

**Resilience in a group of first-year psychosocial
science students at the North-West University
(Potchefstroom Campus)**

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2012

**Resilience in a group of first-year psychosocial
science students at the North-West University
(Potchefstroom Campus)**

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“If you educate one man you have educated one person, and if you have educated one woman you have educated a whole family”.

Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

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SUMMARY

RESILIENCE IN A GROUP OF FIRST-YEAR PSYCHOSOCIAL SCIENCE STUDENTS AT THE NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY (POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS).

First-year students entering university for the first time face considerable life changing challenges, from relocating to a new setting to adapting to a new learning environment. For the student to be successful, the level of resilience plays a vital role in the student's development and future growth. The fundamental aim of this research is to explore resilience amongst first-year students. This exploratory and descriptive study undertook to determine the level of resilience and the risk factors that contribute to the transition to university. The participants in this study were first-year psychosocial science students who enrolled at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus) in 2011. Thirty-five students participated in the quantitative study that examined the level of resilience in first-year students. Thereafter 12 of these students participated in the qualitative study that investigated the risk factors in first year students. Data was analysed by means of the Perspective Training College Program and by use of thematic analysis. The results showed significant high levels of stress in first-year students. The scores for expectations, achievements and satisfaction were not in an optimal range of functioning. Many risk factors were associated with first-year students such as stress, lack of social support, self-concept, time management and the fear of fitting into the university set-up. These factors cannot be avoided, nonetheless, literature explains that protective factors can be instilled into the university set-up to assist with students and thus decrease the risk factors associated with the transition to university.

OPSOMMING

DIE HERSTELVERMOË ('VEERKRAGTIGHEID') VAN 'N GROEP EERSTEJAAR PSIGOSOSIALE WETENSKAP STUDENTE AAN DIE NOORDWES - UNIVERSITEIT (POTCHEFSTROOM KAMPUS)

Eerstejaar studente wat vir die eerste keer universiteit toe gaan, kom voor aansienlike lewensveranderende uitdagings te staan – van die hervestiging in 'n nuwe sosiale omgewing, tot aanpassings ten opsigte van die opvoedkundige omgewing. Die vlak van so 'n student se veerkrachtigheid speel 'n deurslaggewende rol in toekomstige persoonlike ontwikkeling en groei. Die grondbeginsel van hierdie navorsing is om ondersoek in te stel na die herstelvermoë van eerstejaar studente. Hierdie ondersoekende en beskrywende studie het onderneem om die vlak van veerkrachtigheid en die risiko faktore wat tot die oorgang na universiteit bydra, te bepaal. Die deelnemers aan die navorsing was eerstejaar psigososiale wetenskap studente wat aan die Noord-Wes Universiteit se Potchefstroomkampus ingeskryf is, in die jaar 2011. Vyf-en-dertig studente het aan die kwantitatiewe navorsing deelgeneem, wat die vlak van veerkrachtigheid in eerstejaar studente ondersoek het. Hierna het 12 studente aan die kwalitatiewe navorsing deelgeneem, wat die risikofaktore in die eerste jaar studente ondersoek het. Data is deur middel van die Perspective Training College-Program geanaliseer en deur gebruik te maak van tematiese analise. Die resultate het op 'n groot hoeveelheid stres in eerstejaar studente gewys. Die tellings vir die verwagtinge, prestasies en tevredenheid was nie in 'n optimale reeks van funksionering nie. Baie risiko faktore was met die eerste jaar studente geassosieer soos stres, gebrek aan sosiale ondersteuning, selfbeeld, tyd en aanpassing by die universiteit opset. Hierdie faktore kan nie vermy word nie, nietemin, literatuur meen dat beskermende faktore ingebring kan word in die universiteit opset deur die studente te help en sodoende die risiko faktore wat verband hou met die oorgang na die universiteit te verminder.

FOREWORD

This research will be presented in article format in accordance with Rule A.7.5.7.4 as stipulated in the North-West University Calendar (2012). It is important to note that each article must form a functional unit. This implies that some of the data will have to be repeated in the different sections.

The content and technical requirements of the articles are based on the South African Journal of Social Work / Maatskaplike Werk (refer to addendum 5).

I, Tasleem Hassim, hereby declare that this research report is a product of my own work and has not been aided by any person other than myself. I acknowledge that plagiarism includes denying an author credit for their work and this would result in disciplinary action. In light of this, I declare that no part of this current research project has been plagiarized.



Tasleem Hassim

30 April 2012

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When I was young and free and my
imagination had no limits, I dreamed of
changing the world;

As I grew older and wiser I realized the
world would not change.

And I decided to shorten my sights
somewhat and change only my country.

But it too seemed immovable.

As I entered my twilight years, in one last
desperate attempt, I sought to change
only my family, those closest to me, but
Alas they would have none of it.

And now here I lie on my death bed and
realize (perhaps for the first time) that if
only I'd changed myself first, then by
example I may have influenced my
family and with their encouragement
and support I may have bettered my
country, and who knows I may have
changed the world!

Anglican Bishop.

SECTION A:

Resilience in a group of first-year psychosocial science students at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus)

"Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world, but today I am wise, so I am changing myself."

Rumi

SECTION A: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

RESILIENCE IN A GROUP OF FIRST-YEAR PSYCHOSOCIAL SCIENCE STUDENTS AT THE NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY (POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS)

Key words: first-year student, psychosocial science, resilience, transition

1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Students in their first year face the challenge of transition from school to university where independent and self-directed learning is called for. Students must navigate multifaceted life adaptations – physical adaptations such as moving away from home, and psychological adaptations such as moving into young adulthood, away from the familiarity of a homogeneous school environment to the heterogeneous culture of the university, often from a rural to an urban environment, faced by a different language than what they are used to, and mixing with diverse race groups. Moving from the control, protection and predictability of school life, students are now free for the first time to test their autonomy and experiment with choices (Collins & Van Breda, 2010:14-25).

It takes time to adapt to the transition from high school to a tertiary institution. Many first year tertiary students find it difficult to place themselves in a tertiary environment. Emotions, lifestyle, and the adaptation to a tertiary institution form a significant part of social well-being and resilience, while negative thoughts and experiences can cause a detrimental effect on a student's well-being (Kantanis, 2000:100-110).

The School of Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences forms part of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus) and provides academic and professional training in two disciplines, namely Psychology and Social Work as well as Psychotherapeutic- and Health Promotion through the Institute for

Psychotherapy and Counseling. The mission of the School for Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences is to improve the psychosocial health, well-being and quality of life of the people of South Africa, and of the North-West Province in particular. A further mission is to promote Social Work and Psychology as academic disciplines by offering outcome-based learning opportunities of a high quality, conducting relevant and high caliber basic and applied research in the area of preventive and therapeutic interventions, offering community services in the form of research outputs and practice related and relevant interventions at individual-, group- and community levels (NWU, 2011).

As a temporary junior lecturer at the Potchefstroom Campus, the researcher provided individual supervision to first- and second-year social work students. During these sessions, the supervisor and the student would discuss the students' well-being and any precipitating issues, be it of personal, family or academic concern. Through these consultations the researcher realised the impact of a tertiary institution in the lives of a first-year student.

The notion of identity and self-concept came up countless times during these sessions. It occurred to the researcher that these first-year students did not have a deeper introspection into their personal lives. Lazarus (1976:17) explains that problems of adjustment are universal in that all people must face difficult or troubling circumstances of living. A key problem for adolescents or young adults is the determination of their psychological and social identity, that is, who they are and what their role in the social scene would be.

According to Erikson in Louw, Louw and Van Ede (2005:424) in order to form an identity, all the psychosocial crises of the previous stages need to be resolved. This means that the adolescent must have acquired basic trust, autonomy, initiative and industry to successfully accomplish identity development. For all individuals, adolescence is a stage that requires considerable adjustment, and we should not underestimate the degree of change experienced during these years (Coleman & Hagell, 2007:3). An adolescent needs to go through all the stages of adolescence to truly define who they are.

A first-year student needs to first form his or her identity before embarking on a decision for a future career. The researcher has noted that many students do not have a clear perception of who they are and where they see themselves in five years' time. Very few young people survive adolescence without any difficulty. If their needs are not met the possibility arises that this will have a definite impact on the individual's school-, university life and career.

Each individual experiences adversity on a different level. Some individuals can easily deal with real hardship, difficulties and pressure in contrast to other individuals who struggle to just make it through the day. The question thus arises: how come some people succumb to or become disabled by adversity, whilst others overcome similar circumstances, heal and are able to thrive? On a more personal level: why do we sometimes cope well and other times not that well? According to Warner (2009) the answer lies in personal resilience, the capacity to handle life situations better.

Ensuring that students are safe, drug-free, healthy and resilient is central to improving academic performance. Many adolescents turn up at university with a variety of health-related problems that make successful learning difficult, if not impossible. As families are faced with more social problems than before, in such a changing environment, divorces, loss of a parent, chronic and mental illness may leave an undergraduate student confused and with the decision of 'where to go to from here'.

Although there appears to be no universal definition for resilience, Knight (2007: 543-555) describes resilience as: "patterns of positive adaptation in the context of adversity." However, not all students in an academic society have had an 'adverse' time in their lives. Another definition of resilience, according to Liebenberg and Ungar (2008: 21), "it is a concept that changes our focus from the breakdown of the disorder attributed to exposure to stressful environments, to the individual's characteristics and social processes associated with either normal or unexpectedly positive psychosocial development."

In an academic environment, students face stress and pressure while adapting from a (high) school environment to a university environment. In today's modern times, further social demands are exerted on the student, such as peer pressure, academic performance, identity crises and social well-being. Moleli (2005) explains that most first-year university students are faced with many new experiences and responsibilities; they also need to learn to cope with examination anxiety, financial difficulties, personal relationships and social ills like divorce. However, each individual coping strategy is handled differently. Some are able to bounce back to stable life circumstances, whereas others are not inclined to be this resilient.

Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the researcher will define resilience as an individual's ability to cope during normal life experiences, crises and stressful situations in a positive and stable manner.

Against the before-mentioned, the following research questions are formulated:

- What is the level of resilience in first-year psychosocial science students?
- What are the risk factors that may adversely affect resilience in first-year students?

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

2.1. AIM

The general aim of this study was to explore the level of resilience, and to determine risk factors in first-year students at the School of Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus).

2.2. OBJECTIVES

For the purpose of this research the researcher focused on the following to conduct a feasible study:

- To examine the level of resilience in first-year psychosocial science students at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus).
- To determine the risk factors that may adversely affect resilience in first-year psychosocial science students at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus) and to include guidelines to assist in implementing a program for these students to function optimally in a tertiary environment.

3. CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENT

If guidelines for an eventual programme for first-year students can be developed, it will empower them and promote resilience and effective functioning in a tertiary environment

4. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

4.1. ANALYSIS OF THE LITERATURE

According to Grinnell (2001:434), a literature review supports and interacts with the framework by introducing and conceptually defining the key variables that are the subject of the study. The core focus of this study was to investigate the resilience of first-year students at the school of Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus). Themes that were studied included books and publications on university and student life, however, not much has been published on the resilience of university students.

The following databases were consulted:

- Academic search Premier
- EbscoHost
- MEDLINE
- PsycINFO
- SAePublications
- Scribd

4.2. EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

4.2.1. DESIGN

The design of this research was exploratory and descriptive in nature. According to Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2006:75) exploratory research is conducted to gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or individual. The researcher used the exploratory design as it employs an open, flexible and inductive approach to research as they attempt to look for new insights into phenomena (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter 2006:44).

Descriptive research as defined by De Vaus (2001:1) aims to find out in more precise detail than exploratory research, the *what* of social phenomena. Descriptive design is used to explain the phenomena (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006:44). In this regard, the researcher aims to explain the nature of resilience as well as gain insight into the risks associated with resilience in first-year students.

In order to acquire the desired results from the research, the researcher will make use of the mixed method approach. According to Creswell (2009:203) a mixed method approach is one in which the researcher tends to base knowledge claims on pragmatic grounds (example, consequence-orientated, problem-centred, and pluralistic). It employs strategies of enquiry that involve collecting data whether simultaneously or sequentially to best understand research problems. The data collection involves gathering both numeric information (instruments) as well as text information (interviews) so that the final database represents both quantitative and qualitative information.

4.2.2. PARTICIPANTS

The participants for the desired research were from the School of Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences at the North-West University, (Potchefstroom Campus). The sample for the study composed of students who enrolled at the university for the first time. Samples make possible a glimpse of the behaviour and attitudes of

whole groups of people. The validity and accuracy of research results depend heavily on how samples are drawn (Monette, Sullivan & De Jong, 2005:130).

Samples differed for qualitative and quantitative purposes. For the quantitative research a class list of first year students at the School of Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences was obtained. According to the guidelines for sampling as mentioned by Stoker (1985) in Strydom, (2011a:225) an estimate of up to 500 first-year students, would be representative of the 900 students who are registered as registered first-year students. The researcher drew a sample of 100 students in which systematic sampling was used. Monette *et al.* (2005:135) explain systematic sampling as taking every k th element listed in a sampling frame. Systematic sampling uses the table of random numbers to determine a random starting point in the sampling frame, the value of k is called the sampling interval, and it is determined by dividing the population size by the desired sample size. The researcher started at the beginning of the class list that was representative, this class list was in alphabetical order, and the researcher then chose every 5th student to be part of the sample. Out of the 100 students only 71 students who were willing to be included in the study were registered on the Perspective Training College website, however, at the end only 35 students completed the questionnaire. The reasons for a lack of participation was due to the following: the questionnaires were handed out in May, the time of mid exams; the questionnaire comprises of over 200 questions which takes a long time to complete; in order for the questionnaire to be completed, the students had to logon onto the internet; and they also had to have access to a computer to complete the questionnaire.

Once the sample for the quantitative study was drawn, the researcher drew a sample for the qualitative study, making use of purposive sampling. According to Corbetta (2003:222) purposive sampling can be explained as: "the sampling units are not chosen in a random manner, but on the basis of some or other characteristics." The first few students who first completed this questionnaire were invited for interviews until data saturation was reached. Data saturation was

reached at 12 students. Data collection ceases when theoretical categories are reached (Harper & Thompson, 2012:135). These theoretical categories were in terms of themes that emerged from the interviews. Charmaz (2006:113) explains that categories are saturated when gathering fresh data, no longer sparks new theoretical insights, nor reveals new properties of your core theoretical categories.

Rationale that examiner wanted me to provide - The sampling of the students was done in such a way that the students who received formal lectures from the supervisor and co-supervisor were excluded from the research in order to maintain confidentiality as the questionnaire included personal information regarding their well-being.

4.2.3. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Quantitative research explained by Barker (2003:369) is the use of systematic investigations that include descriptive or inferential statistical analysis. Examples are experiments, survey research, and investigations that make use of numerical comparisons. For the quantitative study, the researcher made use of the Personal Multi-Screening Inventory instrument (PMSI) which was conceptualised by Faul & Hanekom (2005) (*see addendum 3*). The PMSI is a paper and pencil self-report measure that is used to evaluate client's strengths and problems in 33 different areas of personal, emotional, interpersonal, spiritual and physical functioning. The PMSI contains 265 items and requires 30 to 45 minutes to complete. It can be scored manually in about 30 minutes and scoring by computer takes approximately five minutes. The 33 subscale scores are used to prepare a graphic profile for ease of interpretation and for use in assessment and strategic planning (Faul & Hanekom, 2006:6).

The PMSI is a self-report assessment tool that measures the degree, severity, or magnitude of a wide range of distinct and separate strengths and problems in personal, emotional, interpersonal, spiritual and physical functioning. Each subscale of the PMSI has the same format and structure, and they all have four

to 12 items. This particular length was selected for three specific reasons: the subscales are long enough to produce acceptable reliabilities; they are short enough to keep fatigue to an acceptable level; and the use of four to 12 items lead to the construction of simple and rapid scoring procedures (Faul & Hanekom, 2006:6).

In order to gain qualitative data, interviews were used as a means of information collection (*see addendum 4*). Greeff (2005:287) states that you interview because you are interested in other people's stories. Interviewing is the predominant mode of data or information collection in qualitative research. Interviewing the participant involves description of the experience but also involves reflection of the description (Greeff, 2005:287). These interviews included a number of questions relating to the resilience of first-year psychosocial science students.

4.2.4. PROCEDURES

- The researcher obtained permission from the School of Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences to undertake the desired research at the Potchefstroom Campus.
- Ethical permission from the North-West University was provided to further this research (*see addendum 1*).
- The researcher obtained a suitable scale, the PMSI (Faul & Hanekom, 2005) and compiled a qualitative schedule.
- Pilot study was done by testing the scale and schedule.
- A sample was drawn for the quantitative study.
- A sample was drawn for the qualitative study.
- The researcher prepared the participants by explaining the nature of the research.
- The researcher proceeded with the empirical study.
- The researcher provided a voucher for a cup of coffee to each student who completed the questionnaire.

- A research report was compiled.
- Dissemination of information was lastly done.

4.2.5. ETHICAL ASPECTS

Research in the social sciences is often concerned with collecting data from people (Oliver, 2010:3). Therefore the researcher kept in mind the ethical aspects concerning the participants. According to Strydom (2011b:114), “ethics is a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group, is subsequently widely accepted and which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students.”

Taking into account the type of research being conducted, the researcher pursued the following:

- Obtaining relevant permission to conduct research. Permission was received from the North-West University in order to conduct the desired research. Ethical approval: reference number **NWU-00104-10-S1**.
- Informed consent from students was gained when the students completed the questionnaire. Babbie (2010:66) explains informed consent as a norm in which subjects have their voluntary participation in research projects on a full understanding of the possible risks involved. However, the researcher assured the students that there are no risks involved in the study.
- Confidentiality explained by Oliver (2010:81) “as private details and information not being circulated to others”. The researcher explained to the participants that the results of each questionnaire will not be disclosed to anyone besides the researcher that conducted the study.
- Personal feedback of the results of the questionnaire was given to those students that were interested in the outcome of their questionnaire. Oliver (2010:65) explains that some respondents will be sufficiently interested in the research to wish to see some of the result. While this is a reasonable request, he mentions

that it is important to clarify what the respondents would like to see. The researcher only provided personal feedback of the individual's questionnaire and not of the full group report.

4.2.6. DATA-ANALYSIS

The data collected was analysed by the researcher in the following ways:

The Personal Multi-Inventory Scale (PMSI) (Faul & Hanekom, 2005) was analysed by Perspective Training College as part of the quantitative data.

For the qualitative data the researcher made use of a thematic analysis described as Tesch's approach (as quoted in Creswell, 2009:186):

- The researcher read the transcripts carefully to gain a sense of the whole, ideas were noted as they come to mind.
- The researcher selected one interview, e.g. the most interesting, the shortest, the one at the top of the pile and went through it asking "what is it about?" thoughts about the underlying meaning in the information were noted.
- When the researcher completed this task for several participants, a list was drawn up of all the topics. Similar topics were clustered together and formed into columns that were arrayed into major topics, unique topics and leftovers.
- The researcher took the list back to the data. The topics were abbreviated as codes and the codes written next to the appropriate segments of the text.
- The researcher found the most descriptive wording for the topics and turned them into categories. The researcher further reduced the total list of categories by grouping together topics that related to each other.
- The researcher made a final decision on the abbreviation for each category and alphabetised the codes.

- The data was assembled, each belonging to a category and a preliminary analysis was performed
- The researcher recoded the existing data if it was necessary.

5. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

5.1. FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

According to the Education Statistics in South Africa (2009) a student in the higher education sector is one who is registered mainly for courses offered in contact mode. A contact mode course involves personal interaction with lecturers or institution supervisors at higher education institutions through lectures, tutorials, seminars, practicals, supervision, or other forms of required work and is presented on the institution's premises or at a site of the institution. Therefore for the purpose of this study, the term first-year student will be described as a student who has completed grade 12 the year prior to enrolling at a higher education institution for the first time (SA, 2009).

