



FACTORS AFFECTING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF
FIRST YEAR STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF
NAMIBIA (HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBA CAMPUS,
ONGWEDIVA)

*Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for a Master of Education in
Higher Education Degree*

By

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

I, **SAIMA KAUNAPAWA SAKEUS**, hereby declare that this Master's dissertation is wholly my original work and has not been submitted anywhere else for academic credit either by myself or any other person. I fully understand what plagiarism implies and declare that this research is my pure words, phrase, ideas, figures, organisation and results except where reference is implicitly made to someone else's work.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'SAIMA KAUNAPAWA SAKEUS', written over a horizontal line.

Date: 08 May 2023

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my dear husband and parents for their great prayers and support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My most appreciation goes to the almighty God for his grace and guidance. Without Him, the successful completion of this dissertation would not have been possible. I am most grateful to my supervisor, Prof. Ushe Makambe, for his great support throughout my research work. The support, contribution and assistance towards this research were overwhelming. I express my sincere gratitude to my dear husband. Your love and motivation have put me on the path of success and your immeasurable care is much appreciated. I want to thank my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Sakeus, and my siblings for their support during my study. I am most grateful to Dr. Tulonga Shuukwanyama for her love and financial support towards this research. Again, I want to express gratitude to my good friend Miss. Emma Kashweka for her support throughout my study and research. Finally, my special appreciation goes to the University of Namibia for their support which contributed to the success of this project.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

HPC	Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus
NUST	Namibia University of Science and Technology
IUM	International University of Management
UNAM	University of Namibia
ICT	Information Communication Technology
HET	Higher Education Training
GPA	Grade Point Average
SU	Stellenbosch University
FYA	First-year Academy
SES	Socio Economic Status
HE	Higher Education
UK	United Kingdom
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
SD	Standard Deviation
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
BTS	Bartlett Test Sphericity
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
SADC	Southern African Development Community

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ABSTRACT

There has been debate among policy makers, educators, and academics concerning students' poor performance in their first year of study. Furthermore, failure among first year students has been alarming over the years. This study sought to establish the factors that contributed to poor performance by first year students at the University of Namibia, Hifikepunye Pohamba (HP) Campus, Ongwediva specifically focusing on the effects of learning facilities, class attendance, student accommodation, and socio-economic status of learners on their academic performance. The data used in this study were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected through survey questionnaires distributed to targeted respondents who were first year students while the secondary data were collected through a review of related literature. Out of 150 questionnaires that were distributed, 104 were returned and valid for analysis. The returned questionnaires amounted to 69% response rate. Furthermore, the validity of the study was established through factor loading metrics which included the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test, Bartlett test of sphericity (BTS), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The findings of the study revealed that the significance and impact of the factors (learning facilities, class attendance, campus accommodation and socio-economic status) on the academic performance of first year students. These factors contributed meaningfully towards improving the academic performance of first year students if they were appropriately managed. This study provides the Ministry of Higher Education and the Namibia government with first-hand information that will assist them in coming up with policy aimed at the improvement of learning in Namibian tertiary education institutions especially at the first-year level.

Keywords: Academic performance, poor academic education, higher education learning, socio-economic status, class attendance, student accommodation.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that influenced the performance of first year students at the University of Namibia, (Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus, Ongwediva) at the time of the study. In this chapter, the research provides us background that informed the study, the problem that the study sought to solve (problem statement), and the research objectives that the research sought to achieve. Furthermore, Chapter 1 highlights the research questions that the study was meant to answer, the research hypotheses that were tested, and the significance of the study to the various stakeholders. Finally, the scope of the study (delimitations), the limitations of the study, and definition of terms are covered in this chapter.

1.2 Background to the study

There has been considerable debate among policy makers, educators and academics concerning students' poor performance in their first year of study. Nasri & Ahmed (2006) indicated that the unsatisfactory terminal examination results of students in their first academic year are as a result of parents' education level, economic status of the family and self-motivation). Ihssan & Azhar (2019) also stressed that socio-economic status has a significant effect on the academic performance of students. Social economic status of students comprises several elements that include parents' education, income, and occupation. The family socio-economic status has an influence on the students' academic achievement. This implies that the above factors can contribute negatively or positively in the academic performance of students.

Florence, Ayoade & Taiwo (2020) added that the learning environment plays a major role in the academic performance of students in tertiary institutions. Florence, Ayoade & Taiwo (2020) argued that poorly equipped educational venues and libraries have a negative effect on the students' academic performance such as overcrowding that has a negative effect on learner participation. Overcrowded classrooms and a high student-lecturer ratio leads to poor performance of students (Lusia, Ester & Samuel, 2017). The authors further alluded that students face challenges of accommodation, inadequate health facilities and electricity supply which stand as major stumbling blocks towards students' academic performance (Florence, Ayoade & Taiwo, 2020).

A study conducted in Europe discovered that academic failure and dropout among first year students was a result of institutional (class-group, university type), personal (age, sex, personality, traits) and circumstantial (educational level of progenitors, financial resources) factors (Juan & Guadalupe, 2018). A similar study was conducted in South America which indicated that students experienced challenges when transiting to universities. According to Raquel et al. (2020), first year students in South America found it hard to adapt to the new environment because they had not been exposed to it in the previous stages of their education which negatively affected their academic performance. In addition, Raquel et al. (2020) argued that other factors that affected the first-year students' performance included lack of preparation and economic as well as financial difficulties. However, these are not the only factors that affect the first year students' performance because failure is considered to be a collective phenomenon in which exogenous and endogenous factors converge.

Another study conducted at a university in Kenya indicated that transition of first years to university remains a great concern. Tabitha, Elishiba & Samuel (2012) confirmed that transition of first year students to universities was a challenge due to lack of preparedness to form new relationships. For example, first year students find it difficult to form new friendships while going through socio-cultural and psychological adaptation. First year students who manage to adapt to campus life are found to perform much better academically than those who find it difficult to adjust to the new lifestyle at the university. The above authors further explain that provision of appropriate food services in the universities' settings remains a challenge and this affects the quality and performance of first year students.

Studies conducted in South Africa on the factors affecting the performance of first year students revealed that students entering the South African universities come from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds which usually result in difficult life experiences, different educational opportunities, and a variety of expectations, needs and academic potential (William & Roy, 2003). The authors added that South African universities use school matriculation results as the sole (or primary) determination for university entrance but this does not determine whether the students will perform well once they commence their course of study. William & Roy (2003) believed that school matriculations results or the entry examination at the university are not likely to be strong predictors of success for first year students because they do not measure non-intellective factors

that are more related to various important influences on success that students encounter after they enroll at the university.

Ihssan & Azhar (2019) further explained that factors affecting the students' academic performance can be grouped into two groups which include external and internal factors. External factors include extra academic activities, work, financial situation, and family problems while internal factors include students' competence and aptitude, class (schedule, size, environment), availability of textbooks, and the examination system as well as learning facilities and technology (Ihssan & Azhar, 2019).

A study conducted in Eswatini revealed that poor performance of students is influenced by both internal and external factors. Lusia, Ester & Julia (2017) elaborate that first-year students' performance is influenced more by external factors than by internal factors. External factors that influence learner performance include teaching and learning, lack of university accommodation, insufficient resources, socio-economic factors, and curriculum related issues. Lusia, Ester & Samuel (2017) further explained that teaching and learning usually include teaching strategy, labeling of students by lecturers and inadequate support. The insufficiency of resources was exacerbated by unavailability of bookshops on campus, poor internet facilities, insufficient prescribed textbooks, and poorly equipped libraries.

Looking at the curriculum related factors, Lusia, Ester & Samuel (2017) noted that there is overloaded examination time table, study day system, huge scope of test and module pre-requisites. Some socio-economic factors that lead to failure of students are peer influence, problems in relationships, financial problems, and pregnancy while students are still studying.

Internal factors include students' lack of discipline and attitudes. These factors hinder the students' long life learning character and encourage the development of dependent attitudes towards the students. In support of the above points, most students take more than they can chew and this results in mediocre performance in their studies (Lusia, Ester & Samuel, 2017).

Although a study has been conducted in Namibia on the factors that influence students' performance in universities in general, no known study has been conducted that focuses on first year students. This study therefore seeks to investigate the factors affecting first year students' performance at the HP Campus of the University of Namibia.

1.3 Problem statement

Failure among first year students has become alarming over the years, in HPC it is believed that the general failure rate is between 35-40 percent at the campus . If proper measures are not taken, it will affect the employment opportunities of the students. This study will delve into the factors that affect the academic performance of first year students at Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus. Various studies have indicated an increase of failure of first year students. Ihssan & Azhar (2019) noted that educational institutions contribute a lot towards making out good results from students through the development of the system, quality teaching and learning environment. But due to various factors like lecturers-student ratio, class attendance, parents' education level, communication skills, distance of school, as well as learning facilities the performance of first year students is negatively affected (Ihssan & Azhar, 2019). This study seeks to identify the factors that affect academic performance of first year students and to outline possible ways of mitigating the continuity of the trend of unpleasing first year students' results.

1.4 Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the factors affecting the academic performance of first year students at the Hp-Campus of the University of Namibia. The secondary objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the effects of learning facilities on the academic performance of first year students at the Hp-Campus.
2. Explicate the effects of class attendance on academic performance of first year students at the Hp-Campus.
3. Elucidate the effects of student accommodation on academic performance of first year students at the Hp-Campus.
4. Explicate the effects of socio-economic status on the academic performance of first year students at the Hp-Campus.

1.5 Research Questions

Based on the above research objectives, the study will seek to answer the following research questions:

- What are the effects of learning facilities on the academic performance of first year students at the Hp-Campus?
- What are the effects of class attendance on the academic performance of first year students at the Hp-Campus?
- What are the effects of accommodation on the academic performance of first year students at the Hp-Campus?
- What are the effects of socio-economic status on academic performance of students at the Hp-Campus?

1.6 Research Hypotheses

The study tested the following hypotheses:

H1: There is a significant relationship between learning facilities and the academic performance of first year students at the Hp-Campus.

H2: There is a significant relationship between class attendance and academic performance of first year students at the Hp-Campus.

H3: There is a significant relationship between students' accommodation and academic performance of first year students at the Hp-Campus.

H4: There is a significant relationship between students socio-economic status and academic performance of first year students at the Hp-Campus.

1.7 Significance of the study

This study seeks to explore the factors affecting first year students' performance at the Hp-Campus of the University of Namibia. The findings of the study will assist the university management to understand the challenges faced by the first-year students at the campus during their course of their studies which results in poor academic performance and come up with measures to address them. The result of this study will awaken parents, students as well as university staff on the importance of attaining outstanding results in their first years as it intrinsically motivates students to soldier on with their studies. The findings of the study will make college/university principals, lecturers, students, and other important stakeholders understand and appreciate the factors that influence first year learner performance and the measures that must be put in place to improve the students' performance.

The findings of the study will further inform policy makers for them to come up with policies that or adjustment of institutional rules and regulations that will enable students to concentrate on their studies to achieve their set goals by removing the impediments to high performance. The main factor that lawmakers need to consider is the accommodation issue which should be given to first year students as a top priority to avoid problems such as absenteeism and late coming to class. This will provide the first year students with more time to study and to receive guidance and counseling at the campus.

This research will also provoke some researchers to conduct further research on related concepts. Moreover, it will assist researchers with literature that will enable them to embark on the study of other factors that would have been left out such as the causes of poor academic performance by university students in general and analysing their effects on students' performance.

1.8 Scope of the study/ delimitation

The study is focused on the factors affecting academic performance of first year students. The study was conducted at the Hp- campus, one of the University of Namibia campuses. The study focused on the Hp campus in Ongwediva because this is one of the biggest campuses of the university which is in the northern part of Namibia which offers courses in the field of education and the targeted population was all the first-year students. Factors that were covered are learning facilities, accommodation, class attendance, and socio-economic status. Other factors that could have enhanced this study were excluded because of the limitation of the study that are discussed in Section 1.9. These factors include communication skills, lecturer-student ratio, and the distance to the school, among others. The study excluded other regions of Namibia where there are university of Namibia campuses such as Omusati, Kavango, Karas, and Khomas. Other universities such as Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) and International University of Management (IUM) were also excluded.

1.9 Limitations of the study

This study has potential limitations. This study could have been affected by methodological limitations. The quantitative methodology was adopted. This study did not therefore benefit from other possible research methodologies such as qualitative and mixed methods. A sample of 100 students was chosen as the respondents where a bigger sample could have enhanced the validity

of the study and the generalisability of the research findings. The time frame given to complete the study was another limitation. The six months that were allocated to the study was not enough to cover all the important elements of the study.

