

PART TWO

THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

5. Profile of the population
6. Learner choice:
to study further or not
7. Choosing an institution
8. Choosing a field of study
9. The impact of choices on the future
10. Relative influence of factors on
learner choice



5. PROFILE OF THE POPULATION

The total number of learners who completed valid questionnaires as part of the Grade 12 Learner Choice survey was 12 204. The provincial breakdown is as follows:

Table 5.1: Unweighted response to Grade 12 Learner Choice survey by province

	EC ¹	FS	G	KZN	M	NC	L	NW	WC	TOTAL
n	1949	731	1215	2596	879	557	2468	929	880	12204
%	16.0	6.0	10.0	21.3	7.2	4.6	20.2	7.6	7.2	100.0

Table 5.2 indicates the numbers of respondents to the Grade 12 Learner Choice survey by province and population group.

Table 5.2: Unweighted numbers of respondents to Grade 12 Learner Choice survey by province and population group

	EC	FS	G	KZN	M	NC	L	NW	WC	TOTAL
African	1650	588	883	2056	789	234	2308	839	197	9544
Coloured	75	43	50	30	7	179	10	34	463	891
Indian	13	1	2	307	11	1	2		31	368
White	158	92	265	56	47	137	39	34	136	964
Other	10	2	5	11	3	2	6	1	17	57
Total	1906	726	1205	2460	857	553	2365	908	844	11824

A comparison between Tables 5.1 and 5.2 reveals that 380 respondents (3%) did not indicate their population group. The provincial breakdown of missing population group information is indicated in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Missing population group information in the Grade 12 Learner Choice survey by province

	EC	FS	G	KZN	M	NC	L	NW	WC	TOTAL
n	43	5	10	136	22	4	103	21	36	380
%	2.2	0.7	0.8	5.2	2.5	0.7	4.2	2.3	4.1	3.1

Percentages in the tables that follow based on any frequencies below 100 in Table 5.2 are to be treated with some caution, particularly where high levels of disaggregation occur in the data. Thus, for example, percentages based upon any of the numbers of Indians in all provinces except KwaZulu-Natal should be regarded with some scepticism in the light of these very low figures. As a rule of thumb, indeed, it is imprudent to report percentages for any frequencies below 100.

At the same time, however, the sampling procedure described in Section 4.1.2 allows for the *weighting* of the numbers reported in Table 5.2 to reflect the supposed numbers of learners – the total population of Grade 12 learners in all nine provinces – to which the actual numbers are extrapolated. Thus the numbers reported in the narrative and tables that follow, as indicated in Section 4.1.4.3, are *weighted*.

¹ In this and subsequent tables, province names are abbreviated. The key is: EC = Eastern Cape; FS = Free State; G = Gauteng; KZN = KwaZulu-Natal; M = Mpumalanga; NC = Northern Cape; L = Limpopo (formerly Northern Province); NW = North West; and WC = Western Cape.



5.1 Gender

The target population comprises 492 908 Grade 12 learners – 48.1% of whom are male, 51.9% female. While there are more males than females in the Free State (52.6% male) and Western Cape (53.0% male), the male-female distribution in the other seven provinces matches closely the distribution in the general population (Stats SA, 2001a: 1). Only in Mpumalanga does the proportion of males to females (48.3% to 51.7%) approximate the mean (48.1% male, 51.9% female). In the Northern Cape there are significantly fewer males (44.1%) than females (55.9%).

5.2 Age

The mean age of the population is 19 – also the average across seven of the nine provinces; but in the Eastern Cape the average is 20, and in the Western Cape 18. The predominant age is 18: more than a quarter of learners (27.3%) are 18 years old. The total percentage of learners either 17 turning 18 or already 18 in their Grade 12 year (46.6%) is less than half the number of learners who according to recently rescinded government policy (RSA, 2001) – not in force when the Grade 12 cohort started formal schooling, it has to be said – should have turned 7 in their Grade 1 year and therefore, by extrapolation, should turn 18 in their Grade 12 year.

A categorization of age reinforces the discrepancies in the ages of South African Grade 12 learners both nationally and provincially, as the following table illustrates:

Table 5.4: Age of Grade 12 learners by category²

AGE IN YEARS	EC	FS	G	KZN	M	NC	L	NW	WC	TOTAL
Under 17	1.8	2.3	1.8	2.6	2.6	.4	2.8	1.9	.2	2.1
17	14.5	16.4	20.1	22.9	17.4	19.9	15.2	19.1	33.1	19.3
18	22.5	31.5	34.7	25.3	26.2	45.0	21.2	25.7	41.6	27.3
19	18.9	18.7	20.1	17.4	18.1	14.1	22.2	20.7	14.6	19.1
20	14.9	13.1	11.2	12.7	12.3	8.2	15.9	13.0	6.1	12.9
21	11.5	7.5	6.6	9.0	11.2	5.6	10.4	8.4	1.7	8.8
Over 21	15.9	10.5	5.5	10.1	12.2	6.8	12.3	11.2	2.7	10.5
Total	100.0									

Most strikingly, 89.3% of learners in the Western Cape are concentrated in the 17 to 19-year-old category – a far cry from the situation in KwaZulu-Natal, for example, where only 65.6% of learners are located within this range. The profile indicates that in those provinces with a higher concentration of rural areas – and concomitantly with a higher incidence of rural schools – there are far more Grade 12 learners 20 years old and older than in more urbanized provinces: thus more than two-fifths of the learners in the Eastern Cape (42.3%) and just under two-fifths of the learners in Limpopo (38.6%) are 20 years old or older, while in Gauteng and the Western Cape the percentages are 23.3 and 10.5 respectively.

² Unless otherwise indicated, all figures in this and subsequent tables are percentages.

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5.3 Population group

The demographic breakdown of Grade 12 learners is as follows:

Table 5.5: Population group of Grade 12 learners

GROUP	EC	FS	G	KZN	M	NC	L	NW	WC	TOTAL
African	%	87.1	82.8	73.7	83.2	92.9	43.1	97.7	91.6	21.4 81.8
	n	66029	24783	49545	77933	38818	2748	91841	36194	7550 395440
Coloured	%	3.7	6.5	4.2	1.3	0.8	30.0	0.4	3.9	55.5 6.7
	n	2770	1952	2838	1185	335	1912	375	1524	19583 32473
Indian	%	0.7	0.2	0.1	12.6	1.6	0.1	0.1	0	3.5 3.0
	n	501	58	93	11844	655	9	103	0	1236 14499
White	%	8.1	10.3	21.2	2.4	4.4	26.4	1.4	4.4	17.6 8.0
	n	6136	3082	14242	2278	1820	1685	1353	1740	6228 38565
Other	%	0.5	0.2	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.1	2.0	0.5
	n	376	65	473	394	135	22	288	52	694 2499
Total	%	100.0								
	n	75812	29940	67191	93635	41763	6377	93960	39509	35291

A comparison of the survey population group distribution (Table 5.5) with the population distribution in the country as a whole reveals an over-representation in the Learner Choice survey of Africans and Indians (the national percentages are 77.5 and 2.5 respectively) and an under-representation of coloureds and whites (the national percentages are 9.5 and 10.4 respectively) (Stats SA, 2001a). One obvious reason for the under-representation of whites and the over-representation of Africans, for example, is that many of the formerly white schools included in the sample have experienced an integration of different population groups – in some instances (for example, Sundra High School, in Mpumalanga), to the extent that black learners far outnumber white learners. The sampling process could have controlled for such a factor only through including white learners exclusively in the former white school stratification layer of the profile.

The following table outlines the distribution of Grade 12 learners across schools by previous departmental affiliation (pre-1994), collapsing categories into a population group classification. Thus:

- All former Department of Education and Training schools are collapsed with all former homeland schools to produce the category 'Former African';
- All former House of Assembly schools are collapsed with all former provincial education department schools (for example, Transvaal Education Department, Natal Education Department, etc.) to produce the category 'Former white';
- All former House of Representatives schools are classified as 'Former coloured'; and
- All former House of Delegates schools are classified as 'Former Indian'.

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Table 5.6: Grade 12 learner distribution by population group classification according to previous departmental affiliation of schools

SCHOOL POPULATION GROUP CLASSIFICATION	N	%
New schools (post-1994)	607	5.0
Former African	8787	72.0
Former coloured	859	7.0
Former Indian	433	3.5
Former white	1518	12.4
Total	12 204	100.0

The distribution of the four population groups within these four categories is illustrated in Figure 5.1:

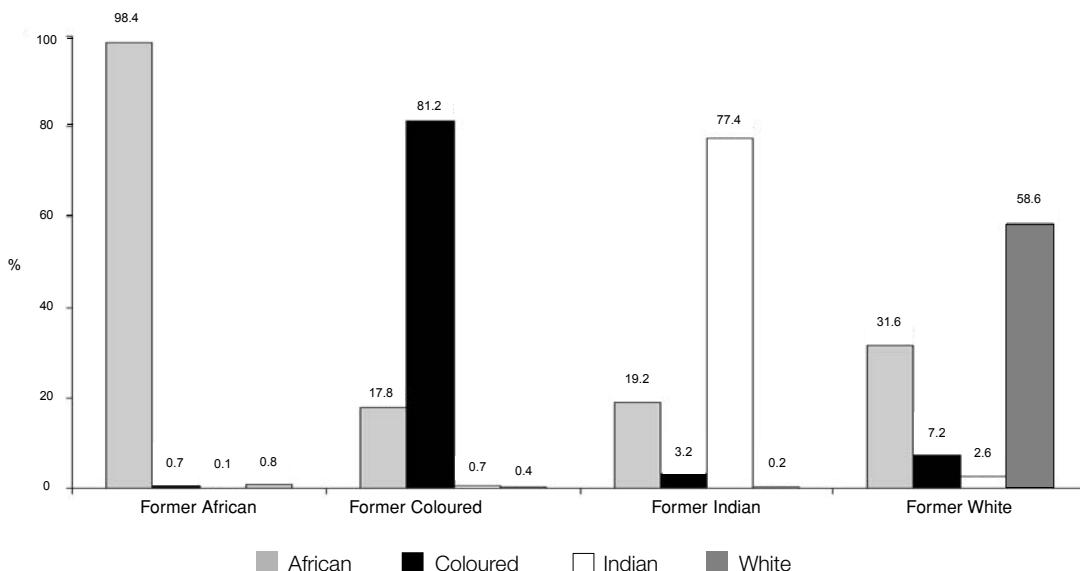


Figure 5.1: Grade 12 learners by population group by former school affiliation

As this figure indicates,

- Learners of all four population groups are represented in all four former population group-affiliated schools;
- Former white schools contain the largest distribution of learners of different population groups; and
- Most tellingly, nearly a third of all learners in former white schools are African, while fewer than three out of five learners in former white schools are white. *These statistics indicate the extent of integration in former white schools since 1994.*

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The other interesting finding is that 97.1% of learners in schools established after 1994 are African – the percentages of learners of other population groups in such schools all being less than 2%. We can deduce from this that the overwhelming majority – if not all – of the schools established by the state since 1994 have been for African learners.

5.4 Language

As is evident from Table 5.7 below, the three most popularly spoken languages in the home are IsiZulu (20.3%), IsiXhosa (16.6%), and Sepedi (13.9%). A comparison with official language statistics as reported in the October Household Survey of 1999 indicates that 23.5% of South Africans in 1999 spoke IsiZulu, 17.6% IsiXhosa, and 13.7% Afrikaans – the three most commonly-spoken first languages (Stats SA, 2001b). The under-representation of coloureds and whites in the survey may account for the slippage of Afrikaans from third position in the national profile to sixth position in this survey; but at face value it seems that Afrikaans as a home language has lost ground particularly to Sepedi and English. This does not necessarily signify a trend, however; besides the issue of the under-representation of coloureds and whites, the difference may be attributable to age (the African population profile is more slanted towards the younger ages than is the white population, for example). Unfortunately the *Labour Force Survey* does not report on language to enable a more recent comparison with national data.

Table 5.7: Language spoken most at home by Grade 12 learners

LANGUAGE	EC	FS	G	KZN	M	NC	L	NW	WC	TOTAL
Afrikaans	3.5	12.5	15.6	0.2	1.5	62.2	0.7	6.8	49.8	8.7
English	10.3	6.0	13.0	17.8	6.5	1.1	2.8	1.4	31.1	10.7
IsiNdebele	0.1	0.3	0.8	0.0	20.1	0	0.6	1.1	0	2.1
IsiXhosa	85.0	8.1	5.5	0.4	0.2	9.8	0.2	3.9	18.0	16.6
IsiZulu	0.7	3.9	18.1	80.9	16.0	0	0.8	2.2	0.1	20.3
Sepedi	0	0.3	11.2	0	13.5	0.2	56.1	1.3	0	13.9
SeSotho	0.3	61.8	17.0	0.5	2.0	2.6	3.8	4.2	0.4	7.6
Setswana	0	6.4	14.6	0.1	2.2	23.9	0.8	76.0	0	9.2
Siswati	0	0	0.6	0	35.3	0	0.8	0.4	0	3.4
Tshivenda	0	0	0.8	0	0.1	0	15.5	0.7	0	3.2
Xitsonga	0	0	2.6	0.1	0.8	0.1	7.8	1.9	0	4.1
Other	0.1	0.8	0.3	0.1	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.6	0.3
Total	100.0									

The fact that only 10.7% of learners speak mostly English at home has major implications for the validity of responses to the questionnaire, which was administered in English only. However, since it is not possible to estimate the extent of this loss of validity except through a correlation of major home language with Grade 11 symbol for English, which would still not provide a firm indication of learners' understanding of the language of the

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questionnaire (such factors as understanding of rating scales and filters are probably equally as telling as the issue of linguistic understanding), one has to accept learner response at face value.

5.4.1 Language of learning at school

While learning at school ostensibly takes place through the medium of English or Afrikaans (the two languages designated by the Department of Education as official languages of learning), the survey reveals that all eleven official languages are used to some extent for teaching and learning, and that nationally more than 1% of learners learn through the medium of IsiZulu (1.8%), IsiXhosa (1.5%), Sepedi (1.4%), and Setswana (1.2%). A provincial analysis reveals that in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape more than 7% of learners learn through the medium of IsiZulu and IsiXhosa respectively, while in North West more than one in ten learners learns through the medium of Setswana. Nevertheless, 82% of learners learn through the medium of English, 10.5% through Afrikaans.

While 82% of learners learn through the medium of English, only 10.7% speak mostly English at home – which gives some indication of the scale of the linguistic challenge facing South African education, and explains the extent of learning through languages other than English and Afrikaans described above.

5.5 Socio-economic status

The socio-economic status (SES) of learners participating in the survey was determined through the establishment of an SES indicator based upon responses to two of the questions in Section 8 of the questionnaire:

- 8.10 What is the highest level of education of each of your parents / guardians (where applicable)?
- 8.12 How much do your parents earn per month (where applicable)?

The levels of education and income levels of both parents / guardians, where applicable,³ were taken into account in the calculation. The socio-economic status (SES) variable was calculated using four variables from the Student Choice Behaviour survey database:

- Education level of the father;
- Education level of the mother;
- Income level of the father; and
- Income level of the mother.

Categories within these variables were re-categorized into three categories of an inherent order to form ordinal variables for each – that is, variables with categories for ‘low’, ‘middle’ and ‘high’. Table 5.8 shows how categories for the education and income variables were re-categorized into an ordinal variable.

³ Clearly there are difficulties with the analysis of the responses to all three questions dealing with ‘parents’ – ‘What is the highest level of education of each of your parents / guardian (where applicable)?’ ‘What is the employment situation of each of your parents?’; and ‘How much do your parents earn per month (where applicable)?’ – difficulties which the use of ‘guardian’ in the first question (intended to be ‘read’ in the next two questions) does not diminish. Notwithstanding the fact that fieldworkers encouraged learners to read ‘guardians’ for ‘parents’ where one or both of their parents was deceased, not all learners will have interpreted the instruction similarly – especially in cases where a learner lives with a guardian but still has a living parent / parents. Follow-up research might usefully establish the precise domestic situations of learners vis-à-vis guardianship, particularly with a view to calculating the effect which the HIV / AIDS epidemic, AIDS orphans, and learners being left to care for younger siblings will have on HE participation rates in the future.

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Table 5.8: Categorization of education and income variables into an ordinal variable

EDUCATION	INCOME	ORDINAL VARIABLE	VALUE (SCORE)
Primary school or less	Less than R500	Low	1
Some secondary schooling	R 501–R 1 000		
	R 1 001–R 2 000		
	R 2 001–R 3 000		
Matric	R 3 001–R 4 000	Middle	2
College Certificate	R 4 001–R 5 000		
	R 5 001–R 7 500		
	R 7 501–R 10 000		
Technikon or university certificate or diploma	R 10 001–R 15 000	High	3
Technikon or university degree	R 15 001–R 20 000		
	More than R 20 000		

The four new ordinal variables for each of the re-categorised variables were then used to calculate a single SES variable that assigns an SES score to each learner in the database. The SES variable is simply based on the average score of the four ordinal variables and was calculated using the following formula:

$$SES = \frac{\left(\sum_{Father - Mother} \text{Education} \right) + \left(\sum_{Father - Mother} \text{Income} \right)}{4}$$

Scores within the calculated SES variable ranged from 1–3, where scores ranging between 1–1.6666666 were coded to form ‘Low socio-economic status’, scores between 1.6666667–2.3333333 were coded to form ‘Middle socio-economic status’, and scores between 2.3333334–3 were coded to form ‘High socio-economic status’.

The national profile of Grade 12 learners in terms of these three categories is depicted in Figure 5.2.

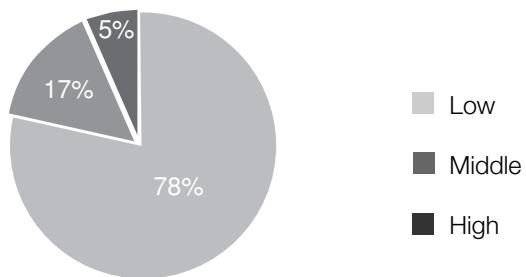


Figure 5.2: Distribution of Grade 12 learners by socio-economic status

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Table 5.9 provides the SES breakdown according to province.

Table 5.9: Socio-economic status of Grade 12 learners by province

SES	EC	FS	G	KZN	M	NC	L	NW	WC
Low	78.8	78.1	61.6	78.7	84.1	70.8	85.4	83.5	66.3
Middle	16.4	13.7	27.9	17.5	14.4	21.6	12.2	14.0	22.9
High	4.8	8.1	10.5	3.7	1.5	7.6	2.4	2.5	10.8
Total	100.0								

The percentages of learners from high SES backgrounds varies considerably across certain provinces: as one might expect, in the more developed, industrialised provinces (Gauteng and the Western Cape) the percentages are high (10.5 and 10.8 respectively), while in less developed provinces (Mpumalanga, Limpopo and the North West) the percentages are significantly lower (1.5, 2.4 and 2.5 respectively). These are also the provinces with the largest percentages of learners from low SES backgrounds (84.1, 85.4 and 83.5 respectively). Gauteng seems to be the province with the largest SES spread, boasting the lowest percentage (61.6%) of low SES learners and the highest percentage (27.9%) of middle SES learners – both figures differing significantly from the national totals (77.5% for low SES, 17.4% for middle SES).

While one can posit SES on its own, moreover, as Table 5.9 indicates, it is also possible to cross tabulate the SES indicator with population group. The results of such a cross tabulation are portrayed in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10: Cross tabulation of population group with socio-economic status

	POPULATION GROUP	SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS			
		Low	Middle	High	Total
African	n	7936	1207	250	9393
	% within population group	84.5	12.8	2.7	100.0
Coloured	n	561	182	34	777
	% within population group	72.2	23.4	4.4	100.0
Indian	n	146	143	54	343
	% within population group	42.6	41.7	15.7	100.0
White	n	210	452	248	910
	% within population group	23.1	49.7	27.3	100.0
Total	n	8853	1984	586	11423
	% within population group	77.5	17.4	5.1	100.0

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A chi-square test to determine the distinction in SES between Africans, coloureds, Indians and whites indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between these four groups.⁴

5.6 Physical disability

A surprisingly high percentage of learners (13% nationally) indicate that they have a physical disability. In Limpopo, a staggering 19% of learners claim to have a physical disability, while in the Northern Cape and the Western Cape the percentages are 4.3 and 4.4 respectively. Since learners may define disability as anything from quadriplegia to poor eyesight necessitating the use of spectacles, however, it is likely that the percentage of learners with serious physical disabilities is far lower than the data would suggest. In the absence of the provision of categories of disability or of examples of disability, then, the validity of this question is compromised.

5.7 Proximity of home to school

Three questions in Section 8 (8.4–8.6) probe the issue of proximity of home to school. The data reveal that 75.1% of learners live less than 10km from school – which suggests a reasonable spread of schooling provision throughout the country. There are no noteworthy provincial anomalies in relation to the national total.

The predominant means for getting to and from school both nationally and provincially is on foot: 65% of learners nationally walk to school (though they may do so after alighting from cars, buses, or trains – and there is no way of extracting this information from the responses to the question), while at least 45% of learners in every province walk at least part of the way to school every day. Limpopo records the highest percentage of walkers (78.1%), while Gauteng records the lowest percentage (46.7%). The incidence of walking to and from school seems to be lowest in those provinces with the lowest proportion of rural areas (Gauteng and the Western Cape, where the figure is 48.6%). These figures need to be treated with caution, however, since different learners may interpret walking to school in vastly differing ways.

The only noteworthy statistic with regard to modes of transport⁵ is that an anomalously high 24.6% of learners in the Western Cape indicate private car as one of their modes of transport (the national figure is 10.9%).

A cross tabulation of question 8.4 ('How far do you live from the school?') with question 8.5 ('How do you get to and from school every day?') based upon an analysis of single modes of transport only (i.e. factoring out learners who may use more than one mode of transport to get to and from school daily) reveals the extent to which Grade 12 learners constitute an ambulant population. More than half of the Grade 12 learners (10 311, or 52.4%) who live more than 40km from their schools walk to school every day, the figures for the other distances reinforcing the point: 41.7% of learners living 21–40km away, 46.6% of learners living 11–20km away, 64.6% of learners living 6–10km away, and 85.5% of learners living less than 5km from school.