5.2. PSYCHOSOCIAL SCIENCE

The School of Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences forms part of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus). The school includes Psychology and Social Work students. The mission of the School for Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences is to improve the psychosocial health, well-being and quality of life of the people of South Africa. The School also aims to promote Social Work and Psychology as academic disciplines by offering outcome-based learning opportunities of a high quality, conducting relevant and high calibre basic and applied research in the area of preventive and therapeutic interventions (NWU, 2011).

5.3. RESILIENCE

Resilience refers to a pattern of behavior that demonstrates that a person is doing well despite being exposed to significant risk or adversity (Medoff, 2010: xv). Wilks

and Spivey (2010:276-288) state that resilience is a product of survival, as well as an indication of hardiness of present and future internal strength. Therefore, individuals who are highly resilient exhibit adaptive coping skills and often convert stressors into opportunities for learning and development.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher will define resilience as an individual's ability to cope during normal life experiences, crises and stressful situations in a positive and stable manner.

5.4. TRANSITION

The student's experience of change involved in joining the university; transitions can occur in different dimensions – academic, personal, financial, social and students who manage one aspect may struggle in another (Johnston, 2010:4). This transition occurs between grade 12 and the first-year of higher education. The transition can be accompanied by challenges and difficulties. It's a new stage in which a student embarks on and it sets a foundation for a successful career and working environment.

6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- This study only included 35 first-year psychosocial science students. The results cannot be applicable to all students as only few students answered the questionnaire.
- On initial contact with students during their lectures, the researcher explained the purpose of the research and circulated a document to be filled in. From the 100 students who were drawn as a sample; there were only 35 students who fully completed the questionnaire. Four students completed the questionnaire half way and for that reason those students' questionnaires were not included in the final research findings.
- The questionnaire takes 30-45 minutes to complete and requires an internet connection to be logged onto the program to complete the questionnaire.

7. STRUCTURE OF REPORT

Section A	This section serves as a general introduction to the study. The problem statement, research aims and objectives, central theoretical statement, method of investigation, research methodology, definition of concepts, limitations of the study as well as reference list form part of this section.
Section B	Article 1: The level of resilience in first-year psychosocial science students at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus).
	Article 2: The risk factors associated with first-year psychosocial science students at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus).
Section C	This section includes the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.
Section D	The addendums used in this study is included in this section.
Section E	A complete list is given of all the references used in this study.

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SECTION B

ARTICLE 1:

The level of resilience in a group of first-year psychosocial science students at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus)

“God writes spiritual mysteries on our heart, where they wait silently for discovery.”

Rumi

**SECTION B:
ARTICLE 1**

**THE LEVEL OF RESILIENCE IN FIRST-YEAR PSYCHOSOCIAL SCIENCE
STUDENTS AT THE NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY (POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS)**

1. INTRODUCTION

Success at university involves much more than taking notes, attending hostel events, memorising course material for exams and attending class. If a university student aims to have lasting value and benefit from his or her studies, he or she will have to develop the abilities to think critically, to deal with life changing events, emotions and to be able to be resilient and find ways to adapt to the new environment.

Leibowitz, Van der Merwe and Van Schalkwyk (2009:1) explain that South Africa is, in many senses, a young democracy, and it is of the utmost importance that the professional and intellectual capacity of our country is developed and strengthened. This cannot be done if the students who enroll for tertiary studies with high expectations and much trepidation have their hopes for academic success dashed before their first academic year is complete. Several studies have shown that school leavers are not sufficiently prepared for the challenges of higher learning (Cook, Rushton & Macintosh, 2006; Blitzer & Troskie-De Bruin, 2005).

First-year students need to be resilient in order to overcome academic difficulties and to cope with academic life. They are the most vulnerable students, as they are not used to university structures and strategies, and are new to the university environment (Wasonga, Christman & Kilmer, 2003:62-75). These students are beginning a new academic life and furthermore they are in a position of shaping their future career. With good coping skills and a positive attitude it sure will lead to a positive outcome.

The purpose of this study was to examine the level of resilience in first-year psychosocial science students at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus).

The Personal Multi-Screening Inventory (PMSI) (Faul & Hanekom, 2005) was used to collect data from 35 first-year students.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

As first-year students look forward to a new venture (that of university life) because of the new opportunities and independence it might bring, this venture also brings challenges and obstacles that might shape a student to be resilient and adapt to these challenges; but it might also drive the student to crave for support and guidance in order to survive.

First-year students face considerable challenges as they enter two significant phases of their life: the world of tertiary education and that of adulthood. At this important juncture, when it would appear that increased guidance, support and encouragement are most needed to assist students in making the transition relatively smooth, the move to a different educational environment sees these elements disappear; the infrastructure that had supported students at school is gone (Kantanis, 2000:100-110). University students in general experience stressful situations once they leave home and begin to adjust to the new life on a campus with its related academic and social demands. For most students, it's their first time away from home as a mature independent adult. At this point in time, they are challenged to adapt to the new environment with all its responsibilities and social demands.

Throughout a lifetime, humans confront a variety of life challenges. Challenges may include a combination of emotional, physical, or social stressors. Such stressors, also known as risk factors, are thought to endanger a child's ability to develop in a healthy, well-adjusted way, preventing them from productively contributing to society (Banatao 2011). As students, these challenges cannot be avoided, nor prevented; but students can try to change how they respond to these events and use constructive coping mechanisms in which they can function optimally in a distressed situation.

Resilience forms part of a successful first-year experience. Bates and Miles-Johnson (2010) explain that resilience is a component that is not only important for transition into University, but also through university life and then the transition from university into the world of work.

Resilience derives from the verb *resile*, which means that when something is compressed, stretched, or bent, it tends to spring back elastically, to recoil and to resume its former size and shape (Strumpfer, 2003). When resilience is fostered and engaged, students' internal assets, such as social competence, problem solving, autonomy, and sense of purpose, emerge, explains Banaoto (2011). It involves behaviour, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed in any individual.

Resilient individuals have the capacity to bounce back from stressful experiences quickly and effectively. They use positive emotions to rebound from, and find positive meaning in, stress encounters (Tugade & Frederickson, 2004; Turner, 2001). However, students need not have to go through a life threatening situation to bring out resilience. Resilience is a constructive mechanism to aid students in situations in which pressure is increased or a greater feeling of stress and anxiety is experienced.

In an academic environment, students face stress, pressure and adaptation from the school environment to the university structure. In modern times today, further social demands are exerted on the student such as peer pressure, academic performance, identity, drugs and alcohol. Even though today's undergraduates are talented and mature, literature proves that they present more social problems than ever before (Kantanis, 2000). However, each individual's coping strategy is handled differently and some are able to bounce back to stable life circumstances, whereas others are not inclined to be resilient.

Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the researcher will define resilience as an individual's ability to cope during normal life experiences, crises and stressful situations in a positive and stable manner.

3. RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the level of resilience in first-year psychosocial science students at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus)?

4. AIM OF THE STUDY

To examine the level of resilience in first-year psychosocial science students at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus).

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A literature study as well as empirical data collection was conducted to examine the level of resilience in first-year psychosocial science students at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus).

5.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Mouton (2001:55) research design is a plan or blueprint of how you intend conducting the research. In social research three paradigms come into actuality, namely quantitative research, qualitative research and mixed methods. For the purpose of this part of the study the researcher used quantitative research methods only. According to Creswell (2009:4) quantitative research is a means of testing objective theories by examining relationships between variables, these variables, in turn, can be measured typically on instruments so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures.

5.2. PARTICIPANTS

Participants for the study were first-year psychosocial science students from the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus). These students either had Psychology or Social Work as their major subject; they were also in their first year of study; academically and historically.

First year students (n= 35) from the school of Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences, North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus) participated in this study. Based on initial data sets of 71, only 35 students completed the questionnaire.

5.3. MEASURING INSTRUMENT

The Personal Multi-Screening Inventory instrument (PMSI) conceptualised by Faul & Hanekom (2005) was used to administer the data from the sample. The PMSI is a paper and pencil self-report measure that is used to evaluate client's strengths and problems in 33 different areas of personal, emotional, interpersonal, spiritual and physical functioning. The PMSI contains 265 items and requires 30 to 45 minutes to complete. It can be scored manually in about 30 minutes and scoring by computer takes approximately five minutes. The 33 subscale scores are used to prepare a graphic profile for ease of interpretation and for use in assessment and strategic planning (Faul & Hanekom, 2006:6).

The PMSI is a self-report assessment tool that measures the degree, severity, or magnitude of a wide range of distinct and separate strengths and problems in personal, emotional, interpersonal, spiritual and physical functioning. Each subscale of the PMSI has the same format and structure, and they all have 4 to 12 items. This particular length was selected for three specific reasons: the subscales are long enough to produce acceptable reliabilities; they are short enough to keep fatigue to an acceptable level; and the use of four to 12 items leads to the construction of simple and rapid scoring procedures (Faul & Hanekom, 2006:6).

The PMSI uses the different constructs to determine the functioning of the individual; this implies that from the positive and negative constructs, one is able to interpret if the respondents are coping and this gives an indication of the level of resilience present.

5.3.1. RELIABILITY OF THE PMSI

If a measurement is to have any clinical or scientific utility it must be reliable. It is usually accepted that a measurement tool that will be used for scientific work

must have a reliability of 0.60 or greater, according to the findings of the reliability for the schedule, the alpha scores of the different PMSI subscales ranged between 0.73 and 0.96, with a mean alpha coefficient of 0.88 for the scale as a whole (Faul & Hanekom, 2006:22). With these scores, it makes the scale very reliable for scientific use.

5.3.2. VALIDITY OF THE PMSI

At the item level of analysis, the PMSI subscales must correlate well with the constructs it is theoretically supposed to correlate with. This is known as convergent construct validity. The findings with regard to the validity of the PMSI suggest that the different subscales correlate higher with their own total scores than with any other subscale total scores, with the overall sample of 0.67 (Faul & Hanekom, 2006:30).

5.4. PROCEDURE

Due to time limitations and other challenges, the researcher sent each student a questionnaire by e-mail.

Seventy-one respondents were registered on the Perspective Training College website. Each respondent was given a username and password which logged them onto the system. An e-mail was sent after completion of each questionnaire to notify the researcher and to confirm completion and submission. Thirty-five (49.3%) of the 71 respondents fully completed the questionnaire during the period of May to November 2011. The reasons for a lack of participation was due to the following: the questionnaires were handed out in May, the time of mid exams; the questionnaire comprises of over 200 questions which takes a long time to complete; in order for the questionnaire to be completed, the students had to logon onto the internet; and they also had to have access to a computer to complete the questionnaire.

Once the researcher received a notification that the respondents submitted their questionnaire, the researcher provided a voucher to the respondent for a free cup of coffee.

5.5. ETHICAL ASPECTS

Research in the social sciences is often concerned with collecting data from people (Oliver, 2010:3). Therefore the researcher kept in mind the ethical aspects concerning the participants. According to Strydom (2011b:114), ethics is a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group, is subsequently widely accepted and which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students.

Taking into account the type of research being conducted, the researcher pursued the following:

- Obtaining relevant permission to conduct research. Permission was received from the North-West University in order to conduct the desired research. Ethical approval: reference number **NWU-00104-10-S1**.
- Informed consent from students was gained when the students completed the questionnaire. Babbie (2010:66) explains informed consent as a norm in which subjects have their voluntary participation in research projects on a full understanding of the possible risks involved. However, the researcher assured the students that there are no risks involved in the study.
- Confidentiality is explained by Oliver (2010:81) “as private details and information not being circulated to others”. The researcher explained to the participants that the results of each questionnaire will not be disclosed to anyone besides the researcher that conducted the study.
- Personal feedback of the results of the questionnaire was given to those students that were interested in the outcome of their questionnaire. Oliver (2010:65) explains that some respondents will be sufficiently interested in the research to wish to see some of the results. While this is a reasonable request, he mentions

that it is important to clarify what the respondents would like to see. The researcher only provided personal feedback of the individual's questionnaire and not of the full group report.

5.6. DATA PROCESSING

The complete PMSI schedule was processed through an online computerised program developed by Perspective Training College (2006). This program provides the researcher with a group assessment report which includes all the questionnaires of all the respondents.

6. DESCRIPTION OF TERMS

Terms that are of relevance to this study will be described below:

6.1. FIRST-YEAR STUDENT

According to the Education Statistics in South Africa (2009) a student in the higher education sector is one who is registered mainly for courses offered in contact mode. A contact mode course involves personal interaction with lecturers or institution supervisors at institutions for higher education, through lectures, tutorials, seminars, practical's, supervision, or other forms of required work, and is presented on the institution's premises or at a site of the institution." Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the term first-year student will be described as a student who has completed grade 12 the year prior to enrolling at an institution for higher education for the first time (SA, 2009).

6.2. PSYCHOSOCIAL SCIENCE

The School of Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences forms part of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus). The school includes Psychology and Social Work students. The mission of the School for

Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences is to improve the psychosocial health, well-being and quality of life of the people of South Africa. The School also aims to promote Social Work and Psychology as academic disciplines by offering outcome-based learning opportunities of a high quality, conducting relevant and high calibre basic and applied research in the area of preventive and therapeutic interventions (NWU, 2011).

6.3. RESILIENCE

Resilience is a theory that can inform action. It is a concept that changes our focus from the breakdown of the disorder attributed to exposure to stressful environments, to the individual's characteristics and social processes associated with either normal or unexpectedly positive psychosocial development (Liebenberg & Ungar, 2008: 21). Through gathering information on resilience in the literature study, the researcher is of the opinion that resilience is a complex phenomenon and different authors have different definitions, with the underlying essence of being able to cope in challenging situations. According to Hunter and Chandler (1999), resilience is to flourish unexpectedly well in one's career and at university, despite being exposed to a stressful environment.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher will define resilience as an individual's ability to cope during normal life experiences, crises and stressful situations in a positive and stable manner.

6.4. TRANSITION

The student's experience of change involved in joining the university. Transitions can occur in different dimensions such as academic, personal, financial, social and students who manage one aspect may struggle in another (Johnston, 2010:4). This transition occurs between grade 12 and the first-year of higher education. The transition can be accompanied by challenges and difficulties. It's a new stage a

student embarks on and it sets a foundation for a successful career and working environment.

7. INTERPRETATION OF MEASURING INSTRUMENT

7.1. GENERAL COMMENTS OF THE PMSI

The data was captured by means of a paper and pencil self-report measure, the Personal Multi-Screening Inventory (PMSI) (Faul & Hanekom, 2005).

The Personal Multi-Screening Inventory (PMSI) (Faul & Hanekom, 2006:3) measures personal, emotional, interpersonal, spiritual and physical functioning. Coefficient Alpha was chosen as the primary means of estimating the reliability for each of the PMSI subscales because it has a number of highly desirable characteristics.

The PMSI contains 265 items and requires 30 to 45 minutes to complete. It can be scored manually in about 30 minutes and scoring by computer takes approximately five minutes. The 33 subscale scores are used to prepare a graphic profile for ease of interpretation and for use in assessment and strategic planning (Faul & Hanekom, 2006:6).

Each subscale of the PMSI has the same format and structure, and they all have four to 12 items. This particular length was selected for three specific reasons: the subscales are long enough to produce acceptable reliabilities, they are short enough to keep fatigue to an acceptable level, and the use of four to 12 items lead to the construction of simple and rapid scoring procedures (Faul & Hanekom, 2006:6).

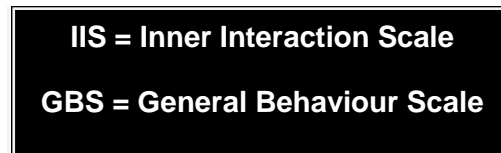
7.2. EXPLANATION OF THE PMSI SUBSCALES

7.2.1. POSITIVE PSYCHO-SOCIAL FUNCTIONING

The positive psycho-social functioning subscale measures six items, namely, achievement inner interaction scale, achievement behaviour scale, satisfaction inner interaction scale, satisfaction behaviour scale, expectation inner interaction scale and expectation general behaviour scale. These items if scored above 80% indicate that the respondents are functioning optimally. However, with a result below 73% indicates that the respondent is not satisfied with his or her life and displays negative emotions.

7.2.1.1. EXPLANATION OF THE IIS AND GBS CONSTRUCT

DIAGRAM 7.2.1.1: Explanation of the IIS and GBS construct



The Inner interaction scale (IIS) and the General behaviour scale (GBS) only applies to the positive and negative constructs.

The IIS can be explained as what the respondents inner feelings consists of; whereas the GBS is how the respondent behaves towards his or her feelings.

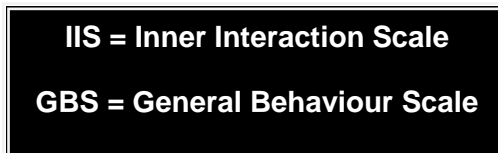
7.2.2. NEGATIVE PSYCHO-SOCIAL FUNCTIONING

The negative psycho-social functioning subscale measures six items namely; frustration inner interaction scale, frustration behavioural scale, stress inner interaction scale, stress behavioural scale, helplessness behavioural scale and helplessness inner interaction scale. These items if scored between 6% to 21% specify that the respondent is functioning optimally. However, if the results range below 6% and above 21%, it indicates that the respondent experiences

discontentment. Extreme high scores indicate that the respondent is unable to rationalise. A high score on the stress item indicates the inability of a respondent to respond positively to the demands of the environment.

7.2.2.1. EXPLANATION OF THE IIS AND GBS CONSTRUCT

Diagram 7.2.2.1: Explanation of the IIS and GBS construct



The Inner interaction scale (IIS) and the General behaviour scale (GBS) only applies to the positive and negative constructs.

The IIS can be explained as what the respondent's inner feelings consists of; whereas the GBS is how the respondent behaves towards his or her feelings.

7.2.3. EMOTIONAL FUNCTIONING

The emotional functioning subscale measures seven items namely; dependency, disturbing thoughts, memory loss, paranoia, anxiety, suicidal thoughts and senselessness of existence. A score between 0% and 16% indicates optimal functioning. A score above 22% indicates that the respondent experiences disturbing thoughts and is in need of something or someone to be dependent on for effective functioning.

7.2.4. SELF-PERCEPTION

The self-perception subscale measures three items namely; inner security, lack of self-worth and guilt feelings. A score between 0% and 20% indicates optimal functioning. A score above 26% indicates that the respondent is afraid of failure and rejection. High scores on this subscale specify that that the respondent has a negative self-perception.

7.2.5. INTERPERSONAL FUNCTIONING

The interpersonal functioning subscale measures eight items namely; social support, relationship with family, relationship with friends, relationship with colleagues, relationship with child, relationship with partner, relationship with stepmother and relationship with stepfather. A respondent with a score above 69% indicates optimal functioning. A respondent with a score below 63% indicates weak relationships and interpersonal functioning.

For the purpose of this study, only the relevant items from the subscale will be addressed namely; social support, relationship with family and relationship with friends.

7.2.6. SPIRITUAL FUNCTIONING

The spiritual functioning subscale measures 1 item; the respondent's relationship with God.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher did not include this subscale as part of the findings and discussion as the first-year group of students comprised of more than one faith.

7.2.7. PHYSICAL FUNCTIONING

The physical functioning subscale measures two items namely; body image and sexual satisfaction. A respondent who scores above 74% on the item of body image indicates that the respondent has a good mental picture of his body.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher only included body image as part of the findings and discussion. The sexual satisfaction was not included as it was of no value to the research.

