (Onweugbuzie & Leech, 2004). Mixed method research has certain advantages over traditional monomethodological research, such as having the ability to answer more complex research questions and providing a more comprehensive picture of the phenomena under investigation by viewing the data from different perspectives (Lund, 2012). It was suitable for this study due to the call for relatively straightforward closed ended questions, as well as the call for more detailed descriptions and in-depth answers from respondents.

Procedure

Firstly, permission from the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of the Witwatersrand was obtained. The survey was then finalized and created in SurveyMonkey. An online link was generated which could be sent to potential respondents. As the generated link was the same for everyone for anonymity

purposes, it was not possible to track which of those invited had or had not completed the survey. Providing personal details such as name and contact numbers for potential follow-up studies was voluntary, however, degree details such as year the degree was obtained, and university attended were requested for tracking purposes.

Once the survey link was generated, respondents were invited through a number of different methods. Lecturers from the University of the Witwatersrand, where the research was based, forwarded the email invitation to former students as well as colleagues at other universities. A snowballing strategy was utilised, thus everyone who received the email invitation was asked to forward it to anyone they knew that had completed the degree. Invitations were also placed on various social networking sites, namely LinkedIn and Facebook. In addition, respondents who had completed the degree and had profiles on LinkedIn were targeted and personally invited to participate. The HPCSA was not asked for a list of registered research psychologists to forward the invitation to, in case this skewed the sample. Lecturers at relevant departments at other universities were contacted and asked to forward the invitation to previous students, however, not all of them had kept a record of previous students.

In order to gain a rough idea of population size, an investigation was done to determine which South African universities offer a masters degree in research psychology, how long they had offered this degree, and how many graduates they produced each year. Unfortunately this information proved difficult to obtain as not all departments had this information and others were unable to disclose it. Nonetheless, a rough indication was given by those universities who could do so. The survey remained open until all possible avenues to gain responses were explored and responses reached saturation.

Sample and Sampling

The population for this study consisted of former students who had completed a masters degree at an institution in South Africa, which could lead to registration as a research psychologist with the HPCSA. Students who completed the degree since 2000, were targeted in order to obtain up to date information, however, no former

research psychology masters student since the promulgation of the category in 1974 was denied the opportunity to participate.

A purposive, snowballing sampling strategy was used to invite as many former students as possible. A purposive sample was appropriate as respondents were selected based on a specific characteristic, namely having completed a masters degree in research psychology, or equivalent degree, such as UNISA's MA Psychology (Research Consulting) or MARC programme, which could lead to registration as a 'Research Psychologist' (Haslam & McGarty, 2003). The type of sampling strategy that was used was classified as a non-probability sampling strategy (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013).

A number of Universities were contacted to determine the nature of their research psychology masters degree, and to gauge how many graduates they had produced from the degree from the year 2000 to when the data collection commenced in 2014. Some Universities such as UCT and Stellenbosch had offered HPCSA accredited research psychology masters degrees in the past, but had decided to stop offering the degree with accreditation so were thus excluded from the target population (UCT, personal correspondence, 01 September 2014; Stellenbosch University, personal correspondence, 09 September 2014). It was determined that six institutions currently offered HPCSA accredited research psychology masters programmes and had offered these degrees for a number of years, namely North West University (NWU), University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN), University of Pretoria (UP), University of South Africa (UNISA), University of the Western Cape (UWC), and University of Witwatersrand (WITS), so these universities were specifically targeted (HPSCA, personal correspondence, 06 October 2014).

The University of Pretoria (UP) provided an official record of the number of students that had completed the degree since 2000, which amounted to 84 (UP, personal correspondence, 06 February 2015). The sample size obtained post 2000 was twenty-two, with one respondent still in progress and three graduating before 2000. The North West University (NWU) could only provide official records since 2009, with the total number of graduates amounting to 45. Ten responses were gained from respondents since 2009, and one from an earlier year. The University of Kwa-Zulu

Natal (UKZN) could not provide official records, however, it was approximated that they had produced about 78 graduates since 2000. A sample size of eleven was achieved from this university, with one from a year prior to 2000.

From an article written by Deyzel and Faris (2010) as well as personal inquiries, it was estimated that the University of South Africa (UNISA) has produced approximately 134 graduates since 2000. Of the 25 UNISA respondents, one had graduated prior to 2000, and one had not yet graduated. The University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) has produced approximately 140 graduates since 2000, and a sample size of 38 was achieved from former students, with one graduating prior to 2000. The University of the Western Cape (UWC) produced 59 graduates since 2000, and a sample size of nine was achieved from this university.

A total of 122 usable responses were obtained from a population estimated to consist of approximately 540 people. The highest percentage of respondents were from the University of the Witwatersrand (n = 38 (21.1%)), followed by the University of Pretoria (n = 26 (21.3%)), and UNISA (n = 25 (20.5%)). Fewer responses were obtained from the other three accredited universities, namely North West University (n = 11 (9.0%)), the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (n = 11 (9.0%)), and the University of the Western Cape (n = 9 (7.4%)). Two responses (1.6%) were obtained from former Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit students. These students had completed their degrees before the university had amalgamated with the other academic institutions to become the University of Johannesburg, and were eligible to register with the HPCSA so were considered suitable respondents.

The majority of the sample had completed the bulk of their degree fairly recently. 14.8% (n = 18) had graduated in the year that the data collection commenced and were classified as ‘recent graduates’. 29.5% (n = 36) had completed their degrees since the year 2010, while 36.9% (n = 45) had completed their degrees in the late 2000’s from approximately 2005 to 2009. 10.7% (n = 13) had done their degree in the early 2000’s, while 6.6% (n = 8) had completed their degrees prior to 2000. Two respondents had not yet graduated but had completed the coursework components of their degrees, were working, and only had their research reports to submit. They were thus considered eligible to participate. The sample was thus relatively young with the

majority (n = 49 (32.8%)) being in the 25-29 year old age group, followed by the 30-34 year old age group (n = 33 (27.0%)). 20.5% (n = 25) were older than 35. As the respondents were relatively young, the majority could only provide information for one or two employment positions.

The sample had the gender bias commonly seen in psychology nowadays, with the majority being female (n = 98 (79.7%)). Only 19,7% of the respondents were male (n = 24). This is consistent with the 'feminisation' of psychology described by Richter and Griesel (1999), and Skinner and Louw (2009). There was also a racial bias in the sample, with the majority being White (n = 90 (73.2%)), followed by Black African (n = 13 ((10.6%)), Indian or Asian (n = 9 (7.4%)), and Coloured (n = 7 (5.7%)). Three respondents preferred not to disclose their race. The majority worked in Gauteng (n = 88 (72.1%)), followed by the Western Cape (n = 11 (9.0%)), Kwa-Zulu Natal (n = 8 (6.6%)), the Eastern Cape and the North West (n = 3 (2.5%)). 4.9% of respondents (n = 6) indicated that they currently worked outside South Africa, while 1.6% (n = 2) said that they worked across many different provinces.

As described earlier, the overall population size in question is approximately 540 people. The table below illustrates the population sizes per university as well as the number of responses obtained from each university. According to the guidelines set out by Strydom (2005b), a sample size of approximately 100 is suggested for a population size of 500. Thus, having a sample that consists of approximately 20% of the population is an adequate enough sample size to reflect a substantial proportion of the population. Although the number of responses obtained from the various universities differ, the overall number of responses is adequate as no cross-university comparisons were done.

Table 1
Frequency distribution of population and sample sizes from HPCSA accredited universities

	N	**n since 2000**	**n other**	**Proportion since 2000**
North-West University	45*	10	1	22.2%
University of Kwa-Zulu Natal	78	10	1	12.8%
University of Pretoria	84	22	4	26.2%
University of South Africa	134	23	2	17.2%
University of the Western Cape	59	9	0	15.3%
University of the Witwatersrand	140	37	1	26.4%
Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit	N/A	N/A	2	N/A
Total	*540*	*111*	*11*	*20.6%*

**Graduates since 2009*

Instruments

The only instrument utilised in this study was a self-generated online questionnaire. By creating a survey instead of using an existing measure, it ensured that the questions were tailored to address the specific aims of the study. The questionnaire contained a combination of closed ended, forced choice questions that could be analyzed quickly using statistical techniques, as well as open ended questions where detailed opinions could be provided (Haslam & McGarty, 2003). Demographic questions including gender, race, age, and university attended were included. These questions were required to produce data relevant to the research questions and aided in understanding the distribution of the sample and how representative it is of the South African population. Further questions such as geographical location of job by province, and income level were asked to provide potential students with additional pertinent career information, however, were not reported on in this particular piece of research. (Please see Appendix B for the questionnaire utilized in this study).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance to conduct the study was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee (non-medical) of the University of the Witwatersrand (Ethics clearance number: MPSYC/14/008 IH). (Please see Appendix E for ethical clearance certificate).

To ensure that informed consent (Strydom, 2005a) was obtained from the participants, a detailed invitation email introducing the researcher and explaining the purpose and nature of the project was included as the front page of the survey. (Please see appendix A). Participants were invited to participate in the research, and informed that participation in the research project was completely voluntary, and that there would be no negative consequences if they decided not to participate. Participation in the project would have no direct advantages or disadvantages to those taking part in it. Participants had the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any point up until submission of their response. Accessing, completing, and submitting the survey was considered informed consent to participate in the study.

There were no risks for participating in the study, no harm came to the participants, and participant details were kept strictly confidential (Strydom, 2005a). To safeguard anonymity, respondent personal details such as name and contact details were not connected to survey results, however, certain survey questions such as the name of the organisation they work for and job title could potentially compromise anonymity if the researcher coding the responses was particularly familiar with respondents. Responses were thus treated with utmost confidentiality and were reported as aggregate findings rather than individually. Although respondents had the option of providing contact details should they be interested in participating in any future studies, this was done via a separate survey link, which was not connected to their survey responses. IP addresses were deleted after the data had been transferred to the Excel spreadsheet. The data was stored in a password protected online dataset during and after collection, and in a password protected Excel file during and after analysis for as long as required. Contact details of the researcher were provided to the participants in case they had any questions or required any further information.

Data Analysis

Data was exported to Excel, cleaned, coded and prepared for analysis in SPSS. Open ended questions were analysed using thematic content analysis, which divided responses into categories in which similar themes were represented (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). Advantages of thematic analysis include flexibility, ease of use, and accessibility (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Additionally, it is useful for summarizing large amounts of data, which this study produced (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The use of open ended questions were particularly valuable in the study as they enabled the researcher to generate insights that could not be obtained from asking closed ended questions alone, producing more in-depth findings.

Descriptive statistics and frequency counts were utilised to explain the demographic characteristics of the sample (Howell, 2011). One-way frequencies were obtained for nominal variables such as gender, ethnicity, and age (Howell, 2011). In some cases, Chi-squared tests of association were used to establish associations. Chi-squared tests of association were utilised as the majority of questions produced nominal rather than numeric variables (Howell, 2011). Descriptive statistics and Chi-squared tests of association were used in conjunction with thematic content analysis to answer the research questions.

Each research question was addressed using different portions of the questionnaire, for example, questions 9-11 in the questionnaire were used to address the research question relating to career paths. Regarding the questions relating to the HPCSA registration category, survey questions 5 & 6 were used to address the question pertaining to individual registration status, while survey questions 7 & 8 were used to address the question of category relevance. This could make analysis prone to the second pitfall of thematic analysis as described by Braun & Clarke (2006), namely the use of data collection questions as themes. Thus great care was taken to ensure a sufficient amount of analysis and interpretation was conducted.