Other limitations to the study include finance. The researcher did not have enough funds to cover other regions where other university campuses are located hence it prohibited the researcher from traveling to other parts of the country to administer the questionnaires. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic was one of the limitations of the study. Since the outbreak of covid-19 in 2019, classes in learning institutions did not hold the usual face-to-face lessons and students were mostly taught online. Therefore, getting good numbers of students to complete the questionnaire was a challenge.

1.10 Definition of terms

Table 1 below shows a list of terms that were used in this study and their definitions.

TERM	DEFINITION	SOURCE
Academic performance	The results of a combination of psychological, social, economic factors which leads to the proper multifaceted growth of students.	Saumya, Monica & Nimmi (2021)
Poor academic performance	This is when students fail to attain a set standard performance in a given evaluation such as examination, test or series of continuous assessment (for example at HPC the average failure rate is below 50 percentage).	Julie (2016)
Higher education institution	This is the education above the instructional of the secondary school. It can also	Hijam (2012)

	be called the tertiary level of education, which is on top of the education pyramid.	
Class attendance	This is when students engage with their course face-to-face or online. The act of attending a scheduled class or lecture as a student. A percentage or ratio that expresses how frequently a student attends a class or lecture.	Elisabeth, Gurkiran & Helen (2019)
Socio-economic factors	The societal and financial experiences and realities that shape one's personality, opinions, and lifestyle are referred to as socioeconomic factors. They are lifestyle components as well as indicators of financial viability and social standing. These are factors such as income, community safety, income, employment, education and social support which help to mold the attitudes, personality and lifestyle of someone.	Edward et. al (2021)
Student accommodation	This can be halls of residence, similar blocks, a range of smaller houses or flats which	Daniel (2022)

	the university provides for the students.	
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1.11 Chapters layout

Chapter one- Introduction and background to the study

This chapter covers the background of the study, problem statement, objectives and research questions. This chapter also covers the significance of the study and outlines the scope of the study. The key terms that were used in the study are defined in this chapter.

Chapter two- Literature review

This chapter reviews existing literature on the factors affecting academic performance of first year students. The concepts learning facilities, class attendance, student accommodation, and socio-economic status of the learners are explored in this chapter.

Chapter three- Research methodology

This chapter covers the methodology that was used by the researcher to conduct the study and it includes the techniques that were used to analyse data. It gives more details on the population and sampling techniques that were adopted for the study. Ethical considerations are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter four- Data analysis and interpretation

This chapter deals with the presentation and discussion of findings of the study. It presents data in the form of charts, tables, graphs and descriptive and inferential statistics.

Chapter five - Final Summary, recommendations, and conclusion

This chapter provides a summary of research findings as well as the recommendations. A conclusion is proffered in this chapter.

1.12 Chapter summary

This chapter focused on the factors affecting the academic performance of first year students at the Hp campus of the University of Namibia. The background of the study, research objectives and research questions were explored in this chapter. Also, the significance, scope and limitations of

the study were discussed. Key terms were also defined for the readers to easily comprehend some of the concepts used in the study. The next chapter reviews the literature related to the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the introduction and background to the study. This chapter examines the factors that affect the academic performance of first year students based on the views of other authors who are experts on the subject. Thus, this chapter is a critical review of current literature on the factors behind the poor performance of first year university students supported by other scholars who have undertaken studies on the topic. The chapter also highlights the theoretical framework which informs the study.

2.2 Factors affecting academic performance of first year students in higher learning institutions

Several studies have indicated that there are various factors that affect the performance of first year students in higher education institutions which include lack of prior academic preparation and economic and financial difficulties (Mark, 2016; Patrick & Arjan, 2018; Raquel et al., 2020). Inadequate prior preparation may lead to the delay of the effective resumptions of lectures and later results in lecturers crushing the programmes in order to cover up for the lost time thus putting pressure on the students and leading to the majority failing the first semester terminal examinations. Class attendance is very crucial for first year students because when students have “limited class attendance”, it makes students not persist (Patrick & Arjan, 2018). Furthermore, economic and financial difficulties, especially of the families of students, may result in increasing incidents of learners failing to attend lectures which will eventually have a significant impact on the performance of the learners. These, and other, factors are discussed in more detail below.

2.2.1 Learning facilities and their effects on students academic performance

There are various variables that operate in the teaching and learning process and they invariably affect the educational performance of students (Mark, 2016). One essential variable that directly affects the quality of learning and acquisition of knowledge among students is the adequacy (or lack) of learning facilities that usually aid in reinforcement of knowledge and skills. The unavailability of learning facilities stands as a hindrance to students’ progress. Students who are new to the course of study need proper learning facilities to succeed in their examinations and assignments. Students who have adequate learning facilities will be more focused and have higher

chances of excelling than those who do not have (Ansa, 2018). The crucial learning resources include all teaching and learning materials used by both lecturers and students in their learning. These materials include textbooks, projectors, laptops, internet and so on (Mbunda, 2006). The first year of study is of key importance in determining students' chances of finishing their studies.

Ainon & Rosmaizura (2018) explained that learning facilities can be grouped into two categories, that is, semi-permanent and permanent structures, for examples, equipment, laboratory, lecturers' instructional tools, teaching aids, machinery, and other equipment such as consumables. The authors noted that school facilities that influence the performance of first year students ranges from libraries, laboratories, workshops, classroom blocks, desks, chairs, electricity, toilets, water, and audio-visual aids to storage space that would be a motivation to the first-year students learning.

Ainon & Rosmaizura (2018) further note that there is a significant relationship between the university environment and the first-year students' attitudes towards schooling which ultimately affects their performance. When universities' facilities are well coordinated and maintained, it improves the first-year students' performance as well as encouraging them to participate in academic activities. Furthermore, learning facilities can be seen to be related to extra-mural education such as athletics and recreation (Zamokuhle 2021). Teaching and learning are closely linked to each other and when classes are big, it inhibits the direct guidance of learners by lecturers which makes it more difficult for the learners to accomplish learning goals. Bigger classrooms promote higher academic results though students need to make more effort to learn.

Meanwhile, university facilities are classified into academic and non-academic. Some examples of non-academic include sports facilities, games, farms, and gardens. Other non-academic facilities include information communication technology (ICT), security facilities, and transportation. Ainon & Rosmaizura (2018) further indicated that decent learning facilities determine the students' achievement upon arrival at the university. Similarly, proper facilities enhance the learning activities, and it boosts students' achievements. According to Arogundade (2010), first year students' academic performance is affected due to lack of proper facilities in the universities. The author further argued that due to lack of finances from the government, universities experience acute shortages of necessary learning equipment. In the same token, Arogundade (2010) further explained that one of the major challenges which first year students face is a lack of adequate

supply of instructional resources which leads to poor performance. Such instructional resources include shortage of lecture rooms, laboratories, workshops, and equipment in libraries. Arogundade (2010) added that often, students are enrolled in large numbers which leads to overcrowded classrooms and a shortage of seats for students.

Consequently, overcrowded classrooms lead to undue stress for first year students and as a result, it creates unruly and rowdy behaviour whereby students will get involved in obscene activities around the campus premises and hanging outside of the classrooms. All these have a negative impact on teaching and learning, hence students' performance. To substantiate the above, Chinaza and Yasmin (2020) concurred that students get admission at the university for courses of their choice without proper effort to make sure that they get all the necessary support that is required to succeed in their studies. This means that when students are enrolled for their studies, the institution does not put into consideration the availability of learning facilities that will enhance their skills to learn to the best of their abilities. This support includes the institution providing necessary direction, orientation, counsel, information, and mentorship where applicable amongst other different means of support that are possible to enable students to successfully transit into the system of the university and life around the campus.

According to Higher Education and Training [HET] (2020), when students get enrolled in the university, they face a challenge of proper devices which include laptops and smartphones. Students at times borrow these devices from family members and friends while some opt for the usage of internet cafés. Furthermore, new students on campus whose parents cannot afford to buy laptops are mostly forced to use their phones and some of the students' phones are old and do not have the latest android version. Higher Education and Training (2020) further notes that some students' phones are inappropriate for studying and do not have the necessary software needed for some modules. In the same vein, HET (2020) indicated that in countries like South Africa, newly enrolled students face challenges of internet connectivity. Students have access to free internet on campus, but the internet is usually slow. Although newly enrolled students get data packages from different sources, it has been seen that this data is not enough especially when they have to engage in communication platforms.

Fareo and Ojo (2013) agreed with Mark (2016) and Ainon & Rosmaizura (2018) that learning facilities have a significant impact on the academic performance of first year students which

translates to poor performance if the facilities are not adequate. Fareo and Ojo (2013) further added that most learning institutions especially in developing countries do not have convenient learning facilities that can accommodate students including those with special educational needs such as instructional materials, hearing aids, hand railings, braille, and lower toilets. Where such special needs education facilities are available, they are usually found in deplorable conditions.

2.2.2 Class attendance and its effects on learner performance

According to Jeff & Lisa (2019), class attendance (the presence of students) directly relates to the mastery of skills and knowledge while, on the other hand, meta-analysis revealed that students' class attendance positively affects the Grand Point Average (GPA) (course grades) of students, and it is the strongest predictor of GPA for first year students. These authors emphasised that class attendance is not only important because it transfers content knowledge of a particular course to students, but it gives students an opportunity to access resources, non-content specific contextual information, and relationships that can positively impact their sense of belonging and knowledge. Regular class attendance is one of the primary reasons for students' success, especially for new students (Shanti, 2019). Class attendance is not merely being bodily present but, rather, it involves the students participating in class work and activities. Shanti (2019) added that when students miss a major portion of class, they jeopardise their chances of achieving their academic goals.

Susan, Menkveld & John (2010) revealed that at Stellenbosch University (SU), there was a serious concern among academics regarding the poor class attendance of undergraduate students. This was identified through a task team that led to the establishment of the First-Year Academy (FYA). Through this academy, the university adopted a holistic approach to support first-year students. Further evidence indicated that students who had performed well in school-leaving examination are those with strong verbal ability which is most likely generated from attending classes compared to their peers who were less able to attend classes. According to Susan, Menkveld & John (2010), various South African studies found that the more students attend classes, the better their results.

According to Yousaf et al. (2019), although there are strict measures put in place concerning class attendance, absenteeism among first year students remains a global concern. Class attendance is very important because it determines the academic outcome of students, especially freshers. Yousaf et al. (2019) further posited that first year students face challenges in familiarising

themselves with the campus which causes them to dodge lectures and this leads to poor performance when students are absent from class, that is, they miss out on important information and they do not get clarity on difficult concepts.

Yousaf et al. (2019) added that students who attend lectures regularly are highly successful in their studies, and they tend to apply the information learned to their profession during their career lives more than those who do not attend class. Class attendance also helps students to accomplish more achievements in their professions and it stimulates them to develop their thinking by comparing the new ideas they learn in class. In addition, Yousaf et al. (2019) argued that absenteeism among first year students is a reflection of the low level of learner motivation which can be linked to extensive socialisation among students, poor physical or mental condition, students taking part time jobs due to lack of finance, and excessive sleepiness.

A study that was conducted by Raquel et al. (2018) concurs with Yousaf et al. (2019) that there is an increase from 29% to 33% of new enrollment rate of students in university between ages 20-24 globally. Students' absenteeism has been associated with academic performance. The authors postulate that first-year students who are absent from lectures find it difficult to understand the module taught while absent and their academic performance drops. Additionally, when first year students move from secondary school to university, they find it hard to cope with the influence on campus life which results in depression, and it affects their class attendance because students will prefer to be in isolation (Raquel et al. 2018).

Ruel, Deny & Reshma (2021) concurred that classroom attendance is essential and contributes to performance. Ruel, Deny & Reshma (2021) and other scholars indicated that class attendance, especially for first years, does not equal to students' outcomes and attending classes does not necessarily mean students will perform well, but engaging students with course content and providing feedback on their performance will enhance their academic achievements. In the same token, Ruel, Deny & Reshma (2021) believed that for first year students, physical class attendance helps them to participate in all class activities or guided learning activities given by the lecturers which helps students when working on their final assessments. First year students need to constantly attend classes to interact with their lecturers. It will also help them to get clarity on the content taught, ask questions for clarity, and interact with their classmates thereby further developing their social skills.