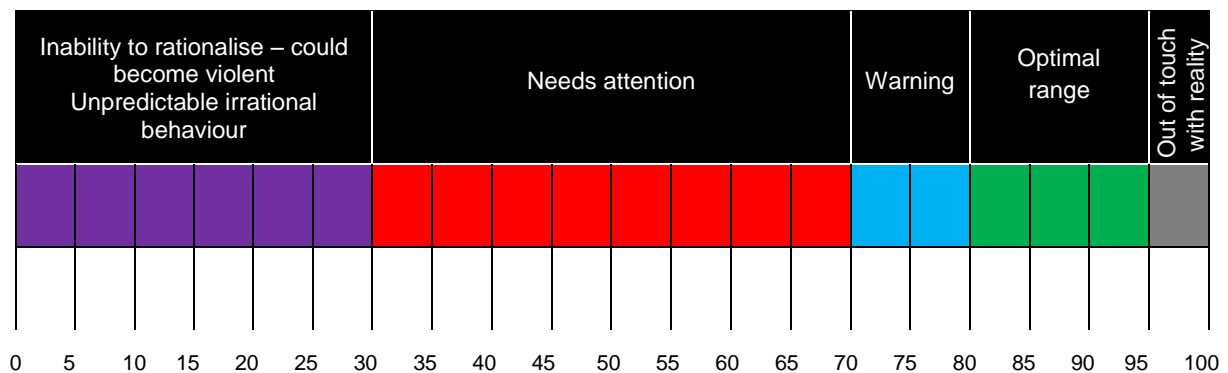
7.3. CLINICAL CUTTING SCORE INTERPRETATION LINE

Clinical cutting scores provide the reader with a deeper understanding of the items being scored. Clinical cutting scores can be indicated on the graphs to ease the interpretation of it. All subscale scores can be summarised in the clinical cutting score interpretation line. The clinical cutting score interpretation line consists of two graphs: positive section and negative section.

7.3.1. INTERPRETATION OF THE POSITIVE SECTION

The clinical cutting scores for the positive section which includes four subscales namely positive psycho-social functioning, interpersonal relationships, spiritual functioning and physical functioning, can be interpreted in the following manner.

DIAGRAM 7.3.1: Clinical cutting scores for positive constructs



According to diagram 7.3.1: the positive section can be explained as follows:

Purple UNDER ACTIVATED (needs urgent attention):

There is reliable proof that the individual has a clinical problem which justifies therapeutic intervention in the area being measured. The problem is so severe, that there is the distinct possibility that such a low scoring client may attempt violence against him/herself or others (or irrational behaviour).

Red UNDER ACTIVATED (needs attention):

There is reliable proof that the individual has a clinical problem which justifies therapeutic intervention in the area being measured.

Blue UNCERTAIN AREA:

This is the clinical cutting score range area where it is uncertain if the individual has a clinical problem which justifies therapeutic intervention. The individual and other sources must provide information to decide if the client falls in the optimal activated area or the under activated area.

Green OPTIMALLY ACTIVATED:

It indicates reliable proof that the individual does not have a problem in that area which justifies clinical intervention.

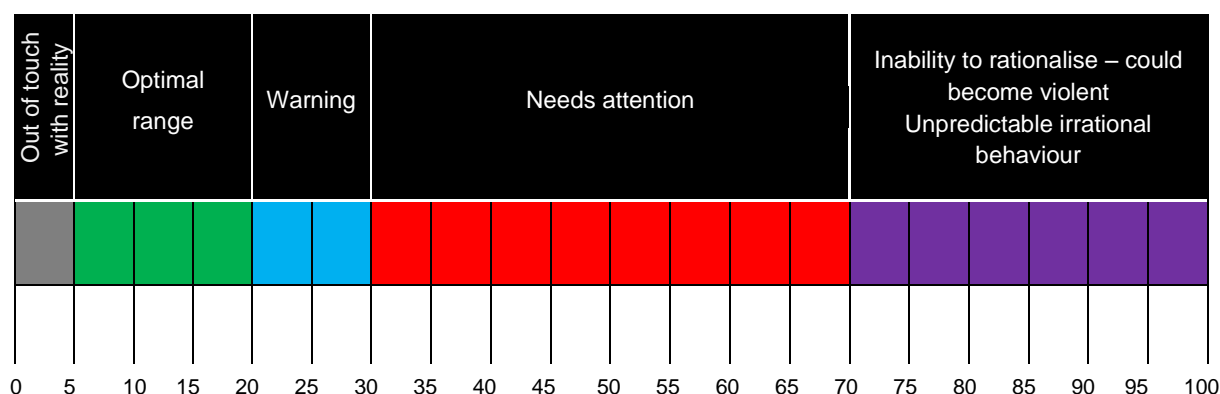
Grey OVER ACTIVATED:

It indicates reliable proof that the individual does not have a problem in that area which justifies clinical intervention, but it is possible that the individual is overemphasizing the positive part of his or her functioning.

7.3.2. INTERPRETATION FOR NEGATIVE SECTION

The clinical cutting scores for the negative section which includes three subscales namely negative psycho-social functioning, emotional functioning and self-perception; can be interpreted in the following manner.

Diagram 7.3.2: Clinical cutting scores for negative constructs



According to diagram 7.3.1: the negative section can be explained as follows:

Grey UNDER ACTIVATED:

It indicates reliable proof that the individual does not have a problem in that area which justifies clinical intervention, but it is possible that the person is under-emphasizing the negative part of his functioning.

Green OPTIMALLY ACTIVATED:

It indicates reliable proof that the individual does not have a problem in that area which justifies clinical intervention.

Blue UNCERTAIN AREA:

This is the clinical cutting score range area where it is uncertain if the individual has a clinical problem which justifies therapeutic intervention. The individual and other sources must provide information to decide if the individual falls in the optimal activated area or the over activated area.

Red OVER ACTIVATED (need attention):

There is reliable proof that the individual has a clinical problem which justifies therapeutic intervention in the area being measured.

Purple OVER ACTIVATED (needs urgent attention):

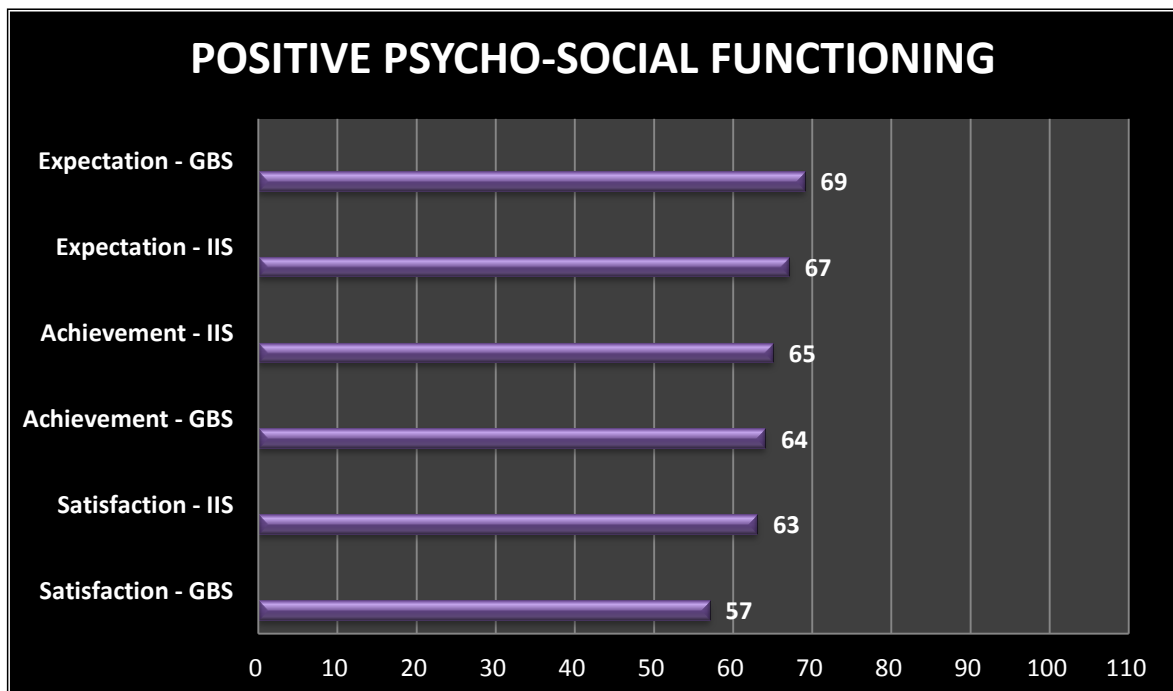
There is reliable proof that the individual has a clinical problem which justifies therapeutic intervention in the area being measured. The problem is so severe, that there is the distinct possibility that such a high scoring client may attempt violence against him/herself or others. Clinical cutting scores can be indicated on the profile graphs to ease the interpretation of it.

8. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The results of the PMSI scores were collected into a group assessment report and the following findings for each construct were made:

8.1. POSITIVE PSYCHO-SOCIAL FUNCTIONING

GRAPH 8.1: Positive psycho-social functioning



Positive Psycho-social Functioning:

0% - 30%: Under activated, unable to rationalize

31% - 72%: Under activated, needs attention

73% - 79%: Warning area

80% - 95%: Optimally activated

76% - 100%: Over activated, out of touch with reality

IIS = Inner Interaction Scale

GBS = General Behaviour Scale

8.1.1. Expectation Behavioural Scale (GBS)

Expectation behaviour is the expression of a positive orientation towards life in the individual's daily life. Behavioural characteristics, for example, to create solutions in difficult circumstances, to act in a calm manner, to protect and support others, to listen to others and to encourage others, form part of the individual's life.

A result of 69% indicates that the respondents display an under-activated tendency for expectation GBS. This means that these respondents cope by trying to create solutions in difficult circumstances, they try to act calm and their defense mechanism for coping is to protect and support others.

The score is 3% from the cut off line. This indicates that these experiences are not manifested in everyday life activities. These feelings only surface when the stress levels are high and when pressure is exerted on the respondents.

8.1.2. Expectation Inner Interaction (IIS)

Expectation behaviour is the expression of a positive orientation towards life in the individual's daily life. According to the construct, a result of 67% indicates that the score is under-activated. This score lies close to the expectation GBS score

and it indicates that the feelings and behaviour of the respondents are in line with each other, that is, the respondents act out according to their feelings.

The score is 5% from the cutting line. Therefore, it is important to note that respondents don't always experience these types of feelings. Expectations form part of the negative construct which explains that when respondents feel stressed they tend to behave in a senseless manner, because their expectations are not reached.

8.1.3. Achievement Inner Interaction (IIS)

The inner experience of achievement relates to the awareness of the individual of his own needs and potential. According to the construct, a score of 65% lies within the under activated range. This score indicates the experiences of the individual with regard to his own abilities. Respondents have goals, but these goals are too high or not within reach. Goals may not be reached due to a lack of time management and the inability to cope constructively.

8.1.4. Achievement Behavioural Scale (GBS)

A result of 65% explains that the achievement behavioural scale is under activated and needs attention. These respondents have an inability to complete tasks that they start, they also lack self-confidence and time management skills, and cannot seem to organise their life in terms of academic and social demands.

8.1.5. Satisfaction Inner Interaction (IIS)

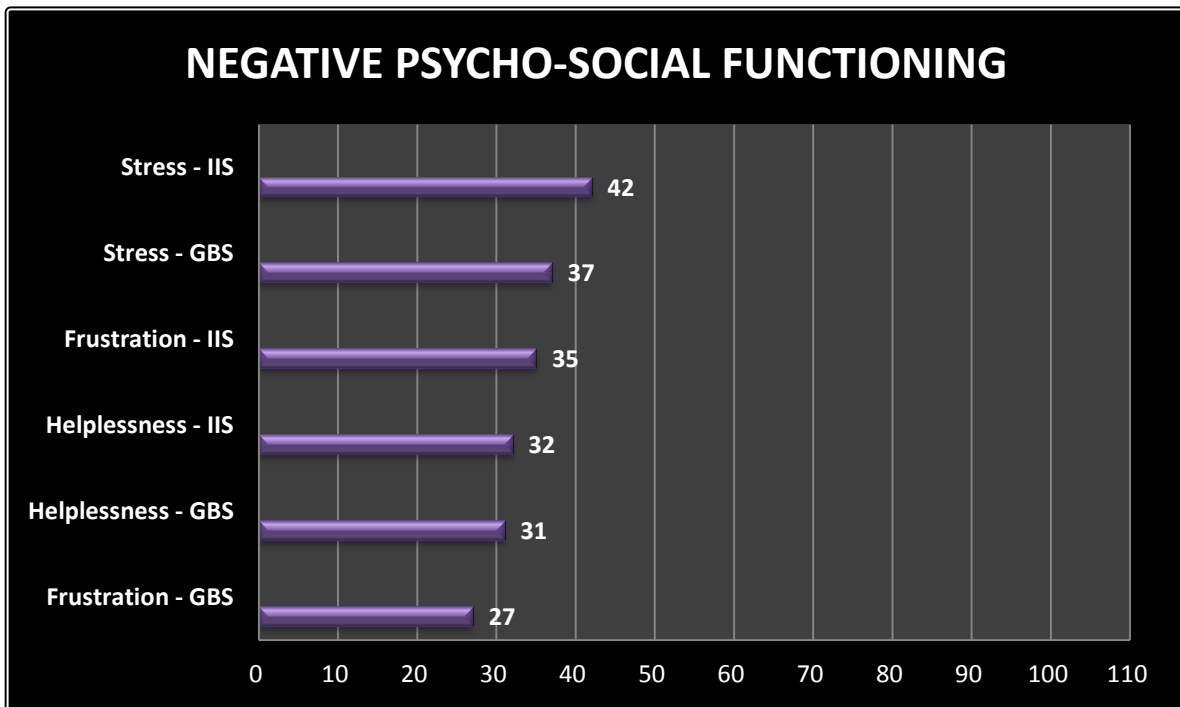
A score of 63% indicates that the score lies within the under activated range. This explains that respondents are not satisfied with their own personal life. This score is also indicative of the respondents' feelings of inner peace. An under activated score indicates that the respondents do not experience inner peace. It is possible that the respondents do not feel accepted into their (new) environment.

8.1.6. Satisfaction Behavioural Scale (GBS)

Satisfied behaviour is the unique expression of an individual as to the feelings of well-being he attaches to his life. An under activated score of 57% explains that respondents do not experience satisfaction. They are unable to make use of their free time in a constructive manner. The respondent also lacks humour and enjoyment of life is trivial. Respondents in this regard fail to create a balance in life. They cannot seem to find a good balance between academic work, social demands and family time.

8.2. NEGATIVE PSYCHO-SOCIAL FUNCTIONING

GRAPH 8.2: Negative psycho-social functioning



Negative Psycho-social Functioning:

0% - 5%: Under activated, out of touch with reality
16% - 21%: Optimally activated
22% - 28%: Warning area
29% - 70%: Over activated, needs attention
71% - 100%: Over activated, unable to rationalize

IIS = Inner Interaction Scale
GBS = General Behaviour Scale

8.2.1. Stress Inner Interaction (IIS)

The inner experience of stress is the state the individual reaches when he experiences that he can no longer respond positively to the demands of the environment.

The total score for the item sums up to 42%. This result lies in the over activated area. Respondents feel that they can no longer respond positively to the demands of the environment due to an increased work load, social and academic demands.

Feelings such as over stressed, nervousness, panic, overburdened, worried and washed out, form part of the individual's experiences.

8.2.2. Stress Behavioural Scale (GBS)

Stress behaviour is the reaction of the individual towards his or her own negative stress experiences. These experiences are due to the fact that he or she can no longer respond positively to the demands of the environment. A score of 37% explains that respondents respond to stress by displaying behaviour such as being moody and acting in an uncertain manner. Stress behaviour can also result in physical symptoms, like head- and/or muscle pains and sleeplessness.

8.2.3. Frustration Inner Interaction (IIS)

The inner experience of frustration is over activated with a score of 35% and refers to feelings of discontentment. These problems prevent the respondents to achieve their aspirations in life. Feelings like anger, frustration, irritation, impatience, embitterment and suspicion forms part of their experiences.

8.2.4. Helplessness Inner Interaction (IIS)

A score of 32%, which lies within the over activated range, indicates that the respondents perceive very negative emotions around them, such as rejection, down-in-the-dumps, purposelessness, powerlessness, loneliness and meaninglessness.

8.2.5. Helplessness Behavioural Scale (GBS)

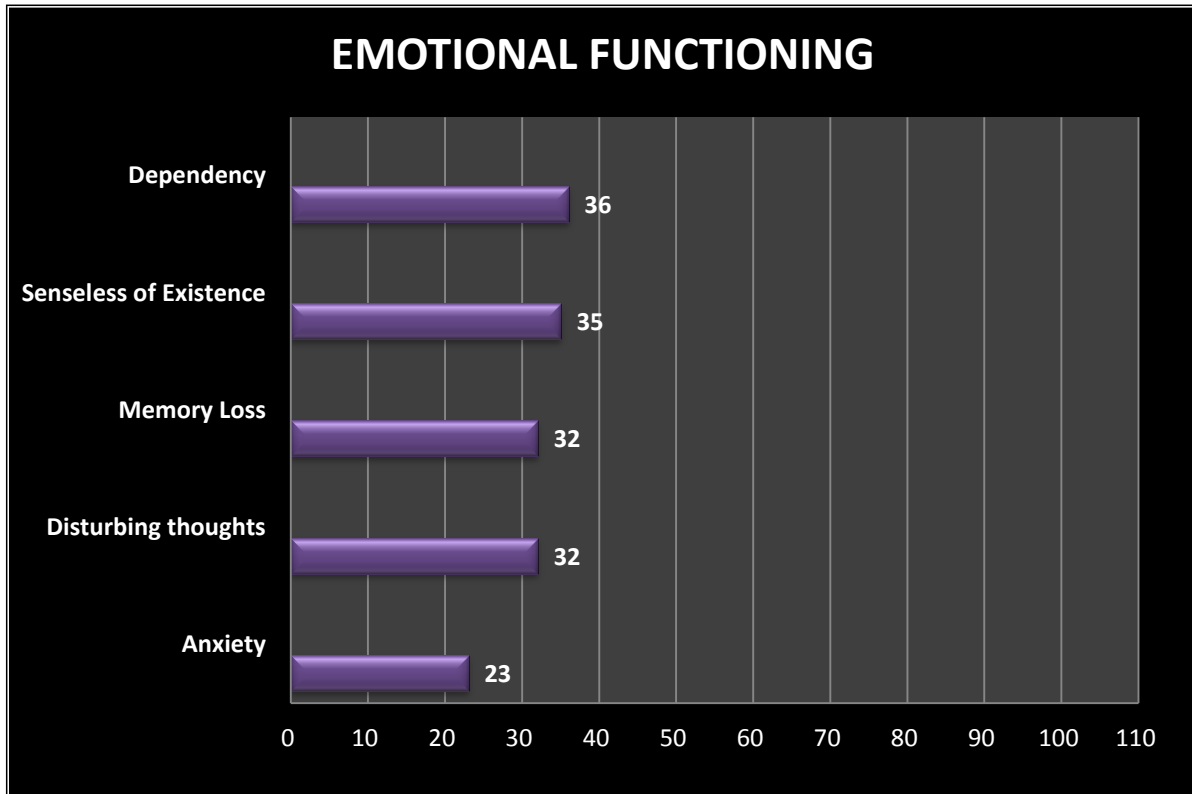
Helplessness behaviour relates to the disintegration of goal-directed activities and a lack of positive coping abilities. A score of 31% indicates an over activated tendency. This score explains that the respondents experience behavioural characteristics such as quitting easily, not participating in activities and creating a depressive atmosphere.

8.2.6. Frustration Behavioural Scale (GBS)

A score of 27% lies within the warning area range. This score explains that the respondents try to hide their frustration. At times they might portray negative emotions when they feel helpless.

8.3. EMOTIONAL FUNCTIONING

GRAPH 8.3: Emotional functioning



Emotional Functioning:
0% - 16%: Optimally activated
17% - 21%: Warning area
22% - 70%: Over activated, needs attention
71% - 100%: Over activated, unable to rationalize

8.3.1. Dependency

Respondents show an over activated tendency of 36%. This indicates the respondents have a need to depend on someone or something for support; this forms part of their coping mechanism through their first-year of university.

8.3.2. Senselessness of Existence

With a shocking over activated score of 35%, respondents lack a purpose or meaning in life. They're merely existing but not living.

8.3.3. Memory Loss

A score of 32 % indicates an over activated tendency. Respondents are likely to forget and experience a loss of memory. This loss of memory has mainly to do with every day basic things.

