

**A conceptual model of volunteer well-being: A  
hermeneutic phenomenological study**

by

ALEKSANDRA MARIA FURTAK

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SUPERVISOR: Prof H A BARNARD

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## DECLARATION

Name: **Aleksandra Maria Furtak**

Student number: **53335600**

Degree: **Doctor of Philosophy**

Title of thesis: **A conceptual model of volunteer well-being: A hermeneutic phenomenological study**

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



**Aleksandra Maria Furtak**

01 October 2019

**Date**

## WORDS OF APPRECIATION

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## SUMMARY

This study, to **enhance understanding of volunteer well-being and to develop a conceptual model of volunteer well-being through an in-depth exploration of volunteers' work–life experiences**, was guided by an interest in volunteering as well as curiosity about well-being as a concept. My perception of the importance of volunteering for our society was based on first-hand knowledge of a volunteering context operating in the Gauteng health sector, as well as the volunteering literature, which confirmed its importance and encouraged me to conduct research on this resource. The literature on well-being highlights its importance for employees in particular and organisations in general and thus justifies the study. The literature also supported my preference for conducting this research on volunteer well-being from a qualitative perspective. Further motivation for the research was provided by my awareness of the challenging nature of the volunteering context as well as the adverse personal circumstances of the volunteers. Accordingly, recognising the importance of well-being in volunteers, I was prompted to dedicate attention to this dynamic work context.

To achieve its aim, in this research I applied a qualitative research approach and a hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenological research methodology. In-depth interviews were used to explore the work–life experiences of eight volunteers and a phenomenological hermeneutical analytic process was used to analyse the data. The data were further contextualised and the findings supported by the relevant well-being literature. Based on the findings, a conceptual model of volunteer well-being was constructed. This model enhances our understanding of volunteer well-being, ultimately contributing to knowledge and practice in the field of volunteering.

**KEY TERMS:** Volunteer, well-being, industrial and organisational psychology, positive psychology, qualitative research, hermeneutic phenomenology, conceptual model, psychofortology, eudaimonia, hedonia.

## OPSOMMING

Die hoofdoel van hierdie studie was om **die begrip van vrywilligerswelstand te bevorder en om 'n konseptuele model van vrywilligerswelstand te ontwikkel deur 'n omvattende ondersoek van vrywilligers se werklewe-ervarings**. Die studie was gelei deur 'n belangstelling in vrywilligerswerk en 'n nuuskierigheid oor welstand as 'n konsep. My waarneming van die belangrikheid van vrywilligerswerk vir ons samelewing is gebaseer op eerstehandse kennis van 'n vrywilligerskonteks in die Gautengse gesondheidssektor en die literatuur oor vrywilligersdienslewering, wat die belangrikheid daarvan bevestig het en my aangemoedig het om navorsing oor hierdie hulpbron te doen. Die literatuur oor welstand beklemtoon veral die belangrikheid daarvan vir werknemers en organisasies oor die algemeen, en regverdig dus die studie. Die literatuur het ook my voorkeur om hierdie navorsing oor vrywilligers se welstand vanuit 'n kwalitatiewe perspektief te benader, ondersteun. My bewustheid van die uitdagende aard van die vrywilligerskonteks asook die ongunstige persoonlike omstandighede van die vrywilligers het my verder gemotiveer om die navorsing te doen. Dienooreenkomstig, as erkenning van die belangrikheid daarvan om vrywilligers se welstand te fasiliteer, is ek geïnspireer om aandag te skenk aan hierdie dinamiese werkskonteks.

Om hierdie doel te bereik het ek 'n kwalitatiewe navorsingsbenadering en 'n hermeneutiese (verklarende) fenomenologiese navorsingsmetodologie in hierdie navorsingsprojek gebruik. Indiepte onderhoude is gebruik om die werklewe-ervarings van agt vrywilligers te ondersoek, en 'n fenomenologiese, hermeneutiese, analitiese proses is gebruik om die data te ontleed. Die data is verder gekontekstualiseer en die bevindings is deur die tersaaklike literatuur ondersteun. 'n Konseptuele model van vrywilligerwelstand is op grond van hierdie bevindinge opgestel. Hierdie model bevorder ons begrip van vrywilligerswelstand, en lewer sodoende 'n bydrae tot die kennis en ervaring op die terrein van vrywilligerswerk.

**SLEUTELTERME:** Vrywilliger, welstand, bedryfs- en organisasiesielkunde, positiewe sielkunde, kwalitatiewe navorsing, hermeneutiese fenomenologie, konseptuele model, psigofortologie, eudemonia, hedonia.

## TSHOBOKANYO

Thutopatlisiso eno **ya go tlhama sekao sa kgopolo sa boithaopi go tswa mo mogopolong wa seemo se se amogelesegang sa botshelo ka go sekaseka go ya kwa botennye, maitemogelo a tiro a baithaopi**, e kaetswe ke kgatlhego mo boithaoping, keletso ya go itse ka ga mogopolo wa seemo se se amogelesegang sa botshelo le dikwalo tse di ka ga boithaopi. Kitso e e tseneletseng ya bokao jwa boithaopi jo bo dirang mo lephateng la boitekanelo la Gauteng, gammogo le dikwalo tsa boithaopi, di tthomamisitse botlhokwa jwa boithaopi mo setšhabeng sa gaetsho mme tsa nthotloetsa go dira patlisiso ka ntlha eno. Go tlaleletsa, thutopatlisiso eno e tthomamisitswe ke dikwalo tse di ka ga seemo se se amogelesegang le botlhokwa jwa seemo se se amogelesegang sa botshelo se se totileng badiri ka bo bona le ditheo ka kakaretso. Dikwalo gape di tshegeditse tlhopho ya me ya go dira patlisiso ka ga seemo se se amogelesegang sa botshelo jwa baithaopi ka mogopolo wa go batla go batlisisa mabaka a a bakang seemo se se rileng. Thotloetso e nngwe ya patlisiso e tlisitswe ke temogo ya me ya dikgwetlho tsa boithaopi gammogo le maemo a a sa amogelesegang a baithaopi. Fela jalo, ka go lemoga botlhokwa jwa go gokaganya seemo se se amogelesegang sa botshelo mo baithaoping, ke ne ke patelesega go tota mofuta ono wa tiro.

Go fitlhelela maikaelelo ano, patlisiso eno e dirisitse mokgwa wa patlisiso o o lebelelang mabaka a a rotloetsang ntlha e e rileng (qualitative research) le mokgwa wa patlisiso o o ranolang (hermeneutic phenomenological research methodology). Go dirisitswe dipotsolotso tse di tseneletseng go sekaseka maitemogelo a tiro a baithaopi mme ga dirisiwa thulaganyo ya tshekatsheko ya *phenomenological hermeneutical* go sekaseka tshedimosetso. Tshedimosetso e ne ya bewa ka bokao mme diphitlhelelo tsa tshegediwa ka dikwalo tse di maleba. Go ikaegilwe mo diphitlhelelong tseno, go ne ga thalwa sekao sa kgopolo sa seemo se se amogelesegang sa botshelo jwa baithaopi. Go tshitshinngwa gore go dirisiwe sekao seno go dirisa ka botlalo le go netefatsa go nnela leruri ga tiro ya baithaopi, gore kwa bokhutlong go tshwaelwe mo kitsong le mo tirong mo lephateng la boithaopi.

**MAREO A BOTLHOKWA:** Moithaopi, seemo se se amogelesegang sa botshelo, maitlhomo, boitshoko, saekholoji ya tiro le ya ditheo, saekholoji e e phosethifi, *salutogenesis*, *fortigenesis*, *hermeneutic phenomeology*, patlisiso e e lebelelang mabaka a a rotloetsang gongwe a bakang sengwe, sekao sa kgopolo.

# CHAPTER 1

## RATIONALE FOR AND ORIENTATION TO STUDYING VOLUNTEER WELL-BEING

*I was taught that the way of progress is neither swift nor easy (Marie Curie).*

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study entailed an exploration of volunteers' lived experiences of volunteering in order to understand their well-being. In the initial phases of this research and whilst I was busy writing up the thesis, I sometimes struggled to clearly formulate in words what my study was about – not only to my friends, family and colleagues but also to myself. At times, I even found it difficult to give a clear explanation to my supervisor. Silverman (2010) notes that when embarking on research, people often find it difficult to articulate their research project to the point of feeling embarrassed if a clear explanation of the study cannot be provided. Truthfully, I was only able to provide this explanation to myself midway through my studies, while I felt my confidence as a researcher grew as the study evolved. This confession, I believe, hints at the adventure this study became and echoes Marie Curie's words, emphasising that development and growth are never easy.

In the thesis I report on my research project, its aim, methods and results. Taking heed of Clarke's (2005) emphasis on perspectival reporting by the qualitative researcher, I believe it is appropriate that this thesis is not only about the research project but also about the research journey, reflecting my experiences as an investigator (cf. Minichiello & Kottler, 2010). Moch and Gates (2000) contend that the researcher's experience is not peripheral to a research study; rather it enhances its rigour. As such, the authors (Moch & Gates, 2000) propose that the researcher's experiences be included in the reporting of a research study. Accordingly, to capture both the research project and my research journey with methodological rigour, I frequently reflect on the excitement, stimulation, challenges, confusion and ambiguity that naturally

accompany such a study (Minichiello & Kottler, 2010) and present this thesis in a way that reflects its natural evolution.

To commence, the purpose of this chapter is to orientate the focus and nature of my research project. This entails providing the background to and rationale for the study in order to demarcate the research problem and subsequently establish the research aim, in light of which the research strategy is briefly presented. This is followed by a delineation of the intellectual boundaries of the study, namely, the disciplinary field, the psychological paradigm and the selected meta-theory (informed by the discipline), which determined the conceptual perspective taken in this study. I then explain the confessional approach evident in the self-reflective writing style that I adopt throughout the thesis and conclude the chapter with the anticipated contribution of the study and the structure of the thesis.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE**

When embarking on a career in academia in November 2011, I knew that I would have to complete a doctoral degree eventually. However, I put it off for as long as I could and, being plagued with uncertainty as to what I should study, I only applied for admission to the doctoral programme towards the end of 2012. Knowing full well that the identification of a research topic was holding me back, I abandoned this endeavour and did not register for the 2013 academic year, as I still could not commit to any concrete research idea. As a doctoral degree is a long-term commitment, I wanted to ensure that the topic I chose would sustain my interest (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016) and would be something that I felt passionate about. I therefore had faith in the fact that the right topic would present itself sooner or later. Adopting a flexible mind-set and deciding to take advantage of opportunities as they presented themselves (Silverman, 2010) alleviated a great deal of stress and pressure and also resulted in volunteering as a natural choice for a research topic, because I became involved in a volunteering context at this point in my academic career.

The choice of what to research can come from a variety of sources. It usually results from an amalgamation of personal interests and experience, a review of the literature

or a practical problem (Churchill, 2018; Gray, 2009; Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Rubin & Babbie, 2010; Silverman, 2010). Silverman (2010) notes that researchers often come across a topic coincidentally or choose a topic based on data or a research site that is easily accessible. Identifying my research topic was a combination of both. My involvement with volunteering and the way in which I became interested in it as a research topic is explained in more detail in Chapter 2, as it forms part of the natural account of my research journey, which is the focus of that chapter. For now, it is important to note that my personal experience with the volunteer community through my community service as an academic, as well as my keen interest in well-being in the workplace, eventually coalesced into the idea of studying volunteer well-being.

After forming a general idea of what it was that I was interested in researching, I proceeded to narrow down the topic by refining the research problem (Creedy, 2008), using a review of the literature (Rubin & Babbie, 2010; Saunders et al., 2016). The purpose of the literature review was also to identify theoretical gaps, thereby affirming the practical value (Rubin & Babbie, 2010) of the intended research topic. As research questions are theoretically informed (Silverman, 2010), the purpose of this section is to provide the theoretical background that influenced the aim and nature of this research. The theoretical background discussed below deals with the value of volunteering and the fact that it is a unique work setting that needs to be managed. It also explains the relevance of employee well-being in this context.

### **1.2.1 The value of volunteering and volunteers**

Natural disasters, war and health crises are some of the many issues reported in the news where volunteer labour is involved. Volunteering is an important and distinctive pro-social activity (Meier & Stutzer, 2008, Omoto & Snyder, 2002) and volunteers are found in countries throughout the world (Curtis, Baer, & Grabb, 2001; Rochester, Paine, & Howlett, 2010). Society as a whole benefits from the work done by volunteers (Manetti, Bellucci, Como, & Bagnoli, 2015; Pearce, 1993) and the non-profit services sector contributes significantly to various spheres of countries' development (Lynn, 2003). The socioeconomic impact of volunteering is affirmed by the contribution that volunteers make to societies globally (Haski-Leventhal, Hustinx, & Handy, 2011), as

individuals volunteer to engage with their communities and to contribute meaningfully to the well-being of society (Brown, 1999). As such, volunteerism is important as both a resource and a commodity and plays an important part in the cultural, political and economic spheres of society (Laverie & McDonald, 2007; Oppenheimer, 2008). The significance of the volunteer and the volunteering work they do is thus clear and therefore creating a sustainable and healthy volunteer workforce is particularly important (Lewig, Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Dollard, & Metzger, 2007). The importance of and rise in volunteerism has compelled non-profit organisations to seek further science-based information on the management of volunteers (Musick & Wilson, 2008).

### **1.2.2 Volunteering: a unique work setting for studying employee well-being**

Volunteering is an unpaid, planned, proactive helping activity where time is given freely for the benefit of another person, group or organisation (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Wilson, 2000). It entails the commitment of an individual's personal time, energy and effort (Clary et al., 1998). Volunteers engage in helping opportunities which involve causes and/or individuals; their commitment often spans considerable periods and they may incur personal, social and opportunity costs (Meier & Stutzer, 2008; Snyder & Omoto, 2008). Volunteers commit themselves to doing good for the benefit of both individuals and communities in an effort to help solve social problems (Omoto & Snyder, 2002).

Volunteering has both physical and psychological benefits and has strong effects on an individual's well-being (Mellor et al., 2008; Vecina & Fernando, 2013). Volunteering enhances human capital through skills acquisition, as well as augmenting social capital through social networks (Handy & Mook, 2011). Self-esteem and a sense of purpose are also increased (Messias, De Jong, & McLoughlin, 2005). Other beneficial outcomes associated with volunteering are the fostering of interpersonal trust and empathy, physical health benefits, positive effects on mental health and the improvement of occupational opportunities (Wilson & Musick, 2000). However, despite the beneficial outcomes related to volunteering, volunteers do encounter challenges and incur various personal costs. The costs associated with volunteering are in the form of the time, effort and responsibility that are required to sustain and continue participation for prolonged periods, sometimes under very limiting economic

circumstances (Barlow & Hainsworth, 2001; Snyder & Omoto, 2008). The challenges encountered by volunteers are related to role demands, operating in emotionally taxing environments, an inability to perform their roles effectively, limited organisational resources, structural problems, and stress and burnout (Crook, Weir, Willms, & Egdorf, 2006; Fuertes & Jiménez, 2000). This suggests that the beneficial outcomes associated with volunteering may be compromised by the challenges faced by volunteers (MacKenzie, Baadjies, & Seedat, 2015), which result from its characteristic unique and challenging work environments. For example, volunteers work in hospitals caring for terminally ill patients, work in hospices, man telephone crisis lines and assist organisations dealing with acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), to name but a few. The question that then arises is how volunteers' well-being can be sustained in the long term to curb the physical and psychological costs of volunteering and to facilitate volunteers' resilience in a challenging work context with few conventional employee rewards.

### **1.2.3 The importance of managing volunteer well-being**

Employee well-being is an essential component of effective organisational functioning (Cooper & Dewe, 2008; Diener & Seligman, 2004; Harter, Schmidt, & Keyes, 2002; Keyes, Hysom, & Lupo, 2000; Robertson & Cooper, 2011). Maintaining well-being in employees is in the best interests of organisations (Harter et al., 2002) because well-being affects a variety of business outcomes such as profitability and productivity, customer loyalty and satisfaction, and employee retention (Keyes et al., 2000; Theobald & Cooper, 2012). In addition, to affecting business outcomes, well-being promises qualities such as a positive focus, a holistic outlook and an emphasis on strengths as opposed to needs (White, 2010). Well-being has become an important concept for both academics and organisations owing to its beneficial consequences for employees and organisations alike. Consequently, employee well-being should be consistently monitored and improved through proactive intervention (Diener & Seligman, 2004). Since an organisation's human resources are its most valuable resource and a critical source of competitive advantage (Cascio, 2001; Moalusi, 2001), employee well-being should be a priority for organisations.

Volunteers, although unpaid, are considered employees and non-profit organisations (NPOs) are dependent on volunteers to deliver their services. Volunteers represent a large part of the workforce and are essential for the maintenance, existence, life expectancy and growth of these organisations (Garner & Garner, 2011; Jäger, Kreutzer, & Beyes, 2009; Lynn, 2003; Yanay & Yanay, 2008). Volunteers are therefore a crucial resource for NPOs and the management of volunteers is as important as the management of other types of resources (Handy & Mook, 2011). Therefore, just as employee well-being is in the best interests of organisations (Harter et al., 2002), so too is volunteer well-being beneficial for NPOs. Furthermore, because volunteers have a vital role to play in modern society (Mellor et al., 2008) and since they commit their personal time and effort to the well-being and service of others (Rochester et al., 2010), it is particularly important that their well-being should not be ignored.

Owing to their non-profit service agreement, volunteer employees do not benefit from the same vested organisational interests with regard to well-being interventions. Moreover, volunteers' expectations and needs are distinct from the traditional employer–employee psychological contract, since volunteering is associated with altruistic motives (Fallon & Rice, 2015; Garner & Garner, 2011; MacKenzie et al., 2015). It is also characterised as a voluntary prosocial helping activity (Omoto & Snyder, 2002), thus emphasising the need to manage the well-being of volunteers differently. Volunteerism therefore constitutes a unique setting that needs to be explored in terms of enhancing and managing the well-being of the volunteer proactively to the benefit of the individual, the organisation and society at large.

#### **1.2.4 Volunteering and well-being research**

Healey-Ogden and Austin (2011) conducted a hermeneutic phenomenological study on the lived experience of well-being in nurses and found that, as professionals, nurses have to pay attention to their well-being, as lack of awareness in this regard may undermine their relationships and others' experiences of well-being. The results of their study may be extended to the volunteering context; in view of the unique volunteering work environment and the fact that volunteers focus on the well-being of others, their well-being is especially important. Healey-Ogden and Austin's (2011)

study invited further research to understand the nature of well-being in particular settings that involve helping or care circumstances (e.g. volunteering). Given the importance of volunteering and the benefits, challenges and unique work environments faced by volunteers, fostering well-being in volunteers would therefore seem critical.

Several studies related to the well-being of volunteers have been conducted. These have been conducted predominantly using a quantitative approach and have focused on whether or how volunteering contributes to or enhances well-being (McMunn, Nazroo, Wahrendorf, Breeze, & Zaninotto, 2009; Mellor et al., 2008; Son & Wilson, 2012; Tabassum, Mohan, & Smith, 2016; Thoits & Hewitt, 2001; Van Willigen, 2000; Vecina & Fernando, 2013), how volunteering affects well-being in later life (Hao, 2008; Haski-Leventhal, 2009; Morrow-Howell, Hinterlong, Rozario, & Tang, 2003; Russell, Nyame-Mensah, de Wit, & Handy, 2018) and the associations between the frequency of volunteer activity and well-being (Windsor, Anstey, & Rodgers, 2008). These studies focused on specific types, indicators, aspects or dimensions of well-being, thus complex well-being concepts were simplified. Furthermore, the results of each study were computed based on the average well-being scores of the sample (cf. Nelson & Slife, 2017). By contrast, limited studies have been conducted that use a qualitative in-depth approach to understand the phenomenon of volunteer well-being and, apart from Elias, Sudhir, and Mehrotra (2016), these studies are also quite dated (see Black & Living, 2004; Brunier, Graydon, Rothman, Sherman, & Liadsky, 2002; Messias et al., 2005; Newman, Vasudev, & Onawola, 1985).

Providing a synopsis of the qualitative studies mentioned here is valuable for distinguishing the value of the current study. Black and Living (2004), applying a mixed-method approach, explored the possible relationship between volunteering as an occupation and well-being from an occupational science perspective. The qualitative phase of the research comprised interviews in which questions were asked that focused on the motivation to volunteer and the personal experiences of volunteering. The findings suggest that volunteering may help to promote psychological well-being. In a study of Canadian renal peer-support volunteers, Brunier et al. (2002) used a questionnaire and interviews to explore the effects of

helping others on these volunteers' psychological well-being. It is noteworthy that the volunteers in this study were well educated, with almost half reporting a university level of education. Elias et al. (2016), using an exploratory study and a mixed-method approach, investigated long-term engagement in formal volunteering and well-being among a sample of Indian participants. Interviews were used to explore self-perceived changes attributed to the volunteering experience and subjective and psychological well-being were assessed using questionnaires. In other research conducted in a low-income context, Messias et al. (2005) examined volunteerism in poor communities from a holistic health perspective, interpreting the participants' well-being in terms of individual psychological empowerment. In investigating older volunteers' perceptions of the effects of volunteering on their psychological well-being, Newman et al. (1985) used a questionnaire and open-ended interviews.

Four of the above-mentioned five studies made use of a mixed-method approach, with psychological well-being as the predominant theoretical focus, thus suggesting that psychological well-being is favoured in the volunteering literature. Like the quantitative studies, the qualitative studies focus on a specific conceptualisation of well-being to understand the consequences, impact or benefits of volunteering on the participants' well-being, thus adopting a reductionist and evaluative approach to well-being (cf. Nelson & Slife, 2017). Consequently, their predominant focus was to understand how volunteering affects well-being and not to provide an understanding of volunteer well-being. Lastly, it should be noted that given the complexity and dynamic nature of well-being (La Placa, McNaught, & Knight, 2013) and volunteering, the reductionist approach of these studies constrains our understanding and offers a simplistic view of volunteer well-being. Hence, a qualitative approach to studying volunteer well-being that goes beyond consequences, impact and benefits would be valuable in contributing to the body of knowledge on volunteering and well-being in the volunteer context. Specifically, such an approach is important for understanding the phenomenon of volunteer well-being in order to gain an in-depth perspective on the development and maintenance thereof.

Furthermore, while the topic of well-being is receiving more research attention in various contexts, it is being dominated by a top-down approach, which has resulted in

a lack of feedback from the individuals themselves (Rojas, 2007). Subjective well-being research has been mainly quantitative, resulting in numerical responses and thus losing the individual (subjectivity) in the process (White, 2010). The qualitative, hermeneutic phenomenological nature of this study allowed a bottom-up approach, thus contributing to a better understanding of the individual (Rojas, 2007) and enabling a person-centred attitude (White, 2010).

Lastly, scant research has been conducted on volunteering in less wealthy societies (Parboteeah, Cullen, & Lim, 2004). Given South Africa's socio-political uniqueness, history and multicultural society, research is needed in this context, since research that addresses unemployed volunteers or those in low-income contexts (MacKenzie et al., 2015)<sup>1</sup> is lacking. This study therefore contributes to this knowledge domain by offering an in-depth understanding of volunteer well-being in a low-income, South African context.

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Volunteers are critical resources for sustaining the work of various organisations, especially NPOs, and volunteer services are of value to the individual, organisations and society at large. The management of volunteers and the facilitation of their well-being in the work context is as important as that of paid employees (Handy & Mook, 2011). Creating a sustainable and healthy volunteer workforce is particularly important (Lewig et al., 2007), given the socioeconomic impact of volunteering and the contributions that volunteers make to societies around the world (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2011; Manetti et al., 2015). Greater emphasis needs to be placed on developing and sustaining volunteers (Brudney & Meijs, 2009) within the unique employment setting that constitutes volunteerism. This unique setting needs to be explored in terms of proactively enhancing the well-being of the volunteer to facilitate their optimal functioning and retention in a challenging work context.

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<sup>1</sup> MacKenzie et al. (2015) conducted a study on voluntary participation in a low- to middle-income context in South Africa with the aim of understanding the volunteer experience within a motivational theoretical framework.

The need for further research on volunteer well-being arises specifically from the predominantly quantitative approach that has been taken thus far to volunteering and well-being, leaving a gap in our understanding of the phenomenon from a person-centred and in-depth qualitative research perspective. As opposed to trying to understand volunteer well-being, previous qualitative studies on the well-being of volunteers have focused on understanding how volunteering affects well-being. Most of the qualitative data stem from mixed-methods studies and rely heavily on the quantified results in the same studies. These studies also focus on specific conceptualisations of well-being, in particular psychological well-being. Furthermore, the continued focus on conducting research on well-being in general from a top-down and quantitative approach has resulted in a lack of feedback from the individuals themselves (Rojas, 2007). This has accentuated the need to study well-being from a person-centred approach (White, 2010), which will contribute to an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of volunteer well-being. Lastly, a predominant emphasis in the literature on Western samples of volunteers, which are characterised as high-level socioeconomic groups that have more resources at their disposal (Jäger et al., 2009), has resulted in a lack of research on volunteering in less affluent societies or low-income communities (MacKenzie et al., 2015; Parboteeah et al., 2004). In view of South Africa's socio-political uniqueness, high unemployment and poverty rates, there is a need to conduct research on developing and managing the well-being of volunteers in the South African socio-economic context.

**In conclusion**, the research problem was grounded in the limited understanding of volunteer well-being from an in-depth qualitative research perspective in a South African volunteering context.

Having discussed the background to and rationale for the study, and having demarcated the research problem, I now present the research aim.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH AIM**

Based on the research problem described in the previous section, the aim of this research is formulated as follows:

**The aim of this study was to enhance understanding of volunteer well-being and to develop a conceptual model of volunteer well-being through an in-depth exploration of volunteers' work–life experiences.**

The specific objectives of this research were therefore twofold. **Firstly**, I attempted to explore the lived work–life experiences of volunteers in a South African volunteering context in order to understand the phenomenon of volunteer well-being. **Secondly**, I attempted to explain the research phenomenon, namely volunteer well-being, using a conceptual model. Such a model is aimed at enhancing our understanding of volunteer well-being in order to retain volunteers and sustain their optimal functioning more effectively. A conceptual model may be defined as an abstraction of a specific phenomenon. Conceptual means “based on mental concepts” and also contains a reference to “wholeness” (Jonker & Pennink, 2010, p. 43). Conceptual models are similar to theories but are more abstract and explain phenomena of interest, express assumptions and reflect a specific philosophical stance (Burns & Grove, 2011). Accordingly, this model was intended to facilitate an understanding of volunteer well-being, thereby performing the practical function of retaining and sustaining the optimal functioning of volunteers.

## **1.5 THE RESEARCH STRATEGY**

To address the problem statement and the stated research aim, the design of this study was guided by a qualitative research strategy. Specifically, the methodological decisions were directed by a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology informed by the perspectives of Heidegger. Subsequently, purposive sampling was used to select eight volunteers from an NPO operating in the South African provincial health sector. These volunteers participated in in-depth interviews and the data obtained were analysed using phenomenological hermeneutical analysis, a three-stage analytic process, as which is proposed by Lindseth and Norberg (2004).

The study context is explained in more detail in the next section, while the research design is explained in Chapter 2 and the research methods that were used to gather and analyse the data are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively.

## 1.6 THE STUDY CONTEXT

Given the perception that volunteering is done by individuals who form part of high-level socioeconomic groups (Jäger et al., 2009), it is important that I clarify the milieu I focus on when referring to a South African volunteering context,<sup>2</sup> as it pertains to the specific contextual focus of this study. The volunteers who participated in this study provide their services to a faith-based NPO operating in 13 hospitals in the Gauteng and Western Cape provincial health sectors. In this study, the volunteers were functioning in government-run hospitals in Gauteng province. The quality of healthcare in government-run hospitals in South Africa is characterised by challenges such as prolonged patient waiting time due to staff shortages, equipment and medical supply shortages, poor service delivery and hygiene, old and poorly maintained infrastructure and medical negligence (Maphumulo & Bhengu, 2019). The volunteers' main activities include providing spiritual care and counselling, as well as emotional, social, trauma and physical support for hospital patients and their families. In addition, during the illness journey, the volunteers fulfil the role of a compassionate friend to patients and family members, giving comfort and counselling.

The demographics of the volunteers vary, with some living in developed urban areas and others in townships; some are retired, employed and unemployed, or have their own business. They conduct volunteering in their spare time and are educated and uneducated. Several of the volunteers come from poor communities and low-income contexts and do not fit the prevailing stereotypes of middle or upper-income individuals and socioeconomic groups that volunteer as part of their leisure time (Neysmith & Reitsma-Street, 2000) and are faced with complex issues such as unemployment and poverty (see Hunter & Ross, 2013). In South Africa townships are considered underdeveloped racially segregated residential areas (Bond, 2008). More contextual

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<sup>2</sup> As in many other countries, volunteering in South Africa is performed by a wide range of demographic groups (MacKenzie et al., 2015). Details of these demographic groups are provided in the *Volunteer Activities Survey* (2014) conducted by Statistics South Africa. The volunteering context in South Africa is therefore not confined to or characterised specifically by the context I am focusing on. Details of how I came across this context and why I am focusing on it specifically will be provided in Chapter 2.

information on the participants who formed part of this study is presented in sections 2.8.2, 5.2.4 and 5.3.

## **1.7 INTELLECTUAL BOUNDARY: DISCIPLINARY FIELD, PSYCHOLOGICAL PARADIGM AND META-THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Although the theoretical foundation for studying volunteer well-being in the South African healthcare context is evident in the background to this study, the discipline (Patton, 2015) and the relevant psychological paradigm and meta-theoretical framework stemming from this discipline (Grant & Osanloo, 2014) that informed the conceptual perspective taken in this study also require clarification. The aim of the next section is therefore to explicate the intellectual boundary (Trafford & Leshem, 2012) that informed my research topic. The intellectual boundary explained here forms the theoretical blueprint for this study (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). It encompasses the disciplinary field, as well as the psychological paradigm and the meta-theoretical framework, both of which are in turn informed by the disciplinary field.

### **1.7.1 Disciplinary field**

All research is conducted within a specific discipline and the process applied in conducting research will be dictated by that specific discipline (Patton, 2015). Industrial and organisational psychology is the main discipline within which this study was conducted. Accordingly, I attempted to make a contribution to knowledge in this discipline (Patton, 2015).

Industrial and organisational psychology (IOP) is an applied field (sub-profession) of the greater discipline of Psychology which studies the behaviour of individuals in the workplace (Riggio, 2013; Truxillo, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2016). Through the application of psychological principles, IO psychologists study and attempt to understand, explain, predict, guide, change or influence all aspects of human behaviour to achieve optimal work performance (Barnard & Fourie, 2007; Bergh, 2011; Riggio, 2013; Van Vuuren, 2010). IO psychologists focus on a range of issues such as recruitment and selection, training and development, the psychological processes underlying employee job

performance, productivity, motivation and satisfaction, group processes such as relationships in the workplace and the broader physical work environment (Riggio, 2013; Truxillo et al., 2016). As a discipline IOP recognises the individual and organisational influences on employee behaviour thus adopting a multilevel approach. As such, the role of an IO psychologist is twofold – there should be a focus on both organisational effectiveness and individual well-being to optimise functioning (Rothmann & Cilliers, 2007). However, the world of work is frequently associated with illness and negative and dysfunctional behaviour (Rothmann & Cilliers, 2007), which is evident in the abundance of research studies on issues such as burnout, stress and exhaustion (e.g. Els, Mostert, & De Beer, 2015; Hassard, Teoh, Visockaite, Dewe, & Cox, 2018; Welp, Meier, & Manser, 2016). This negative association can be attributed to research in IO Psychology that has adopted a utilitarian approach with a strong focus on one stakeholder group only, namely, the organisation (Rothmann & Cilliers, 2007). Rothmann and Cilliers (2007) propose a new IO psychology research agenda that focuses on employee health and wellness, because organisations should build their business around the strengths of their employees. Moalusi (2001) refers in this regard to an emphasis on the human side of organisations. Therefore, to obtain optimal work performance and business outcomes, IO psychologists need to focus on employee and organisational well-being (Bergh & Theron, 2006; Van Vuuren, 2010).