Chapter 3: Results and Discussion

Career Paths

What career paths do former research psychology masters students report following, after completion of their degree?

All respondents provided information for the most recent position that they had held. 59 respondents provided information for a second position (previous to the most recent one), 21 for a third, and nine and two for a further fourth and fifth position respectively. Some of the respondent's positions were combined due to similarity, while a few were deleted as they were not formal positions. Additionally, positions reported on that the respondent had occupied before the commencement of the degree, were deleted. The combined data from all the positions that every respondent had provided resulted in a total of 213 employment positions to be analysed.

Almost three quarters of the 122 respondents were employed full time (n = 86 (70.5%)). Some respondents indicated that they were employed part time (n = 14 (11.5%)) or self employed (n = 13 (10.7%)). Two respondents (1.6%) said they were working on a contract. Some respondents were studying, with four respondents indicating that they were PhD students (3.3%), while two (1.6%) had decided to pursue a different degree. Only one respondent (0.8%) was currently unemployed.

Respondents were asked to provide the name of the organisation they were employed by, their job title, as well as a brief job description. Categories describing the type of research work the respondents were doing was created using this information. A total of six research categories were identified, namely academia, corporate research, health or social research, monitoring and evaluation, marketing research and psychometrics or testing. Although these categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive, for example someone working in academia could have aspects of monitoring and evaluation included in their jobs, the employment positions were classified based factors such as employment setting, not only job description. In addition, a category was created for those who classified themselves as independent

researchers, as well as those who were no longer working in a research related position (non research career). Some respondents could not be classified into a research category as the nature of their research was confidential and they could not provide the name of the institution at which they worked (cannot disclose). These categories are listed below from largest to smallest, taking into account all the positions provided by all of the respondents. (For a detailed account of type of research for each job respondents provided information for, as well as the list of organisations classified under these categories, please see Appendix C, tables 14 to 20, as well as Appendix D, list 1).

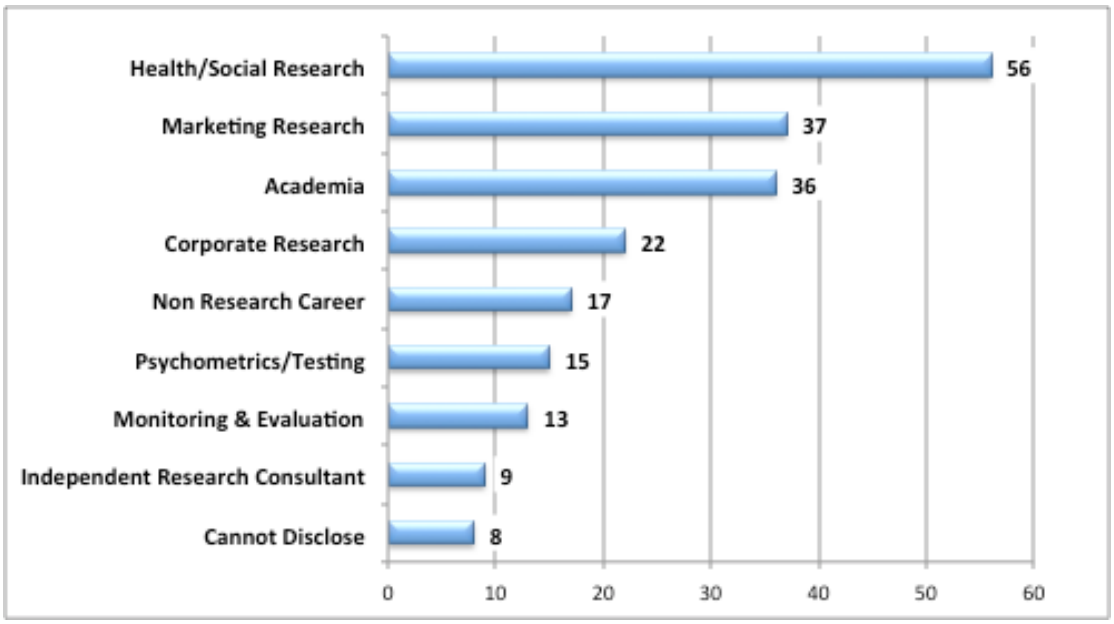


Figure 1

Bar chart illustrating the most common types of research graduates are involved in

Health/Social Research

The highest number of respondents were involved in health/social research. Health and social research were combined into one category as they are interrelated, for example, research done on topics such as HIV/AIDS will have both health and social implications. This is the type of research that would be deemed by Rock and Hamber (1994), and (Pretorius, 2012) to be more community based, focusing on the social development of South Africa, which is what is needed in the country.

Some respondents falling in this categories worked in university run initiatives, however, their work was related to social or health research rather than academia. Common institutes respondents worked at included the Medical Research Council, The Human Science Research Council, CAPRISA, Impact Research International, The Institute for Social and Health Sciences at UNISA, and the Perinatal HIV Research Unit.

Job titles typically included the word 'researcher' or 'research' in them, for example, 'Research Intern'; 'Junior Researcher'; 'Research Assistant'; 'Research Fellow'; 'Research Technologist'; 'Research Psychologist'; 'Project Researcher'; 'National Research Manager'; 'Research Associate'; 'Research Officer', 'Senior Research Specialist'; 'Research Project Manager'; and 'Research Unit Manager', to name but a few. Other titles in this category included 'Clinical Trial's Programme Manager'; 'Director of Programmes'; 'Project Co-ordinator'; and 'Public Health Specialist'. It should be noted that only two respondents identified themselves as 'Research Psychologists' even though thirteen respondents in the category were registered with the HPCSA. Others identified with broader categories, and called themselves 'Social Scientists', rather than 'Researchers'.

Some respondents were doing (or had done) their internships through one of these organisations. Junior level or intern researchers reported to have engaged in many stages of the research phase, including desktop research, literature reviews, data collection, data cleaning or analysis, writing reports and doing general administrative duties. Some also presented at conferences. Respondents in more senior level positions did more overseeing and management of projects, as well as supervision of junior researchers and drafting proposals.

Some respondents described the type of research they were engaging in, such as '*analysing national data on multi-drug resistant TB'*, and '*lead(ing) medical male circumcision efforts in South Africa*'. Respondents were involved in research concerning HIV/AIDS and TB, as well as interventions such as setting up peer support groups, and male and infant circumcision programmes. Respondents also engaged in research regarding general social science issues, community development and child safety programs. Topics mentioned also included doing social impact

assessments, assessing student risk behaviours and doing research involving crime, violence and injury prevention. Activities that meet the Department of Health definition of activities that should be conducted by research psychologists include conducting psychological research, monitoring and evaluating interventions and training and supervising of research psychologists (DOH, 2011).

Academia

Respondents whose type of research was classified as academia were those who worked at universities, engaging in activities such as lecturing or supervising students. Although a few respondents mentioned doing research as well as lecturing, and research is becoming an increasingly important part of academia, many of their reported job descriptions related more to education. Additionally, they were also situated in a university environment such as a psychology department. Quite a few of those currently working in academia had completed, or were currently completing, a PhD.

Many of the respondents were employed by the universities whose former students were targeted for this study, namely the University of the Witwatersrand; UNISA; the University of Pretoria; the North-West University; the University of the Western Cape; and the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. There were also responses received from people who had worked (or were currently working) at institutions such as the University of Cape Town, the Midrand Graduate Institute, Centurion Academy, the University of the Free State, Rhodes University and Monash University.

The most common job title was 'Lecturer' or some variation thereof, such as 'Senior Lecturer'; 'Guest Lecturer' or 'Part-time Lecturer'. Duties typically included preparing and conducting lectures, preparing, invigilating and marking tests and exams, developing courses, answering student queries, supervising students and doing research. Some respondents were doing (or had done) an internship at an academic institution, and other called themselves 'Researchers' or 'Research Assistants'. These respondents typically were involved in research projects, and some also had the opportunity to lecture and supervise students.

Marketing and Corporate Research

Marketing research and corporate research were also common categories. Even though they could both be classified as being in a corporate environment, they were separated due to the nature of the research. The type of research classified as 'marketing research', was typically done at marketing research suppliers, while a 'corporate researcher', on the other hand, were typically clients of marketing research agencies, i.e. a respondent who was working at the in house research department of a corporate company.

Marketing research agencies included Millward Brown, Ipsos, Ask Africa, BMI Market Research, Colluminate, TNS, AC Neilson and Research International. Typical job titles included 'Research Executive' or 'Senior Research Executive'; ' Key Account Manager', 'Research Analyst' and 'Researcher'. Many respondents indicated that they were involved in projects from start to finish, covering the entire research process. This would typically involve dealing with clients, writing proposals, designing questionnaires/discussion guides, conducting data analysis, compiling presentations and presenting back to the clients. Clients and products mentioned include media owners, automotive companies, telecommunication companies, FMCG's (fast moving consumer goods), media and brand health. As mentioned previously, the main association in the marketing research field is SAMRA, and it becomes apparent in the next section that some respondents working in Marketing Research opted to become a member of SAMRA instead of the HPCSA.

Regarding the 'corporate research' category, there was a much wider variety regarding job title, organisation, and job description. Job titles were varied, with only two overlapping titles, namely 'Research Manager', and 'Intern Research Psychologist'. Other titles included 'Brand Insight Specialist', 'Client and Market Insights Consultant', 'Client Experience Consultant', and 'User Experience Researcher'. Organisations ranged from banks, to retails stores, to telecommunication companies, to companies forming part of the media industry. Job descriptions in corporate research included more mention of strategy formulation and identifying consumer and media trends than in the marketing research category. Two of those currently working in Corporate Research had also completed some form of business related degree or course.

Psychometrics/Testing

The psychometrics / testing category was created based on the organisation name (a organisation specializing in psychometric testing) as well as the job description provided (included working with tests). Organisations in this category included JvR Psychometrics and the South African National Defence Force. Regarding job titles, there were quite a few 'Intern Research Psychologists' working in this domain. Other titles include 'Research Psychologist', Psychometrist', and 'Psychometric Advisor'. Many of the intern research psychologists were involved in test validation. Some respondents also did data capturing, test scoring and interpretation, and quantitative and qualitative research. Two respondents reported that they did research and development in psychometrics.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) was included as a separate research category as it seems to be an emerging profession, and quite a few respondents mentioned working in this discipline. Although some respondents classified in other categories, namely health/social research and academia, did mention monitoring and evaluation briefly as a small part of their job description, the respondents classified in this category worked predominantly in the M&E field. A description of what M&E is, is provided below.

> Monitoring is the regular observation and recording of activities taking place in a project or programme. It is a process of routinely gathering information on all aspects of the project and reporting on it, which enables the collected information to be used in making decisions for improving project performance. Evaluation is the process of determining the worth or significance of an activity in order to determine its relevance, efficacy of design and implementation, the efficiency or resource use, and the sustainability of results. The primary objective of an evaluation is to gain insight and assist in the identification of a future change (Regenesys, 2013).

Quite a few of the respondents classified in the M&E category worked at Khulisa Management Services. One of their main offerings is monitoring and evaluation services. Other organisations included the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment, Desmond Tutu HIV Foundation, and Feedback Research and Analytics. Job titles ranged from 'M&E Officer', 'M&E Researcher', and 'M&E Specialist', to

‘Intern/Research Assistant’, ‘Senior Associate’, and ‘Advisor: Programme Evaluation’. Respondents in this category had a variety of job descriptions including monitoring and evaluation, as well as other tasks such as qualitative and quantitative data analysis, writing evaluation proposals, as well as conducting fieldwork.