8.3.4. Disturbing Thoughts

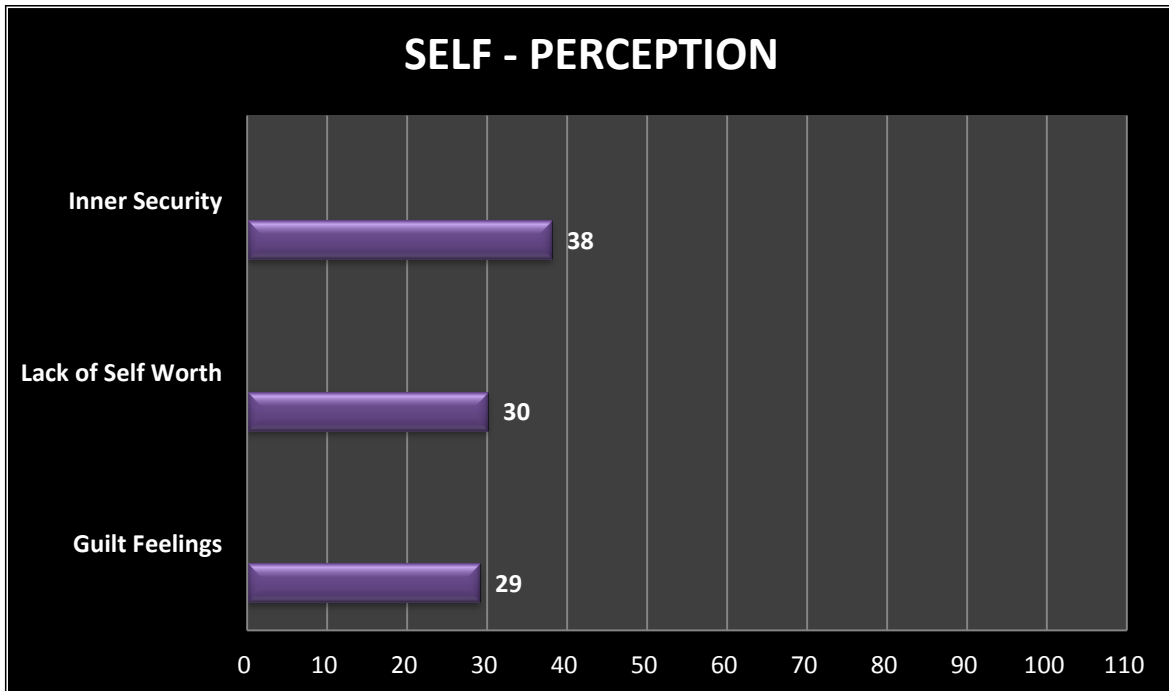
A score of 32%, which lies within the over activated range, explains that respondents are often plagued with obsessive thoughts that could be disturbing. Thoughts such as failure, inability to cope and not reaching their goals are experienced.

8.3.5. Anxiety

A score of 23% lies within the over activated range. This result is 2% away from the cut off line for the warning area. This explains that respondents experience a sense of insecurity and fear. These feelings are not experienced on a daily basis. Feelings such as insecurity and fear only surface when the respondents feel stressed and lonely.

8.4. SELF-PERCEPTION

GRAPH 8.4: Self-perception



Self – Perception:

0% - 20%: Optimally activated

21% - 25%: Warning area

26% - 70%: Over activated, needs attention

71% - 100%: Over activated, unable to rationalize

8.4.1. Inner Insecurity

A score of 38% lies within the over activated range. This score indicates that respondents are afraid to be hurt emotionally and are afraid of rejection or failure. Such a person is of the opinion that he or she cannot rely on his or her own capabilities.

8.4.2. Lack of Self-worth

A score of 30% indicates an over activated tendency. This explains that the respondents feel unimportant. Such a person feels he is worth nothing, he is not special and that he won't be accepted.

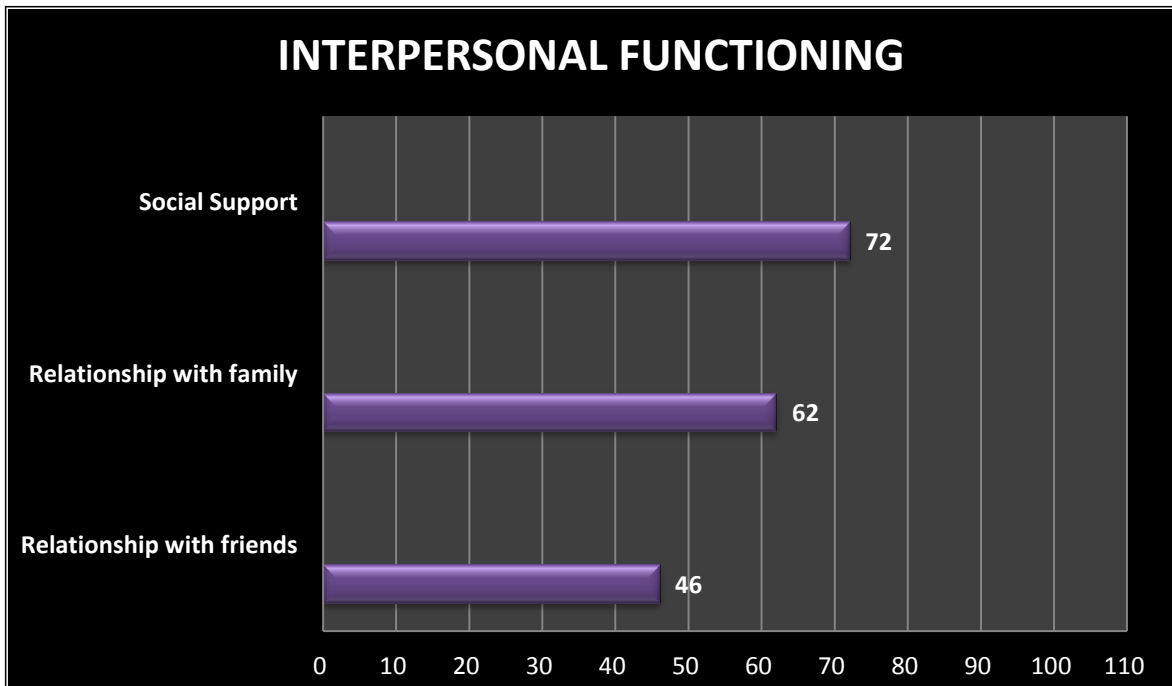
These respondents measure their self-worth against the non-achievement of goals, which leads to a sense of failure.

8.4.3. Guilt Feelings

A score of 29%, which lies in the over activated range, indicates that respondents are unable to manage their life in a responsible manner. The score is 4% away from the warning area. This indicates that respondents don't experience guilt on a daily basis. Guilt feelings such as not forgiving oneself only surface during extreme situations. These situations arise when the respondents feel extremely stressed and when they are not satisfied with themselves.

8.5. INTERPERSONAL FUNCTIONING

GRAPH 8.5: Interpersonal functioning



Interpersonal Functioning:

0% - 30%: Under activated, unable to rationalize

31% - 63%: Under activated, needs attention

64% - 68%: Warning area

69% - 100%: Optimally activated

8.5.1. Social Support

A score of 72% indicates an optimally activated respondent. Optimally activated respondents have a good social support system. The social support from friends and family is what assists the respondents to cope with academic and social demands.

According to the emotional functioning construct, the dependency item scored 36%, which indicates that respondents need something or someone to depend on for optimal functioning.

The score is close to the warning area by just 3%. This indicates that respondents need to improve their social support systems to enhance their coping strategies.

8.5.2. Relationship with family

A score of 62% lies within the under activated range. This explains that family relationships lack communication and trust. It is an indication that respondents need social support to cope, but the social support from their family is not enough.

8.5.3. Relationship with friends

An under activated score of 46% explains that the friendships that the respondents have lack trust and respect. This is an indication that friendships

have not been maintained for a very long time and that the level of support from friends is at a minimum.

9. DISCUSSION

The Personal Multi Screening Inventory (PMSI) (Faul & Hanekom, 2005) schedule was used to fully understand the level of resilience of first-year psychosocial science students at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus). Thirty-five respondents completed the schedule in a space of six months. These students were in their first-year of studies with Psychology or Social Work as their major subject.

From the above results it is clear that first-year psychosocial science students have an inability to function optimally in an academic environment. According to the positive psycho-social functioning construct, all the subscales were under activated, this indicates that respondents have difficulty adapting to a new environment. They fail to make use of constructive coping mechanisms and in order to maintain their academic and social life; they need something or someone to depend upon.

According to the negative psycho-social functioning construct, five of the six constructs were over activated. This indicates that respondents experienced great amounts of stress, due to the social and academic demands; they feel a sense of helplessness. Feelings of helplessness leads to increased levels of frustration as they are unable to reach their goals.

According to the theory of Faul and Hanekom (2006), frustration, stress and helplessness are inter-related. When a respondent begins to feel frustrated they experience stress. This stress leads them to feel helpless and they need to depend on someone or something to cope. This dependence can be anything from sex, drugs, alcohol or people. Ross and De Jong (2008) explain that life transitions in general are times of risk for increased alcohol use and abuse, but many factors during university transition make it a particularly risky period. Chiauzzi, Brevard, Thum, Thurn, Decembrele and Lord (2008:555-572) also highlight that alcohol and drug use are particularly prevalent among university students. This could be related to the students'

developmental level, associated vulnerabilities, as well as the various challenges facing them during the transition.

First-year students come to university filled with hope and a yearning to excel. With such high expectations, they soon feel frustrated and over time experience stress, because they cannot cope with the academic and social demands of university. These expectations are not fulfilled and the students begin to feel a lack of self-worth and helplessness. From the PMSI results it is clear that the respondents have high expectations of university life. These expectations might be related to academic demands or family expectations to excel. Harvey, Drew and Smith (2006:13) highlight several factors emerging from the changes and transitions of first-year students into the university environment. These include: predicting success; assessing performance; withdrawal and retention; adjustment and skill support.

According to a study by Palmer, O'Kane and Owens (2009:37-54) students in their first year explained that they experienced feelings of doubt regarding the perceived abnormality of academic life, and therein the appropriateness of both their expected learning styles and the curriculum design, as well as the freedom and isolation of student life. It is understandable that students might feel this way; they have been following a certain method of learning for 12 years while in school. The sudden change of environment and university norms as well as change in learning style can cause students to feel doubtful. Time management plays an important role in the student's first-year at university. Results from the PMSI indicated that students are unable to manage their free time in a constructive manner. High school has its own structure with a 6 hour academic schedule, while at university students spend the greatest part of their days on the university premises.

A recent study by Pillay and Ngcobo (2010:232-240) at a South African university reported that academic work and the fear of failure were amongst the biggest stressors for first-year students. This is probably related to the fact that the university curricula and demands are new to these students and more challenging than their previous secondary schooling careers. Pillay and Ngcobo (2010:232-240) further highlighted that

most participants perceived their parents to be supportive, but it is worrying to note that one in ten participants viewed their parents as unsupportive. This would certainly be stressful to those students and likely to have a negative effect on the students' academic performance.

According to the subscale of social support, the relationship with families' was under activated. This is a concern for first-year students as they need to be dependent on someone or something for effective social and academic functioning, in order to cope. It could be interpreted that students are away from home and therefore the relationship with their family has stagnated. It is also important that cognisance is taken of the students' fears of failure and perceptions of academic demands. These are very likely related to insufficient preparation of students at secondary school level, with the result that they find themselves overwhelmed when they begin their university education.

Respondents also experience a sense of senselessness of existence, and feel they lack purpose or meaning in life. The score for senselessness of existence was over activated. This indicates that at times they feel helpless and isolated. During Palmer *et al.* (2007:37-54) study, a respondent explained: "I didn't feel that I belonged. I sat in my room, not talking to anyone. I just went to bed to sleep to forget about my worries. This made me even more lethargic which meant I couldn't release any stress and find the energy to do my work." Some respondents wrote metaphorically about hanging onto a thread that would pull them into what they perceived as a normal place (incorporation back into the home life or forward into university life).

Thus the transition from high school to university can be unsuccessful for many. Students are faced with leaving home and entering a new environment of learning, academic stress, social demands and isolation. This can impact on the success and performance of the students during their first-year at university. The literature indicates that a wide range of issues, from social to individual factors, influence students' success during their first year.

Since the inception of support strategies for support first year students, the researcher has been intrigued by the importance of resilience as a factor in successful transition.

Resilience is a component that is not only important for transition into university, but also through university life and then the transition from university into the world of work (Bates & Miles-Johnson, 2010). Young adults need to be resilient in order for them to survive adversity of any kind. The environment in which the young adults operate should interact positively with them.

A resilient individual displays resilience principles in every area that describes a person holistically, in the context of psychological, physical, social, economical and spiritual well-being. Resilient individuals can be identified through their outcomes, which are desirable behaviour and actions (Kaplan, 1999:110).

First-year students need to be resilient in order to overcome academic difficulties and to cope with academic life. They are the most vulnerable students, as they are not used to university structures and strategies, and are new to the university environment. The advantage of resilient first-year students is that they will be able to function on their own in a challenging environment, and be able to move on, even when faced with adversities, as the state of 'bouncing back' predicts academic achievement (Wasonga *et al.*, 2003:62-75). Resilience therefore pervades and influences how students respond to adversity.

Most first-year university students are faced with many new experiences and responsibilities on campus and in life in general. The students have to learn to cope with a variety of settings, including the university, community, the workplace and home. They also need to learn to cope with examination anxiety, financial difficulties, personal relationships and social ills like divorce. The above concerns necessitate students to be resilient in order for them to overcome difficulties and achieve success.

10. RECOMMENDATION

In view of the above findings it is evident that students in their first year have problems adjusting to the university structure. Even though orientation programs have been put into place to assist these students, the researcher is of the opinion that academic staff places more emphasis on the student as a whole. When entering university, students bring personal problems along with them. It is necessary to implement a program in the first year of studies which takes into consideration a holistic view of the student. This program should include ways of coping with academic stress and life in general. This program should also encourage peer to peer interactions between first-year students.

Students enter university without the necessary mental preparation and have high expectations with regard to social status and academic progress. They are not fully aware of what the university structure entails, and lack the ability to successfully balance academics and social activities in their life. It would be wise to facilitate a program based on leadership as well as time management for better academic progress.

The PMSI should be implemented again to the respondents as a post measure to monitor progress after the first year of university.

Due to challenges with regard to time and effective student participation, the researcher could not gain a whole collected view of all first-year psychosocial science students; therefore future research should encourage participation from all students to gain a collected view of the first-year experience.

With changes in society, it would be wise to include the role of one's job into the study. This may assist researchers as to how students incorporate their working hours into their schedule.

The results from the study highlight the need for continual research on stress. Future studies need to explore internal and external factors in detail.

Therapeutic interventions and services need to be readily available especially for first-year students to aid with the transition into university to ensure students' continual success.

11. CONCLUSION

This article was based on the resilience of first-year psychosocial science students at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus). This study is limited to only the students of one school and this study cannot make a general assumption for all first-year students.

To summarise, the study showed significant high levels of stress in first-year students. The scores of the items of expectation, achievement and satisfaction were not in an optimal range of functioning. Students are prone to be dependent on someone or something for effective coping; this may lead to over excessive drinking.

Resilience appears to be at the background of every action a student takes. It acts as a moderator, motivation, compass and activates the mind. Resilient students are able to apply relevant techniques and skills to problems, and are intrinsically motivated to conquer difficulties without suffering lasting harm (Moleli, 2005). Therefore for effective first-year student functioning, it is vital for students to be resilient and to incorporate skills to build resilience in everyday life.

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ARTICLE 2

**The risk factors associated with first-year psychosocial
science students at the North-West University (Potchefstroom
Campus)**

“Silence is the language of God, all else is poor translation.”

Rumi

ARTICLE 2

THE RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH FIRST YEAR PSYCHOSOCIAL SCIENCE STUDENTS AT THE NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY (POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS)

1. INTRODUCTION

Beginning university is a major life transition, characterised by change and challenge. Incoming undergraduates must modify old routines and relationships to adjust to the new demands of university life, and some will be moving away from home and parents for the first time. Although typically considered a positive and exciting time, the transition to university can be problematic for some students (Wintre, Ames, Pancer, Pratt, Polivy, Birnie-Lefcovitch & Adams, 2011:326-343). This transition marks a vital aspect in the undergraduate's academic life; and therefore a great amount of time should be spent on making the right choices in the first year of the undergraduate's academic journey.

Although university offers students opportunities for personal growth and development, it can also be frustrating and stressful. In addition to academic stress, financial strain, time constraints or interpersonal stress can impact students' well-being (Rocha-Singh, 1994:712-727). An optimal amount of stress can be stimulating and encouraging; however, when stress is overwhelming, emotional problems may occur. Therefore, for many years, counsellors and researchers have investigated factors that protect students from the negative consequences of stress and promote their overall well-being. Students in particularly many of the Asian countries (such as Hong Kong, Japan, mainland China and Singapore) put extra pressure on themselves to excel academically, because of the strong focus placed on academic success and expectations from the family that they pursue academic excellence. Such intensive stress may result in the deterioration in mental health and well-being, with cases resulting in depression and suicide (Zeng & Le Tendre, 1998:513-528). On the other hand, resilience is repeatedly found to be negatively associated with psychological distress among university students (Beasley, Thompson, & Davidson, 2003:77-95),

suggesting that it may serve an important role in helping students to adapt functionally in the midst of challenges or difficulties (Mak, Ng & Wong, 2011:610-617).

University students in general experience stressful situations once they leave home and begin to adjust to the new life at University with its related academic, financial and social demands. Students enroll at a university with high expectations; they hope to achieve academic success, but fail to manage their time constructively. With the added freedom, students battle to balance social and academic demands in their daily lives; for some this can be a challenge, while others are resilient to cope.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

A graduate's journey already begins at the first day of school. The fears and hopes embedded into a 7 year old heart – hopes of achieving the ultimate. This is the cycle of education that transcends from primary school to high school, then to a tertiary education and is culminated in the final few days of the graduate's university year. The first year at university sets the foundation for a lasting and fruitful career. This first year also brings much challenges, disappointments, achievements and self-introspection. If successful, the graduate can achieve self-growth and development with lasting success.

Taking the educational stages into perspective, an individual goes through three stages of schooling; pre-primary school, primary school and high school. These three stages provide a foundation for the student to begin a degree in higher education. Therefore, taking the three stages of schooling into consideration; it's evident that students go through three stages of transition before the first year of University. Not much research has been done on the transition between the three stages of schooling, mainly because it is not marred by extreme challenges or risk factors. The transitions between the three stages is in fact the same, a learner might change schools or perhaps enter into a hostel. The only challenge with high school is the extra load of work and academic pressure to gain university exemption. Research has placed emphasis on first-year student retention and the challenges these students face in their first year at university mainly because this is an important aspect in developing the student for tertiary education.

Adolescence itself is a transitional state when adolescents undergo major developmental changes. These changes include cognitive, physical, emotional and psychological aspects. Students find their way through high school and enter a new stage of their life (university), which embraces freedom, independence and new opportunities, but are also flawed with new challenges. Ross and De Jong (2008) describe this phase as one in which students are their own masters, often far from the vigilance of parents and the structures of tightly scheduled school days. As they take this step toward independence, they face the temptation to celebrate their newfound freedom, test limits, and perhaps escape from new pressures through alcohol and other drugs.

Based on previous research, stress, specifically academic stress, has been a major contribution to the challenges of a first-year student. Ting, Morris, McFeaters, and Eustice (2006:39-55) explain that the sources of stress range from a lack of time management abilities to academic demands and a lack of or negative social interactions. Factors that decreased the risk of stress are higher self-esteem, internal locus of control and positive social support.

Many students leave home; a place where they have formed an identity. These students leave their comfort zone to pursue their studies. The transition of leaving home can bring new anxieties to the first-year student.

The traditional image of the first year at university is one of intellectual and growth discoveries, independence in thought and behavior, widening horizons, and growth in confidence. This is close reality for some students, but for many others – in fact, perhaps the majority of South African students – the experience is marred by failure, loss of confidence, and perhaps disillusionment. This has far-reaching consequences for the individual for the development of South Africa's talent and thus for social, economic and political well-being. If this situation is avoidable, surely all reasonable efforts should be made to avoid it (Leibowitz, Van der Merwe & Van Schalkwyk, 2009:17).