The question 'In which province is your home?' was designed to point up the extent of provincial difference between learners' places of abode and school location – a further

⁴ The asymptotic significance is .00; and as the Phi, Cramer's V and Contingency Coefficient values suggest, the significance of these differences (.450, .318 and .410 respectively, where 0 = no association and 1 = total association) is fairly strong.

⁵ Because this is a multiple response item, learners may use more than one mode of transport to get to and from school.

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indicator of proximity of home to school. While the correlation between provincial home and provincial school is above 93% in all cases, the data reveal that 3.4% of learners who go to school in Mpumalanga live in Gauteng, while 4.8% of learners who go to school in the North West live in Gauteng. Because Gauteng is contiguous with Mpumalanga in the east and North West in the west, however, such migration is not surprising. Equally unsurprising is the fact that 3% of learners who attend school in the Northern Cape live in the North West. What appears to be anomalous, however, is that 2% of learners who attend school in Limpopo live in the Northern Cape; only the notion that they are boarders might explain such migration between non-contiguous provinces – a notion not untenable in relation to the other statistics cited, it has to be said. Another explanation, however, is that learner error has issued in confusion of the contiguous ‘Northern Cape’ and ‘Northern Province’ in the alphabetical list of provinces provided.

5.8 Living conditions

Two of the questions in Section 8 of the questionnaire (8.7 and 8.8) attempt to gauge the living conditions of learners. In response to a binary opposite question, nearly three-quarters of learners (73.7%) indicate that they live in a formal settlement, the balance in an informal settlement. The highest percentages of formally housed learners are in Gauteng (83.1%) and the Western Cape (82.4%), while the highest percentages of informally housed learners are in KwaZulu-Natal (30.9%), Mpumalanga (30.1%), and Limpopo (30%). These figures are poorly correlated with responses to the question about dwelling type, however, which reveal that the highest incidence of residence in corrugated iron shacks – which is frequently associated with informal settlements (often referred to as ‘squatter camps’ or ‘shack settlements’) – is in fact in the Free State (12.7%), Gauteng (8%), and North West (9.6%). Since different learners will understand different things by ‘formal’ and ‘informal’, however, in terms both of dwelling area and dwelling type (houses in rural areas, for example, may be constructed from a number of different materials), these results are not necessarily meaningful. For this reason, and because neither the binary nature of question 8.7 nor the large number of variables in question 8.8 (house, townhouse, flat, shack – in city, suburb, township or rural area) squares with the three-way division of SES into ‘low’, ‘middle’ and ‘high’, living conditions was not factored into the determination of SES discussed above.

More than half of the learners in the Western Cape (54%) live in a suburban house – more than double the proportion of learners in Gauteng (26.4%) who do so (the national figure for suburban house occupation is 15.6%). On the other hand, 53.3% of learners in Gauteng live in a house in a township (under the *apartheid* regime, a formal settlement established for Africans). In part this inverse relationship reflects the population distribution of coloureds and Africans in these provinces: in Gauteng the African population of learners constitutes 73.7% of the total and the coloured population 4.2%, while in the Western Cape the coloured population of learners constitutes 55.5% of the total and the African population 21.4%. Because the SES of coloured learners is on average higher than that of Africans (coloured learners in the middle SES category constitute twice as many as African learners in this category, for example), and suburban living can be construed as a measure of higher SES, the high percentage of suburban house-dwellers in the Western Cape is unsurprising. Indeed, the figures would seem to suggest a greater degree of affluence, as measured by suburban house occupation, in the Western Cape than in Gauteng.

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5.9 Study conditions

Asked whether there was a place in their home where they could study in peace and quiet, more than a third of learners (36.5%) answered in the negative. A provincial analysis reveals that 45.8% of learners in both the Free State and North West and 43% of learners in Limpopo do not have a space in which they can study in peace and quiet. This variable too was not factored into the SES indicator calculation because of its binary nature.

5.10 Parents / guardians

5.10.1 Parental education

Deployed as one of the determinants of SES, parental education is indicated in Tables 5.11 and 5.12 below.

Table 5.11: Highest level of education of father / male guardian

EDUCATION	EC	FS	G	KZN	M	NC	L	NW	WC	TOTAL
Primary school or less	30.0	33.2	11.6	35.0	42.8	18.6	34.5	31.1	16.0	29.0
Matric or less	49.2	39.2	56.8	49.9	38.6	51.0	44.7	51.3	55.5	48.9
HE	9.0	12.5	<i>15.3</i>	7.5	<i>4.5</i>	12.0	<i>4.7</i>	5.8	17.8	9.3
I don't know	7.7	11.4	11.8	5.4	10.8	12.8	12.5	8.2	7.7	9.3

Table 5.12: Highest level of education of mother / female guardian

EDUCATION	EC	FS	G	KZN	M	NC	L	NW	WC	TOTAL
Primary school or less	24.9	37.4	12.7	34.0	45.3	18.7	39.1	28.5	16.1	29.7
Matric or less	54.5	45.7	64.2	60.0	37.6	59.3	42.0	58.5	61.6	51.9
HE	9.8	8.6	<i>12.2</i>	6.0	<i>5.4</i>	6.0	<i>4.4</i>	4.3	10.3	7.5
I don't know	5.4	5.4	6.2	4.7	7.5	<i>8.8</i>	<i>9.9</i>	4.2	6.6	6.5

Highlighted in italics in the tables are those percentages which are either anomalous in relation to the national percentages and / or remarkable in some way. Thus, for example, nearly a third of learners' fathers (29%) and mothers (29.7%) nationally have no secondary education whatsoever, while in Mpumalanga 42.8% of learners' fathers and 45.3% of learners' mothers have a primary school education or less (for example, no formal education) only. The national total of learners' fathers who have a higher education qualification⁶ is 9.3%; in Mpumalanga and Limpopo the percentages are below this total, at 4.5 and 4.7 respectively, while in Gauteng and the Western Cape they are way above it, at 15.3% and 17.8% respectively. For learner's mothers, the situation is far worse: in all provinces bar the Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga there are fewer higher education mother than father graduates; and in the Northern Cape, there is half the proportion of mother graduates. The composite picture reveals that mothers on the whole are more poorly educated than fathers.

⁶ Higher Education here excludes college graduates, who might have achieved technical college qualifications (i.e. further education and training certificates) or higher education certificates and diplomas (at colleges of education, agricultural colleges, etc.); for this reason, the figures for learners whose parents / guardians have college qualifications are not reported here.

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The other noteworthy finding is the percentage of respondents who don't know how much education their parents have – 9.3% their fathers' education, 6.5% their mothers' education. The gender differential here would appear to be significant, suggesting that fathers may be absent from the family home.

A cross tabulation of education level with population group reveals that the national total of:

- African learners' fathers with a primary education or less is 39.4%, and with a higher education is 6.2%;
- White learners' fathers with higher education is 43.2% – a startlingly high figure, even in comparison with the population-aggregated national total of 9.3% – and with no secondary education is 2.7% – again, incredibly low in relation to the aggregated total of 29%;
- African learners' mothers with a primary education or less is 38.3%, and with a higher education is 6.2%; and
- White learners' mothers with a higher education is 30.2% – though nothing like the percentage for fathers, still significantly above the population-aggregated total of 7.5% – and with a primary education or less is 2.3% (27.4% below the aggregated national total).

The population group distinctions here far outweigh the gender differences.

5.10.2 Employment situation of parents

Tables 5.13 and 5.14 below outline the employment situations of learners' parents.⁷

Table 5.13: Employment status of learners' fathers

STATUS	EC	FS	G	KZN	M	NC	L	NW	WC	TOTAL
Employed	60.0	68.9	77.0	70.1	75.6	71.2	66.2	65.3	78.5	69.6
Unemployed	10.8	10.5	7.5	11.3	8.2	6.2	7.1	10.1	4.6	8.8
Not economically active	21.8	14.1	9.0	14.3	10.7	13.0	17.4	16.5	9.1	14.6
I don't know	7.4	6.5	6.5	4.4	5.5	9.5	9.3	8.1	7.9	6.9

Table 5.14: Employment status of learners' mothers

STATUS	EC	FS	G	KZN	M	NC	L	NW	WC	TOTAL
Employed	53.8	62.4	64.0	53.9	60.0	56.7	49.9	52.3	61.8	56.2
Unemployed	17.5	18.0	19.5	20.0	17.1	18.2	20.0	24.1	10.6	18.7
Not economically active	22.8	15.2	11.8	22.1	15.3	19.9	19.9	16.7	22.0	18.8
I don't know	5.9	4.5	4.9	4.1	7.4	5.3	10.1	7.1	5.6	6.3

⁷ These tables aggregate information which in the questionnaire was disaggregated.

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Noteworthy in these tables are the following:

- The percentage of unemployed fathers in the Western Cape (4.6%) is significantly lower than the national total (8.8%), as is the percentage of unemployed mothers in the same province (10.6% – as against the national total of 18.7%). The unemployment rate amongst learners' fathers in the Western Cape is 5.5%, amongst learners' mothers 14.6%, while the combined unemployment rate is 9.9%; the national unemployment rate (learners' fathers + mothers, all population groups) is 18.8%. Gender differences are again stark: the national percentage of unemployed mothers (18.7%) is significantly higher than that of unemployed fathers (8.8%). The responses of those learners who do not know their parents' employment statuses factored out, the employment rates of fathers and mothers in this survey are 11.2% and 25% respectively – a significantly wider gap than that found in the general population, where the unemployment rate amongst males is 24.8% and amongst females 28% (Stats SA, 2001a: 9); and
- A fairly high percentage of learners don't know what the employment situations of their fathers (6.9%) or mothers (6.3%) are – suggesting that they either have no parents, or if they have parents do not live with them and /or have no contact with them. This is particularly marked in Limpopo, where 9.3% of learners do not know the employment situations of their fathers, 10.1% of their mothers.

The disaggregated employment profile reveals that:

- More fathers and mothers are in the employ of companies / organizations than in any other employment situation;
- Unsurprisingly, there is a clear gender differential between men and women in the employ of companies / organizations (48.1% vs. 28.8%), reinforcing the notion of mothers as child care-givers and home-makers and / or that women have more difficulty than men in finding formal employment;
- Mothers are far more active in the workforce in companies and organizations in Gauteng (43.8%) and the Western Cape (41%) than in other provinces (the national total is 28.8%), while in Limpopo they are far less active in such positions (17.5%);
- Self-employment opportunities seem to be greatest in the Western Cape, where 13.5% of learners' fathers work for themselves and employ others (as against the national total of 7.1%); and
- The Eastern Cape has the highest percentages of retired / pensionable fathers and mothers (15.9% and 11.2% respectively – as against the national totals of 10.7% and 7.4% respectively).

5.10.3 Parental income

Also used to determine the SES of learners, parental income is reported separately in Tables 5.15 and 5.16.

Table 5.15: Monthly income of learners' fathers

INCOME	EC	FS	G	KZN	M	NC	L	NW	WC	TOTAL
Less than R1000	59.4	41.4	30.3	48.7	53.8	31.5	52.7	46.5	27.4	46.4
R1001 – R3000	18.1	27.8	25.0	25.7	27.5	31.1	30.1	33.0	29.4	26.4
More than R3001	22.4	30.7	44.7	25.6	18.7	37.3	17.3	20.5	43.3	27.1

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Table 5.16: Monthly income of learners' mothers

INCOME	EC	FS	G	KZN	M	NC	L	NW	WC	TOTAL
Less than R1000	69.9	70.4	47.3	71.2	74.9	56.0	77.8	68.7	47.2	67.0
R1001 – R3000	18.5	15.4	25.4	16.1	15.3	25.6	14.5	20.7	29.0	18.8
More than R3001	11.6	14.1	27.2	12.6	9.8	18.3	7.6	10.8	23.7	14.2

The following would seem to be the salient points in relation to these tables:

- Unsurprisingly, given South Africa's poverty levels, the majority of learners' parents fall into the low income bracket. While 72.8% of learners' fathers and 85.8% of learners' mothers earn less than R3001 a month, almost half of learners' fathers (46.4%) and two-thirds of learners' mothers (67%) earn less than R1001 per month; and
- There are striking gender differences in parental income. Besides the low-income distinctions already mentioned (particularly between fathers and mothers earning less than R1001 per month), only 14.2% of learners' mothers earn more than R3001 a month – as against 27.1% of learners' fathers.

A further disaggregation of the data reveals that there are fairly striking disparities in the provincial incomes of learners' fathers. While in the Northern Cape, Gauteng and the Western Cape the percentages of fathers earning less than R1001 per month are 31.5%, 30.3% and 27.4% respectively, in the Eastern Cape a higher percentage of fathers (37%) earn less than R500 per month than earn less than R1001 in the three aforementioned provinces. At the top end, 6.9% of Western Cape fathers earn more than R20 000 per month, as against 1% of Mpumalanga fathers. (The Mpumalanga figure, however, is misleading, since the numbers of white learners surveyed in the province is fewer than 100.)⁸ The Western Cape has the highest income levels overall (fathers + mothers).

A cross-tabulation of parental income with population group reveals that:

- More than half of African fathers (55.4%) versus a meagre 5.2% of white fathers earn less than R1000 per month, while 16.6% of African fathers versus 85.1% of white fathers earn more than R3001 per month; and
- A staggering three-quarters of African mothers versus a fifth of white mothers earn less than R1000 per month, while 8.4% of African mothers versus 56% of white mothers earn more than R3000 per month.

The starkness of the population group differential reinforces the starkness of the gender differential, making for a powerful combination of income distribution disparity.

5.11 Siblings studying at or graduates of HE institutions

The total (national) percentage of Grade 12 learners with siblings who are currently studying at HE institutions is 19.1%. Below the national total are the Northern Cape (16.9%), the North West (16.4%), Mpumalanga (15.6%) and the Western Cape (13.1%); and while the relatively low percentages in the Northern Cape and Mpumalanga are perhaps

⁸ The same point should be made in relation to certain other provinces as well: in the Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and North West there were fewer than 100 white respondents in the survey.

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attributable in part to the lack of HE institutions in these provinces, the same cannot be said of the North West and particularly of the Western Cape, which boasts five institutions of higher learning (three universities and two technikons). The province with the highest percentage of sibling students is the Eastern Cape (21.7%), which has seven HE institutions (four universities and three technikons). A correlation between sibling HE study and proximity to / availability of HE institution is a tenuous one, however; what may be a better predictor of predisposition to enter HE is the SES of the learner's family. A cross tabulation of intention to enter HE (question 3.1) and SES of learners (determined from questions 8.10 and 8.12) – see Table 5.17 below – reveals that the higher the learner's SES, the greater the intention to enter HE: while 85.4% of learners from a high socio-economic background intend entering HE, only 8.1% do not; and while 69.8% of learners from a low socio-economic background intend entering HE, 15.8% do not.

Table 5.17: Intention of Grade 12 learners to enter HE, by socio-economic status

INTENTION TO ENTER HE	LOW SES	MIDDLE SES	HIGH SES	TOTAL
Yes	69.8	81.0	85.4	72.6
No	14.4	9.2	8.1	13.2
I don't know	15.8	9.8	6.6	14.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

A total of 16.9% of learners nationwide indicate that they have a sibling who is a graduate of a university or technikon. The lowest percentages are in the Northern Cape (13.7%) and Western Cape (12.7%) – correlating well with the lower percentages of learners with sibling students in these provinces – while the highest percentage is in Gauteng (18.9%).

A cross tabulation of learners who have student siblings or sibling graduates (collapsed to differentiate learners with siblings with HE connections from those with none) with population group reveals the following:

Table 5.18: Learners with student siblings or sibling graduates, by population group

POPULATION GROUP	SIBLINGS STUDYING OR GRADUATED		TOTAL
	Yes	No	
African	26.7	73.3	100.0
Coloured	15.7	84.3	100.0
Indian	39.9	60.1	100.0
White	33.9	66.1	100.0
Total	26.9	73.1	100.0

While nearly three-quarters (73.1%) of all learners surveyed have no direct HE student or graduate connections through their siblings, the picture is different for whites and Indians on the one hand and Africans and coloureds on the other: while a quarter of Africans

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(26.7%) have HE sibling connections, over a third of whites (33.9%) and two-fifths of Indians (39.9%) have siblings associated with HE. The surprising findings here are that

- more Indians than whites have HE sibling connections; and
- so few coloureds, proportionally – only 15.7% – have HE sibling connections.

5.12 Number of books in the home

Traditionally used as a measure of SES, number of books in the home can in an electronic age no longer reliably serve as the only such measure as affluent families increasingly source information from the Internet. Nevertheless, there is a striking variation in the number of books in the home both by province and by population group. The mean national figure is 57 (SD = 138), with Gauteng, the Northern Cape and the Western Cape boasting the highest means (93, 119 and 106 respectively); Mpumalanga and Limpopo the lowest (40 and 30 respectively). A categorization of the data into 7 incremental categories reveals the following:

Table 5.19: Categorization of numbers of books in the home, by population group

POPULATION GROUP	5 AND FEWER	6-15	16-35	36-75	76-155	156-315	MORE THAN 315	TOTAL
African	23.6	33.0	22.4	11.4	6.3	1.9	1.4	100.0
Coloured	8.3	19.9	30.4	20.6	12.4	6.1	2.3	100.0
Indian	2.9	8.7	21.7	18.5	25.7	12.4	10.1	100.0
White	4.9	4.8	11.7	14.8	26.3	18.3	19.3	100.0
Total	20.1	28.7	22.0	12.6	9.2	4.0	3.3	100.0

As this table reveals, there are significant differences between population groups with regard to book ownership:

- while under 10% of white learners have fewer than 15 books in their homes, more than half the African population (56.6%) owns fewer than 15 books;
- more than a quarter of white and Indian learners (26.3% and 25.7% respectively) have between 76 and 155 books in their homes; and
- nearly two-thirds of white learners surveyed (63.9%) have more than 75 books in their homes; the figure for Africans is under 10%.

The profile reinforces, through the descending order of book ownership from white to Indian to coloured to African, the notion of differential citizenship (first to fourth class) under *apartheid* advanced above.



6. LEARNER CHOICE: To STUDY FURTHER OR NOT

The percentage of learners in the Grade 12 Learner Choice survey who intend entering HE within three years of the survey date (i.e. in 2002, 2003 or 2004) is indicated in the following chart:

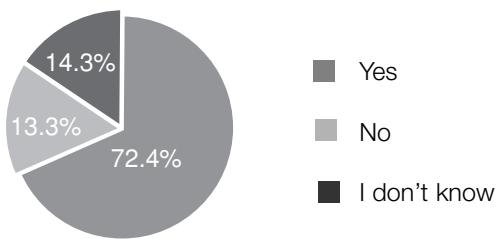


Figure 6.1: Intention to enter HE within the next three years

As surprising as the high percentage of learners intending to enter HE (72.4%) is the percentage who are unsure (14.3%) – outweighing (by 1%, or 5 113 learners) the percentage of those who indicate that they will not be entering HE.

A provincial breakdown reveals that the highest percentages of learners intending to enter HE are in the North West (81%) and Mpumalanga (79%), the lowest in KwaZulu-Natal (64%) and the Northern and Western Cape (65%). Almost one in five learners in KwaZulu-Natal (18.4%) is unsure about entering HE.

A correlation between learner intention to enter HE and the average symbols¹ attained by learners in Grade 11 reveals the following:

Table 6.1: Correlation between average Grade 11 symbol and learner intention to enter HE

GRADE 11 AVERAGE SYMBOL	YES	NO	I DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
A	91.2	3.4	5.4	100.0
B	83.4	7.3	9.3	100.0
C	76.2	10.1	13.7	100.0
D – E	67.5	16.2	16.3	100.0
F – G	54.3	22.7	23.0	100.0

Key: A = 80% - 100%; B = 70%; C = 60%-69%; D = 50% - 59%; E = 40% - 49%; F = 33.3% - 39%; G = < 33.3%

As the table demonstrates, there is a positive correlation between Grade 11 symbols and learners' intention to enter HE – the higher the average symbol, the greater the intention to enter HE. Uncertainty, moreover, is also positively correlated with academic achievement as measured by Grade 11 symbols: the lower the average symbol, the more unsure a learner is about proceeding to HE.

Four out of five of the learners who intend entering HE within three years of the survey indicate their intention to do so in 2002, while 17% intend doing so in 2003 or 2004. Were all the learners who intended entering HE in 2002 actually taken up in the HE system, 270 620 learners would have enrolled in HE institutions in January to March 2002.²

¹ The average symbol is an average of the symbols attained in the six or seven subjects in which learners wrote examinations in their Grade 11 year. The ranges are: A = 80% – 100%, B = 70% – 79%, C = 60% – 69%, D = 50% – 59%, E = 40% – 49%, F = 33.3% – 39%, and G = < 33.3%.

² On the assumption that all students registering for HE programmes do so in the first three months of the year.



There is a significant discrepancy, moreover, between learner intention to enter HE in 2002, as gauged through question 3.3, and learner preference and supposition with regard to life situation one year from the survey date – in August 2002 – as gauged through questions 2.1 and 2.2. While 270 620 learners³ intend entering HE in 2002, 372 138 learners would prefer to be studying in some form (either exclusively or while working) in 2002, while 336 546 learners think they will actually be studying (in some form) in 2002. This discrepancy is all the more striking for the reason that the questions about life situation, where the pro-study response is *higher* than that for intention to enter HE in 2002, *precedes* the question about when those intending to enter HE will do so; in other words, prior to the section on intention to enter HE, significantly more learners indicate their preference for or supposition about study in 2002.

This discrepancy may be attributable to learner intentions to study further *outside of HE* – for example, in private vocational or public further education and training (FET) situations. In this regard, the structure of the questionnaire implies – erroneously – that post-school study is solely equal to enrolment within HE, which is not the case. Indeed, there is anecdotal evidence that the ‘white flight’ from HE, as well as (possibly) the low coloured participation rate in HE, may have arisen at least in part because of increasing preference amongst these groups for non-HE further education. This may be particularly true of the Information Technology (IT) field, where an abundance of non-HE, vocational training opportunities exist. These tend to be of a shorter-term nature than most HE programmes, allowing the learner to enter a reputedly lucrative field of employment relatively quickly.

A further discrepancy lies in the total learner response to questions 2.1 (preferred situation one year hence) and 2.2 (supposed situation one year hence) on the one hand and question 3.1 (intention to enter HE within the next three years) on the other: while the total (weighted) response to question 2.1 is 457 864 and to question 2.2 is 451 446, the total response to question 3.1 is 486 073. All these discrepancies – between preferred and supposed situations on the one hand and intention to enter HE in 2002 on the other, and between the total response profiles for questions 2.1 and 2.2 and the total response profile for question 3.1 – suggest that learner response to the questionnaire may not have been as reliable as expected, notwithstanding instructions to fieldworkers to have learners complete all relevant sections of the questionnaire.