Non Research Careers and Independent Research Consultants

Some respondents had entered careers that had little or nothing to do with research, while others had started their own company, or worked independently as a freelance researcher. Those who had branched off from research worked in a variety of different industries, including software testing, human resource management, business and training consulting, and teaching. Some pursued a more therapeutic route by doing a different degree such as clinical masters, or working as a registered counsellor (in one case at an organisation typically classified in another category). Others had to keep their organisations name confidential.

Research Focused Career Paths

The degree of switching between types of research was also analysed to determine if respondents stayed on the same career path, or switched between different types of research activities. The majority of respondents who provided information for more than one position, stayed in the same type of research (n = 21 (35.6% of n = 59)), or followed a similar path (n = 15 (25.4% of n = 59)), such as health or social research to academia, or marketing to corporate research. 30.5% (n = 18 of n = 59) of respondents changed paths completely at least once, for example, going from academia to marketing research. Some paths could not be determined as organisation names had to be kept confidential. (Please see Appendix D, list 2 for a list of career paths students pursued).

There are thus a wide and diverse range of activities that one can pursue with a research psychology masters degree. While some respondents reported doing activities that relate to the Department of Health’s (2011) criteria, namely creating and applying research for psychological development, developing psychometric measures, conducting monitoring and evaluation interventions, training and supervising others and providing expert opinions, most job descriptions included

criteria that went above and beyond these activities, and stretched into fields beyond that of psychology, such as the marketing and media industries.

The fields that are most closely aligned with Department of Health's (2011), Laher's (2005), Rock and Hamber's (1994), and Pretorius' (2012) description of the activities of research psychologists are health/social research, monitoring and evaluation, psychometrics and academia. While some people in these fields did report conducting the activities mentioned above, many reported a broader scope of activities, indicating that the guidelines set out by the Department of Health (2011) are too restricted, as mentioned by Laher (2005). In addition, people who reported doing activities that related to the scope of profession of research psychologists were not necessarily registered, indicating that the jobs could be done by people with the same skills as research psychologists but not necessarily with the title.

Many respondents also steered away from careers that more closely matched the predefined roles of research psychologists and entered fields such as marketing research and corporate research. These fields focus less on topics related to the social needs of the country, and more on commercial success. The reasons as to why respondents chose these particular career paths is covered in the following section.

Why (according to their reports) do they follow these particular paths and what made them choose to pursue research psychology at a masters level?

The majority of respondents claimed to have only applied to research psychology when they applied for a masters degree (n = 86 (70.5%)). Some respondents also applied to clinical psychology (n = 30 (24.6%) and counselling psychology (n = 16 (13.1%)). Fewer respondents applied for educational (n = 3 (2.5%)) and another two for neuropsychology (n = 2 (1.6%)).

Respondents were then asked why they decided to do a research psychology masters degree. The open ended responses were coded into twelve different categories, representing the various reasons as to why respondents chose to do this degree. These reasons can be seen in the graph below and are not mutually exclusive as a single response could be categorised in more than one category.

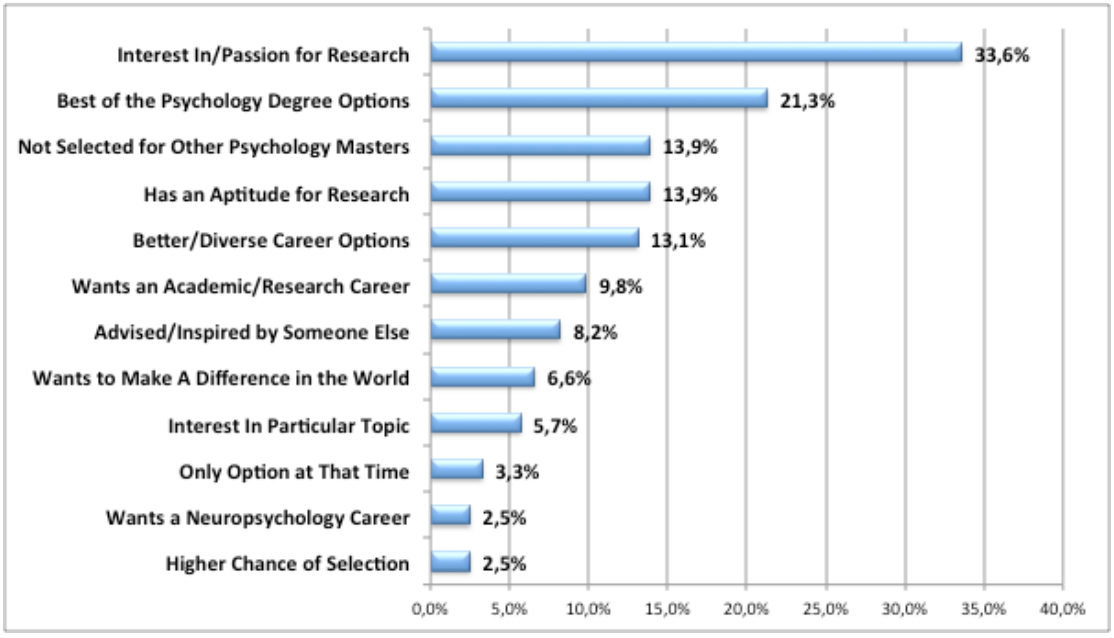


Figure 2

Bar chart illustrating the reasons why respondents chose to do a research psychology masters degree

The main reason respondents chose to pursue research psychology was because they reported simply having a passion for research (n = 41 (33.6%)). They reported being

interested in it, thoroughly enjoying the subject, and wanting to do it for the rest of their lives. Many respondents reported that, out of all the psychology options, they thought that research psychology was the best masters degree for them to do (n = 26 (21.3%)). These respondents reported not being interested in the clinical or counselling side of psychology, but still wanted to continue studying the topic and obtain a masters degree. 13.9% (n=17) of respondents said that they had an aptitude for research. Their specific skill sets were very well suited to research, so that was the direction they chose to go in.

These reasons support the idea posed by a number of scholars (Frank, 1984; Louw & Fouche, 2001; Vespia and Sauer, 2006), namely that the skills, aptitudes and preferences required to do research versus consulting with patients are different, and thereby require different types of people to flourish in a particular area of psychology, at least from the side of researchers as data from practitioners was not obtained. This is one of the main critiques of the scientist-practitioner model (Frank, 1984). The reasons provided by respondents indicate that people who are interested in research want to focus on research only, without a clinical aspect entering their activities. This thus suggests that those critiquing the scientist-practitioner model have valid cause, as it does not seem that those with a strong interest in research wish to divide their time between conducting research and tending to patients. They would rather just do research.

Although research psychology is perceived to be inferior to other areas of psychology, and seen more as a 'back up plan' than a first choice career path (Mdakane, 2013), only 13.9% of respondents said that they had entered this field because they had not been accepted for another psychology masters. Additionally, 70.5% of respondents claimed that they had only applied to research psychology, and not to any other psychology masters options. These results undermine this perception and show that there are people who would prefer a career in research rather than the more clinical options.

Other reasons respondents chose to do research include the belief that the degree led to better and more diverse career options (n = 16 (13.1%) than some of the other courses, and that they specifically wanted a career in research (n = 12 (9.8%)) rather

than any other field. Some respondents felt that they wanted to make a difference in the world (n = 18 (6.6%)) and thought that this would be better accomplished by doing research that could benefit many people rather than conducting one on one counselling which would only benefit one person at a time.

Respondents were also asked what factors encouraged them to accept their various employment positions. This open ended question was coded, and sixteen categories emerged from the thematic content analysis. The graph below displays all these factors from largest to smallest, taking into account all the positions provided by all of the respondents. The most common reasons were that they just needed a job to start earning money, they needed experience or exposure to a certain type of research, and that the particular job provided them with good opportunities, or better opportunities than a previous position.

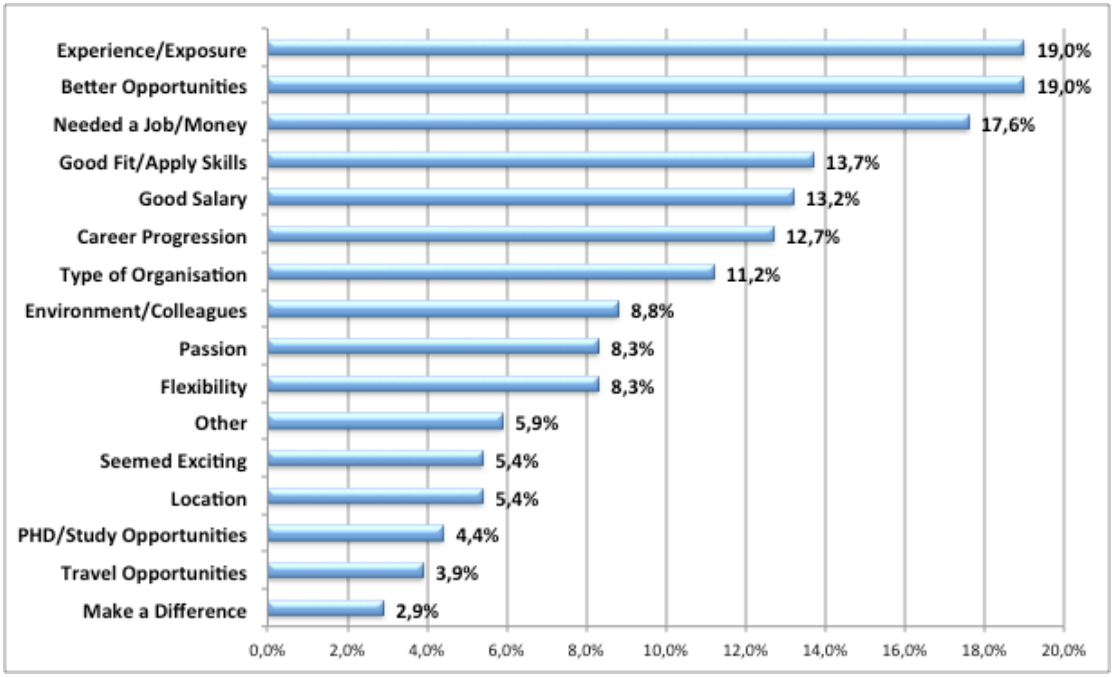


Figure 3

Bar chart illustrating factors that encouraged respondents to pursue specific careers

Factors for pursuing certain career paths differed slightly with the type of research respondents were doing. The most common factors influencing those in health/social research were the need for experience and exposure, (n = 13 (23.6% of n = 55)),

because they needed a job and money (n = 13 (23.6% of n = 55)), and the opportunities the career choice provided (n = 10 (18.2% of n = 55)). Those pursuing academia, on the other hand, did so mainly out of passion (n = 8 (23.5% of n =34)), for job flexibility (n = 7 (20.6% of n = 34)), career progression (n = 5 (14.7% of n = 34)) and the type of environment and people they would work with (n = 8 (23.5% of n = 34)). The opportunities for further study that the institution provided was also a common influencer (n = 8 (23.5% of n = 34)).