Throughout a lifetime, humans confront a variety of life challenges. During childhood and adolescence, threats to student well-being may be temporal or more pervasive. Challenges may include a combination of emotional, physical, or social stressors. Such stressors, also known as risk factors, are thought to endanger a child's ability to develop in a healthy, well-adjusted way, preventing the child from productively contributing to society. Risk factors may include sexual abuse, gang affiliation, poverty, discrimination, dysfunctional family dynamics, drug abuse, and teen pregnancy, to name a few (Banatao, 2011).

Kantanis' (2000:100-110) study undertaken at Monash University indicated that the main transition challenges for students included: responsibility, the pace and style of teaching, large amounts of reading, uncertainty of what is expected from lecturers, family expectations, relocating to another place to study, anxiety, balancing freedom and life demands, isolation and lack of support.

Risk factors refer to those elements that are not conducive to the development of a resilient student, and cause stress for students. They are physiological, psychological, socio-cultural and environmental situations or condition that increases the possibility of a violent or injury outcome (Ahmed, Seedat, Van Niekerk & Bulbulia, 2004:386-408).

In an academic environment, students face stress, pressure and adaptation from the school environment to the university environment. In modern times today, further social demands are exerted on the student such as peer pressure, academic performance, identity and social well-being. Even though today's undergraduates are talented and mature, they present more social problems than ever before. However, each individual coping strategy is handled differently and some individuals are able to bounce back to stable life circumstances, whereas others are not inclined to be resilient.

Taking the literature study into perspective, it's of vital essence to look deeper into the challenges and risk factors that first-year students face. In general, people face challenges in everyday life. Some of these challenges can be controlled, while others cannot. In a university environment, students need to foster resilience in order to minimise the risk factors associated with the first-year experience. Wasonga, Christman

and Kilmer (2003:62-75) explains that the advantage of first-year students being resilient is that they will be able to function on their own in a challenging environment, and be able to move on when faced with adversities as the state of bouncing back predicts academic achievement.

Therefore the aim of this part of the study was to investigate by means of the qualitative approach the risk factors that might adversely affect resilience in first-year psychosocial science students at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus).

3. RESEARCH QUESTION

- What are the risk factors that may adversely affect resilience in first-year students?
- What guidelines can be provided for first-year students to function optimally in a tertiary environment?

4. AIM OF THIS PART OF THE STUDY

To determine the risk factors that may adversely affect resilience in first-year psychosocial science students at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus) and to include guidelines for a first-year program for these students to function optimally in a tertiary environment.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A literature study as well as an empirical data collection was conducted to determine the risk factors that may adversely affect resilience in first-year psychosocial science students at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus).

5.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Mouton (2001:55), research design is a plan or blueprint of how you intend conducting the research. In social research three paradigms come into

actuality. These are quantitative research, qualitative research and mixed methods. For the purpose of this part of the study, the researcher used the qualitative method. According to Creswell (2009:4), qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups ascribed to a social or human problem. He further mentions that the process of research involves emerging questions and procedures collected in the participants' setting, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data.

Due to previous research conducted the researcher made use of triangulation. According to Harper and Thompson (2012:231), triangulation is a process of involving the use of different methods, sources or 'readings to check the integrity, or extend inferences drawn from the data'. The researcher used data collected from the Personal Multi-Screening Inventory (PMSI) group report. This quantitative study was conducted with 35 students prior to the qualitative research study.

5.2. PARTICIPANTS

Participants consisted of first-year psychosocial science students from the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus). These students either had Psychology or Social Work as their major subject.

For the first part of the research study, a measuring instrument, the Personal Multi-Screening Inventory (PMSI) (Faul & Hanekom, 2005), was used to collect data from 35 students for the quantitative study. The first few students who first completed this questionnaire were invited for interviews until data saturation was reached. Data collection ceases when theoretical categories are reached (Harper & Thompson, 2012:135). Charmaz (2006:113) explains that categories are saturated when gathering fresh data no longer sparks new theoretical insights, nor reveals new properties of your core theoretical categories. Data saturation was reached at 12 students.

Eight female and four male psychosocial students were included in the second part of the research study.

5.3. MEASURING INSTRUMENT

The Personal Multi-Screening Inventory instrument (PMSI) (Faul & Hanekom, 2005) was used to administer the data from the sample for the quantitative study.

From the findings of the questionnaire, the researcher compiled a self-structured interview schedule to gather more information concerning the risk factors associated with resilience in first-year students. McMillan (2004:165) explains an interview as a form of data collection in which questions are asked orally and subjects' responses are recorded. There is a direct verbal interaction between the interviewer and the respondent. By establishing a proper rapport with the subject, a skilled interviewer can enhance motivation and obtain information that might not otherwise have been offered.

5.4. PROCEDURE

- The researcher approached the School of Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences for permission to conduct the study.
- Permission was granted and the researcher was given a full class list of all first-year students enrolled for first-year Psychology modules.
- Students were informed about this study during their classes, in which they signed a form and provided contact details for the researcher to contact them.
- Due to time limitations and challenges accompanied by the research, the researcher sent each student (71 students) a questionnaire by e-mail for the quantitative study.
- Thereafter the first few students who first completed this questionnaire were invited for interviews until data saturation was reached.

5.5. ETHICAL ASPECTS

Research in the social sciences is often concerned with collecting data from people (Oliver, 2010:3). Therefore the researcher should keep in mind the ethical aspects concerning the participants. According to Strydom (2011b:114), ethics is a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group, is subsequently widely accepted and which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students.

Taking into account the type of research being conducted, the researcher pursued the following:

- Obtaining relevant permission to conduct research. Permission was received from the North-West University in order to conduct the desired research. Ethical approval was given with reference number **NWU-00104-10-S1**.
- Informed consent from students was gained when the students completed the questionnaire. Babbie (2010:66) explains informed consent as a norm in which subjects voluntarily participates in research projects on a full understanding of the possible risks involved. However, the researcher assured the students that there are no risks involved in the study.
- Confidentiality, explained by Oliver (2010:81), is “private details and information not being circulated to others”. The researcher explained to the participants that the results of each questionnaire will not be disclosed to anyone besides the researcher that conducted the study.

5.6. DATA ANALYSIS

Data was processed by means of thematic analysis. Joffe (2012: 209) explains that because thematic analysis refers to themes, the notion of a theme must be examined more closely. A theme refers to a specific pattern of meaning found in the data. It can contain manifest content which is something directly observable, such as means of stigma across a series of transcripts. Joffe further explains that thematic

analysis facilitates the gleaning of knowledge of the meaning made of the phenomenon under study by the groups studied and provides the necessary groundwork for establishing valid models of human thinking, feeling and behaviour.

For data collection, the researcher made use of a thematic analysis described as Tesch's approach (as quoted in Creswell, 2009:186):

- The researcher read the transcripts carefully to gain a sense of the whole, ideas were noted as they come to mind.
- The researcher selected one interview, e.g. the most interesting, the shortest, the one at the top of the pile and went through it asking "what is it about?" thoughts about the underlying meaning in the information were noted.
- When the researcher completed this task for several participants, a list was drawn up of all the topics. Similar topics were clustered together and formed into columns that were arrayed into major topics, unique topics and leftovers.
- The researcher took the list back to the data. The topics were abbreviated as codes and the codes written next to the appropriate segments of the text.
- The researcher found the most descriptive wording for the topics and turned them into categories. The researcher further reduced the total list of categories by grouping together topics that related to each other.
- The researcher made a final decision on the abbreviation for each category and alphabetised the codes.
- The data was assembled, each belonging to a category and a preliminary analysis was performed
- The researcher recoded the existing data if it was necessary.

6. DESCRIPTION OF TERMS

5.1. FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

According to the Education Statistics in South Africa (2009) a student in the higher education sector is one who is registered mainly for courses offered in contact mode. A contact mode course involves personal interaction with lecturers or institution supervisors at higher education institutions through lectures, tutorials, seminars, practicals, supervision or other forms of required work, and is presented on the institution's premises or at a site of the institution. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the term first-year student will be described as a student who has completed grade 12 the year prior to enrolling at a higher education institution for the first time (SA, 2009).

5.2. PSYCHOSOCIAL STUDENTS

The School of Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences forms part of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus). The school includes Psychology and Social Work students. The mission of the School for Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences is to improve the psychosocial health, well-being and quality of life of the people of South Africa. The School also aims to promote Social Work and Psychology as academic disciplines by offering outcome-based learning opportunities of a high quality, conducting relevant and high calibre basic and applied research in the area of preventive and therapeutic interventions (NWU, 2011).

5.3. RESILIENCE

Resilience refers to a pattern of behavior that demonstrates that a person is doing well despite being exposed to significant risk or adversity (Medoff, 2010: xv). Individuals who are highly resilient exhibit adaptive coping skills and often convert stressors into opportunities for learning and development. Wilks and Spivey (2010:276-288) add that resilience is a product of survival, as well as an indication of hardiness and of present and future internal strength.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher defined resilience as an individual's ability to cope during normal life experiences, crises and stressful situations in a positive and stable manner.

5.4. RISK FACTORS

This term usually refers to the factors that might contribute to poor outcomes of young people, such as poverty, deprivation, illness or dysfunctional family background (Coleman & Hagell, 2007:2). Knight (2007:543-555) describes resilience as "a condition" which is based around the notion of focussing on opportunities to minimise risk factors and enhance protective factors. Building on the protective factor has the potential to mitigate the risk factors. Therefore, although risk factors cannot be avoided, students can be taught how to adapt to these risk factors and promote resilience.

7. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The following themes were identified from the interviews. Quantitative data from the first part of the research study is also included in order to confirm the qualitative data.

THEMES	SUBTHEMES
THEME 1: EMOTIONAL FACTORS	Subtheme 1.1: Lack of resilience
	Subtheme 1.2: Negative self-concept
	Subtheme 1.3: Stress and anxiety
THEME 2: FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE	Subtheme 2.1: Wrong reasons for enrolling into university
	Subtheme 2.2: Transition from school to university
	Subtheme 2.3: First month of university
	Subtheme 2.4: Drop-outs
	Subtheme 2.5: First-year initiation
THEME 3: PSYCHO-SOCIAL FACTORS	Subtheme 3.1: Bad time management
	Subtheme 3.2: Lack of social support
	Subtheme 3.3: New behaviours developed
	Subtheme 3.4: Strengths and weaknesses
	Subtheme 3.6: Alcohol, smoking and drugs

7.1. THEME 1: EMOTIONAL FACTORS

7.1.1. LACK OF RESILIENCE

Respondents were well aware of the term resilience and defined it as 'adapting', 'coping', 'being positive'. Upon asking respondents the question, "Are you resilient?" they were not clear with their answers. Four respondents' claim that it's difficult to answer if they are resilient. Two respondents explained that they are not resilient, and the remaining six mentioned that they might be resilient. A study conducted by Wilks and Spivey (2010:276-288) indicated that friend-related social support moderated the negative association between academic stress and resilience. In other words, the interaction between friend support and academic stress had a positive impact on resilience among Bachelorette Social Work (BSW) students. According to the PMSI of social relationships it is clear that the respondents did not have a trusting relationship with their friends, but they needed social support in order to function optimally. Perhaps if the friendships are strengthened and family relationships are reinforced too, then students can become more resilient. Banaoto (2011) is of the opinion that when resilience is fostered and engaged, students' internal assets, such as social competence, problem solving, autonomy, and sense of purpose, emerge. Beasley *et al.* (2003:77-95) suggest that resilience is repeatedly found to be negatively associated with psychological distress among university students.

Previous research on resilience in first-year students at institutions of higher education indicates that resilience is the core factor for future success. A study by Huggins (2011:243-247) conducted on first year law students indicated that students need to be equipped with inner resources and understandings to promote greater resilience, coping capacity and self-regulation throughout their law degrees. Van Lingen, Douman and Wannenburg (2011:396-408) also mentioned in a study that resilience is part of student focus, "Specific foci could be: enhancing self-awareness and self-esteem, adversity, loss, death and bereavement, basic counselling skills, enhancing spiritual wellness, appreciating

diversity and building resilience.” It is further mentioned that these characteristics will foster a positive outcome in students.

7.1.2. NEGATIVE SELF CONCEPT

Body image is ‘subjective’; in other words, it’s to do with the way we think and feel about ourselves and others, rather than exact measurements or facts. It can strongly affect how good or bad we feel about ourselves (Fitzhugh, 2004:4).

According to the subscale; body image of the PMSI indicated a score of 53% which explains that the score is under activated and these respondents have a negative self-image of their body. A respondent explained that she has no time to work out and she does not have the financial capacity for a gym contract. Another two respondent’s claim that they have no time to make healthy food. “I feel embarrassed to go to the gym, I eat well but I hardly exercise. I never participated in any physical activities at school, but now I know I need to because I am eating junk food’ explained a respondent. Three of the respondents who are females stated that they feel that men are more attracted to pretty and thin girls and they feel that they are not pretty or thin. Sikhwari (2004) states that a negative self-concept results in an inadequate desire to get involved in academic activities, withdrawal, lack of goal directedness and feelings of hopelessness and inferiority. The PMSI subscale scores of senselessness of existence, which scored an over activated score of 35%. This explains that respondents lack a purpose or meaning in life. As from the literature it is explained that self-concept is related to inferiority. Therefore, when a respondent has a negative self-concept about him- or herself they are prone to feel hopeless and inferior in their context.

A positive self-concept is regarded as important for good mental health, improving academic achievement (Chapman, Tunmer, Prochnow, 2000:703-708).

7.1.3. STRESS AND ANXIETY

Stress is a complex concept, it is explained as any circumstance that threatens, or is perceived to threaten, one's well-being and that thereby tax ones coping abilities (Weiten, 2005:523).

All respondents claim that the first emotion they experienced (as a first-year student) was stress. Upon questioning them, the respondents explained that the stress stemmed from fitting into university, social support, academic performance and relationships.

A respondent explained: "I was new in this university; all my school friends went to other universities. I felt alone and I was stressed about fitting into the environment". Another respondent was concerned about her academic work, she explained: "Throughout my high school years I was a top student and I was part of the first hockey team, I made my parents proud. I started to stress after I received my first psychology assignment with a mark of 40%." The respondent further explained: "My low marks made me stress, because I had high expectations and my parents had high expectations from me, this reduced my self-esteem and I needed more motivation to try harder". Misra, McKean, West and Russo (2000:236-245) state that with academic stress, the response can be physical, mental, and/or emotional; the demand can be any combination of frustration, conflict, pressure, change, and self-imposed stress that is related to academics.

In the quantitative study, the PMSI subscale for stress totals 43%. This means that these respondents show an over activated tendency which explains that respondents can no longer respond positively to the demands of the environment.

Stress is a widespread concept commonly associated with psychological and medical problems that may impair an individual's functioning and incur costs on society. Alarming rates of depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and other stress-related problems have been found among college students, says Asber (2000). A

study conducted by Deckro, Ballinger, Hoyt, Wilcher, Dusek, Myers, Greenberg, Rosenthal and Benson (2002:281-287) measured stress levels in a sample of college/university students prior to a stress reduction intervention and found that more than two thirds (69%) reported having “excessive levels of stress”, while 62% indicated that they viewed themselves as being “more anxious than most people”.

Studies assert that students experience considerable amounts of stress and that one reason for this may be the diverse roles students must fill (Deckro *et al.*, 2002:281-287). Humphrey and McCarthy (1998) state that "university students have to develop new roles and modify old ones in response to the developmental tasks that they confront in late adolescence" (Dziegiewski, Turnage & Roest – Marti, 2004).

Rana (2000:20) mentions that anxiety can be thought of as an emotional state which is accompanied by a number of unpleasant physical sensations and which generally occurs in anticipation of a painful or dangerous situation.

“I’m always worried and I can’t seem to explain why,” “before I write a test I’m worried and once it’s over I’m still worried” explained respondents. Respondents further explained that their anxiety stems from feeling ‘new’ at university. Respondents claim that they are on unfamiliar territory. One respondent explained that at high school everyone knew each other and there were familiar faces and if a problem occurred, learners knew who to talk to.

First-year students typically experience a sense of apprehension and loss but also excitement at the prospect of commencing university studies (many of these feelings are also common amongst non-school-leaver students). Most first-year students overlook the fact that others share their anxieties, believing that they alone feel alienated, especially if they are the only student from their school to be attending a large university campus, and unfamiliar with the surroundings. Limited contact with other students and academic staff tends to reinforce

students' isolation. Anxiety is natural — especially when it appears as if everyone else know where to go and what to do (Kantanis, 2000:100-110).

In the quantitative study, the PMSI subscale for anxiety sums up to 23%. This means that these respondents show a slightly over activated tendency which explains that respondents experience a sense of insecurity and fear.

7.2. THEME 2: FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE

7.2.1. WRONG REASONS FOR ENROLLING INTO UNIVERSITY

“Enrolling into university was a norm”, “my parents attended university and it was only natural that I too had to attend university’. All twelve students claimed that going to university was a natural process and after high school, one was expected to further their education. However, the career choice made was not solely the student’s choice. Many students were told to follow into the footsteps of their parents, others agreed to study as they received a bursary. A study by Krause, Hartley, James and McInnis (2000) on first-year experience of undergraduate students indicated that 30% of students enrolled for the specific degree program because of expectations from parents or family. While 83% of students claimed that they had enrolled into university for better job prospects.

7.2.2. TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO UNIVERSITY

All respondents completed Grade 12 prior to the first year of university. All respondents claimed that it took time to adjust to a new context. Nine respondents were not originally from Potchefstroom and therefore have no family living with them. These respondents who recently relocated to Potchefstroom admitted that in the beginning the freedom was virtuous. “I could stay out late, I had no curfew”, “I did not have to report to my parents as to where I was” said the respondents. These respondents also admitted that this freedom was worthy at the beginning, but eventually they longed for home. A respondent said: “Freedom was good, but my parents would have attached boundaries to my life and perhaps that would make me manage my social and academic life better.”

Respondents also explained that they felt a loss of identity in the first few months of university. “I was a top student in my high school years and now I am struggling to cope with the work load and I cannot seem to perform as well as I used to, this brings a sense of failure to me, I am not used to low grades.”

Nel, Troskie-De Bruin and Bitzer (2009:974-991) conducted a study at Stellenbosch University on school-university transition. Their results proved that unrealistic expectations influenced students’ academic transition. They further mention that social integration has a significant role to play in the successful transition from school to university. The support network in the university residence facilitates the transition process, while private accommodation poses challenges with regard to transport, the use of campus facilities and social integration that could ultimately have a negative influence on the transition process. It was found in this study that learners who wished to enter higher education perceived themselves to be ready and well prepared for university study. However, when they actually entered university they realised that their schools, especially previously disadvantaged schools, had left them unprepared or underprepared for university studies. They also had unrealistic expectations with regard to maintaining their school academic performance at university level.

7.2.3. FIRST MONTH OF UNIVERSITY

“On my first day I remember attending the wrong class I had no one to show me where my classes were - perhaps it’s because I did not attend the full orientation program”; “no one told me that it’s expected for my academic performance to be low”; “I failed my first test, I thought I studied really hard, but I failed it” these were the experiences from the respondents during their first month at university. On questioning them about better success during the first month, respondents replied that a mentor who assisted them for some time would have added to their success.

“The lecture rooms were much bigger, the room was full of students, I felt like a statistic”, further explained another respondent.

7.2.4. DROP-OUTS

Ten of the respondents answered yes to the question “did you feel like dropping out in this year”. Their answers explained that it was the influence of wrong friends that made them feel that they should drop out. Academic pressure also contributed to the student’s sense of dropping out. In 2005 the Department of Education reported that of the 120 000 students who enrolled in higher education in 2000, 36 000 (30%) dropped out in their first year of study. A respondent explained: “My first few weeks at the hostel was bad for me, I come from a big family and this was the first time that I had left home, it was terrible. Every weekend that my dad came to fetch me, I felt like packing all my things and never come back again. Being on my own was lonely, I had no family to assist me or motivate me.” Another respondent explains her experience as: “After a few weeks I felt like a failure. I wanted to quit university because I wasn’t performing well academically.”