6.1 Learner intention to enter HE

6.1.1 Intention by gender

More females than males intend entering HE within the next three years: the split is 52.8% female, 47.2% male. Slightly more females than males intend entering HE than are represented in the ratio of females to males in the population of learners (51.9% female, 48.1% male). A provincial analysis reveals that in two provinces (Free State and the Western Cape) more males than females intend entering HE: 52.4%:47.6% in the Free State; and 51.1%:48.9% in the Western Cape. In the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal the ratio of females to males wishing to enter HE is 44.9%:55.1%, and in the North West 45.3%:54.7%. The differential is most marked in the Northern Cape, where the ratio of female to male learners intending to enter HE is 41.7%:58.3% – reinforcing the high differential of females to males (55.9%:44.1%) in the Grade 12 learner population in that province.

³ As indicated earlier, this and other learner numbers presented in Chapter 6 are weighted.

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6.1.2 Intention by population group

There are no striking differences between Africans, Indians and whites in terms of intention to enter HE within the next three years. While comparisons between South Africa and the United States (US) may be spurious, given that blacks constitute a minority in the US and that the population group dynamics in the two countries differ, it is nonetheless interesting to observe that this finding bears out comparative longitudinal research conducted by Schneider & Stevenson (1999), which reveals that the rise in educational expectations in the United States over the last 40 years (as measured by the percentages of learners expecting to obtain a first degree – rising from 30% of learners in 1955 to 70% in 1992) is not confined to any particular group of students. Similarly, research conducted by Hossler *et al.* (1989) and by Paulsen (1990) reported that ethnicity has little or no effect on the educational aspirations of learners. However, as Figure 6.2 demonstrates, the percentage of coloureds intending to enter HE is significantly lower than the percentages for each of the other three population groups, while the percentage of Indians wanting to proceed to HE is notably higher than that for Africans and whites.

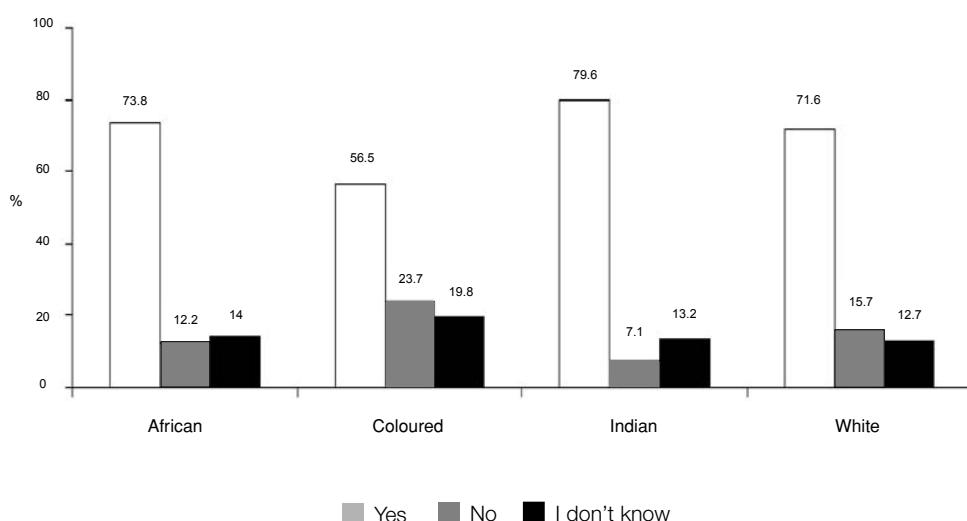


Figure 6.2: Learner intention to enter HE within the next three years, by population group

Not only is the percentage of coloureds intending to enter HE significantly lower than the percentages for the other population groups; but one in five coloureds is unsure about entering HE. Only 52.3% of coloured learners in the Western Cape, moreover, intend entering HE, while almost a third (30%) have no intention of doing so – the next highest percentage of those in the Western Cape not intending to enter HE being whites (at 17.2%). The other interesting comparison is between Indians and whites: while similar percentages of learners in these groups are unsure about entering HE (13.2% of Indians, 12.7% of whites), four in five Indians intend entering HE, as opposed to only 72% of whites. This distinction may be a function of the importance attached to education by the Indian community.

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At the provincial level, the only remarkable finding is that a lower-than-expected 54.2% of whites in KwaZulu-Natal intend entering HE – as against the provincial total of 64.9% (learners of all four population groups) and national total of 71.6% (white learners). Since only 56 white learners completed the questionnaire in this province, however, this figure should be treated with some caution.

6.2 Factors affecting intention to enter HE

Asked to indicate (question 3.2) on a Likert scale ranging from 'Not at all' (1) to 'To a very large extent' (5) the extent to which a variety of factors had influenced their decision to enter HE within the next three years, learners responded as indicated in Table 6.2. Responses are grouped into categories dubbed 'No to little influence' (1 + 2 on the Likert scale), 'Some influence' (3 on the Likert scale) and 'Large to very large influence' (4 + 5 on the Likert scale), with the mean for each item reported separately, and ranked in descending order by mean value.

Table 6.2: Factors affecting learner decision to enter HE within the next three years, in descending order of effect

VARIABLE	NO TO LITTLE INFLUENCE	SOME INFLUENCE	LARGE TO VERY LARGE INFLUENCE	TOTAL	MEAN
HE enhancing employability	5.1	6.7	88.1	100.0	4.4
Intrinsic interest in a field of study	7.2	13.2	79.6	100.0	4.1
HE leading to higher income	14.8	15.9	69.3	100.0	3.9
Family urging HE study	19.6	12.2	68.2	100.0	3.8
Offer of a bursary	29.4	12.2	58.3	100.0	3.5
Family urging HE study to support learner and /or themselves	29.4	12.2	58.3	100.0	3.5
Ability to finance study through NSFAS ⁴	30.1	17.7	52.2	100.0	3.3
Offer of a scholarship	34.6	13.8	51.7	100.0	3.2
Ability to finance study through a bank loan	39.3	18.1	42.7	100.0	3.0
Teacher urging HE study	42.7	15.8	41.1	100.0	2.9
Classmates intending to enter HE	43.7	18.7	37.6	100.0	2.8
Being unsure about life direction	47.8	17.0	35.3	100.0	2.7
Parents having money to finance HE study	55.8	19.1	25.1	100.0	2.4
Romantic attachment	67.2	11.9	20.9	100.0	2.1

⁴ NSFAS = National Student Financial Aid Scheme

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What is immediately apparent from the above table is that all of the listed factors have exerted some influence on the learners surveyed; even romantic attachment, the least influential factor, has had a large to very large influence on one in five learners. The key findings would seem to be the following:

- For nearly nine out of ten learners intending to enter HE, university / technikon study is viewed as the gateway to employment – which, given the unemployment rates of learners' parents reported in section 5.10.2 above, is to be expected. This finding corroborates that of Hossler *et al.* (1999), who demonstrate that even by the ninth grade most parents and their children identify getting a good job as the most important reason for proceeding to HE;
- At the same time, intrinsic interest in a field of study is seen to be an important influence in the decision to enter HE for four out of five learners – far more important, indeed, than the notion of HE study leading to higher income (for whom this is unimportant for 15% of learners);
- While money for study is clearly significant, immediate access to finance does not, as might have been expected, exert an overriding influence on learner choice with regard to entry into HE: the ability to finance HE study is concentrated in the middle of this list of variables (positions 7–9) – which suggests that, relatively speaking, how to materialize the intention to register for HE study is not uppermost in learners' minds. Significantly, parents' ability to finance HE study occupies the penultimate position in a list of 14 items, only a quarter of learners viewing this source of HE study support as important. This underscores the point that family ability to finance HE study is meagre, which, in the absence (for many learners) of access to other forms of funding (bursaries, loans, and scholarships) – with the exception, perhaps, of NSFAS – must contribute in part towards the low participation rate in HE;
- Family urging HE study – the outcome of parent-learner discussions about entering HE – is an important influence upon intention to enter HE for more than two-thirds of learners. While this item occupies fourth position in the given list of variables, however – coming after intrinsic interest in a field of study – various studies conducted in the United States (US) – for example, Falsey & Haynes (1984), Hearn (1984), Sewell & Shah (1978), Tillary (1973), Hossler & Stage (1987) – indicate that parental encouragement is the best predictor of post-secondary educational aspiration. While the influence of significant others (parents, siblings and friends) on learner predisposition to enter HE is significant (Sheppard *et al.*, 1992), the single most important predictor of plans to enter HE is the degree of encouragement parents give their children (Stage & Hossler, 1989; Hossler *et al.*, 1999) – parental encouragement being defined by frequency of discussion between parents and learners about parents' expectations, hopes and dreams for their children. In the South African context, moreover, fewer learners are likely to be living with their parents – or at least with both parents – which renders the notion of parental encouragement all the more poignant;
- While one may find surprising the finding that a teacher / teachers urging HE study has a large to very large influence on learner intention to enter HE for only two-fifths of learners – an even higher percentage of learners (43%) indicating that teacher influence is of little or no importance – such a result is consistent with research conducted in the US (Hossler *et al.*, 1999) which demonstrates that the impact not only of teachers but of high school career counsellors upon

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predisposition to enter HE is insignificant. In the light of the significance of the influence of parental encouragement upon learner predisposition to enter HE, the American finding about the insignificance of teacher influence would suggest that the focus of career counselling in the South African schooling system might more usefully be directed towards encouraging learner interaction with parents or guardians than towards the direct provision of career guidance;

- While it may be encouraging to discover that for just under half of Grade 12 learners intending to enter HE, being unsure about what they want to do with their lives has had little to no influence upon their decision, the corollary is that for 17% of learners this factor *has* had some influence on their decision and for over a third (35%) it has had a large to very large influence. This would seem to bear out the sub-title of Schneider and Stevenson's book (1999) – 'America's teenagers – motivated but *directionless*' (emphasis added); and if a third of learners were shown to be entering the HE system by default (that is, as a kind of holding mechanism in the absence of more viable options), which might account in part for the low retention rates in HE institutions (see Section 2 of the *National Plan for Higher Education* – DoE, 2001a), the implications for the waste of taxpayers' money would be enormous. Learners unsure about their life plans would be better advised to pursue other options than embark upon a study course that might be costly for HE institutions and, in the middle to longer term, for themselves. It needs to be said, however, that uncertainty in the South African context is probably a function as much of the lack of available jobs as of indecisiveness per se; and
- Finally, what arguably is missing from the list of proffered variables is sibling influence: whether learners with siblings currently studying or graduated from HE institutions ascribe their decision to enter HE to this source. Interview data from a study conducted by Hossler *et al.* (1999) suggest that ninth-graders with student siblings or sibling graduates are more likely to have HE aspirations (though overridingly siblings in wealthier families are more likely to be in HE). In the absence of such a variable here, a cross tabulation of questions 8.13 and 8.14 ('Are any of your brothers or sisters studying at a university or technikon?' and 'Are any of your brothers or sisters graduates of a university or technikon?') with question 3.1 ('Are you planning to study at a university or technikon within the next three years?') reveals that the percentage of learners who have student siblings or sibling graduates and who intend entering HE within the next three years (82.8%) is higher than the percentage of learners without sibling HE connections who intend doing so (68.6%) – though the association between sibling HE connections and intention to enter HE is not that strong.⁵

6.2.1 Factors affecting intention to enter HE, by population group

The following table outlines the differences between the population groups (mean values only are reported) in the learner responses to the fourteen variables listed in question 3.2 that affect learner choice with regard to entry into HE.

⁵ The asymptotic significance is .00; but as the Phi, Cramer's V and Contingency Coefficient values suggest, the significance of these differences (.143, .143 and .142 respectively, where 0 = no association and 1 = total association) is fairly weak.

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Table 6.3: Factors affecting learner intention to enter HE, by population group

VARIABLE	AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE	TOTAL
HE increasing chances of employability	4.5	4.3	4.4	4.1	4.4
Intrinsic interest in a field of study	4.1	4.1	4.3	4.0	4.1
HE leading to higher income	3.8	4.1	4.3	4.0	3.9
Family urging HE study	4.0	3.6	3.3	3.1	3.8
Offer of a bursary	3.7	3.0	2.6	2.2	3.5
Family urging HE study to support learner and /or themselves	3.7	2.8	2.3	2.1	3.5
Ability to finance study through NSFAS	3.6	2.7	2.2	1.9	3.3
Offer of a scholarship	3.4	2.6	2.4	2.1	3.2
Ability to finance study through a bank loan	3.2	2.5	2.2	2.1	3.0
Teacher urging HE study	3.0	2.6	2.0	1.8	2.9
Classmates intending to enter HE	3.0	2.4	2.1	2.0	2.8
Being unsure about life direction	2.8	2.2	2.1	2.3	2.7
Parents having money to finance HE study	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.8	2.4
Romantic attachment	2.2	1.5	1.4	1.4	2.1

What is apparent from this table is that:

- External sources of funding for HE study (NSFAS, bank loans, bursaries, and scholarships) are more important for Africans than for coloureds than for Indians than for whites (the mean values can be plotted on a continuum). This reinforces the earlier point about different classes of citizenship for these four groups under apartheid (white = 1st class, Indian = 2nd class, coloured = 3rd class, African = 4th class) and their perpetuation, to a greater or lesser extent, in present-day South Africa. The corollary is that internal sources of funding (in this list, parental finance) are less important influences upon Africans than upon coloureds than upon Indians than upon whites – in inverse proportion to reliance on external funding sources; and
- Significant persons, as Chapman (1984) terms them – that is, parents, teachers, classmates, and boyfriends / girlfriends – exert a greater influence upon African learners' decisions to enter HE than upon other population groups of learners. From a sociological perspective, this may say something about the different loci of control for the different population groups – Africans, by virtue of their more generous conceptualisation of family, being more inter-personally-oriented than the other three population groups.

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6.2.2 Strength of learner intention to enter HE

The strength of learner intention to enter HE is indicated in Table 6.4 below, which categorizes the 1 and 2 responses on the five-point Likert scale into 'Very weak to weak' and the 4 and 5 responses into 'Strong to very strong' and dubs the middle category of response (3) 'Neither weak nor strong'.

Table 6.4: Strength of learner intention to enter HE

VERY WEAK TO WEAK	NEITHER WEAK NOR STRONG	STRONG TO VERY STRONG	MEAN
2.3%	10.9%	86.7%	4.4

The positive correlation between the responses to questions 3.1 and 3.8 indicates that those learners who have decided to enter HE within the next three years are in the overwhelming majority fully intending to do so.

6.3 Factors affecting the timing of HE study

The following two tables indicate the relative importance of the listed factors affecting learner choice:

- To enter HE in 2002; and
- To postpone entry into HE until 2003 or 2004.

Table 6.5: Factors affecting learner intention to enter HE in 2002, in descending order of effect

VARIABLE	MEAN
Knowing what you want to study, and therefore being keen to enter HE as soon as possible	4.3
Wanting to study so you can get a job as soon as possible	4.2
Wanting to earn money as soon as possible	3.8
Your parents wanting you to get your studies over with so you can look after yourself / them	3.6
Not having anything better to do than study further	3.3
Your parents wanting you to get your studies over with so you can look after your family	3.0
Wanting to be independent and therefore to move out of the family home as soon as possible	2.9
People in your class entering HE next year	2.8
Your parents having enough money to send you to university or technikon	2.4
A boyfriend / girlfriend entering HE next year	2.0

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Table 6.6: Factors affecting learner intention to postpone HE study, in descending order of effect

VARIABLE	MEAN
Having to get a job to earn money for studies	3.9
Needing to improve your marks to be able to enter HE	3.5
Being unsure about what you want to study at university or technikon	3.0
Wanting to travel	2.5

Interestingly, the mean value for the variable ‘Knowing what you want to study, and therefore being keen to enter HE as soon as possible’ (4.3) in Table 6.5 is similar to the mean value for the variable ‘Intrinsic interest in a field of study’ (4.1) in Table 6.2 and that for the variable ‘Wanting to study so you can get a job as soon as possible’ (4.2) in Table 6.5. Moreover, in Table 6.2, ‘HE increasing chances of employability’ had a mean value of 4.4, while in Table 6.5 a similar item, ‘Wanting to study so you can get a job as soon as possible’, has a mean value of 4.2. These similarities would seem to indicate that the questionnaire is fairly reliable.

Also noteworthy is that for those learners intending to postpone their entry into HE until 2003 or 2004 (Table 6.6), the need to finance their own studies is paramount: 72% of learners indicate this factor as having had a large to very large influence upon their postponement decision.

6.3.1 The timing of learner entry into HE, by gender

There are very few differences between male and female learners in terms of the effect of the variables listed in question 3.4 upon their decision to proceed to HE in 2002. Female learners are more influenced by:

- Parents having enough money to send them to HE institutions (mean = 2.5, versus 2.2 for males) – which echoes the gender-differential finding with regard to entry into HE within the next three years reported above.

Male learners are more influenced by:

- Parents wanting them to get their studies over with so they can support themselves and their parents (mean = 3.7, versus 3.5 for females); and
- Parents wanting them to get their studies over with so they can support their families (mean = 3.1, versus 2.9 for females) – again surprising, suggesting either that male learners have a greater sense of family responsibility than female learners, or that parents think that boys are more likely to earn more than girls will and that girls will marry, so that what they earn will go to another family.

On the other hand, male and female learners differ in terms of the importance they place on all four variables listed in question 3.5 (factors affecting postponement of HE) – the only difference that is not negligible being that female learners are more influenced by the notion of needing to improve their marks to be able to enter HE (mean = 3.6, versus 3.4 for males).

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6.3.2 The timing of learner entry into HE, by population group

The following table outlines the differences between the population groups (mean values are reported) in the learner responses to the ten variables listed in question 3.4 that affect learner choice with regard to entry into HE in 2002.

Table 6.7: Factors affecting learner intention to enter HE in 2002, by population group

VARIABLE	AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE	TOTAL
Knowing what you want to study, and therefore being keen to enter HE as soon as possible	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.3
Wanting to study so you can get a job as soon as possible	4.3	4.2	4.1	3.8	4.2
Wanting to earn money as soon as possible	3.8	3.9	4.0	3.7	3.8
Your parents wanting you to get your studies over with so you can look after yourself / them	3.8	2.8	2.3	2.1	3.6
Not having anything better to do than study further	3.5	2.2	2.1	1.7	3.3
Your parents wanting you to get your studies over with so you can look after your family	3.3	1.9	1.6	1.5	3.0
Wanting to be independent and therefore to move out of the family home as soon as possible	2.8	3.1	3.5	3.2	2.9
People in your class entering HE next year	2.9	2.3	1.9	1.9	2.8
Your parents having enough money to send you to university or technikon	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.8	2.4
A boyfriend / girlfriend entering HE next year	2.1	1.5	1.4	1.3	2.0

The results are not dissimilar to those for entry into HE within the next three years. What is noteworthy is that:

- For Africans, significant others (parents, classmates, boy / girlfriends) exert a greater influence upon their decision to enter HE straight after school than for coloureds, Indians and whites – the mean values creating sliding scales (values decreasing from African to coloured to Indian to white) in all cases other than classmate influence (where Indians and whites are influenced to the same extent). The corollary is that Africans are less influenced by notions of independence and wanting to leave the family home than are the other population groups – though this difference is not that strong;

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- Africans appear to feel that they have fewer options open to them in terms of alternatives to HE study than do the other population groups; and
- As in the case of entry into HE within the next three years, Africans are less influenced by the idea of their parents financing HE study than are the other groups – no doubt because their parents have less money for such a pursuit.

For those learners wanting to postpone their entry into HE until 2003 or 2004, a disaggregation by population group reveals that Africans and coloureds are far more influenced by having to earn money to finance their studies than are Indians and whites (the mean values are 4.1 and 4.0 as against 3.3 and 3.1), while the effect of having to improve matric marks to be able to enter HE is more telling for Africans than for coloureds than for Indians than for whites – on a sliding scale from 3.7 to 3.6 to 3.3 to 2.5. Inversely, whites are far more prone to the blandishments of travel – no doubt because they are far more able to afford it – than are the other population groups (the scale ranges in equal increments of 0.4 from 2.3 for Africans to 3.5 for whites).⁶ There is no difference between Africans and whites in terms of the effect of uncertainty about field of study (the mean value is 3.1); but the effect of this variable upon coloureds and Indians is less marked (mean values are 2.5 and 2.6 respectively).

6.4 Factors affecting learner decision not to enter HE

Asked to indicate (question 3.6) on a Likert scale ranging from 'Not at all' (1) to 'To a very large extent' (5) the extent to which a list of 19 factors had influenced their decision not to enter HE, learners responded as indicated in Table 6.8

Table 6.8: Factors affecting learner decision not to enter HE, in descending order of effect

VARIABLE	MEAN
Your parents not having the money to send you to university or technikon	3.2
Knowing you can get a good job without going to university or technikon	2.9
Your marks not being good enough to get you into university	2.8
Your marks not being good enough to get you into technikon	2.8
Having no interest in studying further	2.7
Your ability to earn more money by not going to university or technikon	2.7
Not knowing what you want to do with your life	2.7
A lack of confidence in your own abilities	2.7
Your inability to get financial assistance through the NSFAS to study at university or technikon	2.6
Your marks not being good enough to get you into the field you want to study	2.6
Your inability to get a bank loan to study at a university or technikon	2.6
A parent / relative having offered you a position in his / her business	2.3
Your parents / relatives not wanting you to study at university or technikon	2.0

6 Hendry (2002) reports that UCT has had to absorb an unprecedented increase in the take up on new undergraduate offers this year, on top of a substantial increase in new undergraduate applicants. There is anecdotal evidence (too early yet to confirm), she maintains, that other universities have experienced similarly heightened interest amongst the 2001 matriculants which has also translated into increased first-year class sizes. One theory is that the events of September 11 and subsequent downturn in the value of the Rand in late 2001 put a serious damper on 'gap year' travel plans. Another is that the uncertainty surrounding the National Working Group (NWG) report (DoE, 2001b) and the possible institutional mergers that may accrue from it have rendered those institutions that are unlikely to be altered significantly by the NWG recommendations far more attractive to students entering HE in 2002. Future research might usefully establish, from a planning point of view, whether the 2003 intake is likely to be of the same magnitude, all things being equal.

