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A changing role? Educational psychologists in South Africa: two decades beyond democracy

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A research report submitted to the Discipline of Psychology in the School of Human and Community Development in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Education (Educational Psychology) in the faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand.

Johannesburg, South Africa 23 June 2017

DECLARATION

I, Pragashni Asim Kumar, hereby declare that the work conducted on this study is my own work. I have referenced all work utilised and cited in this report by other authors in this field of study. This report is being submitted for a Degree in Masters in Education (Educational Psychology) at the Universities of Witwatersrand. This report has not been submitted previously for another degree or at another training institute.

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Pragashni Asim Kumar

Date: 23 June 2017

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to explore the views of practicing educational psychologists on their roles and functions within the South African context. The main purpose of the study was to document demographic and descriptive data in relation to educational psychologists' training, areas of work, and views of their roles and functions, within the context of changes in education policy and their professional practice in South Africa. The study used a descriptive survey design. One hundred and twenty seven respondents who were qualified educational psychologists completed a self- designed descriptive questionnaire. The findings of this study indicate that majority of educational psychologists in South Africa are practicing in a private practice capacity and majority service urban areas. Educational psychologists in this study highlighted three key areas of psychological intervention that they are engaged in, namely psycho-educational assessments, parent guidance, and child psychotherapy. Other key findings in this report highlight the gaps in training experienced by the respondents; the positive and negative aspects of the Education White Paper 6 policy as experienced by the respondents and their views on the educational psychology scope of practice.

Keywords: Educational psychology, Education White Paper 6, scope of practice, training of educational psychologists, ecosystemic intervention, indirect service delivery, lack of resources.

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Chapter 1: Overview of the Study

Chapter 1 provides the contextual background and rationale for the study presented in this research report. The researcher thereafter states the aims and purpose of the study followed by the demarcation of this report.

1.1 Introduction

According to the Association of [1]Educational Psychologists in the United Kingdom (2006, as cited in Rothì, Leavey & Best, 2008, p. 127), " Educational Psychology is the application of psychological theories, research and techniques to help children and young people who may have learning difficulties, emotional or behavioural problems". The British Psychological Association (2002, as cited in Rothì et al., 2008, p. 127) further expands this definition by stating that "the primary focus of educational psychologists is on the well-being and needs of young people in that they support and promote the proper development of young people". For decades, the role of educational psychologists has been debated. Various countries employ educational psychologists to fulfil different roles. This discussion has filtered into South Africa where the roles of educational psychologists are being questioned and debated on many levels and forums of discussion.

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[1] The term educational psychologist is used in South Africa and in the United Kingdom, however the term school psychologist is commonly used in most international literature.

The origin of the category of educational psychology in South Africa can be traced back to 1982 (Newmark, 2003), however, with the inception of a democratic government and educational system in 1994, there has been a shift in the role and responsibilities of educational psychologists. Whereas in the past, educational psychologists were often seen to focus on individual interactions with their clients, their perceived new functions appear to be more on a systemic level, thereby addressing the needs of a broader society. Further, whereas the focus previously fell on curative approaches and methods in dealing with difficulties in children, this shift marked their involvement in preventative measures in impending problems in children (Donald, Lazarus & Moolla, 2014; Newmark, 2003). However, the question that arises is how thoroughly do universities, through their training programmes, prepare educational psychologists to fulfil these roles and responsibilities. Also, further consideration is required regarding what extent educational psychologists implement changes in their roles, after receiving this training. There may be various reasons that contribute to why psychologists may not be fulfilling their new roles, for example, few employment opportunities for educational psychologists in community settings within the South African context.

Higgs (2002, p. 12) states that it is the role of universities to contribute to the development of democratic societies by producing "graduates with the ability to address society's social needs…" Higgs (2002, p. 13) continues by saying that these graduates should be empowered by their universities to play a critical role in "social renewal and reconstruction" (Bojuwoye, 2006; Higgs, 2012). Newmark (2003) believes that educational psychologists are ideally placed to fulfil this critical role if

they can adapt their practice to the changes that have recently occurred in South Africa and specifically, in education.

1.2 Research Rationale

There has been a shift in the perceived roles of educational psychologists, because of the South African education policy changes. The Education White Paper 6 [Department of Education (DoE), 2001] highlights such changes in education. In the past, educational psychologists worked on an individual, one-on-one level with their clients. Their new role as set out by the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) looks at intervention with clients on a broader systemic level. This implies that educational psychologists need to tailor their interventions on a community level, as well as the individual client level. This leads to the important questions relating to how well educational psychologists are trained to fulfil these new responsibilities and adequately respond to changes in education by the various universities that prepared them. To what extent are these role expectations being accomplished and perhaps what are the challenges that impede these achievements?

Gutkin (2012) further emphasises that it is the role of universities to train graduates to realise these new roles for change to happen. It is important to stress that change needs to happen systematically. Educational psychologists require support, in fulfilling the changed role expectations, from policy makers, the education and health systems at the government level, as well as support from statutory bodies such as the Health Professionals Council of South Africa.

In reviewing literature, the researcher found an absence of published research studies undertaken in South Africa using samples from the educational psychology category of psychology. Most studies that used psychologists, as participants in the

study, used a sample from the clinical and counselling psychology categories (Pillay & Kramers-Olen, 2014; Pillay & Siyothula, 2008; Suffla, Seedat & Bawa, 2015). Hence, it was important to conduct a descriptive study with educational psychologists as participants to obtain a baseline of the profession that may lead to further contributions to research in the field.

1.3 Aims of the Study

This study aimed to explore the views of practicing educational psychologists on their roles and functions within the South African context. A review of research done in South Africa did not reflect published research in this area of enquiry; therefore, this study attempts to respond to a gap in this field of investigation. The key objective is to document demographic and descriptive data about educational psychologists' training, areas of work and views of their roles and functions within the context of changes in education policy and their professional practice in South Africa. This study aims for an overview of the educational psychology profession in South Africa, for example, where educational psychologists are working, types of training obtained and still required, challenges experienced in service delivery, amongst others. This information is regarded as essential before embarking on more specific research into the profession.

1.4 Demarcation of the Study

The research report will be structured as follows:

Chapter 2 will discuss the literature reviewed for this study and will conclude with the research questions that guided this study.

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology, design and procedures implemented in conducting this study.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of this study using both descriptive analyses of the data, as well as thematic content analysis presented in the format of themes that emerged from the data.

Chapter 5 discusses the important findings of the study, implications of this study and recommendations, as well as the limitations of this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter will firstly look at educational psychology from an international perspective followed by a South African perspective while understanding the implications for change following changes in education policy. It will then explore the scope of practice of educational psychologists in South Africa, professional training and conclude with an overview of the theoretical framework that has guided this study.

2.1 Introduction

In his address to Heads of Departments of Universities in South Africa who are involved in training psychologists, Cooper (2002) said, "Psychologists still study people and their behavior, but the areas in which this knowledge is applied, are expanding. Various people are challenging the traditional notion of psychologists who wait in their office for clients". This does not imply that there is no place for individual therapy with clients, but instead, it brings to the fore that the profession is changing to meet the demands of a changing society. Cooper (2014) further adds that the place of practice may require using existing resources within the community setting to address the needs of society. This move away from the traditional notions of psychology has a direct impact on the service delivery of educational psychologists.

2.2 The role of educational psychologists: An international perspective

Both internationally and locally, ongoing debates regarding the perceived role of educational psychologists were necessitated by a change in education (Graves, Proctor & Aston 2014; Gutkin, 2012). On an international level, this shift in education

was propelled in 1975 by the passing of Public Law 94-142 in the United States (since 1990 referred to as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), which required a shift towards inclusive education (Bradley-Johnson, Johnson & Jacob-Trimm, 1995; Conoley & Gutkin, 1995). The focus of inclusive education falls on the development of communities and schools that can accommodate a diverse range of needs, rather than on the exclusion of learners and their placement in specific education settings (Swart & Pettipher, 2005). Hence it compels educational psychologists to shift their practice to a more bio-ecological paradigm than a medical-deficit one (Swart & Pettipher, 2005). The policy of inclusive education was introduced in South Africa a decade later and changes to education policy in South Africa followed the international trends in the profession.

While it is vital that educational psychologists understand their role in implementing inclusive education, Gutkin (2012) advocates that it is also their responsibility to react to changes in the education system and be actively involved in developing the education system through participation in policy development and implementation on a government, provincial and district level. Therefore, it is not the role of the educational psychologist to ask, "Where changes in education will leave school psychology? Rather we must (a) determine where we want to go, (b) network with local, state and national policy leaders, and (c) put our collective shoulders to the wheel and make systemic change happen" (Conoley & Gutkin, 1995, p. 213). Linked to this is the role of educational psychologists as researchers, who will be more involved in the development of criteria for best practice through scientific research, as advocated by Strein, Hoagwood and Cohn (2003), as well as in investigating the effectiveness of the implemented policies.

Inclusive education internationally refers to *all* children when discussing the concept of inclusion in education. However, inclusion in education is often misunderstood as concerning children who have disabilities, learning problems or viewed as vulnerable in some way (Nes, 2014). As part of the role as agents of systemic change in the promotion of inclusive education, educational psychologists worldwide are seen as moving from a direct to an indirect service delivery. Educational psychologists can work directly with children through individual assessments and therapeutic interventions, however, a more systemic approach and the vast range of difficulties experienced by children, requires them to address support and guidance individually or through workshops, policy development, implementation and assessment (Gutkin, 2012).

In line with this, authors such as Conoley and Gutkin (1995) advocated that universities and training institutions should train educational psychologists in the psychology of systems; thereby moving from an emphasis on individual therapy to one that focusses on preventing difficulties on a broader level through systemic health development.

Strein et al. (2003) take this notion and advocate that the role of the educational psychologist should be perceived from a public health perspective, where it is no longer individual children who are viewed as clients, but rather the whole community. Hence, this would identify and enhance positive behaviour in the community and prevent those that contribute to difficulties within the community (Gutkin, 2012; Strein et al., 2003).

Strein et al. (2003) add that risk and protective factors can be found on various levels of the ecosystem. It is the obligation of the educational psychologist to focus on individual interventions for specific children, as well as interventions to support the system and promote inclusive education on various levels. The school environment is usually the primary provider of psychological services for children. In some cases, it is the only place where children and parents can access psychological intervention to assist with areas of emotional distress and maladjustment to life events, that may occur as a result of their community circumstances (Kratochwill, 2007; Kratochwill & Shernoff, 2004).

Cross-cultural competency skills were identified as necessary for educational psychologists to be culturally sensitive when working, for instance, with parents from various backgrounds (Rogers, 2006; Rogers & Lopez, 2002). Skills are required to take into consideration the fact that views of parents on child rearing, for example, might differ in various cultures. Hence in diverse cultural contexts, it is imperative that educational psychologists be trained to understand the cross-cultural challenges when, for example, using translators, as well as the awareness of specific learning difficulties experienced by second language learners taught in an English medium school.

In addition, another role envisaged for educational psychologists within the framework of inclusive education, is that of collaborative consultants within a multidisciplinary team (Graves et al., 2014; Ross, Powell & Elias, 2002). As such, it would be important for the educational psychologist to be trained in the concept of interpersonal influence so that they are empowered to engage in a collaborative

manner with the multidisciplinary team in providing the support anticipated for children. This type of teamwork allows for a creative sharing of knowledge and skills in developing appropriate interventions for children. Gutkin (2012) indicates the importance of educational psychologists to be trained in aspects of social psychology, such as group processes and dynamics. This is particularly significant as indirect service delivery can only be effective when teachers and parents can be guided to implement the recommendations made by the multi-disciplinary team. Other relevant training needs to include an understanding of the theories and elements of effective behaviour management (Gutkin 2012; Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008; Wnek, Klein & Bracken, 2008). Educational psychologists develop a more collaborative function with other members of the multi-disciplinary team, thereby creating an awareness of what each member of the team may require from each other to jointly and efficiently manage classroom dynamics (Graves et al., 2014).

A survey by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) in the USA is conducted every five years and randomly sends invitations to participate to its members. Castillo, Curtis and Gelley (2012) indicated the following findings of the survey. School psychologists reported that they allocated their time to both direct and indirect service delivery. However, one out of three participants stated that they did not provide individual counselling services. The majority of participants indicated that they allocate a significant amount of time to services delivery on a systemic level (Castillo et al., 2012). The key finding of the survey was that school psychologists communicated that more than half of their time is being ‘utilized for special education related activities’, even though research has shown a steady decrease in special needs assessments and re-assessments over the past two decades (Castillo et al., 2012).

Castillo et al. (2012) suggest that the reasons for the majority of school psychologists were involved with special education activities are unknown. However, they further emphasise that school psychologists perhaps perceive that assessing special educational needs is their primary function. This study further draws attention to the professional roles of school psychologists not changing over the past decade. The level of engagement in assessment reduces the availability of school psychologists to deliver other pertinent functions such as consultations and interventions (Bramlett, Murphy, Johnson, Wallingsford & Hall, 2002; Castillo et al., 2012).

A survey by Atkinson and Woods (2007) used 93 qualified educational psychologists in northern England and Wales. The study explored the effectiveness of supervision provided to trainee psychologists in their fieldwork. Results showed that the type of supervision that achieved the highest ranking offered "guidance, problem-solving and support" and was the most valuable to trainee psychologists (Atkinson & Woods, 2007, p.302). The second highest ranked was "effective communication between the supervisor and trainee" and emphasised as central to developing a trusting relationship between them (Atkinson & Woods, 2007, p.302). Another study that explored the supervision of educational psychologists, also recommended that further research was needed to fully grasp how to meet the standards required for the professional development of school psychologists (Chafouleas, Clonan & Vanauken, 2002). A recent study drew further attention to a key finding that their participants (educational psychologists) only accessed clinical supervision on an as needed basis (Graves, Proctor & Aston, 2014). This highlights the fact that although added support was required by educational psychologists, there appears to be a sense of reluctance to access supervision and consultation. Graves et al. (2014) suggested that perhaps

supervision that addresses the lack of administrative support experienced by participants should be separate and as a result, clinical supervision would not be apprehended by the challenges experienced in service delivery.

A study by Boyle and Lauchlan (2009) looked at the changing roles of educational psychologists in the United Kingdom and argued that it is imperative to continue with individual interventions and not only systemic intervention to have credibility. The authors highlighted that educational psychologists are best suited and considered the 'natural providers' of services to children within schools. They further argue that the profession of educational psychology stands a risk of becoming "obsolete if there is a continuation of the move away from individual interventions to a more consultative based approach" (Boyle & Lauchlan, 2009, p. 71). They acknowledged that there is more to the role of individual intervention and psychometric assessments of a child, as a skilful psychologist should also be aware of the child's interaction with the environment. However, they advocate that the core role of educational psychologists in their provision of direct services to children should not change (Boyle & Lauchlan, 2009). The role of educational psychologists is debated nationally and internationally; literature supports the valuable services offered to children by them and highlights that their services need to be more utilised and accessible (Boyle & Lauchlan, 2009; Fallon, Woods & Rooney, 2010; Gaskell & Leadbetter, 2009; Love, 2009).

As seen from the above, the roles and responsibilities of educational psychologists have been debated worldwide for over three decades. Similarly, within the South African context, this issue has received much attention since 1994 with the

inception of a democratic government and the subsequent implementation of policy documents such as the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001).