7.2.5. FIRST-YEAR INITIATION

One of the fears that stemmed from the interviews was the fear and apprehension of the initiation period. Respondents felt that initiation is an embarrassment and there should be other ways to introduce the students to campus; not by initiation as it reduces the self-esteem of a person. A respondent explains her experiences of the first-year initiation: “I was embarrassed; I hated my hostel for putting me through all that.” Another respondent said: “During initiation I met good people; some of those people became my friends. Although something good came out of the first-year initiation, I still felt like a nobody.”

7.3. PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS

7.3.1. BAD TIME MANAGEMENT

Respondents claim that they experience pressure during the first year of university. Most of this pressure is due to a lack of time management. Eleven respondents claim that they have an inability to manage their time. Due to the

freedom as university students, they lack the principle to prioritise, organise and fit social activities into their schedule. A respondent shares that she is dependent on stimulants such as coffee and turbovites (vitamins) to keep her awake at night in order to finish her preparation for the next day's classes. Barnes (2004) as cited in Moleli (2005) mentions that students in their first year are able to plan working schedules, but lack time management skills. This problem occurs when a student is given too much freedom and lacks the structure and boundaries that they once had while in high school. A respondent said: "I come from a reserved family, my parents were strict and had set boundaries for me. Coming to university I was welcomed with all this free time and no boundaries. As I like to keep myself busy I participated in every hostel activity, I had a great social life and met amazing people at social functions. I would complete my assignments and study for tests very quickly so that I could do more with my time. This was not a good idea because my results were weak and it made me feel a sense of failure."

7.3.2. LACK OF SOCIAL SUPPORT

Respondents had difficulty 'fitting in' into the university structure. "Being away from home and alone in an unknown location makes one feel a sense of loss in identity and you need to establish new behaviours in order to cope" explained a respondent. Another respondent states that living in a hostel made things easier as she could liaise with people her own age and it made her make friends quicker. Other respondents who were not living in a hostel claimed that making friends were difficult.

"I don't live in Potchefstroom and the environment was new to me. I had a fear of fitting in and making friends. I joined to Rotaract club and met new people and some of those people were studying what I am studying. This made fitting in so easy. I also participated in the Student Rag Community Service (SRCS) projects' explained a respondent.

The participation in a cultural organization such as the SRCS and faculty organisations made 'fitting in' easier according to respondents.

A study conducted on undergraduate social work students by Wilks and Spivey (2010:276-288) suggests the results indicated that friend-related social support moderated the negative association between academic stress and resilience. In other words, the interaction between friend support and academic stress had a positive impact on resilience among social work students.

In the quantitative study, the PMSI subscale for emotional functioning indicates a score of 36% for dependency which explains that respondents show an *over activated* tendency to depend on someone or something for support. This forms part of their coping mechanism through their first year at university.

7.3.3. NEW BEHAVIOURS DEVELOPED

While university is a transition between high school and a tertiary environment and even though it contributes to stressors in the student's life, it also contributes to personal growth. A respondent mentioned that she has always been the introverted type and during the first few weeks of university she was able to communicate better with peers, family and lecturers. "This year has taught me responsibility, moving from home has given me the opportunity to do things for myself and have a sense of responsibility".

7.3.4. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

It was interesting to note that the respondents could not explain to the researcher their strengths and weaknesses clearly and accurately. The researcher had to probe the respondents to gain some momentum. Respondents claim that they don't really 'look into' themselves and therefore can't disclose what their strengths and weaknesses are. Some of the comments regarding strengths

amongst the respondents were: “I think I have the ability to work hard”; “I have goals”; “I am very patient.”

Respondents claimed that their weaknesses were: “I procrastinate a lot”; “it takes me time to get focused before I begin to study for a test and I get distracted easily”; “I fall asleep in boring lectures”; “I don’t know how to structure my life.”

On questioning these students as to why they had chosen this desired career path, many admitted that they wanted to help people. Even though there are many other professions where one would be able to ‘help other people’, respondents could not explain why they specifically chose their course of study. All respondents also explained that they had not expected the workload to be so high and they were certainly not prepared for this.

7.3.5. ALCOHOL, SMOKING AND DRUGS

Six respondents claimed that the habit of using alcohol and smoking only emerged during their first few weeks at university; the reason was because of peer pressure, social parties and the fear of being an outcast. Respondents explained, “Alcohol is served at almost all social events; it’s difficult to say no”; “My parents never had alcohol in the home; they would not be happy if they come to know about my drinking habits”. Chiauzzi, Brevard, Thum, Thurn, Decembrele and Lord (2008:555-572) highlight that alcohol and drug use are particularly prevalent among university students, probably related to their developmental level, the associated vulnerabilities, as well as the various challenges facing them. Alcohol and drug use are their ways of dealing with stress and social situations.

8. DISCUSSION

All 12 respondents reported high levels of stress, anxiety and fear during their first academic year of university. These students somehow cope by having high

expectations that things will work out. In this regard, it is recorded that the respondents need something or someone to depend on for effective functioning. This means that social support systems are vital in the first year at university.

From a psychosocial perspective, the first-year student is in the process of a transition from high school to university and a transition from adolescence to adulthood. This brings many factors contributing to their development such as forming an identity, career path, academic pressure, multiple demands and an increase in stress levels.

Time management has always been an issue for many, but in a student's life with academic and social demands, one is unable to fit daily activities in a 24 hour schedule. With effective time management, students can get enough rest and the high pressure of academic stress can be reduced. Students also have a low body image which can be ascribed to weak eating habits and less time for physical activity.

Considerable attention has also been focused on stress among students and professionals who enter the helping professions. For example, in the nursing literature, numerous studies have addressed the issue of student stress and the ways to reduce anxiety and stress levels (Speck, 1990; Russler, 1991; Godbey & Courage, 1994). Other studies have examined stress among psychology and other mental health students (Dorff, 1998; Poison & Nida, 1998). Poison and Nida (1998:95-112) suggest that clinical disciplines like psychology, social work, and family therapy that combine classroom work and research with a clinical training component might evoke more stress than traditional graduate programs.

In previous times, social problems were few and far between. The cost of education is high and only a small percentage of people can afford it. Others have to work part-time to pay for their studies – therefore the demands for first-year students are increasing. Yorke (1999) and Biggs (2007) as cited in Johnson (2010:7) explain that the concern now is that more students are entering higher education lacking the academic skills and attitudes previously regarded as basic tertiary level work, which is leading to uncertainty, disengagement and cynicism about traditional values of university study.

The first year of higher education is an educational stage with powerful influence on future success, for the individual student and the sector as a whole, the first year experience, in terms of cognitive, personal and social development, largely determines a student's first year performance, which in turn is a key foundation for advanced study including post graduate study, which is vital in intellectual development in all spheres, including the future staffing of the universities (Leibowitz *et al.*, 2009).

The self-concept of respondents were low. According to literature it is mentioned that self-concept is linked to academic achievement. Therefore students need to enhance their self-concept to better their academic performance. Low self-concept can stem from the inability to cope, lack of social support and difficulty in adapting to the university. Students claimed that it was a natural process to enroll into a university, however, some respondents admitted that the degree program they enrolled in for was not solely their choice. Due to the parents or family's high expectatins of the student, they face greater stress and frustration when the expectations are not met.

Respondents also claim that the university environment brings freedom, but lacks structure. From this it can be intepreted that students need the boundaries from a senior or mentor. This can enable academic success and better time management.

9. GUIDELINES FOR AN EVENTUAL PROGRAM TO ASSIST THE TRANSITION OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

Data for this part of the study was gathered by quantitative and qualitative means. The Personal Multi-Screening Inventory instrument (PMSI) (Faul & Hanekom, 2005) was used to collect data for the quantitative study and an interview schedule was used to collect data for the qualitative study. Therefore the quantitative and qualitative data has been integrated and triangulated in order to be able to give the following guidelines. The researcher will provide these guidelines for an eventual program to assist the university to foster resilience in first year students. This will enable students to function optimally in a tertiary environment.

- Supporting first-year students and ensuring their well-being: The academic or therapeutic staff of the university needs to look at the student as an individual with emotional needs, these needs need to be addressed on a one on one basis in a therapeutic setting. These sessions should commence during orientation and terminate towards the end of the year.
- Counselling professionals need to conduct in depth research into the first-year experience and use this knowledge to assist students during therapy sessions.
- Students come to university with their social and economic problems; therefore a program should include ways to cope as well as ways to increase self-esteem and confidence levels.
- Parents should be more involved in the students first year of university. Parents should be invited for faculty and school meetings once a term to meet with lecturers and academic staff to keep up with the students' academic performance. This gives the student a sense of interaction with their family and it gives the parent an opportunity to introduce boundaries if necessary.
- To enhance social interaction and social support, students should be encouraged to participate in university activities; this can add a sense of belonging and add meaning to their life.
- Since students experience high levels of stress relating to academics, a program should include ways of coping with stress.
- For effective time management; students can be encouraged to structure their daily lives and make time for the important things.
- Students should be given the opportunity to discuss their experiences with relevant people in the university; this can encourage social networks and improve student-lecturer relationships. In this way the student finds belonging and feels part of the university.

10. LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

Although this study provides a number of thought-provoking discoveries, there have been several limitations that have been identified. The purpose of highlighting the

limitations regarding this study is to ensure effective research in future that addresses all concerns of first-year students.

- Firstly, the sample is small due to the failure of students to respond to the questionnaire sent out; therefore the results cannot be assumed true for all psychosocial science students.
- Furthermore, participants included in the sample were only from the School of Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences and therefore does not include other health sciences students such as pharmacy and nursing.
- A further limitation regarding the current sample, included the participation of respondents, many students demonstrated reluctance to participate in the current research study.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Education is a right and a foundation for personal, psychological and professional development. It's a failure having academic institutions but non resilient students. Therefore in view of this study it is highly recommended that:

- Research should address the relationship between students and their lecturers / supervisors.
- Future research should take into consideration the amount of time spent on academics, social activities and time spent on one self – this may provide a framework for guidelines for effective time management.
- Future research should also investigate the relationship between peer interactions and self-esteem.
- A larger sample should be chosen with full participation of each student – this will provide more details into student well-being.

12. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the risk factors amongst first-year psychosocial science students at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus). Literature on risk factors regarding first-year students is limited. By conducting this research it can provide a platform to gradually make changes in the students first year in order for these students to better their academic performance and overall performance. From the results of the research it is clear that significant challenges emerge from the transition from high school to university.

Students often find it difficult to adjust to the academic pressure and social demands of university during their first year. Results indicated that stress is the greatest risk factor associated with the first-year student. Stress is often related to academic stress and social stressors such as the fear of fitting in. first-year students also have freedom but lack time management skills. The social support from friends and companions seemed to have a great significance with regard to their coping; students need someone or something to be dependent on for effective functioning.

Students often find it difficult to adjust to the academic pressure and social demands of university during their first year. The social support from friends and companions seemed to have a great significance with regard to their coping; students need someone or something to be dependent on for effective functioning.

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SECTION C

Findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study

“Everyone has been made for some particular work, and the desire for that work has been put in every heart”

Rumi

SECTION C

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. INTRODUCTION

This section reflects the most important findings from the research study. The findings and recommendations will be discussed with the following research questions in mind, as presented in section A:

- What is the level of resilience in first-year psychosocial science students?
- What are the risk factors that may adversely affect resilience in first-year students?

The findings and recommendations are presented in line with the above research questions. They also form this chapter's main sections as the discussions are intended to respond to the stipulated objectives. The focus will be on resilience and risk factors as it is the focus of the study.

2. SUMMARY

The findings for this study will be set out in accordance with the research methodology in Section A and the articles as set out in Section B.

2.1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The general aim of this study was to explore the level of resilience, and to determine risk factors in first-year students in the school of Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus). Data was collected by means of a measuring instrument; the Personal Multi-Screening Inventory (PMSI) (Faul & Hanekom, 2005) and an interview schedule. The method of investigation was a literature study and an empirical research study.

2.1.1. LITERATURE STUDY

The resources utilised for this study included books, journals, publications and articles from various subjects such as education, social work, psychology and mental health. South African and international literature on above-mentioned subjects were also utilised for the research.

2.1.2. EMPIRICAL STUDY

The research design was exploratory and descriptive in nature. The researcher used the exploratory design to seek new insight for the research. The researcher also made use of the descriptive design to explain the nature of resilience as well as gain insight into the risks associated with resilience in first-year students.

For the purpose of the study, 35 first-year psychosocial science students from the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus) completed the questionnaire. Thereafter the first few students were invited for a qualitative interview, until data saturation was reached. Data saturation was reached at 12 students.

Objectives were gained by means of an in-depth literature study that supported the researcher's findings. Data for the quantitative study was gathered from the Personal Multi-Screening Inventory instrument (PMSI) (Faul & Hanekom, 2005). Data for the qualitative study was gathered from an interview schedule. Thereafter the researcher analysed the data by means of the Perspective Training College program and by use of thematic analysis.

2.2. SUMMARY OF ARTICLE 1:

THE LEVEL OF RESILIENCE IN FIRST-YEAR PSYCHOSOCIAL SCIENCE STUDENTS AT THE NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY (POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS)

In this part of the study the focus was on the level of resilience in first-year students. The Personal Multi Screening Inventory (PMSI) (Faul & Hanekom, 2005) schedule was used to measure the level of resilience of first-year psychosocial science students at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus).

Data was collected from 35 first-year students. Data collected from the PMSI (Faul & Hanekom, 2005) proved that first-year university students experience challenges with regard to the transition from high school to university. Respondents have difficulty adapting to a new environment. This new environment of the university brings challenges but also opportunity for growth. These respondents have an inability to function optimally in an academic environment.

High levels of stress were reported for the first year-students due to social and academic demands. This stress leads to a sense of helplessness and an increased level of frustration.

According to the positive psycho-social functioning construct, all the subscales were under activated, this indicates that respondents have difficulty adapting to a new environment. They fail to make use of constructive coping mechanisms and in order to maintain their academic and social life; they need something or someone to depend upon.

According to the negative psycho-social functioning construct, five of the six constructs were over activated. This indicates that respondents experience great amounts of stress, due to the social and academic demands, they feel a sense of helplessness. Feelings of helplessness lead to increased levels of frustration as they are unable to reach their goals.

According to the theory of Faul and Hanekom (2006), frustration, stress and helplessness are inter-related. When a respondent begins to feel frustrated they experience stress. This stress leads them to feel helpless and they need to depend on someone or something to cope. This dependence can be anything from sex, drugs, alcohol or people. Ross and De Jong (2008) explain that life transitions in general are times of risk for increased alcohol use and abuse, but many factors during university transition make it a particularly risky period. Chiauzzi, Brevard, Thum, Thurn, Decembrele and Lord (2008:555-572) also highlight that alcohol and drug use are particularly prevalent among university students. This could be related to the students' developmental level, associated vulnerabilities, as well as the various challenges facing them during the transition.

Respondents scored high for expectation; these students enter university with a high expectation to excel in university. With such high expectations, they soon feel frustrated and over time experience stress, because they cannot cope with the academic and social demands of university. These expectations are not fulfilled and the students begin to feel a lack of self-worth and helplessness.

Students lack trust in friendship networks as they have to make new friends. Due to increased social and academic demands, goals are not attained and students feel helpless and frustrated.

From the above information it is clear that students do not possess an adequate amount of resilience to be able to cope in a new environment with its social and academic demands.

Resilience is a long term attribute and cannot be learned or acquired in a day. It prepares individuals not only during their first-year at university but for a lifetime.

2.3. SUMMARY OF ARTICLE 2:

THE RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH FIRST-YEAR PSYCHOSOCIAL SCIENCE STUDENTS AT THE NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY (POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS)

In this part of the study the researcher focused on the risk factors associated with first-year psychosocial science students at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus). The data was collected by means of an interview schedule compiled by the researcher. For this part of the study the researcher integrated the quantitative data from the first article. By means of triangulation the researcher gathered the findings. The quantitative data supported the findings of the qualitative data.

From the data gathered, the researcher found that there are many risk factors associated with first-year students, such as stress, lack of social support, self-concept, time management and the fear of fitting into the university set-up. These factors cannot be avoided, nonetheless, literature explains that protective factors can be instilled into the university set-up to help with students and thus decrease the risk factors associated with the transition to university.

Increase in alcohol consumption and smoking has found to be a supportive aid that students resort to. Many students never consumed alcohol before, but due to stress, peer pressure and social demands alcohol consumption increased during their first year.

The influence of parents also plays a role in the success of the first-year student. Some students were told what to study and some students were forced to excel in their academic work because in school they were high achievers. Social support from family was limited due to some students relocating to Potchefstroom. New friendships that were developed lacked trust. Students still need social support for effective functioning.

Students claimed that they did feel like dropping out of their first year due to peer pressure and the inability to excel in their results. Loneliness and being away from home contributed to the respondents' reasons from dropping out of university.

Students in their first year have an inability to manage their time in a constructive manner. Entering a new learning environment, they find it difficult to adapt to the new learning style and ways of teaching. For effective functioning, students need the support from friends and family. Many students have relocated to Potchefstroom and the support from parents is limited.

The researcher is of the opinion that most of these risk factors stem from ineffective time management skills and boundaries. During high school years learners were able to manage their time better within the boundaries set by parents and teachers. At a tertiary institution students need to find the skill to prioritise, organise and plan their daily activities as they are exposed to more social activities and require extra time to prepare for classes.

3. TESTING THE THEORETICAL ASSUMPTION

This study was based on the following theoretical assumption:

First-year students lack resilience and therefore find the transition into university challenging.

Based on the **findings** and **conclusion** of the study, it seems that the theoretical assumption is confirmed.

4. OBJECTIVES

Objectives were gained by means of an in-depth literature study that supported the researcher's findings. Data for the quantitative study was gathered from the Personal Multi-Screening Inventory instrument (PMSI) (Faul & Hanekom, 2005). Data for the qualitative study was gathered from an interview schedule. Thereafter

the researcher analysed the data by means of the Perspective Training College Program and by use of thematic analysis.

5. CONCLUSION

The discussions accompanying the findings are designed to foster understanding of resilience and risk factors and to determine what is required for first-year students to adapt and cope on campus, and to work out strategies that can promote resilience among first-year students.

- Though numerous results have indicated that resilience can shield individuals from adversity, no research has however been identified on the underlying mechanism for fostering resilience.
- According to the PMSI, for the Negative Psycho-Social Functioning, 5 of the 6 items were under activated. This indicates great amounts of stress due to academic demands.
- First-year students come to university with great expectations but do not excel the way they had previously done so in high school. This brings a sense of failure and low self-concept to the individual.
- Social support is an important factor in the transition for first-year students; however many students lack the social support from their family members.
- Support from friends is vital but lacks trust and commitment.
- Students need someone or something to be dependent on for optimal functioning; the increase of alcohol abuse is prevalent in first-year students as it helps them to cope.
- Students lack time management and have the inability to make use of their free time constructively.
- Students who have left home enter a world of freedom and with time they realise that they need structure and boundaries in order for academic success.
- Frustration is linked to stress over time. When students can no longer reach their goals or if they have high expectations they tend to feel frustrated when these

expectations are not reached. This results in stress which leads them to feel helpless.

- First-year students are challenged with many risk factors such as academic stress, negative self-concept and the fear of fitting in. These risk factors, if associated with resilience, can prove to help students with regard to the university transition.
- Students in their first year lack resilience and therefore find it difficult to adapt to the new environment together with its academic and social demands.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher provides the following recommendation for future research:

- Research conducted should be by use of quantitative and qualitative approach.
- Future research should address the relationship between students and their lecturers/supervisors.
- Future research should take into consideration the amount of time spent on academics, social activities and time spent on one self – this may provide a framework for guidelines for effective time management.
- Future research should also investigate the relationship between peer interactions and self-esteem.
- A larger sample should be chosen with full participation of each student – this will provide more details into student well-being.
- Research should incorporate self-efficacy with self-concept, as theory suggests that a high self-efficacy is necessary for student well-being.
- The student should be viewed as an individual with social, emotional and physical needs. These needs can be addressed in a safe therapeutic environment.
- Thought should be given to the available support systems to assist first-year students.