Ruel, Deny & Reshma (2021) further explained that as first year students are new to the modules offered at the campus, class attendance is important for improvement in learning since class time is devoted to the most challenging aspects of the course content. Class attendance exposes first year learners to the content that is likely to come in the final assessments as lecturers tend to talk about it in class often through examples. As noted by Marcus, Sylvia & Urszula (2010), first year students' class attendance does not only allow them to obtain information which is not in textbooks or lecture materials, but it also exposes them to varied contact with materials (review of notes, lectures, and demonstrations). In addition, the authors opined that consistent class attendance represents a system of distributed practice that, over the years, has been effective and it helped new students to increase the retention of information while giving students the possibility for the overlearning of material especially when students must complete their assignments and revise given materials on their own. Moreover, overlearning and distributed practices have been linked to high scores in examinations and better long-term retention of material learned.

2.2.3 Student accommodation and its effects on the performance of first year students

One of the primary concerns for university applicants is to meet the entry requirements and to be accepted by the university. Once the students' applications are successful, another burden comes up which is a place to stay especially for students who live outside the city where the university is located (Zamokuhle, 2021). In addition, the admission department is not concerned whether students have accommodation or not. Tsimangadzo et al. (2020) reiterated that lack of accommodation in universities has forced new students to reside outside the campus. Furthermore, the authors revealed that first year students who reside on campus gain more in terms of social and personal competences which helps them to be more successful in their studies.

Joanne, Paula & Rhiannon (2021) argue that when students transit from secondary school to universities, they ought to adapt to new social situations and environments. Based on a new report by the United Nations, most university applicants live in halls of residence as their choice of accommodation. However, there are various challenges associated with students when leaving home into the student accommodation such as living with people who are strangers to them, managing domestic duties, and developing independence. Joanne, Paula & Rhiannon (2021) further aver that moving from the home environment to another place is accompanied by mental stress as the students try to adjust to the new environment. Psychological distress mostly increases

once students enter the university. Furthermore, first year students who get accommodation in social corridor residence halls, characterised by both communal spaces for interaction and coupled by lack of privacy, affects the students' academic outcomes compared to students who get admitted into isolated apartments residence halls which are characterised by successive communal space and locking doors (Joanne, Paula & Rhiannon, 2021).

According to Justice (2017), tertiary institutions have the full responsibility to provide accommodation to students who are entering the university for the first time to pursue various study programmes. In institutions that are government owned, accommodation is provided by the government. Due to the high demand for accommodation in tertiary education institutions, most governments around the world are unable to provide accommodation for the first-year students. As a result, students who are unable to get accommodation in the institutions are forced to look for private hostels that are near the university and not all get accommodation close to the university with some students ending up with no option but to attend lectures from their respective homes.

Justice (2017) noted that even though accommodation is an important component of students' management, it has not been receiving adequate attention over the years. The provision of students' accommodation helps in catering for the housing needs for the students to accomplish their social and academic goals as they enter the university to study. Justice (2017) further pointed out that first year students who live on campus have a higher degree of academic progress, higher academic performance, and a lower chance of dropping out of school. Also, students who reside in the school hostels are able to take on more credit hours and they have the ability to connect with other learners and faculty members on campus. Also, they have a better opportunity of participating in students' politics and leadership compared to those first-year students who stay outside the campus (Justice, 2017). This view is reinforced by Tsimangadzo et al. (2020) who concur that resident students have more benefits that include access to sporting facilities, religious activities and clubs, and ancillary services than those residing outside of the campus. The authors argued that when new students reside on campus, it helps them to get used to the school premises and to be punctual when attending classes. Students are also able to get access to the library for more hours compared to those who reside outside the campus and they spend much more time travelling long distances before arriving at the campus.

Babatunde (2018) stated that on most occasions, the number of students admitted into universities is higher than the number of accommodation facilities available hence new students end up struggling when starting their first semester which makes it difficult for the students to keep up with their schoolwork while looking for adequate accommodation. It is widely believed that the availability of decent accommodation reduces the risks of students dropping out of school and they are more capable of achieving a higher level of academic performance. Besides that, Zamokuhle (2021) agreed that first year students who reside at home do not feel a sense of freedom compared to those who stay on campus. Being newly admitted to the university, first year students who live at home due to lack of accommodation feel like they are not university students because they are excluded from various activities.

Students who stay outside campus cannot remain at school until late to do group assignments with students who reside on campus due to the shortage of transport. Zamokuhle (2021) noted that students' accommodation is a tool that should be used to advance students' academic excellence hence it is the responsibility of universities to provide a sustainable learning and living environment for students. The author further postulated that when first year students live in a friendly environment, it stimulates their academic success. When students stay in an environment that is formally structured with proper chairs and built-in tables for studying, it assists them to excel academically.

2.2.4 Socio-economic status and its impact on first year students' performance

Mesmin et al. (2019) stated that students from higher socio-economic status (SES) show a persistent advantage in academic outcomes compared to those from a lower SES. Claire (2016) added that there is an important link between education and the socio-economic circumstances in which individual learners are raised as well as their socio-economic circumstances in adulthood. Furthermore, social-economic status is vital in the lives of students and parents' education as it plays a role in the academic success and achievement of students from first year (Salwa, 2016). Even though there is an impact on the lecturers, learning materials, mass media and the voice of the society to influence new students on campus to pursue their degrees, learners' parents' characteristics such as income, level of education, genetic factors, and occupation have an influence on the learners' academic achievements.

According to Salwa (2016), upon admission into a higher learning institution, the institution needs to know to what extent students have the desire to pursue their studies depending on what influences their decision. The author added that when students get admission into the university, their knowledge and academic success is supported by their parents' involvement. Consequently, when it comes to their performance and cognitive skills which lead them to succeed, it is highly associated with family background and social factors mentioned above.

Claire (2016) argued that social-economic differences in the acquisition of higher education (HE) could be driven by the fact that young students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds may go to university but are likely to drop out and less likely to acquire the highest degree classification. The author further posited that in the United Kingdom (UK), students from different socio-economic backgrounds begin their academic journey in the university with different human capital. This suggests that a key part of the strategy to reduce socio-economic inequalities in degree acquisition and performance needs to be increased to maximise the attainments of students coming from poor families.

Marilou & George (2017) espoused that when students gain admission in higher education, it facilitates their social mobility from lower SES to higher SES, but these students are less likely to attend university in the first place. In countries like Australia, the United States, and England, for example, children who attend universities are those from upper income families and professionals compared to those from lower income families and the working class. The students from high income families can enroll in any university of their choice within and beyond the borders as they can afford all the expenses such as high tuition fees and flight fares. The students from low-income families only wait for the sponsorship programmes and these programmes are prone to intense competition. This has led many low-income students to end up embarking on careers that are not of their wish because of the situation they are in (Hansen, 2000).

Harb & El-Shaarawi (2006) established that the most popular factor that has contributed positively to students performance is their good command of English. If the students have a good command of the English language, they tend to perform exceptionally well in school. This shows that performance of students is affected by communication skills - it is possible to see from verbal communication and written work that a particular student is from the high-income family or low-income family by merely looking at their responses to test items. Harb & El-Shaarawi (2006)

reinforce this view arguing that this is so because the students from high-income families are exposed to the environment that promotes the practice of English. This could be, for example, through exposure to video-audio learning aids such as televisions that have some learning programmes that are conducted in English, a privilege that students from low-income families do not enjoy as they may not even own a television or radio. The above authors added that those students from low-income families, even if they can perform well, they are hindered from doing so due to failure to express themselves and put across their points clearly.

Marilou & George (2017) further argued that merit also plays a major role in determining students access to higher education. In countries like Greece, admission to the university is determined by the scores on the nationwide Panhellenic examinations. This constitutes a cost which is associated with preparing secondary school students for their entry examination to tertiary education. The education system mostly benefits students who are from privileged social classes compared to the children from lower socioeconomic families.

Noble (2006) highlighted that students' academic accomplishments, their perceptions of their coping strategies, positive attributions, and background characteristics contribute to their achievement in education. The author further stressed that the parents from low-income families find it difficult to provide proper guidance to their children in their education and in assisting them in developing the right attitude towards their education such as study attitudes and habits. Children who are exposed to the parents' guidance perform better in academics than those from low-income families who do not receive any guidance from parents. The guidance from the parents and the teachers indirectly affects the performance of the students (Hussain, 2006).

In relation to the above, Raychauduri et al. (2010) suggested that under socio-economic factors that affect the performance of students at school is the parents' education level. Students with parents of low educational levels perform worse in academics than their counterparts with parents who are highly educated because they are not motivated to be serious with school as they may think that what their parents have achieved is what is expected of them as their parents will be their role models. Generally, parents who are not educated contribute little to their children's education if not none.

The other socio-economic factor that affects first year students' performance is the lecturer-to student ratio (Raychauduri et al., 2010). In cases of high lecturer-student ratios, the students perform unsatisfactorily because the attention of the lecturer is divided among many students which prevents the lecturer from delivering to his/her full potential. Where the lecturer-student ratio is low, the lecturer can concentrate on the few new students and diagnose their individual hindrances enabling them to perform well.

In relation to the above, the presence of untrained lecturers in universities also affects the performance of students, especially in their first year as these require more guidance than their experienced counterparts. The untrained lecturers have no relevant skills to support the new students towards their success and result in students failing including those who need little guidance from the lecturers (Raychauduri et al., 2010). These lecturers will be unable to deliver the appropriate knowledge in accordance with the curriculum objectives, failing to motivate students, and struggling with attending to students' needs concerning their education. These lecturers also fail to apply Bloom's Taxonomy in their teaching. On the other hand, the trained lecturers implement a variety of pedagogical strategies, effectively guide their learners, and counsel them where necessary, and can diagnose their students' shortcomings and dealing with them effectively to make the new students succeed in their school work.

Mesmin et al. (2019) revealed that there is a high possibility that socio-economic contexts influence new students' mindsets. The authors indicated that various evidence shows that psychological factors play a major role in the academic motivation and achievement of students, and negatively in situations where socioeconomic support and resources are limited. Brandon & Carolyn (2015) agreed with this position suggesting that socio-economic status is associated with students' academic performance. The author further argued that socio-economic factors are one of the strongest predictors of students' success in their academic journey as they enter the university for the first time.

2.3 Theoretical framework

There are many studies on students' poor academic performance. These studies indicate that students' performance is influenced by various factors such as finances, personality characteristics of the students, gender, and family background (Mpho, Mabokang & Adriana, 2009). The current study is premised on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory which acknowledges that motivation

is a key component of one's performance. The theory suggests that motivation can either be intrinsic or extrinsic meaning that it can be from within or can be induced by external factors (Saul, 2018). According to the theory, there are physiological, social, esteem and self-actualisation needs that must be met and once met, they motivate people towards the achievement of higher-level needs as shown in Figure 2.1 below.

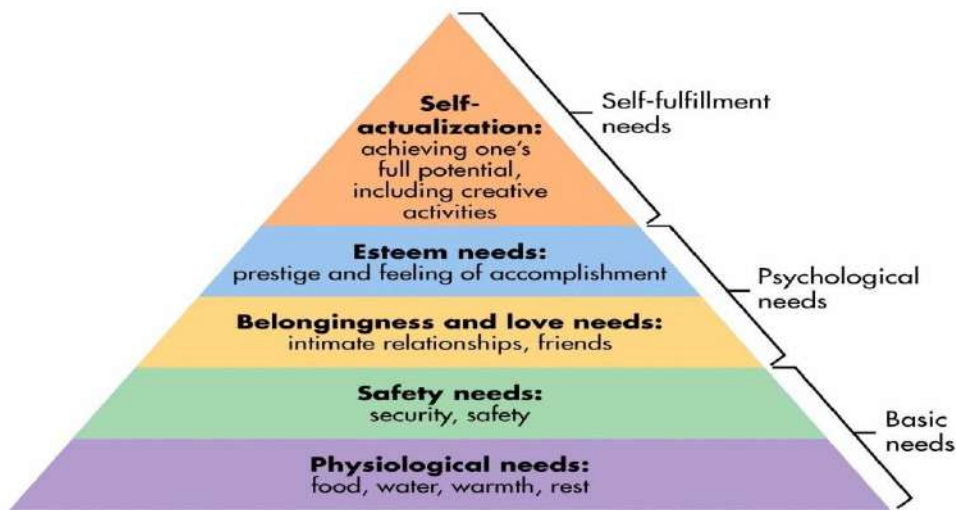


Figure 2.1: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (Saul, 2018)

Based on Figure 2.1 above, the satisfaction of first year students' physiological needs such as food, accommodation, and clothing may motivate them to aim higher by working harder at school to achieve higher level needs. The provision of other learning facilities such as internet, support group networks, qualified lecturers, and recreational facilities can be sources of motivation for the first-year learners thus setting a strong foundation for overcoming their educational challenges encountered at the HP campus. It is against the above justifications that Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory was preferred to inform the study.