Those in marketing research pursued this career option mainly due to the experience and exposure that they would gain (n = 11 (30.6% of n = 36)) and the opportunities it provided (n = 7 (19.4% of n = 36)). Other factors included a good salary (n = 5 (13.9% of n = 36)), and the fact that they just needed a job and money (n = 6 (16.7% of n = 36)). In corporate research, the salary was also a common factor (n = 7 (32.8% of n = 22)), as well as the opportunities it provided (n = 10 (45.5% of n = 22)). Respondents involved in psychometrics did it for a number of reasons, the most common being that they needed a job and money (n = 5 (33.3% of n = 15)), for experience and exposure (n = 3 (20.0% of n = 15)), and the specific type of organisation they were working for (n = 4 (26.7% of n = 15)). Those doing monitoring and evaluation mainly reported doing so for the salary (n = 4 (33.3% of n = 12)), and to make a difference in the world (n = 3 (27.3% of n = 11)).

Some respondents had branched off from research and were doing something different. The main reasons for this were that the respondent either was offered a better opportunity (n = 4 (25.0% of n = 16)), or that they just needed a job (n = 5 (31.3% of n = 16)). Those who started their own companies or worked independently did so mainly because of the flexibility it provided (n = 4 (33.3% of n = 12)), and because there was a good fit between their skills and the job they were doing (n = 4 (33.3% of n = 12)).

The most common themes emerging from the reasons respondents provided regarding why they had chosen to do a research psychology masters degree were centered around the interest that respondents had in the field, and how the field was better suited to them than any of the other psychology options, as well as how their skill sets and aptitudes were a good fit with research. Additionally they mentioned that they

thought the field had a wide variety of diverse career options. As established in the previous research question, there are indeed a large number of different careers one can pursue with this degree. Another theme to emerge was how respondents wished to make a difference in the world and they thought that doing research psychology would enable them to do this. The number of people who felt that they were accomplishing this in their careers was however slightly fewer than those who wished to do it.

The most common themes emerging from the factors that encouraged people to accept a particular position were to gain experience and exposure to research as well as the opportunities that the position provided. Some respondents, however, indicated that they chose a particular position as they needed a job and money. While this is not in line with their expectations on choosing to do a research masters degree, it is obviously a valid reason for getting a job. It also indicates that there are jobs available for graduates, even if they are not exactly in line with what the graduate envisioned. Additional factors that encouraged respondents to accept a position were passion, and a good fit with their skills, which are more in line with what respondents expected going into the degree.

This section also established that while some respondents do report conducting activities in their jobs that are in line with the role that research psychologists are expected to play, many job descriptions include much more diverse activities. Additionally, respondents who claimed to be registered with the HPCSA conducted similar activities to those who were not. Perceptions regarding the HPCSA registration category for research psychologists will be examined in the following section.

The HPCSA Registration Category

What are former research psychology masters students' reported HPCSA registration statuses regarding the category of 'Research Psychology', and what do they claim their reason for this is?

HPCSA Registration Status

Of the 122 respondents, 30.3% (n = 37) claimed to be registered with the HPCSA as a 'Research Psychologist', while 16.4% (n = 20) claimed to be in the process of registering. 6.6% (n = 8) said that they were not currently in the process of registering but they intended to in the future. 27.0% (n=33) said that they had never been registered and never would register, while 19.7% (n=24) claim that they were registered with the HPCSA in the past but they had allowed their registration to lapse. So in total, just over half of the respondents (53.3%) were interested in an HPCSA registration, while the remainder were either never interested or had allowed their registration to lapse.

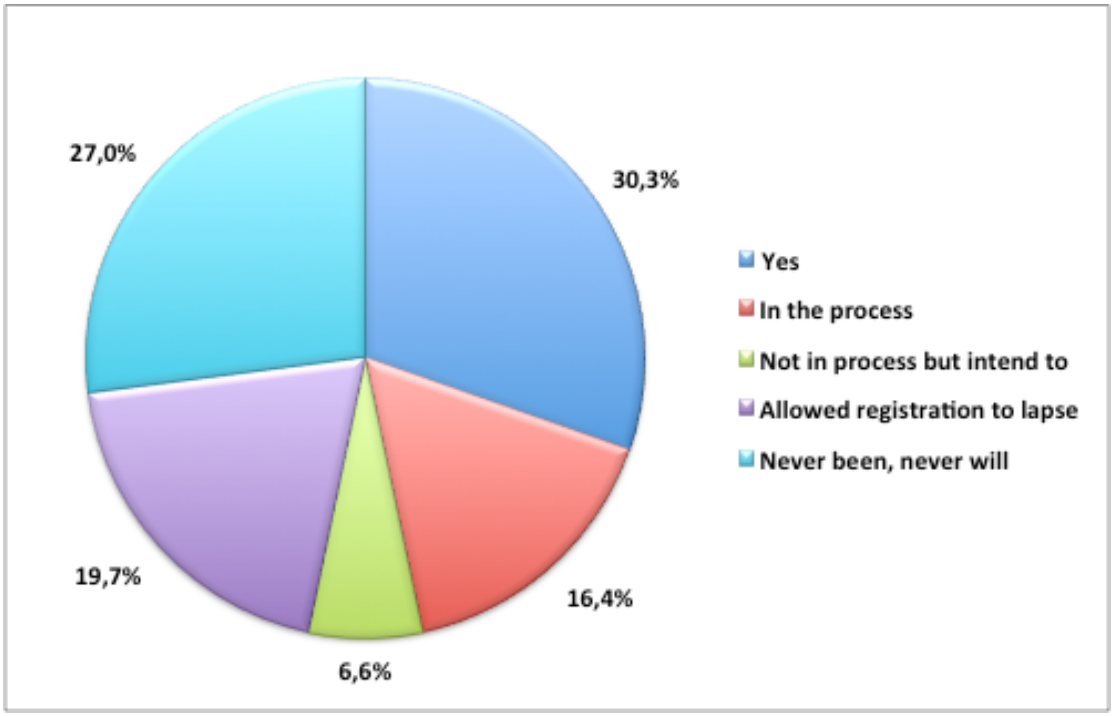


Figure 4

Pie chart illustrating whether or not respondents had registered with the HPCSA as a 'Research Psychologist'

As indicated previously, the population size was estimated to be approximately 540 people. Using historical data obtained from the HPCSA, as of December 2013 there were 226 registered research psychologists, while as of December 2014, this number had increased to 244. That means that should the estimation of the population size be accurate, approximately 41.9% - 45.2% of those graduating with a masters degree in research psychology should be registered with the HPCSA as a research psychologist. In this specific sample, only 30,3% claimed to be registered. This thus indicates that the sample slightly underrepresents those registered as research psychologists. This could however be due to a number of factors, including the relatively young age of the sample, meaning that they were still in the process of registering. The population size was also only a rough indication rather than an exact figure, so it is possible that the population is larger than the estimated 540, especially taking into account those graduating before the year 2000, who were not included in the estimated population size as well as those who had completed their degree at the North West University prior to 2009 as this data could not be obtained. It is thus likely that the actual population, namely those who have completed a masters degree that could lead to registration as a research psychologist with the HPCSA, is larger than the estimated number. Nonetheless, there were people from all registration statuses present in the sample. The factors that influenced their decision whether or not to register, or whether to let their registration lapse will be examined in the following section.

Regarding reported job titles, even though many respondents were registered with the HPCSA, not many actually called themselves a 'Research Psychologist'. Only sixteen respondents indicated that they had used the job title 'Research Psychologist' or 'Research Psychology Intern' in any of the job positions they had reported on. Of these, ten were currently registered, five were in the process of registering, and one had allowed their registration to lapse. Of the fifteen who had registered or were in the process of registering, nine were currently using the title 'Research Psychologist', or 'Intern Research Psychologist', one had a dual title, namely 'Research Psychologist and Internal Evaluator', while the remaining five had completely different titles. Of these remaining ten, six were currently working in the field of psychometrics, three in academia, and one as an intern in corporate research. This thus indicates that even though respondents could use the title 'Research Psychologist' as their job title, not many of them report doing so. This could of course be because a job title, in many

cases, is dictated by the employer rather than the employee. Nonetheless, it indicates that very few employers explicitly use the label 'Research Psychologist' for positions that are in practice, occupied by registered research psychologists. This is in line with what Bedell & Phanyane (1998) found in their study, namely that employers are not specifically looking for 'Research Psychologists' but rather people who have those skills. Respondents that do use 'Research Psychologist' as their job title mainly work in the field of psychometrics. It thus seems that the title of 'Research Psychologist' is not really relevant unless one is involved in a specific field, namely psychometrics.

Reasons for Registration Status

In addition to the closed ended question regarding their registration status, respondents were also asked what influenced their decision to register or not to register as a research psychologist. This was an open ended question. Various themes were identified and coded accordingly. Many respondents provided more than one reason as to why they had or had not registered. Below is a graph depicting all the reasons provided, for all respondents and registration statuses. (Please see Appendix C, tables 8 and 9 for full statistics).

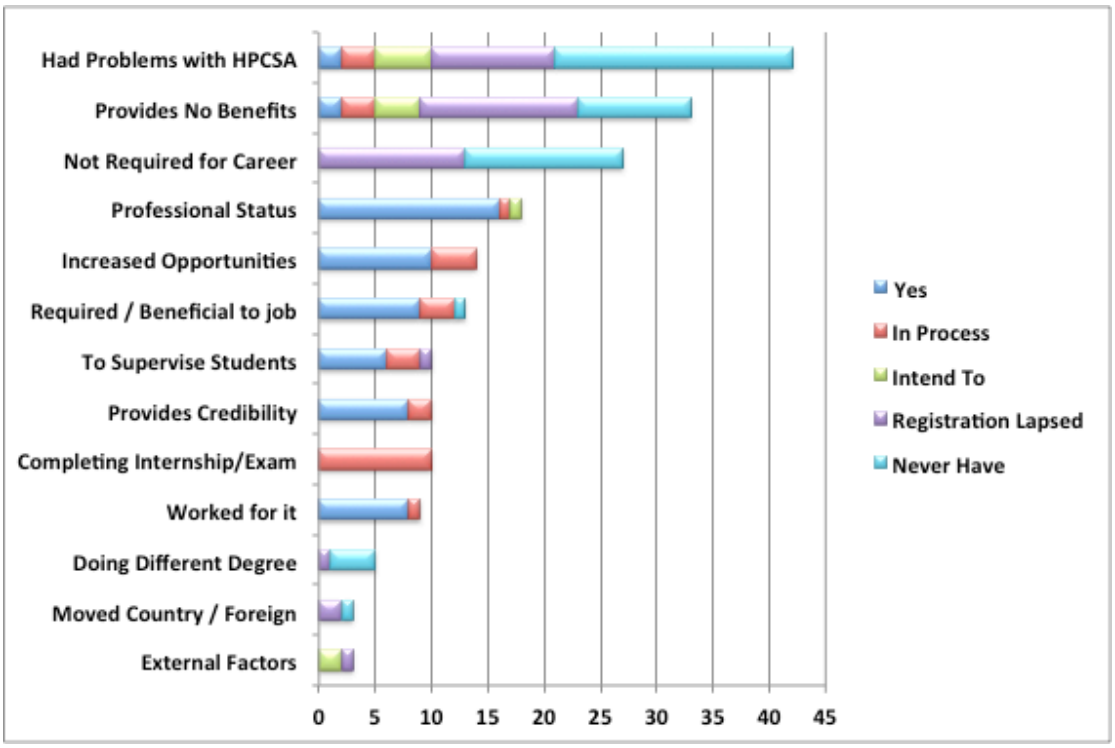


Figure 5

Stacked bar graph illustrating the reasons as to why or why not respondents had registered with the HPCSA as a 'Research Psychologist'

Many respondents (n = 42 (39.5%), despite their registration status, mentioned experiencing problems with the HPCSA. The most common problem described was the difficulty with the process of registration and dealing with the HPCSA. Many respondents said that it was very difficult to communicate with the HPCSA and get any information from them. There was also a concern about the fees. Respondents claimed that the fees were too high and that the HPCSA did not offer much in return. There was also a problem with the lack of CPD courses offered to retain registration. Additionally, there were many comments about experiencing problems with internships. This adds to the problems experienced with the HPCSA, as the HPCSA is the body that is responsible for approving the internship. Problems included not being able to find a well paying internship, as well as experiencing difficulty in having an internship approved.