The application of IO psychology as a discipline in this study is, thus, to understand, explain and optimise the well-being of the employee (volunteer) by means of a conceptual model to facilitate positive employee and organisational functioning.

IO psychology consists of various sub-fields; the sub-fields related to this study are organisational psychology and career psychology.

#### *1.7.1.1 Organisational psychology*

Organisational psychology is concerned with investigating individual behaviour within an organisation (Aamodt, 2016; Jex & Britt, 2014). Truxillo et al. (2016) indicate that organisational psychology is decidedly psychologically focused with an emphasis on the human side of employees. The focus is on an “emotional fit” and the social and

emotional adaptation between the employee and the work context (Weiten, 2007, p. 704). Psychologists in this sub-field deal with organisational issues such as leadership, job satisfaction, employee motivation, conflict management, organisational culture, and change and group processes (Aamodt, 2016; Bergh & Theron, 2006). The focus of organisational psychology therefore remains on employee well-being and enhancing employee satisfaction, productivity and adjustment (Bergh & Theron, 2006). Hence, the rationale for this study was to assist employees to attain well-being by understanding the way in which the optimal functioning of the volunteers can be proactively facilitated using a conceptual model.

#### *1.7.1.2 Career psychology*

Career psychology is concerned with studying individual career development and career-related issues (Bergh & Theron, 2006). The focus is on assisting individuals to adapt to the changing nature of work through the self-management of their careers (Bergh, 2011). According to Van Vuuren (2010), career psychology would seem to show the greatest overlap with some of the areas of specialisation in psychology, focusing on issues such as the meaning of work in people's lives, the quality of work life, stress and work-life balance issues. Psychologists in this sub-field concentrate on career counselling, career planning and development, career conflict resolution and assessments related to choosing a career/job (Bergh & Theron, 2006). More recently, the focus in career psychology has shifted to issues such as job and organisational commitment, employee turnover and dealing with job loss (Van Vuuren, 2010). Through the conceptual model, volunteer organisations, the managers of volunteers and IO practitioners will be able to assist the volunteers to manage their careers by understanding the factors that influence their well-being. It is hoped that career paths that will enable the volunteers to flourish may be forged (cf. Dik, O'Connor, Shimizu & Duffy, 2019).

#### **1.7.2 Psychological paradigm**

In this study, a positive psychology paradigm within the discipline of IO Psychology was applied. According to Van Vuuren (2010), positive psychology has emerged as a

predominant driving force in the thinking of many IO psychologists owing to the significant contribution it has made to understanding, predicting and influencing behaviour.

#### *1.7.2.1 Positive psychology as a psychological paradigm*

Prior to World War II, psychology as a discipline had three objectives: (1) curing mental illness, (2) making the lives of all people more productive and fulfilling, and (3) identifying and nurturing talent. However, after the war, objective number one took centre stage. Accordingly, psychologists built a career on treating mental illness while academics received grants for conducting research on pathology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). While there have been significant advances in the understanding and treatment of mental illness, the other two objectives were neglected. The focus was therefore on a disease model of assess and cure, as well as psychological disorders and the study of negative effects (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Although scholars like Maslow expressed their concern with psychology's preoccupation with illness and disorder (Linley, Joseph, Harrington, & Wood, 2006), in general it seems that psychology has given greater emphasis to and been dominated by negative traits and effects (Lopez, Pedrotti, & Snyder, 2019; Rozin & Rozyman, 2001). In view of this focus of psychology on the treatment model and the preoccupation with it, Gable and Haidt (2005) raise an interesting argument along the lines that our feelings of compassion naturally urge us to help those who are in distress rather than those individuals who are doing well. Additionally, across a wide range of psychological phenomena, "bad is stronger than good" (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001, p. 323). Lopez et al. (2019) note that although a focus on the negative aspects is unproductive, scholars adopting the pathology paradigm were merely responding to the circumstances at that point in time. Focusing solely on one aspect of experience is however considered as bad science and the positive psychology movement has shifted the focus to exploring the positive (Lopez et al., 2019).

Linley et al. (2006) are of the opinion that positive psychology is not a new concept as it shares features of humanistic psychology, with examples of studies such as Rogers'

focus on the fully functioning person and Maslow's model of self-actualisation. Positive psychology has, however, been neglected and Csikszentmihalyi (in Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) refers to his first realisation of the need for this paradigm. He recalls the damage World War II inflicted on individuals and how helpless some had become, yet amidst the chaos there were many whose integrity and purpose remained intact. His ultimate question was "What sources of strength were these people drawing on?" (p. 6). It is this question that prompted me to recognise that growth, improvement, strength and feelings of hope, optimism and happiness can exist even under dire circumstances, because it is only the context that prescribes how potential can be realised (Harrison, 2014). Therefore, if individuals are provided with a supportive context then surely they can flourish and improve their lives.

As the pathogenic paradigm has portrayed the negative aspect of humankind (Lopez et al., 2019) positive psychology places emphasis on positive psychological concepts, traits and aspects and highlights well-being by focusing on the potential, virtues and strengths of individuals and organisations (Bergh, 2011; Compton & Hoffman, 2020; Nafstad, 2015; Page & Vella-Brodrick, 2012). Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) state that the field of positive psychology "at a subjective level is about valued subjective experiences in terms of well-being, contentment, and satisfaction (in the past); hope and optimism (for the future); and flow and happiness (in the present)" (p. 5). Psychological inquiry, therefore, shifts to an asset focus to enable individuals to improve their lives (Linley et al., 2006) based on the belief that harnessing human strengths can assist in the prevention of stress and disease (Gable & Haidt, 2005).

Although the movement of positive psychology has shifted the research focus in psychology, it is not without criticism. Fernandez-Ríos and Cornes (2009) are of the opinion that positive psychology is promising philosophically but should not be accepted uncritically. I now consider the critiques of this paradigm.

#### *1.7.2.2 Critiques of positive psychology*

Many authors (e.g. Cilliers & May, 2010; Fernandez-Ríos & Cornes, 2009; Lazarus, 2003; Linley et al., 2006) suggest that positive psychology is not new, being rooted in

anthropological philosophy and psychology. The emphasis on positive psychology came about as a result of a preoccupation with the imbalance in research (Gable & Haidt, 2005). This in itself may be problematic as being preoccupied with the past could distort current research needs (see Fernandez-Ríos & Cornes, 2009) thus causing a new imbalance. Sundararajan (2005) indicates that at some point this positive focus is bound to shift back to the negative. Grant and Schwartz (2011) share this view, indicating that there are limits to positivity. It is therefore possible that positive psychology could have created its own imbalance in the research agenda.

While not questioning the important contributions positive psychology has made to psychological science, Held (2004) points out the possibility that there may be negative side effects of this movement. For example, being faced with difficulty and not being able to transcend it could result in unintended negative consequences. This is supported by Wong and Roy (2017), who indicate that interventions informed by a positive psychology approach could be harmful in specific situations. Other negative side effects identified by Held (2004) are the preoccupation and overemphasis of positive psychology with positivity and the dominant message and foundational assumption of the movement being that “positivity is good and good for you; negativity is bad and bad for you” (p. 12). Held (2004) refers to this as the “tyranny of the positive attitude” (p. 12) where a positive way of thinking is reinforced, and negativity is viewed as undesirable.

Positive psychology has also been criticised for placing much of the burden and responsibility on the individual while ignoring the influence of the social context and circumstances on their behaviour. Given that research is aimed at informing policy recommendations, positive psychology fails to acknowledge individual agency as residing within a social structure (Ciarrochi, Atkins, Hayes, Sahdra, & Parker, 2016). Further critique of this movement centres on a reductionist approach to concepts and research led by a positivist paradigm (Wong & Roy, 2017). Lastly, a reductionist approach in positive psychology has resulted in componential thinking, thus ignoring the negative (Cilliers & May, 2010; Wong, 2011).

### *1.7.2.3 Reasons for choosing positive psychology as the psychological paradigm despite the criticism*

Despite the criticism of positive psychology, I chose to use it as the underlying psychological paradigm in this study, since it entails the “enhancement of human functioning” (Bergh, 2011, p. 5; Linley et al., 2006, p. 8) and harnesses and builds upon the existing strengths and resources of individuals to ensure well-being, health and optimal human functioning. Optimal functioning, which is the desired outcome of positive psychology, has been characterised in part as well-being (Seligman, 2002). Positive psychology enables researchers to explore and understand human functioning (Dewe & Cooper, 2012). Lazarus (2003) notes that positive psychology “does not mean the same thing to all psychologists” (p. 93). As my focus was on optimal functioning, in reflecting on the essence of positive psychology I chose to approach this study from a resource rather than a deficit perspective. I did not disregard the negative aspects of human behaviour and the volunteer’s difficult personal circumstances nor did I view them as separable, as I believe they are an inevitable part of life (Lazarus, 2003). Wong (2011) has more recently proposed a balanced and interactive approach to positive psychology by encouraging research that incorporates the “interactive effects of positives and negatives” (p. 70). This new approach is still concerned with the same concepts that underpin positive psychology, namely well-being, but recognises the “fundamentally dialectical nature of well-being” (Lomas & Ivtzan, 2016, p. 1754). Similarly, Lopez et al. (2019) consider both positive psychology and the pathogenic paradigm as useful approaches and advise psychologists to adopt an inclusive approach that examines the weaknesses and strengths of individuals while considering their cultural context and environment. While I anticipated and acknowledged that the volunteers’ work–life experiences would include difficulties, I wanted to understand what enables volunteers to achieve and maintain well-being despite these difficulties.

Since well-being from a positive approach is still in the infancy stage (Page & Vella-Brodick, 2012), I also attempted to add value to the body of well-being knowledge. This may be attributed to the fact that it is very difficult to put a financial value on well-being and the betterment of individuals. Concepts related to dysfunctional behaviour

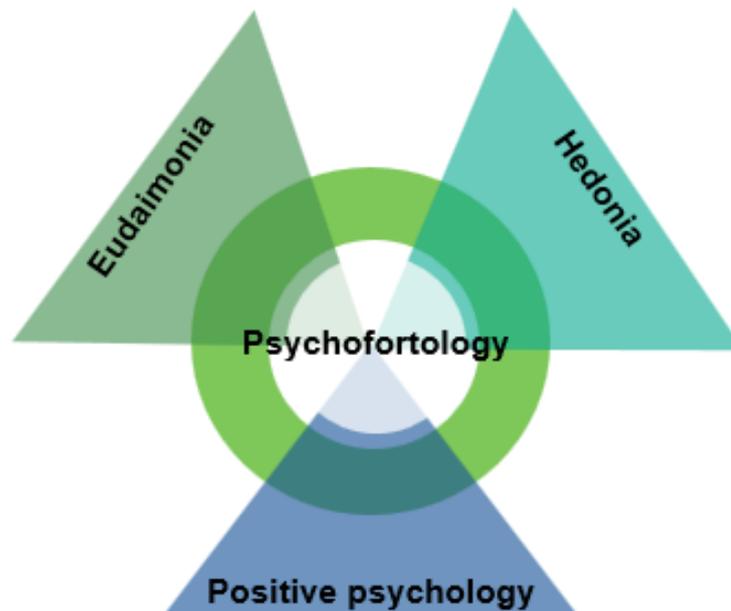
such as job burnout, psychological distress and job dissatisfaction are valued as they are a means to reduce costs for organisations (Wright & Quick, 2009). However, owing to the surge in the positive psychology movement and its extension into the workplace (Page & Vella-Brodrick, 2009), researchers are focusing on topics related to human experience, such as well-being and the improvement thereof, topics which previously received very little published attention (Gable & Haidt, 2005).

### **1.7.3 Meta-theoretical framework**

Grant and Osanloo (2014) explain that a theoretical framework consists of the selected theory as well as the concepts and definitions of that theory that are relevant to the researcher's topic. This theory also determines how the researcher sees their topic and ultimately influences the way the data are interpreted (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Trafford & Leshem, 2012). Within the IOP discipline, informed by a positive psychology paradigm, the meta-theory applicable to this study is well-being. Bates (2005) defines a theory as "the entire body of generalisations and principles developed for a field" (p. 2).

Well-being was identified as the meta-theoretical lens for this study and, for the purposes of this study, includes both the hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives on well-being. In a positive psychology paradigm, the study of well-being has been advanced by Wissing and Van Eeden (1997), who delineated psychofortology as a field of study. Psychofortology focuses on the origins, nature, dynamics and manifestations of well-being as well as the enhancement of well-being (Coetzee & Cilliers, 2001; Wissing & Van Eeden, 1997, 2002). In this study, the various constructs, conceptualisations, dimensions and models used to describe and refer to well-being within the orientations of positive psychology and eudaimonic and hedonic philosophy, were thus used to understand the origins, nature, dynamics and manifestations of the volunteer's well-being. The primary purpose of positive psychology is to understand optimal functioning (Linley et al. 2006; Nafstad, 2015; Schueller, 2012) and hedonic and eudaimonic thought sheds light on whether well-being arises from pleasure and happiness or living a life of virtue (Deci & Ryan, 2008a). Figure 1.1 depicts the

conceptual framework of well-being that was applied in this study. This conceptual framework of well-being is elaborated on in Chapter 4.



**Figure 1.1:** Conceptual framework of well-being

## **1.8 ANTICIPATED CONTRIBUTION**

I anticipate that this study will make unique pragmatic, theoretical and methodological contributions. I explain these contributions according to Mouton's (2001) three-worlds framework. Mouton (2001) proposes that research is conducted within three worlds or contexts, namely, everyday life, science and meta-science, thereby resulting in contributions being made to each of these worlds.

### **1.8.1 Everyday life (pragmatic contribution)**

Pragmatically, the results of this study may influence the management of volunteers. These results are presented in the form of a conceptual model, as it was envisaged that a model would be recognisable to organisations generally. As this model encapsulates the dynamics of volunteer well-being, organisations could use it to

manage volunteers in terms of interventions such as coaching, mentoring, assessment, recruitment and retention from a well-being perspective.

Furthermore, owing to the current overemphasis on Western samples in volunteering research, this model contributes to managing and understanding volunteers in a particular South African context that is characterised by lower socioeconomic status. Given South Africa's socio-political and socioeconomic uniqueness, I believe that this type of study adds value to the everyday life (Mouton, 2001) of volunteers with lower socio-economic status in South Africa, specifically within a health-care context as described in section 1.6 above. This model will enable volunteer organisations to apply contextually grounded knowledge.

### **1.8.2 Science (theoretical/body of knowledge contribution)**

The theoretical contribution of this work lies in the value added to the body of knowledge on volunteer well-being vested in a positive psychology paradigm for IO psychologists, managers and practitioners. Theoretically, this study enhances our understanding of the phenomenon of volunteer well-being in a South African context. While it must be remembered that although volunteers are unpaid they are considered to be employees, research in IOP has predominantly focused on employees in typical organisational settings. This research therefore contributes theoretically to the field of IOP by focusing on volunteerism as a relatively unexplored work domain and a unique employment context. This study also contributes theoretically to the body of knowledge on volunteer well-being from a phenomenological rather than reductionist perspective.

### **1.8.3 Meta-science (methodological contribution)**

The use in this study of a bottom-up, person-centred, qualitative methodological approach makes a methodological contribution to the discipline of IOP. Accordingly, I intended to contribute to the research agenda of the IOP discipline. Some critical issues for research in IOP in the South African context have been identified. Rothmann and Cilliers (2007) propose that there should be a greater focus on research that incorporates qualitative research designs, diversity (particularly in view of South

Africa's multicultural society), employee health and wellness and the examination of positive psychology constructs to include non-Western samples.

Both IOP and psychology in general have been led by positivist research paradigms and quantitative research methods (Ponterotto, 2005). Despite an increase in studies conducted from a qualitative approach in the field of IOP in the South African context (O'Neil & Koekemoer, 2016), studies utilising a quantitative methodology still dominate the literature (Coetzee & Van Zyl, 2014; O'Neil & Koekemoer, 2016). Heeding the call to increase the focus on qualitative methodology as a result of its perceived value (O'Neil & Koekemoer, 2016), my use of a qualitative methodological person-centred approach in this study, I believe, contributes to the IOP discipline. The sample used in this study is also reflective of the multicultural South African volunteering community. Furthermore, none of the qualitative studies on the well-being of volunteers has adopted a hermeneutic phenomenological research methodology. This study therefore introduces a new methodological approach to research on volunteer well-being. As part of this methodological approach, I adopted a specific mode of presentation, discussed next.

## **1.9 MODE OF PRESENTATION: A CONFESSIONAL REFLEXIVE STYLE OF WRITING**

In the introductory paragraph to this chapter I indicated that this thesis reports not only on the research topic and findings but also to my research journey, including my experiences as an investigator (Minichiello & Kottler, 2010). This relates to adopting a non-conventional structure for the thesis as recommended by Kember (2018). Carter, Kelly, and Brailsford (2012, p. 4) propose that there are "creative possibilities for non-conventional structure" when reporting on completed research. Reflecting on his role as an examiner, Kember (2018) explains that theses are frequently difficult to read because students remove themselves from their research. Kember (2018) further points out that most students "do not move in a flash of insight from recognising a problem to researching it" (p. 4) but rather struggle with all the complex theoretical and methodological issues characteristic of good research. This resonated profoundly in

me because I found conceptualising, conducting the research, analysing the data and writing the thesis exceptionally challenging.

Given that the landscape of qualitative research is now in its fifth (present) movement, shaped by new epistemologies and abandoned by the “aloof researcher” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 22), I chose not to distance myself from the research journey but rather to provide an authentic narrative of it (see Kember, 2018). Such a personal approach is not new, however, and was already established in 1988 by Van Maanen, who advocated for producing confessional tales. Similarly, Sparkes (2002) encourages qualitative researchers to break positivistic writing style boundaries by providing confessional tales about doing *real-life* research, thereby becoming storytellers. Trafford and Leshem (2012) also support explanations in the research report that reveal the reality of doing complex research. Lichtman (2010) refers to this practice as researcher self-disclosure, which entails “sharing the self of the researcher, exposing beliefs and feelings, and contributing to the construction of the research narrative” (p. 122).

Webster (2008) views researcher confessions as being both introspective and related to the virtues of honesty *and* self-awareness. Although confessions as a mode of expression have expanded in research, this practice is not without criticism (see Swan, 2008). As the researcher is placed at the centre of the research process, the self rather than the process of reflexivity may become the focus. As such, confessions in the writing style of the researcher are criticised as becoming an egocentric rather than a reflexive activity (Swan, 2008; Webster, 2008). It is therefore important to maintain a balance between telling the story of the research as experienced by the researcher and reflecting on how the researcher influenced the study. Palaganas, Sanchez, Molintas, and Caricativo (2017) are of the view that conducting qualitative research changes the researcher and that these changes could in turn affect the research process. Reflexivity enables researchers to acknowledge these changes by revealing how the researcher shaped and was shaped by the research process (Palaganas et al., 2017). Jootun, McGhee, and Marland (2009) contend that reflexivity increases the rigour of a research study.

A confessional writing style *and* reflexivity represent the mode of presentation of this thesis. My aim, with my own version of the confessional tales that Van Maanen (1988) and Sparkes (2002) refer to, was to provide a truthful and natural account of how the entire research process unfolded for me. Together with being self-reflective (see Braun & Clarke, 2013; Willig, 2008), employing a confessional writing style provides an audit trail of what transpired in the research process and is thus essential to the methodological rigour of the study. I believe a confessional narrative of the research journey illuminates the difficulty of doing real-life research and showcases the development of my researcher self-efficacy throughout the research journey. Apart from giving other students some idea of the reality of doing a doctoral study, I hope my confessional writing style will also provide some hope, in that it reveals in an authentic manner the methodological growth and interpretive insights I acquired. Reporting on my experience and providing self-reflections are consistently grounded in real-life evidence, evidence from my self-reflective journal and personal communications.

As reflexivity is considered both a concept and a process (Palaganas et al., 2017), I incorporated my self-reflections throughout the thesis. Of particular reference is the research topic and conceptual framework that was presented in this chapter. Because the researcher constructs the research study, their awareness of their perspectives and built-in interests needs to be made explicit (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). The research topic was influenced by my personal experience with a volunteer community through my community service as an academic. Furthermore, my conceptual framework was biased by a well-being perspective, the details of which are presented in the following chapter. Being upfront about the experiences that shaped my understanding of and interest in the research topic and the theory that influenced my conceptual framework indicates both honesty but also self-awareness of the way I shaped the research process (cf. Palaganas et al., 2017).

## **1.10 CONCLUSION AND STRUCTURING OF CHAPTERS IN THE THESIS**

In this chapter I explicated the purpose of this study. More specifically, **Chapter 1** provided the rationale and motivation for this research project, as well as the

theoretical foundation, context and aim, and the contribution it makes. In **Chapter 2**, I present my methodological path, specifically the methodological choices I made when executing this research. In the following chapter, I also describe, in narrative form, the personal experiences that led me to this research journey, showing why and how I embarked on the chosen methodology. Volunteering, which is the human experience in this study, is conceptualised in **Chapter 3** from a theoretical perspective. A conceptual framework of well-being, as the meta-theoretical perspective in this study, is presented in **Chapter 4**.

In **Chapter 5**, I discuss in detail the way in which I executed the methodological choices I made. That is, how I sampled the participants, prepared for and conducted the interviews and the way I captured and managed the data. Lastly, I present the participants who formed part of this study in an attempt to honour them for letting me into their world. I consider **Chapter 6** as my moment of truth – these are the research findings that were constructed from the data. This chapter presents my understanding of the research phenomenon as a gestalt and forms the foundation on which the conceptual model of volunteer well-being is based. The conceptual model as the ultimate output of this research is presented in **Chapter 7**, which also explicates the underlying theoretical perspectives that guided the research. Finally, making sense of this journey and reflecting on how, amidst the anxiety, it all eventually fell into place enables me to find closure in **Chapter 8**.

## CHAPTER 2

### MY METHODOLOGICAL PATH

*The only reason for time is so that everything doesn't happen at once*  
(Albert Einstein).

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided the background and context of the study. The aim of this chapter is to present my methodological path and the way in which I constructed it as my research journey unfolded. My methodological path represents the research design of this study and includes details of the methodological decisions I made that guided the execution of the study. According to Blaikie (2010), the research design serves as a guide for carrying out a research study and involves reporting on a range of choices about “what is to be studied and how it will be studied” (p. 14).

Therefore, to ground the research design, in this chapter I firstly reflect on the topic of study by providing further details on how my interest in the research topic and methodology evolved. This reflection is an attempt to be transparent with regard to my motives for researching the particular phenomenon, and to be explicit about my preconceptions and potential bias in studying volunteer well-being. Secondly, I share *how* volunteer well-being was studied by explicating my philosophical assumptions and research paradigm, the research approach, methodology and research methods I adopted. The methodological choices I made are also reflective of a specific philosophical stance that intersects my overall design and methods (Creswell, 2014).

In accordance with the confessional approach of this thesis, I present this chapter partly as a self-reflective narrative, for I believe it to be the most appropriate way to demonstrate authentically the thought process and experiences that shaped my methodological decisions. Creswell (2014) acknowledges that personal experiences are one of the factors that influence the design choices a researcher makes.

## **2.2 RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGICAL INTEREST**

According to Maxwell (2013), a qualitative research design “does not begin from a predetermined starting point or proceed through a fixed sequence of steps” (p. 3). Taking Loseke’s (2013) advice to “think both as a scientist and as an artist” (p. 9), I describe here *how* my research and methodological interest evolved. This ultimately laid the foundation for me to construct a methodological path, which is explained in sections 2.3 to 2.8 that follow. As a research design should include details of the selection of the research topic and the motives for researching it (Blaikie, 2010), in this section I reflect on my initial methodological confusion, which I subsequently resolved and which led me back to clarifying the way in which my interest in the research topic evolved, as well as my desire to conduct this research from a qualitative stance.

### **2.2.1 Initial confusion and finding my way**

Of all the works I read for this research, it was Crotty’s (1998) book, *The foundations of social research* that – while challenging to grasp and apply – ultimately glued this chapter together. As a novice qualitative researcher, I found so many of the terms and methods confusing. According to Mkansi and Acheampong (2012), this is not surprising given the abundant opposing philosophical concepts and approaches that doctoral students are confronted with in the literature on qualitative methodology. The more I read the more confused and less sure of myself I became. Initially, I relied heavily on the work of Denzin and Lincoln (1998, 2011), as I perceived these authors to be the gurus of qualitative research. These authors specify three aspects that define the qualitative research process, namely, ontology, epistemology and methodology. The first two terms presented a huge stumbling block, which I had to overcome. According to Mackenzie and Knipe (2006), my response to these philosophical constructs was similar to the confusion experienced by most postgraduate students in this regard.

The importance of these philosophical constructs to the qualitative researcher is fundamental however and they have to be understood. Creswell (2007, 2014) places emphasis on a researcher’s philosophy, design and methods as being the starting

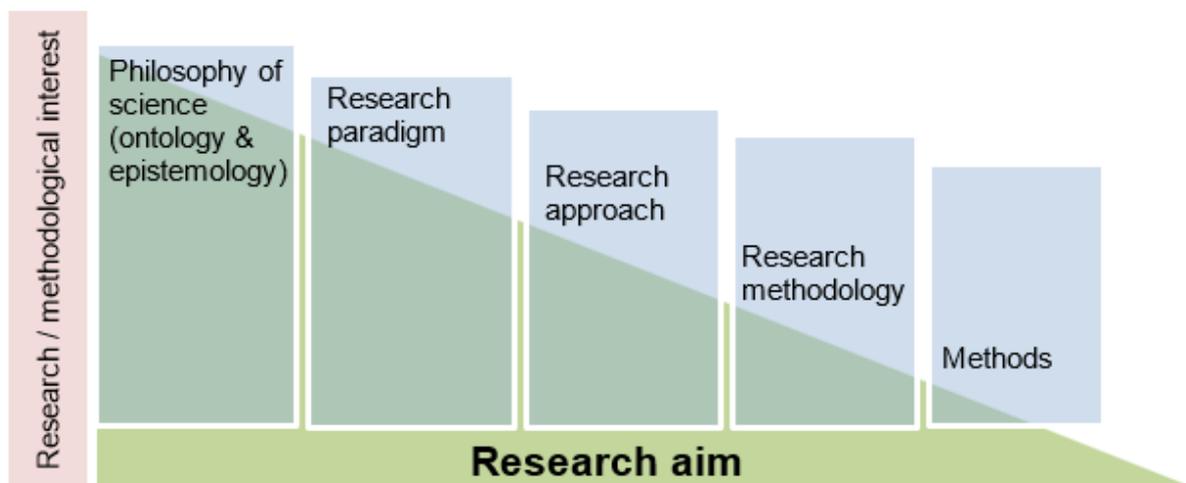
point when conducting a research project. So, this is exactly where I thought I initially had to start – with my philosophy of science. At the time, I thought that explicating my ontology and epistemology would provide me with a logical flow towards my paradigm, methodology and methods. However, it did not turn out this way; rather it gave me the feeling that I was not working logically, as I had identified my research interest early on and had already expressed my desire to conduct my research from a qualitative stance. Consequently, my research aim did not stem from my philosophy of science but rather from an interest in a specific topic and, thus, my qualitative research journey evolved as I continued my reading of the literature on methodology.

I found some solace in the work of Saunders et al. (2016), in which the emphasis is placed on the research topic as a starting point. These authors propose that a researcher needs clarity what they are going to research and once this has been established an appropriate strategy can be chosen. This made me feel less lost and confirmed that my approach was not illogical. In a sense, I was creating my own methodological path, which seemed to be an appropriate research approach, as reflected in the words of Crotty (1998):

Not too many of us embark on a piece of social research with epistemology as our starting point. We typically start with a real-life issue that needs to be addressed, a problem that needs to be solved, a question that needs to be answered. We plan our research in terms of that issue or problem or question. What, then, is the aim and what are the objectives of our research? What strategy seems likely to provide what we are looking for? In this way our research question, incorporating the purposes of our research, leads us to methodology and methods (p. 13).

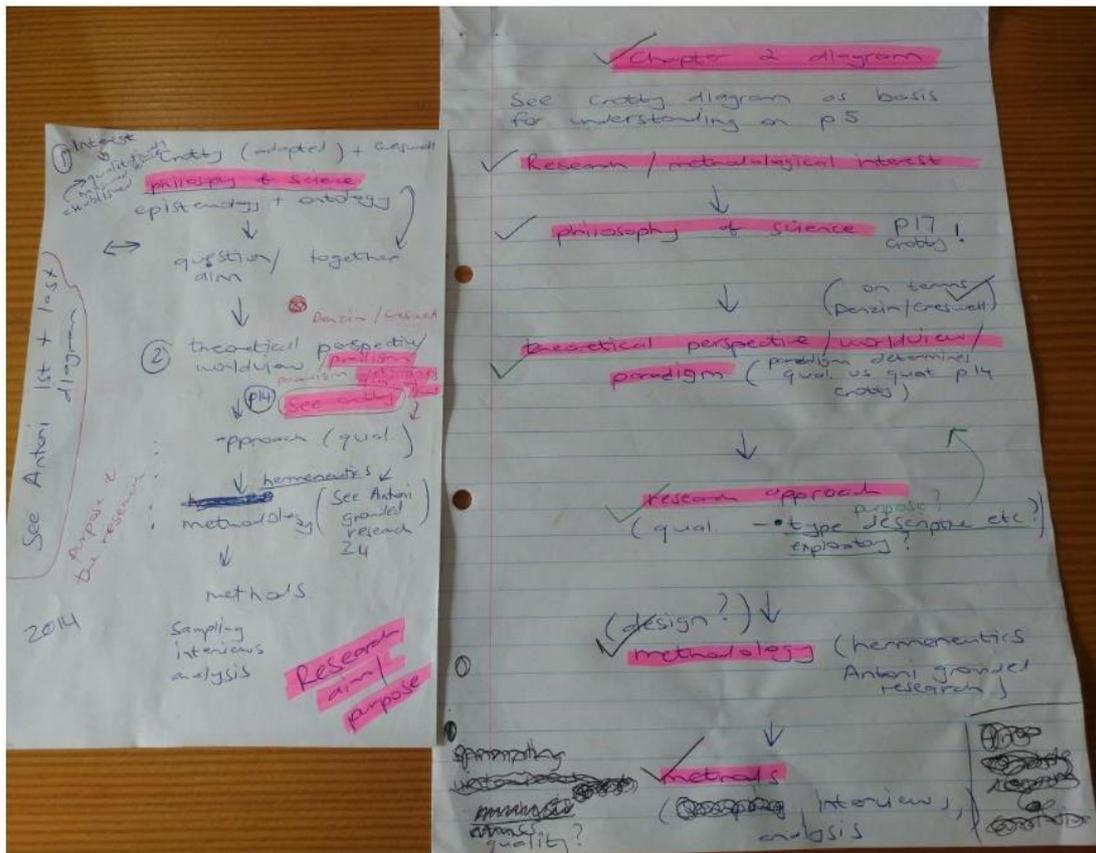
Braun and Clarke (2013) also maintain that the research design may be determined either by the epistemological commitments *or* the research question itself. It therefore dawned on me that I had to go back to the beginning. The beginning, for me, started with a topic and a frame of reference and thereafter a journey towards a qualitative research approach. The self (see Silverman, 2010) was therefore the start of my methodological path and thus I began slowly to find my way.