2.4 Chapter summary

This chapter shows the literatures reviewed which forms the theoretical framework for the study. The completed theoretical framework was developed through the review of literature in which theories of knowledge sharing are explored. The next chapter is going to focus on research design and methodology. The availability of accommodation, Internet, support groups networks, qualified

lecturers, well prepared food and textbooks can be sources of motivation for the learners as well as a strong foundation for overcoming the educational challenges encountered by first year students at the HP campus.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on literature review while this chapter highlights the research design and methodology that were adopted for this study. It covers the research design that influenced the choice of the research approaches, the research methodology that was applied in collecting and analysing data, and the targeted study population as well as the sampling procedure that was used to select the respondents. The chapter also outlines the procedures and tools that were used to collect and analyse data, and the research ethics that were observed in the study to comply with the university's Research Ethics Committee.

3.2 Research design

This study used a survey research design. Kassu (2019) observed that a research design provides the appropriate framework for a study. This study employed a survey research design to establish the factors affecting the academic performance of first-year students at the UNAM, Hp-Campus. According to Shona (2019), survey research means collecting information about a group of people by asking them questions and analysing the results. The author further added that to conduct an effective survey, there are six steps a researcher needs to follow which include the determination of who will participate in the survey, deciding the type of survey (mail, online, or in-person), designing the survey questions and layout, distributing the survey instrument, analysing the responses, and writing up the results. Furthermore, survey research can use quantitative research strategies which include questionnaires with numerically rated items while qualitative research strategies include open-ended questions. Survey research can be used in obtaining data from a large population.

3.3 Research methodology

According to Derek & Kerry (2020), research methodology involves different types of methodologies like quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods which are distinguished by whether they focus on numbers, words, or both. This study used the quantitative research approach to collect information from first-year students at the HP campus of the UNAM. Babbie (2010) opined that quantitative methods emphasise mainly on statistical and objective measurements, numerical analysis of data collected through polls, surveys, and questionnaires, mathematical or through manipulating pre-existing statistical data using computational techniques. Furthermore, the author emphasised that the quantitative method focuses on generalising and gathering numerical data across a group of people to explain a specific phenomenon. Pritha (2020) added that, quantitative research approach can be used to find patterns and averages, test causal relationships, make predictions and generalize results to wider populations.

In addition, Pritha (2020) explained that quantitative research method is the opposite of qualitative research, which involves collecting and analysing non-numerical data (e.g. audio, text, or video).

3.4 Population and sampling

The population for this study comprised 300 first-year students from UNAM's HP campus. According to Faber & Fonseca (2014), an appropriate (more importantly large) sample-size gives research more efficiency and reliability while conforming to ethical principles of research. Therefore, the researcher targeted a sample of 150 first-year students as the sample size to have findings that are more representative of the study population. According to Memon et al. (2020), several factors influence the size of the sample for survey research of which the nature of the research and the research methodology are the most significant. For instance, exploratory factor analysis cannot be used if the sample size is less than 50, whereas simple regression analysis requires at least 50 respondents while a sample size of at least 100 is required for most quantitative studies.

This study used a simple random sampling (probability sampling) technique because it involves samples being gathered in a process that gives all individuals in the population an equal chance of being selected (Aaron, 2019). Lauren (2020) defines simple random sampling as a method that is

most straightforward of all the probability sampling methods, since it only involves a single random selection and it requires little advanced knowledge about the population. Furthermore, because it uses randomization, any research performed on this sample should have high internal and external validity and be at a low risk for research biases like sampling bias and selection bias.

3.5 Data Collection

In this study, data was collected through a structured questionnaire. Syed (2016) describes data collection as a process of gathering and measuring information on the variables of interest in an established and systematic fashion that allows one to answer the research questions, test the research hypotheses, and evaluate the study outcomes. The author further suggests that even though there are various methods of collecting data, the emphasis of collecting accurate and honest data remains the same. The author further explains that the main goal for collecting data is to capture quality evidence that translates to rich data analysis which allows the researcher to obtain convincing and credible answers to research questions that have been posed. Data collected can be either qualitative or quantitative. This study collected data using a quantitative approach whereby a structured questionnaire was used to gather the information that determined the factors affecting the academic performance of first-year students at UNAM, Hp campus.

The questionnaire used for this study contained close-ended and open-ended questions. The participants were requested to rate the statements in each section on the scale: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral (Neither Agree nor Disagree), Agree, Strongly agree. The questionnaire consisted of six sections as follows:

Part 1: This section collected demographic information from the respondents which included their gender, age, marital status, university residents' status, qualifications for entry into the university, nationality and how students get to campus for lectures.

Part II: This section was meant to collect data on the factors affecting academic performance of first year students at the UAM, HP campus (Ongwediva). The section was meant to collect data that addressed the primary research objective. The questions were developed from Section 2.2 of the literature review (Chapter 2).

Part III: This section collected information on the effects of learning facilities on the academic performance of first year students at the UNAM, HP campus. This data was meant to address the first secondary objective of the study. Questions in this section were established from Section 2.2.1 of the literature review.

Part IV: This section sought to collect data on the effects of class attendance on the academic performance of first year students at the UNAM, HP campus and the data collected was meant to address the second secondary research objective. The questions in this section were derived from Section 2.2.2 of Chapter 2.

Part V: This section collected data on the effects of student accommodation on the academic performance of first year students at the UNAM, HP campus and the data collected sought to address the third secondary research objective. Questions in this section were designed from Section 2.2.3 of Chapter 2.

Part VI: This section was meant to collect information pertaining to the effects of socio-economic factors on the academic performance of first year students at the UNAM, HP campus. The data sought to address the fourth research objective of this study. The questions in this section were derived from Section 2.2.4 of the literature review.

Saul (2018) describes a questionnaire as an instrument that consists of questions with the purpose of gathering information from respondents. A questionnaire provides a quick and cheap way of getting information from a large population through a sample of which data can be collected through telephone, face-to-face, computer, or post. A questionnaire can have either open or closed-ended questions. The questionnaire used for this study had both open and closed-ended questions with open-ended questions providing the respondents with an opportunity to give more details in their own words. The questionnaires were distributed to the first-year students at HP campus, and they were given a period of 1-2 weeks to complete and return the questionnaires. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed to participants and only 104 questionnaires were completed and returned to the researcher which represented a response rate of 69%. This response rate is considered acceptable because, according to Moser & Kalton (1971), results of a survey can be considered unacceptable if the response rate is lower than 40 percent. The questionnaires collected were therefore sufficient to achieve the research objectives.

3.6 Data analysis

Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Adam (2022) suggested that descriptive statistics is brief information which summarises a given data set which can either be a representative of the whole population or just a sample of the population. Pritha (2020) added that the first thing done in a quantitative research after collecting data is to conduct a statistical analysis to describe the characteristics of the responses which includes the average of one variable (e.g. age) or to determine the relationship between two variables (e.g. creativity and age). Descriptive data helps in simplifying large amounts of research data by breaking it down into a simple and understandable summary. Two general statistics were used to describe data which is through measures of spread and the central tendency. Measures of central tendency estimate the center or average of a data set. The average can be found using the mean, median, and mode while measures of spread summarise grouped data to measure the spread of occurrences (Pritha, 2020). Data was summarised using graphs, charts, and tables.

While descriptive statistics help to summarise the characteristics of a data set, inferential statistics help the researcher to conclude and make predictions based on data. When data is collected from a sample, inferential statistics can be used to understand the large population from which a sample was taken (Pritha, 2020). Inferential statistics can involve testing the hypotheses to conclude about the population and to make an estimation about a population. To use inferential statistics, the researcher needs to set population parameters.

A decision tree was used to conclude the right tests to run on the data. Each statement/question was analysed separately, and the majority frequencies were highlighted as well as recognised in the analysis done. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software was used to analyse data. An SPSS is a set of software that is combined in a single package (Kate, 2022). This application is used to analyse scientific data. It can also be used for surveys, market research, and also data mining (John, 2018). The author further added that the SPSS helps researchers to process critical data in simple steps. Working on data can be time-consuming and complex, but the SPSS assists in easily processing and analysis the data collected. The samples were rated and viewed by each statement.

All the scale items on the questionnaire were evaluated using the mean and standard deviation (SD). The Five point Likert Scale was adopted with 1= strongly disagree; 2= disagree; 3= neutral; 4= agree; and 5= strongly agree.

3.7 Validity and reliability

After developing the content validity and preliminary data analysis, empirical and theoretical reliability tests were run. Scale reliability is the correlation between two scores starting from 0.00 to 1.00 whereby Cronbach's alpha coefficient is the commonest form of internal consistency reliability test. The commonly agreed-upon lower limit for alpha is 0.60 although values above 0.8 are preferable (Pallant, 2010). The adopted cut-off alpha for this study was 0.70 and measures below 0.70 were eliminated. This was done because in Connelly's (2011) study, it was discovered that some of the scales were less than 0.7, hence the mean inter-item correlation was reported, and the suggested range for the inter-item correlation was 0.2- 0.4 (Briggs & Cheek, 1988).

The validity of the study was established through factor loading metrics which the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test, Bartlett test of sphericity (BTS), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). For a study to be deemed valid, the KMO metric, as a measure of sample adequacy, should be statistically significant at the 0.5 threshold.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical consideration is essential when it comes to research. Ethical considerations in research are important principles which guide the research practices and designs (Pritha, 2021). Furthermore, how the researcher decides to conduct research involves various key ethical considerations to maintain academic integrity, increase research validity, and protect the rights of each research participant. When the researcher adheres to ethical norms, it helps in promoting the aim of the research and reduces errors when conducting the research (David, 2020). Ethical consideration is when participants who are taking part in the research are safe, and they are not exposed to any form of harm.

In this study, the researcher adhered to the principles and guidelines given by the university management during the study. The researcher showed the participants respect and kept the participants information confidential. In this study, a letter was sought from Botho University and

issued to the UNAM, HP campus, where the researcher conducted the study for permission to be granted. Before administering the questionnaires, a letter was written to the participants requesting them to participate in the study and this was attached to the questionnaires given to the respondents. Two important ethical issues were considered while administering the questionnaires – ensuring voluntary participation and observing the confidentiality of the respondents. To ensure voluntary participation, no participant was forced to take part but to participate willingly. The researcher fully explained to the participants the principle of voluntary participation before distributing the questionnaires and the participants were assured that the information that they provided was not going to be used against them.

Anonymity of the research participant is whereby the respondents cannot, by any chance, be linked even by the researcher to their responses (Pritha, 2021). The researcher made sure that there was no violation of confidentiality by not requesting the respondents to reveal their names when completing the questionnaires. Participants who wished to withdraw at any point during the study were allowed to do so.

3.9 Chapter summary

This chapter outlined the research methodology that was adopted in this study. It discussed the research design that was adopted, the research methodology that was used to collect and analyse data, and the study population from which a sample was chosen together with the sampling technique. The chapter also described how reliability and validity of the study were facilitated. Ethical standards that were observed in the study were also highlighted in this chapter. The next chapter focuses on the presentation and analysis of study findings.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter described the research methodology that was employed in this study. The current chapter focusses on analysing and interpreting the findings of the study in conformity with the research objectives that were outlined in Chapter 1 and the literature that was outlined in Chapter 2. The goal of the study was to investigate the factors that affected the academic performance of first year students at the UNAM, Hp-Campus. The specific research objectives are restated as follows:

- To explain the effects of learning facilities on the academic performance of first year students at the Hp-Campus.
- To explicate the effects of class attendance on the academic performance of first year students at the Hp-Campus.
- To elucidate the effects of student accommodation on the academic performance of first year students at the Hp-Campus.
- To identify the effects of students' socio-economic status on the academic performance of first year students at the Hp-Campus.

The chapter proceeds by presenting the biographical profiles of the survey-respondents before it progresses to address each of the above objectives. To evaluate and ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, the Cronbach's Alpha test was used, and the results are indicated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Cronbach's alpha reliability test results

No.	Variable	Cronbach's alpha
1	Factors that affect academic performance of 1 st year students at Hp-Campus	0.719
2	Effects of learning facilities on academic performance of 1 st year students at Hp-Campus	0.805
3	Effects of class attendance on academic performance of 1 st year students at Hp-Campus.	0.626
4	Effects of student accommodation on academic performance of 1 st year students at Hp-Campus	0.710
5	Effects of student socio-economic status on academic performance of 1 st year students at Hp-Campus	0.748

The results in Table 4.1 reveal that there was internal consistency of the research instrument as indicated by the Cronbach's Alpha values that were all above the 0.60 threshold. Therefore, the

results obtained from using the questionnaire instrument can be relied upon (Hoe Gan, Wah Lim, and Koh, 2020).