2.3 History of Psychology in South Africa

Psychology in South Africa began to be practiced approximately 80 years ago and stemmed from the era of 'scientific racism' influenced by Eurocentric psychology working in the best interests of the colonial and later apartheid capitalism (van Ommen & Painter, 2008). Scientific racism began to lead or govern educational and social scientific discussions and debates by the end of the 19th century, in the same way as it did in Europe (van Ommen & Painter, 2008). Social scientists in South Africa, such as psychologists and doctors, justified the variance in treatment for the different races. Psychologists were concerned with the 'native problem' and the 'poor white problem'. They provided the pathway through the findings of social research to "justify the system of institutionalised racism and economic exploitation, that was later to be termed *apartheid*" (van Ommen & Painter, 2008, p. 67). Consequently, the origins of psychology in South Africa inadvertently supported apartheid ideology through psychological testing.

During this time psychology was confined to the educational domain. The primary focus was to measure the extent of mental retardation in Transvaal schools (now known as Gauteng). Psychological tests in South Africa were biased and culturally inappropriate for the participants. The standardised tests used amongst the illiterate, poor and uneducated black South Africans were developed in the USA, Britain and Europe (Laher & Cockcroft, 2013). The results of the tests were interpreted to claim that there was mental regression in Africans and supported the

segregationist ideology. These results were used to justify job reservations and thus maintain the logic behind the apartheid system (Laher & Cockcroft, 2013).

Subsequently, psychology made a global shift from the 'academic-theoretical' to the 'applied-practical' discipline (van Ommen & Painter, 2008). This change occurred after the Carnegie study in 1928, where psychologists extended their influences and biases as white psychologists beyond the educational domain (van Ommen & Painter, 2008). The services of psychometric skills of psychologists were used in industry and military forces to further the interests of racist establishments while simultaneously remaining silent about the psychological needs of the black race who were the majority race group in South Africa (van Ommen & Painter, 2008).

The Carnegie Commission Report focussed on the plight of poor whites in South Africa who made up the farming community. The "trek spirit" amongst white farmers, which is the movement from one area to the next in search of suitable farming land, resulted in many challenges (Seedat & MacKenzie, 2008, p. 74). The youth made their way towards the towns and cities in search of employment. Competition for employment was evident between the unskilled white labourers and skilled black labourers who earned a lower wage. Many professionals, including psychologists, became concerned with poor whites and blacks forming an identity of a class through their mutual experience of poverty. This threatened the superiority of the white European race in South Africa (Seedat & MacKenzie, 2008).

Many psychologists actively participated in the study of the poor using psychometric tests. These tests were designed to appropriately place poor whites into

vocational posts such as dressmaking and tailoring. This highlights the fact that the application of psychology, during the apartheid era, still poses challenges for the profession. The value of psychological testing remains contested and there is a focus on using tests that are reliable and valid for use within multicultural and multilingual societies (Foxcroft & Davies, 2008). This process highlights that psychology inadvertently supported racism and economic inequalities in South Africa (van Ommen & Painter, 2008). Thus, psychologists' skills, interventions, and expertise were central to the resolution of social, military and industrial problems.

This led to psychologists' formalising and affirming their profession within the South African context (van Ommen & Painter, 2008). However, this drive to professionalise psychology and foster social legitimacy came at a cost as it was evident that the profession's active role during the apartheid era inadvertently perpetuated racism and classist ideology within South Africa (van Ommen & Painter, 2008). This did not place the profession in a good position. Furthermore, during the apartheid era, health care facilities and services provided were based on race throughout South Africa. However, with the fall of apartheid, these institutions now opened its doors to all other race groups. This induced many challenges for service providers including psychologists (Pillay & Kramers-Olen, 2014). Trust and rapport would need to be established and fostered, for services to be well received and effective. Mainstream psychology associations were challenged and critiqued and there needed to be another way of providing services to at risk and violated groups in South Africa. The first democratically established professional association was formed in 1994, the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) (van Ommen & Painter, 2008). PsySSA's vision is to promote South African psychology as a science

and profession that has global prominence and supports an application of psychology that is relevant, proactive and responsive to societal needs and well-being (Cooper, 2013).

Cooper (2013) argues that it is pivotal for South African psychology to make a shift from its dependence on Western psychological models of understanding human functioning to meet the needs of its people. Mainstream psychology traditionally adopted the medical model approach focussing on treatment rather than understanding the underlying contributing factors to the problem.

Maddux, Snyder and Lopez (2004, p. 321) described clinical psychology as associated with treating the minds of the ill and attending to patients and wrote that "long after the ancient roots of the term clinical psychology have been forgotten, they nevertheless continue to influence our thinking about psychology." Pretorius (2012) further added that this notion of psychology is further entrenched by medical aid schemes that would only remunerate services of psychologists that have a diagnostic ICD 10 code ascribed, thus further endorsing the medical disease model.

There are many challenges within the South African context as a result of apartheid for psychologists who currently work within the medical model (Sigogo et al., 2004). "Problems such as violence, rape, child sexual abuse, chemical dependence and HIV/AIDS", are some of the common challenges faced within the South African context (Sigogo et al., 2004, p. 78). The critical test for psychology, however, is a move away from the traditional medical model of intervention to one that will focus on prevention and social change.

Furthermore, professional training institutions of psychologists in South Africa need to evaluate whether progressive steps in place do address the unequal distribution amongst white and black trained psychologists. Results of a study done by Pillay and Siyothula (2008) indicated that only 14.2% of psychologists were Black African, whereas Statistics South Africa (2013) reported that 79.2% of the nation are Black African.

A recent study by Pillay and Kramers-Olen (2014) conducted two decades post-apartheid, highlighted that the pace of transformation within South Africa is slow. Since most trained psychologists in South Africa were White or non-African, they are faced with additional difficulties such as providing services in a second language, possibly through a translator, which impacts on the quality of psychological services delivered to many South African people (Pillay & Kramers-Olen, 2014). Educational psychologists in South Africa are aptly positioned to challenge their roles to provide a more indirect service delivery that reaches the wider community (Amod, 2003; Engelbrecht, 2004). Engelbrecht (2004, p. 23) proposed changing roles in that "specialised skills and practice of educational psychologists should be directed at providing holistic health-promotive, developmental and preventative actions in relation to individuals, schools and communities". This further emphasises the movement towards the conceptualisation and thinking of the client from a systemic and holistic perspective (Amod, 2003; Engelbrecht, 2004).

Daniels (2010) expresses that while there are instances for educational psychologists to be engaged in the traditional practice of psycho-educational assessment and therapeutic interventions, their roles need to be more broadly defined.

Their functioning would include assisting teachers to screen, identify, assess and support learners experiencing barriers to learning, promoting school development and offering support in the design and development of learning and psycho-social development programmes (Amod, 2003; Daniels, 2010). The broadened role of the educational psychologists in South Africa regarding indirect service delivery is consistent with the principles of community psychology, which refines the role of psychologists to focus more on public health than individual intervention. This includes the functions of advocacy, community networking, mobilisation and policy formulation (Amod, 2003; Seedat, Duncan & Lazarus, 2002).

Research by Moolla and Lazarus (2014) in the Western Cape involved participants who were psychologists employed by the Department of Basic Education (DBE). Psychologists that were employed by the government were called school psychologists. Forty-seven school psychologists participated in the study and a total of eight focus group discussions were held. The objective of the study was to explore the experiences and challenges of school psychologists when required to work collaboratively with a multidisciplinary team to promote school development.

The study found that the roles of school psychologists were unclear and ambiguous. The miscommunication of the role of school psychologists filtered down to all members of the multidisciplinary team in a restrained manner (Moolla & Lazarus, 2014). Miscommunication gave rise to unclear expectations of the function of school psychologists. The participants of the study shared that the only usefulness their role contributed to school development was through providing services on a one-to-one intervention level. This was a consequence of role confusion of school

psychologists in the education sector where they were employed (Moolla & Lazarus, 2014). The shift from direct to indirect service delivery on a systemic level poses an enormous challenge due to misunderstandings of the role of school psychologists.

Psychologists in South Africa require a master's degree and must meet the requirements to complete board exams to register with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). Subsequently the psychologist would be qualified for "employment by the state, in the private practice, in higher education, the corporate sector, non-governmental organisations, community-based structures, and are also able to be employed as *school psychologists* at the DBE" (Moolla & Lazarus, 2014, p. 1; Daniels, Collair, Moolla & Lazarus, 2007).

A *school psychologist* is a term coined by the DBE, and it refers to employees who provide psychological services in schools (Moolla & Lazarus, 2014). Role confusion is perhaps unavoidable when taking into account that the minimum requirements for the position at the DBE is a four-year degree and includes a Honours in psychology. It implies that HPCSA registered master's degree in psychology, as well as HPCSA registered counsellors and psychometrists are eligible for a school psychologist role in schools (Daniels et al., 2007).

Moolla and Lazarus (2014) further added that the role of school psychologists involves observing, evaluating and engaging with psycho-social factors within the school system, parent system and community that may impact on learners and educators. A further role of school psychologists would be a collaborative role with other helping professionals working with children, educators, parents and community

organisations to address problems such as bullying, domestic violence, gangsterism, substance abuse, difficult classroom behaviours to name a few (Amod, 2003; Moolla & Lazarus, 2014).

Educational psychologists in South Africa are skilfully trained in both direct and indirect service delivery (Amod, 2003; Donald, Lazarus & Moolla, 2014). However, intervention strategies require a needs assessment of the community serviced. Thus psychologists are challenged to take on a fundamental role as change agents and activists in communities. Assessments with children can be considered as a more indirect service if one thinks of assessments as a means to initiate appropriate interventions for children in a group setting, most of who will receive educational programmes and strategies indirectly through their teachers and/or parents. This idea, once again, agrees with the notion of inclusive education, where the importance of assessments does not fall on testing children so that they can be placed in specialised education, but rather on establishing appropriate support strategies (Amod & Heafield, 2013; Bornman & Rose, 2010).

Amod and Heafield (2013) further discuss the matter of assessments by stressing that it is important for educational psychologists to be trained in cross-cultural competencies, which includes the ability to understand the underlying bias of assessment measures. It is important to address this within the framework of inclusive education so that evaluations with children from diverse cultural backgrounds can be conducted in a fair manner. This coincides with the training of educational psychologists to develop skills in alternative ways of assessing children, for example, dynamic assessment, where the focus falls more on the learning than the assessment

process and the assessor acts as a mediator in the child's learning (Amod & Seabi, 2013).

2.4 Education White Paper 6 and the role of the educational psychologist in South Africa

Previous education provision in the apartheid era was distinguished by the marked segregation of learners based on individual disabilities and racial groupings. Within this structure, educational psychologists were mainly employed in special schools and psychology clinics providing services to neighbouring schools. Psychological service delivery (based on one-to-one interaction with learners) was not equally developed for all race groups, with students from black and rural communities being grossly underserviced (Donald et al., 2014).

With the launch of the new democracy in 1994, the education system in South Africa has also undergone extensive policy changes in an attempt to reshape and transform a fragmented and inequitable education system to a more democratic and inclusive system. The Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) outlines a 20-year strategy for building a unified education and training system. This policy defines inclusive education and training as accepting that *all* children and *all* youth can learn and that *all* need varying support through an acceptance of diverse learning needs of *all* learners (DoE, 2001). This highlights the importance of all educational institutions that provide learning in a diverse South African context to meet the needs of *all* learners, as well as awareness and respect of differences (DoE, 2001).

The Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) has implications for service delivery to learners, educators and parents. There is a shift from an individual direct

service to a more community-based approach that involves collaboration of many support service professionals such as psychologists, social workers, special education teachers and health workers (DoE, 2001). This highlights an approach that would respond well to learner diversity. Implications for educational psychologists would involve a change from their role as expert, to that of collaborator working with other professionals to achieve the best outcome for learners (DoE, 2001).

It is essential that the educational support services (educational psychologists, social workers, educators and special needs educators amongst others) subscribe to and support inclusive education for it to be effective. However, it is important to acknowledge that most supportive services in the past have been trained using Western approaches, which may not align with inclusive education and the South African context.

In a change from the previous narrow conceptualisation of special education, the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) recognises that many learning barriers arise from a range of extrinsic and systemic factors, for example, poverty, child abuse and neglect, rather than intrinsic factors such as learner deficits or physiological impairment (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Support services are then redefined to include the development of School-Based Support Teams (Institutional-Level Support Teams), District-Based Support Teams and Special Schools as Resource Centers (Donald et al., 2014; Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Within the revised policy structures psychologists are mainly based in District Support Teams, which consist of other staff members such as learning support advisors, curriculum advisors and other therapists (DoE, 2001). Nonetheless, the lack of resources together with a pessimistic

attitude adds to the confusion in implementing inclusive education in most South African schools (Donohue & Bornman, 2014).

Challenges in policy implementation are an ongoing struggle for service providers since the launch more than decade ago. The key strategies as set out by the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) do not provide details on how to follow through with the implementation of the policy (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). The six key strategies are as follows:

1) "Upgrading existing special needs schools and changing some schools into resource centers;
2) enrolment of children with disabilities who are at school going age into schools who were at the time not in schools;
3) transformation of some mainstream schools into full-service schools;
4) training of educators and administrators in mainstream schools on the notion of inclusive education and its implementation, as well as early detection of children who may have special educational needs;
5) developing a school-based support team to assist educators in implementing the policy; and
6) a national dissemination of information making the public aware of the policy and its implementation"

(DoE, 2001).

A study by Stofile (2008) found that education officials in South Africa had a vague understanding of the goals of inclusive education and were doubtful regarding the transformation of the infrastructure of existing schools and resources to

adequately align with the inclusive education ideals of service delivery. Stofile (2008) further added that teacher training is crucial to understanding and developing strategies to accommodate learners with disabilities in the classroom. However, teacher training was insufficient and required more intensive focus and training (Donohue & Bornman, 2014).

The major change in educational policy requires a theoretical and practical paradigm shift in the conceptualisation of the role of the educational psychologists. It requires a change from an individual deficit, psycho-medical approach to an ecosystemic, asset-based, multi-dimensional and holistic approach to understanding and addressing barriers to learning and development (Daniels, 2010; Donald et al., 2014; Engelbrecht, 2004). The role of the educational psychologist must move from one-to-one service delivery to that of a collaborative consultant who shares skills and expertise with teachers, parents, other professionals and relevant stakeholders to align with this policy.

Engelbrecht (2004) put forward the view that educational psychologists need to become engaged with clients on a systems level to provide services, assess and evaluate circumstances that influence development and learning, and after that develop strategies and programmes that allow for preventative measures. Engelbrecht (2004, p. 23) further suggested that the changing roles of educational psychologists should include “organisational facilitators” and “collaborators” in transformation of school structures; “intersectoral collaboration”; “consultants” who support schools to establish processes and systems, especially to aid the inclusion of learners who are experiencing barriers to learning and development; and “mental health specialists”

who provide support to educators and school administrators develop understanding and promote competence in learners.

While a more consultative and preventative model of support is encouraged in the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001), there is no definite description concerning the specified functions of educational psychologists (Amod, 2003). Daniels (2010) states that in practice services offered by some educational psychologists could vary between provinces and even within districts, as well as within schools. The HPCSA set guidelines in its scope of practice for educational psychologists.

2.5 HPCSA scope of practice of educational psychologists in South Africa

According to Pretorius (2012, p. 512), "in psychology, the construct of scope of practice refers to the range or extent of matters that a psychologist, psychometrist and/or registered counsellor can deal with according to the unique skills that are required by the category". Despite this, a scrutiny of the categories through a review of literature found that there are blurred boundaries between the scope of practice of clinical, counselling and educational psychology categories in South Africa (Pretorius, 2012). She further proposes that this does not infer that the types of psychology are identical but rather that certain core skills are common across the streams and other skills that are more stream specific. This has led to considerable debates about the scope of practice for each category and whether psychology is relevant to this context. According to legislation is it vital that each category of psychology perform their duty within their scope of practice [Department of Health (DoH), 2011].