Describing one’s methodological path is an essential part of the research process, as Crotty (1998) explains that research is not research without the task of explication and explanation. Therefore, before making my evolving interest in the topic, my frame of reference and my leaning towards qualitative research explicit, it is important to demonstrate how I designed my methodological journey. Figure 2.1 is a model I constructed from reading both Creswell (2014) and Crotty (1998), in which I depict how I found my way through the methodological maze of doing research. The figure depicts my methodological path and the systematic framework that guided the research process and formed the basis for the structure of this chapter. My methodological path includes and starts with my research and methodological interest (discussed in section 2.2). It also reflects my philosophical assumptions and research paradigm, as well as the research approach, methodology and methods, which are described in the subsequent sections (2.3 to 2.8) of this chapter.



**Figure 2.1:** My methodological path

As I have tried to show, finding my way and designing a systematic methodological path did not come easily, but evolved from the initial confusion and uncertainty experienced by most novice researchers. The following photograph depicts the confusion and thought process that eventually inspired the development of my methodological path.



**Photograph 2.1:** The development of my methodological path

According to Kember (2018), many students are inspired by personal experiences to undertake a research degree, although these experiences are seldom recounted. In line with Kember (2018), in the following section I thus describe the way my personal experiences and insights led me to this research topic and the use of a qualitative research approach.

### 2.2.2 A topic and a frame of reference: my evolving interest

I was introduced to the volunteering context through my involvement in a community engagement project at an NPO in the health care environment, a context which subsequently placed me on this research path. While attending various meetings with the NPO for the purposes of the project, I became acutely aware of how different the environment was from a traditional (for-profit) organisation. As an IO psychologist I am aware of the mutual impact the two stakeholders in the psychological contract, the organisation and the employee have on each other. One of my first impressions was

how few resources this NPO had. I also noticed how few permanent staff it had to manage its daily operations and how it thereafter relied solely on volunteers to deliver these services. This made me realise how important volunteers are. What attracted me even more to this context was the realisation that volunteers have a different psychological contract to that of a traditional employee, as volunteers are unpaid but nevertheless still come to work. This dynamic fascinated me because although volunteers are considered to be employees, volunteering is essentially a personal sacrifice. However, I consider volunteering to be a job and a work context and thus it stands to reason that volunteers will also be exposed to the stresses and obstacles of everyday life. In light of this, I firmly believe that volunteers should be given the same attention as that dedicated to paid staff.

Drawing on the individual (employee) perspective of my profession, I then thought about the actual work that the volunteers at this NPO do. The volunteers provide emotional, spiritual and physical support to patients and their families in hospital. This once again brought me back to the importance of these volunteers and how vital their services are to the hospitals, the patients and their families. However, the work that these volunteers do places them in a context filled with constant trauma. Being exposed to this context myself made me recognise how challenging it must be to have to witness illness, desperate patients and the loss of loved ones. In addition to this challenging context, I became aware of how the volunteers also face adverse conditions and difficult circumstances themselves, contending with circumstances such as unemployment, poor living conditions and lack of access to basic resources. What intrigued me about this was how, despite these adverse conditions and difficult circumstances, the volunteers continue their participation even when one would expect the opposite.

These reflections compounded my interest in the volunteering context and as a result I started to read more on the topic. The literature on volunteering led me to recognise the importance of NPOs in general and subsequently volunteers and the significance of their work to society in particular. Furthermore, the prospect of being exposed to a work context that is underpinned by a dramatically different employer–employee perspective excited me.

My curiosity about the concept of well-being came about as a result of a colleague's study, which explored well-being among pastors and from which I drew inspiration (see Rudolph, 2019). Her study led me to reflect on the importance of well-being for volunteers – a profession where the primary concern is for the well-being of others. The fact of their challenging personal and work contexts, piqued my interest in their well-being even further. Malcolm Gladwell's (2013) work titled *David and Goliath: Underdogs, misfits, and the art of battling giants* and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's (in Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) account of World War II also influenced my psychological frame of reference. Malcolm Gladwell writes about the years leading up to World War II and how the British government was concerned about the effects of German air raids on London and the people living there. Death, panic and helplessness were predicted. Psychiatric wards were built outside London to deal with the psychological casualties. The air raids eventually happened and bombing took place over a period of eight months, resulting in injury and death. However, the effect of the bombing on the people was quite the opposite of what the government had predicted. The people of London adapted, there was no panic and the psychiatric hospitals built outside of London were empty and eventually used by the military (Gladwell, 2013, pp. 128–133). This is a powerful account of human resilience and a personal realisation that human strength is real and can be harnessed regardless of the context. It is this account that really affected my frame of reference from being focused on negative and dysfunctional behaviour to wanting to understand positive behaviour – how people stay well, remain resilient and flourish despite challenging circumstances. It is safe to assume that amidst the devastation of war, the people of London were in distress. However, their behaviour proved otherwise. It is therefore possible to live a purposeful, credible and respectful life no matter the context or circumstance.

I therefore started to believe that at the heart of volunteering is well-being. I maintain that the importance of well-being in this context lies in its reciprocity – for others, the community and society and for the individual volunteer. As an IO psychologist, my profession strives to ensure the wellness of individuals in their work context. Volunteering is a work context – an unpaid albeit extremely important one. Neysmith and Reitsma-Street (2000) and Huynh, Metzger, and Winefield (2012) indicate that

studies on unpaid work are scant compared to those conducted on paid employment. This context therefore allowed me to venture into a work domain that is relatively unexplored by IO psychologists. From an organisational perspective, my interest in this research stemmed from the NPO's reliance on volunteers.

Although well-being is an elusive and highly subjective concept, I felt that its presence contributes to individuals, specifically volunteers, and subsequently indirectly to organisations. As referred to previously, I mention two 'stakeholders' as my designation is made up of two words, namely, industrial – referring to the workplace – and the psychologist – which makes reference to the individual. I am often torn between where my priority lies, knowing very well that in reality both stakeholders will not gain the same type of benefit. However, I felt that an exploration of volunteer well-being could prove to be valuable – to both stakeholder roles. Owing to the unique nature and context of this workforce I therefore focused on the individual well-being of volunteers. In addition, through this study, I intended to add value to volunteering management by focusing on the South African context.

I consider the preceding and the subsequent section as almost an extension of one another. As my interest in volunteering and well-being evolved, so too did my thinking on how I could go about conducting the research. This led to an increasingly strong desire to conduct the research from a qualitative approach.

### **2.2.3 My journey towards a qualitative research approach**

Although I am a psychologist whose primary concern is the welfare of others, I consider myself to be a pragmatic person, and qualitative research never really appealed to me. Cronin, Coughlan, and Smith (2015) state that

... undertaking a research study is similar to undertaking a journey and like any journey it has a point of origin, a planned route and a final destination (p. 12).

It is therefore apt that in this section I document the point of origin, which consists of two separate accounts, that is, how and why I became interested in qualitative research.

The first account relates to a conversation I had with one of my husband's colleagues. He was contemplating leaving the country to work in the United Kingdom. One afternoon Rocco<sup>3</sup> and I were sitting in our living room discussing the prospect of him leaving and working abroad. As a single male with no commitments and debt, I told him that it was easy for him to leave the country. His response to me was "easy is relative" (R. Romano, personal communication, 2014<sup>4</sup>). I was taken aback by that comment. It then dawned on me how right he was – I had made an assumption that afternoon and the word 'relative' kept resonating in my mind. Everything in life is relative – relative to the person, their experiences, interpretations, story and context. Recalling that conversation makes me realise how these three words affected my orientation to research.

The second account reveals my frustration with quantitative research. As a researcher, I acknowledge the difficulty inherent in the data collection process, and hence I try my best to complete every survey that is sent to me, in the hope that when I need to collect data someone will reciprocate. In addition, the institution I work for frequently sends surveys to staff members on various topics, which I also try to complete. However, anger and frustration set in halfway through a survey on the general cleanliness of the institution – I was just a number, nothing would ever come from this survey and I would not get any feedback! I was tired of filling in meaningless questionnaires! Although these two accounts did not occur at the same time, they both enabled me to view the world from a different perspective and readied me for personal encounters and hearing people's stories and experiences.

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<sup>3</sup> Permission was granted by Rocco Romano to use his name and our conversation in this thesis. Rocco was provided with a draft as well as a final version of what was written in this section.

<sup>4</sup> I cannot recall the exact date of this conversation, but I know that it occurred in the summer of 2014, as it was a warm afternoon. Rocco left in the winter of that same year.

In this section I place the emphasis on the word 'journey' and I cannot agree more with Thomas (2004) that

... the researcher should see the process as a journey, not only one in which a diversity of decisions need to be made to orientate oneself along a labyrinth of different paths, but also as a journey in which assumptions should be **continually**<sup>5</sup> scrutinised and re-evaluated [my emphasis] (p. 211).

The reference in this quote to the word 'continually' is extremely important. I cannot deny that my pragmatism at times does still creep in. I often contemplate how unrealistic it is to interview every person in the world and deep down I know that it is impossible and impractical to take into account every person's story, experience and context. I cannot ignore these thoughts as "the process of pursuing research is inextricably linked to the process of discovering oneself" (Probert, 2006, p. 10). Therefore, although this reservation enables me to acknowledge that all forms of inquiry have their own constraints (Eisner, 2003), it by no means deterred me from pursuing qualitative research and I can say with certainty that I am at peace with the methodological path I have chosen. The path I chose was directed by the following considerations:

- my research topic
- my desire for personal encounters, hearing people's stories and experiences
- a deep connection to an approach characterised by intimacy and individuality, and
- a need to have my voice heard in the research process.

As depicted in Figure 2.1, the next step on my methodological path relates to my philosophy of science. A researcher's philosophy of science encompasses assumptions about the way in which they view their world (Saunders et al., 2016). In this regard, Crotty (1998) reasons that inherent in us as researchers is a "host of assumptions" (p. 17) which need to be clarified and unpacked. I maintain,

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<sup>5</sup> Continuously scrutinising and evaluating my assumptions is done through a process of reflexivity. Reflexivity, as an essential requirement in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2013), is discussed in section 2.5.4.

nevertheless, that these assumptions are flexible and depend largely on circumstances and context. I use the term 'flexible', as it is evident from my journey towards a qualitative research approach, which I explicated in section 2.2.3, that I did not always believe in a relative reality. A research orientation depends on one's evolution as a person and as a researcher and one's current lifeworld at a particular point in time.

The philosophy of science and subsequent assumptions, which I present next, are based on a combination of my research interest, my journey towards a qualitative approach, as well as a constant awareness of my research aim. It is for this reason that the research aim is linked to all the aspects in Figure 2.1. I was also constantly mindful of my research aim and the most suitable way in which it could be achieved.

### **2.3 PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE**

A researcher's philosophical assumptions represent the nature of the world, how knowledge about the world can be obtained and the process by which it is developed (Myers, 2013; Saunders et al., 2016). These assumptions enable researchers to uncover their understanding of what knowledge is and what it entails (Crotty, 1998). Hammersley (2002) pertinently states that researchers can neither escape nor avoid these assumptions as they provide the foundation for the entire research process (Mertens, 2015). According to Creswell (2007, 2013), a researcher chooses a stance on the philosophical assumptions of ontology, epistemology, axiology, rhetoric and methodology. These assumptions hold implications for the way the research is designed and conducted. Denzin and Lincoln (1998), however, propose that philosophies of science are primarily based on assumptions of ontology, epistemology and methodology.

Underlying these assumptions is the personal biography of the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). As researchers, our realities differ depending on aspects such as culture, gender, race and age (Camic, Rhodes, & Yardley, 2003). As a white female doctoral student in my mid-thirties, I brought my own worldviews and sets of beliefs to this research (Creswell, 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Eisner (2003) similarly states

that all perspectives are framed. It is therefore suggested that these assumptions should be made explicit as part of the research process (Creswell, 2014; Crotty, 1998; Myers, 2013). According to the research framework proposed by Saunders et al. (2016), gaining an understanding of the researcher's philosophical position will provide an awareness of the influence of these assumptions on the research process. So, apart from having been explicit about how my research interest and approach evolved, my aim in this section is to provide a detailed account of my beliefs; the ontological and epistemological assumptions and the research paradigm that framed my methodological decisions. Although researchers typically provide a discussion of their paradigm together with that paradigm's underlying assumptions, guided by Crotty's (1998) scaffolding approach of the research process I chose to discuss my ontological and epistemological assumptions first. Crotty (1998) maintains that one's philosophical assumptions inform the research paradigm, methodology and methods as constructionism as an epistemological assumption is embodied in various paradigms.

### **2.3.1 Ontological assumptions**

According to Willig (2008), ontological assumptions are fundamental and as human beings we all make some assumptions about the nature of the world. Ontology is concerned with beliefs about what there is to know about the world and the nature of social reality (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Ormston, Spencer, Barnard, & Snape, 2014; Snape & Spencer, 2003). As researchers, we decide on what can and cannot be real (Willis, 2007). The debate within ontology revolves around the nature of reality – whether this reality exists independently from human practices or whether we think that reality cannot be separated from human practices (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The ontological positions within this debate range on a continuum between realism and idealism (Ormston et al., 2014; Snape & Spencer, 2003) or realism and relativism (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Willig, 2008). This continuum is also characterised by various variants of realism and idealism/relativism.

Finding my position within the ontological debate was a confusing process because along the realism and idealism continuum I cannot dispute my agreement with both

concepts. I agree with the underlying notion of realism in that “the world is there regardless of whether human beings are conscious of it” (Crotty, 1998, p. 10). Realism is described as the existence of an external reality, which is independent of our beliefs and understanding (Snape & Spencer, 2003). I cannot deny that a whole world exists out there and that we are constantly interacting with it; however, I strongly believe that reality “becomes a world of meaning only when meaning-making beings make sense of it” (Crotty, 1998, p. 10). As individuals, we can all have different experiences, perceptions and interpretations of the same reality. As mentioned previously, I believe that everything in life is relative<sup>6</sup> – relative to the person, their experiences, interpretations, story and context. I therefore also strongly believe in assumptions underlying idealism, which proposes a mind-dependent reality (Ormston et al., 2014) as it accepts and allows for understanding.

In attempting to find my footing in this complex ontological debate and taking cognisance of the two equally applicable notions of realism and idealism, I believe that volunteer well-being is an external reality that exists independent of our understanding of it (Snape & Spencer, 2003). In order to understand what volunteer well-being entails, my intention is however to construct the reality of volunteer well-being through the perspective of the volunteer (see Murphy, 2004a). My ontological position is therefore that of subtle/critical realism, which is a variant of realism but is influenced by idealism (Snape & Spencer, 2003). This position incorporates the existence of an external reality; however, it acknowledges that reality is constructed through the human mind (Snape & Spencer, 2003).

The next fundamental issue related to a researcher’s philosophy of science is epistemology. Having explicated my ontological position as that of subtle/critical realism, the question that now arises is how and in what way can I know about a reality (Willis, 2007) that is constructed through the human mind? This brings me to make explicit my epistemological assumptions. Crotty (1998) emphasises the importance of

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<sup>6</sup> This relativity that I refer to is always experienced in relation to something – an external reality. Looking back on my conversation with Rocco, his external reality/object was moving to another country. The meaning he ascribed to this reality was that it is not so easy for him to make this move.

making these assumptions explicit, as epistemology has a huge bearing on how the research will be conducted.

### **2.3.2 Epistemological assumptions**

Epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge and how it can be acquired (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Ormston et al., 2014; Snape & Spencer, 2003). Epistemological questions have been contested since the time of Plato and Aristotle (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Epistemology aims to answer the question: “How can we know the things that exist?” (Willis, 2007, p. 9) Epistemology is a term derived from the Greek word *episteme*, which means “knowledge” (Stokes, 2011, p. 41). However, it is better understood when broken down into its essential parts, namely *episteme*, which means “knowledge” or “science” and *logos*, which means “knowledge”, “information”, “theory” or “account” (Johnson & Duberley, 2000, p. 2). Crotty (1998) distinguishes between three epistemologies, namely, objectivism, constructionism and subjectivism.

The key epistemological question revolves around the nature of the relationship between the researcher and what can be known (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Guba & Lincoln, 1998; Snape & Spencer, 2003). Considering my ontological position of subtle/critical realism and my belief in a relative (subjective) reality, I have adopted a position that leans more to a mind-dependent epistemological stance. Knowledge in this study was therefore constructed interactively (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). I believe I was only able to garner an understanding of volunteer well-being through the perspective of the individual volunteer. This position is consistent with the epistemological stance of constructionism (Crotty, 1998). According to constructionism, there is no knowledge, rather there are knowledges (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Constructionism holds the view that knowledge and meaning are constructed by human beings through the interaction with their world (Crotty, 1998; Ormston et al., 2014). We (human beings) are seen as meaning constructors and sense-makers (Ashworth, 2003). Constructionism corresponds to my ontological position of

subtle/critical realism as it brings together the subject and the object. The external reality is the world and the objects in it, and meaning is created by individuals engaging with this external reality (Crotty, 1998). Subject and object cannot be separated, as they are understood in relation to one another. In this regard, Crotty (1998) believes that “experiences do not constitute a sphere of subjective reality separate from, and in contrast to, the objective realm of the external world” (p. 45).

Because constructionism holds that meaning is constructed by individuals in relation to “something real in the world” (Andrews, 2012, p. 40), I also cannot ignore *my* role in the construction of meaning in this study. As my own meta-theoretical perspective on volunteer well-being was infused into the study; knowledge was thus constructed jointly (Galbin, 2014), making me and the participants interdependent parts (Geldenhuys, 2015) of the meaning-making process. This notion of co-constructed meaning, epistemologically also pertains to social constructionism, which is regarded as a variant of constructionism (Crotty, 1998). Many authors refer to *social constructionism* as an epistemological position as opposed to just *constructionism* (see Andrews, 2012; Leeds-Hurwitz, 2006). For the purposes of clarification, and to steer clear from a potential confusion with philosophy of science terminology (cf. Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006), I opted to follow Crotty (1998) and label my epistemological stance as constructionism. Because the researcher’s ontological and epistemological beliefs converge to form a specific research orientation or paradigm (Creswell, 2014), I label this, my research paradigm, social constructionism.

Guba and Lincoln (1998) highlight the importance of a researcher’s paradigm, as they believe that “questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigm” (p. 195). They view a paradigm as “the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator” (p. 195). In light of inconsistencies that exist regarding the term ‘paradigm’,<sup>7</sup> I have opted to use the words ‘research orientation’ and ‘research paradigm’ interchangeably and define a paradigm as a “set of basic beliefs” about

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<sup>7</sup> Guba and Lincoln (1998), Mertens (2015), Saunders et al. (2016) and Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2006) use the term ‘paradigm’. Other authors make reference to ‘theoretical perspective’ (Crotty, 1998), ‘philosophical worldview’ (Creswell, 2014), ‘interpretive frameworks’ (Creswell & Poth, 2018) and ‘schools of thought’ (Ormston et al., 2014).

ontology and epistemology (Guba & Lincoln, 1998, p. 200) that “guide and direct my thinking and action” (Mertens, 2015, p. 7). The philosophical assumptions discussed in the preceding sections lead me to explicate a social constructionist research paradigm.

### **2.3.3 Research paradigm**

Positioning myself within a specific research paradigm was a daunting process. Ormston et al. (2014) point out how overwhelming it can be for a novice researcher (such as myself) to become familiarised with all these various schools of thoughts or “isms” (p. 11) and their corresponding beliefs and methodological preferences. This was evident as early as the proposal phase of my research when I made reference to constructionist traditions and social constructionism in the same sentence. I received the following feedback from my supervisor: “Are you implying that these two constructs are used interchangeably?” (A. Barnard, personal communication, May 20, 2015).

My first step in attempting to make sense of the “isms” (Ormston et al., 2014, p. 11) was to go back to my ontological and epistemological assumptions (whilst constantly being mindful of the aim of my research). I identify this going back and forth as an iterative process (see Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002) that ensures congruence between design and implementation. Morse et al. (2002) specifically refer to this as “methodological coherence” (p. 18), which enables the researcher to ensure congruence between the aim of the research and the intended methodology. These assumptions I summarise as follows in Table 2.1 on the following page:

**Table 2.1:** My philosophical assumptions

Assumptions of:	
<b>Ontology</b>	<b>Subtle/critical realism</b> The existence of an external reality, which is constructed through the human mind (Snape & Spencer, 2003).
<b>Epistemology</b>	<b>Constructionism</b> Knowledge and meaning is co-constructed by individuals <i>and</i> the researcher in relation to an external reality (Andrews, 2012; Crotty, 1998; Galbin, 2014).

To make sense of the applicability of all the various paradigms I also went back to my research aim:

*The aim of this study was to enhance understanding of volunteer well-being and to develop a conceptual model of volunteer well-being through an in-depth exploration of volunteers' work–life experiences.*

Having identified the subtle/critical realism and constructionist elements in my research aim, namely, volunteer well-being as an external reality, the participants and their work–life experiences and my perspective as the researcher, I could not ignore the unique context<sup>8</sup> of the study, which I identify as a South African volunteer context. In congruence with my constructionist epistemology, social constructionism emphasises the construction of meaning in relation to others and a specific socio-cultural and historic context (Andrews, 2012). Therefore, my ontological and epistemological assumptions and the context of the research are congruent with a social constructionist research paradigm (see Hammersley, 1992). My intention was to report on the way volunteer well-being is constructed within a South African volunteer community (Crotty, 1998). Although Crotty (1998) views social constructionism as a variant of constructionism and as an epistemological stance, Galbin (2014), for example, indicates that at times it is referred to as a movement,

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<sup>8</sup> Burr (2003) recognises that our understanding of the world is shaped by where and when in the world we live. In this regard, I could not ignore the unique context of this study, which I explicated in detail in section 1.6 of Chapter 1. The volunteer's work–life experiences cannot be understood without acknowledging the historical and cultural relativity (Burr, 2003) of the South African volunteer context.

while at others it is referred to as a position, a theory, a theoretical orientation or an approach. Creswell (2014) categorises social constructionism as an interpretive research framework, whilst Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2006), on the other hand, consider it to be a paradigm. Geldenhuys (2015) likewise notes that it can be regarded as a paradigm. Irrespective of what it is called, when reflecting on the origins of social constructionism as developed by Berger and Luckmann in their 1967 book, *The social construction of reality*, it remains a theory of knowledge construction, proposing how knowledge is constructed in a social context (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2006). Thus, even though it may be labelled a paradigm, as I do in this study, social constructionism will always represent a theoretical orientation that is fundamentally epistemologically orientated. For the purposes of this study, I have thus adopted social constructionism as a paradigm, whilst acknowledging its inherent epistemological nature.

I expect that volunteers have realities that differ according to their different work–life contexts and therefore reject the existence of a single truth (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The notion of an ultimate truth does not exist in social constructionism; rather truth/knowledge is regarded as socially constructed by those who are involved in the meaning-making process (Bu & Paré, 2018; Galbin, 2014; Geldenhuys, 2015). In accordance with my philosophical assumptions, I believe in an external reality, which is culturally, historically and socially grounded (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Willig, 2008), as we are all born into a world where meaning already exists (Crotty, 1998). Meaning is the result of our engagement with the social world (King & Horrocks, 2010) and knowledge is constructed through the daily interactions between people (Burr, 2015). Crotty's (1998) explanation is pertinent to my discussion. He uses the example of a tree to explain that we are born into a world of meaning. We (human beings) have construed trees, given the name 'tree' and attributed certain associations with it. In light of this, trees will have different cultural associations for the residents of a logging town as opposed to those in a treeless slum. It is nevertheless important to note that social constructionism is about the mode of meaning generation and does not have to involve people at all (Crotty, 1998). The tree is therefore the object and the cultural association is the meaning (reality) attached to that tree. Furthermore, I consider Gergen's (2009) viewpoint to explain how within this paradigm social exchange is used to construct the world we live in. He states that "problems do not exist in the world as

independent facts; rather we construct worlds of good and bad” (p. 4). If we use the definition of social constructionism with the example of the tree, for a lumberjack a tree is a source of income and opportunity (good cultural association); however, in conversation with an environmentalist (cutting down of trees has a bad cultural association) the opportunity could be reconstructed into a problem.

I have adopted a social constructionist paradigm because all individuals live and exist in a society, and well-being should be understood within their particular context, culture and relationship to other people (Rojas, 2007). The volunteers’ various realities were brought together and coordinated through a relational process, together with the researcher’s meta-theoretical perspective (well-being), to create a truth/understanding of the research phenomenon, ultimately representing local knowledge (Geldenhuys, 2015).

Although at this point it would seem that I have already taken a firm qualitative research stance, I did not want to force myself into a “methodological straitjacket” (Ormston et al., 2014, p. 19). Because I was acutely aware of the various approaches, designs and methods that were at my disposal, my intention was to choose and implement an approach that was not only compatible with my philosophy of science but also most suitable for answering the aim of my research. This led me to re-visit the aim of my research to ascertain what type of answers I was looking for and thus reflect on the overall purpose of my research.

## **2.4 OVERALL PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH**

The overall purpose of research can be either exploratory, descriptive, explanatory or evaluative (Durrheim, 2006; Ritchie, 2003; Ruane, 2005; Saunders et al., 2016). It is not uncommon, however, for a research project to have more than one purpose (Babbie & Mouton, 2006; Leavy, 2017; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). In this regard I am once again not confining myself to a “methodological straitjacket” (Ormston et al., 2014, p. 19) by choosing one of these purposes specifically. Therefore, in accordance with the aim of my research I regard this study as exploratory, descriptive and explanatory.

An exploratory approach<sup>9</sup> enables the researcher to gain new insights into and understanding of a phenomenon (Babbie & Mouton, 2006; Leavy, 2017; Ruane, 2005). The purpose of this research was to develop an understanding of volunteer well-being through an exploration of the work–life experiences of volunteers as they manifest in their social world (Ritchie, 2003). New insights were gained by exploring these experiences in a South African volunteer context in order to enhance my understanding of volunteer well-being. This study can also be regarded as descriptive as I intended to describe and provide a detailed account (Durrheim, 2006; Ruane, 2005) of volunteer well-being, thereby capturing the inherent nature of this under-researched phenomenon (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Ritchie, 2003). Descriptive research is often an extension of exploratory research (Saunders et al., 2016). An exploration of the volunteer’s work–life experiences thus enabled me to accurately describe the phenomenon of volunteer well-being as my focus was on an in-depth understanding rather than generalisation. As descriptive research neglects to answer questions of why and how, researchers need to conduct explanatory research (Ruane, 2005). This study can be regarded as explanatory because a theoretical product in the form of a conceptual model was developed of volunteer well-being to explain how this social phenomenon (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Leavy, 2017) manifests in the real-life context of South African volunteers in a particular health-care setting.

Having explicated my research purpose as exploratory, descriptive and explanatory, I was able to choose a suitable research approach that enabled me to achieve the aim and overall purpose of this research effectively.

## **2.5 A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH**

All research is conducted within a frame of systematic inquiry (Mertens, 2015) that can either entail the use of a quantitative or a qualitative methodology. Crotty (1998) proposes that rather than adopting a quantitative or qualitative research stance, researchers should strive for being epistemologically consistent. Guba and Lincoln (1998) also support this notion as they are of the opinion that both qualitative and

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<sup>9</sup> Ritchie (2003) uses the term ‘contextual’ rather than exploratory to describe this type of research purpose.

quantitative methods can be used with any research paradigm. It is therefore the researcher's epistemological stance that informs the decision of using one methodology over the other or both (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002). Considering this, I do think that I have succeeded in maintaining a social constructionist research paradigm. Furthermore, I have also taken the advice of Ormston et al. (2014) and guarded against adopting a purist approach. I acknowledge the value of both methodologies and the contributions they can make to social research practice (Snape & Spencer, 2003); however, a qualitative approach is most congruent with my ontological and epistemological stance and it was the most appropriate method to be used to achieve my research aim.

Creswell (2009) defines qualitative research as “a means for exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 4). The researcher makes use of techniques such as interviews, surveys, case studies and other personal techniques (Salkind, 2012; Yin, 2016). It is essentially a descriptive form of research (Welman, Kruger, & Mitchell, 2007) that generates or uses non-numerical data (Saunders et al., 2016).

Qualitative research uses a combination of interpretive practices since it applies multiple theoretical paradigms, it does not belong to a single discipline and it does not have a distinct set of methods or practices that are entirely its own (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Drawing on this statement and taking into account the numerous definitions presented by a variety of authors, I choose to conceptualise qualitative research according to commonly agreed elements that give it its distinct character. The focus is on meaning and providing insight and an in-depth understanding of social phenomena by considering the participants' contexts (circumstances, experiences, perspectives and histories) (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Ormston et al., 2014; Snape & Spencer, 2003; Yin, 2016). The research is conducted in a naturalistic real-world setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Snape & Spencer, 2003), the exploration of meaning is value-laden and the relationship between the researcher, the participants and what is studied is characterised by intimacy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Using a qualitative approach allows the participants to be experts of their own social reality and it allows an exploration of “the insiders' view” (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002, p. 12).

Accordingly, a qualitative research approach enabled me to understand volunteer well-being through the perspective of the volunteer within their real-world volunteer context.

Qualitative research has distinct features, assumptions, fundamentals, characteristics and elements. I will now highlight these and their applicability to my study.

### **2.5.1 A natural setting**

Researchers who engage in qualitative research wish to conduct a naturalistic inquiry<sup>10</sup> in a real-world setting. The purpose is to understand participants and to learn about their circumstances, experiences, perspectives and histories (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Phenomena are therefore investigated in their natural settings and real-world contexts (Creswell, 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Holloway & Wheeler, 2002, Ritchie, 2003). Unlike in quantitative research,<sup>11</sup> where the environment is experimental and can be manipulated, in qualitative research things (events and behaviours) are studied as they are in their everyday context (Norum, 2008). This enables qualitative researchers to enhance the ecological validity of the data they are studying (Camic et al., 2003).

I thus realised that I would only be able to answer my research aim if I explored the real world of a volunteer. This real world would be free from artificial procedures and intrusions and would allow the volunteers to say what they wanted to say, as I would not be imposing any preconceived ideas on them (Yin, 2016). The question that arises is what does their real-world entail? This requires understanding how volunteers experience volunteering on a day-to-day basis. My main aim as the researcher was therefore to become familiar with the participants' world and to see it from their point of view (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002) – their natural and everyday world. In this regard, in section 2.2.2 of this chapter I explained how my involvement in a community engagement project exposed me to the volunteering context. Through this project and

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<sup>10</sup> Interchangeable terms that can be used to describe the qualitative paradigm are 'interpretative', 'contextual' and 'naturalistic' (Henwood, 1996).

