

Abstract

This research report explores the experiences that influence academic success of socio-economically disadvantaged postgraduate students at the University of Witwatersrand. This research study seeks to examine the experiences that have contributed to their attainment of academic success in higher education. This study utilised a qualitative research design in order to gain a thorough understanding into the students' shared experiences. The data collected from 11 socio-economically disadvantaged students using semi-structured interviews were analysed and thematically coded to understand the themes and meaning of the information provided. The results revealed specific factors that influence the attainment of academic success amongst students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. These influencing factors include student funding, socio-economic status, adjustment issues, language, writing skills, motivation, availability of resources, academic and social support. The research report therefore concludes to highlight that due to the historical inequalities experienced in South Africa during apartheid, Black socio-economically disadvantaged students still face enormous challenges in attaining academic success in higher education. This research report recommends that South African Universities seek to fully understand the university experiences of socio-economically disadvantaged students in order to foster increased student academic success amongst these students in higher education.

Keywords: academic success, postgraduate students, socio-economically disadvantaged, higher education experiences, student funding, ecological systems model