As stated by Botha (2011), the role of the psychologist within the South African context has reached a crisis of relevance and this has a negative bearing on the types of clients being seen by psychologists and questions whether there are enough psychologists available to the population of South Africa. Pretorius (2012) further argues that while there exists a need to reconceptualise, debate and understand the scope of practice of each category of psychology in South Africa, simultaneously the question of relevance of psychology within this diverse context arises. She believes that while the scope of practice debate in South Africa continues and power struggles ensue between the categories of psychology, the applicability of psychology loses value due to a lack of cohesion in the profession (Pretorius, 2012).

According to the HPCSA (DoH, 2011), the following actions are stipulated within the scope of practice for registered educational psychologists practicing in South Africa:

(a) *"assessing, diagnosing, and intervening in order to optimise human functioning in the learning and development; assessing cognitive, personality, emotional, and neuropsychological functions of people in relation to the learning and development in which they have been trained;*
(b) *identifying, and diagnosing psychopathology in relation to the learning and development; identifying and diagnosing barriers to learning and development; applying psychological interventions to enhance, promote and facilitate optimal learning and development, referring clients to appropriate professionals for further assessment and intervention;*
(c) *designing, managing, conducting, reporting on, and supervising psychological research, in the learning and development; conducting psychological practice,*

and research in accordance with the Ethical Rules of Conduct for Practioners registered under the Health Professions Act, 1974; adhering to the scope of practice of Educational psychologist;

(d) advising on the development of policies, based on various aspects of psychological theory, and research; designing, managing, and evaluating educationally-based programmes;

(e) training and supervising other registered psychological practioners in educational psychology; and

(f) providing expert evidence and/or opinions"

(DoH, 2011, p.8).

Currently in South Africa various associations and organisations such as the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA), the South African School Psychologists Association (SASPA), Educational Psychological Association of South Africa (EPASSA) among others are actively engaged in discussions with many stakeholders and the Professional Board of the HPCSA. These discussions and debates are aimed to ensure that the scope of practice, particularly within the category of educational psychology, are not misunderstood and discriminated against by Government Medical Aid schemes such as Government Employees Medical Schemes (GEMS) and South African Police Service Medical Scheme (POLMED), due to the misinterpretation of the scope (EPASSAinfo, personal communication, February 18, 2017; Gumede, 2017).

The education and training guidelines for the profession of educational psychology, specifies the completion of a Bachelors, Honours and Master's degree

programmes at an accredited training institution. Thereafter the completion of a one-year internship at a HPCSA approved site, followed by passing of board exams are required for a qualification as an educational psychologist. For the purpose and scope of this research report, the following section will look at only some examples and aspects of the professional educational psychology training programmes offered at some training institutions in South Africa.

2.6 Training of professional educational psychologists

Higgs (2002, p. 11) highlights that it is the responsibility of training institutions such as universities to yield professionals who are "able to address society's social needs". This emphasises the importance of universities' responsibility to constantly be aware of trends in educational psychology practice, both internationally and locally, and to attempt to meet the challenges professionals face in practice settings, whilst being aware of the changing needs of the community and the broader social context (Higgs, 2002; Higgs, 2012). Bojuwoye (2006) states that for psychology to adequately respond to the needs of society, local content is necessitated to be included in the syllabus of the training programmes. Newmark (2003, p. 114) further stresses the importance of the selection process of candidates for educational psychology, as their practice has an immediate influence on the development of "social renewal and reconstruction". The significance of the role of reviewing and selecting candidates who are invested in developing training and practices is crucial, so that a new and changed society is envisaged.

There are various universities across South Africa that offer a Master's Degree in educational psychology. In reviewing the websites of some of these universities in South Africa, it is apparent that the training is a two-year full-time or three-year part-

time programme. The course of study includes coursework modules and a research report to be completed within the field of educational psychology. Following completion of the coursework programme, each student is required to complete an internship at a HPCSA approved institution. All universities have their own selection process for master's students and usually only accommodate approximately 12 students per annum. For this research report, the researcher examined a few selected universities and their programmes.

The training programme for educational psychologists at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) is a full time, two-year programme. The internship year (M2) is a continuation of the first year (M1) coursework year, as well as the continuation and completion of the research report. The maximum time allocated to complete the degree is three years as required by the HPCSA. Successful completion of M1, M2, research report and passing of board exams leads to registration with the HPCSA (Wits, 2016). The following coursework modules are offered during the training, namely: clinical procedures, counselling theory and practice, research, adjustment/maladjustment and educational psychology in the community (Wits, 2016). Training at Wits has its foundation in the psychoanalytic psychodynamic theory in training clinical interventions, as well as an ecosystemic theoretical framework in addressing the needs of the community where the students are trained.

The training of educational psychologists at the University of Pretoria (UP) is a three-year degree, which includes two years of coursework and a third year of internship, as well as the completion of a research report within the three-year period. The values of positive psychology is the foundation of the asset-based training

programme for educational psychology master's students (UP, 2015). The course outline, however, was not accessible on the website of this training institution.

The University of Johannesburg (UJ) has a three-year part time training programme for masters in educational psychology. The training is based on bio-ecological theory as the foundation for coursework training. Their mission is to advance social justice in diverse communities through care and teaching practices that are culturally fair and genuine (UJ, 2015).

The above brief descriptions of the training of the above three universities reflect that the training of educational psychologists is geared to shift the focus to the community at large. It is crucial that universities that train educational psychologists across the country, collaborate with each other and formulate a consensus on how educational psychologists are trained to meet the changing needs of the communities they service.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

As emphasised in this research report, psychology as a profession is challenged to adapt its service delivery. Psychologists are required to adopt a new paradigm of thinking to provide an indirect service delivery to clients in various communities who are in dire need of assistance (Pretorius, 2012). Therefore, the integration of an ecological and systems theory into an ecosystemic theory is a more appropriate and transformative theory in response to changing government policies and providing supportive services needed in a developing country like South Africa. This perspective moves away from seeing impediments in the client to examining the

impact of the systems interacting with the client. This framework provides a holistic view of the client (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner, 2009; Donald et al., 2014).

This further emphasises the fluidity and changing roles that psychologists' need to play in various environments and community settings. Thus, educational psychologists trained in community psychology principles are well positioned to adopt this paradigm of thinking and practice to address inequalities that still exist in communities in South Africa. Community psychology emerged as a response to psychology being involved in political repression during apartheid to face the challenge of psychologists moving away from their consulting rooms and developing methods of working with the disenfranchised masses (Sigogo et al., 2004). This approach extends the focus beyond the individual client to the family, organisation, religious affiliation and the community as a whole (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner, 2009; Donald et al., 2014).

The ecosystemic model corroborates the principles and theory of community psychology. Community psychology gave an answer to the question of the applicability of psychology regarding theoretical bearing and practice-related suitability within the South African context in the 1980s (Seedat, MacKenzie, & Stevens, 2004). The framework aptly shifts thinking or rationales that are attributed to psychosocial problems, from 'blaming the victim' to a focus on environmental or ecological factors (Seedat et al., 2004). Thus, this is an appropriate framework to guide the understanding of the changing roles of educational psychologists within the South African context, two decades beyond democracy.

The pioneer, Urie Bronfenbrenner shaped and influenced professionals in their understanding of working with children and developed theories on how the different levels of systems within a child's social context interacts and influence the child's development (Donald et al., 2014). The ecosystemic model contrasts the medical model in critical ways. It combines both the ecological theories of mutual dependency amongst different organisms and their environment, and systemic theories that focus on the interaction between systems. Various systems within the social context continuously influence each other, creating a whole that is greater than the sum of its individual parts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Systems are surrounded by other systems above, below or in close proximity to them and although interdependent, each system functions in its own particular way (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner, 2009; Donald et al., 2014).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) describes human development as the ability to arise from the natural environment, understand the relationship to the environment, to explore new facets of the environment, to engage in the preservation of the valuable elements and change or mould parts of the environment as needed. Thus, for Bronfenbrenner, the psychology of an individual cannot be questioned without considering the context. Bronfenbrenner's ecosystemic model of child development constitutes four interacting dimensions that are crucial to the process of understanding child development from a psychosocial perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner, 2009; Donald et al., 2014; Landsberg, Krüger & Nel, 2005).

The first dimension refers to *person factors*. These refer to the temperament of the child and that of the parent or caregiver. The second dimension refers to *process*

factors, which are the types of interactions and relationships that happen within the family. Educational psychologists' adopting this theoretical framework should bear person factors and process factors in mind, when intervening on a *microsystem and mesosystem level.* Thus, taking into consideration both micro and meso systems that has proximal contact and interactions in the client's life. These systems influence a developing child's thinking, social skills, and affect moral and spiritual development. Examples of *microsystems* would be parents, caregivers, siblings, grandparents, neighbours, friends, classmates and teachers. On a *mesosystem level,* it refers to interactions and relationships that form between the microsystems. Awareness and understanding of these systems are fundamental to the type of interventions or service delivery employed by psychologists (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Donald et al., 2014).

The third factor refers to *contextual factors.* These factors refer to the families, school, neighbourhood, classroom and the local community, amongst others. A *Macrosystem* level of intervention refers to the awareness of the principal dominant cultural, social, educational, political and economic systems that influence the developing child directly or indirectly. These include values, beliefs, laws, attitudes, ideologies, traditions and customs of the society into which the developing child is born. The service delivery of psychologists on the *mesosystem* and *macrosystem* level involves preventative and awareness programmes, as well as research findings that influence policy development and its effective implementation (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Donald et al., 2014).

The fourth dimension refers to *time factors*, which includes changes over time due to growth of the child, as well as environmental changes. Time factors impact all

stages of development of children and all systems that interact with children, which constitute *mesosystems* and *macrosystems* (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner, 2009; Donald et al., 2014; Landsberg et al., 2005).

This holistic approach views a child as being influenced and affected by the contexts in which he or she functions, such as society, schools, and homes. This approach also takes into account the genetic endowments of children in interaction with such contextual factors (Donald et al., 2014; Harcombe, 2007). Bojuwoye (2006) advocates for the training of psychologists in Africa to incorporate community psychology principles. He further highlights that human suffering is not only a consequence of psychopathology but could perhaps be "intrinsically linked with environmental conditions" (Bojuwoye, 2006, p. 162)

2.8 Conclusion

The literature review highlights that two decades after democracy in South Africa, the profession of educational psychology is evolving to meet the needs of society. Internationally and in South Africa, changes to the education policy has led to debates and the redefining of the role of educational psychologists. The movement from direct to indirect service delivery has been challenging and resulted in role confusion for both educational psychologists and stakeholders (Moolla & Lazarus, 2014). International studies have explored the views of educational psychologists on varied aspects of the profession. It is only through research and understanding of the contextual nature of the profession that change and clarity for the future can be initiated. The lack of literature on the current state of the educational psychology profession in South Africa led to the research questions of this study. The research

method and procedures implemented in this study will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Methods

This chapter begins by briefly stating the aim of the study and the research questions. This is followed by a discussion of the research design and methodology employed in this research.

3.1 Research Aims and Questions of the Study

The aim of this study was to explore the views of practicing educational psychologists regarding their roles and functions within the South African context. The research questions were as follows:

1. What is involved in educational psychologists' practice in the current South African context?
2. Which aspects of educational psychologists' masters' training programmes prepared them for their current practice?
3. What are educational psychologists' views on policy changes in education and the implications thereof for their current practice?
4. What are educational psychologists' views on their current scope of practice?

3.2 Research Design

The study used a descriptive survey research design. The type of design applied to the study was a non-experimental, cross-sectional, descriptive, exploratory method of enquiry. The self-designed descriptive questionnaire was completed and surveyed at a single point in time within a natural setting. Therefore, this study represents a cross-sectional design. There was no manipulation of variables in the study and the total sample considered was a single group of subjects, who were not subject to any controls from the researcher (White & McBurney, 2013).

McMillan and Schumacher (2001, p. 602) define survey research as "the assessment of the current status, opinions, beliefs and attitudes by questionnaires or interviews from a known population". Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2002, p. 169) further highlighted that the survey method of enquiry, "set out to describe and to interpret what is".

This study explored several aspects of educational psychology training, practice, and the perceptions of the respondents to understand and define the field of educational psychology practiced in South Africa. Due to limited research within the South African context about the practice of educational psychology as a phenomenon, a qualitative survey design was appropriate for this study. Qualitative research contributes to developing more understanding of the complex areas of health care (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott & Davidson, 2002). Furthermore, interpretivist research offers an outlook of a situation through exploring the phenomena and providing awareness into the way a particular group of people, in this study, educational psychologists, make sense of their profession (Maree, 2007).

3.3 Sampling Procedure and Sample

The sampling method used was a non-probability purposive sample of qualified educational psychologists practicing within South Africa. The respondents were knowledgeable about the area of study, hence safeguarding the validity of the data (Polit & Beck, 2008; Rice & Ezzy, 1999). Validity of the data, allows for inferences to be made with confidence and trustworthiness of the respondents' responses to the survey (Freeman, de Marrais, Preissel, Roulsont & St. Pierre, 2007). Purposive samples are non-random samples chosen for their distinctive features (De Vos, Delport, Fouché, & Strydom, 2011; White & McBurney, 2013). Huysamen (1993, as

cited in Laher & Botha, 2012) states that non-probability sampling is beneficial, cost effective and convenient for survey research. However, it needs to be acknowledged that a limitation is that the probability of any individual subject to be part of the sample cannot be calculated and some members of the target population may have no possibility of being part of the sample.

This study invited qualified educational psychologists to volunteer to complete a descriptive survey. The researcher approached Medpages to employ a form of convenience sampling to acquire responses from different provinces, age groups, training institutions and practice settings within South Africa. At the time of data collection, Medpages had a database of 857 educational psychologists registered on their directory throughout South Africa. The administrators at Medpages made email contact with educational psychologists who had advertised their contact details, and an invitation to participate in the survey was forwarded to them (See Appendix A).

A total of 857 surveys were delivered successfully and 297 educational psychologists looked at the study. However, only 127 educational psychologists completed the questionnaire and this constituted the final sample size for this study (statistics obtained from Medpages via email correspondence). This indicated a 43% response rate from the surveys opened by educational psychologists for this analysis. The acceptable response rate for online surveys is revealed to be approximately 30% (Hamilton, 2009; Sheehan, 2001). Although this study's response rate was acceptable, it yielded a 57% non-response rate that indicates a threat of response bias (Babbie, 2013). It is important to note that non-respondents are likely to differ from the sample in more ways than just an unwillingness to participate (Babbie, 2013).

3.3.1 Sample Demographics

The 127 respondents in this study ranged between over 20 years of age to over 50 years of age. The majority of respondents in this study were over 50 years of age (*n* = 54; 43%), followed by the 46- to 50-year-old group (*n* = 19; 15%) and the minority age group was the 20- to 25-year-old age group (*n* = 1; 0.8%). Figure 1 below illustrates the distribution of the age range of the respondents.