<sup>11</sup> One of the drawbacks of quantitative research is that a laboratory setting does not resemble the real-world context of the participant (Marecek, 2003).

prior to conducting this research, I was able to observe this natural setting – the real everyday work setting of the volunteers.

### **2.5.2 Context-specific inquiry**

Qualitative research is seen as holistic and analysis occurs in the context of a larger whole (Camic et al., 2003). Data are produced in a specific context by participants who come from and are located in these contexts (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Moreover, phenomena cannot be understood if they are isolated from their contexts (Edson, 2001). Qualitative research is therefore context specific, with researchers situating their investigations in specific historical, social and cultural contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Marecek, 2003; Yin, 2016). In this regard, Holloway and Wheeler (2002) suggest that researchers should realise that participants are grounded in their history and temporality. Researchers therefore have to provide contextual information (Guba & Lincoln, 1998), as credible interpretations cannot occur without an understanding of the context (Eisner, 2003). Within a qualitative research paradigm, it is generally recommended that knowledge outside of the context in which it was generated should not be considered (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Holloway and Wheeler (2002) refer to this context as the “total context of people’s lives” (p. 11). The context is therefore broad. It is not just the physical environment of the individual; it encompasses the community, as well as the socio-cultural, political and economic framework of the participant<sup>12</sup> and the research issue (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011). Holloway (2005) firmly states that “a qualitative research account without contextualisation will be lifeless” (p. 275), as a description of the context enables the reader to grasp the whole picture. Furthermore, according to Babbie and Mouton (2006), researchers can only truly claim to understand a phenomenon once they have understood it against the background of the participant’s entire context.

I firmly believe that human behaviour is situated within a specific context (McGrath & Johnson, 2003). This context cannot be ignored as it can influence the experiences of

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<sup>12</sup> This is congruent with the social constructionist research paradigm that I have adopted in this study.

the volunteers and it is the context within which the lives of the volunteers take place (Yin, 2016). Earlier, I identified the context of this study as that of a South African volunteer context. My aim was not to generalise but to explore local knowledge<sup>13</sup> and to provide richly contextualised information that could benefit the well-being of volunteers in a South African health-care context specifically (Marecek, 2003).

### **2.5.3 Meaning making and understanding**

Researchers who adopt a qualitative research paradigm acknowledge that one correct version of reality or knowledge does not exist and that there are multiple versions of reality (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Multiple versions of reality exist because, as individuals, we interpret what we experience in different ways. Fundamental to qualitative research is an understanding of these experiences and the meaning that individuals attribute to their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The purpose in this paradigm is therefore to “make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 3). Participants are therefore meaning-making actors (Marecek, 2003). Through these actors, the “authenticity of human experience” (Silverman, 2010, p. 6) is understood. The focus is on an in-depth understanding of the social world of the participant (Snape & Spencer, 2003), how participants make sense of this world, as well as the experiences they have in this world (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Meaning and human experience are, however, explored from “the insiders’ view” (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002, p. 12). According to Babbie and Mouton (2006), one of the most distinctive features of qualitative research is its attempt to view the world from the perspective of the participant.

Reflecting on my philosophical assumption of a mind-dependent reality implies that reality only has meaning once we as individuals have interpreted our experiences of

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<sup>13</sup> According to the social constructionist research paradigm that I have adopted, a disregard for local knowledge or rather culture has led to western ideas colonising other cultures (Burr, 2003). This highlights the need for contextual understanding.

it. I can therefore only understand volunteer well-being by exploring the meaning that volunteers attribute to their work–life experiences.

#### **2.5.4 The role of the researcher**

In qualitative research, the researcher is considered to be the primary instrument (Creswell, 2007; Lichtman, 2010; Merriam, 2002). According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), the researcher is not only the instrument but also a prominent feature of the entire research process:

Because of the prominence of the researcher in the conceptualisation, design, and conduct of qualitative research, the positionality of the researcher is viewed as a central and vital part of the inquiry itself (p. 40).

Merriam (2002) acknowledges that this role is prone to shortcomings and biases. However, rather than disregarding these biases and subjectivities,<sup>14</sup> they should be identified and monitored, as subjectivity is in fact a strong feature of qualitative research (Lumsden, 2019; Silverman, 2010). This can be done by adopting a critically reflexive process (Ravitch & Carl, 2016) as also noted in Chapter 1. Reflexivity is an essential requirement in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Camic et al., 2003) and refers to the process of reflecting critically on the self and making explicit the personal values of the researcher, which could affect data collection and interpretation (Lumsden, 2019; Polit & Beck, 2008).

In quantitative research, objectivity is valued, whereas subjectivity is valued in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Qualitative researchers are therefore faced with the constant dilemma of trying to be unbiased and objective (Lichtman, 2010). Considering this, I acknowledge that in a qualitative study, the values and paradigms held by the researcher, as well as the interactive nature of the relationship between the researcher and the participants, may hamper an individual's judgement

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<sup>14</sup> An important methodological stance that is associated with qualitative research is taking into consideration the influence that the researcher's perspectives have on the research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Snape & Spencer, 2003).

in attempting to be neutral and objective. However, I support the argument that Camic et al. (2003), Ormston et al. (2014) and Snape and Spencer (2003) make: as researchers we can make every effort to be neutral and objective, but no one can achieve this fully (even in a quantitative study), and completely neutral or objective knowledge does not exist. Braun and Clarke (2013) assert that, in general, research can be regarded as a subjective process for the following reason:

[W]e, as researchers, bring our own histories, values, assumptions, perspectives, politics and mannerisms into the research – and we cannot leave those at the door. The topics we find interesting to research, and ways we ask questions about them, the aspects of our data that excite us – these (and many other factors) reflect who we are; our subjectivity. Therefore, any knowledge produced is going to reflect that, even if only in some minor way. We're not robots – we're all living, breathing, subjective human beings, partial in our knowledge, and **flawed** [my emphasis] (p. 36).

In light of this, I therefore attempted to strive for continuous reflexivity<sup>15</sup> and empathetic neutrality by making my assumptions, potential biases, values, background and beliefs known and providing information on my research process and conduct during the entire process and throughout this thesis (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002; Lumsden, 2019; Ormston et al., 2014; Snape & Spencer, 2003). Willig (2008) suggests that reflexive considerations may be discussed at the end of a research report or, alternatively, they may be integrated into the report and raised at any relevant point. I have chosen the latter option as I see my reflexive considerations as a continuous process in my evolving research journey.

I firmly believe that up to this point my methodological path may be described as being both epistemologically consistent (Crotty, 1998) and philosophically coherent (Snape & Spencer, 2003). My philosophy of science is underpinned by a social constructionist research paradigm, which is congruent with a qualitative research approach (Burr,

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<sup>15</sup> Reflexivity is also seen as a quality control measure in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Braun and Clarke (2013) propose the use of a reflexive research journal in which researchers can document their thoughts, feelings and reflections throughout the research process.

2003). Although Crotty (1998) advocates for epistemological consistency, Snape and Spencer (2003) suggest that researchers should not disregard ensuring a suitable fit between the research methods and the aim of the research. These authors advise that choosing the right research tools is more important than using research methods that are philosophically consistent.

As I mentioned previously, the linkage between the research aim and all the aspects in Figure 2.1, from my philosophy of science towards my methods, is evident of a twofold approach<sup>16</sup> that corresponds with being both epistemologically consistent (Crotty, 1998) *and* constantly mindful about the research aim and the most suitable way in which it can be achieved. In this regard, a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology will be discussed next. This methodology<sup>17</sup> is grounded in social constructionism and was deemed to be most appropriate for addressing my research aim.

## **2.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGY**

Phenomenology has been influenced by many scholars and as a result numerous philosophical positions on phenomenology exist in the literature (Yeung, 2004). There are several schools/varieties of phenomenology (Dowling, 2007) and research conducted from a phenomenological approach can be categorised as either transcendental/descriptive, interpretive/hermeneutic/existential or social (McWilliam, 2010).

The aim of the next section is, firstly, to clarify what phenomenology is as well as its essential purpose and then to demarcate the particular phenomenological approach (and its philosophical foundations) that was followed in this study.

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<sup>16</sup> This twofold approach is based on the acknowledgement that “not all research methods are compatible with all methodologies” (Willig, 2008, p. 8).

<sup>17</sup> A clear distinction can be made between methodology and methods. Methodology entails the framework within which the research will be conducted and specifies the practices that will be used to conduct the research (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Methodologies can be broad (qualitative or quantitative) or narrow (Silverman, 2010) such as the hermeneutic phenomenology methodology identified in this study.

### 2.6.1 Nature and origins of phenomenology

Defining phenomenology is no easy task (Lawthom & Tindall, 2011), as the term is accompanied by confusion surrounding its nature (Dowling, 2007). Kafle (2011) refers to phenomenology as an umbrella term as it can be described as a philosophy, approach and method (Dowling, 2007; Ray, 1994). Davidsen (2013) further characterises it as a movement. Many definitions/descriptions of phenomenology exist; however, I refer to Reeder's (2010) definition as it aptly describes this concept. Reeder (2010) defines phenomenology as "a philosophical movement based upon a self-critical methodology for reflectively (reflexively or introspectively) examining and describing the lived evidence (the phenomena) which provides a crucial link in our philosophical and scientific understanding of the world" (p. 21). The pursuit is to clarify the "lived evidence of experience itself" that makes the phenomena in phenomenology "experience-as-lived" (p. 23). In essence, the purpose of phenomenology is to explore phenomena, as they are experienced through an individual's lifeworld and context (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003; Lawthom & Tindall, 2011).

Phenomenology originated as a philosophy prior to World War I (Dowling, 2007). Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) is considered the founder and central figure (Cohen & Omery, 1994; Davidsen, 2013; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003; Kafle, 2011). The underlying premise of Husserl's phenomenology was that of consciousness as a medium of access to the lived experience of a single person (Giorgi, 1997; Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). Phenomena are studied through consciousness (Lavery, 2003), their nature and structure are revealed and described (McWilliam, 2010) by suspending personal prejudices and interpretation (Kafle, 2011). After Husserl, various other European philosophers such as Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Gadamer contributed to different perspectives on phenomenology.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, various schools of phenomenology were developed based on the foundations of these philosophers (McWilliam, 2010).

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<sup>18</sup> Although these philosophers all contributed to the evolution of phenomenology, my aim in this section is not to elaborate on the writings of all these philosophers but to provide a summary of the origin of phenomenology.

Reflecting on phenomenology in general, I could not agree more with Dowling's (2007) opinion of the blurred boundaries related to phenomenology. Although it is seen at once as a science, philosophy, paradigm and methodology (McWilliam, 2010), Fleming, Gaidys, and Robb (2003) and Koch (1995) pertinently point out that the various philosophers developed philosophies and not research methods per se. In light of this, I regard phenomenology overall as a philosophy consisting of particular philosophic foundations. These foundations guide research practice and methods. For the purpose of research coherence (McWilliam, 2010), I need to explicate the philosophical foundations of phenomenology that led me to adopt it as the overall research methodology. However, as phenomenology is about phenomena I firstly confirm the phenomenon in this study.

### **2.6.2 The phenomenon under study**

As phenomenology entails exploring phenomena, it is important to understand what phenomena are. Giorgi (1997) explains that the phenomenon in phenomenology refers to "the presence of any given precisely as it is given or experienced" (p. 237). I regard phenomena as everything and anything that exists in the world in which we are interacting; therefore, phenomena may be social constructs and/or objects, as researchers do not necessarily always study people (Silverman, 2010). In order to identify the phenomenon under study in phenomenological research, Churchill (2018) advises that it is important to distinguish between the research question and the lived experience that will be interrogated. The human experience that was interrogated in this study was the work–life experiences of volunteers. Within this lived experience, I wanted to understand how the well-being of volunteers' manifests – what makes the volunteers well despite challenging circumstances? (research question). Reflecting on the lived experience and the research question (cf. Churchill, 2018) brought me to identify the phenomenon of concern in this study, which is *volunteer well-being*. Volunteer well-being was understood through an exploration of the work–life experiences of volunteers as they occur in the life world of the participant (the volunteer).

### **2.6.3 Choosing phenomenology as the overall research methodology**

In order to scrutinise the philosophical foundations of phenomenology, and their congruence with my philosophy of science and my research aim, I need to evaluate its essential purpose, which I summarise in the following paragraph.

The focus of phenomenology is on lived experience. The aim is to understand phenomena as they are experienced by the individual who is having the experience, thereby accessing their lifeworld (Lawthom & Tindall, 2011). The lifeworld in phenomenology is the context of the participant's life. Phenomenology therefore acknowledges that we are all embedded in a specific context (Lawthom & Tindall, 2011) and phenomena are understood in the context within which they occur (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003).

In accordance with the essential purpose of phenomenology, which I explained above, the first philosophical foundation of phenomenology relates to the subjective understanding of a specific phenomenon. My motivation for adopting phenomenology resides in my belief that a phenomenon is a reality or a given which is relative and mind-dependent and exists within a greater external reality which we are all part of and interact in and with. Subjective understanding will therefore result in realities and knowledges (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Additionally, subjective understanding requires adopting an approach that will enable the researcher to extract this mind-dependant reality. This implies that the relationship between the researcher and the participant(s) must be interactive in nature. This foundation is congruent with my assumptions of a subtle/critical ontology, a constructionist epistemology and a qualitative research approach.

The second philosophical foundation involves the lifeworld of individuals. This lifeworld means that I needed to consider the context within which phenomena occur (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). I can therefore only understand volunteer well-being through an exploration of the work–life experiences of volunteers by engaging in their lifeworld (Lawthom & Tindall, 2011). This foundation is congruent with my belief that we are all situated in a specific context (McGrath & Johnson, 2003) and hence my adoption of a

social constructionist research paradigm (Andrews, 2012; Bu & Paré, 2018; Cosgrove, 2000).

Although there is agreement amongst phenomenological researchers regarding the essence of phenomenology, in practice there are various versions and varieties of this philosophy (Davidsen, 2013; Finlay, 2009). I now turn to demarcating the particular phenomenological approach that was applied in this study.

#### **2.6.4 The phenomenological approach applied in this study: hermeneutic phenomenology**

As various philosophers have contributed to different perspectives on phenomenology, this has resulted in the emergence of several research approaches, which translate phenomenology into practice. These include predominantly first-person, descriptive and hermeneutic phenomenology (Finlay, 2009). Davidsen (2013) regards these approaches as “parallel currents that are related but not homogeneous” (p. 319). For the purposes of this study, I adopted the hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenological approach originating from the perspectives of Heidegger (Ray, 1994). The foundation of this approach is concerned with human experience as it is lived (Dowling, 2007) and ontologically this lived experience is explored as an *interpretive* process (Cohen & Omery, 1994). Cohen and Omery (1994) refer to this approach as Heidegger’s ontological phenomenology, which entails an examination of the meaning of “Being” (p. 142), which can only be done by “Being in the world” (Ray, 1994, p. 121). Interpretations occur in contexts involving the everyday experiences of the subject (Cohen & Omery, 1994; Racher & Robinson, 2002) and result in understanding and possibilities that are linked to cultural norms (Cohen & Omery, 1994). For Heidegger, making sense of the appearance of the phenomenon is facilitated by the act of interpretation (Davidsen, 2013).

Two important notions of hermeneutics are the *historicality of understanding* and the *hermeneutic circle* (Koch, 1995). In terms of historicality, there is unity between a person and the world, since individuals are constantly being constructed by the world whilst constructing this world from their own experience and background. Individuals

are born into a world that is already there and participation in the world happens in cultural, historical and social contexts (Koch, 1995). Therefore, reference is made to “lived experience” rather than just “experience” (Racher & Robinson, 2002, p. 472). Hermeneutic-phenomenology is therefore also essentially socially constructed and enables us to understand the human condition in the social-historical reality<sup>19</sup> in which we live (Ray, 1994). Because individuals are born into a world which is already there, pre-understanding exists due to our being in the world, which cannot be eliminated (Koch, 1995). This forms the premise of the hermeneutic circle since “nothing can be encountered without reference to a person’s background understanding, and every encounter entails an interpretation based on the person’s background, in its historicity” (Heidegger, 1962, as cited in Koch, 1995, p. 831). The present is therefore understood in terms of the past and vice versa (Racher & Robinson, 2002), and dialectic movement takes place from the part to the whole (Koch, 1996).

The hermeneutic circle, as the second important notion in hermeneutics, consists of two dimensions/horizons which guide the interpretation of lived experience (Holzer, 2011; Takayama, 2000). As we cannot eliminate our pre-understanding (Koch, 1995), we firstly “understand in terms of what we already know” (Kezar, 2000, p. 386). The aim is to sort through this pre-understanding by adopting a constant questioning stance (Grondin, 2016). Takayama (2000) describes this as a dialogue between the researcher’s pre-understandings and their evolving understanding of the text. The second dimension/horizon pertains to making meaning out of the text by moving between the parts and the whole (Holzer, 2011). According to Takayama (2000), the whole cannot be understood without comprehending the functioning of its parts and vice versa. The application of the hermeneutic circle to the analysis of the data is further described in section 2.8.5.

Theory plays an important role in any research study, whether quantitative or qualitative. In terms of qualitative research, theory plays a basic, central and foundational role (Mertz & Anfara, 2006). Mertz and Anfara (2006) recommend that qualitative researchers should not ignore the role that theory plays in their research,

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<sup>19</sup> This premise is congruent with my philosophy of science as well as a social constructionist research paradigm (see Andrews, 2012; Bu & Paré, 2018; Cosgrove, 2000).

as it frames and shapes what the researcher looks at and ultimately how the study is conducted. Theory is also approached differently in the various approaches to phenomenological inquiry. It is therefore important that I recognise how I used and approached theory in this hermeneutic phenomenological study. In the following section, I describe how I handled theory in this study.

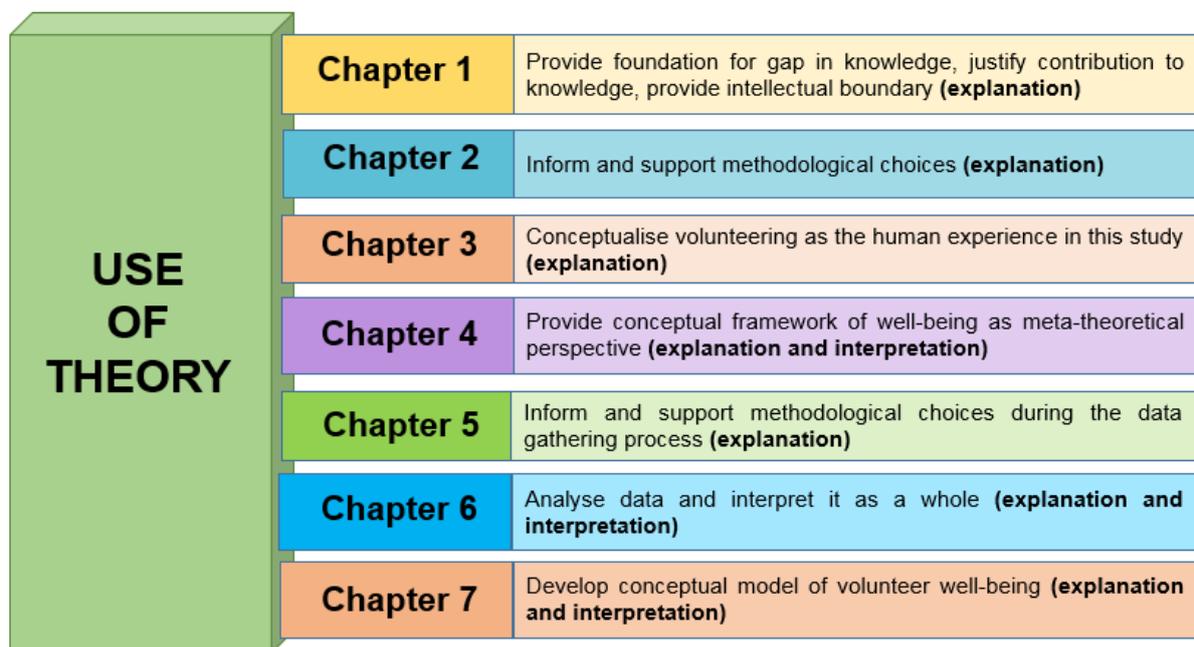
## **2.7 HOW I HANDLED THEORY IN THE STUDY**

I embarked on this research journey to acquire in-depth knowledge about volunteer well-being. In research, knowledge is acquired either deductively or inductively (Snape & Spencer, 2003). When adopting a deductive approach (theory verification), one works from the general to the specific; where a theory and a hypothesis are developed, the hypothesis is tested and the theory is verified. The inductive approach (theory generation) entails working from the specific to the general, where data are collected and a theory is developed as a result of the data analysis (Hartas, 2010; Saunders et al., 2016).

Qualitative studies are more likely to adopt an inductive approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Marecek, 2003; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018), since theory and hypothesis building take place through a description of a phenomenon from the perspective of the research subject and their context (Train, 2007). However, both approaches can be used in qualitative research (Myers, 2013) because, as these approaches have identical goals, they are closely intertwined (Nestor & Schutt, 2015). Both approaches therefore involve the use of theory, one at the beginning (deductive) and the other during/after the data analysis process (inductive). However, neither approach is without criticism and in light of this, I adopted the “theory all around” view that Hartas (2010, p. 20) proposes, since theory is used in an ongoing manner through the cycles of interpretation and explanation. Deductively, and in support of my ontology, theory on volunteering and well-being exists (external reality) and I acquired knowledge of this prior to and at the start of this research project. I do, however, recognise that knowledge acquisition is a continuous process and hence I support the notion of “theory all around” (Hartas, 2010, p. 20). As such, theory was used as a foundation for establishing a rationale and direction for the study, and inductively, I acknowledge that

I did not embark on this research journey without any preconceived theories or ideas (Marecek, 2003). However, I endeavoured not to make any assumptions about how volunteer well-being would be constructed within the specific context of this study.

Theory was also used during various stages of this research, with Figure 2.2 depicting the use of theory in these stages. I developed this figure as a result of reading Hartas (2010) and Trafford and Leshem (2012).



**Figure 2.2:** Use of theory in the various stages of the research

I used theory in various stages of this research, as hermeneutic phenomenological research in particular is understood “with the help of some specific hermeneutic or method of interpretation” (Kafle, 2011, p. 191). Furthermore, as meaning was co-constructed in this study, with volunteer well-being being interpreted through a particular theoretical lens, I touch briefly on the way the hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenological approach that I adopted influenced my use of theory.

Heidegger was against a “presuppositionless descriptive phenomenology”, thereby steering phenomenology in a “hermeneutic direction” (Davidsen, 2013, p. 322–323). Descriptive phenomenology specifically emphasises bracketing as a strategy for

entering the research field without any preconceived notions. Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology is, however, based on the premise that understanding must be unconcealed through interpretation (Davidsen, 2013; Fleming et al., 2003). The search for an understanding of experience takes place through a fusion of horizons, which includes the researcher's preunderstanding and understanding of a particular philosophical perspective (Dowling, 2007; Fleming et al., 2003; Laverty, 2003). Throughout the research process, understanding involves continuous reading, reflective writing and interpretation (Kafle, 2011). According to Smith (2007), interpretation is neither linear nor static but rather dynamic and opens the possibility for "constantly digging deeper" (p. 5). Davidsen (2013) pertinently indicates that although "the fore-structure is always there" (p. 323), the researcher only becomes aware of what influenced the interpretation by continuously engaging with the analysis of the phenomenon.

Although I had a general theoretical understanding of well-being, this understanding did not remain static but developed throughout this study, particularly during the analysis of the data. As I read the participants' narratives, I continued to expand my theoretical understanding and this enabled me to further interpret the data. Therefore, prior to the analysis of the data I did not know which fore-structure of well-being would be relevant to the data. This was subsequently uncovered through a fusion of my continuous engagement with the text and theory (see Davidsen, 2013). In Chapter 4 in particular, I make explicit the theoretical notions of well-being that influenced my interpretation of the data.

Having explicated the philosophical underpinnings of and the methodological approach adopted in this qualitative study, I now move to the way I operationalised the study by discussing the research methods I employed.

## **2.8 RESEARCH METHODS**

As I continue to explicate my methodological path, I believe that I have successfully clarified the scientific framework (Braun & Clarke, 2013) within which this research was conducted. I now discuss the specific methods that were used to execute my research. Silverman (2010) refers to these methods as specific research techniques. I first explain the implications of adopting a phenomenological hermeneutic method. Then I provide details of the sampling, as well as the data gathering, management and analysis methods that were used in this study.

### **2.8.1 Adopting a phenomenological hermeneutical method**

Although hermeneutic phenomenology is regarded as a suitable methodology in human sciences research, it is also sometimes considered a theoretical perspective and thus studies frequently fail to clarify the process involved (Tan, Wilson, & Olver, 2009). Tan et al. (2009) suggest that if methods are not clarified, assigning rigour to the research could be difficult. For the purpose of this study, I was guided by the phenomenological hermeneutical method as applied by Lindseth and Norberg (2004), which is aligned to hermeneutic phenomenology as methodology and can be applied in human studies. Essential meaning, through lived experience, is studied and thereafter interpreted. This method falls into the tradition of hermeneutics as founded by Martin Heidegger but was inspired by Paul Ricoeur's theory of interpretation (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004). These authors do not believe in pure phenomenology; rather this method is based on understanding lived experience as narrated through participants' stories and thereafter interpreted. Hermeneutic-phenomenology allowed me firstly to understand volunteer well-being in more depth through an exploration of the volunteer's work-life experiences while including the complex perspective of individual experience. Thereafter, I interpreted the way well-being is expressed in the participants' texts. The phenomenological hermeneutic method of Lindseth and Norberg (2004) thus guided my sampling, data gathering and analysis.

## 2.8.2 Sampling the participants in this study

Earlier on in this chapter, I indicated that I considered myself to be a pragmatic person. I also consider myself to be very structured – for me things have processes, procedures and guidelines which I like to follow – in other words a prescribed start and end. In this chapter specifically, however, I constantly felt that I was out of my comfort zone (refer to section 2.2.1 in which I explain how I struggled to articulate my methodological path) because my research journey initially seemed to me to be far from structured. Further, I did not necessarily sample/select my participants in the conventional manner as my involvement in the community engagement project at a specific NPO sparked my research interest and led me to construct a particular methodological path and not the other way around. I reflected on what Flick (2007) advises in terms of sampling and realised that sampling may also occur in a natural manner:

Your relation to the field, your access to the people, situations or materials will determine whether you can include what your sampling demands in the ideal case (p. 33).

I identified the organisation where I was going to conduct the research very early on because, being in academia, I was aware that accessing participants and/or organisations can be a challenging and difficult process (Flick, 2007). I therefore sampled first on a site level and thereafter on a participant level (Creswell, 2007). Thus, the sampling strategy I employed can be described as purposive (Yin, 2016). In hermeneutic phenomenology, purposeful and snowball sampling are the most suitable sampling methods to use (Ngulube & Ngulube, 2017). Although I identified my site level early on, I was guided throughout the sampling process by my research aim, the phenomenon in this study and a hermeneutic-phenomenological methodology. In accordance with this methodology, the sample should consist of participants who share the experience of the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Ngulube & Ngulube, 2017).

Being cognisant of the phenomenon under investigation, I chose the participants who would form part of my sample by looking at the volunteers in the NPO. The NPO provides its services to 13 hospitals in the Gauteng and Western Cape provinces and employs both permanent and contract staff, as well as students and volunteers. Merriam (2009) advises that when conducting purposive sampling, essential selection criteria must be determined and justified to enable the researcher to choose suitable participants. Because the NPO operates in two provinces, my first criterion was geographic location. I reasoned that selecting participants from the hospitals in Gauteng would provide me with sufficient information-rich cases (Patton, 2015). Furthermore, at the time of conducting the study, the NPO had only recently started to expand its services in the Western Cape and was not as established as in Gauteng. The second criterion I used was selecting volunteers who fitted the definition of a formal volunteer, as explicated in Chapter 3 (see section 3.3.2), and who had been volunteering their services to the NPO for a period in excess of 12 months. In my opinion, a period of 12 months is reflective of a commitment on the part of the volunteer and provides a sufficient time period within which the phenomenon would have occurred.

In addition, I was also mindful of the number of participants that should form my sample. Selecting the sample size in qualitative research is a far more dynamic process than in quantitative research, as the number of participants is not pre-determined and thus decisions based on adequacy rather than sample size are generally made (Mertens, 2010). Specifically, in phenomenological research, the standard is to examine fewer participants in greater depth (Ngulube & Ngulube, 2017). I therefore followed a rule-of-thumb approach (Mertens, 2010) for suggested sample sizes for phenomenology, which is approximately six participants (Ray, 1994). After obtaining a list of participants that fitted my selection criteria from the gatekeeper of the NPO, I selected eight<sup>20</sup> participants from four hospitals in Gauteng province. In

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<sup>20</sup> I initially conducted two interviews, as I wanted to gain entry into the field. Thereafter, I conducted six interviews and three follow-up interviews. More details on these interviews will be provided in Chapter 5.

terms of my sampling procedure, I was satisfied that I had obtained both a homogeneous and a heterogeneous<sup>21</sup> sample (see Daymon & Holloway, 2002).

I now continue to discuss the data gathering, management and analysis methods that were used in this study.

### **2.8.3 In-depth interviewing as a data gathering method**

In general, interviews have become the preferred choice of data collection method in qualitative research (Silverman, 2010). In particular, in-depth interviews are most commonly utilised (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003; Liamputtong, 2007). Nevertheless, my decision to adopt in-depth interviewing as the preferred data gathering method was based on an honest reflection on the most suitable method to achieve my research aim. Braun and Clarke (2013) maintain that interviews are most suitable for answering experience-type research questions and are the most common data collection method for phenomenological research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Galvin & Holloway, 2015; Lawthom & Tindall, 2011; Ngulube & Ngulube, 2017). The purpose of an in-depth interview, which is to elicit rich information (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Liamputtong, 2007) by exploring the lifeworld of the participant (Monette, Sullivan, & DeJong, 2011), was thus methodologically congruent with the aim of this study.

Although I identified the in-depth interview as the most suitable data gathering method, I approached the overall research process with an open mind and endeavoured to adopt a flexible research strategy (Snape & Spencer, 2003). I therefore opted to conduct two pilot interviews,<sup>22</sup> firstly to define the parameters of the study and secondly to gain a better understanding of the environment and contextual issues (see Levers, 2006). The outcome of these interviews would determine whether I needed to adjust my research procedure. The pilot interviews, which I also refer to as 'entry-into-the-field interviews', confirmed the suitability of this method for my research.

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<sup>21</sup> The sample was heterogeneous in terms of demographic variables such as race and gender.

<sup>22</sup> More details regarding the specific research procedure that was followed during these interviews will be provided in Chapter 5.

Particularly sensitive information was revealed by the participants and in order to do them justice by enabling them to share their stories, I decided to continue with one-on-one in-depth interviews. As the data from the pilot interviews elicited rich and relevant information in relation to the phenomenon under study, and as I did not revise my interview guide after conducting these interviews, I therefore opted to include these pilot interviews as part of my formal data set (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). According to Arthur and Nazroo (2003) and Ravitch and Carl (2016), pilot interviews do not have to be excluded from a formal data set unless there are significant revisions to the research objectives or data collection method of a research study.