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*Table 6.8: Factors affecting learner decision not to enter HE, in descending order of effect
(cont.)*

VARIABLE	MEAN
Having to look after ageing or old relatives	2.0
People in your class not going to university or technikon	2.0
Your boyfriend / girlfriend not studying at university or technikon	1.9
Having to look after sick relatives	1.9
A teacher persuading you not to study at a university or technikon	1.8
Wanting to have children	1.7

It should be observed that learners may not have discriminated as carefully as the questionnaire might have wanted them to between two items in this list – marks not being good enough to enable entry into university (third item) or technikon (fourth item) – hence the similarity between the mean values (2.81 versus 2.76) for the two.

A comparison of the mean values in the above table with those for the factors affecting learner decision to *enter* HE (Table 6.2) reveals that seven out of the fourteen variables in Table 6.2 have values higher than the highest value in Table 6.8: in other words, those seven factors are more positively correlated with intention to enter HE than are all the factors in Table 6.8 with intention *not* to enter HE – notwithstanding the fact that some of the items in the two lists are binary opposites. Thus, for example, ‘Ability to finance study through NSFAS’ is cited as having a large to very large influence upon the decision to enter HE by 52% of learners, while *inability* to finance study via this source is cited as having a large to very large influence upon the decision *not* to enter HE by only 30% of learners (the means are 3.34 and 2.61 respectively). Seemingly, those learners intending to enter HE are more confident, therefore, about the effect of a host of factors upon their decision than are those learners *not* intending to enter HE. However, this is perhaps to grant a degree of intentionality to learners that they do not possess. It is much easier to know what had led to a positive decision – going to HE – than to a negative or non-decision. For many learners, moreover, the very idea of proceeding to HE is a non-issue, since their station in life precludes them from even entertaining such a notion.

The other noteworthy observation is that only six of the nineteen variables, arguably, connote a positive desire not to enter HE (being able to get a good job without a HE; having no interest in studying further; being able to earn more money without a HE; not knowing what to do with one’s life; being offered a position in a relative’s business; and wanting to have children). The remainder assume one or other constraint to entering HE which, overcome, might lead to the learner wanting to enter HE.

6.4.1 Factors affecting learner decision not to enter HE, by gender

The only significant gender differences with regard to learner decision not to enter HE are that:

- Female learners are more influenced than are males by their inability to finance their studies through a bank loan (mean = 2.7, versus 2.4 for males)⁷ – presumably

⁷ Throughout Section 3 of the questionnaire, the questions concern the extent to which the listed factors have affected the particular decision involved – in this case, the decision not to proceed to HE. The mean values range from 1 to 5, where 1 = ‘not at all’ and 5 = ‘to a very large extent’.

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- because female learners have more doubts about their ability to repay loans should they for whatever reason (most likely, family) not enter the careers for which their HE study has prepared them; and
- Male learners are more influenced than are females by their wanting to have children (mean = 1.8, versus 1.5 for females) – for which no logical interpretation beyond misreading of the question can be advanced.

6.4.2 Factors affecting learner decision not to enter HE, by population group

The following table reveals the mean values for learner intention not to enter HE for the different population groups.

Table 6.9: Factors affecting learner decision not to enter HE, by population group

VARIABLE	AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE	TOTAL
No interest in further study	2.8	2.6	2.0	2.7	2.7
Being able to get a good job without HE	2.9	2.9	2.6	3.1	2.9
Having been offered a job by a relative	2.3	2.3	2.9	2.3	2.3
Marks not good enough for university access	2.7	3.1	2.8	3.1	2.8
Marks not good enough for technikon access	2.7	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.7
Marks not good enough for particular field	2.6	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.6
Lack of confidence in own abilities	2.8	2.6	2.2	2.1	2.7
Parents not having money for HE study	3.3	3.2	3.3	2.7	3.3
Ability to earn more money without HE	2.8	2.7	3.1	2.6	2.7
Inability to access NSFAS finance for study	2.8	2.3	2.1	1.6	2.6
Inability to get a bank loan for HE study	2.8	2.3	1.5	1.6	2.6
Teacher persuasion not to enter HE	2.0	1.5	1.1	1.2	1.8
Lack of parental support for entry into HE	2.2	1.7	1.2	1.4	2.0
Boyfriend / girlfriend not entering HE	2.1	1.5	1.6	1.2	1.9
Classmates not entering HE	2.1	1.9	1.5	1.4	2.0
Having to care for ageing or old relatives	2.2	1.5	1.8	1.2	2.0
Having to care for sick relatives	2.1	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.9

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Table 6.9: Factors affecting learner decision not to enter HE, by population group (cont.)

VARIABLE	AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE	TOTAL
Wanting to have children	1.7	1.4	1.6	1.5	1.7
Not knowing what to do with life	2.7	2.7	2.4	2.4	2.7

The salient points would seem to be the following:

- Indian learners are more likely to enter the businesses of their relatives than are learners from other population groups – which may account in part for their having less interest in HE study;
- There is a sliding scale for lack of confidence in own abilities, Africans having least confidence and whites most (with coloureds and Indians between the two along the continuum). Such lack of confidence may be a function partially of inadequate schooling; whatever the cause, it has implications for Africans' ability to succeed in HE;
- Parental ability to finance HE has far less of an impact upon the intention of white learners not to enter HE than upon the other three population groups;
- Sources of external income have more of an impact upon African learners' intentions not to enter HE than upon those of learners of other population groups – in the case of access to NSFAS finance, there is a sliding scale from African (through coloured and Indian) to white, in the case of access to bank loans a sliding scale from Africans to coloureds to Indians-plus-whites;
- As in the case of the effect of significant others upon intention to *enter* HE, Africans are more susceptible than the other groups to the influence of teachers, parents, classmates and boyfriends / girlfriends in deciding *not* to enter HE. Similarly, they are more influenced by having to care for ageing, old or sick relatives than are the other groups; and
- Africans and coloureds are more influenced than are Indians and whites in deciding not to enter HE by uncertainty about what they want to do with their lives – which parallels the highest incidence of African learners' citing of the same influence upon their decision to *enter* HE reported above.

6.5 Factors likely to influence learner decision to enter HE

As portrayed in Figure 6.1, more learners are unsure about entering HE than are sure about not entering HE – 14.3% versus 13.3%. The extent to which the factors listed in question 3.7 are likely to influence their decision are indicated in Table 6.10 below.

Table 6.10: Factors likely to affect learner decision to enter HE, in descending order of effect

VARIABLE	MEAN
Discussions with your family	3.8
Whether you can get a bursary to study at a university or technikon	3.7
Your final matric marks	3.6
Whether you are given a scholarship to study at a university or technikon	3.6

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Table 6.10: Factors likely to affect learner decision to enter HE, in descending order of effect
(cont.)

VARIABLE	MEAN
Whether your parents can find the money to send you to a university or technikon	3.6
Job opportunities that may arise	3.6
Whether you can get enough information about universities / technikons and the programmes they offer	3.5
Whether you receive financial aid through the NSFAS to study at a university or technikon	3.3
Whether you receive a bank loan to study at a university or technikon	3.1
Discussions with your friends	2.8
Whether you can get a place in a university or technikon close to home	2.7
Whether you can get a place in a university or technikon far away from home	2.7
Whether your father / mother / relative offers you a position in his / her company	2.6
Whether you can get a place in a distance university or technikon	2.6
Whether your boyfriend / girlfriend will be going to university or technikon	2.0

Significantly, a comparison of these mean values with those for the factors affecting learner decision not to enter HE (Table 6.8) reveals that eight out of the fourteen variables in Table 6.10 have values higher than the highest value in Table 6.8: in other words, these eight factors are more positively correlated with likelihood of entering HE than are all the factors in Table 6.8 with intention not to enter HE. Once again, factors affecting a decision *not* to do something are less potent than factors affecting a decision to *do* something.

That family discussions (mean = 3.8) – rather than discussions with friends (mean = 2.8) – are the most likely predictor of learner decision to enter HE is consistent with the findings of Stage & Hossler (1989) and Hossler & Stage (1987) that students who talk most with their parents about their post-secondary plans are more likely to be planning to enter HE and are more likely to be certain of their plans. In fact, two-thirds of learners cite family discussions as potentially exerting a large to very large influence on their decision to enter HE.

What is also a strong motivating influence, however, is sources of funding for study – bursaries, scholarships, and parental finance in particular (though all funding sources have a mean above 3). In the South African context, indeed, the discussions-with-parents/intention-to-enter-HE correlation is muddied by the overlay effect of money: where parents have money, children are more likely to enter HE. The corollary is that parents who have insufficient funds to send their children to HE may well be less likely to initiate and sustain conversation with them about HE.

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Final matric marks, finally, are also a determining factor, three-fifths of learners claiming this would have a large to very large effect on their decision-making – a finding that correlates well with the Grade 11-symbol / intention-to-enter-HE correlation.

6.5.1 Factors likely to influence learner decision to enter HE, by gender

The only factor likely to influence female learners more than males to enter HE is obtaining a bank loan to finance HE study (the mean is 3.3, versus 3.0 for males) – a finding consistent with the earlier reported finding that inability to obtain a bank loan has influenced female learners more than males in deciding not to enter HE. Ability to get a bank loan to finance HE study would appear, then, to be a determining factor for female learners in the decision to enter HE.

6.5.2 Factors likely to influence learner decision to enter HE, by population group

Table 6.11 outlines the differences between population groups in the way learners perceive the likely influence of the listed factors upon their decision whether to enter HE or not.

Table 6.11: Factors likely to affect learner decision to enter HE, by population group

VARIABLE	AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE	TOTAL
Final matric marks	3.6	3.9	4.5	3.3	3.6
Discussions with friends	2.9	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.8
Discussions with family	3.9	3.6	3.8	3.2	3.8
Job opportunities that may arise	3.5	3.8	3.9	4.0	3.6
Boyfriend / girlfriend entering HE	2.1	1.7	1.3	1.6	2.0
Offer of position in a relative's company	2.6	2.7	2.9	2.9	2.6
Getting a place in an institution close to home	2.7	2.7	3.1	2.4	2.7
Getting a place in an institution far from home	2.8	2.4	2.8	1.9	2.7
Getting a place in a distance learning institution	2.7	2.5	2.7	1.9	2.6
Getting enough information about HE institutions	3.5	3.6	3.6	2.9	3.5
Parents having enough money to finance HE study	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.5	3.6
Receiving financial aid through the NSFAS	3.3	3.5	3.5	3.1	3.3

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Table 6.11: Factors likely to affect learner decision regard to enter HE, by population group
(cont.)

VARIABLE	AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE	TOTAL
Receiving a bank loan to study at a HE institution	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.0	3.1
Getting a bursary to study at a HE institution	3.8	3.7	3.4	3.1	3.7
Being given a scholarship to study at a HE institution	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.3	3.6

What this table reveals is that:

- Whites are less likely to be influenced in deciding to proceed to HE by discussions with family than are the other groups;
- Africans are more likely to be influenced by discussions with friends than are the other three groups;
- All four population groups assess the impact of matric marks differently; for Indians these are more influential upon their decision to enter HE than for the other groups;
- Africans are more likely to be influenced by whether their boyfriends / girlfriends will be entering HE than are the other groups – a finding consistent with the earlier findings that Africans are more influenced by significant others than are the other three groups;
- Indians are more influenced, and whites less influenced, by the prospect of studying at an institution close to home than are the other groups;
- Whites are less likely to be influenced by the offer of a place in a distance learning institution than are the other three groups – possibly (though the study does not measure this) because their matric marks make entry into contact institutions easier;
- The offer of a bursary for HE study is more likely to affect the decision of Africans than of coloureds, Indians and whites (on a continuum) to enter HE – while aside from the offer of a scholarship, there is no clear difference amongst the four population groups in terms of the effect of other sources of funding (parental, NSFAS, bank loan) upon their decision to enter HE; and
- Whites are less likely than the other population groups to have their decision to enter HE affected by the offer of a scholarship.

Perhaps the most significant finding here is that while sources of funding for HE study – as reported in earlier tables – are clearly more influential for Africans than for the other three population groups amongst learners who have already decided either to enter or not to enter HE, the effect of three major sources of funding – parental finance, NSFAS finance, and bank loans – upon the decision to proceed to HE is somehow diluted amongst those learners who are undecided about whether to enter HE or not. This would suggest that the notion of HE funding is, particularly for Africans, more positively correlated with clear-cut decision-making along SES lines than with wavering intention to enter HE.



7. CHOOSING AN INSTITUTION

7.1 Learner choice of institution

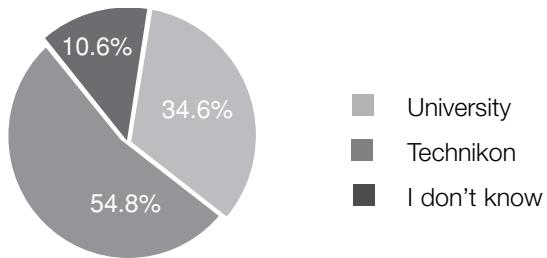


Figure 7.1: Learner intention to enter institution type

7.1.1 Learner choice of institution type

The percentages of learners intending to study at a university and at a technikon within the next three years, as well as the percentage of those who are unsure, are portrayed in Figure 7.1. The number of learners intending to study at a university is 110 377 and at a technikon 174 834.

7.1.1.1 Learner choice of institution type, by gender

An analysis of learner choice of institution type by gender reveals that slightly more female learners want to study at technikons (54%) than at universities (52%).

7.1.1.2 Learner choice of institution type, by population group

The following graph indicates the disaggregation of choice of institution type by population group.

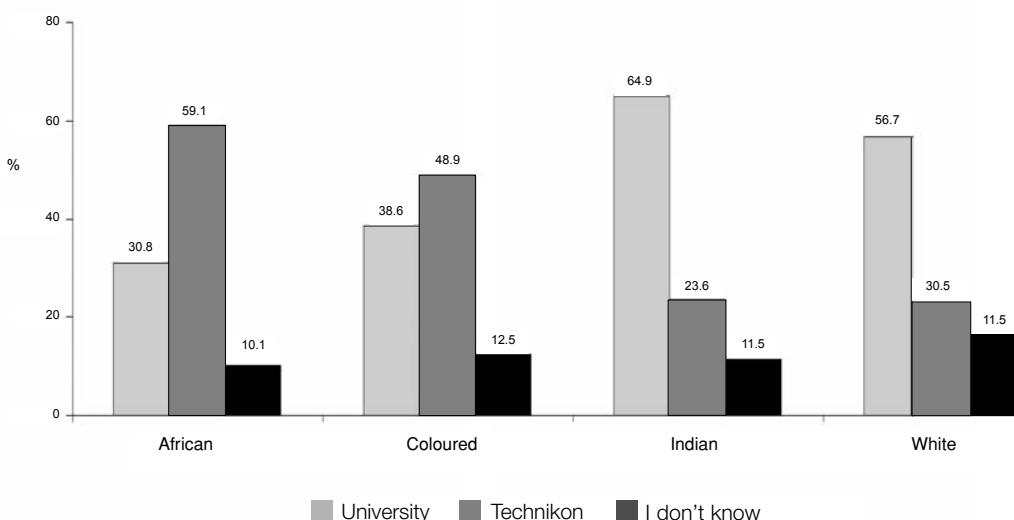


Figure 7.2: Learner choice of institution type, by population group

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While the percentages of those learners not sure about which institution type they want to study at are similar across the four population groups, there are fairly striking differences between the groups in terms of university and technikon choice. Africans and coloureds are more likely to choose to study at a technikon, Indians and whites at a university. Were it not for the anomaly of more Indians than whites choosing to study at a university and fewer Indians than whites choosing to study at a technikon, the choice profile would correlate positively with SES – the higher the SES, the greater the tendency to choose to study at a university.

7.1.1.3 Learner choice of institution type, by average Grade 11 symbol

The percentages of learners wishing to study at a university versus a technikon are disaggregated in the following table by the average symbols learners achieved in Grade 11:

Table 7.1: Learner choice of institution type, by average Grade 11 symbol

SYMBOL	UNIVERSITY	TECHNIKON	UNCERTAIN	TOTAL
A	86.2	11.8	2.0	100.0
B	52.3	39.6	8.1	100.0
C	32.8	57.0	10.3	100.0
D-E	26.8	60.5	12.7	100.0
F-G	30.5	59.4	10.2	100.0
Total	35.6	53.9	10.5	100.0

As is evident from the table, the highest percentage of learners who want to study at a university achieved an A-average Grade 11 symbol, the second highest (52.3%) a B, and so forth. Correspondingly, the lowest percentage of learners who want to study at a technikon achieved an A-average Grade 11 symbol, the second lowest a B, and so forth. The pattern alters as one moves from the D-E to F-G level, however: university study is the least popular choice not of learners with an F-G symbol but with a D-E symbol, while technikon study is the most popular choice not of learners with an F-G symbol but of learners with a D-E symbol. Nevertheless, there is a strong correlation between Grade 11 symbol and choice of institution type.

Interestingly, the highest percentages of learners who want to study at both universities and technikons are those with a C-average Grade 11 symbol – 32.1% of those who want to study at a university, 42.7% of those who want to study at a technikon. Two out of five learners who want to study at a higher education institution, in fact, achieved a C-average symbol in Grade 11.

7.1.2 Factors affecting learner choice of private over public institution

Of those learners intending to go to university, 9.6% indicate their intention of registering with a private institution. Asked how influential a list of factors were in persuading them to study at a private institution,¹ learners responded as follows:

¹ While the questionnaire uses the term 'private university' rather than 'private institution', the *National Plan for Higher Education* makes it clear that private institutions can become universities only if they are prepared to 'comply with, and be subject to, the same requirements as public higher education institutions' (DoE, 2001a: 65). The term 'universities' in association with 'private' was used in the questionnaire to distinguish this institution type from technikons – there being consistent reference to 'universities' and 'technikons', and not HE institutions, in the questionnaire.

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Table 7.2: Factors affecting learner decision to study at a private institution, in descending order of effect

VARIABLE	MEAN
It will better prepare me for the job market than will a public university	4.0
It has a better reputation in my field of study than any public university	3.9
It has a better reputation than any public university	3.8
It offers better personal security than a public university does	3.7
It will better prepare me for further study overseas than will a public university	3.6
The fees are more affordable than at a public university	3.3

That the mean values for all these variables are higher than the mid-point on the Likert scale (3) suggests that all the factors exert a fairly strong influence on learner choice of private institution; indeed, the aggregation of the positive influence (4 + 5) responses reveals that all of these factors have influenced over 53% of learners – and up to 73% of learners in the case of the variable ‘It will better prepare me for the job market’ – to opt for private over public HE.

7.1.2.1 Factors affecting learner choice of private institution, by gender

Amongst learners choosing private over public HE, males are more influenced than females by the notion of private education better preparing them for the job market than would a public HE (mean = 4.1, versus 3.8 for females).

7.1.2.2 Factors affecting learner choice of private institution, by population group

The following table provides the mean scores for the variables positing the supposed advantages of private over public HE according to the four population groups.

Table 7.3: Factors affecting learner decision to study at a private institution, by population group

VARIABLE	AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE	TOTAL
Has a better reputation	3.9	3.7	4.3	3.3	3.8
Has a better reputation in field of choice	3.8	3.6	4.6	4.0	3.9
Offers better preparation for the job market	3.9	4.2	4.1	4.0	4.0
Offers better preparation for further study overseas	3.6	3.9	3.7	3.5	3.6
Offers better personal security	3.6	4.1	4.3	3.5	3.6
Fees are more affordable	3.4	2.4	2.9	2.8	3.3

There are no clear patterns amongst these findings, and the population group differences are not large. Some of the interesting observations, however, are the following:

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- While reputation of the institution is more important for African than for white learners, the reverse is true in the case of the reputations of fields of study – suggesting that whites are more discriminating at the level of study programmes;
- Coloured and Indian learners are more influenced than are African and white learners – albeit very slightly so – by the notions that private HE better prepares one for the job market and for study abroad – which would seem to dispel the myth that white learners are the only group migrating to private HE because they perceive public HE to constitute an inadequate grounding for work and / or further study;
- Personal security has influenced coloureds and Indians more than Africans and whites to opt for private HE – again dispelling the myth that whites are the only group choosing to enrol with private institutions for reasons of better personal security;
- White learners are less influenced than are African learners but more influenced than are coloured learners by the perception that fees at private universities are more affordable than at public institutions – suggesting an element of confusion in the minds of respondents to this question; and
- Indian learners are particularly strongly influenced – far more so than are the other three groups – by both the reputation of the private institution itself and of the chosen field of study as well as by the offer of personal security.

7.1.3 Mode of learning at HE institution

The vast majority of learners (86%) indicate that they will be studying in a contact rather than a correspondence mode.² The reasons advanced by those (14%) who will be studying via correspondence for selecting this mode are portrayed in Figure 7.3

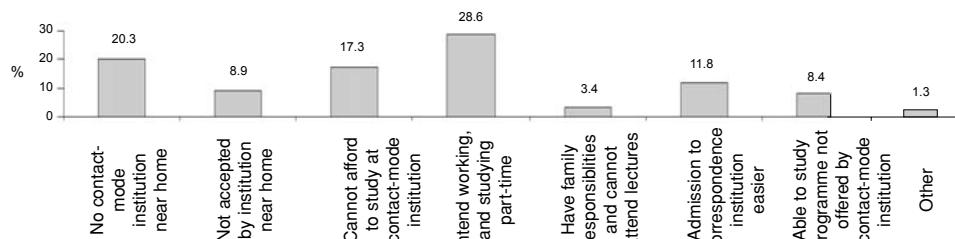


Figure 7.3: Reasons for learner decision to study via correspondence

More than a quarter of those learners who have chosen to study via correspondence have done so because they will be studying part-time while working, while for a fifth there is no institution near their home offering face-to-face tuition.