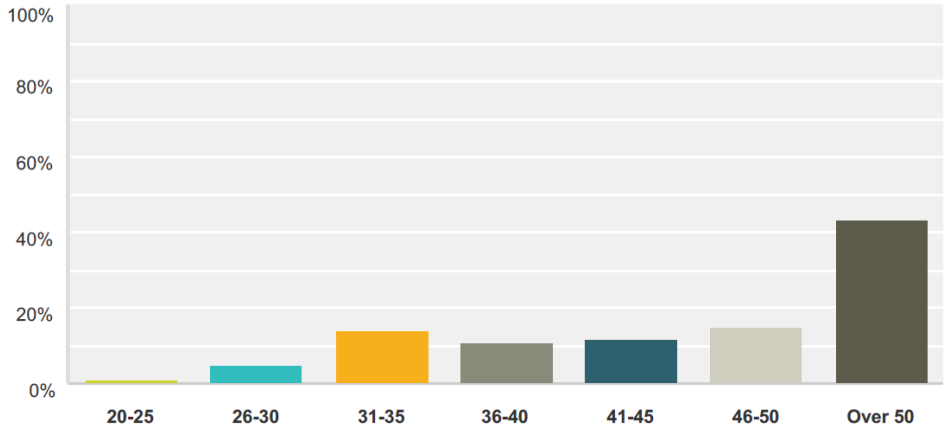


Figure 1. **Age range of sample (N=127)**

In this sample, 16% (*n* = 21) were male educational psychologists and 84% (*n* = 106) were female. The ethnic constitution of the sample was described as follows: 82% (*n* = 105) were White educational psychologists, 6% (*n* = 8) Black educational psychologists, 5% (*n* = 7) Indian educational psychologists, 3% (*n* = 4) Coloured educational psychologists and 2% (*n* = 3) of the sample preferred not to indicate their category of race. The highest level of qualification of the sample was a doctoral qualification in psychology 23% (*n* = 29) and 77% (*n* = 98) had a master's qualification in psychology.

Majority of respondents in this study trained at the University of Pretoria (*n* = 34; 27%). Table 1 below shows the distribution of universities attended by respondents of this study.

Table 1. Distribution of Universities attended by respondents

Name of University	No of respondents (N=127)	Percentage of sample
University of Pretoria	34	27%
University of Witwatersrand	20	16%
University of Johannesburg	20	16%
University of South Africa	18	14%
University of Stellenbosch	16	13%
University of Kwa-Zulu Natal	10	8%
University of Cape Town	3	2%
University of Zululand	2	1.6%
University of the Free State	2	1.6%
Harvard University	1	0.8%
Edinburgh University	1	0.8%
Total:	127	100%

Majority of respondents had 20 years or more (*n* = 40; 31%) experience as educational psychologists, 29% (*n* = 37) of respondents had at least 10 years but less than 20 years of experience, 21% (*n* = 27) of respondents had at least 5 years of experience but not more than 10 years and a minority of respondents (18%; *n* = 23) had less than 5 years of experience. See Figure 2.

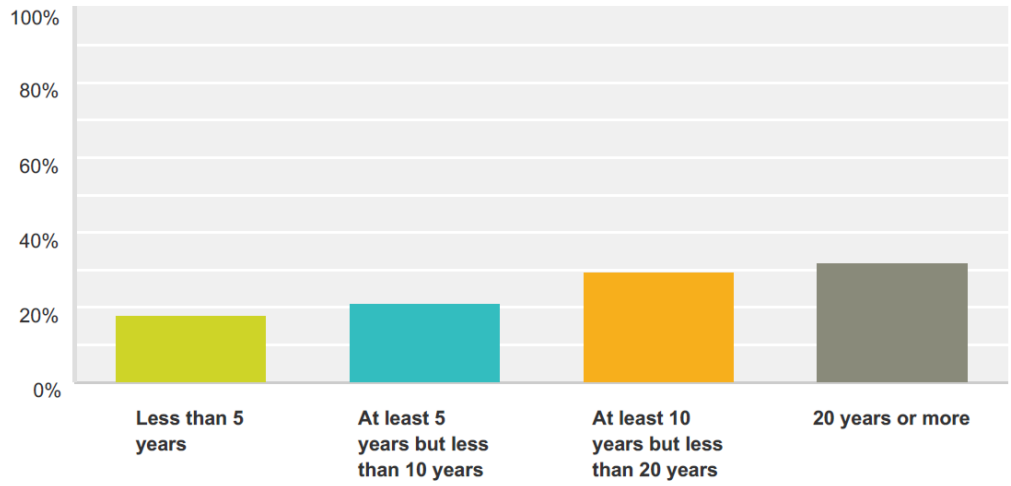


Figure 2. **Experience in the field of educational psychology**

3.3 Instrument

The survey used in the study was a self-designed online questionnaire (see Appendix B). The questionnaire consisted of 27 questions comprised of 13 closed-ended questions and 14 open-ended questions. However, three of the 14 open-ended questions required both a closed and open-ended responses (see Appendix B). The advantages of an online survey were the reduction of social desirability due to the method of data collection being impersonal (White & McBurney, 2013). The limitation of an online survey is the problem of response rates, which results in response bias as a threat to the study's findings. The researcher needs to be aware of the differences that exist between those who responded and those that did not reply (Babbie, 2013; White & McBurney, 2013).

The closed-ended questions were biographical questions and provided descriptive data of the sample adding to the exploratory nature of the study. These types of questions are usually quick to answer, and coding and analysis are straightforward. However, the disadvantage is that responses are preselected and at

times, the respondent may select a response without careful consideration of their response (Maree, 2007). The open-ended questions elicited rich, in-depth data that provided an understanding of the field of educational psychology practiced by these respondents. The advantages of the open-ended questions included the facts that the responses yielded interesting information and that respondents are usually honest and open due to the impersonal nature of an online survey. However, a disadvantage is the inconsistency in the amount of information provided by each respondent and that coding and analysis of the responses may be time-consuming and challenging (Maree, 2007; White & McBurney, 2013).

The questionnaire elicited the following data from respondents:

- the current context of practice and areas of work (Q1 to Q13);
- the type of coursework and internship training received and experience (Q 14 to Q18);
- additional training needs and supervision in the field (Q 19 & Q 20);
- explored therapeutic approaches and assessments used in practice (Q21 to Q23);
- the scope of practice of educational psychologists (Q 25);
- respondent's views on changes made to the education policy, specifically the Education White Paper 6 and its impact on the current practice of the educational psychologist (Q 26); and
- a question for additional comments (Q27).

The instrument was piloted amongst four educational psychologists who were

lecturers, supervisors and practitioners in the field. Once their feedback was received, minor changes were made to the survey questionnaire. Modifications included adding a category to Q10 and correcting grammar on Q 22 & 24. Thereafter the researcher's supervisor approved the instrument, before the data collection phase.

3.4 Procedure

Ethical clearance from the Human Research Ethics Committee – Non-Medical (HREC Non-Medical) at the University of Witwatersrand was obtained; ethics clearance number (MEDP/15/008IH) (see Appendix C). The instrument was then piloted amongst four educational psychologists as discussed above. Subsequently, the survey was loaded on to the online research tool, Survey Monkey. Once uploaded and a link to the survey was created and tested, and then attached to the Invitation to Participate Letter that was emailed to respondents via Medpages (see Appendix A). The completed anonymous surveys were collected via Survey Monkey giving the total of 127 completed surveys for analysis.

3.5 Data Analysis

Once data was collected, the raw data was imported into the MS Excel program. The data was checked, cleaned, then coded and analysed. Data obtained from closed-ended questions on the survey was analysed using descriptive statistics, as these were essential in answering the research questions. The descriptive data in this study was represented by using tables to illustrate the frequencies of the coded data. Codes emerged from the actual content or responses of the respondents in the study. By analysing the frequencies of the codes, the researcher could transform non-quantified data into quantifiable data (Stark & Roberts, 2002).

The open-ended responses to the survey were analysed using Braun and Clark's six steps of thematic content analysis. According to Braun and Clark (2006, p. 79), "Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data". The researcher firstly immersed herself in the raw data by reading and re reading the responses of each participant to each question in the survey. Becoming familiar with the data was a time-consuming but a crucial step in this analysis phase. Secondly, the researcher generated codes, which initially identified every possible idea. Thirdly, after coding all the data, common themes and sub-themes were classified. Fourthly, these were reviewed and refined, and a thematic table was drawn up to categorise the themes induced from the data. Fifthly, the researcher identified the themes by defining and naming those generated from the data. Finally, a comprehensive report on the findings was prepared (Braun & Clark, 2006).

3.6 Quality Criteria

The researcher kept in mind the quality criteria of qualitative analysis throughout the research process. In qualitative analysis, the primary concern is credibility and trustworthiness of the research, rather than validity and reliability as in pure quantitative analysis (Maree, 2007). Criteria for trustworthiness include "credibility, applicability, dependability, and confirmability" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 991). Credibility refers to the degree of assessment undertaken with stakeholders in the field of the study (Maree, 2007). Coding was carried out by the researcher, however, regular and formal supervision with her supervisor allowed for the checking of the raw data, as well as the codes and themes that emerged to avoid bias. The researcher also shared the findings of this study informally with an educational psychologist who confirmed that the results were in line with her experiences in the field (Maree, 2007).

Dependability refers to the findings of the results to be constant over time (Maree, 2007). The researcher included the questionnaire to allow for the possibility for it to be replicated at another stage if required. Confirmability refers to the independence or neutrality of the raw data and the absence of researcher bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher in this study remained detached from respondents through the online method of data collection and this prevented researcher bias. Furthermore, direct quotations of respondents included in the research report demonstrated that the researcher's views did not influence their responses. Finally, transferability refers to the extent to which the results can be spread or generalised in the field (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study made use of a survey design, which yielded a broad cross-section of 127 respondents for a qualitative study allowing for transferability.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The respondents were qualified and registered educational psychologists practicing in South Africa. The respondents were not a vulnerable sample, and the topic of study was not sensitive. All participants were willing volunteers in the study. No forms of deception were used to coerce participation. There were no written consent forms required for this proposed study however, respondents were informed that once he or she completed and submitted the survey, this was considered as consent for the information to be used in the study. The researcher ensured that no identifiable details of respondents were captured in the survey and that confidentiality and anonymity was assured and respected.

A Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix A) included a link to the online survey emailed to respondents. This informed respondents of the purpose of the study and that there were no risks or benefits involved in participation, the approximate time

required to complete the survey and confidentiality and anonymity assured in the study. No identifying details were requested, hence confidentiality and anonymity was protected. The participant information sheet also provided contact information for the researcher involved, as well as her supervisor, should any respondents require any extra information or feedback. Respondents were informed that feedback would be available after the completion of the study in the form of a one-page summary sheet. This would be emailed to respondents on request.

The electronically captured raw data was saved on a password secured computer to protect the data. After data analysis, the raw data was saved and will be archived for five years in the Psychology Department at Wits. The results of the study will be included in a Masters Research report that will be submitted for degree purposes to the School of Human and Community Development, Psychology Department. After the completion of the Masters in Educational Psychology Degree, the research report will also be added to the Wits online library that is available to registered students at Wits. The results may be used in conference presentations and/or future academic publications.

3.8 Self-Reflexivity

The topic of study was of interest to the researcher as a Masters student in Educational Psychology. The researcher had to remain aware of her views, assumptions and biases by keeping a personal journal and discussions with her supervisor who is a registered educational and clinical psychologist. The researcher was aware that her opinions and feelings about the field of educational psychology might impact on the interpretation of the data gathered from open-ended responses in the survey. This constant control and checking of researcher bias were essential

during the analysis phase of this study. Furthermore, the researcher also needed to keep in mind her lack of experience and understanding of the reality of the practice field of educational psychologists and to ensure there were no judgments or expectations in the interpretation of data.

3.9 Summary

Chapter 3 outlined the survey research design that yielded both quantitative and qualitative data from the respondents in this study. It further discussed procedure, analysis and ethical considerations. Chapter 4 will describe the findings of this study.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter presents the main themes and results of this study in a structured approach to answer the research questions. The results of the closed-ended responses are provided in the form of descriptive data and the data from the open-ended responses was analysed using thematic content analysis. The chapter will present an overview as follows:

- demographic data analysed from the survey;
- a description of educational psychology practiced within the South African context;
- the views of educational psychologists of the training received and still required when working in the South African context;
- the themes that emerged from educational psychologists' views on the impact of the Education White Paper 6 in practice within South Africa will be presented; and
- the views of educational psychologists on their scope of practice as outlined by the Professional Board of Psychology of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA).

4.1 Overview of Demographic Data of the Study

4.1.1 Current work context of respondents

In this study, respondents worked in multiple settings, hence provided various responses. This study found that 104 respondents (82%) worked within a private practice setting. Thirty-six respondents (28%) worked in a mainstream school setting

and 23 respondents (18%) worked in a tertiary educational setting. Figure 3 below illustrates the various work settings of the respondents in this study.

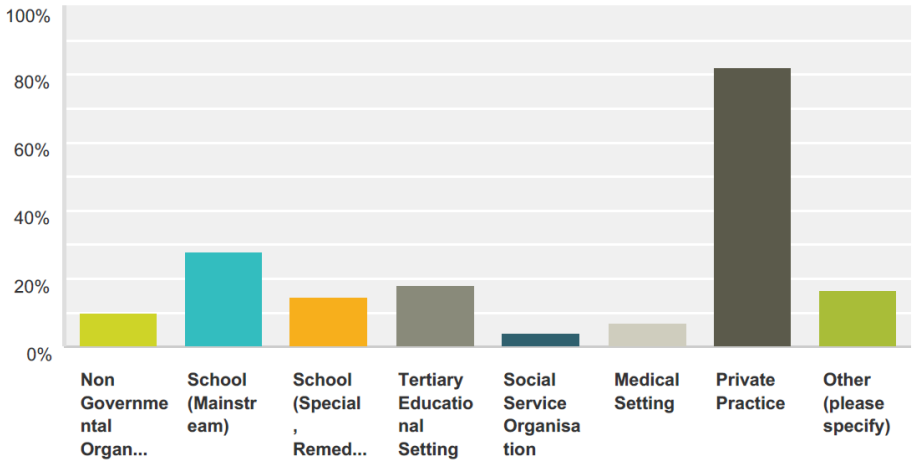


***Figure 3*. Current work context of respondents**

4.1.2 Type of setting

A majority of the respondents (n = 107; 84%) work within an urban context of service delivery. Thirteen respondents (10%) in this study indicated that they worked within a rural setting and 7 respondents (6%) stated that they worked in both rural and urban settings. Figure 4 below illustrates the types of setting where respondents work.