Of the respondents who claimed to be registered as a research psychologist, (n = 37, n = 32 provided a reason), the most commonly mentioned reason was that it provided professional status (n = 16 (50.0% of n = 32)). Respondents indicated that they

wanted to have a professional identity, they thought that the extra qualification looked good on their CV, and they wanted to have the ability to call themselves a 'Research Psychologist'. However, as established in the previous section, although some respondents can call themselves a 'Research Psychologist', not many actually use the title as their job title is different. Respondents also indicated that they thought that registering might increase opportunities for them (n = 10 (31.3% of n = 32)). They claimed it could widen their scope of practice, increase work opportunities and provide more options. Others claimed that it was required or beneficial for their job (n = 9 (28.1%% of n = 32)). It was a requirement for employment at some institutions (such as the Military Psychological Institute), as well as for some of the research that respondents were doing. Two respondents working in the field of psychometrics indicated that it was a requirement for their jobs.

A number of respondents (n = 6 (18.8% of 32)) specifically mentioned that they needed to be registered in order to supervise students. These respondents were currently working in either the health/social research segment, or in academia. According to the HPCSA, a requirement for completing an internship is to be supervised by someone who is currently registered as a research psychologist. This is thus one thing that only a registered research psychologist can do. If there was not a category in which to register, this reason to register would slide away. Another reason that could slide away if the category did not exist was the idea that the respondent registered because they had worked hard to (n = 8 (25.0% of n = 32)). They felt that they had put in a lot of effort into their degree, and it was only right to complete the process and register. This indicates that registering could be justified merely because the category exists and people went through the internship process so felt it was right to complete the process, rather than because it has any actual value. On the other hand, some respondents (n = 8 (25.0% of n = 32)) indicated that the title provided credibility.

Despite registering, some respondents also claimed that it provided no benefits (n = 2 (6.3% of n = 32)) and said that they had experienced problems with the HPCSA (n = 2 (6.3% of n = 32)), indicating that although they had registered, they did not necessarily feel that it is worthwhile. This is illustrated in the comment below. The respondent indicated that they registered as they believed it provided professional

status, however, they exemplified the idea that there are not other benefits attached by capitalising the word 'any'.

> I am registered as I believe it provides some professional recognition, although it does not have ANY other benefit.

On the other end of the spectrum are those that claimed that they had never been registered as a research psychologist, and that they never would be (n = 33 (27.0% of n = 122)). The main reason they described were problems that they had experienced with the HPCSA (n = 21 (63.6% of n = 33)). Some respondents described how they had tried to register, however, had not been able to complete the process due to the difficulties that they experienced, such as the HPCSA sending correspondence to the incorrect email address or not at all, having the HPCSA not recognize their internship, and the general tedious administration process that they had to try and go through in an attempt to register.

Other prominent reasons for not registering included registration not being required for their career (n = 14 (42.4% of n = 33)), and that it provided no benefits (n = 10 (30.3% of n = 33)). Those who said it was not required for their career were from all the predefined disciplines except psychometrics. This is in line with Laher's (2005) suggestion that only students intending on working with psychometric tests would need to register with the HPCSA.

Some respondents had gone on to pursue another degree so saw no need to register (n = 4 (12.1% of n = 33)), while one was foreign and did not intend on staying in South Africa. One respondent had never registered due to the *'byzantine administration process inside the HPCSA'* among many other reasons, however had subsequently seen some job adverts asking for registered research psychologists so thought that it was a *"technicality"* that may help the person get jobs.

The main reasons why respondents had allowed their registration to lapse (n = 24 (19.7% of n = 122) were similar to those that had never registered in the first place, namely that they had experienced problems with the HPCSA (n = 11 (45.6% of n = 24)), that it was not required for their career (n = 13 (54.2 of n = 24)), and that it

provided no benefits (n = 14 (58.3% of n = 24)). Two respondents had allowed their registration to lapse as they had moved country and no longer needed it. As discussed previously, South Africa is the only country to have the category of 'Research Psychology', and although it is a term that is used overseas, registration with a health organisation is not necessary.

The problems with the HPCSA as described by these respondents were largely centered on the expensive fees to maintain registration, the difficulty in dealing with the HPCSA and difficulty obtaining CPD points. The majority of those who claimed it was not necessary for their career currently worked in the marketing research environment (n = 6 of (46.2% of n = 13)), followed by corporate research (n = 3 (23.1% of n = 13)). One respondent described how they had not seen the point in registering until a colleague had mentioned that they could be a mentor (supervise students) and attract new talent to the company.

The remaining respondents were either in the process of registering, or not in the process but intended to at some stage. Of those who were in the process of registering (n = 20 (16.4% of n = 122)), the main reason was that they were still completing their internship or still had to write the board exam (n = 10 (50% of n = 20)). Other reasons overlapped with the reasons mentioned by those already registered with respondents mentioning both positive and hindering aspects of registering. A few were not currently in the process of registering but intended to in the future (n = 8 (6,5% of n = 123)). The main reason was due to problems with the HPCSA (n = 5 (62.5% of n = 8)). Respondents also claimed that registration provided no benefits (n = 4 (50.0% of n = 8)). Other reasons included experiencing problems with their internships (n = 2 (25.0% of n = 8)), as well as external factors (n = 2 (25.0% of n = 8)) such as prioritizing other activities.

There are thus various opinions surrounding registering with the HPCSA as a research psychologist. On the one hand, respondents thought that it was valuable to have a title and professional identity that differentiates them from others, while on the other hand, the title and the ability to supervise students seemed to be the only benefits that registering in the category provides. Many respondents indicated that registering in the category provides no benefits but rather incurs unnecessary costs. Many people

reported experiencing some sort of problems with the HPCSA and indicated a sense of frustration with the organisation. What should have been a relatively simple process did not seem to be, and in some cases, people who had intended to register were put off and decided not to. Below are the responses from two such respondents.

> I registered as a student but internship registration was fraught - many errors on the side of the HPSCA and too much conflicting information. No one would respond to queries in a helpful manner. Registration fees are costly and the HPCSA does not seem to cater much to research psychology/ists.

> I did intend to register with the HPCSA and therefore did complete the necessary research psychology internship. I registered to write the board exam twice. The first time the HPCSA sent the exam notice to the wrong email address. I received this by post but it arrived after the exam had already taken place. I asked to be allowed to write the next exam and they confirmed that I would write in February; however, I never received any further correspondence after that despite numerous attempts to follow up. I eventually grew tired of the HPCSA's incompetence and gave up.

Both of these respondents had intended to register as a research psychologist, but did not end up registering. One had registered as a student but had difficulties advancing from the student to the intern phase, while the other had completed an internship but experienced communication difficulties while trying to write the board exam and did not complete the process. This indicates that the discrepancy between the number of people who are eligible to register and who actually do may not be because they do not wish to, but rather because the process they have to go through is fraught with too many complications. It is possible that should the HPCSA put measures in place to ensure a smoother registration process, more people would be registered.

It is also possible that people are not registering due to the seeming inappropriateness of this category falling under a health professions organisation, as suggested by Abel and Louw (2009). Indeed, this is articulated by the response below.

> There is no relevance in the scope of practice. The board does not seem to understand what research psychologists do. I refuse to be bound to an organisation that takes the role of regulator when they don't understand what they are regulating.

As established in a previous section, although there is a defined scope of practice relating to the perceived activities of a research psychologist, many job descriptions incorporate more activities than the ones specified, and some respondents did not report conducting any of the activities laid out in the scope of practice. Additionally, some respondents did report conducting some of the activities laid out in the scope of practice, however were not registered as research psychologists. There thus seems to be a disconnect between what the HPCSA understands as the role of a research psychologist, and what activities are being conducted by research psychology graduates. The closest fit is in the field of psychometrics, however this is a rather small field compared to some of the other fields such as academia, marketing research and health and social research. The HPCSA is essentially a board that regulates health care professional that provide services to the public, such as doctors, dentists, dieticians and therapists (HPCSA, 2013). Even though a person may be conducting research into various health issues, they are not necessarily dealing directly with patients or providing care to them. The fact that research psychologists are not health care providers raises a question as to how good a fit it is for them to be registered with a health professions board (Abel & Louw, 2009). Perceptions around the relevance of having a research category falling under a health organisation will be examined more closely in the next section.

Do participants perceive the HPCSA 'Research Psychology' category as a relevant category to have as part of the HPCSA, or not, and why?

Of the 122 respondents, 47.5% (n = 58) believed that the category was a relevant category to have in the HPCSA, 23.8% (n = 29) did not think it was a relevant category, while 28.7% (n = 35) were unsure.

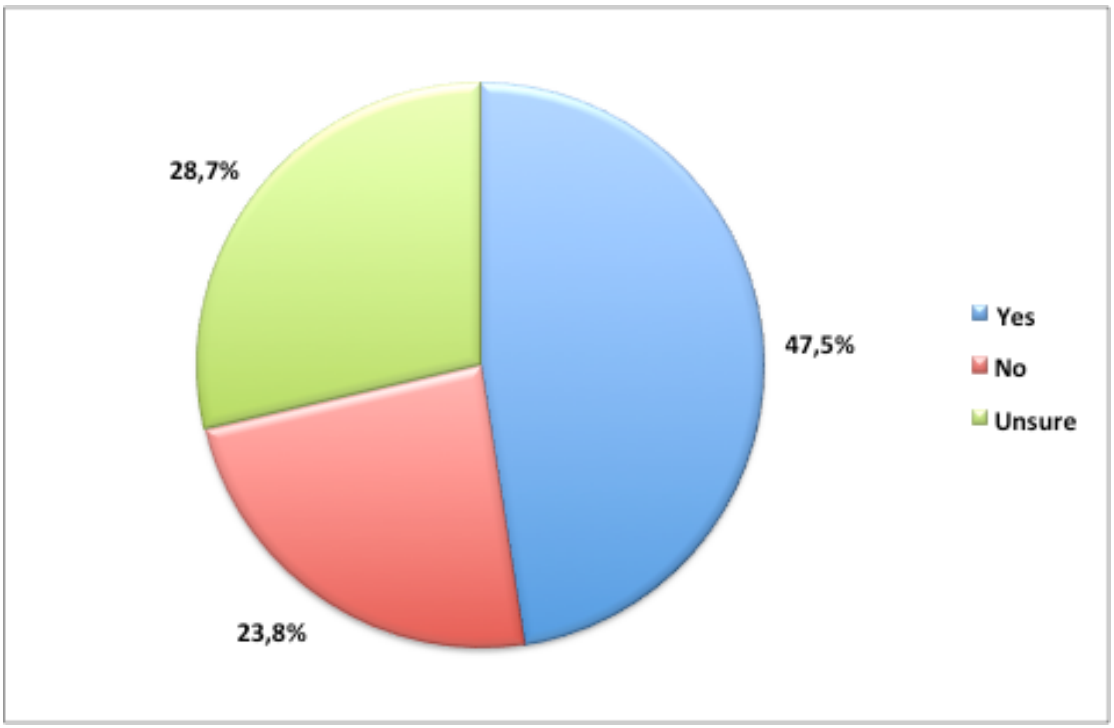


Figure 6

Pie chart illustrating the number of respondents who thought that the 'Research Psychology' category was a relevant category to have in the HPCSA.