As discussed in Chapter Three, a total of 150 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents who were all first-year students at the Hp campus of the UNAM. However, 104 questionnaires were completed and collected by the researcher which yielded a response rate of 69 percent. This is arguably a reasonable response rate given the tough research environment imposed by the Covid 19 pandemic at the time the survey.

4.2 Demographic data analysis

The demographic patterns of the survey respondents are analysed in this section. Key variables of interest include respondent's gender, age category, marital status, university residence status, entry qualifications into the university, nationality, and transport used to the campus. These are vital for positioning the study into perspective and thus prepare for the outlining of some relevant recommendations later in the final chapter. The findings on each variable are discussed in the corresponding subsections.

4.2.1 Gender composition of respondents

The respondents were asked to indicate their gender and a summary of their responses is shown in Figure 4.1.

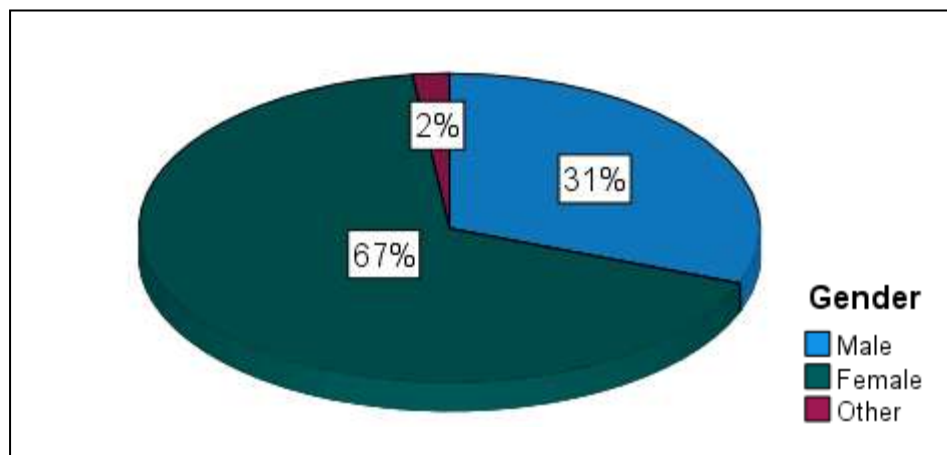


Figure 4.1: proportion of the respondents

The study findings in Figure 4.1 indicate that female respondents dominated their male counterpart in the survey with a ratio of 67 to 31. The remaining 2 percent of the respondents were in the category whose gender is identified as other.

4.2.2 Age categories of respondents

The respondents were asked to indicate their age categories and the findings are presented in Figure 4.2.

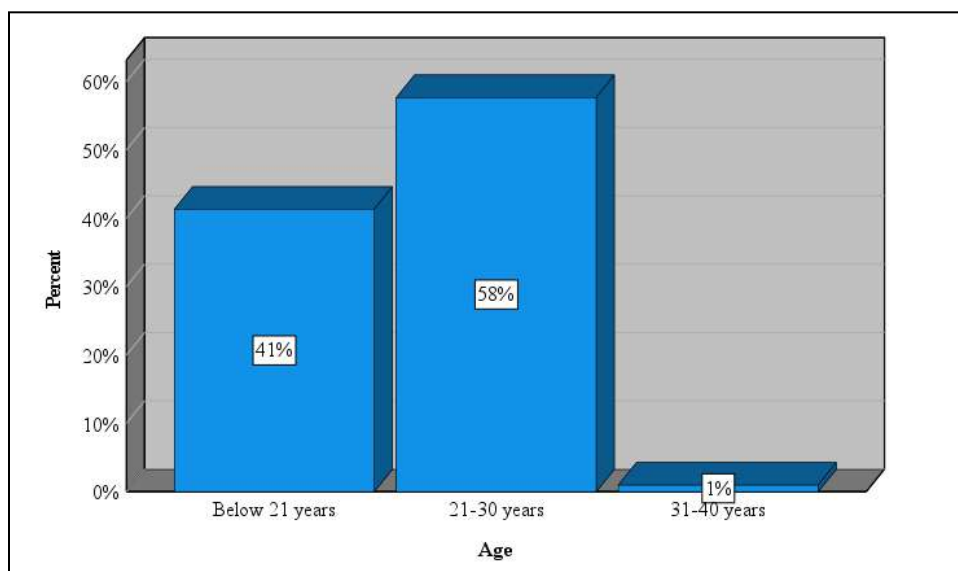


Figure 4.2: Bar graph showing age category of the respondents

Figure 4.2 shows that the respondents who were below the age of 21 years constituted 41 percent. The most dominant group is the 21 – 30 years which were 58 percent, whereas those in the 31-40 years bracket were only one percent.

4.2.3 Marital status of the respondents

In addition, the respondents were asked to state their marital status. The results are indicated in Figure 4.3 overleaf. Most of the survey participants, adding up to 96 percent, were single. The remaining four percent of the respondents were split equally between those who were married and ‘other’.

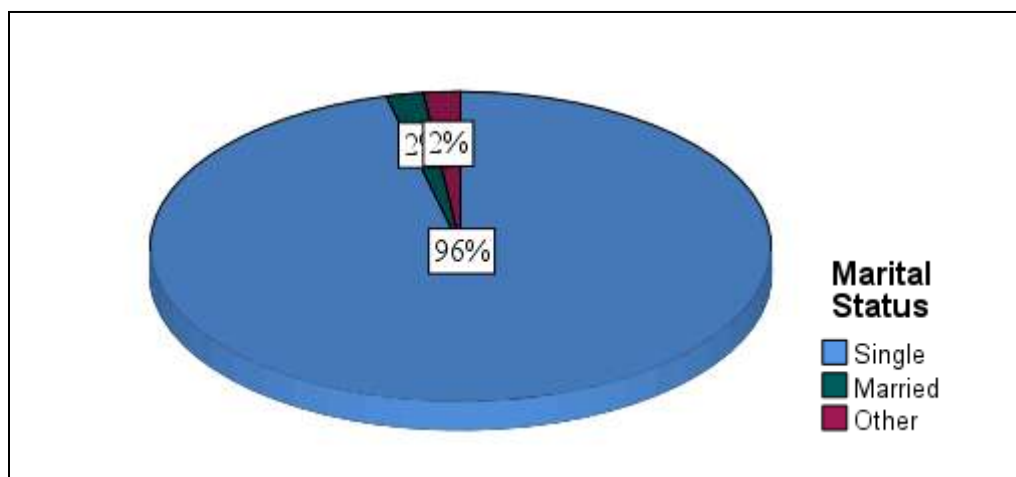


Figure 4.3: Marital status of the respondents

4.2.4 The respondents' entry qualifications into the university

Data was collected to determine the entry qualification of students into the university. The results are indicated in Figure 4.4.

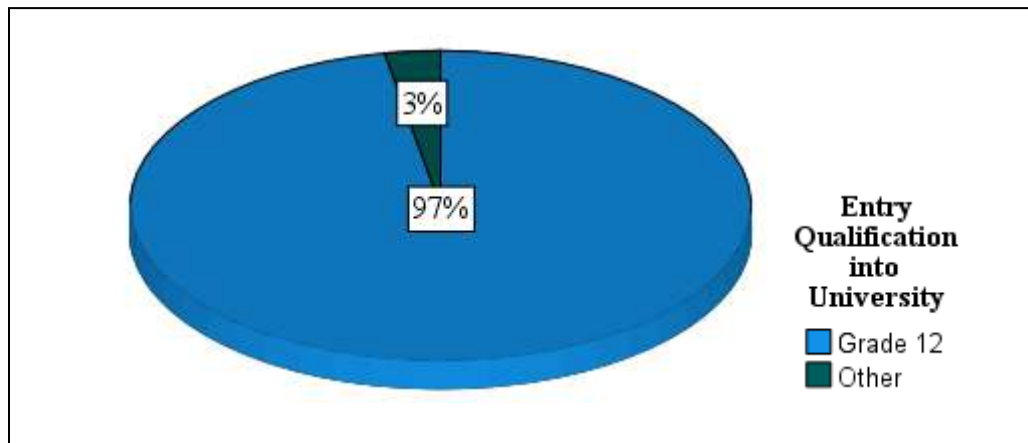
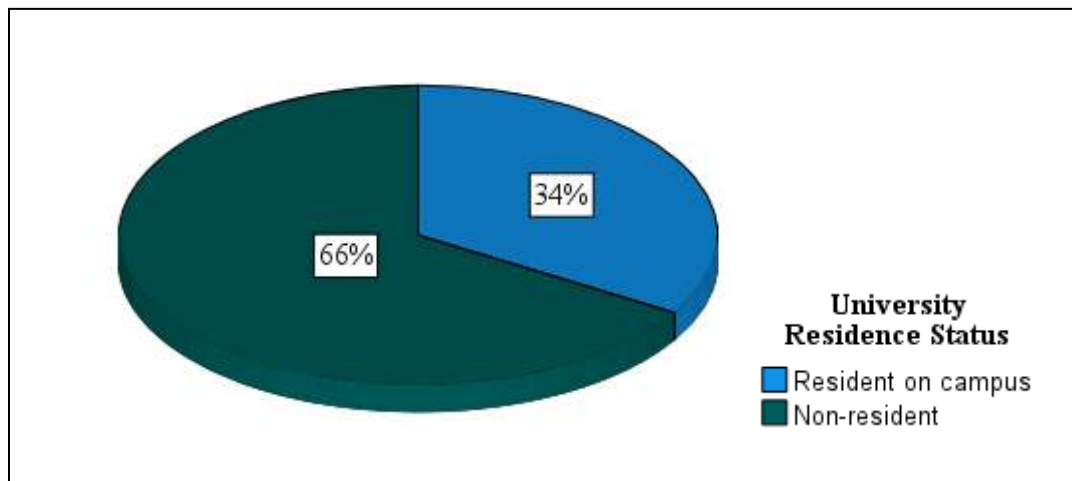


Figure 4.4: Entry qualifications of the respondents into the university

The results in Figure 4.4 shows that 97 percent of the respondents entered university using Grade 12 qualifications, while 3 percent used other qualifications.

4.2.5 The respondents' university residence status

The respondents were requested to indicate whether they were resident on the university's campus or they were staying outside campus. The findings are shown in Figure 4.5.



Figure

4.5: Respondents' university residence status

The findings in Figure 4.5 show that 66 percent and 34 percent of the respondents stay on and off the campus residence, respectively.

4.2.6 Respondents' nationality

Data was also sought to establish the respondents' nationality. The findings are shown in Figure 4.6.

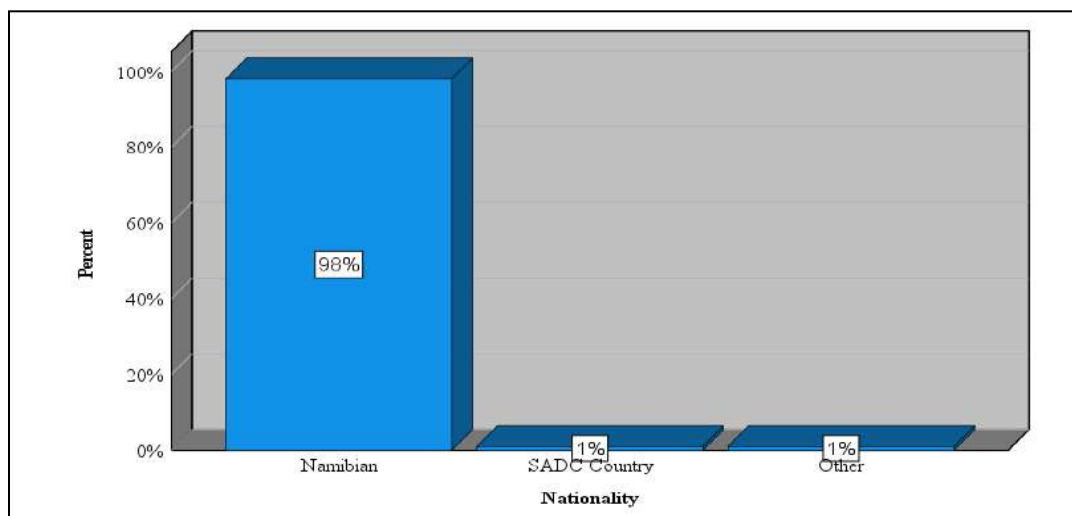


Figure 4.6: The respondents' nationality

The results in Figure 4.6 demonstrate that almost all the respondents are Namibian by nationality (98 percent). Only about one percent of the respondents originated from the SADC countries outside Namibia, while the other one percent was from beyond.