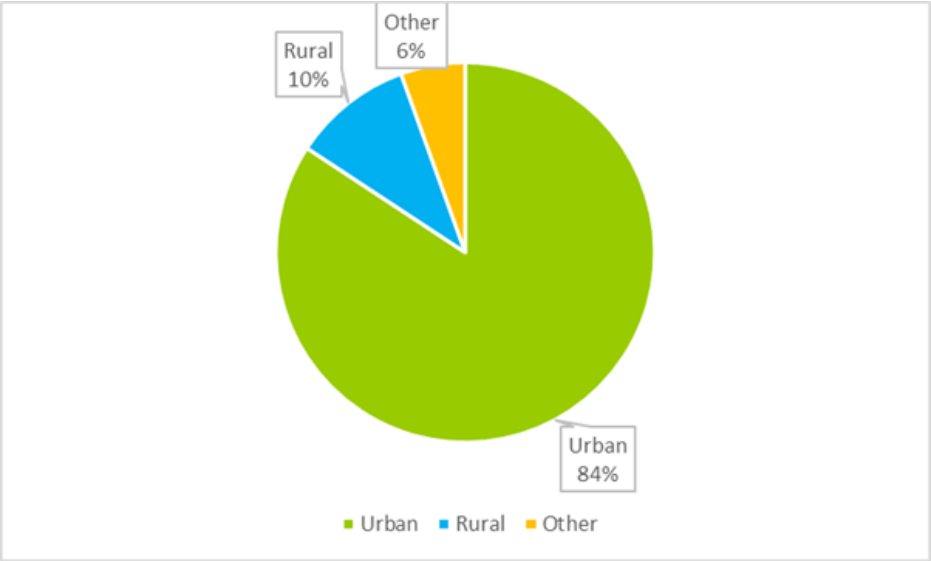


Figure 4. **Type of setting**

4.1.3 Areas of work currently engaged in

In analysing the responses of the respondents, the following principal ten areas of practice were identified by the researcher as the most frequent areas of intervention that describes the work of the educational psychologists in this study:

- Psycho-educational assessments (*n* = 114; 90%)
- Parent guidance (*n* = 93; 73%)
- Child psychotherapy or play therapy (*n* = 90; 71%)
- Adolescent therapy (*n* = 87; 69%)
- Career assessment and career guidance (*n* = 70; 55%)
- Individual adult therapy (*n* = 53; 42%)
- Medico-legal assessments (*n* = 49; 39%)
- Crisis intervention (*n* = 48; 38%)
- Family therapy (*n* = 47; 37%)
- Learner support or remedial therapy (*n* = 46; 36%)

4.2 A description of Educational Psychology practiced within the South African context.

4.2.1 Supervision attended:

The types of supervision sought out by the respondents in this study were peer or group supervision; individual supervision; attending continued professional development activities; attending conferences as well as informal meetings with colleagues were some examples provided. Forty-five respondents (35%) indicated that they attended both individual and peer supervision groups, while 27 respondents (21%) attended peer supervision groups only and 29 respondents (23%) attended individual supervision only. Ten respondents (8%) shared that they attended continued professional development (CPD) activities, engage in informal meetings and case discussions with colleagues and an occasional consultation with a supervisor when required. However, 16 respondents (13%) in this study indicated that they did not attend supervision while practicing as educational psychologists. These results emphasised that although majority of respondents (n = 110; 87%) do engage in some form of supervision, a minority group (n = 17; 13%) do not engage in this type of continued professional development.

4.2.2 Therapy approaches or paradigm used in practice

In this study, the majority of the respondents (n = 70; 55%) practice an eclectic approach to therapeutic interventions. Forty-seven respondents (37%) practice Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. A psychodynamic approach to therapy was the least practiced therapeutic paradigm by 35 respondents (28%). Thirty-nine respondents (39%) indicated that they used other therapeutic approaches, such as the narrative

approach, positive psychology, and community psychological paradigms and mediated learning experience.

4.2.3 Tests frequently used in practice

The researcher coded each test listed by the respondents of the study. Subsequently, tests were sorted into the categories of cognitive tests or intelligence tests, scholastic or educational tests, emotional and projective tests and then a category of other, which included perceptual testing, neurological screening and school readiness assessments. Each test code was counted and the five most frequently used tests were selected and presented in this section. Please see Appendix D for the full list of tests used in practice by the respondents of this study.

The cognitive assessment tools that were most frequently used by respondents are as follows:

- Senior South African Individual Scale- Revised (SSAIS-R) (*n* = 60; 47%)
- Junior South African Individual Scale (JSAIS) (*n* = 51; 40%)
- Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children Fourth Edition (WISC-IV) (*n* = 41; 32%)
- Intelligence/Cognitive tests (Not Specified) (*n* =23) (18%)
- Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence-Revised (WPPSI-R) (*n* = 18; 14%)

The scholastic or educational assessment tools that were most frequently used by respondents are as follows:

- Scholastic Assessments (Not Specified) (*n* = 43; 34%)

- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT) (*n* = 35; 28%)
- Neale Analysis of Reading Ability Test-Revised (NARA-R) (*n* = 15; 12%)
- ESSI Reading and Spelling Test (*n* = 10; 8%)
- Edinburgh Reading Test (*n* = 6; 5%)

The projective tests and emotional assessment tools that were most frequently used by respondents are as follows:

- Emotional Test Battery (Not Specified) (*n* = 33; 26%)
- Draw-A-Person (DAP) (*n* = 23; 18%)
- Incomplete Sentences (*n* = 18; 14%)
- Kinetic Family Drawing (KFD) (*n* = 17; 13%)
- Children's Apperception Test (CAT) (*n* = 11; 9%)
- Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) (*n* = 11; 9%)

The assessment tools that were frequently used by the respondents in this study to assess perceptual functioning were the Bender Visual-Motor Gestalt Test (n = 39; 31%) and the Beery Test of Visual Motor Integration (n = 17; 13%). For career guidance, the assessment tools most frequently used are the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (n = 13; 10%), the Jung Personality Questionnaire (JPQ) (n = 11; 9%) and the Differential Aptitude Test (DAT) (n = 12; 9%).

4.2.4 Types of assessment most frequently requested in current practice:

The respondents in this study reported that scholastic or educational assessments were the most frequently requested, followed by emotional assessments and full psycho-educational assessments. The results presented in Table 2 describe the assessments frequently requested in the practice of educational psychologists in this study.

Table 2. Assessments frequently requested in practice

Type of Assessment:	***n***	**%**
Scholastic/Educational Assessment	80	63%
Emotional Assessment Battery	57	45%
Full Psycho-educational Assessment	40	31%
Vocational/ Career assessments	40	31%
Cognitive/Intelligence Tests	27	21%
School Readiness Assessments	7	6%
Developmental Screening Tests	4	3%
Concessions	3	2%
Parental Assessment	1	0.8%

4.3 Educational Psychologists' views of training received and still required when working in the South African context

4.3.1 Masters Coursework Training

Nine percent of the sample (n = 11) indicated that all aspects of training were useful. These respondents were not precise in their response. The majority of respondents (n = 49; 39%) stated that training in psychometric assessment and report writing skills was essential. This was followed by various therapeutic approaches to counselling as a vital component of training, as well as practical training and supervision. Table 3 illustrates useful course content for training during master's coursework year.

Table 3. Useful course content training in the master's coursework year

Course Content	*n*	Percentage
Psychometric Assessment Training & Report Writing Skills	49	39%
Various Therapeutic Approaches to Counselling	48	38%
Practical Training and Supervision.	37	29%
Working in school settings.		
Exposure to different schools of thought.	15	12%
(Broad training on theory content)		
Community-based courses	12	9%
Child Development and Psychopathology	8	6%
Career Guidance	7	5.5%
Case presentations and learning from peers. Group discussions	9	7%
Research Training	5	4%

Several assessment tools were trained on and listed by the respondents of this study. The researcher coded the respondents individual lists of assessments trained on and calculated a frequency count for each. The researcher identified a list hereunder of the most frequently trained assessment tools, trained at universities in South Africa namely: Cognitive Assessment Tools, Scholastic Assessment Tools, Emotional Assessment Tools, and Career Assessment Tools (see Appendix E for the full list of assessment tools trained during the master's coursework year of study).

Cognitive assessment tools that were most frequently trained at university were:

- Senior South African Individual Scale- Revised (SSAIS-R) (*n* = 74; 56%)
- Junior South African Individual Scale (JSAIS) (*n* = 68; 54%)
- Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children Fourth Edition (WISC-IV) *(n* = 30; 24%)
- Wechsler Preschool & Primary Scale of Intelligence-Revised (WPPSI-R) (*n* = 14; 11%)
- Intelligence/Cognitive tests (not specified) (n = 13; 10%)

Scholastic assessment tools that were most frequently trained at university were:

- Scholastic Assessments (Not Specified) (*n* = 50; 39%)
- Neale Analysis of Reading Ability Test-Revised (NARA-R) (*n* = 12; 9%)
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT) (*n* = 10; 8%)
- Schonnell Spelling Test (*n* = 5; 4%)
- ESSI Reading and Spelling Tests (*n* = 5; 4%)

Emotional assessment tools or projective tests that were most frequently trained at university were:

- Rorschach Inkblot Test (*n*=39; 31%)
- Children's Apperception Test (CAT) (*n* = 30; 24%)
- Draw-A-Person Test (DAP) (*n* = 29; 23%)
- Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) (*n* = 28; 22%)
- Kinetic Family Drawing (KFD) (*n* = 17; 13%)

Career assessment tools that were most frequently trained at university were:

- The sixteen-personality factor Questionnaire (16PF) (*n* =16; 13%)
- Jung Personality Questionnaire (JPQ) (*n* =15; 12%)
- Differential Aptitude Test (DAT) (*n* =15; 12%)
- Career Guidance Test (*n* =15; 12%)
- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (*n* =12; 9%)

The most frequently trained perceptual test was the Bender Visual-Motor Gestalt Test (*n* = 38; 30%) and the Quick Neurological Screening Tests (*n* = 6; 5%) was the neurological screening test most frequently taught to the respondents of this study.

4.3.2 Internship Training

Majority of the respondents in this study highlighted that practical experience was the most useful in their internship training. Table 4 illustrates the multiple responses of the respondents about what they experienced as useful during their internship training as educational psychologists.

Table 4. Useful training during internship

Useful training during internship year	***n***	**Percentage**
Practical Experience	79	62%
Intensive Supervision and Support	43	34%
Work with Various Systems	39	31%
Work in Schools	37	29%
Working with a multidisciplinary team	30	24%
Psycho-educational Assessments	29	23%
Case Management /Case Conference	20	16%
Peer Support amongst Interns	15	12%
Additional training courses	8	6%

4.3.2.1 Gaps in Internship Training

Thirty-nine percent of the respondents (n = 50) indicated that their internship training was experienced as adequate and sufficient. However, when engaging in the thematic content analysis of the responses regarding what educational psychologists would like included in their internship training, respondents in this study identified the following gaps in the training during their internship year:

- The lack of consistent and in-depth level of supervision (n = 10; 8%).
- Exposure to family therapy (n = 10; 8%);
- Consideration of a split internship year, with six months at a clinical setting and six months at a school (n = 9; 7%);

- Case management training for difficult cases such as child abuse and neglect including practical and legal aspects and report writing skills (*n* = 9; 7%);
- A higher individual therapy caseload during internship would be beneficial (*n* = 7; 6 %);
- Specific training on parent guidance for children with learning difficulties (*n* = 6; 5%);
- Exposure to diverse communities and cross-cultural work during the internship year (*n* = 6; 5%);
- Exposure to forensic assessments (*n* = 6; 5%);
- More exposure to standardised assessment tools (*n* = 5; 4%).

4.3.3 Views on readiness to work within the South African context

Seventy-eight percent of respondents (*n* = 99) in this study indicated that they felt ready to work within the South African context after receiving their training. However, 22% of respondents (*n* = 28) responded that they felt inadequately prepared to work in the South African context. All responses were further analysed and the following themes emerged. Respondents highlighted positive and negative aspects of training discussed below.

4.3.3.1 Positives aspects of training

4.3.3.1.1 Internship training and experience

Many respondents experienced their internship training as valuable and an opportunity that exposed them to various forms of interventions and assessments that were not taught in their coursework year at the university. One of the respondents said that:

> Through my internship, I have learnt all about career psychology, developing entrepreneurial projects, ethics, medico-legal assessments, couples counselling, family therapy, implementing informative and sustainable workshops and more importantly I have learnt to use different approaches when working with different clients and not just relying on a psychodynamic approach (Respondent 74).

Respondents also emphasised that the internship training developed a sense of direction and flexibility in the ability to work in multiple settings with different groups of people. 'The internship was intense and challenging yet it equipped me to provide services in a variety of settings and contexts. It laid the foundation for the work I am currently doing' (Respondent 46).

4.3.3.1.2 Supervision

Supervision came up as an important aspect of training and ongoing professional development as an educational psychologist. 'I felt well-trained by the end of my internship and competent to practice as a psychologist. However, I also felt that for my own professional development, it was important to remain in supervision with an experienced psychologist' (Respondent 54).

Another respondent stressed that even with years of experience in the field, supervision continues to be a valuable aspect of ongoing training. 'I feel it is very very very important that supervision is part of the process, even after you have qualified. Twenty years later, I am still in supervision three times a month and find it invaluable' (Respondent 21).

4.3.3.1.3 Continued professional development (CPD)

Educational psychologists in this study drew attention to the importance of continued professional development in the field. Enhanced skills and increased competency levels were necessary to handle difficult cases in practice.

> During the coursework and internship training, we were encouraged to continuously learn and enhance our skills even through difficult cases, clients and assessments. I felt well equipped to work independently, seeking out areas that were aligned with my own interests and abilities (Respondent 46).

Another respondent emphasised that the role of educational psychologists shifted from individual interventions to that of community interventions and that required further training and professional development.

> BUT, the field has changed since the early 90s when I trained and registered and I had to continuously, via CPD and my work in tertiary institutions, re-adjust and keep up to date with developments – the main being a shift from individual intervention to community contexts (Respondent 24).

4.3.3.1.4 Experience in the field prior to master's training

Another important theme expressed by educational psychologists in this study was the benefit of having experience in working with children before their master's year of training: 'I worked with psychologists before my studies and learned a lot from them. Therefore, I was more equipped than other students' (Respondent 1). Another respondent further emphasised the value of experience prior to the master's year of training, 'I was well trained, but no one can buy experience. PS: I still think 4-year

teaching, which was pre-requisite for MEd was unbelievable and a MUST to work with children' (Respondent 18).

4.3.3.1.5 Being mentored

Respondents highlighted the importance of being mentored by an experience educational psychologist while training and entering the field.

> I chose to work in a practice alongside a qualified psychologist for 3 years until I felt confident enough to start my own practice. I feel strongly that this practice should be made compulsory as too many newly qualified but inexperienced psychologists are starting their own practicing straight out of university. Guidance and mentorship as well as supervision are VITAL in our field (Respondent 35).

Another respondent alluded to a feeling of isolation and loneliness in the field for beginner educational psychologists that could be contained through having a mentor.

> The 18 years' experience in the special education sector and my life experience contributed significantly to my ability to do this work. I had to take responsibility for my own development. Perhaps mentoring by another Educational Psychologist will add immense value to growing this work. (Respondent 73)

The benefits of being mentored included improvement of confidence and provision of guidance to newly qualified educational psychologists.

4.3.3.2 Negative aspects of training that led to feeling unprepared

4.3.3.2.1 Lack of exposure to diverse communities

Educational psychologists in this study experienced a lack of exposure to diverse communities in their training and internship years of study, which perhaps limited their skills set. Respondents in this study highlighted the importance of seeking internship sites that meet their interest, as well as exposure to areas of intervention that allows for a rich experience and immersion into the needs of the clients of various community settings. 'I think that I would have preferred to work in an environment with a wider scope' (Respondent 14). 'Inadequate to non-existent work in a cross-cultural setting' (Respondent 27). Respondents also highlighted the importance of the selection of internship sites that meet the training needs of students adequately.

4.3.3.2.2 Lack of community service

At present, an educational psychology qualification does not require an added year of community service. This study found that respondents saw community service as an added year of development that would supplement their training, hence enhancing their competence as beginner practitioners in the field. 'I feel that a year of community service would assist a great deal. There are not enough internship institutes in Kwa-Zulu Natal. More supervision would be beneficial' (Respondent 41).

4.4 Views of Respondents on the impact of Education White Paper 6 on the practice on Educational Psychology in South Africa.