In-depth interviews are issue/topic orientated (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011) and a predetermined list of questions is not used (Saunders et al., 2016). The process is fairly unstructured and informal and may be compared to a conversation (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Yin, 2016). The researcher (interviewer) follows a broad agenda with the aim of eliciting answers to open-ended questions (Lawthom & Tindall, 2011; Yin, 2016). While an interview is viewed as a common conversation in lifeworld research, the questions and the manner in which they are posed are crucial for gaining insight into the phenomenon and the participant's individual experience. Interview questions therefore need to open up the experience but the interview itself does need to have focus (Dahlberg, Dahlberg, & Nyström, 2008). In this regard, I adopted a thematic interview approach (see Yeung, 2004) where a list of themes of interest was developed to guide my research procedure. However, I allowed the conversation to flow and develop.

Churchill (2018) also stresses that the research phenomenon needs to be distinguished from "the situation that reveals it" (p. 211). Therefore, in terms of the interview, a distinction needs to be made between the research questions (those that are posed to the data) and the questions that are posed to the participants to elicit the lived experience (Churchill, 2018; Lockhart & Resick, 2015). As I endeavoured to understand volunteer well-being (research phenomenon) through the work-life experiences of volunteers (the situation that will reveal the volunteer's well-being), the

theme of the interview questions (see Appendix G) centred on the experiences of volunteering.

Together with my methodological path, my research aim<sup>23</sup> and the outcome of the entry-into-the-field interviews, I also reflected on the following key features of in-depth interviews (Legard et al., 2003), which demonstrate the suitability of this method for this study in particular:

- In-depth interviews combine structure with flexibility. Since the focus is on exploring the work–life experiences of volunteers from their points of view (Miller & Glassner, 2011), each interview will be different. A thematic interview approach (see Yeung, 2004) allowed me to adopt a contextual attitude thereby being open to the responses provided by each participant (Braun & Clarke, 2013).
- Each interview is interactive in nature.<sup>24</sup> The entire process therefore tends to be seen as a partnership or relationship (Yin, 2016), as meaning is co-constructed by the interviewer and the participant (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) refer to the process as a “meaning-making endeavour” (p. 94). As the researcher, I could only access the mind-dependent reality (Ormston et al., 2014) of the volunteers’ work–life experiences by adopting an interactive relationship. My role was to elicit experiences by adopting an open-ended questioning approach. In-depth responses can only be elicited by asking open-ended questions as this will allow participants to speak freely (Braun & Clarke, 2013).
- The focus is on the individual and his or her own language. In-depth interviews allowed me to capture the subjective understanding of volunteers’ work–life experiences in their own words (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Yin, 2016), thus depicting their points of view (Miller & Glassner, 2011) in ways that make sense to them (Monette et al., 2011). This honours the participant, their story and their voice.

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<sup>23</sup> In-depth interviews are also congruent with the overall purpose of this research as they are used to generate exploratory and descriptive data (Babbie & Mouton, 2006; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011).

<sup>24</sup> Due to the interactive nature of in-depth interviews, Braun and Clarke (2013) advise interviewers (the researcher) to adopt a reflexive process and indicate how their practices and values shaped the data. These details will be explicated in Chapter 5 where I outline my overall research procedure.

Since interview data are captured in their natural form (Legard et al., 2003), I now describe how I captured, managed and stored my interview data.

#### **2.8.4 Capturing, managing and storing my interview data**

Silverman (2010) highlights the importance of recording interview data. Thus, with the permission of each participant, I tape-recorded each interview. This is advisable because it enables researchers to devote their full attention to the interview process, thus capturing the interview in its natural form. Tape recordings also provide an accurate verbatim record of the interview (Legard et al., 2003; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). Since in-depth interview data are rich in detail (David & Sutton, 2004), the tape recordings enabled me to refer back to the data when needed. During the interviews, I also made field notes, which captured the context and dynamics of the process (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003; Saunders et al., 2016). As advised by my supervisor I also made use of a reflexive research journal throughout the entire research process (Braun & Clarke, 2013) in which I documented my thoughts and feelings and my methodological trail.

As transcribing the interview data is such a time-consuming process (David & Sutton, 2004; Given, 2016), I employed the services of a professional. The transcriber signed a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix F) and only had access to the data during the transcription process. Moreover, throughout the research process, I was cognisant of Ruane's (2005) stance on research ethics that "every research decision we make, from planning to the disclosure of results, should be made with an eye to ethics" (p. 17). When capturing, managing and storing my interview data I ensured that I acted in accordance with the ethical guidelines prescribed by my university and interview data were stored safely on my personal computer. Electronic records of the data were password protected and only made available to personnel involved in the study by giving access privileges and passwords upon request, while paper-based data records were also stored safely. The software package ATLAS.ti was also used to store and analyse the data.

### 2.8.5 Data analysis

Phenomenological research is generally descriptive in nature (Koch, 1996). The intention is to provide a thick description that accurately captures the lived experience of the participant (Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves, 2000). However, due to the ambiguity that exists in phenomenological research, consensus does not exist on how it should be applied (Giorgi, 2006b). In this regard, Hycner (1985) indicates that phenomenologists are reluctant to prescribe specific steps for research methods and in the data analysis process a “cookbook” (p. 280) procedure does not exist. The process is therefore flexible (Grbich, 2007) and can be conducted in a number of ways (Laverty, 2003). Hermeneutic phenomenology, and the phenomenological hermeneutic method in particular, is however predominantly guided by the hermeneutic circle where understanding takes place in an *iterative* manner through a process of moving between the part and the whole and vice versa, whilst taking into account contextual considerations (Cohen et al., 2000; Koch, 1996). According to Koch (1996), the hermeneutic circle is a metaphor, because in hermeneutic phenomenology, movement is dialectic rather than circular per se. Similarly, Smith (2007) indicates that the hermeneutic circle “speaks to a non-linear style of analysis” (p. 5).

In accordance with the hermeneutic phenomenological methodology I adopted in this study, data analysis (interpreting the text) was guided by an iteratively applied three-stage process, called phenomenological hermeneutical analysis (Beck, Martinsen, Birkelund, & Poulsen, 2017; Lindseth & Norberg, 2004) inspired by Paul Ricoeur’s philosophy on narratives and interpretation (Ricoeur, 1976). The analytic process is referred to as a process because strict methodological rules are not followed with phenomenology. The analytic process consists of three stages of data inquiry that begin with a naïve reading, thereafter a structural analysis is created, and finally a comprehensive understanding is formed (Beck et al., 2017; Lindseth & Norberg, 2004). Throughout these three stages, the metaphorical action of the hermeneutic circle is constantly applied (Geanellos, 2000), causing the researcher to move back and forth between the three stages, using each as a critical reflection and verification of the other.

Earlier on I indicated that I consider myself to be very structured. Thus, combined with being a novice researcher I initially found the information on phenomenological data analysis very hazy and difficult to grasp. This may perhaps be attributed to the fact that although it is referred to as a step-wise process, in an applied research context it is vague and not linear (Cohen et al., 2000). Prior to analysing the data, I found Hycner's (1985) article on phenomenological analysis the most useful in providing a general introductory background and a good overview for analysing phenomenological data. In the author's words (Hycner, 1985), the guidelines were sufficient to "sensitise" (p. 280) me to the issues pertinent in the analysis of phenomenological data. In addition, I perused several articles that adopted the same methodology, which enabled me to get a better overview of the *how* of the process (see Dale, Söderhamn, & Söderhamn, 2012; Healey-Ogden & Austin, 2011; Smith, 2007; Victor & Barnard, 2016).

In terms of the data analysis process, Miles and Huberman (2002) advise that in order to be taken seriously, researchers should "be fully explicit about what is being done each step of the way" (p. 395). In the following sub-sections I describe the specific step-by-step, yet iterative process I followed to analyse my data in detail. The findings of the first two stages in the data analysis method of phenomenological hermeneutical analysis, namely the naïve reading and thematic structural analysis are presented in Chapter 6 as they portray my interpretation of volunteer well-being. As the conceptual model is based on and reflects the third and last stage in the phenomenological hermeneutical analysis method, namely the comprehensive understanding which synthesises the findings in a meaningful whole, the outcome of this stage is discussed in Chapter 7 where the conceptual model is presented. Furthermore, as noted above, this analytic process follows the phenomenological hermeneutical method as described by, among others, Lindseth and Norberg (2004), Victor and Barnard (2016), Henricson, Segesten, Berglund, and Määttä (2009), as well as Beck et al. (2017). This discussion also includes the naturally evolving process of analysis as it unfolded for me.

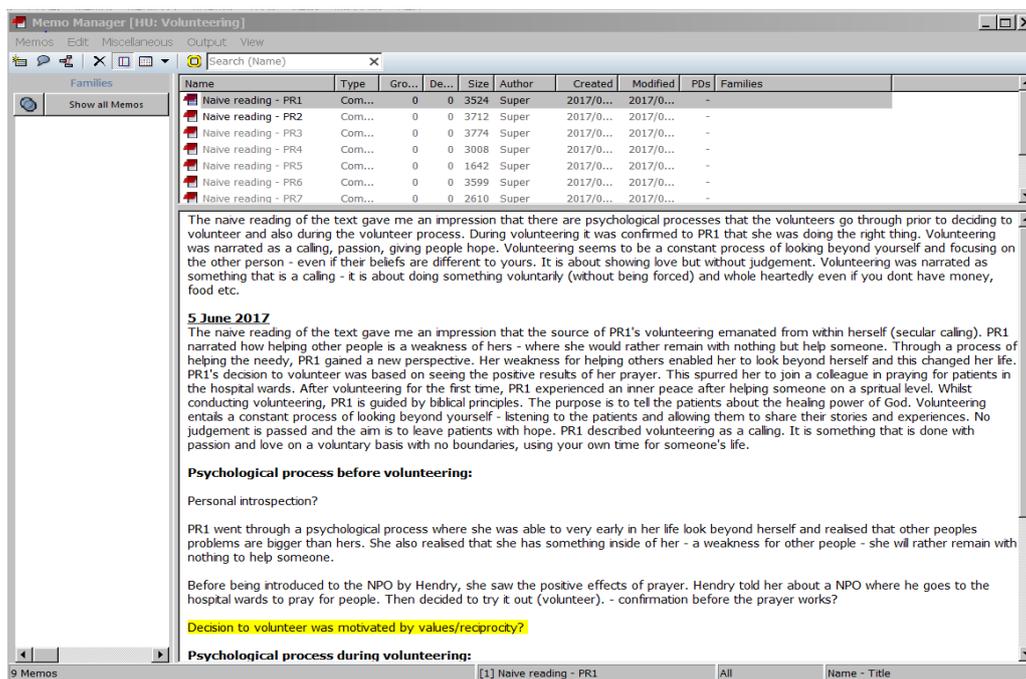
### 2.8.5.1 *Naïve reading*

The first stage of phenomenological hermeneutical analysis entails reading the text (several times) in order to get a sense of it as a gestalt (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004). Although this may seem obvious, according to Giorgi (1997) it is important to make this step explicit, as the data needs to be read as a whole before the analysis process may begin. At this stage, no thematising should occur (Giorgi, 1997) as this important first step of the naïve reading is regarded as a “first conjecture” (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004, p. 149). On my initial naïve reading of the first transcript, I struggled to keep this in mind and in fact went against Giorgi’s (1997) recommendation by trying to find patterns in the data while at the same time relating the data to the aim of the study. Going against what the literature instructed me to do reflects the difficulty of novice researchers when embarking on data analysis. Despite the time thinking and reading about how to go about analysing the data, applying the analytical strategies and tactics to real data is difficult. Self-efficacy, however, only develops once the researcher actually moves from reading about analysis to doing it.

Whilst engaging with the first transcription in this way and feeling dissatisfied with my attempt at a naïve reading, I went back to the methodological guidance in studies that have applied phenomenological hermeneutic analysis (e.g. Dale et al., 2012; Victor & Barnard, 2016). I proceeded to do what felt comfortable and engaged with the transcriptions by continuing to re-read them multiple times, reflecting on the holistic storyline I saw in each. In addition, during this stage of the analysis I focused on the research question pertaining to this study, namely, what makes the volunteers well despite challenging circumstances (see Churchill, 2018).

Immersing myself in the data, I started to understand and apply more comfortably what is referred to as keeping an open mind and phenomenological attitude. Dahlberg et al. (2008) describe a phenomenological attitude as cultivating a stance to the data in which one keeps an open mind, curious to see the phenomenon in a new way. This requires a thoughtful vigilance to self-reflect consciously on intrapersonal processes and preconceptions that may influence such an openness to see the phenomenon in the data (Dahlberg et al., 2008; Nyström & Dahlberg, 2001). Lindseth and Norberg

(2004) reiterate the importance of the phenomenological attitude in this first step by indicating that it guides and is used to validate/invalidates, the subsequent structural analysis. I used the memo manager function on ATLAS.ti to capture the naïve reading per interview as well as the combined naïve reading of all the interviews. This function enabled me to capture ideas and make short notes and amendments where necessary. Figure 2.3 presents the memo manager view in ATLAS.ti of all the naïve readings.

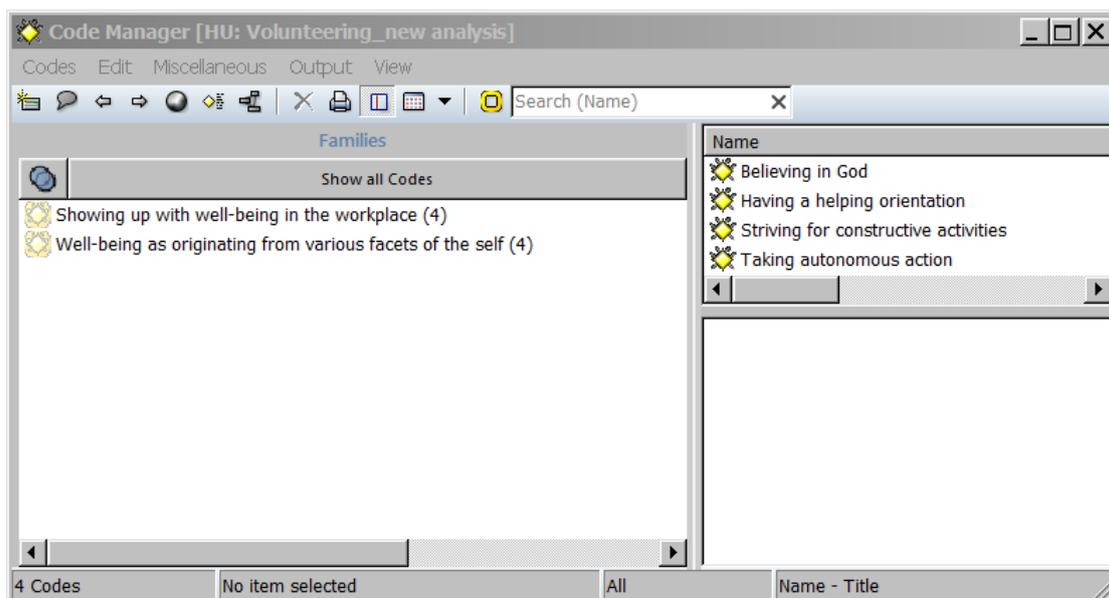


**Figure 2.3:** ATLAS.ti memo manager view of naïve readings

### 2.8.5.2 Thematic structural analysis

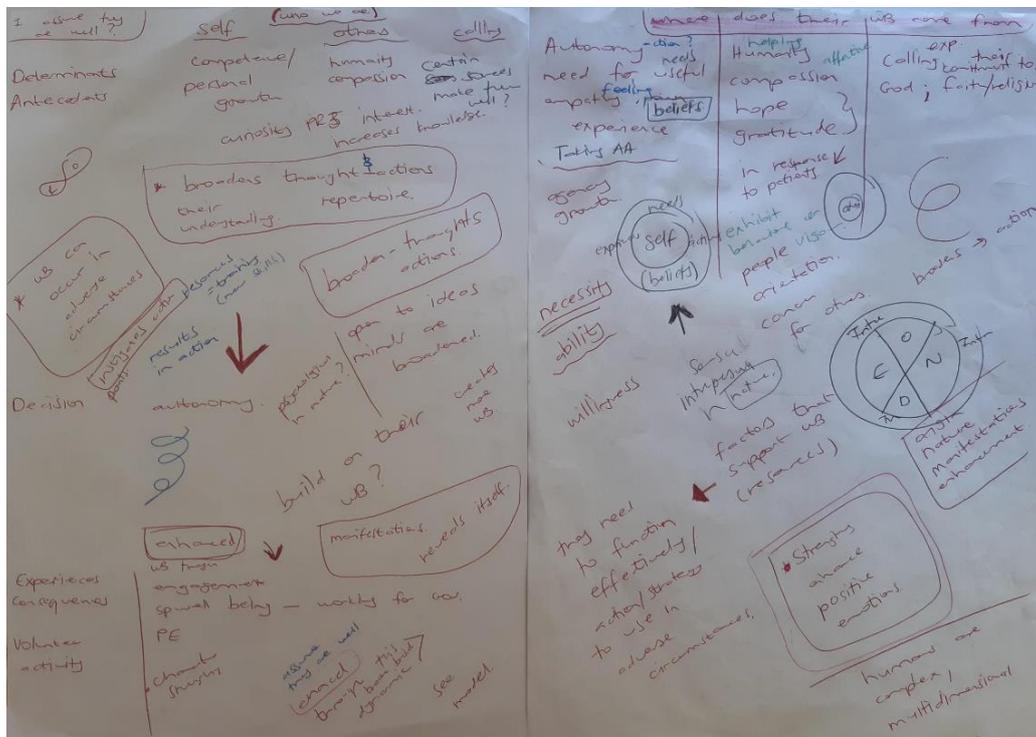
After the naïve reading is concluded, a thematic structural analysis is constructed where themes are identified and formulated (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004). In order to construct the structural analysis, I firstly identified sections of meaningful text and condensed them (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004). These condensed sections were expressed in everyday language and were then reviewed, interpreted and sorted into sub-themes and main themes by continuously reflecting back on the naïve understanding (Beck et al., 2017; Dale et al., 2012; Henricson et al., 2009; Lindseth &

Norberg, 2004; Victor & Barnard, 2016). This way of moving between the naïve understanding of the data and the themes that result from the second phase of analysis reflects the notion of the hermeneutic circle. Applying the hermeneutic circle during analysis entails that understanding takes place in an iterative manner by moving between the part and the whole and vice versa (Cohen et al., 2000; Koch, 1996). This iterative analytic movement is akin to the phenomenological hermeneutic method of analysis (Geanellos, 2000). As such, while constructing the structural analysis I reflected continuously on the naïve reading as well as on the aim of the research (Dale et al., 2012). The purpose of this is to verify whether the themes that emerge in the structural analysis validate or invalidate the naïve understanding and vice versa (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004). In addition, constant comparison between and reflection on the themes and the aim of the research took place. This stage of the analysis also involved an iterative movement between the themes identified in the data and my conceptual framework of well-being, which is congruent with the way I handled theory in this study and my epistemological assumptions of constructionism. Once I was satisfied that there was congruency I finalised the structural analysis, using the code and the family manager function in ATLAS.ti to formulate it. In addition, making manual notes assisted me to see the data as a gestalt. Figure 2.4 presents the codes (sub-themes) and families (main themes) created in ATLAS.ti.



**Figure 2.4:** Codes and families created in ATLAS.ti

The following photograph also depicts some of the *many* manual notes I made that were informed by the naïve reading and which contributed to the structural analysis:



**Photograph 2.2:** Manual notes made during the data analysis process

### 2.8.5.3 Comprehensive understanding

The last step in the three-stage data analysis process is to formulate a comprehensive understanding of the data by interpreting it as a whole. The structural analysis is reflected on in relation to the naïve reading, the aim of the research, the context of the study, the author’s preunderstanding and the relevant literature (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004). In this stage, my interpretation and inquiry were still guided by the hermeneutic circle, which entails a dialectical examination, conducted by moving between the analytic parts and the whole and vice versa (Cohen et al., 2000).

Consequent to the data analysis, two main themes and several sub-themes were constructed from the data (see Chapter 6). However, to achieve the research aim of the study, namely, to develop a conceptual model, I needed to conceptualise the

findings on another level of abstraction – leading me to develop a model. To do so, I searched for guidance on developing conceptual models. To explicate how I ensured methodological rigour at the model development stage of this study, in the following section I discuss how I went about transforming the findings into a conceptual model.

### **2.8.6 Developing the conceptual model**

In the development of the model, I used Bernard and Ryan's (2010) three-step process. In the first step, the key constructs to be included in the model are identified. During the second step, the linkages between the constructs are shown, and lastly, the cases are tested in order to verify the theory, which is also referred to as negative case analysis (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). According to these authors (Bernard & Ryan, 2010), building models is also an iterative process; therefore, the steps in the process are not necessarily sequential and researchers may find themselves going back and forth between these steps. In addition to these steps, I also perused several scholarly articles for examples of conceptual models (see Ben-Ari & Lavee, 2007; Lockstone, Jago, & Deery, 2002; Wysoker, 2002) and searched for visual examples of conceptual models to stimulate my thinking.

#### *2.8.6.1 Identifying key concepts*

According to Bernard and Ryan (2010), the first step in model building entails choosing among the many identified themes and prioritising them based on their impact on what is being studied. This entails separating core from peripheral themes, thus searching for salience and centrality. Salience refers to frequency, in other words how often a concept appears in the data, and centrality reflects linkage to other concepts. This first step also entails making decisions about the concepts that will form part of the model as it is impossible to cover all the concepts (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). Although Bernard and Ryan (2010) place emphasis on salience in this first step, the focus of phenomenology is quite the opposite, as a concept is not necessarily attributed more value simply because it occurs more frequently (Norlyk & Harder, 2010). Therefore, rather than focusing on salience, I placed emphasis on centrality. My identification of the key concepts therefore stemmed from a comprehensive understanding of the data.

### *2.8.6.2 Linking key constructs*

In the next step of model development, key constructs are linked and formed into theoretical models. Constructs are linked to denote the nature of their relatedness to one another and as a whole. This entails going back to the data for further analysis. Thereafter, the links are laid out into the chosen model type (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). The most common model types in social research are conditional matrices, actor interaction, process, decision, transition and activity models, taxonomies and mental maps (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). In this model-building step, I linked the key constructs so as to form a theoretical model (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). I chose to use a process model (Bernard & Ryan, 2010) to represent this understanding. Process models represent the way events unfold over time, such as developing an understanding of coping with personal problems or experiences of positive events (Bernard & Ryan, 2010).

### *2.8.6.3 Testing the model*

The final step entails testing the model. A constant comparison of theory and cases takes place, which is referred to as negative case analysis. The point of this step is to identify commonalities. The researcher starts with a case and develops a theory based on it. Thereafter, the next case is evaluated to confirm the theory. The process continues for all the cases. If the case does not fit the theory, the theory is accommodated to fit the new case (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). It is important to note that in this step, negative (dissimilar) cases were not incorporated. Negative case analysis pertains to data that differ from emergent findings which then leads to the re-examination of current findings (Brodsky, 2008; Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, & McCormack-Steinmetz, 2003). Rather, in this study and congruent to qualitative inquiry, testing the model entailed going back to the data and each case (participant) for confirmation/disconfirmation of the model.

In this last model-building step, I went back to the data and tested each case (participant) for confirmation/disconfirmation of the model. The premise of the broaden and build theory (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2009; Fredrickson, 1998, 2001), as discussed

in Chapter 4, was also used in this step as a way of iteratively testing the conceptual model against the theory after a case-by-case confirmation was conducted. Although each case was different, the purpose of this step was to identify commonalities by confirming the key concepts and their linkages (Bernard & Ryan, 2010).

As I reach the end of my methodological path, the final aspect that I reflect on as essential to the whole process, pertains to ethics.

## **2.9 ETHICAL COMPLIANCE AND MY ETHICS**

The world of research has seen an increased emphasis being placed on research ethics (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012). This is evidenced by the development of codes of ethics and the establishment of ethics committees in various contexts (Flick, 2009) and can be mainly attributed to previous controversial research methods that led to restrictions on social research (Leavy, 2017; Mertens, 2018; Punch, 1998). Research ethics is concerned with providing researchers with guidance on how to carry out their research in a morally defensible manner (King, 2010). I concur with Braun and Clarke (2013), Hammersley and Traianou (2012) and Brinkmann and Kvale (2017) that research ethics is not only about protecting the rights and interests of the participants but is also about a general personal approach to the entire research process. It is therefore not just about ethical compliance but also about how one's personal ethical stance is reflected on in the thesis. These authors further indicate that qualitative inquiry specifically has distinct ethical issues because as researchers we are entering the private lives of research participants and placing them in the public arena (Birch, Miller, Mauthner, & Jessop, 2012).

Although I am extremely structured, I realise now that I entered a research field and adopted an approach that include many unstructured elements; the research approach being flexible and iterative throughout. Birch et al. (2012) characterise qualitative research as fluid and inductively uncertain. The research design in itself is very flexible and, in a naturalistic setting, anything can happen. Because I engaged with participants in their natural volunteering setting, I thought that I could not rely solely on formal institutional ethical guidelines because there is no prescribed procedure for

every eventuality (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). My pragmatic stance on ethics extends policy compliance and is characterised by adopting and being committed to morally responsible ethical behaviour and practical wisdom (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005). I firmly believe that “learning ethical principles is not sufficient to become an ethically responsible researcher” (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005, p. 178). I by no means disregarded universal ethical guidelines;<sup>25</sup> I merely adopted a contextual, situational and practice-based approach (Birch et al., 2012) where I was also guided by my own ethical and moral rules; hence, the addition to the title of this section – *my* ethics. Reflecting on my ethical orientation is also an essential part of the confessional self-reflective stance that I have taken. I believe that allowing the reader a view of my ethical orientation contributes to being explicit about how my moral beliefs may have biased this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This relates to making explicit the researcher’s axiological assumptions – an endeavour that is as important as making ontological and epistemological assumptions known (Hiles, 2008). Axiology is derived from the Greek word *axios*, which means “to be strong” or “to be worthy” (Hiles, 2008, p. 52). Accordingly, axiology is a branch of philosophy that deals with values, ethics, aesthetics and religion (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Hiles, 2008). In a research context, axiology pertains to the value and ethical beliefs of the researcher (Creswell, 2007, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Killam, 2013). It is therefore important to acknowledge that in my life in general, and throughout the research process, I am and was guided by a biblical principle from Luke 6:31 (New International Version) “do to others as you would have them do to you”.

In terms of ethical guidelines, researchers predominantly focus on aspects pertaining to the way they protect the rights and interests of the research participants. These include maintaining privacy and confidentiality, obtaining informed consent and avoiding deception (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Leavy, 2017; Punch, 1998, Ruane, 2005) and are reported on throughout this thesis (e.g. sections 2.8 and Chapter 5). Brinkmann and Kvale (2005, 2017), however, maintain that ethics in qualitative research comprises due diligence to ethics on both a micro and a macro level. From

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<sup>25</sup> As a researcher and psychologist, I am guided by the general ethical codes as prescribed by the professional society of which I am a member, the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), which is the professional board for psychology, as well as the specific ethical codes prescribed by my institution (see Braun & Clarke, 2013).

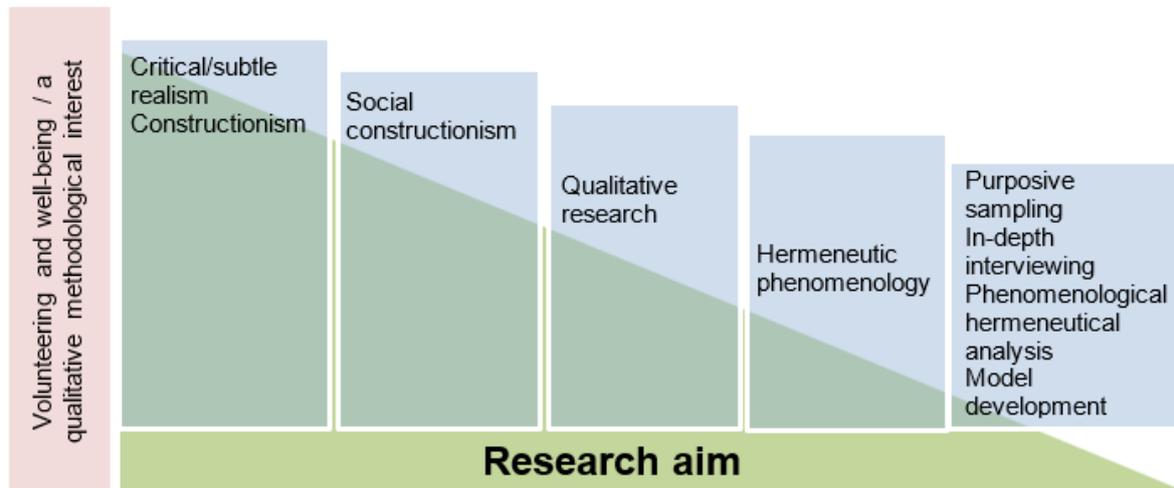
a micro perspective, details of how I protected the rights and interests of my research participants are provided in Chapter 5. From a macro perspective, I reflect on the impact of the value and outcome of my research on society. I do acknowledge that my choice to pursue a doctoral degree was partly based on the prescriptions of the academic world in which I am employed at this particular point in time. As I explained earlier, it was my involvement in a community engagement project that brought me along this path and it is through this involvement that I was exposed to the life and work of volunteers. Being exposed to the sacrifices that the volunteers have made and continue to make, and the actual work that the volunteers at this NPO do, prompted me to care for their well-being. As an IO psychologist, I also felt a sense of responsibility towards the well-being of the volunteers. Further engagement with various literature and the dynamics of the context and environment led me to believe that the outcome of this research could truly benefit society. I am convinced that the well-being of the individual volunteer is paramount as it influences the recipients of their services.

My overall ethical approach can therefore be summarised as that of thinking ethically (Birch et al., 2012) and being constantly guided by both formal and inherently personal ethical and moral rules. I conclude with the following statement by Brinkmann and Kvale (2017):

Being familiar with value issues, ethical guidelines, and ethical theories may help in choices that weigh ethical versus scientific concerns in a study. In the end, however, the integrity of the researcher – his or her knowledge, experience, honesty, and fairness – is the decisive factor (p. 263).

## **2.10 IN CONCLUSION**

In presenting my methodological path, I feel that I have succeeded in constructing an overall rigorous research design, which is not only methodologically congruent but also stays true to my philosophy of science. To this end, I can now present my complete methodological path, which depicts the specific methods I undertook in this study.



**Figure 2.5:** My complete methodological path

Earlier in this chapter, I recognised the foundational role that theory plays in qualitative research (Mertz & Anfara, 2006). In accordance with the theory all around approach (Hartas, 2010) that I adopted, in Chapter 1 I indicated how, in an attempt to narrow my research topic, I conducted a preliminary literature review. My acquisition of knowledge pertaining to the theory in this study was, however, a continuous process and, since volunteering is the human experience in this study, I now turn in the next chapter to conceptualising volunteering and presenting the theory that exists on this concept.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **CONCEPTUALISING VOLUNTEERING**

*In a gentle way, you can shake the world (Mahatma Gandhi).*

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The act of volunteering has been a feature of most societies throughout human history. Religious teachings support the care of the elderly, orphans and the poor. Activities that have been designed to build and support communities have also been entrenched in society (Hodgkinson, 2003). The practice of volunteering seems to be a universal form of human behaviour (Butcher & Einolf, 2017) which has an impact on society, communities and individuals (Omoto & Snyder, 2002). Due to the reliance on volunteerism by governments (Hodgkinson, 2003), interest in volunteering has increased over the past few years. This can be observed by the abundance of scholarly publications on the topic and the surveys being conducted on the extent and distribution of volunteerism (Musick & Wilson, 2008). Volunteering “means different things to different people” (Smith, 2000, p. 3), however, community support, helping the elderly and sitting on a governing body (Hustinx, Cnaan, & Handy, 2010) all constitute volunteering. As volunteerism/volunteering<sup>26</sup> is the central focus of this study and since the term is a social construct, understanding what is meant by this term is very important (Handy et al., 2000). In this chapter, I contextualise the concept of volunteering by presenting the various perspectives, core characteristics/basic elements and typologies as well as the various forms it can take.