This graph shows that respondents are fairly evenly split between those that do believe the category is relevant, and those who are doubtful about it. As 53,3% of respondents indicated that they either were registered or had an intention to register, respondents could be biased in their opinions regarding the HPCSA. To ascertain whether or not respondents were at all influenced by their registration status, a Chi-squared test of association was conducted to establish whether or not there was an association between registration status and those who were seemingly favourable to the idea of registering (i.e. were currently registered, were in the process or intended to) or those who were not (i.e. had never registered or let their registration lapse).

Results showed a statistically significant Chi-squared test of association X^2 (df = 2, n = 122) = 8.671, p = 0.013. Judging from the graph below, it does seem as though those that were registered or were in the process of registering with the HPCSA were more favourable towards the relevance of the category than those who were not registered. This bias should be acknowledged when interpreting the results.

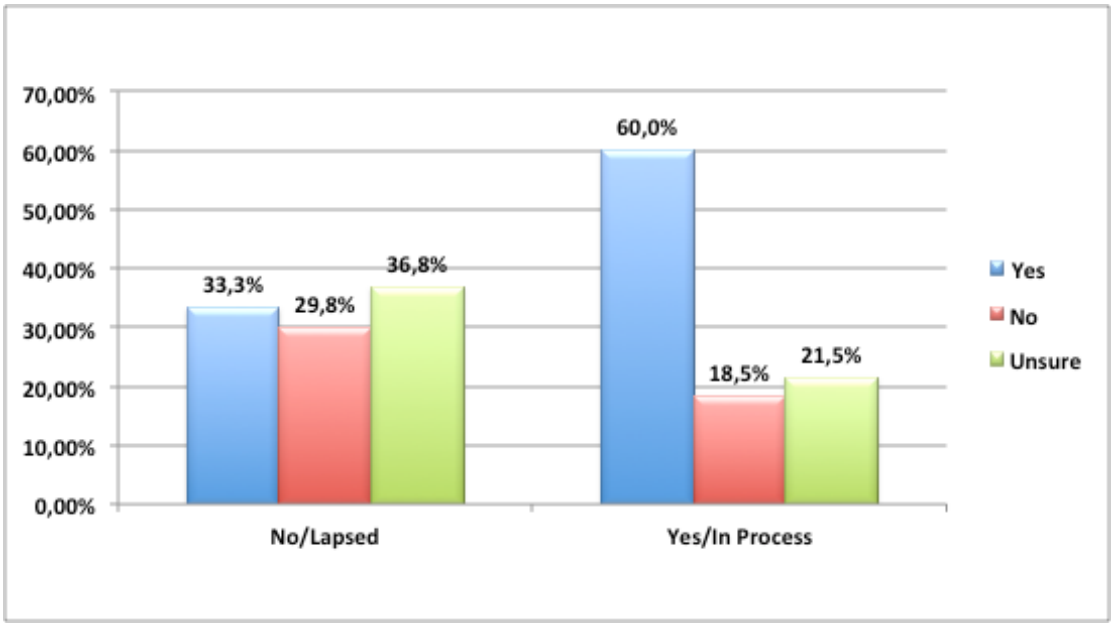


Figure 7

Column graph illustrating the relationship between HPCSA registration status and perceived relevance of the HPCSA category for 'Research Psychology'

In addition to the forced choice question, respondents were asked why they felt this way about the HPCSA 'Research Psychology' category. This was an open ended question, which was coded in a similar fashion to the previous question. The data, however, was split between reasons supporting the relevance of the category, and reasons against the relevance of the category, and presented and discussed accordingly. (There were some incidences where the same respondents pointed out both supporting factors and non supporting factors, despite where they stood regarding whether the category was relevant or not).

The graph below reflects reasons in support of the relevance of 'Research Psychology' as a HPCSA category. (For a full set of coded responses, please see Appendix C, tables 11 and 12).

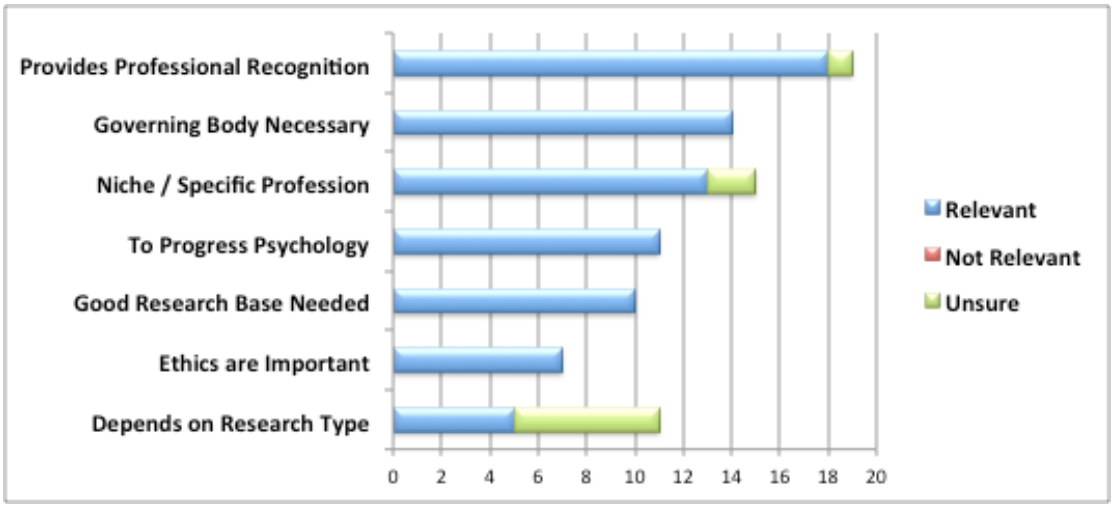


Figure 8

Stacked bar graph illustrating the reasons supporting the relevance of the HPCSA 'Research Psychology' category

The most common reason given by respondents supporting the category was that it provided professional recognition (n = 18 (32.1% of n = 56)). People registered as a research psychologist would have professional status as a psychologist. Additionally, respondents thought it provided credibility and thought that having a professional status set them apart from other researchers and proved that they had to put in a considerable amount of effort to obtain that status. While this theme indicates that some people are in support of the registration category, it does not completely address the relevance of the category forming part of a health professions board. Respondents seem to want recognition as a professional, and see the HPCSA 'Research Psychology' registration category a means of providing that. This is an example of how an individual's registration status could affect perceived relevance, as of the nineteen people citing this reason, fourteen were registered or in the process of registering with the HPCSA. Nonetheless, it does indicated that the HPCSA 'Research Psychology' category is considered valuable by some people.

Another theme to emerge was the perceived need to have a governing body to regulate the profession (n = 14 (25.0% of n = 56)). Respondents claimed that research psychologists should have a controlling body to answer to, as well as to assist in growing and standardising the profession. It could also provide protection, for both

the users of, and the suppliers of research. A few respondents (n = 7 (12.5% of n = 56)) commented on the importance of ethics and how the HPCSA could regulate and assist with any ethical issues that may arise, especially when researchers interact with human subjects. Ethical conduct is an important consideration when doing research, and having an ethical code to adhere to would protect people from potential psychological harm. However, other professional bodies such as PsySSA and SAMRA also have ethical codes that members have to adhere to. Being a member of another organisation could suffice in this regard, especially as many researchers deal with human subjects, not only those researching in the field of psychology.

Many respondents said that research psychology is a niche/specific profession and should be considered as such (n = 13 (23.2% of n = 56)). It is a specific profession with its own skill sets, and should be recognized as a distinct profession, as well as part of the field of psychology. Respondents also said that research psychology played an important part in progressing psychology (n = 11 (19.6% of n = 56)) and that a good research base, especially regarding strong research skills, was needed in the field of psychology (n = 10 (17.9% of n = 56)). The underlying meaning was that research skills are scarce, and psychology should have a good foundation, provided by research psychologists, in order to develop psychological theories and progress psychology in South Africa. A comment that epitomises this feeling is presented below.

> Social sciences are becoming more relevant in our society, which is dynamic with challenges that are influencing our socio-economic development as a whole. In my personal experience, most qualified psychologists (counselling clinical) operate within private practices or corporate fields and fewer are involved in responding to challenges facing communities in South Africa. Research psychologists are qualified (and in demand - and should be more utilized) to engage in communities either from the corporate social investment sector, government, etc.

These themes and commments relate to the scientist-practitioner model and how psychologists are trained. In accordance with the scientist-practitioner model, all psychologists should be both practitioners and researchers (Drabick & Goldfried, 2000), however, while simple in theory, this does not always occur in reality. The

comment above suggests that those qualified in therapeutic roles tend to operate in private practice rather than address social issues, which is better suited to research psychologists anyway. Research and theory development thus seem to be left to research psychologists who appear to be picking up the 'scientist' part of the scientist-practitioner model. Instead of the same person embodying both parts of the Boulder model, it seems to be divided up between researchers and practitioners.

In essence the scientist-practitioner model is not really being practised in the country in the way that it was intended. According to Delport and de Vos (2005), attempting to combine the role of scientist and practitioner has not proven to be succesful. This may not necessarily be a bad thing considering the critiques of the model, namely that there is no need for clinicians to do research and clinicians and researchers have diferent skill sets (Frank, 1984), as well as the growing divide between scientific and academic psychology, and therapeutic practical psychology (Rice, 1997). It thus seems plausible that research psychologists are in a different category to therapeutic psychologists and that they are responsible for conducting research while therepeutic psychologists tend to patients.

While the reasons provided by resondents are in support of the existance of a 'Research Psychology' category as part of the HPCSA, they do not all engage with the relevance of the category forming part of a health professions organisation as questioned by Abel and Louw (2009). It is possible that many respondents were favourable towards the category and perceived it as relevant because they were part of it (67% of respondents who siad the category was relevant were themselves registered, or in the process of registering, as a research psychologist). A couple of respondents did, however, claim that the relevance of the category was dependent on the type of research that was being conducted. (n = 5 (5.3% of n = 56)). For example, the category would be relevant for someone conducting psychological research, however, not relevant for someone conducting marketing research. Examining responses from those who did not perceive the category to be relevant, and those who were unsure, would provide more insights into relevance issues than the reasons provided by those who supported the category.