Seventy-one respondents (56%) in this study indicated that the changes to the Education policy had no impact on their practice as educational psychologists and many were not familiar with the policy. However, 57 respondents (44%) had

indicated that they have experienced the impact on their practices. The themes that emerge as positive aspects of the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) in the practice of respondents were: role clarification, an increased need for educational psychologists in schools, increased requests for assessments and additional collaboration with a multidisciplinary team. The themes that emerged as negative aspects of the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) in the practice of respondents were lack of resources and challenges in implementing the policy in practice.

4.4.1 Positive Aspects of the Education White Paper 6

4.4.1.1 Role clarification

Respondents in this study experienced the Education White Paper 6 as providing a sense of guide and framework to their work within the school system. ‘I have always had it as a framework to understand my own work in the wider system’ (Respondent 11). Another respondent emphasised, ‘CLARIFIED MY ROLE’ (Respondent 12). However, another respondent used the policy tentatively and was guided by ethical principles when working with clients within the school system by stating, ‘I apply its principles as best possible, if it is in the best interest of my client’ (Respondent 28).

4.4.1.2 Increased need for educational psychologists in schools

Respondents noted that the implementation of the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) increased the requests for service delivery of educational psychologists in schools. ‘Have to do assessments for concessions but also think creatively how learners with specific learning problems can be assisted in a mainstream class’ (Respondent 68). This reflects an increased demand and need for assessments in schools, and that working collaboratively works in the best interest of learners. One respondent added, ‘It certainly impacts the kinds of recommendations I make though

as focus is often on helping children to manage in their current environment and be included' (Respondent 81). Another said: 'Need for educational psychologists in all schools due to the social demands that learners are exposed to' (Respondent 19). This addresses a need for a more holistic intervention with the child within the school and family system.

4.4.1.3 Collaboration with the multidisciplinary team

Respondents emphasised that their role requires more involvement and collaboration with other professionals working with children in school settings, which includes educators, social workers, speech therapists, occupational therapists. It allows for a holistic view of the child and the difficulties experienced by the school system. 'Inclusive education requires more inter-professional collaboration and the role of the Ed Psych as part of the team who works with the child becomes increasingly important' (Respondent 49).

4.4.2 Negative Aspects of the Education White Paper 6

4.4.2.1 Lack of resources

Respondents drew attention to challenges that they faced in relation to the implementation of the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) policy. A significant recurrent theme shared by the respondents was the lack of resources. There was a major sense of frustration experienced by educational psychologists in trying to place children with barriers to learning within appropriate schooling environments that would meet their learning needs. One respondent highlighted:

> Although in theory, our schools should be more inclusive, this is a constant challenge as many schools feel unequipped to meet the needs of children who

> have learning difficulties or require accommodation. It is often necessary as an educational psychologist to consider whether the mainstream school can meet the needs of a particular child and if not, then recommend that the child move to a remedial or special needs school - this is an unfortunate challenge we face in SA (Respondent 62).

Another respondent further shared the challenges experienced due to lack of infrastructural resources:

> Yes, too few specialised schools are available. Inclusive education does not really benefit the learner with special educational needs. Purely because classes are too big and teachers are not qualified to assist the learner with special needs. After assessing a child, I often do not know where to refer the child (Respondent 63).

Lack of resources renders children with learning difficulties helpless and disadvantaged in the schooling system. ‘ ‘More children are mainstreamed, and they need more support in the mainstream - fewer special schools. Children get lost in the system if they cannot afford private schools’ (Respondent 13).

In addition to the lack of infrastructural resources, respondents also identified that there are not enough department educational psychologists to service government schools. One respondent said:

> More children need learning support due to their frequent changes in the curriculum and expectations that kids must adapt all the time, too few educators, teachers not equipped with enough remedial skills to deal with volume of learners’ needing support, teachers focused on admin instead of

> teaching, disadvantaged schools & kids still get a raw deal as there are too few educational psychologists to address the demands for therapy and trauma work, learners get identified but schools not equipped to cater to their needs (Respondent 59).

Another respondent emphasised that educational psychologists are needed in schools for inclusive education strategies to be implemented effectively.

> The schools are barely able to implement White Paper 6, and [2]SIAS is a process very few schools know about. The department also not have to keep up and there are too few departmental psychologists for too many schools (Respondent 67).

Demographic data revealed a gap in service delivery between urban and rural area schools. Some respondents highlighted their difficulties in providing services to rural areas. One respondent said:

> In the rural areas because of lack of resources many learners with special needs are in mainstream schools and there is a huge emphasis on inclusive education. It is our job to support schools in this regard especially regarding curriculum adaptations and behaviour management (Respondent 24).

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[2] Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support 'is a policy that standardises the procedures to identify, assess and provide programmes for all learners who require additional support to enhance their participation and inclusion in schools' (Department of Basic Education, 2014, p.1)

Another respondent also provided an opinion regarding the difficulty in accessing those learners with difficulties to provide intervention in rural schools.

> Unfortunately, policies such as White Paper 6 do not seem to exist in rural communities - rural teachers have no idea what 'inclusive education' even means! Further, as I have said before, it is difficult to gain access to work/assist rural schools without the permission of the Department of Education, which entails a lot of paperwork and red tape. So, I can only gain access to children and 'learners' through NGOs and community-based centers - which means the focus of intervention, is more on psycho-social issues and adjustment than learning problems (Respondent 47).

4.4.2.2 Challenges in implementing policy in practice

In this study, the educational psychologists communicated their numerous experiences regarding challenges faced after the implementation of Education White Paper 6 in schools. The researcher presents some of the pertinent themes that were described to highlight some of the difficulties in practice. Placing children with learning difficulties in the appropriate school setting was identified as challenging for various reasons.

> I experience difficulties with placement of learners as special classes and Aid classes have been removed in school settings. Learners with low intellectual abilities are placed in mainstream classes and may not cope, or feel inferior to others, fall apart and display behaviour difficulties (Respondent 1).

> This can be challenging when what I consider may be in the best interest of the learner may be in conflict with the [3]GDE policy and the facilities that are available to accommodate learners. (Respondent 2)

The above two respondents stress that although some learners may fit the criteria for inclusion, their emotional struggles and maladjustment to the mainstream environment may perhaps lead to behavioural difficulties. The best interest of the child in some cases does not fit with inclusive education guidelines. Another respondent said she, 'realised that mainstream is not the option for all children' (Respondent 19).

Some respondents expressed that implementing the policy in some cases was experienced as impractical. 'The various educational policies may be based on progressive thinking but the actual practice thereof is a travesty' (Respondent 9). Another respondent shared:

> Just remember, there is a big difference between what is written in White Paper 6 and what happens in practice. For most children, very little has changed and they progress through school with minimal support or drop out of the system altogether (Respondent 43).

'I found it useful when it was published but current department of education/government have not followed through' (Respondent 44). This highlights the challenges experienced when policy is not followed through in practice.

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[3] Gauteng Department of Education

Another significant finding from the responses of respondents was the lack of training amongst educators on how to accommodate learners with learning difficulties within the mainstream class.

> Yes, too few specialised schools are available. Inclusive education does not really benefit the learner with special educational needs. Purely because classes are too big and teachers are not qualified to assist the learner with special needs. After assessing a child, I often do not know where to refer the child to (Respondent 63).

Another respondent added:

> I find that the teachers where I work are often challenged by policies such as White Paper 6 because they battle, for example, to understand how a child with learning difficulties could and should be included in a mainstream class (Respondent 77).

The respondents' experiences confirmed the fact that educator training was important and needed in order for appropriate accommodations and inclusion strategies to be continued in the classroom setting.

4.5 Educational psychologists' views of their scope of practice

In analysing the results, it was found that 94 respondents (74%) indicated that they found all aspects of the scope of practice applicable to their work as educational psychologists. Two pertinent themes emerged during the analysis of the content namely: aspects of scope most applicable and a lack of clarity of the scope of practice.

4.5.1 Aspects of the scope most applicable in practice

The two themes that emerged from the thematic content analysis that were considered as pertinent to the scope of practice of educational psychologists were addressing barriers to learning and working from an ecosystemic framework in practice.

4.5.1.1 Addressing barriers to learning

One of the key areas of the educational psychology scope of practice document focuses on identifying and addressing barriers to learning. Educational psychologists are primarily viewed as engaging in assessing, diagnosing and developing intervention strategies for learners with learning difficulties. One respondent described this as:

> I mostly work in a school setting so I find that facilitating psychological adjustment and development of children and adolescents' as these areas of functioning relate to school performance, peer groups/social setting and the school context are most applicable to me (Respondent 119).

Furthermore, this underlines the fact that educational psychologists view learners holistically and take into consideration multiple contributing factors that create barriers to learning. Another respondent further highlighted this key area of work: ‘I assess, diagnose and intervene re learners who experience barriers to assessment, recommend accommodations in order for learners to reach their full potential by minimizing the effect of the barriers during tests and examinations’ (Respondent 1).

4.5.1.2 Working ecosystemically

In this study, the respondents emphasised the theme of working with children

ecosystemically. Respondents described that working with children requires intervention on various systemic levels, which cannot be achieved by working with children individually.

> I certainly spend most of my skills focused on facilitating 'psychological adjustment and development' but working according to ecosystemic theory, that entails working not just with children and adolescents, but also (and very importantly) the adults who influence them (Respondent 64).

Another respondent further stated:

> I work from an ecosystemic framework. I therefore assess the family and school in intervening with a child. I also try to make recommendations in such a way that everybody involved in a child's life play their part to help. I have two interviews with parents, interact with teachers, and also, on occasion do school visits. If there are peer issues, for example bullying. I have put a programme in place at a school where one of my clients was bullied (Respondent 106).

Respondents highlighted their work on the micro- and meso-levels by: 'I work systematically with the child in his/ her various contexts' (Respondent 15). Respondents highlighted the importance of working with parents, as part of the intervention strategies and understanding of the learner's needs. 'Parent education to assist their children with barriers to learning/adjustment' (Respondent 52). Another spoke about the importance of observation and understanding the school context: 'Working in a school allows many opportunities to assess and then intervene with children in their context-both at school and in their families' (Respondent 69). The

home context of the learner also consistently emerged as an area of intervention that could not be overlooked by the respondents in this study, ‘Family is brought into the equation when challenging home circumstances are impacting on learning and emotional well-being’ (Respondent 2). This was further emphasised by another respondent: ‘I work systemically so the family and community context is usually foregrounded when I work with a child's parents in understanding the concern and how the child could/should be supported’ (Respondent 119).

4.5.2 A lack of clarity of the scope of practice

The respondents strongly stated their views that the scope of practice for educational psychologist lacks clarity and that its interpretation can be misleading. One respondent said:

> I do think that educational psychologists are being severely discriminated against by all the rules and regulations and rumours related to categorisation and scope of practice. As a professionally trained and registered practitioner I know when to refer and have done so whenever needed in the past. Practitioners registered with the HPCSA should not be burdened with all the unnecessary rules and regulations regarding scope of practice. Medical Aids - being as opportunistic as they are - already started discriminating against Educational psychologists when payment of fees is requested. Practitioners should be viewed as individuals / on merit and their years of experience and post-graduate training should be taken into account. These aspects are more important to me than trying to force practitioners in a specific direction with these ever present new regulations and rules in our country (Respondent 3).

Respondents expressed that training should be considered before limiting the

scope of practice for educational psychologists:

> I feel that that the HPCSA is being extremely short sighted and ignorant in attempting to artificially separate the scopes of practice - especially for those educational psychologists, and counsellors who, many years ago, were well trained by their institutions to work in the field of psychotherapy. I was also trained by my university, in the diagnosis of severe clinical pathology and therefore I am able to confidently refer prospective patients with severe symptomatology to psychiatrists (Respondent 15).

Another respondent further emphasised the value of experience, training and research:

> Certain casework that I have been trained for through further education and research are seen as falling only within the clinical psychologist category, even though it pertains to parental and child functioning. Psychological adjustment and development is a life-long process and there is no reason why Educational psychologists should not be able to work with adults. Most emotional, but also cognitive functioning problems have their roots in childhood (Respondent 51).

Respondents felt that the lack of clarity on the scope of practice continues to have a negative impact on the livelihoods of educational psychologists:

> The scope of practice has led to restricting me to only children and adolescence. I think this is totally unfair, as I have completed numerous CPD workshops, which has trained me in many fields. I feel disillusioned by this. It has also limited my income tremendously (Respondent 66).

4.6 Summary

This chapter presented the findings of this study. The descriptive data was presented, as well as the main themes that emerged from the data collected. Chapter 5 will provide a summary of the key findings of this study, as well as the implications of the results, recommendations and the limitations of the current study.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This final chapter summarises the key findings of this study in relation to the background literature and the implications of the findings. The limitations of this study are considered, as well as suggestions for further research. This chapter would begin with a recap of the aims, purpose and research questions of this study as follows:

- To explore the views of practicing educational psychologists in their roles and functions in the South African context;
- To obtain an overview of the educational psychology profession in South Africa, for example, where are educational psychologists working, types of training and still required, challenges experienced in service delivery? This information is essential before embarking on more specific research into the profession; and
- To document demographic and descriptive data in relation to educational psychologists' training, areas of work and views of their roles and functions, within the context of changes in education policy and their professional practice in South Africa.

The research questions of the study were as follows:

- What does educational psychologists' practice in the current South African context involve?
- Which aspects of educational psychologists' masters' training programmes prepared them for their current practice?

- What are educational psychologists' views on policy changes in education and the implications for their current practice?
- What are educational psychologists' views on their current scope of practice?

The following summarises key findings of the research study

5.1 Overview of demographic findings

The findings of this study indicated that majority of educational psychologists in South Africa are practicing in a private practice capacity and majority service urban areas. One has to look at these findings from a critical perspective and question service delivery in our context. These findings raise several questions. Is it perhaps that educational psychologists cannot access employment opportunities to allow them to work within multidisciplinary team settings thus servicing a wider area of children in South Africa? Or whether private practice is the only option to provide services to children and the chosen option for service delivery for educational psychologists to survive in these difficult economic times?

These findings support Donald et al. (2014), who argue that psychological service delivery does not adequately reach all race groups in South Africa and highlights that those learners from black communities and rural areas are undoubtedly underserviced. Educational psychologists in South Africa are trained to provide services to children, parents and families, and the school settings are ideal placements for educational psychologists to provide a broad range of services. Kratochwill (2007) highlights that the school environment is usually the primary provider of psychological services for children. It is an ideal setting to access children and parents who require services to address emotional and maladjustment to stressful life events

(Kratochwill, 2007; Kratochwill & Shernoff, 2004). However, in South Africa, qualified educational psychologists are dependent on working in the private sector, perhaps due to lack of employment opportunities within the schooling system.

5.2 A description of educational psychology practiced within the South African context

In this study, the educational psychologists highlighted three key areas of psychological intervention, namely psycho-educational assessments, parent guidance and child psychotherapy. Boyle and Lauchlan (2009) emphasise that although the core role of educational psychologists is to provide services to children, it takes the expertise of skilled and experienced educational psychologists to view the client holistically taking into account their interaction with the environment. As a consequence, it is through parent guidance that the educational psychologist works collaboratively and indirectly with children. This process is implemented through establishing more appropriate support strategies in the home environment (Amod & Heafield, 2013; Bornman & Rose, 2013).