4.2.7 The respondents' means of transport to the university

The respondents were required to state the means of transport that they were using for commuting to and from the university's campus when attending physical lectures. The results are shown in Figure 4.7.

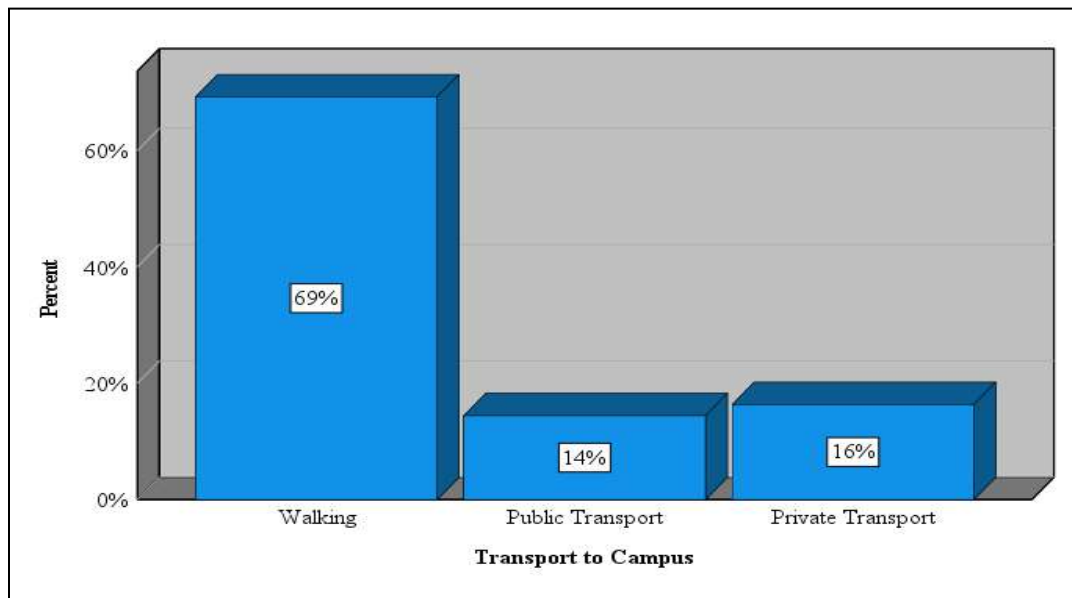


Figure 4.7: Respondent's mode of transport

The findings in Figure 4.7 show that 69 percent of the respondents walk to the university, while 14 percent and 16 percent use public and private transport, respectively. The proportion (69 percent) of those walking to and from the campus is closely related to the proportion of the respondents residing on campus (66 percent) reported in Figure 4.5.

4.3 Interpretation and analysis of the main findings

Discussions of the key findings are carried out in this section starting with the primary research objective that seeks to investigate the factors affecting first years' academic performance at the Hp

campus, UNAM. The analysis then proceeds by focusing on the four secondary research objectives that were highlighted in Chapter 1 and restated at the beginning of this chapter.

4.3.1 Factors affecting 1st year students' academic performance at the Hp campus

This subsection investigates the factors that affected the academic performance of first year students at the UAM, Hp Campus. The factor loading metrics, as depicted by the KMO test, BTS, and AVE, were used to establish the validity of the findings. Every scale item on the questionnaire was evaluated based on the mean and the SD. The analysis applies the Five Likert Scale of 1= strongly disagree agree; 2= disagree; 3= neutral; 4= agree; and 5= strongly agree, which was the foundation of the research instrument. It also made it easier to employ the quantitative research method chosen for this study. On the Likert Scale, the highest value and lowest value $[(5-1)/5]$ was used to compute an average of 0.8, which is then became the weight that distinguishes the strongly disagree to strongly agree classification in the analysis. If a mean response falls in the category of 1 to 1.80, it is interpreted as strongly disagree, whereas 1.81 to 2.60 is construed as disagree. Similarly, 2.61 to 3.40 is moderately agree, while 3.41 to 4.20 is agree, and 4.21 to 5 is strongly agree (see, Asun *et al*, 2015). Results for this construct are reported in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Factors affecting 1st years' academic performance at the Hp campus

	KMO	Bartlett test	Mean	Standard deviation	AVE	Factor Metrics
Statements	0.647	35.963			63.730	
University environment plays a major role			3.85	1.189		0.613
University educational & safety policies are well outlined & available to the newly enrolled			3.61	1.110		0.728
Most students transiting from secondary schools to universities are mostly not prepared to form new relationships.			3.38	1.338		0.809
University timetables are well formulated, and lectures runs smoothly without clashes which is convenient to new students			3.82	1.313		0.642
Proper learning facilities are put in place for new students to scale through their examinations and assignments			3.63	1.167		0.736
Lecturers establish a friendly interaction with new students to familiarise them with the new course.			3.94	1.237		0.696

Results in Table 4.2 indicate the constructs for factors affecting academic performance of first year students at the UNAM, Hp campus. All the factor metrics for each scale item exceeded the

threshold value of 0.5. They ranged from 0.613 to 0.809. The KMO metric for measuring sample adequacy was found to be 0.647, which is statistically satisfactory as it is way above the 0.5 minimum threshold. Also, the BTS value was found to be statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Furthermore, the modelled factors contribute 63.73 percent on average in explaining the academic performance of the first-year students at the Hp campus who participated in this study.

Further to the above, Table 4.2 shows the mean value of each scale item. The respondents agree with the notion that the university environment plays a role in determining academic performance of first year students at the Hp campus (mean=3.85, n=104). They also agree that the university educational and safety policies are well outlined and availed to the newly enrolled students (mean =3.61), and that the university timetables are well formulated, and lecturers run smoothly (mean = 3.82). They also agree with the view that proper learning facilities are put in place for new students to pass their assessments (mean = 3.63), and that lecturers establish friendly interaction with new students to familiarise them with new course (mean =3.94). However, the respondents moderately agree that most students' transitioning from secondary school to universities is smooth as the students are not well prepared to form new relationships (mean =3.38).

Furthermore, some open-ended responses regarding the factors that affect the academic performance of first year students were gathered. The respondents highlighted the following factors as reasons that compromise the academic performance of first year students at the Hp campus:

- Inadequate study resources
- Peer pressure from current and former students
- Poor student orientation
- Aggressive lecturers
- Students not well formalised to work in groups
- Poor communication between students and lecturers
- Inability to adjust to the new environment
- Clash of timetables for lessons and lack of study materials from the university negatively affects performance

4.3.2 Effects of learning facilities on the academic performance of first year students at the Hp campus

Data analysis in this section sought to fulfil the first secondary research objective. Again, the validity of the constructs was established through the KMO, BTS, AVE, and the factor loading metrics. Yet again, responses on each scale item were summarised using the mean and SD values. The results are indicated in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Effects of learning facilities on the academic performance of the first years at the Hp campus

	KMO	Bartlett test	Mean	SD	AVE	Factor Metrics
Statements	0.609	95.166			63.496	
Inadequate learning facilities affect first year students' performance			3.99	1.178		0.827
University has adequate library with modern books (not more than five years)			3.49	1.182		0.631
Library operating hours are adequate & allows more study time			4.24	1.102		0.586
Lecture rooms are big enough to accommodate all students during lessons			3.62	1.403		0.528
Halls of residence are conducive for studying			3.72	5.128		0.682
Students' access to the internet Wi-Fi on campus is unlimited & the speed is fast to allow students to easily download study material			2.54	1.461		0.586
There are enough sports and recreation facilities on campus for 1st years to interact			3.38	1.184		0.685
Facilities on campus cater well for first year students with disabilities			2.97	1.047		0.561
University has a well set up computer lab that accommodates new students who do not have laptops & smartphones			3.83	1.288		0.629

The results in Table 4.3 show that the listed items contribute 63.5 percent on average in explaining the effects of learning facilities on the academic performance of first years at the Hp campus. The KMO value is 0.609 and thus confirms the validity of this construct as it is greater than the 0.5 cut-off value. All the factor loading metrics exceed the minimum threshold of 0.5 as they range from 0.528 to 0.827 which authenticates their inclusion into the analysis. Also, the BTS value is statistically significant at the 0.01 level and thus, together, all these statistics justify the use of factor analysis.

The results in Table 4.3 indicate that the respondents strongly agree with the view that the university's library operating hours are adequate, allows for more study time to first year students (mean =4.24, n = 104). They agree with the notion that inadequate learning facilities affect first year students' performance (mean = 3.99), and that the university has a well-resourced library with modern books that are mostly not older than five years (mean =3.49). They also agree that the lecture rooms are big enough to accommodate all students during lessons (mean =3.62), and that halls of residence are conducive for studying (mean = 3.72). In addition, they agree that the university has a well set-up computer lab that accommodates new students who do not have laptops and smartphones (mean = 3.83). However, the respondents disagree with the opinion that students have access to unlimited internet Wi-Fi on campus and the speed is fast enough to easily download study material (mean = 2.54). They do not agree that facilities on campus cater well for first year students with disabilities (mean = 2.97), and moderately agree that there are enough sports and recreation facilities on campus for first years to interact (mean = 3.38).

The above findings were corroborated with the open-ended responses that collated additional comments on the availability of learning facilities at the Hp campus. Although the respondents suggested, to a large extent, that the campus has conducive learning facilities, they still underscored the following:

- More lecture theatres are needed.
- Wi-Fi is slow.
- There are few chairs and benches for resting/relaxing and refreshing the minds.
- There are limited facilities for studying.
- The campus administration should expand the computer laboratory.

The above findings confirm the findings of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Ansa (2018) confirmed that unavailability of learning facilities stands as a hindrance to first year students' performance because students who are new to a course of study need proper learning facilities to scale through their assignments and examinations. Mbunda (2006) added that those resources include all teaching and learning materials used by both lecturers and students in their learning. Other materials include textbooks, projectors, laptops and internet. Students indicated their

concern of limited internet access in table 4.3 which can be a great hindrance to their academic performance.

4.3.3 Effects of class attendance on the academic performance of 1st year students at the Hp campus (2nd secondary research objective)

This subsection explicates the effects of class attendance on the academic performance of first year students at the Hp campus in relation to the survey findings. As with the previous subsections, the KMO, BTS AVE, and factor loading metrics were employed to confirm the validity of the constructs. The findings are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Effects of class attendance on the academic performance of first year students at the Hp campus

	KMO	Bartlett test	Mean	Standard deviation	AVE	Factor Metrics
Statements	0.571	68.627			62.927	
Class attendance affects performance of first year students.			3.78	1.313		0.650
University has a clearly laid out class attendance & absenteeism policy			3.78	1.102		0.559
The minimum contact time per course is clearly stated & is enough to stimulate performance of 1st year students			3.71	1.063		0.534
Procedures of acquiring clearance if there is need to miss lectures are not complicated for students with supporting documents			3.04	1.252		0.618
Physical attendance helps students to participate in all class & guided learning activities- helps with preparations for final assignments			4.39	0.931		0.702
Attendance helps first year students to improve their learning since class time is devoted to challenging discussions			3.95	1.070		0.684
Feedback (marked and revised written work) influences academic performance in final examinations			3.20	1.360		0.658

The findings in Table 4.4 indicate that the factor metrics range from 0.534 to 0.702 which confirms the validity of the factor analysis for all the individual items. The results are buttressed by a KMO value of 0.571, and the BTS value which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. The listed factors account for 62.9 percent on average (AVE) in explaining the effects of class attendance on the academic performance of first year students at the Hp campus.

The results in Table 4.4 reveal that the respondents strongly agree with the opinion that physical attendance helps students to participate in all class and guided learning activities which helps them with preparations for final assignments (mean = 4.39, n = 104). The respondents agree with the notion that class attendance affects performance of first year students (mean = 3.78), and that the university has a clearly laid out class attendance and absenteeism policy (mean = 3.78). They also agree that the minimum contact time per course is clearly stated and is sufficient to stimulate performance of first year students (mean = 3.71), and that attendance helps first year students to improve their learning since class time is devoted to challenging discussions (mean = 3.95). However, the respondents moderately agree that procedures of acquiring clearance if there is need to miss lectures are not complicated for students with supporting documents (mean = 3.04), and that feedback (marked and revised written work) affects the students' terminal examination results (mean = 3.20).