A disaggregation by gender reveals that more male than female learners cannot afford to study in an institution offering contact-mode tuition (52% versus 48%), but that for all the

² Notwithstanding the supplanting of the term 'correspondence' by 'distance learning', it was decided to use the term 'correspondence' in the questionnaire to avoid the confusion that the embracing by 'distance learning' of such modes as telematics and Internet tuition creates. Indeed, correspondence learning is not the only form of distance education in the higher education information management system (HEMIS) definitions, which are: Contact mode: The course involves personal interaction with institutional teachers or institutional supervisors, through lectures, tutorials, seminars, practicals, supervision, or other forms of required work, and occurs at the institution's premises or a site of the institution. Distance mode: The interaction with institutional teachers or institutional supervisors is undertaken through 'distance education' techniques (e.g., through the use of correspondence, telematics, or the Internet); and Mixed mode: the interaction with institutional teachers or institutional supervisors is undertaken through a mixture of contact and distance modes (DoE, 2001c). Because the questionnaire does not distinguish clearly enough between these three modes, further research would be needed to obtain more accurate information about study choices in the three modes and the reasons for them.

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other variables the percentages of female responses outweigh those of male responses – in some cases disproportionately in relation to the distribution of male and female learners in the sample, as the following table indicates:

Table 7.4: Reasons for learner decision to study via correspondence, by gender

VARIABLE	MALE	FEMALE
No contact-mode institution near home	44.2%	55.8%
Admission to a correspondence-mode institution easier	41.8%	58.2%
Ability to study a programme not offered by a contact-mode institution	42.5%	57.5%

A disaggregation by population group reveals the following:

For African learners, the three main reasons for their wanting to study via correspondence are:

- Wanting to study part-time while working (26%);
- There being no contact-mode institution near their homes (21%); and
- Unaffordability of study in a contact mode (18%).

For coloured and Indian learners, the main reasons are:

- Wanting to study part-time while working (60% and 83% respectively); and
- Unaffordability of study in a contact mode (17% and 11% respectively).

For white learners, the main reason is their wanting to study part-time while working (61%) – the other responses distributed in similar percentages (between 7% and 9%) across the remaining seven reasons.

Though the percentages vary considerably, the response profile would suggest a fair degree of similarity amongst African, coloured and Indian learners with regard to reasons for choosing correspondence study – wanting to study part-time while working and the unaffordability of contact-mode learning being the main points of similarity – while for white learners the only substantial reason for correspondence study is to enable part-time study while they are working.

7.1.4 Learner choice of institution for HE study

The following table indicates learners' choices of institutions for HE study, in descending order of popularity according to national learner preferences. The 'I don't know' category – though the second most popular choice nationally – is included at the end of the table, in italics.

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Table 7.5: Learner choice of institution for HE study, in descending order of popularity by national preference

INSTITUTION	EC	FS	G	KZN	M	NC	L	NW	WC	TOTAL
Technikon Pretoria	2.8	8.5	26.2	1.7	35.9	6.3	29.1	21.6	0.6	16.6
Technikon Witwatersrand	1.4	3.9	7.7	1.2	5.4	4.1	8.0	9.5	0.2	4.9
University of Pretoria	0.6	2.5	7.3	0.8	12.8	1.5	5.9	5.1	0.2	4.4
Technikon Vaal Triangle	0.2	9.0	8.0	0.4	2.1	3.5	7.0	7.9	0	4.2
Other institutions ³	3.5	2.7	7.4	2.3	3.4	9.3	2.1	5.4	5.9	3.9
University of Natal	1.0	0.2	0.6	17.3	0.6	0	1.4	1.2	0.2	3.6
Technikon Natal	1.6	0.2	0.4	17.9	0.5	0	0.3	0.8	0	3.4
University of Cape Town	4.2	1.5	1.6	0.8	1.2	1.8	2.2	3.4	16.0	3.1
University of the Witwatersrand	1.2	2.6	4.9	1.5	3.9	2.3	4.0	4.5	0.4	2.9
Port Elizabeth Technikon	15.7	0.6	0.8	0.3	0.3	0	0.4	0.7	2.7	2.9
Cape Technikon	2.6	1.5	0.8	0.4	0.2	3.8	1.2	1.2	23.5	2.7
University of South Africa	0.8	3.3	3.8	1.6	2.9	0	3.3	2.0	0.7	2.3
Medical University of SA	0.3	0.9	0.9	1.5	6.4	0	4.7	2.7	0.1	2.3
Mangosuthu Technikon	1.1	0.2	0.1	12.2	0.4	0	0	0	0	2.2
Technikon Free State	0.4	22.1	0.7	0.1	0.2	16.7	0.3	0.7	0	2.0
University of Durban-Westville	1.4	0.7	0.4	9.0	0.4	0	0.4	0.2	0.3	1.9
Technikon South Africa	0.6	1.4	3.4	0.8	2.4	3.1	2.8	2.9	0.5	1.9
Technikon Northern Gauteng	0.3	0.4	2.0	0.9	1.3	1.0	5.1	2.0	0	1.9
ML Sultan Technikon	1.4	0.2	0	8.4	0	1.4	0.3	0	0	1.7
University of the Western Cape	0.7	0	0.3	0	0	1.6	0.3	0.4	16.7	1.4
Border Technikon	7.8	0	0	0	0	0.7	0.4	0	0.4	1.3
Eastern Cape Technikon	7.0	0.2	0.3	0.1	1.2	0	0.1	0	0.2	1.3

³ 'Other institutions' includes both private institutions and institutions elsewhere on the African continent or abroad.

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Table 7.5: Learner choice of institution for HE study, in descending order of popularity by national preference (cont.)

INSTITUTION	EC	FS	G	KZN	M	NC	L	NW	WC	TOTAL
Rand Afrikaans University	0	0.7	5.8	0.3	1.5	0.4	0.4	0.9	0.2	1.2
University of Venda	0	0	0.2	0	0	0	6.0	0	0	1.2
Vista University	2.3	3.6	2.0	0.2	1.4	0.7	0.7	0.2	0	1.2
University of Fort Hare	6.8	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.1	0	0.3	1.2
University of Stellenbosch	0.8	0.6	0	0	0	6.2	0.4	0.6	10.9	1.1
Peninsula Technikon	2.4	0.4	0	0.1	0	3.2	0.3	0.9	7.8	1.1
University of Port Elizabeth	6.6	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.6	0.1	0.2	0.2	1.1
University of the Free State	1.0	11.2	0	0.1	0.2	7.9	0.1	0.2	0	1.1
Potchefstroom University	0.4	3.4	2.0	0.2	0	4.9	0.2	3.5	0	1.0
University of the North	0	1.2	0	0.1	0.6	0	3.5	0	0	0.9
Transkei University	4.0	0	0	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	0.6
University of Zululand	0.2	0.4	0	3.2	0.4	0	0	0	0	0.6
Technikon North West	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.5	2.5	0	0.5
Rhodes University	1.6	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.7	0.3	0	0	0.4
University of the North West	0.1	0.6	0.3	0	0	0	0.1	3.1	0	0.4
<i>I don't know</i>	17.1	14.3	11.1	16.4	14.0	17.6	8.2	15.9	12.0	13.3
Total	100.0									

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Each learner was afforded the opportunity of indicating only one name of institution he / she had chosen for HE study. The institutions are ranked according to the extent to which learners nationally (i.e. in total) have chosen to study at them. Thus, for example, while 16.6% of learners have chosen to study at Technikon Pretoria, 4.9% have chosen to study at Technikon Witwatersrand – each percentage being relative to the other percentages in the column.

What Table 7.5 reveals, from an institutional perspective, is the following:

- Technikon Pretoria emerges as the single most popular choice for HE study, more than three times as many learners (16.6%) opting for study there than at the next most popular institution, Technikon Witwatersrand (TWR; 4.9%). There is, moreover, huge interest in studying at Technikon Pretoria not only amongst Gauteng-based learners (26.2%) but amongst learners in Mpumalanga (35.9%), Limpopo (29.1%), the North West (21.6%), the Free State (8.5%), and the Northern Cape (6.3%) – the last-mentioned province not even geographically contiguous with Gauteng. The Mpumalanga and Northern Cape support for Technikon Pretoria is attributable in part to the absence of HE institutions in these provinces – which also accounts for the large Northern Cape interest in Technikon Free State (16.7%) and other institutions (9.3%) and the large Mpumalanga interest in the University of Pretoria (UP; 12.8%). But the main reason for the large interest in studying at Technikon Pretoria – particularly in the case of Mpumalanga-based learners – is likely to be that the technikon has four satellite campuses outside Gauteng – three in Mpumalanga (in Kwa-Mhlanga, Nelspruit and Witbank) and one in Limpopo (in Polokwane). In addition, the technikon has invested heavily in telematics, which allows students to study remotely from this traditionally residential institution's home seat. Besides this, the technikon has an impressive website, which learners may have accessed;
- There are various provincial anomalies in the choice profile: a higher percentage of learners from North West (9.5%) and Limpopo (8.0) than from Gauteng (7.7%) want to study at TWR; a higher percentage of learners from Mpumalanga (6.4%), Limpopo (4.7%), North West (2.7%) and KwaZulu-Natal (1.5%) than from Gauteng (0.9%) want to study at the Medical University of South Africa (MEDUNSA); a higher percentage of learners from the Northern Cape (4.9%) than from the North West (3.5%) want to study at Potchefstroom University; and, following the observation in the first bullet point, a higher percentage of learners from Mpumalanga and Limpopo than from Gauteng want to study at Technikon Pretoria; and
- The level of support for study at an institution is in the case of many institutions not confined to learners in the province in which the institution is located. Thus more than a quarter of the institutions, two of which (University of South Africa [UNISA] and Technikon SA) are distance learning institutions, derive support from at least three provinces. Aside from the distance learning institutions, these are: the University of Cape Town (UCT); the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits); Cape Technikon; MEDUNSA; Technikon Northern Gauteng; Vista University; Peninsula Technikon (Pentech); and Potchefstroom University (which in 2000 had 5 000 distance education students – Hendry, 2002). The University of Stellenbosch and the University of the Free State draw substantial support from a province other than that in which they are situated – that is, the Northern Cape – the latter institution at least partly through its satellite campus (albeit offering only Education Sciences) in the Northern Cape.

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From a provincial perspective, Table 7.5 reveals that:

- A fairly high percentage of learners across all nine provinces (13.3%) are not sure which institution they will be enrolling with. In two provinces – the Northern Cape and Eastern Cape – these percentages are as high as 18% and 17% respectively;
- In the Eastern Cape, twice as many learners want to study at Port Elizabeth Technikon (15.7%) as at the next most popular institution, Border Technikon (7.8%). UCT is more popular than Rhodes;
- In Mpumalanga, only 5.3% of learners want to study through UNISA or Technikon SA, nearly two-thirds of them preferring to study at traditionally contact-mode institutions in Gauteng (which might include the Technikon Pretoria campuses in Kwa-Mhlanga, Witbank and Nelspruit and the Vaal Triangle Technikon campus in Secunda);
- Even fewer learners in the Northern Cape (3.1%) want to study through UNISA or Technikon SA, a quarter of them preferring to study at the two traditionally contact-mode institutions in the Free State;
- In Limpopo, only 14% of learners want to study at institutions based in the province; 55%, on the other hand, would prefer to study at institutions in Gauteng (though one of these may be the satellite campus of Technikon Pretoria in Polokwane);
- In the North West, only 9% of learners want to study at the two universities and technikon; 52% would prefer to study in institutions in Gauteng; and
- In the Western Cape, nearly a quarter of all learners intend registering with Cape Technikon – three times as many as want to study at Pentech. The two Cape Town-based universities (University of the Western Cape [UWC] and UCT) are equally popular with Western Cape learners.

A comparison of university and technikon choice reveals that more than half the learners in four provinces – Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and the North West – want to study at specified technikons. Only in the Western Cape do more learners want to study at specified universities than at technikons.

7.1.4.1 Learner support for home (provincially)-based study

The same information presented in Table 7.5 can be disaggregated by province to reveal the relative popularity of institutions amongst learners in the provinces in which they go to school. The following table juxtaposes institutional choices by province such that all the institutions whose primary campuses are based in a province are indicated for that province. Thus, for example, in the Western Cape the five institutions based in the province occupy the first five places in the provincial popularity stakes. Indicated in italic typeface are the institutions whose primary campuses are based in another province. The percentage of learners who don't know which institution they will be studying at appears at the bottom of each province's list, in bold typeface.

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Table 7.6: Learner choice of institution for HE study, by province, in descending order of popularity

PROVINCE	PERCENTAGE
Eastern Cape	
Port Elizabeth Technikon	15.7
Border Technikon	7.8
Eastern Cape Technikon	7.0
University of Fort Hare	6.8
University of Port Elizabeth	6.6
<i>University of Cape Town</i>	4.2
Transkei University	4.0
<i>Other institutions</i>	3.5
<i>Technikon Pretoria</i>	2.8
<i>Cape Technikon</i>	2.6
<i>Peninsula Technikon</i>	2.4
<i>Vista University</i>	2.3
Rhodes University	1.6
I don't know	17.1
Free State	
Technikon Free State	22.1
University of the Free State	11.2
I don't know	14.3
Gauteng	
Technikon Pretoria	26.2
Technikon Vaal Triangle	8.0
Technikon Witwatersrand	7.7
<i>Other institutions</i>	7.4
University of Pretoria	7.3
Rand Afrikaans University	5.8
Wits University	4.9
University of South Africa	3.8
Technikon South Africa	3.4
Vista University	2.0
Technikon Northern Gauteng	2.0

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Table 7.6: Learner choice of institution for HE study, by province, in descending order of popularity (cont.)

PROVINCE	PERCENTAGE
<i>Potchefstroom University</i>	2.0
<i>University of Cape Town</i>	1.6
Medical University of SA	0.9
I don't know	11.1
<hr/>	
Kwazulu-Natal	
Technikon Natal	17.9
University of Natal	17.3
Mangosuthu Technikon	12.2
University of Durban-Westville	9.0
M.L. Sultan Technikon	8.4
University of Zululand	3.2
I don't know	16.4
<hr/>	
Limpopo	
<i>Technikon Pretoria</i>	29.1
<i>Technikon Witwatersrand</i>	8.0
<i>Technikon Vaal Triangle</i>	7.0
University of Venda	6.0
<i>University of Pretoria</i>	5.9
<i>Technikon Northern Gauteng</i>	5.1
<i>Medical University of SA</i>	4.7
<i>Wits University</i>	4.0
University of the North	3.5
I don't know	8.2
<hr/>	
Mpumalanga	
<i>Technikon Pretoria</i>	36.0
<i>University of Pretoria</i>	12.8
<i>Medical University of SA</i>	6.4
<i>Technikon Witwatersrand</i>	5.4
<i>Wits University</i>	3.9
<i>Other institutions</i>	3.3

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Table 7.6. Learner choice of institution for HE study, by province, in descending order of popularity (cont.)

PROVINCE	PERCENTAGE
<i>University of South Africa</i>	2.9
<i>Technikon South Africa</i>	2.4
<i>Technikon Vaal Triangle</i>	2.1
<i>Rand Afrikaans University</i>	1.5
I don't know	14.0
<hr/>	
Northern Cape	
<i>Technikon Free State</i>	16.7
<i>Other institutions</i>	9.3
<i>University of the Free State</i>	7.9
<i>Technikon Pretoria</i>	6.3
<i>University of Stellenbosch</i>	6.2
<i>Potchefstroom University</i>	4.9
<i>Technikon Witwatersrand</i>	4.1
<i>Cape Technikon</i>	3.8
<i>Technikon Vaal Triangle</i>	3.5
<i>Peninsula Technikon</i>	3.2
I don't know	17.6
<hr/>	
North West	
<i>Technikon Pretoria</i>	21.6
<i>Technikon Witwatersrand</i>	9.5
<i>Technikon Vaal Triangle</i>	7.9
<i>Other institutions</i>	5.4
<i>University of Pretoria</i>	5.1
<i>Wits University</i>	4.5
<i>Potchefstroom University</i>	3.5
<i>University of Cape Town</i>	3.4
<i>University of the North West</i>	3.1
<i>Technikon South Africa</i>	2.9
<i>Medical University of SA</i>	2.7
<i>Technikon North West</i>	2.5
I don't know	15.9

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Table 7.6: Learner choice of institution for HE study, by province, in descending order of popularity (cont.)

PROVINCE	PERCENTAGE
Western Cape	
Cape Technikon	23.5
University of Western Cape	16.7
University of Cape Town	16.0
University of Stellenbosch	10.9
Peninsula Technikon	7.8
I don't know	12.0

From this table it is evident that:

- In only three provinces – the Free State, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape – is the ranking of the most popular institutional choices synonymous with the number of institutions whose primary campuses are based in those provinces. In other words, there is high degree of provincial loyalty amongst learners in these provinces;
- Amongst Eastern Cape learners, UCT is more popular than two of the provincially-based institutions (Transkei and Rhodes), while six institutions outside the Eastern Cape – UCT, private and foreign institutions, Technikon Pretoria, Cape Technikon, Peninsula Technikon, and Vista University (though it has a campus in the province) – are more popular than Rhodes;
- Amongst Gauteng learners, private and foreign institutions are more popular than all but three of the provincially-based public institutions, all of them technikons; Moreover, Potchefstroom University and UCT are more popular than MEDUNSA;
- Amongst Limpopo learners, the three most popular Gauteng-based institutions are all more popular than the University of Venda, while in addition to these three, four other Gauteng-based institutions are more popular than the University of the North. In other words, seven of the nine most popular institutions amongst Limpopo learners are Gauteng-based institutions;
- Of the ten most popular institutions amongst Mpumalanga learners, nine are Gauteng-based, the remaining one is private or foreign institutions;
- The ten most popular institutions amongst learners in the Northern Cape are distributed amongst the Free State, Gauteng and the Western Cape, private and foreign institutions being the second most popular choice; and
- Amongst learners in the North West, five Gauteng-based institutions and private and foreign institutions are all more popular than Potchefstroom University and, with the addition of UCT, than the University of the North West and Technikon North West.

What these findings suggest is a sense of presumed mobility amongst learners – reinforcing the notion that HE institutions are a national resource in many instances knowing no provincial borders. But on closer inspection there are strong geographical reasons for the provincial profiles, along north-south, integrity and contiguity lines.

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From a north-south perspective, a consideration of the profiles of the two southern-most provinces reveals that:

- Three of the five Western Cape institutions are amongst the eleven most popular institutions in the Eastern Cape; and
- Only two northern institutions – Technikon Pretoria and Vista University (by virtue of its satellite presence in the Eastern Cape) – have a real presence in the south.

At the same time, a consideration of the profiles of the northern provinces (North West, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and Gauteng) reveals a strong Gauteng domination of the region.

From an integrity perspective, it would appear that the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and the Free State have a certain geographical integrity not present in the other provinces – the two former provinces because their institutions are either on the coast or within 120 km of the coast, Free State because the centrality of Bloemfontein (home of its two institutions) seems to isolate the province from those provinces contiguous with it.

Gauteng's contiguity with Mpumalanga, Limpopo, and North West, as well as its economic domination of the region, ensures a strong degree of border permeability that makes its institutions an attractive proposition for its neighbours. Such attractiveness is enhanced by the location of a number of satellite campuses in surrounding provinces.

At an aggregated level, with the exception of the proposed merger of Technikon North West with the two technikons in the Tshwane metropole (regardless of whether the mergers of institutions proposed in the report of the National Working Group to the Minister of Education [DoE, 2001b] occur or not), the provincial choice profile in terms of the percentages of learners wanting to study at traditionally contact-mode institutions in their own province is as follows:

- In the Eastern Cape, public contact-mode institutions account for fewer than half of the institutional choices of learners – 50.5% of whom either don't know where to study (17.1%) or have opted to study through distance learning institutions (1.4%), at other institutions (private institutions or institutions abroad), or at institutions in other provinces;
- In the Free State, two-thirds of the institutional choices of learners are accounted for in the public HE system – though this figure does not take into account the learners who have opted for study at Vista University, possibly its Welkom or Bloemfontein campuses, or at the University of Pretoria campus in Bloemfontein;
- In Gauteng, the choice of 46.8% of learners in the province is to study at Gauteng-based institutions (this includes learners who want to study at Technikon North West, which is likely to be merged with the other two technikons in the province). More than half of the learners in the province either don't know where to study, are planning to study at other institutions, or would not have their institutional choices accounted for by provincially-based traditionally contact-mode institutions;
- In KwaZulu-Natal, just under a third of learner choices are unaccounted for by learner choice to study at traditionally contact-mode institutions in the province;
- In Limpopo, a massive 85.8% of learners don't know where to study, want to study at other institutions, or would opt to study in a distance mode or at institutions outside the province (which might include the satellite campuses of Technikon Pretoria and the University of Pretoria, both situated in Polokwane);

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- In the North West, the overwhelming majority of learner choices (93.4%) are for distance learning, education at other institutions, or for contact-based learning in other provinces (which might include the Klerksdorp campus of Vaal Triangle Technikon). (This figure assumes the merging of Technikon North West with the two technikons in the Tshwane metropole); and
- In the Western Cape, contact-based institutional choice accounts for three-quarters of learner choices in the province.

What these comparisons suggest is a great deal of variance between the provinces in terms of the percentages of learners choosing to study at traditionally contact-mode institutions. These range from the Western Cape, where only a quarter of learner choices are not accounted for through choice of study at the traditionally contact-mode institutions in the province, to the North West, where *almost all* learner choice (were the proposed shifting of Technikon North West to Gauteng to take place) is not for traditionally contact-mode study at provincially-based institutions.

7.1.4.2 Learner choice of institution for HE study, by population group

A disaggregation of learner choice of HE study by population group reveals that the five most popular institutions, in descending order of popularity, are as depicted in Table 7.7.

Table 7.7: Five most popular institutions for HE study, by population group, in descending order of popularity

AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE
Technikon Pretoria	Cape Technikon	University of Natal	Other institutions
Technikon Witwatersrand	UWC	Technikon Natal	University of Pretoria
Technikon Vaal Triangle	University of Stellenbosch	UCT	University of Stellenbosch
University of Pretoria	Other institutions	UNISA	UCT
Technikon Natal	UCT	Wits	Technikon Pretoria

What this table indicates is that:

- Technikon study is most popular amongst Africans, featuring only once in the top five most popular institutional choices of the other three groups but four times for Africans. Four of the five most popular institutions amongst Africans, moreover, are in Gauteng;
- Amongst coloureds, four of the top five institutional choices are located in the Western Cape – in line with the national distribution of coloureds;
- The Indian top five profile, on the other hand, is more nationally distributed – through KwaZulu-Natal, the Western Cape, and Gauteng;
- White learners' top five institutional choices are located in Gauteng and the Western Cape. Significantly, other institutions (private universities or institutions abroad) constitute the first choice of white learners – 14.9% wanting to study at such institutions, 13.4% at the University of Pretoria;
- The University of Pretoria and Technikon Pretoria both feature amongst the top five most popular choices of both Africans and whites; and

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- UCT is the only institution featuring in the top five lists of three population groups.