The therapeutic approach most commonly used by respondents was an eclectic approach as compared to one predominant therapeutic approach to therapy. There appeared to be a gap in the literature comparing the therapeutic paradigms that are best suited to the South African setting. A review of the literature also found that a gap exists in research. In South Africa, a comparative study of the various therapeutic approaches is needed to explore which therapeutic approach is best suited to this diverse context. The findings of this study perhaps illustrate that respondents adapted the therapeutic approach trained in, at the university trained at; as well as the approaches exposed to and taught at an internship site, and further training obtained

through continued professional development.

This study found that educational psychologists were most frequently requested to conduct full psycho-educational assessments and emotional assessments in their area of work. Hence these results imply that conducting and reporting on assessments is viewed as a critical role of educational psychologists in this study. Amod and Heafield (2013) support the notion of assessments taking on a more indirect service delivery approach to meet the demands of these highly-requested skills. Amod and Heafield (2013, p. 81) suggest that an "interdisciplinary and collaborative approach" which involves addressing children's physiological needs, emotional needs and providing access to varied learning opportunities to allow for readiness for schooling in young children. In this way, more children would have access to assessments and have support strategies developed at an early age to address barriers to learning and development. Therefore, programmes designed and implemented in under-resourced communities in early childhood would remove barriers to learning and development (Amod & Heafield, 2013).

This study also found that a minority group of respondents chose to not engage in any form of supervision. Graves et al. (2014), found that educational psychologists sought out supervision on an as-needed basis. Chafouleas et al. (2002) further recommended that supervision of educational psychologists should be explored in order to understand how to meet their needs as psychologists thus making supervision in practice an essential undertaking.

5.3 Views of educational psychologists on training received and still required when working in the South African context

The results identified that majority of educational psychologist trained at various universities in South Africa felt well-trained or equipped to work within this diverse environment. Respondents experienced coursework and internship training as fostering a sense of direction and exposure to working within a multidisciplinary team. Higgs (2012) views universities as having a vital responsibility to select and empower their graduates thus advocating for change and development within society.

Other key findings that reflected positive aspects of training were the importance of regular and valuable supervision and continued professional development in the field. The respondents of this study expressed that this enhanced their skill set and informed their intervention strategies with difficult and challenging cases in practice. The results also pointed out the importance of having prior experience in working with children before embarking on training as educational psychologists. Results of this study drew attention to the importance of being mentored during the training phase. The respondents expressed that one's confidence developed as the result of the mentoring relationship. Chafouleas et al. (2002) found that there is a gap in research in exploring the needs of school psychologists to enhance their professional development. Graves et al. (2014) found that school psychologists only accessed support on an as-needed basis. The findings of this study suggest that a mentorship programme is used to bridge the gap, thus encouraging educational psychologists to seek out professional, supportive services in practice on a more regular basis.

Two key findings regarding the negative aspects of training were the lack of adequate exposure to diverse communities during training and the lack of community service as part of the qualification for an educational psychologist. Respondents in this study experienced a lack of exposure to diverse communities highlighting a gap in the training needs of educational psychologists. In South Africa, there are limited accredited internship sites for trainee educational psychologists. Perhaps more schools need to register as internship sites that would allow psychologists' exposure and access to various communities during the placement. A review of literature highlights debates on the subject of educational psychologists changing roles and expectation to move away from direct service delivery to a more indirect approach with psychological interventions and strategies.

Daniels (2010) puts forward that the principles of community psychology is imperative and would refine the role of educational psychologists from an individual focus to that of public health perspective. Seedat, Duncan and Lazarus (2002) further add that the role of advocacy, community networking and policy formation and implementation are roles educational psychologist can undertake within the communities they service. The findings of this study highlight the existence of the challenges to move away from direct service delivery to an indirect service delivery. Hence this transition requires a lot more effort and training at the level of university training, as well as internship training.

Educational psychologists in private practice are further challenged to offer their experience to marginalised communities. Private practitioners could perhaps offer their services to schools in marginalised communities, through building a collaborative relationship, to assist with lobbying for resources in under-resourced

schools and by volunteering a mass presentation as part of social responsibility. The researcher suggests that a mass presentation at schools on topics such as substance abuse awareness, information about HIV, teenage pregnancy, parent guidance are some of the ideas for private practitioners to engage in some form of indirect service delivery.

The respondents of this study expressed that an extra year of community service as a necessary component of their training should be considered. Community service would allow trainee educational psychologists more experience, as well as enhance skills and training before qualification. There appears to be a gap in literature and research regarding the implementation of community service for educational psychology qualifications in South Africa. This area requires further research into how to best utilise the skills of newly qualified educational psychologists in a country where there is a lack of services within the school settings. The government could perhaps make use of the skills of newly qualified educational psychologists through funding posts for community service in schools. The findings highlight that perhaps it would result in a mutual benefit for the Department of Basic Education and newly qualified educational psychologists if community service is introduced to the qualification. This approach subsequently would reach more communities that are in dire need of psychological services.

5.4 Education White Paper 6 and the role of the Educational psychologist in South Africa

The findings of this study pointed out that over half of respondents experienced no change or impact on their practice after the changes to education policy. The remaining respondents shared that they had experienced either a positive or negative

impact. A positive aspect that emerged from the analysis was that educational psychologists had a clearer understanding of their role within the school system. The Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 20011) highlighted that services required from educational psychologists was more than individual services to learners but also services to educators, parents and the community as a whole.

This highlights a systemic form of intervention that is required within the school system and interactions with the whole community. Peers, siblings, parents, families and neighbourhoods have some impact on children in a profound way, therefore, taking all factors into consideration when working with children is imperative. Sigogo et al. (2004) argued that psychologists are challenged to move away from their individual therapy rooms in private practice to provide services to marginalised communities. This makes a further argument for the dire necessity for educational psychologists to be based at schools. In South Africa, the socioeconomic status of the majority of people does not allow access to the service of psychologists in private practice. Hence employment of educational psychologists in schools would enable their services to children, teachers, parents, and families thus taking a preventative stance in managing mental health issues at a community level.

Another positive aspect that emerged from this study was the recognition of an increased need for the services of educational psychologists in schools after the introduction of the inclusive education policy to South Africa schools. Inclusive education refers to the diverse learning needs of all children in educational institutions (DoE, 2001). In South Africa psychosocial issues such as poverty, youth headed households, grief and loss as a result of HIV, teenage pregnancy, etc. are matters that cannot be separated from the school system (Amod 2003; Moolla & Lazarus, 2014).

These issues have a direct impact on learning and development. Hence the findings of this study have implications for further research to explore this need for educational psychology posts in South Africa schools. The majority of respondents in this study are working in private practice and servicing urban areas. These findings allude to a continued lack of services available to children in marginalised communities two decades after the apartheid era.

The key themes that reflected the negative impact of Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) were the lack of resources that included infrastructural resources and a shortage of educational psychologists in schools, as well as the enormous challenges in implementing the policy. A study by Stofile (2008) found that officials employed by the South African DoE were uncertain about whether changes to the infrastructure of existing schools would be implemented, as stated in the policy. These findings point out that lack of resources remains a challenge for educational psychologists when implementing the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001). Donohue and Bornman (2014) further argue that the lack of resources together with a doubtful attitude adds to the difficulties in implementing the policy successfully. The findings of this study corroborate the findings of Donohue and Bornman (2014).

5.5 Educational psychologists' views on their scope of practice

Almost three-quarters of the respondents expressed that all aspects of the scope of practice applied to their practice as educational psychologists. Addressing barriers to learning and working ecosystemically were two key themes that emerged from the analysis. Educational psychologists in this study interpreted their pivotal role in their scope of practice as primarily addressing barriers to learning on different levels of intervention. Donohue and Bornman (2014) discussed barriers to learning as resulting

from a range of extrinsic and systemic factors, for example, poverty, child abuse and neglect, rather than intrinsic factors such as learner deficits or physiological impairment. Daniels (2010) supports these findings and views the role of educational psychologist as change agents in society. He sees educational psychologists as working on various levels of the school, parent and community system to identify and address barriers to learning.

Findings in this study illustrate a shift in thinking from one-on-one intervention level to an ecosystemic level, thus highlighting a transition in approach and thinking from direct service to an indirect service delivery means of intervention. This perspective views the child holistically, thus taking into consideration the contexts and systems that influence their adjustment or maladjustment to life events (Donald et al. 2014; Harcombe, 2007). Although this shift in thinking is emerging, educational psychologists in private practice find themselves limited to exercise the full range of services they could offer due to lack of employment in other sectors such as schools and community organisations.

A dominant theme that emerged from the analysis was that respondents also shared their views that the scope of practice for educational psychologists lacked clarity. The misinterpretation of the scope of practice by medical aid schemes, for example, has posed further challenges for practitioners in the field. In South Africa, government medical aid schemes such as GEMS and POLMED are refusing to reimburse the services of educational psychologists due to the misconception of the scope of practice (Gumede, 2017; EPASSAinfo, personal communication, February 18, 2017). According to Annexure C, item 34, POLMED stated that the following

would be excluded benefits by the scheme, that is, aptitude tests, IQ tests, school readiness, marriage counselling, learning problems, behavioural problems (noreply@medscheme, personal correspondence, February 07, 2017). Currently, the Department of Health (2011) scope of practice has been declared invalid through court proceedings held in November 2016 (EPASSAinfo, personal communication, February 18, 2017). This raises more questions about the impact of limiting services in a country that already has a shortage of services. Would this perhaps further marginalise vulnerable children in our society?

A recent article published describes the state of the Educational Psychology profession regarding not being remunerated for services by government medical aids schemes (Gumede, 2017). Dr Kevin Fourie, an action group member and a counselling psychologist, made an important statement about the plight of children who require psychological intervention. He raises this important question: what happens to the children if clinical psychologists don't work with children and educational psychologists not remunerated for services by medical aid schemes (Gumede, 2017).

5.6 Implications of the study

Respondents of this study are in support of the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) and findings indicate that they are keen to work collaboratively with teachers and other members of the multidisciplinary team. There appears to be a disjuncture between the Education White Paper 6 (D0E, 2001) and the regulations as set out by the Department of Basic Education on the posts available to educational psychologists within the school system (Moolla & Lazarus, 2014). The services of an educational psychologist are central to ensuring that the best interest of children is core to service

delivery aimed at learners, teachers, parents and the community at large. Therefore, from the findings of this study, it is suggested that educational psychological services in schools need further research. Perhaps schools that have governing bodies who employ educational psychologists need to be studied to gauge the effectiveness of service delivery to perhaps inform changes to policy on employment of educational psychologists in schools.

The results of this study also emphasised the lack of clarity of the scope of practice. The HPCSA needs to examine this issue and elicit the participation of all educational psychologists, university training institutions, educational psychology associations and working groups to finalise a clear, transparent and fair guideline on the scope of practice. Professionals in the field need to be active agents of change and ensure that the scope of practice of the profession is well-defined and understood by all stakeholders. As discussed earlier in this paper, government medical aids are refusing to reimburse educational psychologists due to their policies based on their understanding of the scope of practice. One needs to consider that the victims of this debate are the vulnerable children of South Africa who would be further jeopardised. These findings have implications for further research into the meaning of the scope of practice across each category of psychology.

5.7 Limitations

The survey approach used yielded an older age group, which made up the majority of the sample. Majority of respondents were over the age of 50 (42.52%), followed by the age range of between 45-50 years of age (14.73%). The transferability of results was constrained due to an over-representation of the above 45 age group, hence a threat to population validity of the sample (De Vos et al., 2011). The sample size of

127 respondents was large enough for the demographic findings of the study, however, for a qualitative study, which required thematic content analysis, the analysis was time-consuming and proved challenging.

Another methodological limitation of this study was the method of data collection, which was an online survey. Responses to open-ended questions in an online survey limited the researcher's opportunity to probe for further insight. This study provides some baseline data and may not represent the views of all registered educational psychologists in the country. However, existing data can be built upon through further studies. Follow-up semi-structured interviews and / or focus group interviews can provide more in-depth data which would allow for the triangulation of data ensuring reliability (Maree, 2007).

The questionnaire was a self-designed data collection tool and restricted to the aims of the research study (De Vos et al., 2011). Although there were open-ended questions that elicited the respondents' views, the respondents were limited to the questions in the questionnaire rather than the emergence of a narrative that would have been elicited through a semi-structured interview.

5.8 Suggestions for Future Research

Respondents in this study highlighted the need for an extra year of community service to be added to the qualification as an educational psychologist. It is thereby recommended that universities investigate this training need, further, to ascertain whether an extra year of community service would be feasible for future students. The findings of this study proposes that a mentorship programme would bridge the gap in training, thus encouraging educational psychologists to seek out professional, supportive services in practice, on a more regular basis. A study exploring this need

would assist newly qualified educational psychologists in the field. Lastly, a study exploring the effectiveness of supervision available to educational psychologists in the field to adequately meet the needs for continued professional development is suggested.

5.9 Conclusion

This study aimed to understand the views of educational psychologists on their roles and functions while practicing in this diverse South African context. A further purpose of the study was to gather descriptive data as a baseline description of educational psychology as a profession. Findings from this study provided an overview of the profession that can serve as a starting point in order to aid future research.

The literature reviewed internationally and nationally presented arguments for the profession of educational psychology to move away from direct service delivery to an indirect service delivery. Key findings from this study suggest that educational psychology in South Africa is still in a transitional phase. Results highlighted that respondents in this study had shifted their thinking and approach to interventions with children. However, respondents expressed challenges experienced in translating this shift in thinking into practice. The majority of respondents are working in a private practice capacity, which perhaps limits opportunities to expand services that they are keen to offer, and trained to offer in school community settings. The adoption of an ecosystemic approach to intervention was evident from the findings. However, respondents have shared the numerous challenges that exist in implementing services.

The role of educational psychologists currently in South Africa remains unclear, however “a redefinition of roles will enable educational psychologists to

provide their services in a broad array of contexts" (Engelbrecht, 2004, p. 27). Findings from this study illustrate that educational psychologists are trained, capable, and willing to provide services on a systemic level. Opportunities to implement such services are imperative in transforming psychological service delivery in South Africa. "Whether it be the lack of sufficient resources, the lack of adequate service delivery or policy implementation, or scarce and expensive human resources such as psychologist and other education support personnel, resources need to be optimally utilised" (Moolla & Lazarus, 2014, p. 1). It can only be hoped that the results of this survey prompt discussion and further research into the profession.

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Appendix. A: Participant Information Sheet

Psychology
School of Human & Community Development
University of the Witwatersrand
Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050
Tel: 011 717 4503

Dear Educational Psychologist

Please click here to complete the survey:

Good day. My name is Pragashni Asim Kumar and I am currently a Master's in educational psychology student at the University of Witwatersrand. A research study is being conducted to explore the current roles, functions and identities of educational psychologists within the South African context. The findings of the study, are proposed to be used, to inform current educational psychology training programmes.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. Participation is voluntary and completion and submission of the attached survey implies your informed consent to participate. Your name and identifying details are not required on the electronic survey, thus anonymity and confidentiality is ensured. There are no risks or benefits involved in participation, and the approximate time required in order to complete the survey is at most 30 minutes.

If you choose to participate, please click on the attached link below. Where options are given, mark the alternative/s that applies to you with a tick. Please be as thorough as you can when answering the questions as your input and valuable experience would provide insights about our profession and would be highly appreciated. You may withdraw from the survey at any point by pressing exit before selecting the submission key. However, once you have submitted the completed survey, you cannot withdraw from the study.

Kind Regards

Mrs P Asim Kumar (Researcher) nivashak19@gmail.com

Dr Zaytoon Amod (Supervisor) Zaytoon.Amod@wits.ac.za

Appendix. B: Survey

Exit this survey

Educational Psychology Survey

Thank you for your participation.