In addition, open responses were gathered on other ways that class attendance contributes to the performance of first year students. They suggested the following:

- Class attendance helps students to understand a specific module better.
- There is a policy that ensures that every student is scared not to write their examinations because of absenteeism. Students are required to sign attendance registers for each lecture and 80% attendance is needed to sit for examinations.
- Besides, if students attend lessons, they will gain knowledge and skills.
- It contributes 20% to mark and allows students to attend class and do every activity.
- Attending lectures and tutorial everyday helps the students to catch up with the content easily.

The above findings confirm the literature that was reviewed in Chapter 2. Shanti (2019) averred that regular class attendance is one of the primary reasons for students' success especially for new students. This view was reinforced by Yousaf et al. (2019) who added that class attendance is very important because it determines the academic outcome of learners, especially those in their first year of study.

4.3.4 Effects of availability of campus accommodation on the academic performance of first year students at the Hp campus.

Discussions in this subsection elucidate the effects of availability of campus accommodation on the academic performance of first year students at the Hp campus. The factor metrics, KMO, BTS and the AVE were applied to determine the validity of the research constructs. The mean and SD were used to summarise the responses to each scale item. Table 4.5 presents the findings of the study regarding the respondents' opinions on the effects of availability of campus accommodation on first year learners' performance.

Table 4.5: Effects of availability of campus accommodation on the academic performance of first year students at the Hp campus

	KMO	Bartlett test	Mean	Standard deviation	AVE	Factor Metrics
Statements	0.733	90.632			56.736	
Lack of campus accommodation affects first year students' performance			3.73	1.416		0.510
On campus resident students perform better than the non-resident			3.04	1.314		0.514
Availability of campus accommodation has an impact on new students' tertiary enrolment			3.45	1.131		0.532
1st year students in social corridor & residence halls faces barriers in privacy & interaction which affects academic outcomes			2.96	1.140		0.709
First year students who live on campus are able take on more credit hours compared to those who resides outside of the university.			3.93	1.108		0.551
1st year students residing on campus has high opportunity to participate in students' politics & leadership compared to outside campus			3.77	1.353		0.589

The results in Table 4.5 show that the indicative effects of the construct account for 56.74 percent in explaining effects of the availability of campus accommodation on first year students' academic performance. The KMO is 0.73, and the BTS is significant at the 0.01 level. All the factor metrics exceed the 0.5 minimum threshold with the smallest reported at 0.510. Therefore, the statistics indicate that the construct 'availability of campus accommodation' is valid and reliable.

Table 4.5 shows that the respondents agree with the view that lack of campus accommodation affects first year students' performance (mean = 3.73, n=104), and that the availability of campus accommodation has an impact on new students' tertiary enrolment (mean=3.45). They also agree that first year students who live on campus are able take on more credit hours compared to those who resides outside of the university (mean =3.93), and that first-year students residing on campus has high opportunity to participate in students' politics and leadership compared to outside campus (mean = 3.77). However, they moderately agree that on-campus resident students perform better than non-resident students (mean=3.04), and that first-year students in social corridor and residence halls faces barriers in privacy and interaction which affects academic outcomes (mean = 2.96).

The above findings were corroborated with the findings from open ended questions. The respondents stated that:

- On-campus residence contributes to better academic performance as the students benefit from access to internet 24/7 and can make use of the library anytime.
- Students who live on campus have more opportunities to study and interact with other students.
- There is good security in campus accommodation.
- On-campus students can manage time better without disturbances from home.
- Students who live on campus do their assignments on time.
- Staying on campus makes improves students' punctuality for lessons.
- Students renting in flats outside campus face difficulties in meeting basic needs.
- First year students lack financial support to afford rentals.
- Walking distance from home to campus is often long, making some students arrive late for lessons and they will be tired.

The above results confirm the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Tsimangadzo et al. (2020) confirmed that lack of accommodation in universities has forced new students to reside outside the campus. Furthermore, the authors indicated that first year students who reside on campus gain more on social and personal competences. The level of competence gained by first year students who live on campus helps them to be more successful in their courses. Zamokuhle (2021) also

confirmed that first year students who reside at home do not feel a sense of freedom compared to those who stay on campus. Being newly admitted to the university, first year students who live at home due to the lack of accommodation do not really feel that they are university students because they are excluded in various university activities. Students who stay outside of the campus cannot stay at the campus till late to do group assignments with students who reside on campus due to transport challenges.

4.3.5 Effects of socioeconomic status on the academic performance of first year students at the Hp campus.

In this final subsection, discussions focus on identifying the effects of socioeconomic status on academic performance of first year students at the Hp campus. As in the other subsections above, the factor metrics - KMO, BTS and the AVE - were employed to verify the validity of the constructs. The mean and SD were, again, used to encapsulate the responses to each scale item. Table 4.6 shows the findings.

Table 4.6: Effects of socioeconomic status on the academic performance of 1st year students at the Hp campus

	KMO	Bartlett test	Mean	Standard deviation	AVE	Factor Metrics
Statements	0.713	139.290			61.573	
The socio-economic status of the first-year students affects their performance.			3.65	1.091		0.691
Economic status and background affect students' proficiency in written and spoken English which affects their overall performance.			3.77	1.182		0.522
Good results obtained from top expensive secondary schools put 1st years on course to perform well at university			3.21	1.250		0.846
Students from less privileged families receive financial assistance from the government when they enrol at the university			3.81	1.245		0.659
Namibia Student Financial Assistance fund mostly gives study grants & loans to students who are coming from low socio-economic status			4.03	1.256		0.649
Parents with higher socio-economic status can provide their children with the necessary support			3.94	1.153		0.508

Drugs and alcohol abuse are more common among first year students from rich families which may affect their performance			3.59	1.294		0.606
Failure by the government to support students and universities financially has a negative effect especially on new students			4.07	1.215		0.646

The suggestive items of the construct in Table 4.6 account for 61.57 percent (AVE) in explaining the effects of socioeconomic factors on the academic performance of first year students at the HP campus, UNAM. The KMO is 0.71, and the BTS is significant at the 0.01 level. All the factor metrics exceed the 0.5 minimum threshold with the lowest being 0.508 hence the statistics entail that the socioeconomic construct is valid.

Furthermore, the findings in Table 4.6 reveal that the respondents agree with the opinion that the socio-economic status of the first-year students affects their academic performance (mean = 3.65, n = 104), and that economic status and background affect students' proficiency in written and spoken English which affects their overall performance (mean = 3.71). They also believe that students from less privileged families receive financial assistance from the government when they enrol at the university (mean = 3.81), and that the Namibia Student Financial Assistance fund mostly gives study grants and loans to students who are coming from low socio-economic status (mean = 4.03), and parents with higher socio-economic status can provide their children with the necessary support (mean = 3.94).

Moreover, the respondents agree with the views that drugs and alcohol abuse are more common among first year students from rich families which may affect their performance (mean = 3.59), and failure by the government to support students and universities financially has a negative effect especially on new students (mean = 4.07). The respondents moderately agree with the notion that good results obtained from top expensive secondary schools put the first years on course to perform well at university (mean = 3.21).

The above findings were corroborated with the findings from the open-ended responses. The respondents emphasised the following:

- University fees are high, and students end up in economic crisis.

- First year students mostly struggle with registration fees.
- Alcohol and drug abuse negatively impact academic performance.
- Poor students have no devices to learn online or buy textbooks.
- Most first year students have no phones and computers, so it is difficult to type assignments.
- Some less privileged first year students end up falling into relationships for financial benefits.
- Some of the students from poor backgrounds drop out of school.

The above findings are supported by the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 that there is an important link between education and the socio-economic circumstances in which individual learners are raised as well as their socio-economic circumstances in adulthood (Claire, 2016). First year students agreed that economic status and background affect students' proficiency in written and spoken English which affects their overall performance. This is supported by Harb & El-Shaarawi (2006) who confirmed that the most essential factor that has contributed positively to students 'performance is students' good command of English. If students have a good command of the English language, they tend to perform well in tertiary education.

4.4 Chapter summary

This chapter analysed and interpreted the findings of the study. Most of the results appear to be supported by the extant literature which was reviewed in Chapter 2. The demographic patterns of the respondents were discussed to provide a background meaning to the main findings. The results on the primary objective of study which is an investigation of the factors affecting the academic performance of first year students at the Hp-Campus were analysed. The chapter then proceeded by focusing on the secondary research objectives that encompassed an analysis of the effects of learning facilities, class attendance, availability of student accommodation, and socioeconomic status on the academic performance of first year students at the Hp campus. The next chapter provides a final summary of the study findings, concludes the study, and suggests some recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

FINAL SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented data and interpreted the research findings. This chapter summarises these findings. The chapter also reaffirms the purpose of the study. It provides recommendations based on the research findings and ends with a conclusion which is grounded on the researcher's observations during the course of the study.

5.2 Purpose of the study

This study sought to explicate the factors affecting the academic performance of first-year students at the UNAM, Hp-Campus. The study used a survey design for the collection of data. Questionnaires were distributed to first year students at the Hp-campus.

5.3 Summary

This section gives an overall summary of the research results. It contains five sections of which the first offers the summary of the results that address the primary study objective. The second part of the summary addresses the results of the first secondary study objective. The third part gives a summary of the results of the secondary study objective. The fourth part provides a summary of the findings of the third secondary research objective, while the last part summarises the results that address the fourth secondary objective of the study.

5.3.1 Factors affecting first year students' academic performance at the Hp campus

The research findings revealed that the respondents believed that the university environment plays a major role in determining the academic performance of first year students. The respondents further indicated that the university had put in place educational policies which were well outlined and were availed to the newly enrolled students. The respondents added that the university timetable was formulated and first year students' lectures were running smoothly. However, the respondents revealed that most first year students transiting from secondary school to universities were not adequately prepared to form new relationships.

The results further indicated, through open-ended general comments, that issues such as inadequate resources, peer pressure from current and former students around the campus, poor

students' orientation, aggressive lecturers, lack of students readiness to work in groups, poor communication between students and lecturers, and clash of timetable for lectures were negatively affecting the performance of first year students at the UNAM, Hp campus.

5.3.2 Effects of learning facilities on the academic performance of first year students at Hp campus.

This section focused on collecting data on the effects of learning facilities on academic performance of first year students at the Hp campus. The close-ended responses indicated that the respondents believed that the university environment played a major role in determining the academic performance of first year students. Through the open-ended responses, the study participants suggested that although the campus had conducive learning facilities, the university did not have adequate infrastructure in the form of lecture theatres, Wi-Fi, chairs and benches for resting, and computer labs.

5.3.3 Effects of class attendance on the academic performance of first year students at the Hp campus.

The outcome of this study revealed that the university had clearly laid out class attendance and absenteeism policy and the minimum contact time per course was clearly stated and was sufficient to stimulate the performance of first year students. However, the respondents were not fully satisfied with the procedures of acquiring clearance if there was need to miss lectures as they believed that these measures were not clearly explained to the students with the necessary supporting documents.

5.3.4. Effects of availability of campus accommodation on the academic performance of first year students at Hp campus.

The respondents agreed that first year students that lived on the campus took more credits compared to those who lived outside the campus. Furthermore, the respondents believed that first year students who resided on campus had more opportunities to participate in student politics and leadership capacity development programmes compared to those living outside campus. Furthermore, the results of the study revealed that on-campus resident students benefited from access to internet 24 hours a day and could use the library till late. Again, the resident students were free from disturbances from home hence could concentrate on their studies more easily. The

students were not walking long distances from home to campus like their commuting counterparts who often came to class late which could have negatively affected their performance.

5.3.5 Effects of socioeconomic status on the academic performance of first year students at the Hp campus.

The study revealed that the respondents believed that the socio-economic status of the first-year students affected their academic performance including the students' proficiency in written and spoken English. The findings also indicated that drug and alcohol abuse were more common among first year students from rich families which may have negatively affected their academic performance. Again, the inability of the government to support students in universities financially negatively affected their academic performance especially new students. Through open-ended question, the respondents indicated some of the socio-economic factors that negatively affected the academic performance of first year students at the Hp campus as high university fees which cause students from low income backgrounds to end up in economic crisis, lack of sporting attire to effectively participate in sporting activities, incapacity to pay registration fees which were not paid for by the government, and lack of technological devices (smart phones and laptops) to learn online and finances to buy textbooks.