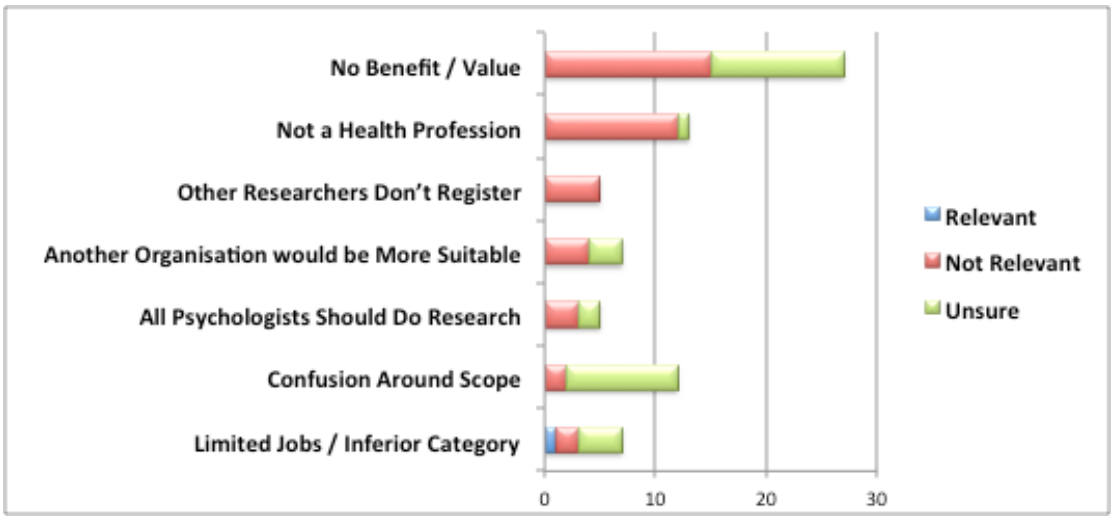


Figure 9

Stacked bar graph illustrating the reasons against the relevance of the HPCSA 'Research Psychology' category

As there were many other overlapping themes between those who said that the category was not relevant, and those who were unsure, these reasons were examined together. Percentages relating to the entire sample were thus provided instead of those who only perceived the category to be relevant as in the previous section.

The most prevalent theme was that the category provides no benefits (n = 27 (23.5% of n =122). Respondents felt that they could do the same jobs without having registered with the HPCSA, and that it seemed like a waste of money for no reason. Some respondents perceived the category to have no value as an HPCSA practice number was not required to pursue a career in research psychology. Thus the category was not relevant as part of the HPCSA.

Respondents also indicated that research is not a health profession so should not be classified under a health organisation (n = 13 (11.3% of n = 122)). This is exactly in line with what Abel and Louw (2009) suggest when questioning the suitability of having the categories of 'Research Psychology' and 'Organisational Psychology' falling under the HPCSA. A comment illustrating this idea is presented below.

> Research Psychology spans far more than "health professions". It also feels disconnected from mainstream psychology which has counselling at its core. It

> should have its own organisation with which to be registered, along with other research professions.

This suggests that not only is the 'Research Psychology' category a bad fit with the HPCSA, it also encompasses more than what a typical health profession would. As discussed in a previous section, there are many career paths that a research psychologist could pursue, some of which are not related to health at all, such as marketing and corporate research.

This particular respondent also suggested that research psychologists should have their own organisation in which they, and other research professions, can be registered. These types of organisations already exist, such as SAMRA, SAMEA, and SARIMA which are more industry specific. Other respondents did suggest that registration with another organisation would be more appropriate (n = 7 (6.1% of n = 122)). Respondents also made the point that researchers in other fields do not have to register, so they did not see why it was necesssary to register as a researcher in the field of psychology (n = 4 (4.3% of 122)).

Some respondents mentioned that the category was not relevant as all psychologists should be doing research (n = 5 (4.3%)). In other words, psychologists should adhere to the scientist-practitioner model. These respondents seem to be in favour of the scientist-practitioner model, despite the critiques of the model as presented by various authors such as Frank (1984), as well as the proposed seperation of the professions (Rice, 1997). There is thus a sense of discord among respondents regarding research psychology itself. While some respondents indicate that research psychology should be separate from therapeutic/health psychology, others seem to be in support of a scientist-prectitioner model in psychology. This indicates a sense of confusion about the category, even amongst those eligible to occupy it.

There was indeed a lot of confusion around the category as indicated by respondents. (n=12 (10.4% of n=122)). Respondents were not sure what a research psychologist did, and mentioned that they found the scope of practice vague and limited. Additionally, responses indicated that the HPCSA did not really understand what the category was themselves, thus contributing to the confusion. As discussed in a

previous section, many respondents did report conducting activities that went above and beyond the official scope of practice. A few respondents also indicated that the category was not relevant as there were limited jobs that specified the need for a 'Research Psychologist', and that it was not taken as seriously as other psychology categories (n=7 (6.1% of n=122)). This is not overly surprising considering that South Africa is the only country in which such a category exists. Suprisingly, only one respondent mentioned this when asked about the relevance of the category. This indicates that people who are eligible to occupy the category do not really question its existance in relation to how the rest of the world operates. South Africa is unique in having a category for researchers forming part of a health organisation, but not many people who could potentially be part of the category seem to realise this.

The relevance of having a research category falling under a health professions organisation, as called into question by Abel and Louw (2009), thus does seem to be a contentious issue, and one worthy of further investigation. (The fact that some universities have renounced the idea of an accredited degree altogether, and still attract students who go on to pursue successful careers, adds fuel to the idea that the research psychology category as part of the HPCSA is not necessary to pursue a career in research). Some respondents did touch on issues that question the relevance of the category, such as research psychology not being a health profession, and that all psychologists should be doing research anyway, however others did not seem be concerned with it.

Transformation

To what extent (if at all) has demographic transformation been achieved among this group of psychology graduates?

To answer this question, the demographic distribution of the sample obtained in the study was examined, as well as statistics received from the HPCSA (Personal correspondence, HPCSA, 16 July 2015).

The below tables represent the demographic breakdown regarding race and gender for both those who are currently registered as a research psychologist with the HPCSA, as well as those who are registered as intern research psychologists.

Table 2
Demographic breakdown of people registered as Research Psychologists with the HPCSA

	Female	**Male**	**Total**	**Proportion**
African	12	7	19	7.7%
Coloured	16	4	20	8.1%
Indian	13	2	15	6.1%
None	25	21	46	18.6%
White	115	32	147	59.5%
Total	*181*	*66*	*247*	*100.0%*

Table 3
Demographic breakdown of people registered as intern Research Psychologists with the HPCSA

	Female	**Male**	**Total**	**Proportion**
African	17	3	20	20.6%
Coloured	14	0	14	14.4%
Indian	13	1	14	14.4%
None	1	0	1	1.0%
White	37	11	48	49.5%
Total	*82*	*15*	*97*	*100.0%*

Following the trend towards the feminisation of psychology (Richter & Griesel, 1999; Skinner & Louw, 2009), females, make up 73.3% of the population of research psychologists of South Africa. White females specifically make up almost half (46.6%) of the total number. Regarding race, in total, white people make up 59.5% of research psychologists in South Africa. There does not seem to be much representation from other racial groups such as Black Africans (7.7%), Coloureds (8.1%), or Indians (6.1%). There was no racial data provided for 46 research psychologists.

Taking into account the proportion of people registered as intern research psychologists, it seems that the number of Black African, Coloured and Indian recruits are increasing. However, these people are registered as intern research psychologists, not full research psychologists, so one cannot determine how many of these respondents will complete their internship and register as research psychologists, nor how long they have been registered as intern research psychologists. None the less, considering they were registered as interns, they must have completed their research psychology degrees and are most likely working in some kind of research related position. There is thus some evidence that the research professions is moving slightly towards greater representivity.

The below table takes into account the demographic breakdown of the sample used in this study. It shows that white people make up the largest portion of the sample. The proportion of whites in the sample is higher than the proportion registered as research psychologists with the HPCSA. This could mean that the sample is not representative on the entire population of research psychology graduates as it is skewed towards white people. However, people who were eligible to register, not only those who had registered (as presented in the tables above) were included.

Table 4
Demographic breakdown of sample taking into account race and gender

	Female	**Male**	**Total**	**Proportion**
African	11	2	13	10.7%
Coloured	5	2	7	5.7%
Indian/Asian	9	0	9	7.4%
None	3	0	3	2.5%
White	70	20	90	73.8%
Total	*98*	*24*	*122*	*100%*

To assess the degree of transformation in the sample, the years that the respondents completed their degrees were firstly grouped in two-year increments (please see Appendix C, table 3), and then Chi-squared tests of association were conducted on various demographic variables such as gender, race and language, however, none of the tests showed significance (please see Appendix C, tables 33-35). This indicates that there were no significant changes in the demographic profiles of the sample across years of completion of the masters degree. This result could, however, be due to the small sample sizes in the early years. The small sample sizes in the years prior to 2008 could have resulted in the expected frequencies being 'too small', ultimately rendering these Chi-squared tests of association to be invalid statistical tests (Howell, 2011).

There does appear to be a greater amount of racial diversity in the more recent years, compared to the previous years, as illustrated in the below graph. Thus despite there not being statistical significance, there does seem to be some evidence for a substantive difference, or at least a trend in that direction.

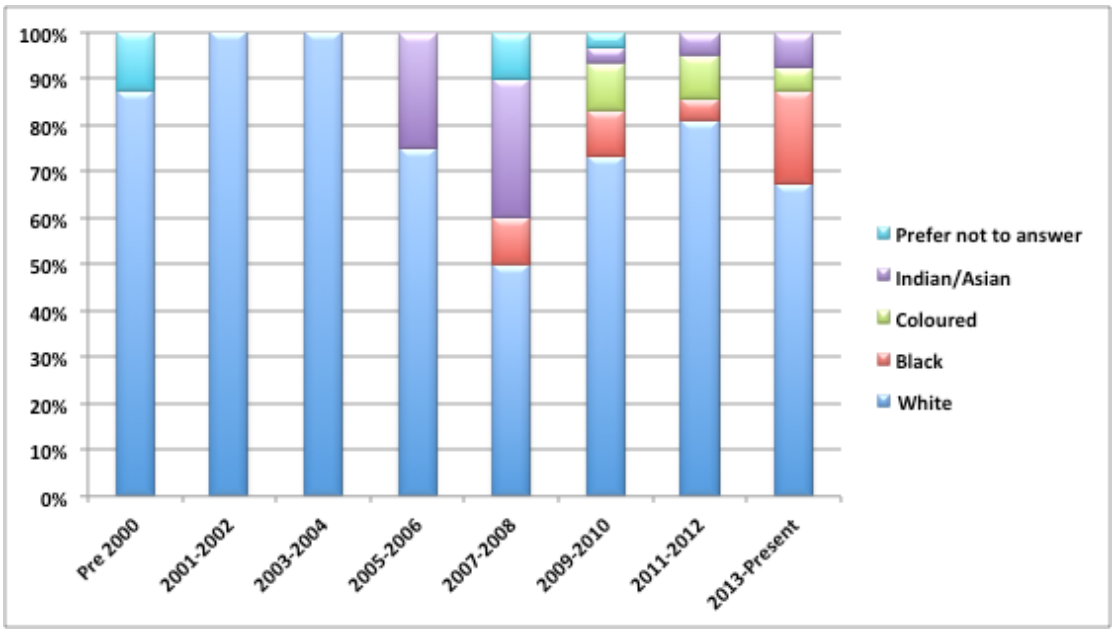


Figure 10

Stacked column graph illustrating race distribution by year of degree completion

Additionally, in recent years, there were more respondents with a knowledge of an African language than there had been in previous years, especially regarding first language proficiency. (Please note that Afrikaans was not regarded as an 'African Language' in this case as the aim of this questions is to assess transformation, and Afrikaans is a language that was historically spoken by a large number of white psychologists).