The disaggregation by population group also reveals that:

- The percentages of Indians and whites unsure about which institutions they will be attending are higher than the percentages of Africans and coloureds who do not know. A third of all Indian learners are unsure about institutional choice; and
- UCT and Rhodes are the only historically white English-medium universities to which a higher proportion of whites than any other population group wish to go. In the case of historically white Afrikaans-medium universities, moreover, with the exception of the universities of Stellenbosch and the Free State all institutions are far more popular amongst white learners than amongst the other population groups.

7.1.4.3 Learner choice of institution for HE study, by SES, institutional category, and population group

A further disaggregation sees a classification of HE institutions into six categories:

1. Historically Disadvantaged Universities (HDUs) – that is, universities set up either prior to or during the apartheid regime for students (of colour) from a disadvantaged background;
2. Historically Advantaged Universities – Afrikaans (HAUs-Afr) – that is, Afrikaans-medium universities set up either prior to or during the apartheid regime for (advantaged) white students only;
3. Historically Advantaged Universities – English (HAUs-Eng) – that is, English-medium universities set up either prior to or during the apartheid regime for (advantaged) white students only;
4. Historically Disadvantaged Technikons (HDTs) – that is, technikons set up under the apartheid regime for students (of colour) from a disadvantaged background;
5. Historically Advantaged Technikons (HATs) – that is, technikons set up under the apartheid regime for (advantaged) white students only; and
6. Other institutions – that is, private and foreign (non-South African) institutions.

The following tables disaggregate learner choice of institution by institutional category, SES, and population group.

Table 7.8: Learner choice of institution for HE study, by institutional category and population group – low SES

CATEGORY	AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE	TOTAL
HDU	15.4	19.2	6.3	6.0	15.3
HAU - Afr	10.9	17.1	20.3	37.1	11.8
HAU - Eng	9.5	5.5	37.8	11.8	9.7
HDT	14.0	6.2	8.2	7.5	13.4
HAT	47.1	41.7	20.9	24.6	46.1
Other	3.2	10.4	6.5	13.1	3.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

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Table 7.9: Learner choice of institution for HE study, by institutional category and population group – middle SES

CATEGORY	AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE	TOTAL
HDU	12.3	16.0	7.2	0.9	10.2
HAU - Afr	10.0	21.9	10.6	55.7	19.5
HAU - Eng	11.3	13.8	62.6	12.3	14.9
HDT	9.7	1.8	4.2	0.8	7.0
HAT	53.8	39.4	11.3	15.4	42.8
Other	3.0	7.1	4.2	14.8	5.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 7.10: Learner choice of institution for HE study, by institutional category and population group – high SES

CATEGORY	AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE	TOTAL
HDU	10.5	5.0	7.7	2.1	6.5
HAU - Afr	20.1	25.0	0	46.7	30.1
HAU - Eng	13.7	34.1	68.7	15.1	19.2
HDT	6.7	0	0	1.7	3.8
HAT	45.9	35.9	23.7	17.7	31.9
Other	3.2	0	0	16.8	8.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The key findings from these tables are that:

- The highest percentage of high-SES African learners – 45.9% – want to go to HATs, the second highest percentage (20.1%) to Afrikaans-medium HAUs, and the third-highest percentage (13.7%) to English-medium HAUs;
- Amongst high-SES white learners, this situation is reversed: the highest percentage – 46.7% – want to go to Afrikaans-medium HAUs, while the second-highest percentage (17.7%) want to go to HATs;
- Amongst low-SES white learners, the profile is similar: the largest percentage of learners (37.1%) would prefer to go to Afrikaans-medium HAUs, the second-largest percentage (24.6%) to HATs; but
- Amongst low-SES African learners, there is an interesting difference: whilst the highest percentage (47.1%) want to enter HATs, the second-highest percentage (15.4%) want to enter HDUs.

The middle-SES category epitomizes the African–white technikon–university split: the highest percentage of African learners (53.8%) – of all three SES categories – want to go to HATs, while the highest percentage of white learners (55.7%) – of all three SES categories – want to go to Afrikaans-medium HAUs.

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7.1.4.4 Learner choice of institution for HE study, by A- and B-average Grade 11 symbol

The following table outlines the institutional choices of those learners who achieved an A- or B-average symbol in Grade 11.

Table 7.11: Learner choice of institution for HE study by A- and B-average Grade 11 symbol, in descending order of popularity according to total of A- and B-average symbols

INSTITUTION	A-AVERAGE SYMBOL	B-AVERAGE SYMBOL	TOTAL
Technikon Pretoria	2.8	11.4	10.0
University of Pretoria	10.1	6.6	7.2
University of Natal	11.3	6.1	7.0
University of Cape Town	9.6	6.0	6.6
University of the Witwatersrand	4.1	4.7	4.6
University of Stellenbosch	11.0	3.1	4.5
Technikon Witwatersrand	0	4.1	3.4
Other institutions	1.4	3.5	3.2
Rand Afrikaans University	2.7	3.1	3.0
Port Elizabeth Technikon	1.8	3.2	2.9
Medical University of SA	2.5	3.0	2.9
University of South Africa	1.9	3.1	2.9
Technikon Natal	0.9	3.1	2.7
University of Port Elizabeth	4.9	2.0	2.5
ML Sultan Technikon	0.4	2.7	2.3
Technikon Vaal Triangle	0	2.4	2.0
Potchefstroom University	7.3	0.8	1.9
University of Durban -Westville	0.4	2.2	1.9
Mangosuthu Technikon	0.4	2.1	1.8
Cape Technikon	0.7	1.5	1.4
University of the Free State	1.6	1.1	1.2
University of the Western Cape	1.5	1.1	1.2
Technikon Northern Gauteng	0	1.2	1.0
University of Fort Hare	0.5	1.0	0.9
Technikon South Africa	0	1.1	0.9
Technikon Free State	0.1	0.9	0.8
University of Zululand	0.4	0.7	0.7

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Table 7.11: Learner choice of institution for HE study by A- and B-average Grade 11 symbol, in descending order of popularity according to total of A- and B-average symbols (cont.)

INSTITUTION	A-AVERAGE SYMBOL	B-AVERAGE SYMBOL	TOTAL
Vista University	0	0.8	0.6
Rhodes University	0.4	0.6	0.6
Peninsula Technikon	0.5	0.6	0.6
Eastern Cape Technikon	0.5	0.5	0.5
University of Venda	0	0.5	0.4
Border Technikon	0	0.5	0.4
Technikon North West	0	0.5	0.4
Transkei University	0	0.5	0.4
University of the North West	0	0.4	0.3
<i>I don't know</i>	20.0	13.3	14.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

While the top five preferences of A-symbol learners are all historically advantaged universities (University of Natal, University of Stellenbosch, University of Pretoria, University of Cape Town, and Potchefstroom University), the inclusion of B-symbol learners displaces a historically advantaged university (Natal) at the top of the list with a historically advantaged technikon (Pretoria). What is perhaps most striking, however, is that the highest percentage of learners with an A- or a B-average Grade 11 symbol wanting to study at a HE institution do not know which institution they want to study at – probably because they are spoiled for choice, and may even be weighing up study in South Africa versus study abroad.

7.1.5 Factors affecting first choice of institution for HE study

For 82.2% of learners, the institution at which they are planning to study constituted their first choice. Asked to indicate one main reason for not studying at the institution of their first choice, the 17.8% of learners who will not be doing so replied as follows:

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Table 7.12: Learner reasons for not studying at institutions constituting their first choice, in descending order of popularity of reason

VARIABLE	TOTAL
My parents cannot afford to send me to my first choice	39.5
The university or technikon that was my first choice is too expensive	10.9
Other	10.1
The university or technikon that was my first choice does not offer the programme I want to study	9.8
I want to study while living at home and my first choice is far from home	9.7
I want to study far away from home and my first choice is too near my home	8.5
I have had a letter of rejection indicating that my marks are not good enough	5.4
I have had a letter of rejection from my first choice of institution indicating no places available	4.7
My boyfriend / girlfriend will not be studying at my first choice	1.5

What is evident from this table is that:

- Half of all learners who will not be studying at the institution of their first choice cite financial constraint as the key reason;
- One in ten learners wants to study while living at home, while almost this number wants to live and study away from home. These two options are themselves contradictory, however, assuming that choice of institution for HE study and choice of abode during study must be at odds with each other; and
- One in ten learners who will not be studying at the institution of his / her first choice discriminates on the basis of the programme rather than the institution.

7.1.6 Factors affecting choice of institution for HE study

The following table outlines the factors posited as influencing the choice of institution at which learners will be studying, in descending order of extent of influence.

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Table 7.13: Factors influencing learner choice of institution for HE study, in descending order of extent of influence

VARIABLE	MEAN
It has a good reputation	4.3
The school / faculty / department in which I want to study has a good reputation	4.2
It is far away from home, and I want to live in residence / other accommodation while studying	3.2
There are better sporting facilities there than at other universities / technikons	3.1
The fees are lower than at other universities / technikons	2.8
My friends recommended it to me	2.5
It allows me to study via correspondence	2.4
It is near my home, where I want to live while studying	2.4
My parents / relatives studied there	2.1
I have been awarded a scholarship to study there	1.8

Noteworthy amongst these findings is that:

- Reputation (whether of institution or study programme) is the most important of the listed influences on choice of institution for study – echoing the earlier finding (Section 7.1.2) that reputation is important in terms of the decision about private versus public institution for choice of study;
- The notion of leaving home to study is far more significant an influence than its opposite (3.2 versus 2.4) – 49.3% of learners citing leaving home to study as having influenced them to a large or very large extent; and
- The provision of superior sporting facilities exerts a greater influence upon the choice of institution of potential students than do fees, friends' recommendations, learning modes (distance versus contact), parental study, or the award of a scholarship.

7.1.6.1 Factors affecting choice of institution for HE study, by population group

The four population groups react differently, to varying extents, to the influence of all the listed factors on their choice of institution for HE study, as Table 7.14 indicates.

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Table 7.14: Factors influencing learner choice of institution for HE study, by population group

VARIABLE	AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE	TOTAL
Reputation of institution	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.3
Reputation of school / faculty / department	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.0	4.2
Institution far from home – study while in residence	3.4	2.4	1.7	2.1	3.2
Better sporting facilities	3.3	2.9	2.4	2.2	3.1
Lower fees	2.9	2.4	2.0	1.9	2.8
Friends' recommendation	2.5	2.3	2.7	2.4	2.5
Allows for study via correspondence	2.6	1.9	1.7	1.7	2.4
Institution near home – study while at home	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.4
Parents / relatives studied at institution	2.1	1.8	2.4	1.9	2.1
Award of scholarship to study at institution	1.9	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.8

From the table one observes that:

- In contrast to the effect of the reputation of chosen field of study upon the choice of private over public HE (Section 7.1.2.2) being greater for whites than for Africans, here Africans are more influenced by school / faculty / departmental reputation than are whites;
- Africans are more influenced than are coloureds, Indians and whites (on a continuum) by the offer of better sporting facilities and lower fee structures, and are far more influenced than are the other three groups by scholarship awards to study at particular institutions;
- More Africans and coloureds than Indians and whites want to get away from home to study (a far higher proportion of Africans even than coloureds wanting to do so) – the corollary being that more Indians and whites want to live at home while studying. Paradoxically, however, study via correspondence appeals more to Africans than to coloureds, Indians and whites; and
- Africans and Indians are more influenced than are coloureds and whites by whether their parents studied at a particular institution.

7.2 Application to study at HE institutions

The section of the questionnaire dealing with the application process does not occupy a large space in this report, for two reasons. First, the question of whether learners have applied to institutions is not the major focus of the study, which is primarily concerned with whether learners intend entering HE, and why. Second, the application process in South African HE institutions varies, across both institutional types (university versus

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technikon) and individual institutions (different institutions adopting different procedures for handling applications). For example, in Gauteng alone the closing dates for application to study at arbitrarily selected institutions in the first semester of any given year are as follows:

Table 7.15: Closing dates for application to study at selected institutions in Gauteng

INSTITUTION	CLOSING DATE – SELECTED PROGRAMMES	CLOSING DATE – OTHER / ALL PROGRAMMES
University of Pretoria	Health Sciences, Veterinary Sciences, Built Environment, Communications – 30 June	Other programmes – 30 September
UNISA		All programmes – 31 January
Technikon Pretoria	Health Sciences, Nature Conservation, Photography, Dental Technology – 15 June	Other programmes – 15 August
Wits		All programmes – 30 September
Technikon Witwatersrand		All programmes – 15 August

Even from these examples, the permutations make for a complex tapestry. While some institutions have one closing date for all programmes (for example, the two Johannesburg-based institutions), others have different closing dates for different programmes. Thus the closing dates for programmes in the Health Sciences and related (or entirely unrelated) fields are often two to three months before those in other fields. This complexity goes some way towards explaining why the majority of learners – as discussed below – had not yet applied to any institution by the time of the survey (13–24 August 2001), and may indeed account for the fact that two-thirds of learners cite lack of access to sufficient information about universities or technikons as their main reason for not yet having applied to any institutions.

Not only do different institutions post different closing dates for applications, but neither of the professional associations under which the universities and technikons fall (the South African Universities Vice-Chancellors' Association – SAUVCA – and the Committee of Technikon Principals – CTP – respectively) is able to provide information on closing dates for the receipt of applications, referring enquirers to individual institutions. It seems that any attempts at establishing an applications clearing house for South African HE have not met with any success.

Against this backdrop, this section of the report focuses, then, on only three aspects:

- The percentages of learners who have applied to HE institutions;
- A comparison of the percentages of learners who have applied to institutions with

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- the percentages of learners who have indicated their intention of studying at those institutions; and
- The importance of various factors (listed in question 4.5 of the questionnaire) in facilitating the application process.

7.2.1 Institutions to which learners have applied

While Section 7.1 may suggest, from the tables indicating the institutions at which learners are planning to study, that most learners have already applied to these institutions, this is far from the case. Responses to question 4.1 – ‘To which of the following institutions have you applied for a place to study?’ – indicate that more than half of the learners intending to enter HE (54%) have not yet applied to any institutions – public or private. In three provinces the figure is even higher – in Mpumalanga, 74%; and in Gauteng and the North West, 58%. A disaggregation by institution type reveals that 53% of learners intending to study at a university have not yet applied, while 57% of learners intending to study at a technikon have not yet applied.

Since question 4.1 is a multiple response item, the following table outlines the response profile for applications to HE institutions.

Table 7.16: Multiple response profile for learner applications to HE institutions

NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS TO WHICH APPLIED	NUMBER OF LEARNERS APPLYING TO INSTITUTIONS	% LEARNERS HAVING APPLIED TO INSTITUTIONS
1	81 570	59.0
2	26 869	19.4
3	13 183	9.5
4	7 343	5.3
5	3 922	2.8
6	1 853	1.3
7	1 294	0.9
8	640	0.5
9	526	0.4
10	268	0.2
More than 10	816	0.6
Total	138 285	100.0

What is apparent from this table is that while the majority of learners who have submitted applications have applied to only one institution, 41% have applied to more than one institution. A further disaggregation reveals that one in five learners has applied to two institutions, one in ten learners to three.

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7.2.2 Learner application and learner choice

A comparison of the percentages of learners who intend to enter specified institutions (question 5.6) with the percentages of applications made to specified institutions is drawn in Table 7.17.

Table 7.17: Comparison of learner intention to enter public HE institutions and learner applications to these institutions

INSTITUTION	LEARNERS SELECTING SPECIFIED INSTITUTIONS ⁴	APPLICATIONS MADE TO INSTITUTIONS ⁵
Technikon Pretoria	20.0	11.2
Technikon Witwatersrand	5.9	6.0
University of Pretoria	5.3	6.7
Technikon Vaal Triangle	5.1	4.2
University of Natal	4.3	5.7
Technikon Natal	4.1	4.6
University of Cape Town	3.7	4.8
University of the Witwatersrand	3.6	5.2
Port Elizabeth Technikon	3.6	2.9
Cape Technikon	3.3	3.5
University of South Africa	2.8	3.0
Medical University of SA	2.8	2.9
Mangosuthu Technikon	2.7	1.9
Technikon Free State	2.4	1.8
University of Durban-Westville	2.3	3.9
Technikon South Africa	2.3	1.8
Technikon Northern Gauteng	2.2	1.5
ML Sultan Technikon	2.0	2.9
University of the Western Cape	1.8	2.0
Border Technikon	1.6	1.5
Eastern Cape Technikon	1.5	1.2
Rand Afrikaans University	1.5	1.7
University of Venda	1.5	1.8
Vista University	1.5	1.4
University of Fort Hare	1.4	1.3
University of Stellenbosch	1.4	2.2

⁴ The categories 'I don't know' and 'Other institutions' have been factored out of this analysis to allow for comparison with applications to institutions.

⁵ The categories 'Private institution' and 'None – I have not yet applied' have been factored out of this analysis to allow for comparison with learner choice of specified institution.

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Table 7.17: Comparison of learner intention to enter public HE institutions and learner applications to these institutions (cont.)

INSTITUTION	LEARNERS SELECTING SPECIFIED INSTITUTIONS	APPLICATIONS MADE TO INSTITUTIONS
Peninsula Technikon	1.4	2.0
University of Port Elizabeth	1.4	2.2
University of the Free State	1.3	1.8
Potchefstroom University	1.2	0.9
University of the North	1.0	1.1
Transkei University	0.8	0.8
University of Zululand	0.7	1.2
Technikon North West	0.6	0.6
Rhodes University	0.5	1.4
University of the North West	0.5	0.4
Total	100.0	100.0

The way to read the table is to say, for example, that in the case of the first institution listed, 20% of the learners who intend entering HE within the next three years and who have made their choice from amongst the 36 public institutions of higher learning have chosen to go to Technikon Pretoria, to which 11.2% of all applications made to the 36 public HE institutions have been made.

Those universities to which a lower percentage of applications have been made than there are the percentage of learners intending to enter their doors are Vista University, University of Fort Hare, Potchefstroom University, and University of the North West. A higher percentage of applications have been made to the vast majority of universities, then, than there are the percentages of learners intending to go to them.

In the technikon sector, the profile is somewhat different. A lower percentage of applications have been made to more than half of the technikons than there are percentages of learners intending to enter their doors – higher percentages of applications having been made only to Cape Technikon, ML Sultan Technikon, Pentech, Technikon Natal, Technikon North West and Technikon Witwatersrand than there are percentages of learners intending to go to them.

The import of this analysis is the following. Whatever the reasons, there is a university–technikon divide in terms of the application process, the university sector having attracted higher percentages of applications than the technikon sector in relation to the percentages of learners intending to enter their doors. In other words, notwithstanding the finding reported earlier (Section 7.1.1) that 54.8% of learners intend studying at a technikon and only 34.6% at a university, and the concretisation of this (Section 7.1.4) in the finding that 48.6% of learners who intend entering HE have specified that they intend

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studying at the 15 technikons, 33.9% at the 21 public universities (13.3% being unsure and the balance intending to study at other institutions), a higher percentage of applications have been directed to the university sector than there are learners intending to study at universities (contrary to the situation in the technikon sector). This would suggest that in an ideal world university study is more attractive, yet in the real world more inaccessible, than technikon study – which is unsurprising given that admission requirements are more stringent at universities than at technikons. Moreover, in an ideal world (question 9.2) the gap between technikon and university choice is considerably narrowed – 47.2% of learners choosing to study at the 15 technikons (as against 48.6% in the real world) and 44.8% of learners choosing to study at the 21 public universities (as against 33.9% in the real world).

What this analysis does not take into account, however is the ‘walk-in’ phenomenon. Anecdotally, at some institutions it is fairly common for prospective new students to arrive at registration without going through the application-admission process at all (Hendry, 2002). Failure to apply to study at an institution does not, then, translate into a lack of interest in studying at that institution.

7.2.3 Factors facilitating learner application to HE institutions

Asked, on a five-point Likert scale, to rate a number of factors facilitating the process of application to a HE institution, learners responded as follows:

Table 7.18: Factors facilitating application to HE institutions, in descending order of importance

VARIABLE	MEAN
Receiving information directly from a university or technikon about studying there	4.2
Having a postal address	4.1
Television	3.9
Discussions with relatives and friends	3.9
Newspapers	3.8
Radio	3.8
Having a telephone	3.7
Living near a university or technikon	3.3
Advertisements on street lamp-posts	2.9
Living in a city	2.9
Use of private transport	2.8

All factors bar the last three seem to be important to learners in applying to HE institutions. Personalised receipt of information – particularly by mail – facilitates the application process most.

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A disaggregation by population group (see Table 7.19 for the details) reveals that:

- Having a postal address and a telephone are less important for whites – most of whom would have them – than for the other three groups;
- The broadcast and print media (television, radio, and newspapers), as well as living near a university or technikon – this being, for Africans, the corollary of the previous bullet point – are more important for Africans than for the other three groups (all means can be plotted on an African-coloured-Indian-white continuum in every case but for radio, which is equally important a medium for coloureds and Indians);
- Discussions with relatives and friends are more important for Indians than for Africans, coloureds and whites (in that order); and
- Use of private transport is more important for Indians and whites, who would have less access to public transport to get to a university or technikon than would Africans and coloureds.

Not listed as one of the options is accessing of an institution's website – which in the case of institutions like UCT (Hendry, 2002) is an increasingly popular means of sourcing information about the institution.

Table 7.19: Factors facilitating application to HE institutions, by population group

VARIABLE	AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE	TOTAL
Receiving information directly from a HE institution	4.2	4.4	4.4	4.0	4.2
Having a postal address	4.2	4.2	4.2	3.7	4.1
Television	4.1	3.4	3.1	2.6	3.9
Discussions with relatives and friends	3.9	3.8	4.0	3.6	3.9
Newspapers	4.0	3.3	3.1	2.4	3.8
Radio	4.0	3.0	3.0	2.5	3.8
Having a telephone	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.3	3.7
Living near a university or technikon	3.3	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.3
Advertisements on street lamp-posts	3.0	2.5	2.6	2.1	2.9
Living in a city	2.9	2.9	3.0	2.9	2.9
Use of private transport	2.6	3.2	3.4	3.4	2.8

7.3 Learner choice in an ideal world

Asked to indicate whether, in an ideal world – a world free of biographical and structural constraints to action – they would proceed to HE, 82.6% of learners indicated that they would do so – 10.2% more than said in answer to question 3.1 of the questionnaire that they intended entering HE within the next three years. Moreover, while only 13.3% of learners indicated in response to question 3.1 that they would not be entering HE, the effect of not having a category 'I don't know' in Section 9 of the questionnaire is to raise

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the percentage of learners who would not enter HE if absolutely free to do so from 13.3% to 17.4%.