5.4 Recommendations

The significance and impact of the factors that influenced the academic performance of first year students (learning facilities, class attendance, campus accommodation, and socio-economic status) cannot be overemphasised. In this study, the factors indicated contributed meaningfully towards improving or hindering the standard of education at the UNAM, Hp campus. Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are suggested to reduce the impact of the indicated factors on the academic performance of first year students.

This study findings revealed that some of the learning facilities at the Hp campus were inadequate, yet these have a significant impact on the academic performance of first year students. It is therefore recommended that the university should establish more physical infrastructure at the campus such as lecture theatres, computer laboratories, internet, the library, and residential accommodation for first year students transiting from secondary schools to the university as these

had no contacts in the city. This would enable them to settle down more quickly to focus on their studies.

- The outcome of the study indicated that class attendance is associated with students' academic performance especially for the first years. To enhance class attendance among first year students, the university must ensure that the procedures for acquiring clearance with supporting documents for first year students if absent from classes are fast-tracked to encourage the students to go through normal procedures for class absenteeism. Again, first year students' awareness of the importance of class attendance must be increased given that regular class attendance was found to enhance the academic performance of first year students.

- The study showed that availability of campus accommodation had a significant effect on the first-year students' academic performance. It is therefore recommended that the university should prioritise first year students when allocating campus accommodation to ensure that they live on campus and focus on their studies without disturbances of commuting from the locations when they have limited resources and knowledge of the city.

- In this study, socio-economic status was found to be one of the factors affecting the academic performance of first year students. On this note, the university must increase the grants and bursaries for first year students to enable them to focus on their studies. Again, the university should determine school fees based on affordability and financial capacity to accommodate students from different socio-economic backgrounds. The government should also encourage private companies to give scholarships to outstanding first year students to ease their financial burden and allow them to concentrate on their studies which will boost their academic performance.

5.5 Conclusion

The study focused on the factors affecting academic performance of first year students at the UNAM Hp campus, Ongwediva. The study findings were comprehensive, informative and significantly validated the indicated factors (learning facilitate, class attendance, campus

accommodation and socio-economic status) as elements that affected the first-year students' academic performance at the university.

The actual contribution of the study is its input to the body of knowledge in achieving the study objectives and answering the research questions thereby contributing to both practice and future research on factors affecting the academic performance of first year students in colleges and universities in Namibia and elsewhere. The main inference for implementation is that this study provides the University of Namibia, Ministry of Higher Education, and the Namibia government with the necessary empirical facts on the factors affecting academic performance of first year students. Furthermore, the evidence that was acknowledged from the conclusions, as well as the recommendations that were suggested will provide the University of Namibia, Ministry of Higher Education and the Namibia government with first-hand information that will assist them in their policies and decisions towards the improvement of teaching and learning in Namibian tertiary education institutions.

This study has inferences for further research. The study covered students from the Hp campus, Ongwediva only. Upcoming researchers might need to cover other UNAM campuses such as UNAM Main Campus, UNAM Khomasdal Campus, UNAM Rundu Campus, UNAM Oshakati Campus, UNAM Engineering Campus and UNAM Ketmanshoop Campus. Future researchers may also want to widen the study to include other universities and tertiary institutions in Namibia such as International University of Management, Institute for Open Learning and Triumphant College. Also, future researchers can use the results of this study as a catalyst in identifying other factors affecting academic performance of students generally across all facets of institutional learning. Future researchers may want to pursue other research methodologies such as qualitative and mixed methods instead of the solely quantitative methodology that was implemented in this study.

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APPENDIX I: INTRODUCTION LETTER

Topic: Investigating the factors affecting academic performance of first year students at the University of Namibia (Hifikepunye Pohamba campus, Ongwediva)

Dear participant,

My name is Saima Kaunapawa Sakeus. I am currently enrolled in the Master of Education in Higher Education degree programme at Botho University, and I am in the process of writing my MED dissertation. I would like to thank you in advance for abandoning your busy schedules to respond to this questionnaire. The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine the factors affecting academic performance of first year students at the University of Namibia (Hifikepunye Pohamba campus, Ongwediva).

Your participation in this research project is completely voluntary. Your responses will remain anonymous and confidential. No identifiable responses will be presented in the final form of this study. No participant is allowed to write any identification information. This questionnaire will not be used for any business purpose but of the fulfillment of a master's degree with Botho University.

If you agree to participate in this study, please answer the questions in the questionnaire as best as you can. It should take you approximately 10 to 20 minutes to complete.

CONSENT

Please tick below

☐

I have read and I understand the information provided above. I understand that my participation is absolutely voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason for such withdrawal from the survey.

Name of Supervisor: Prof. Ushe Makambe

APPENDIX II: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

PART I: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

The following information is collected for demographic purposes only and will not be used to identify any respondents. Your responses are confidential and will be combined with those of other respondents for the purpose of this study only. **Tick the box that applies to you.**

1. Gender

Male ☐ Female ☐ other ☐

2. Age

☐ Below 21 years ☐ 21-30years ☐ 31 - 40 years

☐ 41 – 50 years ☐ 51-60 years ☐ 61+ years

3. Marital Status

☐ Single

☐ Married

☐ Other

4. University residence status

☐ Residence on campus

☐ Non-residence on campus

5. Qualification used for entry into the university

☐ Grade 12 ☐ Other

6. Nationality

☐ Namibian

☐ SADC country

☐ Other

7. How do you get to campus for lectures?

☐ Walking ☐ public transport ☐ private transport

PART II – FACTORS AFFECTING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF FIRST YEAR STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA (HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMBA CAMPUS, ONGWEDIVA). (Primary research objectives)

Please rate the following statements on the scale: Strongly agree, Disagree, Neutral (Neither Agree nor Disagree), Agree. There is no right or wrong answer. **Tick the box that suits your opinion.**

Please tick (✓) the appropriate columns

SI No.		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
8.	The university environment plays a major role in the academic performance of students.					
9.	The university has educational and safety policies that are well outlined and are available to newly admitted students.					
10.	The university has well equipped departments and libraries.					
11.	Most students transiting from secondary schools to universities are mostly not prepared to form new relationships.					
12.	The university time tables are well formulated and lectures runs smoothly without crashes.					
13.	Proper learning facilities are put in place for new students in order to scale through their examination and assignments.					
14.	Lecturers establish a friendly interaction with new students to familiarize them to the new course.					

15. State some other factors that affect the academic performance of first year students.....

PART III- EFFECTS OF LEARNING FACILITIES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF FIRST YEAR STUDENTS (Secondary research objective 1)

This section investigates the effects of learning facilities on the academic performance of first year students at the University of Namibia (Hifikepunye Pohamba campus, Ongwediva).

Please tick (✓) the appropriate columns

SI No.		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
16.	The university have an adequate library with modern books (not more than five years)					
17.	The library operation hours per day are adequate for students.					
18.	The lecture rooms are big enough to accommodate all students during lessons.					
19.	The halls of residence are conducive for studying.					
20.	Student's access to the internet Wi-Fi on campus is unlimited and the Wi-Fi speed is fast enough					
21.	There are enough sports and recreation facilities on campus.					
22.	The facilities on campus cater well for students with disabilities.					
23.	The university has a well set up computer lab that accommodates new students without laptops and smartphones.					

24. Any further comments you may wish to make concerning campus facilities?

.....

.....

.....

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PART IV- THE EFFECTS OF CLASS ATTENDANCE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF FIRST YEAR STUDENTS (Secondary research objectives 2)

This section investigates the effects of attendance on academic performance of first year students at the University of Namibia (Hifikepunye Pohamba campus, Ongwediva).

Please tick (✓) the appropriate columns

SI No.		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
25.	Orientation programme is put in place for students to familiarize themselves with issues concerning class attendance which boosts the performance of first year students.					
26.	The university has a clearly laid out strict class attendance and absenteeism policy measures that enhance the performance of first year students.					
27.	First year students understand the attendance policies of the university which enhances their performance.					
28.	The minimum contact time per course is clearly stated and is enough to stimulate the performance of first year students.					
29.	The procedures of acquiring clearance if there is need to miss lectures are not complicated for students with supporting documents thus making it easier for them to miss class.					
30.	Physical attendance helps students to participate in all class and guided learning activities which helps students when working on their final assignments.					
31.	Attendance helps first year students to improve their learning since class time is devoted to challenging discussions.					

32. Do you think class attendance contributes to the performance of students?

.....

PART V- THE EFFECTS OF ACCOMMODATION ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF FIRST YEAR STUDENTS (Secondary research objectives 3)

This section investigates the effects of accommodation on academic performance of first year students at the University of Namibia (Hifikepunye Pohamba campus, Ongwediva).

Please tick (✓) the appropriate columns

SI No.		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
33.	Students in social corridor, residence halls faces barrier in privacy and interaction which affects students' academic outcomes compared to students in isolating apartment which have communal space and locking doors.					
34.	First year students who live on campus have greater degree of academic progress, higher academic performance and high retention.					
35.	Students who live on campus are able take on more credit hours and they have the ability to connect with the faculty members on campus and high opportunity to participate in students' politics and leadership compared to those first year outside who stay outside of the campus.					
36.	The university accommodation has better basic students' amenities like chairs, study desk, bed and closet.					
37.	When students leave home into students accommodation they end up living with strangers and this contributes to the students' mental stress as they adjust to new environment.					

38. State what you mostly like about your accommodation

.....

.....

.....

.....

PART VI- THE EFFECTS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF FIRST YEAR STUDENTS (Secondary research objectives 4)

This section investigates the effects of socio-economic factor on academic performance of first year students at the University of Namibia (Hifikepunye Pohamba campus, Ongwediva).

Please tick (✓) the appropriate columns

SI No.		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

39.	Students from less privilege families receive financial assistance from the government.					
40.	Namibia Student Financial Assistance fund firstly give study grants and loans to students who are coming from low socio-economic status families.					
41.	Most first year students from disadvantage backgrounds drop out due to financial difficulties.					
42.	Family education and socio-economic status have an impact on students' academic achievements at any level of education.					
43.	When the university works with students, parents and families it ensures diverse cultural and social capital which students bring to school increases academic achievement.					
44..	Parents with higher socio-economic status are able to provide their children necessary support compared to those with low socio-economic status which enhances their academic performance.					

45. State the common socio-economic factors that influence students' academic performance

.....

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! THANK YOU

APPENDIX III: RESEARCH PERMIT

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH SERVICES

Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor: Research, Innovation & Development

University of Namibia, Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia

340 Mandume Ndemutayo Avenue, Pioneers Park, Office F223 - Block, Second Floor

☎ +264 61 206 4673; E-mail: kmbulu@unam.na; URL: <http://www.unam.edu.na>



UNAM
UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

21 June 2022

Dear Ms. Saima K Sakues,

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA (UNAM)

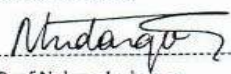
Your application to conduct research at UNAM entitled: "An Investigation into Factors Affecting Academic Performance of First Year Students at The University of Namibia (Hifikepunye Pohamba campus, Ongwediva)" was considered based on ethical approval from your institution. Hence, permission is hereby granted with the following conditions:

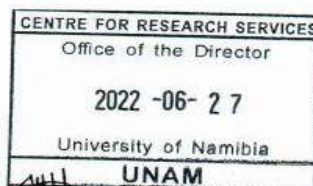
1. During the course of your research activities at UNAM, you will observe the required procedures, norms and ethical conduct in accordance with the relevant Research Policies and Guidelines. If unsure, please consult the Centre for Research Services at UNAM for guidance. The assessment take note of your adjusted methodology of collecting data and anonymity of participants as indicated in the email. Any deviations and amendments to the original documents submitted (i.e. methodology, interview guide, consent forms, etc.) must be submitted again for approval, before the research activities can commence.
2. The results of the findings will be shared with the PVC: Research, Innovation and Development, and the Centre for Research Services, before they are disseminated or published in the public domain.
3. Upon completion, a copy of the Research Report must be lodged with the UNAM Library for our records.
4. Proper, full acknowledgements of the University of Namibia and all participants /respondents shall be done in the Research Report and any subsequent publications arising from this research.
5. Although permission is granted, provision of information is to the consent of respondents.

If you are agreeable to the above conditions, please sign and date a copy of this letter and return it the Centre for Research Services (Email: nkanime@unam.na). If you have any queries, do not hesitate to contact the Centre for Research Services.

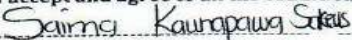
Wishing you all the best with your research.

Yours sincerely


Prof Nelago Indongo
Director: Centre for Research Services



I accept and agree to all the conditions


Saima Kaurapawa Sakus

Full Name and Surname

Signature

Date

 22/06/22