SECTION D

THE ADDENDUMS USED IN THIS STUDY IS INCLUDED IN THIS SECTION

“Remember, the entrance door to the sanctuary is inside you.”

Rumi

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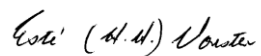
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24 Januarie 2011

Me. Marietjie Halgryn

Dr. Strydom het bevredigend op die kommentaar geantwoord en etiese toestemming word aanbeveel.

Die uwe



Prof. H.H. Vorster



Dear all,

Firstly I would like to thank each and every one of you that is willing to participate in my research study. I do understand that this is a crucial time because of late nights, early mornings and stressful hours. But I assure you that if you have come thus far, the rest will be manageable.

As you all know, as part of my research I will need 100 students to complete a questionnaire comprising of over 250 questions, due to exams I have decided to have the questionnaires electronically submitted. Therefore I will register each one of you on the web system and send you a link via e mail, once you have 45 minutes to spare, you can fill the questionnaire electronically and it can be submitted. Once I have received a notification that you have submitted the questionnaire, I will send you a voucher for a free cup of coffee at 'die jonge akker'

Further on I will need 25 students to take part in an in depth study, this study will be a series of questions which I will interview each one of these 25 students. These students will receive a further incentive.

I do understand that you are all busy studying, so the deadline for the submission will be 30 July 2011.

The outcome of my research depends on you!

Thank you for your time and willingness to participate in my research.

For further enquiry, please do contact me.

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Perspektief in Menswees
Standard Bank Potchefstroom
Branch Code: 052838
Account Number: 012380040

***Personal Multi-Screening
Inventory (PMSI)***

***Persoonlike Multi-Sifting
Inventaris (PMSI)***

Questionnaire / Vraelys

**Comprehensive Personal
Assessment**

**Omvattende Persoonlike
Assessering**

Personal Multi-Screening Inventory

(PMSI)

About your PMSI Profile

Confidentiality

We want you to know that the personal information you share will remain just that, personal. Your confidentiality will be respected.

Purpose

The PMSI is designed to improve the quality of your life by evaluating your present functioning and making recommendations for the future. For the report to be accurate, all questions need to be answered to the best of your ability.

A few Suggestions

Answer the questions as quickly and as honestly possible. Do not speculate too long before you answer. This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. The first answer that comes to mind is usually the correct one.

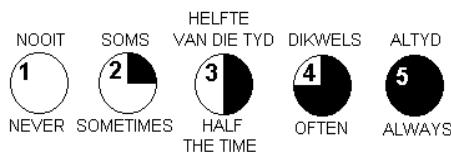
Procedure

- Mark the relevant number on the answer sheet, by encircle the number.
- Check to be sure you have answered every question.
- If a specific question is not applicable, please encircle the on the answer sheet.

Example

I am full of life

If your answer is **often**, encircle **4**



Persoonlike Multi-Sifting Inventaris

(PMSI)

Oor u PMSI Profiel

Vertroulikheid

Ons wil hê u moet weet dat die persoonlike inligting wat u met ons deel persoonlik bly. U vertroulikheid sal beskerm word.

Doel

Die PMSI is ontwerp om kwaliteit van u lewe te verhoog deur u huidige funksionering te evalueer en aanbevelings vir die toekoms te maak. Vir die verslae om akkuraat te wees moet al die vrae na die beste van u vermoë beantwoord word.

'n Paar Voorstelle

Antwoord die vrae so vinnig en eerlik moontlik. Moenie te lank oor 'n antwoord dink nie. Dit is nie 'n toets nie en daar is geen regte of verkeerde antwoorde nie. Die eerste antwoord wat in u gedagtes opkom, is normaalweg die korrekte een.

Prosedure

- Merk die relevante nommer op die antwoordblad, deur die nommer te omring.
- Maak seker u het elke vraag geantwoord.
- Indien 'n spesifieke vraag nie op u van toepassing is nie, omsirkel die op die antwoordblad.

Voorbeeld

Ek is vol lewe

Indien u antwoord **dikwels** is, trek 'n sirkel om **4**.

1 2 3 ④ 5

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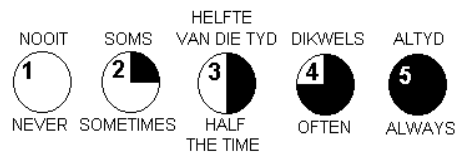
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Personal Multi-Screening Inventory (PMSI)

Persoonlike Multi-Sifting Inventaris (PMSI)

Questionnaire / Vraelys

Mark the relevant item on the answer sheet, using the following numerical scale:	Merk die betrokke item op die antwoordblad deur die volgende skaal te gebruik:
--	--



I feel rejected.	1	Ek voel verwerp.
I maintain the belief that things will turn out fine.	2	Ek behou geloof dat dinge goed sal afloop.
I act in a tense way.	3	Ek tree gespanne op.
I feel frustrated.	4	Ek voel gefrustreerd.
I have willpower.	5	Ek het wilskrag.
I get head aches and/or other aches as a result of tension.	6	Ek kry hoof- en/of ander pyne as gevolg van spanning.
I am hopeful about my future.	7	Ek is hoopvol oor my toekoms.
I feel as tense as a tightly coiled spring.	8	Ek voel so gespanne soos 'n opgewende veer.
I have stopped laughing.	9	Ek het opgehou om te lag.
I feel life is unfair.	10	Ek voel die lewe is onregverdig.
I avoid people.	11	Ek vermy mense.
I feel people demand too much from me.	12	Ek voel daar word te veel eise aan my gestel.
I take action to solve my problems.	13	Ek neem aksie om my probleme op te los.
I feel panicky.	14	Ek voel paniekerig.
I find it difficult to get started.	15	Ek sukkel om aan die gang te kom.
I find it difficult to keep up the pace.	16	Dit is vir my moeilik om die pas vol te hou.

I feel powerless to do anything about my circumstances.	17	Ek voel magteloos om iets aan my omstandighede te doen.
I act in a listless way.	18	Ek tree lusteloos (sonder energie) op.
I feel satisfied with the standard of my life.	19	Ek voel tevrede met die standaard van my lewe.
I act without any purpose.	20	Ek tree doelloos op.
I become entangled in arguments.	21	Ek raak in argumente betrokke.
I take control of my problems.	22	Ek neem beheer van my probleme.
I act panicky when I experience stress.	23	Ek tree paniekerig op wanneer ek spanning ervaar.
I create an unpleasant atmosphere when I feel frustrated.	24	Ek skep 'n onaangename atmosfeer wanneer ek gefrustreerd voel.
I show my frustrations to others.	25	Ek wys my frustrasies aan ander.
I feel good about the course my life is taking at present.	26	Ek voel goed oor die huidige verloop van my lewe.
I am downhearted.	27	Ek is terneergedruk.
I feel irritated.	28	Ek voel geïrriteerd.
I get what I want by making others feel too threatened to oppose me.	29	Ek kry my sin deur ander mense te bedreig te laat voel om my teen te staan.
I socialise with others.	30	Ek verkeer sosiaal met ander.
I feel cheerful.	31	Ek voel opgewek.
I become embittered.	32	Ek raak verbitterd.
I only do the minimum.	33	Ek doen net die minimum.
I feel angry.	34	Ek voel kwaad.
I act disordered when I experience stress.	35	Ek tree verward op wanneer ek spanning ervaar.
I encourage others because I believe things will turn out well.	36	Ek praat ander moed in want ek glo alles sal goed gaan.
I manage life with a smile.	37	Ek hanteer die lewe met 'n glimlag.
I am goal oriented.	38	Ek is doelgerig.
It is important to me to work hard.	39	Dit is vir my belangrik om hard te werk.
I feel satisfied with my present accomplishments.	40	Ek voel tevrede met dit wat ek tans bereik.
People can see from my actions that I am afraid.	41	Mense kan uit my optrede sien dat ek bang is.
I feel prevented from reaching my objectives.	42	Ek voel verhinder om my doelwitte te bereik.
I achieve little.	43	Ek bereik min.
I act unproductively.	44	Ek tree onproduktief op.
I feel down-in-the-dumps.	45	Ek voel neerslagtig.

I complete what I set out to do.	46	Ek maak klaar met dit waarmee ek begin.
I hurt others feelings before they can hurt me.	47	Ek maak ander se gevoelens seer voor hulle dit dalk aan my doen.
I behave in a nervous manner.	48	Ek tree senuweeagtig op.
I enjoy my relationships.	49	Ek geniet my verhoudings.
I plan events in such a way that life is a joy to me.	50	Ek beplan my lewe só, dat ek dit geniet.
I manage life from a negative point of view.	51	Ek hanteer die lewe vanuit 'n negatiewe gesindheid.
I am successful.	52	Ek is suksesvol.
I act without enthusiasm.	53	Ek tree sonder entoesiasme op.
I keep calm by remaining positive.	54	Ek behou kalmte deur positief te bly.
I take initiative when things need to be done.	55	Ek neem inisiatief wanneer dinge gedoen moet word.
Stress gives me muscular tension.	56	My spiere trek saam as gevolg van spanning.
I feel overstressed.	57	Ek voel oorspanne.
My behaviour towards others shows that I have faith in them.	58	My gedrag teenoor ander wys dat ek in hulle glo.
I act with uncertainty.	59	Ek tree onseker op.
I worry.	60	Ek bekommer my.
I have a high energy level.	61	Ek het baie energie.
I feel let down.	62	Ek voel in die steek gelaat.
I am satisfied with my relationships.	63	Ek is tevrede met my verhoudings.
I focus on the positive elements in others.	64	Ek fokus op die positiewe in mense.
It is important to me to encourage others.	65	Dit is vir my belangrik om ander aan te moedig.
I feel burned out.	66	Ek voel uitgebrand.
It is important to me to reach my planned objectives.	67	Dit is vir my belangrik om my beplande doelwitte te bereik.
I feel impatient.	68	Ek voel ongeduldig.
I am motivated.	69	Ek is gemotiveerd.
I act cheerfully.	70	Ek tree opgewek op.
I feel close to breaking point.	71	Ek voel naby aan breekpunt.
I experience peace of mind in my circumstances.	72	Ek het gemoedsrus oor my omstandighede.
I feel people misunderstand me.	73	Ek voel ander verstaan my verkeerd.
I am effective in what I do.	74	Ek is effektief in wat ek doen.

I feel happy.	75	Ek voel gelukkig.
I act in an unfriendly way when I feel frustrated.	76	Ek tree onvriendelik op wanneer ek gefrustreerd voel.
I help others to be successful.	77	Ek help ander om suksesvol te wees.
I do things properly.	78	Ek doen dinge deeglik.
I feel overburdened.	79	Ek voel oorlaai.
I think everyone is against me.	80	Ek dink almal is teen my.
I improve on previous attempts.	81	Ek verbeter op my vorige pogings.
I feel depressed.	82	Ek voel depressief.
I take time to relax.	83	Ek maak tyd om te ontspan.
I work hard.	84	Ek werk hard.
I take control over my circumstances.	85	Ek neem beheer van my omstandighede.
I am enthusiastic about what I do.	86	Ek is entoesiasies oor wat ek doen.
I scare people through my actions.	87	Ek maak mense bang deur my optrede.
I show others that I care for them.	88	Ek wys vir ander dat ek vir hulle omgee.
I experience life as meaningless.	89	Ek beleef die lewe as sinloos.
I create solutions by acting positively in difficult circumstances.	90	Ek skep oplossings deur positief te reageer op moeilike omstandighede.
I feel that there is too much pressure on me.	91	Ek voel daar is te veel druk op my.
I am optimistic about my future.	92	Ek is optimisties oor my toekoms.
I feel nervous.	93	Ek voel senuweeagtig.
I act with ease in my relationships.	94	Ek tree met gemak binne my verhoudings op.
I believe that things will turn out favourably.	95	Ek glo dat dinge ten goede sal uitwerk.
I look forward to the future.	96	Ek sien uit na die toekoms.
I adapt to bad things that happen to me in a positive way.	97	Ek verwerk die slegte dinge wat met my gebeur op 'n positiewe manier.
I spend time on hobbies.	98	Ek spandeer tyd aan stokperdjies.
I do things that I enjoy.	99	Ek doen dinge wat vir my lekker is.
I wish I could just run away from it all.	100	Ek wens ek kan van alles af weghardloop.
I have perseverance.	101	Ek het deursettingsvermoë.
I communicate positive feelings towards others.	102	Ek kommunikeer positiewe gevoelens aan ander.
I feel like giving up.	103	Ek voel lus om moed op te gee.
I act calmly because all will be well.	104	Ek tree rustig op want alles sal goed gaan.

I feel joyful.	105	Ek voel vrolik.
I feel lonely.	106	Ek voel eensaam.
I refrain from participating in activities.	107	Ek weerhou my van enige deelname aan aktiwiteite.
I lose self-control when I become angry.	108	Ek verloor beheer wanneer ek kwaad word.
I am at ease in my relationships with others.	109	Ek is gemaklik in my verhoudings met ander.
I am friendly.	110	Ek is vriendelik.
I listen to others when they talk about their problems.	111	Ek luister na ander wanneer hulle oor hulle probleme praat.
I act moodily.	112	Ek tree buierig op.
I focus on the positive aspects in my circumstances.	113	Ek fokus op die positiewe aspekte in my omstandighede.
I have little hope for my future.	114	Ek het min hoop vir my toekoms.
I keep on working until I am satisfied.	115	Ek hou aan werk totdat ek tevrede is.
My thoughts are frightening to me.	116	My gedagtes maak my bang.
I find it difficult to get bad thoughts out of my mind.	117	Ek kry slegte gedagtes moeilik uit my kop.
I wake up at night feeling afraid.	118	Ek word snags wakker in 'n toestand van vrees.
I think about committing suicide.	119	Ek dink daaraan om selfmoord te pleeg.
People stare at me.	120	Mense staar my aan.
The only way to end my shame is to end my life.	121	Die enigste manier om my skaamte te verberg, is om my lewe te beëindig.
I find it difficult to handle problems without the support of something.	122	Dis vir my moeilik om probleme te hanteer sonder dat iets my ondersteun.
I forget important phone numbers.	123	Ek vergeet belangrike telefoonnommers.
I have frightening nightmares.	124	Ek het vreesaanjaende nagmerries.
People are trying to make me look foolish.	125	Mense probeer om 'n gek van my te maak.
I have difficulty remembering basic things.	126	Ek vind dit moeilik om basiese dinge te onthou.
I have disturbing thoughts.	127	Ek het ontstellende gedagtes.
Horrible thoughts rush into my mind.	128	Aaklige gedagtes kom by my op.
People who are supposed to be my friends are out to stab me in the back.	129	Mense, wat veronderstel is om my vriende te wees, is daarop uit om my in die rug te steek.
I break out in cold sweats.	130	Ek kry koue sweetaanvalle.
I think about ending my life.	131	Ek dink daaraan om 'n einde aan my lewe te maak.
I prefer something to support me when things go wrong.	132	Ek verkies dat iets my moet ondersteun wanneer dinge verkeerd loop.

Life is worthwhile.	133	Die lewe is die moeite werd.
I think I shall find peace when I take my own life.	134	Ek dink ek sal vrede vind wanneer ek my eie lewe neem.
I feel panic stricken.	135	Ek voel paniekbevange.
I can feel people watching me.	136	Ek kan aanvoel dat mense my dop hou.
I help make the world a better place.	137	Ek help om van die wêreld 'n beter plek te maak.
I have ideas and thoughts that disturb me greatly.	138	Ek het idees en gedagtes wat my baie ontstel.
I experience anxiety.	139	Ek beleef ang.
People spy on me.	140	Mense hou my dop.
It is useless for me to continue living.	141	Dit is nutteloos om aan te hou lewe.
I find it difficult to keep up the pace without the help from something else.	142	Dis vir my moeilik om die pas vol te hou sonder die hulp van iets anders.
I forget where I put things that I use daily.	143	Ek vergeet waar ek dinge wat ek elke dag gebruik, neersit.
I have a dream for my life.	144	Ek het 'n droom vir my lewe.
Disturbing ideas come to me.	145	Ontstellende gedagtes kom by my op.
I overcome obstacles in my life.	146	Ek kom struikelblokke in my lewe te bowe.
I think about my final plans for ending my life.	147	Ek dink aan die finale planne om my lewe te neem.
I forget personal information.	148	Ek vergeet persoonlike inligting.
People talk about me behind my back.	149	Ander mense skinder van my.
People are "out to get me".	150	Mense is daarop uit om my te benadeel.
I make a difference in life.	151	Ek maak 'n verskil in die lewe.
Life is difficult to handle on my own.	152	Dis moeilik om die lewe op my eie te hanteer.
People are trying to hurt me.	153	Mense probeer my seermaak.
I have a purpose in life.	154	Ek het 'n doel in die lewe.
Everyone would be better off if I was dead.	155	Dit sal vir almal beter wees as ek dood is.
I like it when something helps me to handle pressure.	156	Ek hou daarvan wanneer iets my help om druk te hanteer.
I find it hard to manage life without the support of something else.	157	Dis vir my moeilik om die lewe te hanteer sonder die ondersteuning van iets anders.
I know why I live.	158	Ek weet hoekom ek lewe.
I have strange thoughts.	159	Ek het vreemde gedagtes.
People talk about me.	160	Mense praat oor my.

I forget important things about my work or school.	161	Ek vergeet belangrike dinge omtrent my werk of studies.
I think about horrible things.	162	Ek dink aan aaklige goed.
My life is over and I may as well end it.	163	My lewe is verby en ek kan dit net sowel beëindig.
I am dependent on the support of something else.	164	Ek is afhanklik van die ondersteuning van iets anders.
I need something to cope with life.	165	Ek het iets nodig om die lewe te kan hanteer.
I think about different ways that I could kill myself.	166	Ek dink aan verskillende maniere om myself dood te maak.
I find it difficult to remember more than one instruction.	167	Ek vind dit moeilik om meer as een opdrag te onthou.
I am stricken with a sense of paralysing fear.	168	Ek word platgeslaan deur 'n gevoel van verlamende vrees.
My memory seems to fail me.	169	Dit lyk asof my geheue my in die steek laat.
People try to cause me trouble.	170	Mense probeer my in die moeilikheid bring.
My agony is too great for me to continue living.	171	My lyding is te veel om aan te hou leef.
I worry about the horrible thoughts that I have.	172	Ek is bekommerd oor die aaklige gedagtes wat ek het.
I learn from my previous experiences.	173	Ek leer uit my vorige ervarings.
I become so afraid that I can hardly move.	174	Ek word só bang dat ek skaars kan beweeg.
I feel worthless.	175	Ek voel nikswerd.
I live with self-reproach.	176	Ek leef met selfverwyt.
I become scared.	177	Ek raak bang.
I am afraid of the future.	178	Ek is bang vir die toekoms.
I feel threatened by my current circumstances.	179	Ek voel bedreig deur my huidige omstandighede.
I am afraid to fail.	180	Ek is bang om te misluk.
I blame myself.	181	Ek veroordeel myself.
I find it difficult to accept myself.	182	Ek sukkel om myself te aanvaar.
I feel unimportant.	183	Ek voel onbelangrik.
I feel like a failure.	184	Ek voel soos 'n mislukking.
Everything is my fault.	185	Alles is my skuld.
I feel I deserve punishment.	186	Ek voel ek verdien straf.
I feel I am a hopeless person.	187	Ek voel ek is 'n hopelose mens.
I feel ashamed of myself.	188	Ek voel skaam vir myself.
I am afraid that I will be hurt emotionally.	189	Ek is bang ek gaan emosioneel seerkry.
I feel guilty.	190	Ek voel skuldig.

Feelings of guilt control my life.	191	Skuldgevoelens beheer my lewe.
I am afraid people will reject me.	192	Ek is bang mense sal my verwerp.
My circumstances make me feel uncertain.	193	My omstandighede laat my onseker voel.