#### **3.2 A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The aim of this section is to provide a general historical overview of volunteering. The history of volunteering differs from country to country with extensive literature available

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<sup>26</sup> In the context of this study the term ‘volunteer’, ‘volunteering’ and ‘volunteerism’ will be used interchangeably. The volunteer (also the research participant) conducts voluntary work (volunteering/volunteerism).

on historical accounts in America, England and Australia. Volunteering is influenced by the history, politics, religion and culture of a specific region (Smith, 1999), which most likely accounts for the different ways it has been shaped in various countries. Volunteering is an activity that is part of almost every culture and it is culture-specific (Lukka & Ellis, 2001; Murphy, 2004b). However, the term 'volunteer' does not exist in some cultures. For example, while the term 'social work' is used in India, there is no word to denote volunteers in Russia (Hustinx, Cnaan et al., 2010).

Karl (1984) states that the term 'volunteer' did not exist until the last century and writers who wish to trace the origins of volunteerism have had to access literature in which the term does not appear. Although the idea of volunteering can be traced to almost every period of history, the term 'volunteer' was confined to a religious concern as well as to military service. Acting without coercion and providing one's service for no compensation are features that have been part of this term from its earliest appearance (Karl, 1984). In explaining the origin of the term, Karl (1984) provides the ancient example from the field of agriculture of crops that reseeded themselves versus those for which seeds were procured. Later on, the term was used in the context of military service to distinguish between men who offered their services freely and those that were coerced or paid to go into battle.

Cnaan, Handy, and Wadsworth (1996) confirm this and trace the term 'volunteer' back to both biblical and modern Hebrew, and indicate that it is derived from a word that means, "to willingly give" (p. 366). The term implies an expectation of altruism and the giving of one's wealth was the highest form of altruism. In modern times, giving not only encompasses the giving of money, however, but also products such as labour, expertise and support. Historically, volunteering has consisted of two kinds of social activity (Karl, 1984). The first activity involves institutions established by church organisations. These institutions were established to provide medical care, education and relief from economic distress and were staffed by what Karl (1984) refers to as "professionals" (p. 507), who responded to a call to service. This activity provides us with insight into and understanding of the religious background on volunteering. The second activity entails responses from community members to emergencies that require support services. Examples of these emergencies are wars, epidemics of

disease and natural catastrophes (Karl, 1984). It is evident from these activities that the scope of volunteering in modern times has not changed all that much.

Since this study was conducted in the South African volunteering context, providing a background to the origins of volunteering in Africa, and more specifically South Africa, is necessary. Volunteering in Africa is underpinned by the cultural norms of belonging, togetherness and caring for one another. These norms have sustained and continue to sustain community life. Traditional cultural beliefs and practices are responsible for an ethos of collective responsibility, solidarity and reciprocity (Graham, Patel, Ulriksen, Moodley, & Mavungu, 2013). In South Africa, the concept of *ubuntu*, which is derived from the Bantu culture, is cited as the source of mutual aid and support (Graham et al., 2013; VSO & RAISA, 2011). The advent of colonialism in Africa was, however, responsible for the erosion of these cultural norms resulting in the imposition of Western beliefs and values and modernisation, with the concept of social welfare also being based on a Western approach. The struggle for national independence resulted in civic activism and social and community involvement. In Africa, the post-independence era also contributed to an influx of international volunteering organisations that assisted in development efforts and nation building (Graham et al., 2013). In South Africa, volunteering played a crucial role in challenging apartheid and building the road to democracy. Although volunteering in South Africa has contributed to addressing key development challenges, volunteering as an activity still needs improvement. Two areas that need to be addressed in this regard are the lack of research and government support (VSO & RAISA, 2011).

### **3.3 DEFINITIONS**

A plethora of terms such as one-on-one help, mutual aid, campaigning, advocacy, maintaining a religious organisation, sustained prosocial actions, desire for social change and social justice, and simple acts of helping or neighbourliness are often associated with the term 'volunteering'/'volunteerism' (Musick & Wilson, 2008; Penner, 2002; Snyder & Omoto, 2008). The term 'volunteering' also often denotes a wide range of non-salaried activities (Cnaan et al., 1996). Musick and Wilson (2008) indicate that although the terms 'volunteering' and 'volunteerism' are familiar terms in Western

cultures, for scientific purposes the concepts need to be internally consistent and clearly demarcated. It is therefore fitting that I start with a definition of volunteer/volunteering/volunteerism, whilst simultaneously demarcating the term(s) that are applicable for the purposes of this study.

Defining what is meant by volunteering is not an easy task (Carson, 2000), as the term is multidimensional and involves many aspects (Anheier, 2014). Rodell (2013), for example, defines volunteering as “giving time or skills during a planned activity for a volunteer group or organisation” (p. 1274). However, volunteering includes many different types and a vast array of disparate helping activities, which range from being planned to unplanned and formal to informal (Hustinx, Handy & Cnaan, 2010; Lee & Brudney, 2012; Wilson, 2000). In addition, historical, cultural, political, social and religious contexts add to the complexity of volunteering (Holmes & Smith, 2009). Moreover, what constitutes volunteering in one country may be perceived as low paid labour in another (Smith, 2000). Although there is a huge variety of definitions referred to in the literature (Roy & Ziemek, 2000), a single, objective definition which encapsulates all these complexities does not exist (Rochester, 2006; Smith, 2000). There is, however, agreement on the core characteristics/basic elements that constitute volunteering. These core characteristics/basic elements allow for differences in interpretation but provide boundaries, which offers a better understanding of what volunteering is versus what it is not, thus differentiating it from other activities (Rochester, 2006; Smith, 2000). In an attempt to define volunteering, I now move on to identifying and describing these core characteristics/basic elements; as such an explanation will enable me to describe all the complexities that constitute volunteering. This will then enable me to demarcate the term as applied in this study.

For the purpose of this chapter, I will use the dimensions and categories<sup>27</sup> defined by Cnaan et al. (1996) to outline the core characteristics/basic elements of volunteering. Hustinx, Handy et al. (2010) maintain that volunteering is *still* a complex and multidimensional phenomenon and that no integrated theory on volunteering has emerged. Although the dimensions identified by Cnaan et al. (1996) may not be

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<sup>27</sup> I make reference to core characteristics/basic elements, whereas Cnaan et al. (1996) refer to dimensions. These terms all refer to the same thing.

exhaustive, they provide clear boundaries for understanding what volunteering entails, as it would be impractical to provide all the definitions used in the literature. To arrive at the dimensions and categories that constitute volunteering, these authors (Cnaan et al., 1996) examined a range of widely used definitions and, using content analysis, synthesised the term according to the following dimensions and categories, which are common to a variety of definitions:

**Table 3.1:** Dimensions and categories of volunteering

<b>Dimension<sup>28</sup></b>	<b>Category<sup>29</sup></b>
<b>Free choice</b>	Free will Relatively uncoerced Obligation to volunteer
<b>Remuneration</b>	None at all None expected Expenses reimbursed Stipend/low pay
<b>Structure</b>	Formal Informal
<b>Intended beneficiaries</b>	Others/strangers Friends/relatives Oneself

**Source:** Cnaan et al. (1996)

### 3.3.1 Dimensions and categories

These dimensions and categories of volunteering will now be discussed in detail in order to provide a better understanding of what they entail.

<sup>28</sup> Cnaan et al. (1996) identified four dimensions. Smith (1999) added the basic element of level of commitment, which refers to the level of involvement of a volunteer. This element is discussed in section 3.5.3 of this chapter.

<sup>29</sup> The identified categories can be seen as ranging along a continuum.

### 3.3.1.1 *Free choice*<sup>30</sup>

Volunteering is a “freely chosen helping activity” (Snyder & Omoto, 2008, p. 1). Holmes and Smith (2009) describe it as a discretionary activity. It is therefore optional and non-compulsory and if individuals decide to volunteer, they give their time freely (Grönlund, 2013). The next category within this dimension relates to that of coercion. When describing volunteering, Graham (2004) prefers to use the phrase ‘lack of coercion’ rather than free choice, as some volunteering activities such as community service, student internships and work experience activities involve a level of coercion (Rochester, 2006). These activities are in addition hard to refuse and cannot be classified as non-obligatory (Rochester, 2006). Coercion may refer to certain external influences, pressures and factors that have an impact on an individual’s freedom of action (Paine, Hill, & Rochester, 2010). Coercion may be moral (Rochester, 2006) or legal (such as community service) or an organisation may put pressure on their employees to take part in corporate volunteering efforts. Furthermore, people may be coerced socially and individually by the family or the community (Paine et al., 2010).

Volunteering may also involve an element of obligation (Rochester, 2006). Stebbins (2015) describes obligation as a state of mind, an attitude, as well as a form of behaviour. It is both mental and behavioural and is rooted in the individual’s social and cultural world. In line with Stebbins’ (2015) description, Omoto and Snyder (2002) state that the obligation can, for example, be a humanitarian one and individuals may choose to volunteer to satisfy this obligation. This humanitarian obligation would therefore most likely be rooted in the social or cultural world of the particular individual.

### 3.3.1.2 *Remuneration*

Literature on volunteering indicates that it is a form of unpaid work and volunteers do not receive any form of monetary payment (Anheier, Hollerwerger, Badelt, & Kendall, 2003; Musick & Wilson, 2008). In addition, there is no expectation of a reward (Snyder & Omoto, 2008). Volunteers may, however, be reimbursed for expenses such as travel

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<sup>30</sup> Smith (2000) refers to the categories in this dimension as grey areas, as it is very difficult to maintain the notion of free will in volunteering.

and meals, thus allowing individuals with even limited financial resources to participate (Hodgkinson, 2003) or they may be rewarded non-materially through the acquisition of training or some form of accreditation (Smith, 2000). Although Musick and Wilson (2008) maintain that stipends for volunteering are rare, some countries do offer programmes where the volunteer is paid a stipend/low pay, usually for living expenses, during the volunteering period (Hodgkinson, 2003). Remuneration in volunteering may consist of incurred expenses (ensuring that volunteers are not out of pocket due to their involvement) or enhanced expenses (general expenses and living allowances). Incentives and rewards may be used to encourage people to volunteer and organisations may pay volunteers for their services (Paine et al., 2010). The practice that volunteers should not receive any form of material reward is therefore not universally applied (Rochester, 2006).

#### *3.3.1.3 Structure*

Volunteering may be either formal or informal. Formal volunteering is a structured activity conducted in an organisational setting or as part of a government programme (Akingbola, 2015; Carson, 2000), whereas informal volunteering entails providing voluntary action outside a formal organisational context or group (Lee & Brudney, 2012; Skinner & Rosenberg, 2011). There is a misconception that volunteering must be conducted formally through legally recognised structures. The reality is that much of the volunteering activities conducted throughout the world take place on an informal basis through small groups, clubs and associations (United Nations Volunteers, 2011). Informal volunteering still entails the contribution of unpaid time for the welfare of others (Anheier, 2014), but participation tends to be ad hoc and infrequent and volunteers do not have formally recognised roles (Anheier et al., 2003). Informal volunteering is also culturally universal and is present in all human societies (Butcher & Einolf, 2017).

#### *3.3.1.4 Intended beneficiaries*

According to Cnaan et al. (1996), the intended beneficiaries of volunteering are others/strangers, friends/relatives and oneself. This dimension suggests that

volunteering is directed at someone and that individuals volunteer to help/assist someone. In order to better understand this dimension, Wilson (2000) indicates that volunteering is “any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group, or organisation” (p. 215). Barlow and Hainsworth (2001) also point out that “the benefits of volunteerism extend to both giver and recipient” (p. 204). This is supported by Haski-Leventhal et al. (2011), who state that “by helping others, volunteers also help themselves” (p. 140). According to Wilson (2000), I therefore add another category, namely, the organisation. My reasoning here is that volunteering can be directed not only at someone but also at someone and/or something. I make use of the term ‘something’ because the intended beneficiary of volunteering could be an environmental organisation (Parboteeah et al., 2004), the community, the environment, a school (Hodgkinson, 2003), a social movement or even an animal shelter/organisation (Snyder & Omoto, 2008). Smith (2000) refers to the additional category I have mentioned as abstract notions such as the environment or society. The intended beneficiary or beneficiaries will therefore depend on the structure of the volunteering activity as well as the type of organisation the volunteer is associated with.

### **3.3.2 Volunteering definition guiding this study**

The above section highlights that the definition of volunteering contains many conceptual inconsistencies as it can include both compulsory participation as well as remuneration (Carson, 2000). Carson (2000) further highlights the need for me to clearly demarcate the volunteering term that is applicable in this study. This author points out that various conceptual definitions of volunteering exist and data disparities occur because it is not clearly understood what volunteering entails in the context of a specific survey. Handy et al. (2000) also maintain that the term ‘volunteer’ is too general. This makes it difficult to make generalisations or policy recommendations, and definitional inconsistencies create problems for measurement and restrict the utility of data (Petriwskyj & Warburton, 2007).

Taking into consideration the different dimensions and categories of volunteering and the advice given by Carson (2000) to clearly demarcate the volunteering term that is

applicable in this study, I therefore used the following definition of formal volunteering<sup>31</sup> as highlighted by Snyder and Omoto (2008) to guide this study. Volunteering actions are (i) voluntary (conducted freely under no obligation); (ii) they involve providing a service to others (beyond the immediate family) or to a specific cause, and the decision to do so entails thoughtful deliberation or decision-making; (iii) the service extends over a recurring period of time (weeks, months or years rather than a once off event or activity); (iv) the decision to volunteer is made without expectations of reward or punishment; (v) it is an unpaid activity; (vi) it entails helping an individual or cause that requires and seeks help; and finally, (vi) it is usually performed via agencies or formal organisations. Messias et al. (2005), who conducted a qualitative study on volunteerism in poor communities from a holistic health perspective, employed a similar definition of volunteer community work, that is, ongoing, unpaid participation occurring for at least 12 months, which extends beyond the family.

The broad definition of volunteering provided in the preceding section encompasses only a fraction of what the term entails. Thus, a mere definition is not sufficient, because volunteering is not a single entity and cannot be described in general terms because it is an inherently multidimensional phenomenon (Hustinx, Cnaan et al., 2010). In order to understand the full extent of this concept, differences in the nature of the experience and the kind of setting in which it takes place need to be explored (Paine et al., 2010), as volunteering can be found in a wide variety of activities (Roy & Ziemek, 2000).

### **3.4 VOLUNTEERING PERSPECTIVES**

Voluntary activity can be understood within different paradigms. These paradigms shape research on volunteering and also frame research perspectives on volunteering.

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<sup>31</sup> In a study on formal volunteering conducted by Parboteeah et al. (2004), reasons are provided for the specific focus on formal volunteering. These include that while informal volunteering is more spontaneous in nature, formal volunteering is more structured and organisations are more likely to encourage this type of volunteering, making their results more relevant for organisations. My reason for focusing on formal volunteers is aligned with these authors. Roy and Ziemek (2000) also state that most operational definitions of volunteering focus on a formal form of volunteering.

### **3.4.1 Dominant<sup>32</sup>/non-profit paradigm**

Within the dominant/non-profit paradigm, volunteering is seen as an act of philanthropy or altruism – where a person gives their time rather than money. In this context, volunteering is not only an additional resource but also contributes to the economy in general (Lyons, Wijkstrom, & Clary, 1998). In the field of social welfare, volunteering takes place through large, formally structured non-profit organisations, which offer public services that may also be offered by government agencies. Volunteers are considered a resource in the form of unpaid labour but are treated like human resources and undergo selection, induction and training processes (Rochester et al., 2010). Rochester et al. (2010) are of the opinion that this paradigm has shaped the volunteering industry and contributed to the emergence of volunteer management. Such volunteering usually takes place in formal charitable organisations as well as agencies such as schools and hospitals (Paine et al., 2010). Economics, Law and Management are typically the disciplines that conduct volunteering research within this paradigm (Lyons et al., 1998). The non-profit paradigm was also the context for this research study.

### **3.4.2 Civil society paradigm**

The civil society paradigm is rooted academically in political science and sociology and volunteer activities include social welfare and political participation. Volunteers are typically affiliated to voluntary associations, such as clubs, societies and self-help organisations where no staff is employed, which serve their members rather than the public. Voluntary action is based on “people’s ability to work together to meet shared needs and address common problems” (Lyons et al., 1998, p. 52). This voluntary action can be characterised as activism. Although there is the perception that these associations exist for the benefit of their members rather than the public, their contributions and importance should not be underestimated (Rochester et al., 2010).

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<sup>32</sup> Although Lyons et al. (1998) coined the term ‘non-profit paradigm’, Rochester et al. (2010) use the term ‘dominant paradigm’.

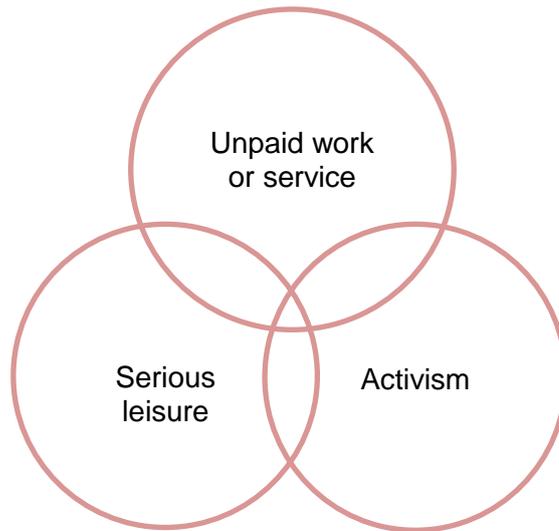
### 3.4.3 Volunteering as serious<sup>33</sup> leisure

Individuals who engage in volunteering as leisure do so because they want to – having the option to accept or reject the activity on their own terms – using their abilities and resources in an enjoyable (casual leisure) or a fulfilling (serious leisure) way. Serious leisure can be defined as “the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity sufficiently substantial, interesting and fulfilling for the participant to find a (leisure) career there acquiring and expressing a combination of special skills, knowledge and experience” (Elkington & Stebbins, 2014, p. 14). Volunteering as leisure is done for the enjoyment of the activity (Pearce, 1993). The motivation to volunteer within this paradigm is essentially intrinsic and engagement rests on the notion of enthusiasm. Activities take place in fields such as the arts, culture, sports and recreation through voluntary associations, local clubs, organisations and community-based groups (Paine et al., 2010; Rochester et al., 2010). Volunteers may take on roles such as coaching, teaching, managing, judging competitions and administrative support (Rochester et al., 2010).

These three perspectives provide more insight into this complex concept. Nevertheless, Rochester et al. (2010) maintain that, on their own, these perspectives do not reflect the complexity of volunteering and, hence, have captured them in the model depicted in Figure 3.1.

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<sup>33</sup> The use of the adjective ‘serious’ in this context was first employed by Stebbins (1982, as cited in Elkington & Stebbins, 2014) to express the way his respondents defined the activities in their everyday lives. It embodies qualities such as earnestness, sincerity, importance and carefulness.



**Figure 3.1:** A three-perspective model of volunteering

**Source:** Rochester et al. (2010)

### **3.5 VOLUNTEER TYPOLOGIES**

To further explore the complexity of volunteering, it is necessary to enhance our understanding of this concept by considering the various forms it can take and the different kinds of volunteers that provide their service to organisations.

#### **3.5.1 Types of volunteer activity**

Petriwskyj and Warburton (2007) are of the opinion that the breadth and depth of volunteer activities have not been recognised. Volunteering includes a diverse range of activities; however, there are, in particular, four types of volunteer activity that occur in all parts of the world, namely, mutual aid or self-help; philanthropy or service to others; participation; and advocacy or campaigning.

*Mutual aid or self-help* entails people working together to address their shared problems and challenges and is the oldest form of voluntary action (Rochester et al., 2010). This type of volunteer activity is a big source of social and economic support in both developing and industrialised countries for the welfare of communities (Dingle,

2001; Smith, 1999). In developing countries such as Kenya, mutual aid is expressed in the Harambee tradition where provision is made for health, water and education. In industrialised countries, on the other hand, self-help is expressed through organisations that are established to deal with a particular disease or illness by providing sufferers with assistance and support (Smith, 1999).

*Philanthropy or service to others* occurs all over the world but is more prevalent in developed and industrialised societies. The recipient of this type of volunteering is generally a third party such as a community. This type of activity is carried out through non-profit, statutory, community and corporate organisations (Dingle, 2001; Smith, 1999). One example of this type of volunteering involves individuals who are recruited by the United Nations to provide developmental or humanitarian assistance (Smith, 1999).

*Participation* entails the voluntary involvement in governance, political and decision-making processes (Dingle, 2001; Rochester et al., 2010; Smith, 1999). Volunteers can serve as committee members, local representatives or be representatives on government consultation bodies. This type of volunteering is prevalent in democratic societies with strong civil society traditions (Dingle, 2001; Smith, 1999).

The last type of volunteering activity is called *advocacy* or *campaigning*. Individuals lobby/campaign to promote social change and social justice (Dingle, 2001). This type of activity can be both local and global. Although this type of volunteering may result in conflict with the state, volunteers engaged in this activity have alerted the public to issues that range from human rights abuse to environmental destruction (Smith, 1999).

### **3.5.2 What volunteers do**

Volunteer services can be classified according to what volunteers do. Volunteers may be involved in either direct or indirect services. Volunteers involved in *direct service* roles are highly visible, usually work alongside paid staff and are in direct contact with the clientele of that specific organisation. Examples of direct service activities are mentoring and tutoring (Hartenian, 2007; Terry, Harder, & Pracht, 2012). Volunteers

who carry out *indirect service* roles perform support services – in such cases, the client is the organisation. Examples of indirect services are answering phones, maintaining facilities, planning and preparing for events, promotional activities, recruitment, and management and fundraising (Hartenian, 2007; Terry et al., 2012). Hager and Brudney (2004) further divide indirect service roles into internal and external administrative roles. The internal administrative role deals with typical administrative activities such as filing, making copies and answering phones, whereas the external administrative role entails activities such as fundraising and public relations.

### **3.5.3 Length of service**

Another volunteering typology that is commonly used to classify volunteers is length of service. Volunteering work is structured very differently from formal employment (Pearce, 1993), with volunteers providing their services on either a long-term, short-term or episodic basis.

*Long-term volunteers* provide their services to an organisation for an extended period of time and this commitment does not have an end date (Terry et al., 2012). These are volunteers who have a strong emotional or philosophical attachment to an organisation and its mission and feel part of the organisation (Sakaduski, 2013). Although it depends on the type of volunteer programme, most organisations prefer long-term volunteers who can provide a lengthy commitment. As a result of the high return on investment that can be obtained from long-term volunteers, organisations will be likely to spend more resources on these volunteers (Terry et al., 2012). *Short-term volunteers* express a desire to help but cannot make a long-term commitment and will provide their service for a limited period. These types of volunteers are easy to find as they are a stable source that can be used occasionally; however, they are difficult to retain (Sakaduski, 2013; Terry et al., 2012). Despite short-term volunteers being unable to make a long-term commitment, this does not mean that they do not want to continue to volunteer. Accordingly, short-term volunteers can be further categorised into episodic volunteers. These are volunteers who provide their services occasionally for short periods of time (Macduff, 2005).

*Episodic volunteers*<sup>34</sup> provide an infrequent service to an organisation. Their time commitment is minimal, and they make themselves available for a single day or a multiday event. Although this type of volunteering is highly flexible for the volunteers themselves, the management of these volunteers is challenging (Terry et al., 2012). Macduff (2005) distinguishes between temporary, interim and occasional episodic volunteers. Temporary episodic volunteers provide their services for a very short duration, perhaps for a few hours or days. They usually do not volunteer again and are not engaged in the organisation. Interim episodic volunteers provide their services on a regular basis but for a duration of less than six months. Occasional episodic volunteers volunteer at regular intervals but for short periods. These volunteers usually return – an example would be a volunteer providing their services at an annual event (Macduff, 2005). Most organisations therefore use a combination of long-term and short-term volunteers.

#### **3.5.4 Degree of organisation**

One of Cnaan et al.'s (1996) dimensions of volunteering, the structure of volunteering, discussed earlier may be categorised as either formal or informal. Paine et al. (2010), however, indicate that these categories are too simplistic and are thus inadequate, as informal volunteering is very broad and, in formal volunteering, questions are being raised regarding the definition of the term 'organisation'. These authors therefore propose categories related to the degree of organisation that volunteers may fall into. Accordingly, volunteering may also be classified as organised, collective or individual volunteering (Paine et al., 2010). Volunteers who are involved in *organised volunteering* do so through formally constituted entities that have a long-term or permanent existence. These entities will have a specific aim, purpose and operational procedures. Billis (1993, as cited in Paine et al., 2010) identifies three types of organisations that make use of volunteers. The first type of organisation is associations; these are membership organisations that rely on the unpaid work of volunteers to carry out their functions. Such associations elect a committee to manage

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<sup>34</sup> Paine et al. (2010) further distinguish volunteering involvement according to different intensities (amount of time the volunteer is involved in the activity). Examples are serial episodic, episodic, and long-term and sporadic long-term volunteering. For the sake of clarity, I will only be briefly discussing episodic volunteers.

their day-to-day duties. The second type, bureaucracies, are also considered to be typical organisations and are found in both the for-profit and statutory sectors, as well as charities. The operational system is hierarchical, functions such as authority are clearly defined and volunteers play an ancillary role in the organisation. The last type of organisation is referred to as a hybrid voluntary agency. In this type of organisation, features of both associations and bureaucracies are combined. A governing body is elected, and managers and staff are employed to perform the day-to-day operational activities.

*Collective volunteering* may be seen as a generally adhoc activity and takes place within informally organised groups. Where features of associations are adopted, these groups may be regarded as hybrids and may even include family and friends. Volunteers are seen as a group of individuals rather than a legal entity or organisation and no formal rules exist as to who is and is not a member – hence the term ‘ad hoc’ is used to describe this degree of organisation, as the group often disbands once the volunteering purpose has been achieved (Paine et al., 2010).

The final degree of organisation is called *individual volunteering*. As the name implies, volunteering is conducted on an individual basis and volunteers are not associated with a specific group or organisation. This degree of organisation may also be classified as informal volunteering, which was discussed and defined earlier. Examples of individual voluntary activities include coaching/mentoring, giving advice, providing childcare or assisting a neighbour or family/friends (Paine et al., 2010).

### **3.6 A LOCAL STATISTICAL PERSPECTIVE**

In an attempt to capture the global impact and rates of volunteering, my initial intention in this section was to provide a statistical overview of worldwide trends in voluntary activity. During the initial planning phase of this chapter, this section was originally titled “A global and local statistical perspective”. However, after an extensive information search I abandoned this endeavour as data on global volunteering rates are mixed and highly contested, as differences can be found for the same country from one study to another owing to issues such as definitional and methodological concerns

(Salamon, Sokolowoski, & Haddock, 2011). A reflection of the literature provided in the preceding sections also highlights these definitional concerns. In view of these concerns and as this study was conducted in the South African context, I therefore found it appropriate to provide information on volunteers in this context only.

The first survey on voluntary activity in South Africa, titled the Volunteer Activities Survey (VAS), was conducted by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) in 2010. The purpose of this survey was to provide information on the scale of volunteer work and, more specifically, to report on and provide a profile of those engaged and involved in volunteering activities, as well as to estimate the economic value of volunteer work (StatsSA, 2014). The most recent VAS<sup>35</sup> released in 2014<sup>36</sup> summarises the following highlights<sup>37</sup> related to volunteering in South Africa (StatsSA, 2014):

- South Africa's volunteer rate increased by 2.1 percentage points to 5.8% in 2014, constituting an increase of approximately 898 000 volunteers from 2010.
- Women made up the majority of volunteers (60.7% in 2014).
- Ninety percent of volunteering activities were conducted in the community as well as the social services industry.
- There are more adult volunteers.
- Although there was an increase in the number of volunteers the average annual hours spent on volunteering activities decreased.
- Volunteering activities encompassed helping a cause that volunteers believe in.
- The 610.4 million volunteer hours are (approximately) equivalent to more than 293 000 full-time jobs.
- Finally, the volunteer hours spent in 2014 are valued at R9.8 billion.

Niyimbanira and Krugell (2014) conducted an in-depth analysis of the 2014 VAS survey and found that voluntary activity is carried out by an older generation of adults (the average age of respondents was 43 years). Furthermore, large differences were

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<sup>35</sup> The results of the survey are based on organisation-based volunteering, direct volunteering and both organisation-based and direct volunteering activities.

<sup>36</sup> The next VAS was expected to be released in March 2019 but was not yet available when this thesis was submitted for examination.

<sup>37</sup> The purpose of this section was not to provide cumbersome statistical information but rather to provide a summary of the information contained in the VAS (2014).

found between the average number of hours volunteered per population group, with the black population group reporting on average almost double the hours volunteered in comparison to the other population groups.<sup>38</sup> What is also significant is that the black population is characterised as having significantly lower levels of education. This is contrary to studies that have linked education to volunteering rates (e.g. Boraas, 2003; Freeman, 1997; Kim, Kang, Lee, & Lee, 2007; Okun & Michel, 2006; Shye, 2010; Vaillancourt, 1994; Voicu & Voicu, 2009). Other noteworthy findings are that helping others is one of the main predictors of the hours spent volunteering and there is no interrelationship between hours spent volunteering and education and income. It is therefore evident that the findings in this survey challenge the stereotypes<sup>39</sup> associated with volunteering in the literature (Wilson, 2001).

The information presented in the above section is reflective of the uniqueness of the volunteering context in general. This reaffirms the value of studying this phenomenon from a qualitative perspective, thereby enabling the exploration of local knowledge to provide for the use and application of contextualised information (see Marecek, 2003).

### **3.7 BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING**

Volunteering has an impact not only on the individual volunteer but also on those who benefit from it. One of the characteristics or defining principles of volunteering is that it is “of benefit to others” (Paine et al., 2010, p. 10). The beneficiaries of volunteering are the volunteers themselves, as well as organisations, communities and the societies in which volunteers operate (Holmes & Smith, 2009; Salamon et al., 2011). Wilson (2000) and Wilson and Musick (2000) maintain that although volunteering is an activity conducted for the benefit of other people, groups or organisations, this does not exclude the volunteers themselves from benefitting from their work. Cnaan et al. (1996) also include the intended beneficiaries as one of the dimensions of

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<sup>38</sup> The population groups in this survey consisted of black/African, coloured, Indian/Asian and white.

<sup>39</sup> In the literature, volunteering in general has been associated with a specific class, culture, income, ethnic group and education level (Wilson, 2001).

volunteering. It is therefore appropriate that the benefits/beneficiaries of volunteering are explored in greater detail.