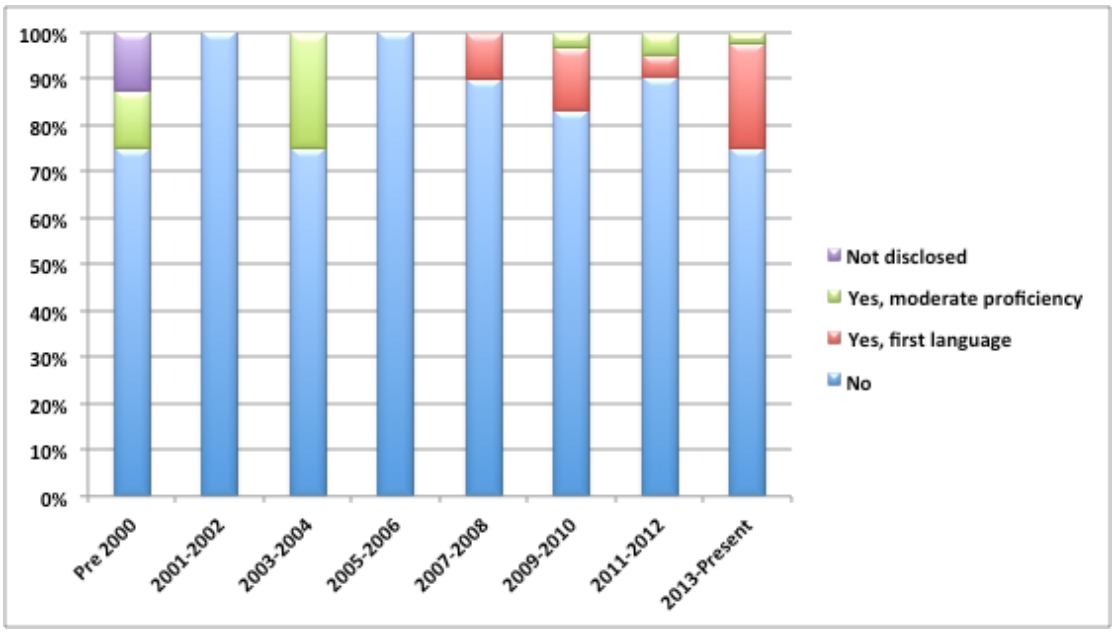


Figure 11

Stacked column graph illustrating knowledge of an African language by year of degree completion

Thus, although statistics received from the HPCSA (Personal correspondence, HPCSA, 16 July 2015) indicates that the category is still dominated by white people (n = 147 (59.5%)), there does seem to be a more racially diverse distribution in recent years, compared to previous years. Additionally, there are more African language speakers in the years since 2007. Language is an important aspect for psychologists to consider as it involves communication (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004). Thus the call for a more racially diverse group of post-graduate students (Ahmed & Pillay, 2004) is in the process of being met, however the shifts are rather slow. A certain degree of transformation does seem to be taking place, however, not enough to show statistical significance. There is, however, evidence of substantive significance.

In addition to being asked which languages they speak, respondents were asked how their language proficiency assisted or limited them in their university or professional careers. The majority of respondents (n = 82 (67.8%)) claimed to speak English as the first language, followed by Afrikaans (n = 44 (36.4%)). Only fifteen respondents spoke an African language as a first language (12.4%), and two spoke a European language as a first language (1.7%), namely German and French. Seventeen were bilingual, speaking both English and Afrikaans as first languages, and two

additionally spoke an African language. Only an additional six respondents claimed that they were moderately proficient in an African language. (Please see Appendix C, tables 26-28 for details on knowledge of languages). This number seems relatively low considering that the majority of the population is African (StatisticsSA, 2011). It also is low considering the call to create emic psychological tests in native languages (Pretorius, 2012). It would be difficult to create such tests if many of the people who are qualified to create them cannot speak the desired language.

Regarding how language proficiency had assisted them or limited them in any stage of their university or professional careers, the majority of respondents (n = 27 (22.1%)) said that knowledge of English was very important, and that it had assisted them in various different ways. English is the predominant language at both the universities attended as well as in the working world. Despite this, 23.8% of respondents said that having knowledge of an African language (n = 20 (16.4%)), or another language (n = 9 (7.4%)), would be beneficial.

Not being able to communicate with some research participants due to language differences did cause a problem for some respondents, however, it also seems that there are some ways around it, such as using a translator. Despite some people saying that not knowing more languages has been to their detriment, many respondents also said that it has had little or no effect on them (n = 18 (14.8%)). Some respondents also said that being bilingual or multilingual has assisted them in many situations (n = 14 (11.5%)). However, despite the fact that knowing multiple languages would be beneficial in research, as it would in most situations, it is probably an issue that needs to be tackled at a much earlier stage than a research masters degree. The fact that language diversity does seem to be increasing shows that psychology is on the path to transformation, albeit a slow and inconsistent route.

Chapter 4: Conclusions

This research intended to track former research psychology masters students and gain an understanding of the different career paths this degree led them to, and why they chose to pursue a particular path. In addition, it aimed to determine whether or not former research psychology masters students registered with the HPCSA as a research psychologist or not, and gain insights into their thoughts and perceptions of the category. This study also sought to evaluate the degree of transformation in this division of psychology.

Regarding employment opportunities, the study showed that there are a wide range of careers that can be pursued on completion of a research psychology masters degree. These include positions in the academic arena, providing insights for the good of the community such as in health and social research, assessing the impact of intervention programmes as in monitoring and evaluation, working in the corporate world, as well as developing psychometric tests. The job descriptions provided by respondents showed that although some jobs contain some of the activities that the scope of practice for research psychologists lays out, the actual jobs include many activities that are not suggested. This fuels the idea that the category is too narrowly framed, as suggested by Laher (2005). In addition, people are conducting some of the activities described in the scope of practice for research psychologists, without finding a need to be registered. Thus although there is the professional category in which to register, it does not seem necessary to be registered as a research psychologist to pursue many of the career paths suited to research psychology graduates. Considering that eligible candidates do not register and still obtain employment, it indicates that registration with a health organisation is, in many cases, not necessary for a research psychology graduate's career.

It thus seems to be a personal choice as to whether one decides to register or not, rather than a requirement by employees (with the exception of some of those who work in psychometrics). The main aspects that put people off registering as a research psychologist with the HPCSA are the problems they seem to encounter while doing it.

A number of respondents reported experiencing problems with the HPCSA. Lack of communication with the HPCSA presented as one of the reasons why participants did not register, or allowed their registration to lapse, and many administration issues seem to occur. Aside from that, many respondents claim that even when finally registered, registration provided no benefits and that they could do their jobs just as well without the title. Although some people wished to register as a research psychologist, the dealings with the HPCSA prevented this and they ultimately did not end up registering. The process involved in registering and the difficulty respondents reported having with the HPCSA contributed greatly toward the discrepancy between those who were eligible to register and those who actually did. If the HPCSA smoothed out the registration process and made it easier to get information and do an internship, the number of people who register may increase.

The category of 'Research Psychology' in the HPCSA remains a contentious issue with various opinions about the relevance of it. Some people accept it and do not really question its relevance, while others point out some misalignments, such as research psychology not being a health profession. Although some people deal with issues that are related to health such as TB and HIV, they do not necessarily deal directly with patients, providing a service to them. Considering the role of the HPCSA is to regulate practitioners that provide a health service to the public (HPCSA, 2013), a research category within this organisation does seem an uneasy fit. There is no doubt that certain guidelines and ethical principles need to be adhered to, but the majority of researchers adhere to ethical principles without being registered with the HPCSA. Researchers in other fields in the social sciences do not have a category in which to register, however may also deal with sensitive issues. Many respondents also did not seem to realise that the category of 'Research Psychology' is unique to South Africa, which could also be a reason to critique its relevance.

This study has hopefully brought about an increased awareness of the research psychology masters degree, potential career options for graduates, as well as insights into the question of registration with the HPCSA as a research psychologist, and the relevance of the category as part of a health organisation. There are, however, some limitations in this study, which could potentially be remedied for future studies. Firstly, some aspects of the questionnaire utilised could be improved. The study

requested information about various employment positions the respondent had occupied. It was assumed that respondents would include their internship position as one of the positions that they had occupied, but not all respondents felt that their internship was proper employment. Some thus excluded their internship position, while others did include it as part of their career trajectory. A separate section asking whether or not they completed an internship, and where, could have provided additional insights to this study. On the other hand, it creates an opportunity for a follow up study, focusing solely on the experience the student had during their internship and how useful they found it.

Some respondents also did not seem to fully grasp the question around the relevance of the research psychology category forming part of the HPCSA, treating it rather as a question about value. This creates another opportunity for a follow up study, potentially in an atmosphere more conducive to discussion, such as a focus group. This environment would allow space for an explanation of the debates around the issues in the case that participants were unaware of them. This could lead to more in-depth findings regarding the appropriateness of a research category falling under a health professions board.

It is possible that the survey would have been quicker to complete as well as analyse if there were fewer open-ended questions. For example, one question that seemed to be a problem answering was that of age. An open-ended comment block was provided to supply an exact age. It is possible that people were not comfortable doing this, and that forced choice age categories would have been more appropriate. Regarding some of the other open ended questions, while providing answer options to select from may have increased the speed of the survey and ease of analysis, the range and diversity of answers would have been limited and the insights obtained would not have been as rich and full.

Another limitation was the inconsistent distribution of respondents from the various institutions that formed part of the target population for the degree, as well as a bias towards respondents who currently work in Gauteng. The majority of respondents were from the University of the Witwatersrand, which is where the study originated, or from the University of Pretoria and UNISA. As a result, not many responses were

obtained from the rest of the country. While some universities assisted with the study and forwarded the invite to as many former students as they could, other universities could not, which resulted in less representation and insights from their students. However, as the data was reported as aggregate findings, this should not have made too much of a difference to the results. A wider geographical distribution of people might just have given more examples of places to work outside the Gauteng province.

Despite the limitations, this study has raised some interesting insights about research psychology, and there are plenty of opportunities for future studies on the discipline. While this study was rather broad in focus, more specific studies could be conducted to gain further insights about some of the issues raised. For example, only those that are currently registered as a research psychologist could be targeted and the registration process could be examined in detail to evaluate the pitfalls, and suggest possible improvements. In addition, as previously mentioned, the internship process could be more closely examined, as well as the question of the relevance of the 'Research Psychology' category in a more in-depth manner.

It is also possible to do different types of studies that do not involve interacting directly with former students, but can rather be aimed at interviewing representatives from organisations that employ people with research psychology masters degrees to examine how the skills these people have potentially give them an advantage in the organisation, and what skills should be developed, thus assisting course creators in improving the degree. One could also consult recruiters or do an examination of newspaper job adverts to give a different type of insight into what sorts of jobs are available to research psychology graduates.

There seems to be an endless amount of research studies that can be done on the topic of research psychology. Whereas it was an under-researched category in the past, it does seem that interest in research on research psychology is growing. As a start, this study has provided insights into the wide range of careers that one can pursue with a research psychology masters degree, despite whether having registered with the HPCSA or not. In addition, it has provided explanations to account for the discrepancy between the number of people who are eligible to occupy the category and the number of people who actually do. The study has also shown that research

psychology is on the path towards transformation and becoming more relevant for the majority of South Africans, albeit on a slow route. The is a definite role that the research psychologist can play in growing and supporting the development of a more socially relevant psychology in South Africa, however, it does not seem that registration with a health professions board is a prerequisite to do so.

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