There were no significant differences between institutional choices in an ideal world (question 9.2) and in the ‘real’ world (question 5.6)⁶ – there being a one percentage point or greater difference between ‘real’- and ideal-world choices only in the cases of Wits and UNISA. The only other remarkable difference is that while 13.3% of learners indicated that (in the ‘real’ world) they were unsure about which institution they would be studying at, only 0.8% indicated uncertainty in an ideal-world scenario. This difference may, however, be an artefact of the questionnaire – three sections in the questionnaire intervening between the ‘real’- and ideal-world questions.

⁶ The distinction between *intention* and *reality* should not be confused with this usage of ‘real’ – which is in fact ‘real intention’, hence the quotation marks.



8. CHOOSING A FIELD OF STUDY

8.1 Learner choice of field of study

The fields in which learners are planning to study – whether they have applied yet or not – are categorized in the questionnaire into the framework of the twelve organizing fields of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). While this framework has been unevenly appropriated by the HE sector, the twelve fields represent those broad areas within and around which learning will increasingly be organized.

Learner response to question 6.1 – ‘In which field are you planning to study?’ – is as follows:

Table 8.1: Learner choice of HE field of study

FIELD	TOTAL
Agriculture & Nature Conservation	5.4
Culture and Arts	4.0
Business, Commerce & Management Studies	25.6
Communication Studies & Language	2.1
Education, Training & Development	1.4
Manufacturing, Engineering & Technology	15.6
Human & Social Studies	5.9
Law, Military Science & Security	5.4
Health Sciences & Social Services	14.1
Physical, Mathematical, Computer & Life Sciences	10.2
Services	5.5
Physical Planning & Construction	1.2
I don't know	3.6
Total	100.0

These fields of study in the table represent the first choices of 82.1% of learners, 47% of whom intend studying towards a degree, 31% towards a diploma, and 9% towards a certificate (the balance being uncertain about the qualification in which their study programme will culminate). Large percentages of learners, moreover, do not know either the name of the qualification towards which they will be studying (48%) or the major subjects that will comprise their study programmes (42%) – or indeed do not understand the categories.

A correlation between the findings reported in Table 8.1 and the objective in the *National Plan for Higher Education* (DoE, 2001a) to shift the balance in enrolments away from the Humanities towards Business & Commerce and SET, were these preferences to be realized in actual enrolments, is difficult to make. The first reason for this is that the



national enrolment figures (49%:26%:25% for Humanities:Business & Commerce:SET) represent enrolment throughout all years of study in the HE system, while the learner preferences in the table above impact upon the intake of first-year students only. The second is that there is some overlap between the organizing fields that renders the calculation of the number of learners who might enrol within the area of SET inexact: because SET spans three organizing fields – Manufacturing, Engineering & Technology, Health Sciences and Social Services and Physical, Mathematical, Computer & Life Sciences – it is not possible to establish how many learners have responded to the ‘Manufacturing’ element only rather than to the SET component of the sixth organizing field and to the ‘Social Services’ element only of the ninth organizing field. And the third is that learners themselves, despite the provision of examples of learning areas behind the names of the organizing fields and the possible assistance provided by fieldworkers in the completion of the questionnaire, are unfamiliar with the twelve organizing fields, and may well have had difficulty in locating their chosen areas of study within this framework.

Nevertheless, a comparison between the above patterns and the *National Plan* fields would read as follows:

Table 8.2: Correlation between learner choices of fields of study and National Plan fields in stated objective

FIELD COMPONENTS	HUMANITIES ¹	BUSINESS & COMMERCE	SET
Culture & Arts	4.0		
Communication Studies & Language	2.1		
Education, Training & Development	1.4		
Human & Social Studies	5.9		
Law, Military Science & Security	5.4		
Business, Commerce & Management Studies		25.6	
Manufacturing, Engineering & Technology			15.6
Health Sciences and Social Services			14.1
Physical, Mathematical, Computer & Life Sciences			10.2
Total	18.8	25.6	39.9

Were all the learners indicating their learning field preferences to be accommodated within the HE system, the next three years would see an intake of 60 249 learners in the Humanities, 82 414 learners in Business & Commerce, and 128 463 learners in Science, Engineering and Technology from the 2001 Grade 12 cohort.

¹ This concept of the Humanities is somewhat broader than that used in many HE institutions, embracing all fields in which there is a strong human studies element

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To place this set of choices in perspective, however, one needs to consider the correlation between learner choice within the key scarce-skill fields and the percentage of learners taking Mathematics at the higher grade in Grade 12, as well as the correlation between such learner choice and the Grade 11 symbols of learners for Mathematics. Such a cross tabulation reveals that:

- The percentage of learners intending to study in the field of SET taking Mathematics at the higher grade is 21.4%, while the percentage taking Mathematics at the standard grade is 78.5%. Similarly, while only 14.8% of learners intending to study in the field of Business & Commerce took Mathematics at the higher grade, 84.9% of such learners took Mathematics at the standard grade; and
- The percentages of learners who achieved an A, B, C, D or E symbol for Mathematics in Grade 11 intending to study in the field of SET do not differ greatly: 67.7% who attained an A symbol intend studying in the field of SET, 61.9% of learners who attained a B symbol intend doing so, while 64% of learners with a C symbol, 58.2% with a D symbol, and 53.2% with an E symbol intend studying in SET. Business & Commerce, the next most popular field of study, evinces an even flatter profile: 20.8% of learners with an A for Mathematics intend studying in the field, versus 27% with a B, 25% with a C, 23.1% with a D, and then, somewhat surprisingly, 29.5% with a E. A comparison of these statistics with those indicating the percentages of learners with various HG Mathematics symbols wanting to study in the fields of SET and Business & Commerce paints a similar picture: 73.7% of learners with an A in Mathematics want to study in the field of SET, 20.2% in Business & Commerce; 64.1% with a B symbol in Mathematics want to study in SET, 29.8% in Business & Commerce; 66.9% with a C symbol in Mathematics want to study in SET; 22.5% in Business & Commerce; and so on.

These analyses reveal that the vast majority of those intending to study in the field of SET took Mathematics on the standard grade – which has major implications for their supposed success rate in HE programmes requiring competence in Mathematics, and goes some way towards explaining the high drop-out and attrition rates in HE (DoE, 2001a). In addition, the analyses reveal that there is no positive correlation between the desire to achieve a qualification in the fields of SET and Business & Commerce and the symbols for Mathematics that Grade 12 learners achieved in their Grade 11 year. Compositely, the picture epitomizes the discrepancy between illusion and reality, for only those with symbols of C and above in Mathematics at the higher grade are likely to succeed in SET programmes in HE, particularly in universities.²

What is evident also from the above table, moreover, is the relative paucity of Humanities choices. Nevertheless, were the 19% of learners who have opted for the Humanities to actually enrol for programmes in this field over the next three years (that is, at a rate of 19% per annum), enrolments in this field would still exceed the national target of 40% enrolment in the Humanities in the short to medium term (DoE, 2001a).

8.1.1 Learner choice of field of study, by gender

The choices of fields of study by male and female learners are indicated in the following table:

² This speculation would need to be corroborated by quantitative evidence.

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Table 8.3: Learner choice of field of study, by gender

FIELD OF STUDY	MALE	FEMALE
Agriculture & Nature Conservation	54.6	45.4
Culture & Arts	53.2	46.8
Business, Commerce & Management Studies	44.2	55.8
Communication Studies & Language	42.0	58.0
Education, Training & Development	33.9	66.1
Manufacturing, Engineering & Technology	70.2	29.8
Human & Social Studies	42.9	57.1
Law, Military Science & Security	56.4	43.6
Health Sciences & Social Services	25.1	74.9
Physical, Mathematical, Computer & Life Sciences	52.1	47.9
Services	29.7	70.3
Physical Planning & Construction	69.6	30.4
I don't know	35.9	64.1
Total	46.9	53.1

The percentage of female learners who do *not* know which field they will be studying in is considerably higher than the percentage of male learners who don't know – which makes the gender differences all the starker. Though this fact makes comparison difficult, the atypical findings from this table would seem to be the following:

- The fields in which the proportion of females is higher than popular opinion might suggest are: Agriculture & Nature Conservation; Business, Commerce & Management Studies; Law, Military Science & Security; Health Sciences & Social Services (notwithstanding the traditional female support-base of the nursing profession); and Services; and
- Possibly the only field in which the proportion of males is much higher than popular opinion might suggest is Culture and Arts (which is disproportionate even in relation to the male-female divide in the general population).

More useful a comparison involves the percentage distribution of males and females across all twelve fields – the rank order of which is indicated in the following tables.

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Table 8.4: Male learner choice of HE field of study, in descending order of popularity

FIELD OF STUDY	% DISTRIBUTION
Business, Commerce & Management Studies	24.2
Manufacturing, Engineering & Technology	23.3
Physical, Mathematical, Computer & Life Sciences	11.4
Health Sciences & Social Services	7.6
Law, Military Science & Security	6.5
Agriculture & Nature Conservation	6.2
Human & Social Studies	5.5
Culture & Arts	4.5
Services	3.5
I don't know	2.7
Communication Studies & Language	1.8
Physical Planning & Construction	1.7
Education, Training & Development	1.0
Total	100.0

The top four fields – aligned with two of the critical scarce-skills areas in the strategic objective of the *National Plan* – account for 66.5% of male learners' choices, while the Humanities account for 19%. The female learner profile is very similar: subscription to the Humanities is 18%, while 64.9% of female learners want to study in the two critical fields identified in the *National Plan*. There is a difference – albeit small – in the percentages of learners in the two tables who are unsure about what they want to study – 4.3% of female learners, but only 2.7% of males.

Table 8.5: Female learner choice of HE field of study, in descending order of popularity

FIELD OF STUDY	% DISTRIBUTION
Business, Commerce & Management Studies	27.0
Health Sciences & Social Services	19.9
Physical, Mathematical, Computer & Life Sciences	9.3
Manufacturing, Engineering & Technology	8.7
Services	7.2
Human & Social Studies	6.4
Agriculture & Nature Conservation	4.6
Law, Military Science & Security	4.4
I don't know	4.3
Culture & Arts	3.5

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Table 8.5: Female learner choice of HE field of study, in descending order of popularity (cont.)

FIELD OF STUDY	% DISTRIBUTION
Communication Studies & Language	2.2
Education, Training & Development	1.7
Physical Planning & Construction	0.7
Total	100.0

8.1.2 Learner choice of field of study, by population group

The population group disaggregation of the data on learner choice of field of study looks as follows:

Table 8.6: Learner choice of field of study, by population group

FIELD OF STUDY	AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE	TOTAL
Business, Commerce & Management Studies	26.2	24.9	24.9	24.1	25.9
Manufacturing, Engineering & Technology	16.4	14.3	13.4	10.0	15.7
Health Sciences & Social Services	13.9	16.4	21.2	11.3	14.1
Physical, Mathematical, Computer & Life Sciences	9.8	10.0	13.7	12.1	10.2
Human & Social Studies	6.5	3.8	2.8	2.0	5.9
Services	5.4	5.6	3.5	7.6	5.5
Law, Military Science & Security	5.3	8.5	4.1	5.9	5.4
Agriculture & Nature Conservation	5.8	2.1	1.9	3.7	5.3
Culture & Arts	3.7	4.2	2.8	6.8	3.9
I don't know	2.7	5.1	7.5	8.9	3.5
Communication Studies & Language	2.1	2.0	1.1	2.0	2.1
Education, Training & Development	1.0	1.5	2.0	4.3	1.3
Physical Planning & Construction	1.1	1.7	1.1	1.5	1.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Some of the noteworthy findings are the following:

- A quarter of learners in all four population groups want to study in the field of Business, Commerce & Management Studies;
- More Africans than other population groups – on a downward continuum from African to coloured to Indian to white – want to study in the field of Manufacturing, Engineering & Technology;

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- The percentage of Indian learners choosing Health Sciences & Social Services is significantly higher than the percentages of the other three groups doing so, and nearly double that of whites;
- The percentage of Indians choosing to study in the area of the Humanities (12.8%) is significantly lower than the percentages of the other three groups choosing to do so (Africans = 18.6%; coloureds = 20%; whites = 21%), suggesting greater interest in the professions. Interest in studying in the field of Education, Training & Development (ETD), moreover, can be plotted on a continuum, at the one pole of which is African learner interest, at the other pole white learner interest – coloured and Indian learner interest falling between the two poles. That interest in entering the ETD field is low amongst all four population groups, but especially amongst African learners, could have severe implications for the education of South Africa's youth unless steps are taken nationally and provincially to improve the image of, and to recruit young people into, the teaching profession;
- Indian interest (73.2%) in the two critical areas identified in the *National Plan* objective – Business & Commerce and SET – is higher than that of Africans (66.3%) and coloureds (65.6%), which in turn is higher than that of whites (57.5%); and
- The percentages of learners who don't know which area they will be studying in are highest for whites and lowest for Africans, on a sliding scale. More than three times as many whites as Africans are unsure about their study area – possibly because:
 - They are on average wealthy enough to assume they will go on to study and are not therefore pressurised to make the choice at the time of the survey;
 - Their marks are good enough so as not to limit their future options in terms of field of study; or
 - Their perceptions of the effect of affirmative action upon their employment options may have caused them to waver on the issue of choice of study direction.

8.1.3 Factors influencing learner choice of field of study

Table 8.7 outlines the extent to which learners indicated that various factors influenced their choice of field for HE study.

Table 8.7: Factors influencing learner choices of fields for HE study, in descending order of effect

VARIABLE	MEAN
Interest in this field of study	4.5
Opportunities of finding a job in South Africa after qualifying in this field	4.3
Ability to use a qualification in this field to contribute towards development	4.1
Ability to follow a practical course of study	3.9
Opportunities of finding a job overseas after qualifying in this field	3.8
The reputation of the school / faculty / department	3.7
The amount of money to be made with a qualification in this field	3.7
Ability to follow a theoretical course of study	3.5

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Table 8.7: Factors influencing learner choices of fields for HE study, in descending order of effect (cont.)

VARIABLE	MEAN
The possibility of obtaining a study loan from a bank / other financial institution	3.0
The offer of a scholarship to study in this field	3.0
Parents / relatives having persuaded me to study in this field	2.5
Not being able to study within the field of first choice	2.5
Persuasion by friends to study in this field	2.2
A parent / relative having studied in this field	2.0
A boyfriend / girlfriend having decided to study in this field	1.8

While there is some similarity between these findings and those in Section 6.2 (the factors affecting intention to enter HE) – the top two influences in both cases (though the order is reversed) being interest in a field of study and HE / a specific field enhancing employability – there are also a couple of interesting differences:

- While the notion of HE leading to higher income occupies third position in Table 6.3 (Factors affecting learner decision to enter HE within the next three years), it is displaced by four other factors in the above table – the most remarkable, arguably, being the ability to use a qualification in a specific field to contribute towards the development of the country and its people, nearly three-quarters of learners citing this factor as having exerted a large to very large influence on their choice of field of study; and
- Parental influence is much higher in the case of intention to enter HE (mean = 3.8) than in the case of choice of field of study (2.5) – suggesting that parents may be more interested in the fact of their children achieving a HE qualification than in the course of study they pursue.

There is also an interesting difference between the findings above and those pertaining to the factors affecting choice of HE institution (Section 7.1.6). Most notably, while the mean values for the influence of the reputation of the institution and of the school / faculty / department in which the learner wishes to study upon learner choice of institution are 4.3 and 4.2 respectively, in the above table the reputation of the school / faculty / department is only 3.7 – suggesting that reputation is a more important consideration in the choice of institution than of field of study.

The other two factors with high mean values in the table are ‘Ability to follow a practical course of study’ and ‘Opportunities of finding a job overseas after qualifying in this field’ – the practical outcomes of study featuring highly in learners’ minds.

8.1.3.1 Factors influencing learner choice of field of study, by population group

A disaggregation of the field of study choice findings by population group reveals the following:

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Table 8.8: Factors influencing learner choices of fields for HE study, by population group

VARIABLE	AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE	TOTAL
Interest in field of study	4.5	4.5	4.7	4.7	4.5
Opportunities of finding a job in SA after qualifying	4.4	4.2	3.9	3.7	4.3
Use of qualification to contribute to development	4.2	4.1	3.8	3.2	4.1
Ability to follow a practical course of study	4.1	3.4	3.4	3.0	3.9
Opportunities of finding a job abroad after qualifying	3.7	4.1	4.2	4.1	3.8
Reputation of school / faculty / department	3.8	3.5	3.5	3.2	3.7
Money to be made with qualification in this field	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.6	3.7
Ability to follow a theoretical course of study	3.6	3.0	3.1	2.7	3.5
Possibility of obtaining study loan	3.1	2.5	2.3	2.1	3.0
Offer of scholarship to study in this field	3.1	2.4	2.1	2.0	3.0
Parents / relatives urging study in this field	2.6	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.5
Not being able to study within field of first choice	2.6	1.9	1.6	1.6	2.4
Friends urging study in this field	2.2	1.6	1.7	1.7	2.1
Parent / relative having studied in this field	2.1	1.8	2.1	1.8	2.0
Boyfriend / girlfriend deciding to study in this field	4.5	4.5	4.7	4.7	4.5

The table reveals that:

- Africans and coloureds are more motivated by finding employment in South Africa than are Indians and whites; the corollary is that Africans are less motivated than are the other three groups (coloureds being the anomaly here) by the idea of being able to find employment abroad with a qualification in a field of their choice;
- Unsurprisingly, perhaps given their roots and the current political dispensation in the country, Africans and coloureds are more influenced by the notion of their qualification contributing towards the development of the nation than are Indians and whites;
- Africans are more influenced than coloureds and Indians, who in turn are more influenced than whites, by being able to pursue both a practically- and a

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theoretically-oriented programme of study (if somewhat contradictorily) and by the reputation of the school / faculty / programme in which they want to study;

- Financial assistance – in the form of a study loan or a scholarship – is most important for Africans, and less so for other groups on a continuum at the other end of which are whites;
- Africans are more influenced than are the other three groups by parental and peer persuasion to study in a particular field; and
- Africans and coloureds are more influenced in choosing a field of study by not having been able to study in the field of their first choice than are the other three groups.



9. THE IMPACT OF CHOICES ON THE FUTURE

The objective of Section 7 of the questionnaire was to gauge learner response to questions about their life situation ten years hence – where they would be living, what their family and work situations would be, whether they would be studying – and whether they believe that the socio-political situation in the country (as measured by the key indicators of crime, poverty, education, health care, and access to HE) would have improved.

In response to the question ‘How important is it to have a job which ... [followed by a list of job attributes]’, learners answered thus:

Table 9.1: Learner perceptions about future work situation, in descending order of importance

VARIABLE	MEAN
Allows you to help other people	4.5
Uses your skills	4.4
Is in line with your interests	4.3
Enables you to earn lots of money	4.3
Allows you to work where you want to	4.2
Gives you independence	4.1
Gives you job security	3.9
Allows you to work as part of a team	3.9
Is useful to society	3.9
Gives you status (position in society)	3.8
Allows you to work when you want to	3.3
Allows you to work close to home	3.1

What is striking about these responses is, collectively, their high mean values (not one is below the mid-point) – suggesting that learners hold an (over-)optimistic view of working life. That the ability to earn high wages appears only fourth in this list, however (albeit only 0.2 away from the highest mean value) – coming after philanthropy, competency, and alignment with interests – suggests a view of work that does not place monetary reward at the acme.

Aside from the question of whether living and working abroad is a positive or a negative concept, learner responses to the question about life situation ten years hence reveal a fairly high degree of optimism about the future. The mean values are reported in the following table:



Table 9.2: Anticipated life situation of learners ten years hence, in descending order of extent of likelihood

VARIABLE	TOTAL
Working in a satisfying occupation	4.4
Studying towards a higher qualification	4.2
Being part of the senior management of a company/organization	4.0
Being part of the middle management of a company/organization	3.9
Living and working overseas	3.5
Married, with children	3.1

From this table we deduce that learners see themselves as being happy and successful in their work, and bettering their education.

The only significant gender differentials are:

- More female learners than male seeing themselves as studying toward a higher qualification (mean = 4.3, versus 4.1 for male);
- More female learners than male seeing themselves living and working abroad (mean = 3.6, versus 3.3 for males); and
- More male learners than female seeing themselves as married, with children (mean = 3.3, versus 3.0 for females) – atypical in terms of traditional notions of the importance of motherhood and the fact that women tend to marry earlier than men.

All three differences in their way contradict popular opinion about normative gender-differentiated behaviour.

A disaggregation by population group reveals that:

- Africans see a greater likelihood of their studying towards a higher qualification and being part of the middle or senior management of a company than do coloureds than do Indians than do whites, on a continuum (the ranges are 4.3 : 4.1 : 3.9 : 3.3, 4.0 : 3.8 : 3.3 : 3.2 and 4.0 : 3.9 : 3.7 : 3.4 respectively); and
- There is virtually no difference between the likelihood of the four population groups living and working abroad (mean = 3.4 for whites, versus 3.5 for the other groups) – an unexpected finding in the light of popular perceptions about the ‘white flight’ phenomenon.

On the question of the social fabric of the nation ten years hence, there is, at least at the aggregated level, a remarkable degree of optimism, as the following table indicates:

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Table 9.3: Learner perceptions of the socio-political situation in the country ten years hence, in descending order of extent of agreement

VARIABLE	TOTAL
(My) children will receive good quality public education in South Africa	4.0
My family and I will receive good quality public health care in South Africa	4.0
There will be greater opportunities for people to go to university or technikon	4.0
Universities and technikons will provide students with a world-class education	3.9
Poverty in South Africa will be greatly reduced	3.4
The crime situation in South Africa will have improved	3.1
HIV/AIDS will be under control in South Africa	3.1

While there are no significant gender differences in the way learners perceive these social indicators, there are fairly strong population group differences, which can be summarised as follows:

- Africans and coloureds differ from Indians and whites on the issues of improvement in the crime situation (3.1 + 3.0 versus 2.6 + 2.8), reduction in poverty (3.5 + 3.1 versus 2.4 + 2.5) and HE institutions providing learners with a world-class education (4.0 + 3.9 versus 3.4 + 3.3); and
- The extent to which the four population groups agree on the issues of the provision of good quality public education and good quality public health care, the control of HIV/AIDS and greater access to HE can be plotted on each of four continua, with Africans agreeing most strongly and whites least strongly with the given statements (the values are 4.3 : 3.7 : 2.8 : 2.7, 4.2 : 3.6 : 2.9 : 2.6, 3.3 : 2.6 : 2.2 : 1.9 and 4.1 : 3.9 : 3.3 : 3.0 respectively).