This survey seeks to understand the current role of Educational Psychology in South Africa and the developments that have taken place in this regard over the last two decades. The findings of this study will be used to inform our current Educational Psychology training programme. Participation in this study is voluntary and completion of this survey implies that you have given consent to participate. All information is anonymous. Your participation would be greatly appreciated. Kindly complete the following questions, select the alternative that applies to you, and please elaborate the best you can when required.

*** 1. Which age range do you fall into?**

- ◯ 20-25
- ◯ 26-30
- ◯ 31-35
- ◯ 36-40
- ◯ 41-45
- ◯ 46-50
- ◯ Over 50

*** 2. What is your gender?**

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female

*** 3. What is your ethnicity?**

- ◯ African

- ◯ White
- ◯ Indian
- ◯ Coloured
- ◯ Other (please specify)

*** 4. Highest level of Qualification?**

*** 5. In which province did you complete your Masters in Educational Psychology training?**

- ◯ Gauteng
- ◯ Western Cape
- ◯ Eastern Cape
- ◯ Northern Cape
- ◯ North West
- ◯ Mpumalanga
- ◯ Limpopo
- ◯ Free State
- ◯ Kwazulu Natal

*** 6. Name of University where you qualified as an Educational Psychologist?**

*** 7. In what setting(s) did you complete your internship?**

- ☐ Non Governmental Organisation (NGO)
- ☐ School (Mainstream)

- [ ] School (Remedial, Special)
- [ ] Tertiary Education Setting
- [ ] Social Services Organisation
- [ ] Child and Family Service Organisation
- [ ] Medical Setting
- [ ] Other (please specify)

*** 8. Indicate the number of years you have been working as an Educational Psychologist.**

- ◯ Less than 5 years
- ◯ At least 5 years but less than 10 years
- ◯ At least 10 years but less than 20 years
- ◯ 20 years or more

*** 9. Which province are you currently practicing in?**

- ◯ Gauteng
- ◯ Western Cape
- ◯ Eastern Cape
- ◯ Northern Cape
- ◯ North West
- ◯ Mpumalanga
- ◯ Limpopo
- ◯ Free State
- ◯ Kwazulu Natal

*** 10. What is your current work context(s)?**

- [ ] Non Governmental Organisation (NGO)
- [ ] School (Mainstream)
- [ ] School (Special, Remedial)
- [ ] Tertiary Educational Setting
- [ ] Social Service Organisation
- [ ] Medical Setting
- [ ] Private Practice
- [ ] Other (please specify)

11. If you are currently working in more than one context please indicate your time spent in each context in approximate number of hours per week.(For example: A typical day = 8 hours, a typical week = 40 hours)

	Number of hours per week
Non Governmental Organisation (NGO)	
School (Mainstream)	
School (Special, Remedial)	
Tertiary Education Setting	
Social Services Organisation	
Child and Family Service	

Organisation

Medical Setting	
Private Practice	

Other (please specify)

*** 12. Please indicate the type of setting you are currently working in.**

- ◯ Urban
- ◯ Rural
- ◯ Other (please specify)

*** 13. What areas of work are you currently engaged in? Please indicate an approximate number of hours per week of your time spent in each area of work. (For example: A typical day = 8 hours, a typical week = 40 hours)**

	Number of hours per week
Psycho-educational Assessments	
Medico-legal Assessments	
Career Assessments and Guidance	
Learner Support/ Remedial Therapy	
Family Therapy	
Parent Guidance	

Couple Therapy	
Child therapy/ Play Therapy	
Individual Adult Therapy	
Adolescent Therapy	
Group Therapy	
Life Skills Training	
Crisis Intervention	
Policy Development	
Community work and service	
Training of other professionals	
Supervision of other professionals	
Supervision of Undergraduate Students in training	
Supervision of Post Graduate Students in training	
Supervision of Student Research	

Other (please specify)

Please Elaborate.

*** 19. Have you felt the need to undergo additional training to assist you with the demands of your current practice?**

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

Please Elaborate.

*** 20. Please indicate the type of supervision you attend in your current practice.**

- ◯ Peer/ Group Supervision
- ◯ Individual Supervision
- ◯ Both of the above
- ◯ None

◯ Other (please specify)

*** 21. Which therapeutic approach or paradigm guides your therapy style used in your practice?**

- ☐ Psychodynamic Psychotherapy
- ☐ Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
- ☐ Person Centered Therapy/ Humanistic Approach
- ☐ An Ecclectic Approach
- ☐ Other (please list)

*** 22. Please list the assessment tests/tools you were trained on during your coursework year?**

*** 23. Please list the assessment tests/ tools you most frequently use in your practice?**

*** 24. What types of assessments are you most frequently requested to administer in your current practice? (For example: scholastic, emotional, vocational etc.)**

*** 25. Which aspects of the current scope of practice of Educational Psychologists do you think is applicable to your current practice in South Africa and in what ways?**

*** 26. Has the changes in the Educational Policy and curriculum Development, e.g. *Education White Paper 6*, impacted on your practice as an Educational Psychologist?**

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

Please Elaborate.

27. Additional Comments:

Done

Powered by
SurveyMonkey®
See how easy it is to create a survey.

Appendix. C: Ethics Clearance Certificate

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SCHOOL OF HUMAN & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: MEDP/15/008 IH**
PROJECT TITLE:	A Changing Role? Educational Psychologists in South Africa: Two Decates Beyond Democracy.
INVESTIGATORS	Pragashni Asim Kumar
DEPARTMENT	Psychology
DATE CONSIDERED	10/06/15
DECISION OF COMMITTEE*	Approved

This ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application

DATE: 10 June 2015

CHAIRPERSON
(Prof. Brett Bowman)

cc Supervisor: Dr Zaytoon Amod
Psychology

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR (S)

To be completed in duplicate and **one copy** returned to the Secretary, Room 100015, 10th floor, Senate House, University.

I/we fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure, as approved, I/we undertake to submit a revised protocol to the Committee.

This ethical clearance will expire on 31 December 2017

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES

Appendix: D

List of assessments most frequently used in practiced by respondents of this study

COGNITIVE ASSESSMENTS/IQ TESTS		
TEST:	**n**	**Percentage**
Senior South African Individual Scale-Revised (SSAIS-R)	60	47%
Junior South African Individual Scale (JSAIS)	51	40%
Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-IV)	41	32%
Intelligence/Cognitive tests (Not Specified)	23	18%
Wechsler Preschool &Primary Scale of Intelligence. Revised (WPPSI)	18	14%
Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS)	15	12%
Raven's Progressive Matrices	5	4%
Good Enough Harris Score	3	2%
Cognitive Assessment System (CAS)	2	1.6%
Grover Counter Scale of Cognitive Development	1	0.8%

SCHOLASTIC/EDUCATIONAL TESTS		
TEST:	**n**	**Percentage**
Scholastic Assessments (Not Specified)	43	34%
Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT)	35	28%
Neale Analysis of Reading Test (NARA)	15	12%
ESSI Reading & Spelling Test	10	8%
Edinburgh Reading Test (ERT)	6	5%
Schonnel Spelling	5	4%
Woodcock-Johnson Test of Achievement	4	3%
Burt Word Reading	4	3%
One Minute Reading	3	2%
Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP-2)	3	2%
Young Group Maths Test	3	2%
VASSI Mathematical Proficiency Test	3	2%
Trimaths	2	1.5%
UCT Spelling	2	1.5%
Graded Reading	2	1.5%
Remedial Assessment	2	1.5%
One Minute Maths	2	1.5%
Schonell 5 Minute Maths	2	1.5%
Stark-Griffin Dyslexia Test	2	1.5%
Speed Reading Test	1	0.8%
Holborn Sentence Reading	1	0.8%
Milne Mental Arithmetic	1	0.8%
Lucid Adult Dyslexia Screening (LADS)	1	0.8%
Boehm Test of Basic Concepts	1	0.8%
Schonnel 12 Word Problem	1	0.8%
Vernon Graded Math	1	0.8%

Test of Written Language	1	0.8%
Curriculum Based Assessments	1	0.8%
Informal Tests	1	0.8%
Concessions (IEB)	1	0.8%
Pearson Dyslexia Screening Test	1	0.8%

PROJECTIVE TESTS / EMOTIONAL TEST **(Multiple reports of types of projective tests done)**		
TEST:	**n**	**Percentage**
Emotional Test Battery (Not Specified)	33	26%
Draw a Person	23	18%
Incomplete Sentences	18	14%
Kinetic Family Drawing	17	13%
Children's Apperception Test (CAT)	11	9%
Thematic Apperception Test (Tat)	11	9%
Bene-Anthony Family Relations Test (BAFRT)	6	5%
Rorschach Inkblot Test	3	2%
Drawings	3	2%
Roberts Apperception Test (RAT)	2	1.5%
Human Figure Drawing Test	2	1.5%
House-Tree-Person	2	1.5%
Other	9	7%
Beck's Depression Scale	1	0.8%
Columbus Drawing	1	0.8%
Test of Psychopathology	1	0.8%
Narrative Tools	1	0.8%
Person in the rain test	1	0.8%
Child Home & School Apperception Test	1	0.8%

(CSH-T)		
3 Wishes	1	0.8%
Tests for Anxiety & Depression	1	0.8%
Baron Emotional Quotient Inventory (Bar –On-EQ)	1	0.8%

APTITUDE TESTS		
TEST:	**n**	**Percentage**
Differential Aptitude Test (DAT)	12	9%
Individual Scale of General Scholastic Aptitude (IGSA)	5	4%
Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)	4	3%
Joint admission Test (JAT)	2	1.5%
Career Development Questionnaire (CDS)	1	0.8%
Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI)	1	0.8%

INTEREST TESTS		
TEST:	**n**	**Percentage**
MB 10	6	5%
19 Field Interest Inventory (19FII)	5	4%
South African Vocational Interest Inventory (SAVII)	5	4%
Rothwell Miller Interest Test	4	3%
Self Directed Search	1	0.8%
PACE Career Interest Questionnaire (UJ)	1	0.8%
Kobus Interest questionnaire	1	0.8%

PERSONALITY TESTS		
TEST:	**n**	**Percentage**
Meyers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)	13	10%
Jung Personality Questionnaire (JPQ)	11	9%
16 Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF)	9	7%
Personality Inventories (Not Specified)	9	7%
Eysenck's Personality Inventory (EPI)	3	2%
Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)	1	0.8%
High School Personality Qusetionnaire (HSPQ)	1	0.8%
Children's Personality Questionnaire (CPQ)	1	0.8%
Millon's Adolescent Personality Inventory (MAPI)	1	0.8%

OTHER TESTS		
TEST:	**n**	**Percentage**
Career Mentor	2	1.5%
Career Assessments	2	1.5%
Brown – Holzmann Survey of Study Habits &Attitudes Qusetionnaire (SSHA)	2	1.5%
Kobus- Maree	1	0.8%

Career Assessment		

NEURODEVELOPMENTAL TESTS		
TEST:	**n**	**Percentage**
Quick Neurological Screening Test (QNST)	8	6%
Neuropsychological Tests (Not Specified)	7	5.5%
Griffith Mental Developmental Scales (GMDS)	5	4%
Delis-Kaplan Executive Function Scale (D-KEFS)	2	1.5%
Neethling Brain Profile	1	0.8%
Autism Diagnostic Observation	1	0.8%

BEHAVIOURAL TESTS		
TEST:	**n**	**Percentage**
Connors Rating Scale (CRS)	4	3%
Beck's Youth Inventories	3	2%
Vineland Adaptive Behavioural Scale (VABS)	1	0.8%
Social Skills Improvement Test	1	0.8%
Tests of Variable of Attention (TOVA)	1	0.8%

PERCEPTUAL TESTS (Visual/Auditory/Motor		
TEST:	**n**	**Percentage**
Bender Gestalt	39	31%
Beery VMI	17	13%
Wepman Auditory Processing	3	2%

Visual Aural Digit Span Test (VADS)	2	1.5%

SCHOOL READINESS TESTS		
TEST:	**n**	**Percentage**
Aptitude for School Beginners (ASB)	6	5%

Appendix: E

Assessment Tests trained during coursework year of Masters Degree

COGNITIVE TESTS		
Name of Test	n	%
Senior South African Individual Scale- Revised (SSAIS-R)	74	58%
Junior South African Individual Scale (JSAIS)	68	54%
Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-IV)	30	24%
Wechsler Preschool &Primary Scale of Intelligence. Revised (WPPSI)	14	11%
Intelligence/Cognitive tests (Not Specified)	13	10%
Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS)	7	6%
Cognitive Assessment System (CAS)	4	3%
Raven's Progressive Matrices	2	2%
Good Enough Harris Score	1	0.8%

SCHOLASTIC TESTS		
Name of Test	n	%
Scholastic Assessments (Not Specified)	50	39%
Neale Analysis of Reading Ability	12	9%
Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT)	10	8%
Schonnell Spelling Test	5	4%
Durell Visual Memory and Visual Discrimination	5	4%
ESSI Reading and Spelling Test	5	4%
Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (SDRT)	4	3%
Key Maths	3	2%

UCT Mental Arithmetic Test	2	1.6%
UCT Spelling Test	2	1.6%
UCT Scholastic Test	2	1.6%
Young Group Maths Test	2	1.6%
VASSI Mathematical Proficiency Test	2	1.6%
Vernon Graded Arithmetic	1	0.8%

EMOTIONAL TESTS/ PROJECTIVE TESTS		
Name of Test	n	%
Rorschach Inkblot Test	39	31%
Children's Apperception Test (CAT)	30	24%
Draw A Person Test (DAP)	29	23%
Thematic Apperception Test (Tat)	28	22%
Incomplete Sentences	17	13%
Kinetic Family Drawing	17	13%
Emotional Test Battery (Not Specified)	13	10%
Bene-Anthony Family Relations Test (BAFRT)	9	7%
Columbus	4	3%
Beck's Depression Scale	4	3%
House-Tree-Person	1	0.8%
Child and Adolescent Psychological Interview	1	0.8%
Temperament Questionnaire	1	0.8%
3 Wishes	1	0.8%

PERCEPTUAL TESTS		
Name of Test	n	%
Bender Gestalt Test	38	30%
WEPMAN	2	1.6%
NEUROLOGICAL SCREENING TESTS		
Name of Test	n	%
QNST	6	5%
NEPSY	3	2%
Halstead-Reitan	1	0.8%

Neuropsychological Battery		
SCHOOL READINESS TESTS		
Name of Test	n	%
School Readiness Tests(Not Specified)	7	6%
Aptitude for School Beginners (ASB)	5	4%
Paper and Pencil Games	1	0.8%
OTHER TESTS		
IAC	2	
Dynamic Assessment	1	0.8%
Various Remedial Assessments	1	0.8%
CAREER TESTS		
Interests Test		
Name of Test	n	%
19 FII	10	8%
Interests Tests (Not Specified)	4	3%
Self Directed Search (SDS)	1	0.8%
	Values Tests	
Value Scale	1	0.8%
Personality Tests		
16 PF	16	13%
Jung Personality Questionnaire (JPQ)	15	12%
MBTI	12	9%
MMPI	5	4%
Personality Tests (Not Specified)	3	2%
High School Personality Questionnaire (HSPQ)	2	1.6%
HSVP	2	1.6%
Aptitude Tests		
DAT	15	12%
SAT	7	6%
Aptitude Tests	2	1.6%
Other		
Career Guidance Tests	15	
Vocational Assessments	2	1.6%
Career Mentor	1	0.8%
Career Developmental Questionnaire (CDS)	1	0.8%