I have categorised the benefits/beneficiaries of volunteering as external and internal. I firstly discuss economic and community/societal benefits as the external benefits/beneficiaries and conclude the section with a reflection on the internal benefits.

### **3.7.1 Economic benefits**

The economic benefits of volunteering are unquestionable and substantial (Brown, 1999; Smith, 1999). Volunteers contribute to promoting sustainable economic development (Sajardo & Serra, 2010) and their labour is used to produce economic outputs for the benefit of others (Pho, 2008). Although the economic benefits of volunteering are substantial, the value of volunteering is not easily quantifiable (Brown, 1999). As a result, the economic impact of volunteering is often ignored by statisticians and is not included in gross domestic product (GDP) statistics because no monetary transaction takes place (Hiding in plain sight, 2009; Pho, 2008). Because of this, few scientific advances have been made in this field (Sajardo & Serra, 2010). In order to affirm the contribution of volunteering, Salamon et al. (2011) attempted to measure the economic value of volunteer work. Despite the lack of systematic comparative data available, these authors found that the volunteer workforce represents an enormous economic workforce and if it could be equated to a country it would be the second most populous country in the world behind only China. Furthermore, the total economic value of the world's volunteer workforce can be estimated at US\$1.348 trillion (as of 2005). These (tentative) estimates thus effectively highlight the economic benefits of volunteering (Salamon et al., 2011).

Although I have categorised economic benefits as an external benefit that results from volunteering, Rochester et al. (2010) indicate that volunteers themselves may also experience indirect economic benefits, such as the value of training courses and the enhanced earning power resulting from the acquisition of new skills.

### **3.7.2 Community and societal benefits**

Individuals within the communities in which volunteers provide their services benefit positively, with community benefits such as improved quality of life, service provision, social cohesion, social capital, reduced crime and enhanced well-being having been reported. On a broader societal level, volunteering contributes to social cohesion, social capital, citizenship and changes in social and environmental values (Holmes & Smith, 2009; Rochester et al., 2010). Volunteering builds trust and reciprocity among communities and in society in general, which results in cohesiveness, stability and economic prosperity (Smith, 1999).

In terms of the internal benefits of volunteering, I refer to these as the benefits experienced by the volunteers themselves as a result of conducting voluntary work. These will be discussed next.

### **3.7.3 Benefits derived by the volunteers themselves**

Rochester et al. (2010) are of the opinion that in terms of the benefits/beneficiaries of volunteering, the most comprehensive evidence exists for the benefits derived by the volunteers themselves, with significant literature being available in this regard (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2011).

Volunteering fosters interpersonal trust, toleration, empathy for others and general respect (Wilson & Musick, 2000). Smith (1999) identifies benefits such as personal satisfaction and gains in confidence and self-respect. Additional personal benefits include personal achievement and social interaction (Low, Butt, Paine, & Smith, 2007). Volunteering has also been linked to an improvement in physical and mental health (Wilson & Musick, 2000). The findings of a systematic review to ascertain the health effects and benefits of volunteering reveal that volunteering has been shown to decrease mortality and improve mental health, life satisfaction, healthy behaviours and coping ability (Casiday, Kinsman, Fisher, & Bambra, 2008). According to Cnaan and Amroffell (1994), these benefits can be categorised as internal and social interaction rewards. Occupational benefits related to volunteering have also been identified such

as gaining new skills, networking, accumulating educational credentials and improving occupational opportunities (Niyimbanira & Krugell, 2014; Wilson & Musick, 2000). These are considered to be tangible or material rewards (Cnaan & Amroffell, 1994). Additionally, volunteering is beneficial to groups of people such as people with disabilities, the unemployed, the youth and older people.<sup>40</sup> Benefits cited for these groups are enabling social integration, improving employability and self-development, and active ageing (Smith, 1999).

### **3.8 MOTIVATIONS**

The preceding sections have shed some light on the various aspects that make up the phenomenon of volunteering. Although volunteering is an activity encouraged by society and is socially and culturally valued, it is nevertheless an activity that is conducted on a purely voluntary basis. Accordingly, features such as it being voluntary and an unpaid activity and having no expectation of reward should deter individuals from becoming involved in volunteering and reduce the likelihood of sustained involvement (Mannino, Snyder, & Omoto, 2011). These aspects highlight the motivational foundations of volunteering and Mannino et al. (2011) propose that “volunteerism is a motivated phenomenon, propelled by motivational forces that lead individuals to seek out volunteer activities and to surmount barriers that impede their participation as well as their sustained involvement” (p. 129).

Understanding the motives for volunteering is important for the management of NPOs (Prouteau & Wolff, 2008). The importance of understanding these motivations is evident in the large amount of attention that has been given to the motivational psychology of volunteering (Paine et al., 2010). Clary and Snyder (1999) view volunteering as “an intriguing psychological phenomenon” (p. 156) and thus adopting a motivational perspective to further understand volunteering might be useful in answering questions such as “why do people volunteer and what sustains voluntary helping?” (Clary et al., 1998, p. 1517). Motivation forms the cornerstone of

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<sup>40</sup> Numerous studies have been conducted to determine the effects/benefits of volunteering on older adults (see Morrow-Howell et al., 2003; Morrow-Howell, Hong, & Tang, 2009; Tang, Choi, & Morrow-Howell, 2010; Van Willigen, 2000 to name a few).

volunteering (Yeung, 2004) and understanding the motives of volunteers has also preoccupied much of the literature on volunteering (Esmond & Dunlop, 2004). Studying the motivations of volunteers is of significance as they form the core of the actualisation and continuity of voluntary work and shed light on the sociological conception of commitment and participation (Yeung, 2004).

Although the preceding paragraphs have highlighted the importance of understanding volunteer motivation, Pearce (1993) refers to the motivations for volunteering as a “mystery” (p. 59) and is of the opinion that there is no easy answer to understanding why individuals volunteer. This mystery has therefore resulted in a plethora of empirical research on this topic. Slaughter and Home (2004) further suggest that there is no generic response to understanding the motivations for volunteering. The purpose of this section is therefore not to report on the plethora of studies that have been conducted on the motivations for volunteering but to present general volunteer motivational theoretical frameworks and models that exist and that are currently used in the literature to explain volunteer motivation.

Volunteer motivations have been studied from an economic, psychological, sociological and relational perspective (Prouteau & Wolff, 2008). Understanding the motives for volunteering thus entails using different approaches (Papadakis, Griffin & Frater, 2004) and studies conducted on this topic make use of various models. Consequently, research studies on volunteer motivation incorporate or adapt at least one of the models that will be discussed in the subsequent section (Esmond & Dunlop, 2004).

### **3.8.1 Understanding volunteer motivation from a psychological, sociological and relational perspective**

In the following section, models that explain psychological, sociological and relational motives for volunteering will be discussed.

### 3.8.1.1 *The unidimensional model*

The *unidimensional model* of volunteer motivation does not distinguish between types of motives. Only one category of motives exists, which Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991) label succinctly as a “rewarding experience” (p. 281). In order to create this model, these authors conducted a comprehensive literature review from which 28 motives were identified. Based on these motives, they developed the Motivation to Volunteer (MTV) scale and administered it to both volunteers and non-volunteers. The results of their study showed that volunteers have both altruistic and egoistic motives. Furthermore, volunteers do not distinguish between these two types of motives but act on both. Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991) subsequently concluded that volunteers act on a combination of motives and not on a single motive or category of motives, and therefore called it a unidimensional model. Although this model is the least utilised (Widjaja, 2010), Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen’s (1991) research did provide an alternative perspective on volunteer motivation (Esmond & Dunlop, 2004).

### 3.8.1.2 *The two-dimensional model*

The *two-dimensional model* distinguishes between two volunteering motives, namely, altruistic and self-serving motives (Frisch & Gerrard, 1981). Altruistic motives are related to intangible rewards while self-serving (egoistic) motives are related to tangible rewards (Esmond & Dunlop, 2004). Frisch and Gerrard (1981) indicate that this model draws on Katz and Kahn’s (1978, as cited in Frisch & Gerrard, 1981) schema of motivation, which states that no one is motivated by altruistic motives alone and that all behaviour is motivated by either internal (social affiliation, value expression) or external (money, developing social contacts, career exploration) rewards. It is for this reason that Widjaja (2010) proposes two other possible categories, namely, intrinsic and extrinsic motives.

Similarly, Meier and Stutzer (2004, 2008) distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to volunteer. An intrinsic motivation stems from the internal reward received from caring for the welfare of others. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand,

is based on receiving a by-product of the volunteer work. The motivation to volunteer may consist of a combination of these rewards.

Intrinsically motivated volunteers receive an internal reward based on the direct result of their activity and/or the outcome of the volunteer work done. There are three types of intrinsic rewards (Meier & Stutzer, 2004, 2008):

- *Caring about the recipient's utility* implies that the volunteer's utility increases if other people are better off as a result of the volunteering activity or if inequality between individuals is diminished.
- *Benefiting from intrinsic work enjoyment* infers that despite what the outcome may be, enjoyment comes from performing the required task itself.
- *The act of helping gives enjoyment* and knowing that a contribution has been made to a good cause is internally self-rewarding.

Extrinsically motivated volunteers volunteer for instrumental reasons, as volunteering is seen as an investment and certain benefits are expected to result. Volunteering for the sake of helping others is secondary and the positive feelings experienced from helping others are absent. The following are extrinsic rewards associated with volunteering (Meier & Stutzer, 2004, 2008):

- *Volunteering is conducted as a means to invest in human capital.* Volunteering is conducted for the purposes of rebuilding or maintaining employment skills; doing community service is a prerequisite for employment and is done in the expectation of higher earnings potential in the future.
- Conducting volunteering to *invest in a social network* enables volunteers to form social contacts, which may assist in establishing business contacts or obtaining employment.
- Volunteering is conducted to *gain social approval* and to increase an individual's social standing. Social approval may increase expected future (material) rewards; however, social approval is valuable in itself.

### 3.8.1.3 *The three-dimensional model*

The *three-dimensional model* suggests that there are three major reasons for why individuals volunteer. Morrow-Howell and Mui (1989) acknowledge that “an individual’s decision to volunteer is a multifaceted phenomenon” (p. 22). This indicates that the main reasons for volunteering are based on altruistic, material and social motives. Altruistic motives focus on meeting the needs of others, whilst social motives focus on providing social interactions for the volunteer. Material motives on the other hand are based on the expectation of personal gain (Morrow-Howell & Mui, 1989).

### 3.8.1.4 *The multidimensional model*

The *multidimensional model* suggests that multiple categories of volunteer motives exist (Widjaja, 2010). The development of this model by Clary et al. (1998) was based on functional theorising for considering the motivational foundations of volunteerism. This theory is based on the principle that while people perform similar actions these actions perform different psychological functions. Clary et al. (1998) maintain that the key themes of the functional analyses that have been used to understand phenomena and processes such as attitudes, social relationships and personality can also be used to understand the “complex motivational foundations of volunteer activity” (p. 1517). Using functionalist theory to understand the motivational foundations of volunteerism, Clary et al. (1998) proposed a set of six motivational functions<sup>41</sup> that are served by volunteering, namely, values, understanding, enhancement, career, social, and protective. The *values* function provides the individual volunteer with an opportunity to express or act on altruistic and humanitarian values. The *understanding* function exposes volunteers to new learning experiences and enables them to exercise knowledge, skills and abilities that are unused. The *social* function is related to relationships with others and enables volunteers to strengthen social relationships. The fourth function is related to the volunteer’s *career* and individuals engage in volunteer work with the motive of gaining career-related experience through volunteering. The *protective* function is associated with the functioning of the ego.

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<sup>41</sup> These authors have also designed an instrument called the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) that can be used to assess these functions.

Individuals will volunteer to reduce negative feelings such as guilt or to address personal problems. The last function, *enhancement*, is also related to the ego; however, the focus is not on the elimination of negative aspects but rather on the growth and psychological development of the ego. Widjaja (2010) maintains that Clary et al.'s (1998) model best conceptualises the motivations for volunteering and has to date become the most widely used and accepted model. This model is undoubtedly the most widely known work on volunteering from a psychological perspective (Rochester et al., 2010).

### **3.8.2 Understanding volunteer motivation from an economic perspective**

Volunteer motivations are not only studied from a psychological perspective but also from an economic perspective.<sup>42</sup> For economists, volunteering would seem to be a paradox. Economists assume that human behaviour is self-interested and rational; volunteers, however, defy this assumption, as volunteering is an activity where costs exceed benefits (Hustinx, Cnaan et al., 2010). Prouteau and Wolff (2008) suggest that volunteer motivations are studied by economists for two reasons; namely, to understand the benefits that accrue to volunteers and to gain an understanding of why individuals choose to volunteer rather than give money. Although Ziemek (2006) is of the opinion that volunteer motivations have not been adequately addressed in the economics literature, some economics studies on volunteer motivations have nevertheless been conducted using three models, namely, the public goods, the private consumption and the investment models<sup>43</sup> (Roy & Ziemek, 2000). Differences between these models are based on assumptions regarding what motivates volunteers to give and what is of value to the volunteer (Ziemek, 2006).

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<sup>42</sup> Roy and Ziemek (2000) point out that motivations to volunteer can be both economic and non-economic. Examples of non-economic motivations are to make a change in society or to support a specific cause. Economic motivations could be to gain experience for professional opportunities. These motivations are similar to the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations discussed in the preceding section.

<sup>43</sup> Although these models provide an explanation for the microeconomic motivations to volunteer, results generated from studies using these models can predict important macroeconomic consequences (Roy & Ziemek, 2000).

### 3.8.2.1 *Economic models explaining volunteer motives*

The first economic model, the *public goods model*, is based on an altruistic premise. Individuals volunteer for the benefit of a public good or service with the intention to increase the total supply of the public good or service. This model suggests that individuals obtain utility because they increase the utility of others who directly benefit from the consumption of the public good or service. The principle of this model is based on altruism because individuals volunteer for the benefit of others. These individuals do not receive anything in return and also do not receive any utility from their own giving (Ziemek, 2006). In the second model, the *private consumption model*, the underlying benefit is based on self-value. The act of giving, as well as the reward(s) associated with volunteering, motivate individuals to volunteer. Individuals therefore receive private benefits (Handy & Mook, 2011). Examples of rewards are self-integration and satisfaction from carrying out the act of volunteering (Ziemek, 2006). Volunteering is seen as a “charitable gift” (Roy & Ziemek, 2000, p. 15). The third model, the *investment model*, assumes that volunteer work is an activity that raises one’s future earning power by providing work experience and potentially valuable contacts (Menchik & Weisbrod, 1987). Individuals use volunteering as an investment mechanism and are motivated by a desire to gain labour market experience, skills and attributes (Roy & Ziemek, 2000). The benefit associated with this model is the exchange value benefit, where individuals volunteer to get something in exchange for conducting volunteer work (Ziemek, 2006). The investment motives of volunteers have been identified as being provided with on-the-job training, gaining access to networks, signalling an ability and willingness to perform, the preparation of markets that may be profitable in the future and, lastly, to compensate for the decline in human capital (Hackl, Halla, & Pruckner, 2007).

## 3.9 VOLUNTEERING AS A PROCESS

In the literature, volunteering is also considered a process. Snyder and Omoto (2008) view volunteering as “a process that unfolds over time” (p. 7), as volunteering entails a process of choice – the decision to volunteer is influenced by specific values and motivations – and considerable time is spent in the volunteering environment. These

authors use a conceptual model to explain volunteering as a process which is characterised by three sequential stages, the antecedents stage, the experiences stage and the consequences stage. Each stage is associated with specific psychological and behavioural features (Omoto & Snyder, 1993, 1995; Snyder & Omoto, 2008). The *antecedents stage* identifies certain personality, motivational and life circumstance characteristics which determine who will become involved in volunteering. The *experiences stage* focuses on the act of volunteering, including interpersonal relationships and beneficial aspects. Lastly, while also focusing on the act of volunteering, the *consequences stage* focuses on the impact of volunteering at various levels (Omoto & Snyder, 1993, 1995; Snyder & Omoto, 2008). Similarly, Bussell and Forbes (2003) developed a marketing model to facilitate volunteers' experiences from a recruitment and retention perspective. This model portrays volunteering as a behaviour that goes through specific stages. These stages are identified as the determinants of volunteering, the decision to volunteer and the volunteer activity. The *determinants of volunteering* implies that volunteers have specific motivations for volunteering, the *decision to volunteer* depends on the fit between the potential volunteer organisation and the motivation of the specific individual and, lastly, the *volunteer activity* stage focuses on the experience(s) of volunteering in a particular organisation (Bussell & Forbes, 2003).

### **3.10 NEW PERSPECTIVES**

According to Rochester et al. (2010), the context within which volunteering takes place is changing as a result of societal changes and government policy development. As volunteering is affected by the changes in the environment in which it takes place (Murphy, 2004b), these changes have brought about new trends in volunteering to accommodate the changes in the volunteering environment. These new trends can be seen in the new kinds of volunteers such as virtual, tourism, international, corporate and disaster volunteers. These new perspectives, which are discussed in the next section, have provided more opportunities for first-time volunteers and are the result of globalisation, new technologies, private-sector volunteering initiatives and technological developments (United Nations Volunteers, 2011).

### 3.10.1 Virtual volunteering

*Virtual volunteering*<sup>44</sup> entails using information and communications technology to enable the volunteering process to be carried out away from the organisation. It is formally defined as the “application of information and communications technology to the process of volunteering” (Murray & Harrison, 2005, p. 33). Developments in technology have extended volunteering activities beyond face-to-face contact (United Nations Volunteers, 2011). With virtual volunteering, volunteer tasks and activities are conducted via the internet using a home or work computer. This type of volunteering offers opportunities to individuals who would not normally be able to participate, who have time constraints and who have physical limitations (Wymer, Knowles, & Gomes, 2006). Individuals who engage in this type of volunteering come from all age groups, educational and work backgrounds, and various geographies and ethnicities. These volunteers are professionals, students, stay-at-home parents and teenagers – although anyone can do this type of volunteering (Cravens & Ellis, 2014). Virtual volunteering consists of two types of activities, namely, providing technical assistance and direct contact. Providing technical assistance entails sharing expertise on projects and providing support to NPOs. Typical activities include conducting online searches, consulting, translating documents, and managing websites and online databases. Providing direct contact entails tutoring, involvement in online chat rooms and distributing electronic newsletters (Wymer et al., 2006).

### 3.10.2 Volunteer tourism

*Volunteer tourism* is a form of tourism where, as part of their travels, the tourist volunteers in a local community (Sin, 2009). More specifically, volunteer tourism can be defined as “those tourists who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organised way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society or environment” (Wearing, 2001, p. 1). The link between

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<sup>44</sup> Virtual volunteering is also referred to as online volunteering, cyber service, online mentoring or teletutoring (Wymer et al., 2006). Scholarly articles make reference to online volunteering whereas published books use the term ‘virtual volunteering’.

volunteering and travel dates back to the nineteenth century when teachers, doctors and missionaries travelled to assist others (Benson, 2011). The idea of this type of volunteering is to develop a form of travel that is beneficial to the host country's community and environment. This type of volunteering came about as a result of the need to develop new ways of conducting tourism. Although tourism should have a positive impact on the host destination, it is often criticised for reinforcing dependencies rather than delivering on the promise of promoting tourism in developing countries (Sin, 2009). Activities in which these volunteers participate vary from scientific research, conservation projects, medical assistance, economic and social development to cultural restoration (Wearing, 2001). Benson (2011) even refers to this form of volunteering as a "sector" (p. 1), where organisations from charities to profit-making organisations offer projects to individuals, families, students and groups.

### **3.10.3 International volunteering**

*International volunteering* entails qualified professionals travelling to other (usually developing) countries to work on specific projects. These projects are aimed at alleviating poverty and achieving positive sustainable development. Volunteers offer their skills to areas of the developing world that have been affected by conflict, disease, poverty or environmental degradation. International volunteering is long term, professional and developmental in nature (Thomas, 2001). International volunteers are individuals who work "outside of their own country in a developing community, at its request, for an extended period under local conditions, with some assistance to cover basic needs, and with some support from a facilitating agency" (Devereux, 2008, p. 369). Various stakeholders, such as the state, the corporate sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), are involved and promote this type of volunteering (Baillie Smith & Laurie, 2011), which is characterised by six criteria, namely, humanitarian motivation, reciprocal benefit, living and working under local conditions, long-term commitment, local accountability, and linkages to causes rather than symptoms (Devereux, 2008). International volunteering is linked to development work (Thomas, 2001) and can provide tangible contributions through skills and resource transfers whilst promoting international understanding and solidarity (Lewis, 2006). The reciprocal nature of international volunteering is evident not only in its

impact on global equity and the enhancement of global citizenship but also on the individual volunteer's professional identity and career progression through skills enhancement (Baillie Smith & Laurie, 2011).

#### **3.10.4 Corporate volunteering**

*Corporate volunteering*, commonly referred to as workplace, employee or employer-supported volunteering (Holmes & Smith, 2009), emerged in the United States in the 1970s (Allen, 2003). Although many organisations have traditionally played a leadership role in their communities, this phenomenon has spread throughout the world as a result of pressures from various stakeholders as well as a demand for organisations to demonstrate their corporate social responsibility (Allen, 2003). Organisations engage in corporate volunteering to demonstrate their community involvement and social responsibility (De Gilder, Schuyt, & Breedijk, 2005). Parker and Jarvis (2015) indicate that the definition of corporate volunteering is constantly evolving, it can however be defined as “the encouragement and facilitation of volunteering in the community through the organisation by which an individual is employed” (p. 214). Organisations will typically encourage and enable employees to volunteer and contribute to social goals by doing work for NPOs during their paid working hours (Anheier et al., 2003; De Gilder et al., 2005). Employees usually volunteer on an individual, group or team basis and they do so occasionally or once-off (Holmes & Smith, 2009). The premise behind encouraging corporate volunteering is that it results in benefits for the community, the individual volunteer and the organisation (Allen, 2003).

#### **3.10.5 Disaster volunteers**

Responding to, preparing for and attending to the aftermath of disasters requires the services of dedicated, knowledgeable and skilled personnel (Cain, Morgan, & Lillpop, 2012). *Disaster volunteers* are volunteers who prepare for and respond to natural disasters and natural and political crises (Rochester et al., 2010). Examples of such events are the tsunami in Southeast Asia and the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York (Rochester et al., 2010). Natural disasters include earthquakes,

floods and hurricanes. There are various well-known volunteer, government and NGOs that have been established and that train volunteers for this specific purpose (Coppola, 2015). Disaster volunteers may be categorised as either affiliated or unaffiliated. Affiliated volunteers are volunteers who are already part of a recognised response group. These volunteers have been recruited and trained by that specific organisation. Unaffiliated volunteers, on the other hand (also known as spontaneous/convergent/walk-in volunteers), are volunteers who arrive at a disaster scene of their own accord owing to a desire to help. Their presence is unexpected, they are not associated with any recognised disaster response agency and they will probably have no credentials or emergency management or disaster training (Coppola, 2015; Kantor & Beckert, 2011).

### **3.11 CONCLUDING CONSIDERATIONS**

Despite the importance and contribution of volunteering, the field is not devoid of issues and challenges. I now reflect on these and provide my own concluding reflections on volunteering based on the preceding literature review.

It is evident that volunteering is a multifaceted and complex concept (Rochester et al., 2010). It is perhaps this complexity and the various ways in which volunteering manifests in different contexts that make it such a difficult task to manage and delineate (Smith, 1999). However, I regard it as a field that is adapting to the changes taking place in society and in the environment. The numbers of older people are increasing globally (Smith, 1999) and the field of volunteering has managed to seize this as an opportunity, as there has been an increase in the amount of volunteering being performed by older adults. This is evidenced by the numerous studies that have been conducted on volunteering among older adults (see footnote 41). Global and technological changes can be seen all around us and the responses from the volunteering field to these changes are reflective of the new forms of and trends in volunteering. These have also opened up the field to new groups of volunteers such as people with disabilities and the youth.

The value, importance and contribution of volunteering cannot be disputed. Yet despite the recognition and interest in voluntary work, measures of its real economic value are limited owing to methodological challenges and the availability of systematic information on the subject (Sajardo & Serra, 2010; Salamon et al., 2011). Measures of such value would provide important information on voluntarism and would enable volunteering to be located within a specific landscape (Brown, 1999). I maintain that paying more attention to the economic value of volunteering would highlight its magnitude and contribution. Rochester et al. (2010), however, are of the opinion that equating volunteering to money is problematic, because volunteers do not want their efforts reduced to numbers as the focus would then be on how they save money, thereby undermining their value. These debates once again highlight the complexities attributed to volunteering.

The final aspect that I reflect on here relates to the management of volunteers. It could be that my organisational background leads me to believe that people need to be managed, as this will result in efficiency, control and order. Volunteering, however, is governed by its own set of rules and enforcing a workplace model seems inappropriate (Rochester et al., 2010).

I now move on to Chapter 4 where I provide a conceptual framework of well-being as the meta-theoretical perspective in this study.

## CHAPTER 4

### WELL-BEING: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

*You need chaos in your soul to give birth to a dancing star* (Friedrich Nietzsche).

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Although there is an abundance of research on well-being, a single, unanimously accepted definition does not seem to exist. La Placa et al. (2013), Pollard and Lee (2003) and Ryan and Deci (2001) indicate that well-being is inherently complex, multifaceted and controversial. This is evident from the various diverse conceptualisations and operational models of well-being such as psychological well-being, subjective well-being and flourishing that exist in the literature. According to Dodge, Daly, Huyton, and Sanders (2012), well-being in the literature is not defined but discussed in terms of its dimensions. Ryan and Sapp (2007, p. 71) conceptualise well-being as “a person’s capacity for optimal functioning”. The focus is thus on strengths (White, 2009), the ability to persevere when faced with obstacles (Ryan & Sapp, 2007) and a personal drive to exist (Healey-Ogden & Austin, 2011). Sarvimäki (2006, p. 5); hence, White (2010, p. 160) uses the terms “doing well – feeling good” and “being satisfied”. Ryan and Deci (2001) indicate that well-being as a concept refers to “optimal psychological functioning and experience” (p. 142) but there is considerable debate in the literature concerning what defines optimal functioning. In addition, health, wellness and well-being are used interchangeably in the literature (Kirsten, Van der Walt, & Viljoen, 2009). Despite these conceptualisations and operational models, distinguishing well-being from similar concepts such as quality of life (Fleuret & Atkinson, 2007) and constructs such as flourishing and contentment, which are frequently considered synonyms for well-being, is challenging (MacDonald, 2017).

Given the plethora of conceptualisations and operational models of well-being, Dodge et al. (2012) propose that in order to ensure valid assessment, researchers should

provide a “clear and definite statement of the exact meaning of the term” (p. 222). As well-being constitutes the meta-theoretical perspective in this study, the purpose of this chapter is to provide a literature review and conceptual framework of well-being. Furthermore, as I have chosen the interpretive variant of hermeneutic phenomenology, where understanding is dependent on the perspective of the researcher (Finlay, 2009), this chapter also encompasses the theoretical notions that guided my interpretation of the data and, consequently, the findings of this study (cf. Barnard, Clur, & Joubert, 2016).

I start this chapter by providing possible reasons as to why it is difficult to locate a single definition of well-being by exploring the roots of the word and distinguishing well-being from similar constructs. Thereafter I discuss how knowledge on well-being can be acquired through the various orientations/approaches that have informed research on well-being. One-dimensional and multidimensional conceptualisations of well-being are also provided. I end this chapter by presenting a conceptual framework of well-being that I constructed as a synthesis of my meta-theoretical understanding of the construct.

## **4.2 CHALLENGES IN DEFINING WELL-BEING**

By turning to the roots of the word and reviewing constructs that are used interchangeably with well-being in the literature, more insight can be obtained on why a single definition of well-being does not exist.

### **4.2.1 The etymology of well-being**

In this particular section, I refer to the research of Healey-Ogden and Austin (2010) and the work of Dewar (2016), who both used etymology to provide an in-depth understanding of the term ‘well-being’. According to Healey-Ogden and Austin (2010), well-being is an “elusive” (p. 87) concept. In their study on uncovering the lived experience of well-being, these authors turned to the dictionary to explore this term. Adopting the same approach, I found two different dictionary definitions. The online Oxford Dictionary of English (Stevenson, 2015) defines well-being as “the state of

being comfortable, healthy or happy” whereas the Webster’s New World Dictionary (Agnes, 2003) defines well-being as “the state of being well, happy or prosperous” (p. 733). Healey-Ogden and Austin (2010) further explored the terms well and being as separate terms. ‘Well’ is related to the term ‘will’ and ‘being’ pertains to ‘existence’ but philosophically also implies the fulfilment of possibilities (Healey-Ogden & Austin, 2010). Similarly, Dewar (2016) explored the terms separately but adopted a different approach by using a poetic figurative description to understand well as an adjective in relation to being. Using a conception of depth to explore the term ‘well’, Dewar (2016) referred to the term as the “hole in the ground from which water sprang forth” (p. 58). According to this author, from a poetic perspective the well in relation to a person’s being signifies the possibility of vitality arising from the depths of an inner source. Therefore, “well-being arises from within our depths in a life giving, affirming, and nurturing manner” (Dewar, 2016, p. 58).

Fleuret and Atkinson (2007), however, contend that using semantics to understand well-being is problematic, as finding comparable terms in other languages is challenging. These authors provide the same English definition of well-being I provided in the preceding paragraph but indicate that French and German terms and their accompanying synonyms differ significantly. For example, *bien-être* is used in French, but this term pertains more to needs and an absence of psychological strain. In German, the context dictates which term is applicable. Either *wohlfahrt*, *wohlergehen* or *wohlbefinden* would be applicable, which relates to needs, physical well-being and state. However, when translated into English, the French and German terms are related to welfare (Fleuret & Atkinson, 2007). Apart from using etymology, undertaking a historical study of the concept of well-being like the one conducted by Oishi, Graham, Kesebir, and Galinha (2013) on the variations in concepts of happiness across languages, cultures, and time would also be valuable. For the purposes of this chapter an articulation of the selected dictionary definitions was however deemed as adequate in providing an indication of the challenges associated with locating a single definition of well-being.

It becomes apparent from the preceding discussion that turning to the roots of the word well-being results in various interpretations and does not necessarily succeed in coming closer to a single definition of the term.

#### **4.2.2 Well-being versus similar constructs**

According to Fleuret and Atkinson (2007), distinguishing well-being from similar constructs is challenging as the term 'well-being' is found in definitions of both health and wellness. In 1946, the World Health Organisation linked health and well-being by defining health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 1946, p. 1). This definition suggests that health includes aspects of well-being and comprises both physical and psychological components. Based on the dictionary definition of well-being in the previous section (see section 4.2.1), it also becomes evident that health is included in the definition of well-being (cf. Healey-Ogden & Austin, 2011). Furthermore, Myers, Sweeney, and Witmer (2000) define wellness as "a way of life oriented toward optimal health and well-being in which body, mind, and spirit are integrated by the individual to live more fully within the human and natural community" (p. 252). This definition includes aspects of health *and* well-being but implies a holistic view. Based on a review of the literature on how health, well-being and wellness have been conceptualised, Kirsten et al. (2009) found that these terms have been used interchangeably. In attempting to distinguish between these terms, these authors consider well-being as both facets and building blocks of health and wellness. Wellness is viewed as a holistic concept where harmony and balance are achieved from the promotion of the various domains of well-being and there is no difference between health and wellness (Kirsten et al., 2009).