Interpersoonlike Funksionering / Interpersonal Functioning

Complete this section with regard to your interpersonal functioning. Mark the relevant item on the answer sheet, using the above-mentioned numerical scale:	Voltooi hierdie afdeling met betrekking tot u interpersoonlike funksionering. Merk die betrokke item op die antwoordblad deur die bostaande skaal te gebruik:
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Verhouding met Vriende / Relationship with Friends

My friends and I do things together.	194	Ek en my vriende doen dinge saam.
I can be honest with my friends.	195	Ek kan eerlik wees met my vriende.
My friends bail me out when I am in trouble.	196	My vriende help my wanneer ek in die moeilikheid is.
My friends share their secrets with me.	197	My vriende deel hul geheime met my.
My friends and I have fun together.	198	Ek en my vriende het 'n lekker tyd saam.
I share my secrets with my friends.	199	Ek deel my geheime met my vriende.
I trust my friends.	200	Ek vertrou my vriende.

Verhouding met Gesin / Relationship with Family

Complete this scale if you are part of a family	Voltooi hierdie skaal indien jy deel van 'n gesin is.	
I share my feelings with my family members.	201	Ek deel my gevoelens met my gesinslede.
I receive guidelines from my family members.	202	Ek ontvang leiding van my gesinslede.
Our family spends time together.	203	Ons gesin bring saam tyd deur.
I can be honest with my family members.	204	Ek kan eerlik wees met my gesinslede.
My family bails me out of trouble.	205	My gesin help my wanneer ek in die moeilikheid is.
I share my secrets with my family members.	206	Ek deel my geheime met my gesinslede.
I can share what happens to me with my family.	207	Ek kan vir my gesin vertel wat met my gebeur.

Verhouding met Ma (Stiefma) / Relationship with Mother (Stepmother)

I share my secrets with my mother/stepmother.	208	Ek deel my geheime met my ma/stiefma.
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My mother/stepmother and I do things together.	209	Ek en my ma/stiefma doen dinge saam.
I spend time with my mother/stepmother.	210	Ek bring tyd saam met my ma/stiefma deur.
My mother/stepmother and I have fun together.	211	Ek en my ma/stiefma het 'n lekker tyd saam.
I share my feelings with my mother/stepmother.	212	Ek deel my gevoelens met my ma/stiefma.

Verhouding met Pa (Stiefpa) / Relationship with Father (Stepfather)

My father/stepfather and I do things together.	213	Ek en my pa/stiefpa doen dinge saam.
I spend time with my father/stepfather.	214	Ek bring tyd saam met my pa/stiefpa deur.
I share my secrets with my father/stepfather.	215	Ek deel my geheime met my pa/stiefpa.
I share my feelings with my father/stepfather.	216	Ek deel my gevoelens met my pa/stiefpa.
My father/stepfather and I have fun together.	217	Ek en my pa/stiefpa het 'n lekker tyd saam.

Verhouding met Maat / Relationship with Partner

Complete this scale if you are in a romantic relationship with someone.		Voltooi hierdie skaal indien jy in 'n romantiese verhouding met iemand staan:
My partner and I have fun together.	218	Ek en my maat het 'n lekker tyd saam.
I share my secrets with my partner.	219	Ek deel my geheime met my maat.
I can be honest with my partner.	220	Ek kan eerlik wees met my maat.
I share my feelings with my partner.	221	Ek deel my gevoelens met my maat.
My partner and I do things together.	222	Ek en my maat doen dinge saam.
I spend time with my partner.	223	Ek bring tyd saam met my maat deur.

Verhouding met Kind / Relationship with Child

Complete this scale if you have children. Complete this scale either with regard to your children in general, or with regard to the child you have the worst relationship with.		Voltooi hierdie skaal indien jy kinders het. Voltooi die skaal met betrekking tot jou kinders in die algemeen, of met betrekking tot die kind met wie jy die slegste verhouding het.
I spend time with my children	224	Ek bring tyd deur saam met my kinders.
My children and I have fun together.	225	Ek en my kinders het 'n lekker tyd saam.
My children share their secrets with me.	226	My kinders deel hulle geheime met my.
My children strive to be like me.	227	My kinders wil graag soos ek wees.
My children and I do things together.	228	Ek en my kinders doen dinge saam.

Verhouding met Kollegas / Relationship with Colleagues

Complete this scale if you are currently employed		Voltooi hierdie skaal indien jy tans in 'n werksituasie staan.
My colleagues treat me with respect.	229	My kollegas behandel my met respek.
My colleagues criticize me.	230	My kollegas kritiseer my.
My colleagues irritate me.	231	My kollegas irriteer my.
I get along with my colleagues.	232	Ek kom met my kollegas oor die weg.
My colleagues make me feel part of the team.	233	My kollegas laat my deel van die span voel.
My colleagues talk behind my back.	234	My kollegas skinder van my.
My colleagues frustrate me.	235	My kollegas frustreer my.
My colleagues let me down.	236	My kollegas laat my in die steek.
My colleagues support me.	237	My kollegas ondersteun my.

Social Support / Sosiale Ondersteuning

I can rely on a special person for support.	238	Daar is 'n spesiale persoon op wie ek kan staatmaak vir ondersteuning.
There is a special person that respects me.	239	Daar is 'n spesiale persoon wat my respekteer.
There is a special person that cares for me.	240	Daar is 'n spesiale persoon wat vir my omgee.
I can count on a special person when things go wrong.	241	Ek kan op 'n spesiale persoon staatmaak wanneer dinge verkeerd loop.
There is a special person who is around when I am in need.	242	Ek kan op 'n spesiale persoon staatmaak wanneer ek in die nood is.
I can talk about my problems with a special person.	243	Ek kan met 'n spesiale persoon oor my probleme praat.
There is a special person who understands my problems.	244	Daar is 'n spesiale persoon wat my probleme verstaan.
There is a special person who is always there for me.	245	Daar is 'n spesiale persoon wat altyd daar is vir my.
I have a special person who is a real source of comfort to me.	246	Daar is 'n spesiale persoon wat 'n werklike bron van gerusstelling vir my is.

Geestelike Funkisionering / Spiritual Functioning

Complete this section with regard to your spiritual functioning. Mark the relevant item on the answer sheet, using the above-mentioned numerical scale:	Voltooi hierdie afdeling met betrekking tot jou geestelike funksionering. Merk die betrokke item op die antwoordblad deur die bostaande skaal te gebruik:
---	---

Verhouding met God / Relationship with God

God is a reality to me.	247	God is vir my 'n werklikheid.
I acknowledge God's guidance in my life.	248	Ek erken God se leiding in my lewe.
I have a personal relationship with God.	249	Ek het 'n persoonlike verhouding met God.
I am aware of God's guidance in my life.	250	Ek is bewus van God se leiding in my lewe.
I trust in God.	251	Ek vertrou op God.
I allow God to change me.	252	Ek laat God toe om my te verander.
God makes a difference in my life.	253	God maak 'n verskil in my lewe.
I feel safe with God.	254	Ek voel veilig by God.

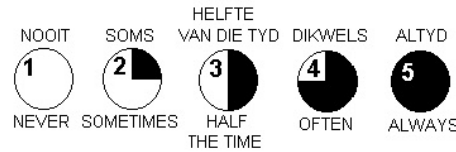
Fisiese Funksionering / Physical Functioning

Complete this section with regard to your physical functioning. Mark the relevant item on the answer sheet, using the above-mentioned numerical scale:	Voltooi hierdie afdeling met betrekking tot jou fisiese funksionering. Merk die betrokke item op die antwoordblad deur die bostaande skaal te gebruik:	
My sex life is exciting.	255	My sekslewe is opwindend.
I am dissatisfied with the shape of my body.	256	Ek het 'n weersin in die vorm van my liggaam.
I am satisfied with the size of my body.	257	Ek is tevrede met die grootte van my liggaam.
Sex is a normal function of my relationship with my partner.	258	Seks is 'n normale deel van my verhouding met my maat.
I hate the way my body looks.	259	Ek haat my liggaam.
I am satisfied with the shape of my body.	260	Ek is tevrede met die vorm van my liggaam.
Sex with my partner is wonderful.	261	Seks met my maat is wonderlik.
I feel overweight.	262	Ek voel oorgewig.
I am dissatisfied with my body.	263	Ek is ontevrede met my liggaam.
I am satisfied with my weight.	264	Ek is tevrede met my gewig.
My partner is sexually pleased with me.	265	My maat is seksueel tevrede met my.

Personal Multi-Screening Inventory (PMSI)
Persoonlike Multi-Sifting Inventaris (PMSI)



Naam / Name:
 Datum / Date: Ouderdom / Age:
 Geslag / Gender: Huistaal / Home Language:



If a specific item is not applicable, please encircle the Y on the answer sheet.
Indien 'n spesifieke item nie van toepassing is nie, omsirkel die Y op die antwoordblad.

1.	1 2 3 4 5	54.	1 2 3 4 5	107.	1 2 3 4 5	160.	1 2 3 4 5	213.	1 2 3 4 5
2.	1 2 3 4 5	55.	1 2 3 4 5	108.	1 2 3 4 5	161.	1 2 3 4 5	214.	1 2 3 4 5
3.	1 2 3 4 5	56.	1 2 3 4 5	109.	1 2 3 4 5	162.	1 2 3 4 5	215.	1 2 3 4 5
4.	1 2 3 4 5	57.	1 2 3 4 5	110.	1 2 3 4 5	163.	1 2 3 4 5	216.	1 2 3 4 5
5.	1 2 3 4 5	58.	1 2 3 4 5	111.	1 2 3 4 5	164.	1 2 3 4 5	217.	1 2 3 4 5
6.	1 2 3 4 5	59.	1 2 3 4 5	112.	1 2 3 4 5	165.	1 2 3 4 5	218.	1 2 3 4 5 X
7.	1 2 3 4 5	60.	1 2 3 4 5	113.	1 2 3 4 5	166.	1 2 3 4 5	219.	1 2 3 4 5 X
8.	1 2 3 4 5	61.	1 2 3 4 5	114.	1 2 3 4 5	167.	1 2 3 4 5	220.	1 2 3 4 5 X
9.	1 2 3 4 5	62.	1 2 3 4 5	115.	1 2 3 4 5	168.	1 2 3 4 5	221.	1 2 3 4 5 X
10.	1 2 3 4 5	63.	1 2 3 4 5	116.	1 2 3 4 5	169.	1 2 3 4 5	222.	1 2 3 4 5 X
11.	1 2 3 4 5	64.	1 2 3 4 5	117.	1 2 3 4 5	170.	1 2 3 4 5	223.	1 2 3 4 5 X
12.	1 2 3 4 5	65.	1 2 3 4 5	118.	1 2 3 4 5	171.	1 2 3 4 5	224.	1 2 3 4 5 X
13.	1 2 3 4 5	66.	1 2 3 4 5	119.	1 2 3 4 5	172.	1 2 3 4 5	225.	1 2 3 4 5 X
14.	1 2 3 4 5	67.	1 2 3 4 5	120.	1 2 3 4 5	173.	1 2 3 4 5	226.	1 2 3 4 5 X
15.	1 2 3 4 5	68.	1 2 3 4 5	121.	1 2 3 4 5	174.	1 2 3 4 5	227.	1 2 3 4 5 X
16.	1 2 3 4 5	69.	1 2 3 4 5	122.	1 2 3 4 5	175.	1 2 3 4 5	228.	1 2 3 4 5 X
17.	1 2 3 4 5	70.	1 2 3 4 5	123.	1 2 3 4 5	176.	1 2 3 4 5	229.	1 2 3 4 5 X
18.	1 2 3 4 5	71.	1 2 3 4 5	124.	1 2 3 4 5	177.	1 2 3 4 5	230.	1 2 3 4 5 X
19.	1 2 3 4 5	72.	1 2 3 4 5	125.	1 2 3 4 5	178.	1 2 3 4 5	231.	1 2 3 4 5 X
20.	1 2 3 4 5	73.	1 2 3 4 5	126.	1 2 3 4 5	179.	1 2 3 4 5	232.	1 2 3 4 5 X
21.	1 2 3 4 5	74.	1 2 3 4 5	127.	1 2 3 4 5	180.	1 2 3 4 5	233.	1 2 3 4 5 X
22.	1 2 3 4 5	75.	1 2 3 4 5	128.	1 2 3 4 5	181.	1 2 3 4 5	234.	1 2 3 4 5 X
23.	1 2 3 4 5	76.	1 2 3 4 5	129.	1 2 3 4 5	182.	1 2 3 4 5	235.	1 2 3 4 5 X
24.	1 2 3 4 5	77.	1 2 3 4 5	130.	1 2 3 4 5	183.	1 2 3 4 5	236.	1 2 3 4 5 X
25.	1 2 3 4 5	78.	1 2 3 4 5	131.	1 2 3 4 5	184.	1 2 3 4 5	237.	1 2 3 4 5 X
26.	1 2 3 4 5	79.	1 2 3 4 5	132.	1 2 3 4 5	185.	1 2 3 4 5	238.	1 2 3 4 5
27.	1 2 3 4 5	80.	1 2 3 4 5	133.	1 2 3 4 5	186.	1 2 3 4 5	239.	1 2 3 4 5
28.	1 2 3 4 5	81.	1 2 3 4 5	134.	1 2 3 4 5	187.	1 2 3 4 5	240.	1 2 3 4 5
29.	1 2 3 4 5	82.	1 2 3 4 5	135.	1 2 3 4 5	188.	1 2 3 4 5	241.	1 2 3 4 5
30.	1 2 3 4 5	83.	1 2 3 4 5	136.	1 2 3 4 5	189.	1 2 3 4 5	242.	1 2 3 4 5
31.	1 2 3 4 5	84.	1 2 3 4 5	137.	1 2 3 4 5	190.	1 2 3 4 5	243.	1 2 3 4 5
32.	1 2 3 4 5	85.	1 2 3 4 5	138.	1 2 3 4 5	191.	1 2 3 4 5	244.	1 2 3 4 5
33.	1 2 3 4 5	86.	1 2 3 4 5	139.	1 2 3 4 5	192.	1 2 3 4 5	245.	1 2 3 4 5
34.	1 2 3 4 5	87.	1 2 3 4 5	140.	1 2 3 4 5	193.	1 2 3 4 5	246.	1 2 3 4 5
35.	1 2 3 4 5	88.	1 2 3 4 5	141.	1 2 3 4 5	194.	1 2 3 4 5	247.	1 2 3 4 5
36.	1 2 3 4 5	89.	1 2 3 4 5	142.	1 2 3 4 5	195.	1 2 3 4 5	248.	1 2 3 4 5
37.	1 2 3 4 5	90.	1 2 3 4 5	143.	1 2 3 4 5	196.	1 2 3 4 5	249.	1 2 3 4 5
38.	1 2 3 4 5	91.	1 2 3 4 5	144.	1 2 3 4 5	197.	1 2 3 4 5	250.	1 2 3 4 5
39.	1 2 3 4 5	92.	1 2 3 4 5	145.	1 2 3 4 5	198.	1 2 3 4 5	251.	1 2 3 4 5
40.	1 2 3 4 5	93.	1 2 3 4 5	146.	1 2 3 4 5	199.	1 2 3 4 5	252.	1 2 3 4 5
41.	1 2 3 4 5	94.	1 2 3 4 5	147.	1 2 3 4 5	200.	1 2 3 4 5	253.	1 2 3 4 5
42.	1 2 3 4 5	95.	1 2 3 4 5	148.	1 2 3 4 5	201.	1 2 3 4 5	254.	1 2 3 4 5
43.	1 2 3 4 5	96.	1 2 3 4 5	149.	1 2 3 4 5	202.	1 2 3 4 5	255.	1 2 3 4 5 X
44.	1 2 3 4 5	97.	1 2 3 4 5	150.	1 2 3 4 5	203.	1 2 3 4 5	256.	1 2 3 4 5
45.	1 2 3 4 5	98.	1 2 3 4 5	151.	1 2 3 4 5	204.	1 2 3 4 5	257.	1 2 3 4 5
46.	1 2 3 4 5	99.	1 2 3 4 5	152.	1 2 3 4 5	205.	1 2 3 4 5	258.	1 2 3 4 5 X
47.	1 2 3 4 5	100.	1 2 3 4 5	153.	1 2 3 4 5	206.	1 2 3 4 5	259.	1 2 3 4 5
48.	1 2 3 4 5	101.	1 2 3 4 5	154.	1 2 3 4 5	207.	1 2 3 4 5	260.	1 2 3 4 5
49.	1 2 3 4 5	102.	1 2 3 4 5	155.	1 2 3 4 5	208.	1 2 3 4 5	261.	1 2 3 4 5 X
50.	1 2 3 4 5	103.	1 2 3 4 5	156.	1 2 3 4 5	209.	1 2 3 4 5	262.	1 2 3 4 5
51.	1 2 3 4 5	104.	1 2 3 4 5	157.	1 2 3 4 5	210.	1 2 3 4 5	263.	1 2 3 4 5
52.	1 2 3 4 5	105.	1 2 3 4 5	158.	1 2 3 4 5	211.	1 2 3 4 5	264.	1 2 3 4 5
53.	1 2 3 4 5	106.	1 2 3 4 5	159.	1 2 3 4 5	212.	1 2 3 4 5	265.	1 2 3 4 5 X



Resilience in a group of first-year psychosocial science students at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus)

QUALITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE
ARTICLE 2:

THE RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH FIRST YEAR PSYCHOSOCIAL SCIENCE STUDENTS AT THE NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY (POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS)

1. Explain research study to participant
2. Explain confidentiality to participant
3. Allow participant to sign the consent form
4. Gain permission from participant to record interview



Name of participant: _____

I agree to partake in this research study. I am fully aware of the procedure. The thoughts and experiences shared may be used for research purposes.

Participant signature: _____

Date: _____

Thank you for participating in my research
Tasleem Hassim
Masters Student

1. What does resilience mean to you?

2. Why did you enrol at a university? (Personal choice, peer pressure, pressure from parents, job related, ambition, goal directedness)

3. How did you adjust to a new context?

4. Do you feel a sense of belonging?

5. Have you developed any new behaviours in this year that you never had?

6. Do you set goals for yourself? Do you reach these goals? Are they realistic goals?

7. How do you manage your time?

8. What was the most difficult thing for you when you entered university?


9. Did you make new friends or was it difficult at first?

10. First year university fears:

11. First year stressors:

12. Has this year contributed to personal growth? In what way?

13. Academic performance:



This voucher entitles you to a free *cup of coffee* at
'die jonge akker'
This voucher is only valid till **31 August 2011**
Thank you for participating in my research

Tasleem Hassim
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INSTRUCTIONS TO THE AUTHORS

The Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk publishes articles, short communications, book reviews and commentary on articles already published from any field of Social Work. Contributions relevant to Social Work from other disciplines will also be considered, contributions may be written in English or Afrikaans, all contributions will be critically reviewed by at least two referees on whose advice contributions will be accepted or rejected by the editorial committee, all refereeing is strictly confidential, manuscripts may be returned to the authors if extensive revision is required or if the style or presentation does not conform to the Journal practice, commentary on articles already published in the Journal must be submitted with appropriate captions, the name(s) and address(es) of the author(s) and preferably not exceed 5 pages, the whole manuscript plus one clear copy as well as a diskette with all the text preferably in MS Windows (Word or WordPerfect) or ASCII must be submitted. Manuscripts must be double spaced on one side of A4 paper only. Use the Harvard system for references. Short references in the text: when word-for-word quotations, facts or arguments from other sources are cited, the surname(s) of the author(s), year of publication and page number(s) must appear in parenthesis in the text, e.g. "... (Berger, 1967:12). More details about sources referred to in the text should appear at the end of the manuscript under the caption "References". The sources must be arranged alphabetically according to the surnames of the authors.

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30 April 2012

To whom it may concern

Confirmation of editing the dissertation of Ms Tasleem Hassim

I hereby wish to confirm that I edited the dissertation, Resilience in a group of first year Psychosocial Science students at the North–West University (Potchefstroom Campus), by Ms Tasleem Hassim. My services included proofreading and editing the document.

Yours sincerely

Maretha Botes

Freelance journalist and language practitioner

SECTION E

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