These findings suggest that optimism about the country's future is highest amongst Africans and lowest amongst whites, with coloured and Indian sentiment falling between these two poles.

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What emerges from the above discussion of the influence of a range of factors upon learner choice with regard to entry into HE, learner choice of institution, and learner choice of programme of study is the relative effect of listed factors (in questions 3.2, 5.10 and 6.7) upon the three types of choice with regard to HE (entry into HE, institution, and field of study). Thus we learn that the five most significant influences upon learner choice with regard to entry into HE are:

- HE increasing chances of employability;
- Intrinsic interest in a field of study;
- HE leading to higher income;
- Family urging HE study; and
- The offer of a bursary for study.

The five most important influences upon learner choice of institution are:

- The reputation of the institution;
- The reputation of the school / faculty / department;
- That the institution is far from the learner's home, allowing him / her to live in residence;
- The appeal of superior sporting facilities; and
- The fees being lower than at other institutions.

Finally, the five most important influences on learner choice of study programme are:

- Interest in the field of study;
- Opportunities of finding employment in South Africa after qualification;
- Ability to use a qualification in the field to contribute towards the country's development;
- Ability to pursue a practical course of study; and
- Opportunities of finding employment abroad after qualification.

The discussion to date has focussed almost exclusively upon the effect of sets of *subjective* factors upon the three areas of choice. The exception to this is that, where appropriate and statistically significant, a disaggregation of the effect of these subjective influences by gender and by population group has been reported.

What the tabulations and cross tabulations in Part Two of this report do *not* tell us, however, is the significance of the effect of a range of other, *objective*, factors, as well as the influence of three subjective factors in Section 7 of the questionnaire, upon the three areas of choice. The full list of such factors whose effect upon learner choice with regard to HE can be established is reproduced in the following table:

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Table 10.1: Factors outside of Sections 3 – 6 of the questionnaire affecting learner choice with regard to HE

FACTOR	QUESTION	NATURE OF CONSTRUCTION OF FACTOR
Province	N/A	Province in which the learner goes to school
Average Grade 11 symbol	1.4	Average of symbols for 6 or 7 Grade 11 subjects
Job expectation	7.1	Factor based upon mean of all 12 variables
Career expectation	7.2	Factor based upon mean of all variables besides 'Married, with children' and 'Living and working overseas', which correlate poorly with the others
Socio-political expectation	7.3	Factor based upon mean of all variables besides 'The crime situation in South Africa will have improved', which correlates poorly with the others
Gender	8.1	Male versus female
Physical disability	8.3	Physically disabled or not
Education – father	8.10	Highest level of education of father
Education – mother	8.10	Highest level of education of mother
Employment – father	8.11	Employment situation of father
Employment – mother	8.11	Employment situation of mother
Income – father	8.12	Monthly income of father
Income – mother	8.12	Monthly income of mother
Socio-economic status	8.10 + 8.12	Categorization into 'high', 'middle' and 'low' as per methodology explained in Section 5.5 of the report
Siblings	8.13 + 8.14	Collapsing of variables about learners with siblings with HE connections (students or graduates)
Population group	8.16	Four population groups: African, coloured, Indian, white

A CHAID analysis of the effects of the variables in the above table upon each of the three areas of choice (entry into HE, institution, and field of study) was conducted to determine not only the strongest predictor with regard to the question concerned but the relative strengths of all the independent variables – relative not to one another but individually in relation to the dependent variable. So, for example, if the dependent variable is 'I am going to town this afternoon' and the three independent variables that might affect this decision are 'The weather', 'Loneliness' and 'The need to spend money',

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the CHAID analysis would examine the effect of each of these independent variables separately upon the dependent variable (going to town) and then rank the independent variables according to their p-values.

At the same time, a nominal logistic regression analysis was conducted to determine the joint contribution of several independent variables to the prediction of values on the dependent variable (Babbie, 1973). In the case of each independent variable, the model compares the values of all components of that variable to a fixed reference point. For example, in the case of the independent variable Province, if Western Cape is taken to be the reference, then the other eight provinces are compared to the Western Cape in terms of the effect of that variable upon the learner's having responded in a particular way to a question. Thus we can assert, for instance, that the odds of learners from the Free State having indicated that they intend entering HE rather than not entering HE are 2.3 times higher than the odds of learners from the Western Cape having done so.

10.1 CHAID and regression analyses

The following part of the discussion outlines the results of both CHAID and regression analyses to establish the effect of a range of factors upon the three areas of choice.

10.1.1 CHAID and regression analyses with regard to intention to enter HE

Table 10.2 portrays the results of a CHAID analysis to establish the effect of the factors in Table 10.1 upon the outcome of the question (3.1) regarding learner intention to enter HE within three years of the survey date.

Table 10.2: Factors influencing the outcome of question 3.1 regarding intention to enter HE within the next three years, in descending order of influence

FACTOR	p-VALUE ¹
Brothers	2.7 e-58
Average Grade 11 symbol	3.1 e-58
Education – mother	3.3 e-42
Province	3.7 e-40
Career expectation	1.9 e-36
Socio-economic status	3.3 e-35
Education – father	8.1 e-34
Population group	4.0 e-28
Job expectation	1.1 e-27
Income – mother	1.4 e-25
Employment – mother	3.5 e-16
Income – father	1.4 e-13
Employment – father	4.3 e-9

¹ The number following the 'e' in each of these p-values indicates the number of decimal places to be placed before the p-value: in the case of Brothers, for example, 58 decimal points are to be placed before 2.7. The smaller the p-value, therefore, the more statistically significant the factor as a predictor of the outcome of the variable.

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Table 10.2: Factors influencing the outcome of question 3.1 regarding intention to enter HE within the next three years, in descending order of influence (cont.)

FACTOR	p-VALUE
Physical disability	1.8 e-8
Socio-political expectation	7.4 e-7
Gender	0.00037

What this table reveals is that whether a learner has siblings who are studying or who are graduates of a university or technikon is the most significant predictor of whether learners would have answered 'yes', 'no', or 'I don't know' to the question of whether they were intending to enter HE within three years of the date of the survey. The learner's average Grade 11 symbol, independently, is the second most significant predictor of response to question 3.1; and so on.

The CHAID analysis does *not* indicate that whether a learner has siblings with HE connections exerts the greatest influence upon intention to enter HE – merely that this factor is most closely *associated with* the dependent variable 'intention to enter HE'. CHAID produces results in tree diagram form, a tabular summary of which for question 3.1 is reproduced below:

Table 10.3: CHAID analysis for question 3.1 – intention to enter HE within the next three years

RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE						
Yes	72.4						
No	13.3						
I don't know	14.3						
1	Sibling studying or graduated						
	Yes	No					
Yes	82.8	68.6					
No	7.2	15.4					
I don't know	10.0	16.0					
2	Education - mother						
	Matric or lower	College or tertiary	A	B	C	D-E	F-G
Yes	82.3	92.2	89.8	80.6	72.8	64.1	49.2
No	7.5	2.6	3.1	9.3	11.6	18.4	24.2
I don't know	10.2	5.2	7.1	10.1	15.6	17.5	26.6

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The table reveals – at level 1 (column 1) – that ‘Siblings studying or graduated’ is the most significant predictor of the outcome of question 3.1, 82.8% of learners *with* siblings indicating that they intend entering HE, only 68.6% of learners *without* siblings indicating that they intend entering HE. *The extent of this difference accounts for the variable exerting the most significant influence upon the issue of intention to enter HE within the next three years.* The tree branches further (level 2 of column 1) to reveal that the educational level of learners’ mothers is the most significant predictor of learners with siblings with HE connections having indicated that they intended entering HE within the next three years – there being a 10 percentage point difference between learners whose mothers have a secondary education and learners whose mothers have a tertiary education having answered ‘Yes’ to question 3.1. At the same time, learners’ average Grade 11 symbol is the most significant predictor of their having indicated that they do *not* intend entering HE within the next three years – the lower the average Grade 11 symbol, the more likely the chances of their having answered ‘No’ to question 3.1.

The CHAID analysis throws up the independent variable (siblings studying or graduated) with the highest degree of association with the dependent variable (whether learners intend entering HE or not). The regression analysis, on the other hand, reveals that learners with siblings with HE connections are nearly twice as likely to have said that they intend entering rather than not entering HE than are learners without siblings with HE connections – which reinforces the finding (Section 6.2) that learners with siblings are more clearly predisposed towards HE than those without.

Other key findings from the regression analysis for question 3.1 are the following:

- The odds of learners with an A-average Grade 11 symbol indicating that they intend entering rather than not entering HE are 8.6 times higher than the odds of learners with an F–G symbol indicating that they intend entering rather than not entering HE. Similarly, the odds of learners with a B-average indicating that they intend entering rather than not entering HE are 4.5 times higher than the odds of those with an F–G symbol doing so, while the odds of learners with a C-average indicating that they intend entering rather than not entering HE are 2.5 times higher than those with an F–G symbol doing so. These statistics reinforce the earlier finding that there is a positive correlation between intention to enter HE and average symbol attained in the Grade 11 examination. And as Hendry indicates (Hendry, 2002), the take-up rate on new academic offers amongst A and B aggregate learners at UCT is markedly higher than that amongst learners with lower aggregates;
- African learners are two-and-a-half times more likely to have indicated that they intend entering rather than not entering HE than are white learners, while Indian learners are more than five times more likely to have said that they intend entering rather than not entering HE within the next three years than are white learners – a finding in keeping with the Indian–white differentiation with regard to intention to enter HE reported in Section 6.1.2;
- The odds of learners whose fathers have a HE intending to enter rather than not enter HE are nearly three times higher than the odds of learners whose fathers have a primary school education or less intending to enter HE, while the odds of learners whose fathers have a HE intending to enter rather than not enter HE are two-and-a-half times higher than the odds of learners whose fathers have a secondary education or less intending to do so. In other words, the lower the educational level of fathers, the less likely it is that their children will enter HE. A similar relationship prevails with regard to learners’ mothers; and

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- From a provincial perspective, learners from the Free State are more than twice as likely as learners from the Western Cape to indicate that they intend entering rather than not entering HE, learners from Gauteng are 1.8 times more likely than learners from the Western Cape to do so, learners from Mpumalanga are more than four times more likely than learners from the Western Cape to do so, learners from Limpopo are nearly twice as likely as learners from the Western Cape to do so, and learners from the North West are three-and-a-half times more likely than learners from the Western Cape to do so. These differences are attributable in large measure to the low coloured learner intention to enter HE – this group constituting a majority in the Western Cape.

10.1.2 CHAID and regression analyses with regard to choice of HE institution

Table 10.4 portrays the results of a CHAID analysis to establish the effect of the factors in Table 10.1 upon the outcome of the question (5.6) regarding learner choice of HE institution. To facilitate the analysis, the pre-determined typology of institutions discussed in the section on learner choice of institution was used: Historically Disadvantaged Universities (HDUs); Historically Advantaged Universities, Afrikaans-medium (HAUs-Afr); Historically Advantaged Universities, English-medium (HAUs-Eng); Other institutions (private and overseas institutions); Historically Disadvantaged Technikons (HDTs); and Historically Advantaged Technikons (HATs).

Table 10.4: Factors influencing the outcome of question 5.6 regarding choice of institution for HE study

FACTOR	p-VALUE
Province	1.1 e-229
Population group	2.4 e-167
Average Grade 11 symbol	5.7 e-87
Income – father	3.3 e-58
Socio-economic status	1.0 e-50
Socio-political expectation	3.5 e-43
Education – father	2.6 e-37
Income – mother	7.8 e-34
Education – mother	2.3 e-18
Career expectation	9.1 e-13
Employment – father	1.2 e-12
Employment – mother	4.2 e-9
Gender	0.00044
Physical disability	0.00056
Siblings	0.0014

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This table reveals that the province in which the learner goes to school is the most significant predictor of the outcome of question 5.6 – which HE institution the learner will choose to study at.

The distribution of learners wishing to study at the six institution types that make up the typology is as follows:

1. HATs 44.6%
2. HAUs-Afr 14.2%
3. HDUs 13.7%
4. HAUs-Eng 11.5%
5. HDTs 11.5%
6. Other 4.5%

Within six of the eight provinces or province groupings² – Eastern Cape, Free State / Mpumalanga, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape and Western Cape – population group, the CHAID analysis reveals, is the strongest predictor of choice of institution according to the above typology. Within the remaining provinces – Limpopo and the North West – employment of learners' fathers and the income of learners' fathers respectively are the strongest predictors of choice of institution type.

A regression analysis for question 5.6 reveals the following.³ From a provincial perspective, a comparison of learners choosing to go to HATs versus those choosing to go to HDUs shows that:

- Learners from the Free State are five times more likely to choose to go to HATs than to HDUs than are learners from the Western Cape – possibly because there is no HDU in the Free State, and there is an HDU (UWC) in the Western Cape;
- Learners from Gauteng are nine times more likely to choose to go to HATs than to HDUs than are learners from the Western Cape – again, because there is no HDU in Gauteng;
- Learners from Mpumalanga are four times more likely to choose to go to HATs than to HDUs than are learners from the Western Cape;
- Learners from Limpopo are two-and-a-half times more likely to choose to go to HATs than to HDUs than are learners from the Western Cape – despite the presence of two HDUs (Venda, and University of the North) and the absence of a HAT in Limpopo; and
- Learners from the North West are five-and-a-half times more likely to choose to go to HATs than to HDUs than are learners from the Western Cape – despite the presence of a HDU (University of the North West) in the province.

A comparison of learners choosing to go to HATs versus those choosing to go to HDTs shows that:

- Learners from the Free State are twenty-five times more likely to choose to go to HATs than to HDTs than are learners from the Western Cape – there being no HDT in the Free State;
- Learners from Gauteng are 9.7 times more likely to choose to go to HATs than to HDTs than are learners from the Western Cape – despite the presence of a HDT (Northern Gauteng) in the province;
- Learners from Mpumalanga are ten-and-a-half times more likely to choose to go to HATs than to HDTs than are learners from the Western Cape;

² If the values for two or more provinces are very similar, the CHAID analysis collapses them into one category.

³ Since from the CHAID analysis it is evident that a higher percentage of learners wish to go to HATs than to any other institution type within the typology, the category HATs was used as the reference point for the regression analysis.

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- Learners from Limpopo are nearly six times more likely to choose to go to HATs than to HDTs than are learners from the Western Cape – there being neither a HAT nor an HDT in the province; and
- Learners from the North West are seven times more likely to choose to go to HATs than to HDTs than are learners from the Western Cape – there being no HDT in the province.

Finally, a comparison of learners choosing to go to HATs versus those choosing to go to other institutions (private institutions and institutions outside South Africa) shows that learners from Limpopo are two-and-a-half times more likely to choose to go to HATs than to other institutions than are learners from the Western Cape.

Other key findings from the regression analysis for question 5.6 are the following. From a marks perspective:

- The odds of learners with an F–G average Grade 11 symbol choosing to go to HATs rather than HDUs are four times higher than the odds of learners with an A average choosing to do so;
- The odds of learners with an F–G average Grade 11 symbol choosing to go to HATs rather than HAUs are ten-and-a-half times higher than the odds of learners with an A symbol choosing to go to – which, historical advantage being equal, reinforces the notion that the higher the learner's average Grade 11 symbol, the more likely he / she is to go to university rather than technikon; and
- The odds of learners with an F–G average Grade 11 symbol choosing to go to HATs rather than HAUs are two-and-a-half times higher than the odds of learners with a B symbol choosing to do so.

From a population group perspective:

- White learners are nearly three times as likely to choose to go to HATs rather than HDUs than are Africans;
- African learners are more than five times as likely to choose to go to HATs rather than HAUs than are white learners – which reinforces the earlier finding that four out of the top five institutional choices of Africans for HE study are technikons;
- Coloured learners are more than four times as likely to choose to go to HATs rather than HAUs than are white learners;
- White learners are nearly three times as likely as African learners to choose to go to HATs rather than HDTs; and
- African learners are eleven-and-a-half times more likely to choose to go to HATs rather than other institutions than are white learners – which in part explains 'Other institutions' constituting the number one choice of white learners for HE study reported earlier.

10.1.3 CHAID and regression analyses with regard to choice of field of study

Table 10.5 portrays the results of a CHAID analysis to establish the effect of the factors in Table 10.1 upon the outcome of the question (6.1) regarding learner choice of field of study.

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Table 10.5: Factors influencing the outcome of question 6.1 regarding learner choice of field of study

FACTOR	p-VALUE
Province	3.9 e-8
Average Grade 11 symbol	6.8 e-5
Career expectation	0.00033
Income – mother	0.00034
Physical disability	0.00100
Income – father	0.0011
Employment – mother	0.0031
Socio-economic status	0.0085
Siblings	0.017
Education – father	0.036

As in the case of question 5.6, this table reveals that the province in which the learner goes to school is the most significant predictor of the outcome of question 6.1 – which field of study the learner chooses to study within.

Field of study was categorized according to the reclassification of the twelve organizing fields of the NQF into SET, the Humanities, Business & Commerce, and Other (Agriculture & Nature Conservation, Services, and Physical Planning & Construction). The CHAID analysis for question 6.1 – ‘In which field are you planning to study?’ – reveals the following:

- The percentages of learners within the different provinces intending to study in the field of SET are (in rank order of popularity): KwaZulu-Natal – 46.8%; Mpumalanga, Northern Cape and North West – 41.8%; Gauteng and the Western Cape – 39.8%; the Free State and Limpopo – 39.6%; and the Eastern Cape – 33.2%;
- The percentages of learners within the different provinces intending to study in the field of Business & Commerce are: Mpumalanga, Northern Cape and North West – 31.9%; Gauteng and the Western Cape – 29.4%; Free State and Limpopo – 27.2%; Eastern Cape – 22.1%; and KwaZulu-Natal – 21.6%;
- The percentages of learners within the different provinces intending to study in the field of the Humanities are: Eastern Cape – 25.8%; Gauteng and the Western Cape – 21.4%; KwaZulu-Natal – 21.3%; Free State and Limpopo – 14.9%; and Mpumalanga, Limpopo and the North West – 14.3%;
- The percentages of learners within the different provinces intending to study in Other fields are: Eastern Cape – 18.9%; Free State and Limpopo – 18.3%; Mpumalanga, Northern Cape and North West – 12%; KwaZulu-Natal – 10.3%; and Gauteng and the Western Cape – 9.4%; and
- After province, the employment status of learners’ mothers is the second most significant predictor of choice of field of study for learners in the Free State and Limpopo, while in Gauteng and the Western Cape it is learners’ gender, in KwaZulu-Natal it is their population group, and in Mpumalanga, the Northern Cape

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and the North West it is their life expectations (based upon question 7.2 in the questionnaire).

For the purposes of the regression analysis, field of study as per the twelve organizing fields of the NQF was reclassified into four categories: Business, Commerce & Management Studies; SET (a combination of Manufacturing, Engineering & Technology, Health Sciences & Social Services, and Physical, Mathematical, Computer & Life Sciences); Humanities (a combination of Culture & Arts, Communication Studies & Language, Education, Training & Development, Human & Social Studies, and Law, Military Science and Security), and Other. The analysis for the dependent variable Choice of field of study reveals the following.⁴ From a provincial perspective, a comparison of learners choosing to study in the field of SET rather than Business, Commerce & Management Studies (BCM) reveals that:

- Learners in Limpopo are more than one-and-a-half times as likely as learners in the Western Cape to have chosen to study in the field of SET rather than in BCM.

A comparison of learners choosing to study in the field of SET rather than the Humanities reveals that:

- Learners in Limpopo are nearly twice as likely as learners in the Western Cape to have chosen to study in the field of SET rather than the Humanities.

A comparison of learners choosing to study in the field of SET rather than Other fields (Agriculture & Nature Conservation, Services, and Physical Planning & Construction) reveals that:

- Learners in the Free State are nearly twice as likely as learners in the Western Cape to have chosen to study in Other fields rather than in the field of SET.

Other findings from the regression analysis are the following. From a population group perspective:

- African learners are one-and-a-half times more likely than white learners to have chosen to study in the field of SET rather than the Humanities, while Indian learners are twice as likely as whites to have done so. Apropos of Africans, this finding would seem to fly in the face of enrolment patterns, which suggest that African students are clustered in the Humanities, with low enrolments in SET and BCM (DoE, 2001a);
- Indian learners are more than twice as likely as white learners to have chosen to study in the field of SET rather than BCM; and
- African and coloured learners are nearly twice as likely as white learners to have chosen to study in the field of SET rather than Other fields.

From an academic performance perspective:

- Learners having achieved an A-average Grade 11 symbol are two-and-a-half times more likely than learners having achieved an F–G symbol to have chosen to study in the field of SET rather than the Humanities;
- Learners having achieved an A-average Grade 11 symbol are nearly three times more likely than learners having achieved an F–G symbol to have chosen to study in the field of SET rather than BCM, learners with a B-symbol nearly two-and-a-half times more likely to have done so, learners with a C-symbol more than twice as likely to have done so, and learners with a D-symbol twice as likely to have done so; and

⁴ SET was taken to be the reference for this analysis, given its prominence as a critical scarce skill area within the *National Plan for Higher Education* (DoE, 2001a).

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- Learners having achieved an A-average Grade 11 symbol are nearly ten times as likely as learners having achieved an F–G symbol to have chosen to study in the field of SET rather than Other fields, learners with a B-symbol three-and-a-half times more likely to have done so, learners with a C-symbol more than twice as likely to have done so, and learners with a D-symbol twice as likely to have done so.

From this we conclude that the better the learner's academic performance (as measured by average Grade 11 symbol), the more likely he / she is to have chosen to study in the field of SET (rather than any other field).

Finally, from a disability perspective:

- Learners with a physical disability are one-and-a-half times more likely to have chosen to study in the field of the Humanities rather than SET than are those without any physical disability.