Well-being is also considered a component of constructs such as quality of life and flourishing. In a study on the quality of life of older persons, Gabriel and Bowling (2004) offer empirical support for psychological well-being as a component of this construct. Subjective well-being is also linked to quality of life (see Cummins, 2000). In addition, various authors (Huppert & So, 2013; Keyes, 2002) use flourishing to describe hedonic and eudaimonic well-being.

### 4.3 ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE ON WELL-BEING

Knowledge on well-being can be acquired from four orientations, namely, positive psychology, salutogenesis, fortigenesis (May, 2014) and psychofortology (Wissing & Van Eeden, 1997). However, there seems to be a great deal of overlap and interrelatedness between these orientations in the literature. Given that these orientations all focus on the positive aspects of human functioning (Mittelmark & Bauer, 2017), the overlap would seem to be expected. For example, according to Mayer (2011), salutogenesis and fortigenesis are concepts that form part of the positive psychology movement. The fortigenic thought of Strümpfer (2005), which focuses on the origins of strengths, closely resembles positive psychology's approach to studying strengths. Furthermore, Strümpfer (2005) and Wissing and Van Eeden (2002), consider psychofortology as an alternative term for positive psychology. In addition, allocating constructs to one of these orientations is challenging. Strümpfer (1990) proposed five salutogenic constructs, namely, sense of coherence, personality hardiness, potency, stamina and learned resourcefulness. Cilliers and Kossuth (2004) consider these constructs as falling into the positive psychology orientation, whereas Coetzee and Cilliers (2001) consider them as psychofortology constructs. More recently, Eriksson and Mittelmark (2017) have proposed that salutogenesis is an umbrella concept comprising a variety of concepts and elements which are viewed as assets for health and well-being. For example, flourishing, which is commonly associated with positive psychology, is regarded as forming part of this umbrella (see Eriksson & Mittelmark, 2017).

As all these orientations share the same premise, namely, a positive focus on human functioning, for the purposes of this study I have opted to subsume them under the field of positive psychology, which is also the psychological paradigm I proposed in Chapter 1. Considered a science of strengths, positive psychology encompasses various theories and fields, which include salutogenesis, fortigenesis and psychofortology (Viviers & Coetzee, 2007). These orientations will each be discussed in their own right in the following sections. I commence, however, with a discussion on positive psychology, which adds to my discussion in Chapter 1.

### 4.3.1 Positive psychology

The primary purpose of positive psychology is to understand optimal functioning (Linley et al. 2006; Nafstad, 2015; Schueller, 2012) and enhance well-being and happiness (Carr, 2011). Core to the agenda of positive psychology is the development and realisation of human potential, which is considered to be the source of well-being and happiness (Nafstad, 2015). Meta-concepts such as well-being and flourishing underpin this dynamic movement (Lomas & Ivtzan, 2016). Sheldon and King (2001) indicate that positive psychology is “nothing more than the scientific study of strengths and virtues” (p. 216), whereas Nelson and Slife (2017) characterise it as a positive framework within which discussion is centred on “what is necessary for a good life” (p. 459). Placing emphasis on the positive aspects of human nature, positive psychology is rooted in an Aristotelian frame of understanding. Foundational to this frame of understanding is the notion that, as human beings, we are driven towards something good, in other words optimal functioning, and teleological goals and values will be introduced when striving for the good (Nafstad, 2015).

In positive psychology, which encompasses a broad research agenda and diverse topics with no disciplinary boundaries (Diener, 2009; Miller, 2008; Nafstad, 2015), states, traits, outcomes, constructs, strengths, positive qualities and virtues are investigated on an individual, group and institutional level using a variety of theories and models (Coetzee & Viviers, 2007).

#### 4.3.1.1 Positive psychology theories

*Self-determination theory (SDT)* is considered a “prototypical example of a theory within the broader field of positive psychology” (Sheldon & Ryan, 2011, p. 33) as it explains a multitude of positive outcomes. In SDT the focus is on motivation, in particular various types, such as autonomous and controlled motivation and amotivation, as well as its influence on performance, relationships, well-being, learning and personal experience. Core to this theory is understanding the self-regulation of behaviour. SDT is considered a macro theory as it studies aspects such as human behaviour, personality development and goal pursuits in relation to motivation (Deci &

Ryan, 2008b). In understanding motivation, three innate psychological needs are considered, namely, competence, autonomy and relatedness, which are essential for optimal functioning, growth, integrity and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2017). In SDT, competence refers to experiencing effectance and mastery, while autonomy, as distinct from independence, is related to volition, freedom and the self-regulation of actions and experiences. Relatedness meanwhile is regarded as a fundamental need and entails feeling connected to others (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

As existing theories of emotions were more applicable for studying negative emotions, in the field of positive psychology Fredrickson developed the *broaden and build theory* that focuses on understanding the effects, form and function of positive emotions (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2009; Fredrickson, 1998, 2001). According to this theory, certain distinct positive emotions such as joy, pride and love, among others, have the ability to “broaden people’s momentary thought-action repertoires and build enduring personal resources” (Fredrickson, 2001, p. 220). Positive emotions play a significant role in this theory and their brief effects on attention, cognition and motivation, as well as physiological responses, are described in relation to the longer-term consequences of the variety of personal resources individuals have at hand (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2013; Fredrickson, 2001). Fredrickson’s theory is based on three propositions. Firstly, positive emotions broaden our range of thoughts and actions and, secondly, these in turn build physical, intellectual, social and psychological resources. The third proposition explains the first two propositions, namely, that positive emotions have evolved in order to build resources rather than simply having an immediate focus (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2013). This theory further suggests that positive emotions are essential for optimal functioning; they act as solutions for negative emotions, fuel psychological resilience and enhance emotional well-being (Fredrickson, 2001).

Seligman’s *PERMA model of flourishing* consists of five indicators of well-being, which together enable individuals to flourish (Goodman, Disabato, Kashdan, Barry, & Kauffman, 2018; Seligman, 2011). Moving away from theories of happiness, Seligman proposed a new theory of well-being which reveals the nature of flourishing (Dodge et al., 2012; Seligman, 2011). Viewed as building blocks for flourishing, the model

comprises the following well-being components/elements, namely, positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment, representing the acronym PERMA (Dodge et al., 2012; Goodman et al., 2018; Seligman, 2011). According to Seligman (2011), all these elements are viewed as contributing to well-being and are measured subjectively and objectively. Consisting of both emotional states and the development of an individual's potential, this model integrates both hedonic (such as positive emotion) and eudaimonic (such as meaning) components (Goodman et al. 2018). The model further incorporates other dimensions of well-being such as social (relationships) and work (engagement) well-being.

Although the field of positive psychology is applicable to individuals, groups and institutions, constructs related to individuals (subjective experiences, emotions and traits) are applicable to this study and will be discussed in the following section (Coetzee & Viviers, 2007; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

#### *4.3.1.2 Positive psychology constructs*

Featuring prominently in positive psychology, *happiness* is characterised as a subjective phenomenon. Often equated with pleasure, happiness is however considered a deeper concept which entails both feeling and doing good (Froh, 2013). Further conceptualising happiness, Seligman (2002) proposed a theory of authentic happiness comprising three distinct paths/orientations (pleasure, meaning and engagement) which, if all are engaged, will result in a pleasant life. These paths/orientations are also associated with well-being (Carr, 2011). In the positive psychology literature, happiness is also conceptualised as subjective well-being, a detailed discussion of which is provided in section 4.4.1 of this chapter.

*Positive emotions* in positive psychology are categorised according to the past (satisfaction, contentment, fulfilment, pride and serenity), present (momentary pleasures and enduring gratifications) and future (optimism, hope, confidence, faith and trust) (Carr, 2011; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Considered positive in valence and resembling positive states, positive emotions include both activated (joy, happiness) and deactivated (serenity, peace) emotions (Schueller, 2012). According

to Forgeard, Jayawickreme, Kern, and Seligman (2011), positive emotion “is one of the most studied facets of well-being” (p. 82) and is viewed as being core to well-being. Positive emotion, considered to be a subjective aspect of well-being, is associated with hedonic philosophy (Forgeard et al., 2011; Seligman, 2011); however, it is not limited to happiness and includes a range of emotions such as joy, interest, contentment, compassion and love (Fredrickson, 2001; Seligman, 2011). Lastly, positive emotions serve as indicators of, and contribute to, well-being (Fredrickson, 2001; Seligman, 2011).

Traits, specifically *character strengths and virtues*, are also of central concern to positive psychology. In order to be considered as having good character, the six virtues of wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance and transcendence need to be present within an individual. These virtues are viewed as core characteristics and are valued by a variety of moral philosophers (Carr, 2011; Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Considered as morally valued personality traits (Park, 2013), character strengths are psychological ingredients that define the above-mentioned virtues. For example, the virtue of transcendence can be achieved through the character strengths of gratitude, hope and religiousness (Carr, 2011; Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Virtues and strengths are strongly associated with well-being (Biswas-Diener, 2006). The literature, however, suggests that some strengths have stronger links to well-being such as gratitude, hope, love, zest, curiosity and optimism/hope (Brdar & Kashdan, 2010; Park & Peterson, 2009; Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004; Peterson, Ruch, Beermann, Park & Seligman, 2007; Shimai, Otake, Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2006). According to Gillham et al. (2011), transcendent strengths, and strengths related to building connections with other people in particular, strongly predict well-being. Furthermore, a study conducted on character strengths and well-being among volunteers and employees found that endorsing and deploying strengths is related to well-being (Littman-Ovadia & Steger, 2010).

*Psychological capital (PsyCap)* is regarded as a multidimensional positive psychology, higher-order construct, which is defined as

... an individual's positive psychological state of development that is characterised by (1) having confidence (efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering towards goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resiliency) to attain success (Luthans, Youssef-Morgan, & Avolio, 2015, p. 2).

PsyCap comprises four individual facets, namely, self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience, and further represents "one's positive appraisal of circumstances and probability for success based on motivated effort and perseverance" (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007, p. 550). The premise of PsyCap is that each facet has cognitive agentic processes but once these facets are combined, the processes are enhanced, leading to desirable organisational outcomes (Luthans et al., 2007; Luthans, Youssef, Sweetman, & Harms, 2013). In the literature, PsyCap has been linked to well-being (see Luthans et al., 2013; Roemer & Harris, 2018).

The last positive psychology construct which I discuss, and which is applicable to this study is *calling*. Calling as a positive psychology construct contributes to an understanding of optimal functioning (see Wrzesniewski, Dekas, & Rosso, 2013), and is rooted in Western cultural and religious traditions (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009). According to Duffy and Sedlacek (2007), a calling pertains to professions that positively affect the broader society. The current working definition of a calling proposes that it is a "transcendent summons, experienced as originating beyond the self, to approach a particular life role in a manner oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and that holds other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation" (Dik & Duffy, 2009, p. 427). The reference to a transcendent summons suggests the involvement of a religious dimension in the term 'calling'. Duffy and Sedlacek (2007), however, maintain that a calling is not limited to religious connotations. A secular view has therefore recently been recognised in terms of which an individual pursues work based on a strong sense of inner direction to achieve self-fulfilment or personal happiness (Duffy & Dik, 2013; Hall & Chandler,

2005). This is confirmed by Hall and Chandler (2005), who note that a calling may arise from either a religious or a secular source. According to these authors, a secular calling arises from within the individual (Hall & Chandler, 2005) and thus the term has taken on a more individualistic and work-related meaning when linked to the domain of work and applied to an individual's occupation (Hall & Chandler, 2005; Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010; Wrzesniewski et al., 2013).

#### **4.3.2 Salutogenesis**

Antonovsky's salutogenic orientation pertains to focusing attention on the *origins of health* as opposed to disease and risk (Mittelmark & Bauer, 2017). Antonovsky grappled with the way people stay healthy despite the presence of pathogenic factors in their lives; in other words, how people cope with the stressors of human existence (Antonovsky, 1996; Strümpfer, 1995, 2013). Rather than focusing on risks, ill health and disease, it is, according to Antonovsky, more important to focus on resources and the capacity to create coping and health. Antonovsky therefore adopted a stress resource orientated approach or mode of thinking with regard to well-being, which emphasises problem solving and the capacity to use available resources (Lindström & Eriksson, 2005). Acknowledging the chaos of daily life, the purpose of Antonovsky's salutogenic view was to understand how individuals manage this chaos and related stressful situations (Eriksson, 2017).

Antonovsky saw health from a continuum perspective, where movement takes place on an axis between total ill health (dis-ease) and total health (ease) (Lindström & Eriksson, 2005). In terms of the continuum, health promotion and disease prevention are emphasised and the intention is to achieve a state of balance (Eriksson, 2017). Movement along the continuum towards health promotion is facilitated by generalised resistance resources (GRRs), which are referred to as "a property of a person, a collective or a situation which is, as evidence or logic has indicated, facilitated successful coping with the inherent stressors of human existence" (Antonovsky, 1996, p. 15). According to Antonovsky, having these resources, being aware of them and having the ability to use them would prevent disease (Vinje, Langeland, & Bull, 2017). Core to Antonovsky's salutogenic model is the sense of coherence construct, a mental

orientation that enables an individual to mobilise their GRRs in the pursuit of successful coping (Eriksson & Mittelmark, 2017).

### **4.3.3 Fortigenesis**

Like Antonovsky, Strümpfer (1995) maintains that stress is inherent to the human condition. In order to endure a life plagued by disorder and unpredictability a philosophy of fortitude is needed (Strümpfer, 1995). Strümpfer (1995, 2013) therefore expanded Antonovsky's salutogenesis into fortigenesis (*fortis* means strong in Latin), as pertaining to the *origins of strength*. Fortigenesis is supported by the active process of resiling (the verb form of resilience) (Strümpfer, 2013). Strength, in the fortigenic context, refers to being aware of a demand, a goal or a direction in terms of which to act and having the ability and energy to do what is required. An element of dynamism is present, implying a continuum as opposed to a static condition, as sources of strength are being developed, thus enabling demands to be endured (Strümpfer, 2013). In fortigenesis, human wellness is related to the positive components of behaviour. Focusing on these positive components creates strength and a positive approach to life's demands (Louw, 2015). Strümpfer (2003) also applied fortigenesis to a continuum comprising burnout and engagement. He (Strümpfer, 2003) argues that resilience, which is made up of various psychological variables, advances fortigenesis towards engagement and moves individuals away from burnout.

Following the work of Strümpfer (1995), fortitude was operationalised by Pretorius (Pretorius, 1998). Based on a theory of appraisal, fortitude is regarded as the strength to manage stress and stay well. Fortitude is considered a stress-resistant resource and as a strength it is derived from positive cognitive appraisals of the self, family environment and support from others thus enabling an individual to facilitate coping (Pretorius, 1998; Pretorius, Padmanabhanunni, & Campbell, 2016).

### **4.3.4 Psychofortology**

Expanding on the fortigenic thought of Strümpfer (1995, 2013), Wissing and Van Eeden (1997) reasoned that understanding psychological strengths is not exhaustive

and that an exploration of the nature, dynamics and manifestations of psychological well-being is needed as well as the enhancement thereof (Coetzee & Cilliers, 2001; Wissing & Van Eeden, 1997, 2002). Considered as the science of psychological strengths, psychofortology focuses on psychological well-being and the development of human capacities (Coetzee & Cilliers, 2001). Research within this sub-discipline has focused on the nature, structure and/or dimensions of psychological well-being, specifically to determine whether a general psychological well-being factor exists (see Wissing & Van Eeden, 2002) and overlaps in the various facets thereof in individualist and collectivist cultural contexts (see Wissing & Temane, 2008).

Given that salutogenic and fortigenic thought informed the development of the psychological sub-discipline of psychofortology (see Coetzee & Cilliers, 2001; Strümpfer, 2013), I now turn to discussing intrapersonal constructs as strength resources that help individuals cope despite difficult circumstances. Although the constructs discussed in the following section originated from salutogenic and fortigenic thought, such as the sense of coherence construct which originated from Antonovsky's salutogenesis theory, as guided by the article of Coetzee and Cilliers (2001), I opted to discuss them under psychofortology as it is a holistic orientation which encompasses both fortigenic and salutogenic constructs.

#### 4.3.4.1 *Psychofortology constructs*

*Sense of coherence (SOC)*, which is viewed by Antonovsky as the “answer to the salutogenic question” (Eriksson, 2017, p. 95), is a global orientation which reflects the way an individual makes sense of the world and responds to stressful situations in order to stay healthy (Eriksson, 2017). SOC comprises of three components, namely, comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness (Antonovsky, 1996). The cognitive component, *comprehensibility*, refers to the way an individual perceives stimuli from their environment and determines whether these stimuli are understandable, structured and predictable. The behavioural component, *manageability*, refers to the belief that the individual has resources at their disposal to meet the demands of the stimuli. Lastly, *meaningfulness*, considered the motivational

component, refers to the desire to resolve the stimuli (Coetzee & Cilliers, 2001; Eriksson & Mittelmark, 2017).

As Rotter (1966) proposed, *locus of control* attributes perceptions pertaining to the outcomes of events as contingent or independent of an individual. A belief in external control interprets the outcomes of events as being independent of the actions of the individual. On the other hand, a belief in internal control regards the outcomes of events as being contingent on the behaviour of that individual. *Self-efficacy*, which is considered a central mechanism in human agency, pertains to judgements concerning capabilities. These judgements influence motivation and behaviour and determine the effort that will be expended in relation to a specific action and the length of perseverance required in the face of adversity (Bandura, 1982). According to Bandura (1982), self-efficacy judgements influence the choice of activities: activities that exceed an individual's coping capabilities will be avoided, whereas activities that can be managed capably will be undertaken. *Hardiness*, as proposed by Kobasa (1979), is regarded as a personality characteristic that moderates the onset of illness in response to stress. According to Kobasa (1979), individuals who stay healthy during times of high stress exhibit more hardiness. Hardiness consists of three characteristics, namely, a strong commitment to activities, control over the events in one's life and viewing change as a challenge for further development (Kobasa, 1979).

Ben-Sira (1985) suggested that *potency* is a mechanism which alleviates tension in the coping-stress-disease relationship, and refers to an individual's self-confidence in their abilities to meet the demands of life as a result of experiencing successful coping in the past. As potency combines intrapersonal (individual capacity) and interpersonal (society) components, the interaction between the person and their environment needs to be considered part of the coping process. Successful coping is facilitated by perceptions of the predictability and meaningfulness of the social environment. On the other hand, *learnt resourcefulness*, a term coined by Rosenbaum (1989), refers to a range of behavioural and cognitive self-control skills that an individual uses to self-regulate emotional and cognitive responses when faced with stressful situations. Accordingly, Rosenbaum (1989, 1993) identifies three kinds of self-control processes, namely, redressive, reformative and experiential. Redressive self-control is used to

control responses to redress the disruption of normal functioning. In an attempt to change harmful behaviour, reformative self-control is used to adopt new behaviour. Lastly, experiential self-control enables individuals to experience pleasurable activities.

According to Strümpfer (2003), the following constructs advance fortigenesis and are regarded as variables which create resistance to burnout:

*Engagement* is defined by Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, and Bakker (2002) as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (p. 74). Vigour entails having high energy levels and mental resilience while working, willingness to invest effort in one’s work and persistence when faced with difficulties. Dedication is characterised as having a sense of significance, enthusiasm, pride and challenge. The third dimension, absorption, entails being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one’s work. In the literature, engagement has been found to be a unique predictor of and contributor to well-being (Schueller & Seligman, 2010; Vella-Brodrick, Park, & Peterson, 2009). In the fortigenic sense, *meaningfulness*, also considered a motivational component in the salutogenic construct of the sense of coherence, entails creating higher-order meaning by searching for existential significance (Strümpfer, 2006). Searching for meaning is a common response to challenge and forms part of our cognitive reaction when struggling toward strength. It also enables individuals to attain mental health (Strümpfer, 2003, 2006). According to Strümpfer (2003), there are meaning-providing (intrinsic aspirations) and meaning-destroying (extrinsic aspirations) variables. *Subjective well-being*, which is viewed as the antithesis of burnout and the primary concern of fortology (Strümpfer, 2003, 2006), is regarded as an important fortigenic construct and will be discussed in detail in section 4.4.1 of this chapter.

As a result of the overemphasis on cognition in the salutogenic orientation, Strümpfer (2003) has placed renewed emphasis on *positive emotions* in fortigenesis. Positive emotions in relation to a personally meaningful occurrence (object), are typically brief and fit into discrete categories of emotion families such as joy and fear (Fredrickson, 2001). According to Fredrickson (2001), positive emotions serve as indicators of well-

being and cultivating positive emotions can lead to improved well-being. *Coping* is viewed as an activity, which is used to master, reduce or minimise intrapsychic or environmental demands that represent potential threats or losses (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997). In attempting to anticipate or detect potential stressors, proactive coping is used to prevent or modify a stressful event prior to its occurrence. Anticipatory coping, on the other hand, entails preparing for the consequences of a likely stressful event.

The preceding section provided a discussion on a coping, strength and resource orientation to understanding well-being. These orientations are not exhaustive, however, and hedonic and eudaimonic thought has also influenced research on well-being.

#### **4.4 HEDONIC AND EUDAIMONIC APPROACHES TO STUDYING WELL-BEING**

Research on well-being has been informed by two traditions/philosophies, namely, hedonia and eudaimonia. These traditions/philosophies represent two opposing views of human nature and have provided scholars with a common language regarding well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2008a; Kashdan, Biswas-Diener, & King, 2008; McMahan & Estes, 2011; Ryan & Deci, 2001).

##### **4.4.1 Hedonia and subjective well-being**

Hedonia, or happiness, is described as the subjective experience of pleasure (Waterman, 2008), consisting of the presence of positive affect and the absence of negative affect (Deci & Ryan, 2008a). The association of well-being with pleasure or happiness can be traced back to philosophers such as Aristippus, Hobbes, DeSade and Bentham (Ryan & Deci, 2001). In this tradition, happiness is derived externally (Deci & Ryan, 2008a) and sources of pleasure are broad and vary from person to person (Waterman, 2008). As hedonia focuses on outcomes (Ryan, Huta, & Deci, 2008), the constructs accentuated in this tradition are happiness, positive affect and satisfaction with life (Dodge et al., 2012). In the hedonic approach, subjective criteria are used to determine well-being (McMahan & Estes, 2011). As such, in research,

hedonia has been associated with subjective well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2008a; Disabato, Goodman, Kashdan, Short, & Jarden, 2016).

In attempting to understand the good life, subjective well-being has focused on happiness. Subjective well-being enables individuals to evaluate for themselves, both cognitively and affectively, whether they are experiencing wellness (Deci & Ryan, 2008a; Diener, 2000; Waterman, 2008). Philosophically, subjective well-being is rooted in the thinking of Democritus who believed that happiness is not based on what a person possesses but on how they react to their circumstances (Diener, Scollon, & Lucas, 2003). This domain of well-being comprises both cognitive (satisfaction and domain satisfaction) and affective components (positive and negative affect) (Carr, 2011), each of which provides subjective information about the quality of an individual's life (Diener et al., 2003) and endorsing these components suggests a high level of subjective well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2008a). The research agenda on subjective well-being has focused on the factors that lead to subjective well-being, comparisons of overall levels of subjective well-being cross-nationally, the consequences of subjective well-being and interventions for promoting and sustaining subjective well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2008a; Waterman, 2008). As well-being is in general complex in nature, Diener et al. (2003) suggest a multifaceted approach to researching subjective well-being owing to its different components. Furthermore, as subjective well-being includes broad components, it should be viewed as an area of scientific interest rather than a single construct (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999).

#### **4.4.2 Eudaimonia and psychological well-being**

Eudaimonia is concerned with the process of fulfilling one's potential and living life to the full (Deci & Ryan, 2008a; Waterman, 2008). In this tradition, happiness comes from within (Deci & Ryan, 2008a). Although eudaimonia is traditionally defined as happiness, philosophically it is contrasted with hedonia (Waterman, 2008). Aristotle rejected the notion of hedonic happiness, suggesting it to be a vulgar ideal (Ryan & Deci, 2001, p. 145). He (Aristotle) extended eudaimonia beyond happiness to the expression of excellence and virtue, in other words, being true to oneself (Disabato et al., 2016; Ryan & Deci, 2001). Aristotle therefore viewed eudaimonia as flourishing

rather than happiness (Waterman, 2008) and emphasised that eudaimonia is not conceived as a feeling, mental state or cognitive appraisal but rather as “a way of living” (Ryan et al., 2008, p. 144). Aristotle’s objective was to provide guidelines on how to live (Ryff & Singer, 2008), thereby distinguishing between pleasure and the good life (Disabato et al., 2016). Although Aristotle did not associate eudaimonia with subjective experiences, different schools of philosophical thought are recognised in understanding this tradition (Waterman, 2008). For example, according to McMahan and Estes (2011), objective criteria, which are rooted in human nature, are used to determine well-being. However, Waterman (2008) indicates that currently there is no instrument that can measure eudaimonia as an objective condition. In his own work, this author uses subjective experiences to explore eudaimonia. Disabato et al. (2016) note that there is no common agreement among researchers as to what constitutes eudaimonia, although, in research, eudaimonia has been associated with psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2008a). For the purposes of this study, I have adopted the Aristotelian view of eudaimonia, which is translated as flourishing as opposed to happiness (cf. Waterman, 2008).

In response to the predominant focus within psychology on a hedonistic view of well-being, specifically subjective well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2008a), Ryff (1989) developed an alternative perspective, namely, psychological well-being. Although psychological well-being is not a new concept and was previously guided by Bradburn’s (1969) model of psychological well-being, conceptualised as independent dimensions of positive and negative affect, Ryff (1989) was of the opinion that this previous literature was not theoretically grounded. In essence, Bradburn conceptualised psychological well-being as happiness (Ryff & Singer, 2008). According to Ryff (1989), in studying psychological well-being, the essential features of eudaimonia such as aspects of positive functioning were neglected. Ryff’s (1989) multidimensional perspective was informed by the work of Aristotle and psychological theories of positive functioning (Deci & Ryan, 2008a; Ryff & Singer, 2008; Waterman, 2008). According to Waterman (2008), Ryff’s work is compatible with viewing eudaimonia as flourishing rather than happiness. Accordingly, Ryff structured psychological well-being according to six dimensions, namely, autonomy (being self-determined and independent and able to regulate behaviour from within), environmental mastery (controlling complex

environments), personal growth (continued self-development and improvement), positive relations (having trusting relations with others and expressing intimacy and empathy), purpose in life (having goals, aims and a sense of directedness in life) and self-acceptance (being positive towards and accepting of self) (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ryff, 2013), further developing a questionnaire to assess these dimensions (Waterman, 2008).

#### **4.4.3 Debates within these approaches**

It has become evident from my preceding discussion that divergent ideas and opinions exist within the approaches to well-being. For example, the varied philosophical thinking surrounding eudaimonia and its measurement (see Kashdan et al., 2008), which includes two different translations of eudaimonia as either happiness or flourishing (Tiberius & Mason, 2013) and the plausibility from a psychological perspective that subjective experiences accompany a life of virtue (Huta & Waterman, 2014). Although distinctions have been made in the literature between hedonia and eudaimonia as distinguishable and distinct conceptions (Ryan et al., 2008; Waterman, 2008), certain authors (e.g. Disabato et al., 2016; Kashdan et al., 2008) suggest that hedonia and eudaimonia represent one well-being construct. Reporting on a study conducted by Ryff where subjective and psychological well-being was compared, Biswas-Diener (2016) indicates that the two concepts are in fact related. This author suggests that rather than distinguishing between the different approaches, they should be viewed as complementary. Regardless of these discourses, Waterman (2008) positively notes that the recommendations for future research on well-being overlap and there is a shared view to incorporate research that takes a broader view of well-being.

#### **4.5 OTHER WELL-BEING DIMENSIONS**

Based on these traditions, research on well-being has continued to evolve. I now continue to present further conceptualisations of well-being.

#### **4.5.1 Social, spiritual and emotional well-being**

Owing to current conceptualisations of well-being as predominantly a private phenomenon, Keyes (1998) extended the nature of well-being to include social criteria. Keyes (1998) was of the view that an individual's private side of life could also be a potential source of optimal functioning, as social tasks and communities constitute a central part of daily life. Drawing on the work of sociologists and social psychologists such as Marx, Durkheim, Seeman and Merton (Westerhof & Keyes, 2010), he (Keyes) proposed a social model of well-being that comprises indicators/dimensions that contribute to social health. These include social integration (feeling part of society), social contribution (contributing to and feeling valued by society), social coherence (making meaning of society), social actualisation (feeling hopeful about the potential and future of society) and social acceptance (holding favourable views of others) (Keyes, 1998).

Spiritual well-being arose in response to the neglect of the role that a religious/spiritual dimension of life can play in well-being (Ellison, 1983). Ellison (1983) recognised that well-being could be attained by fulfilling the need for transcendence. This entails finding a purpose to commit to that involves a "non-physical dimension of awareness" (Ellison, 1983, p. 330–331). Canda (2013) views spiritual well-being as a universal concern, which is spiritually/religiously oriented, provides meaning/purpose in life and fosters human development. According to Ellison (1983), spiritual well-being consists of two components, namely, a religious and a social-psychological component. While these components have two facets both involve transcendence. The religious component is related to God (religious well-being) whereas the social psychological component pertains to a sense of purpose that is not religiously orientated (existential well-being). This suggests that spiritual well-being is a continuous variable (Ellison, 1983). In response to this dimension of well-being, Paloutzian and Ellison (1982) developed a scale to measure spiritual well-being. Subsequently, as a result of an evolving understanding of spiritual health, Fisher proposed a theoretical model of spiritual well-being, which comprises four domains, namely, personal, communal, environmental and transcendental well-being. This author further developed a self-

rated measure that reflects this theoretical model of spiritual well-being (see Gomez & Fisher, 2003).

Emotional well-being, which is regarded as an aspect of subjective well-being, may be defined as “the emotional quality of an individual’s everyday experience – the frequency and intensity of experiences of joy, fascination, anxiety, sadness, anger, and affection that makes one’s life pleasant or unpleasant” (Kahneman & Deaton, 2010, p. 16489). Commonly referred to as either hedonic well-being or experienced happiness (Kahneman & Deaton, 2010), emotional well-being reflects the affective aspect of hedonia (Lamers, Westerhof, Bohlmeijer, Ten Klooster, & Keyes, 2011). Emotional well-being can be measured in terms of the past, present and future. Examples of positive subjective experiences of emotional well-being are contentment (past), happiness (present) and optimism and hope (future) (Langeland, 2014).

It is important to note that the well-being conceptualisations identified in the above section are not exhaustive. Other conceptualisations that exist in the literature include individual, family, community and employee well-being (see La Placa et al., 2013; Page & Vella-Brodrick, 2009). These do not, however, fall within the scope of this research.

Although I have discussed the preceding sections on well-being in a reductionist manner, Ryan and Deci (2001) are of the view that well-being is a multidimensional phenomenon which incorporates hedonic *and* eudaimonic aspects of well-being. In the literature, the concept of *flourishing* is used to describe operational models reflecting hedonic and eudaimonic aspects of well-being. In the next section, I discuss Keyes’ model of mental health, which incorporates both these aspects. This model is reflective of the evolution of well-being theory, encapsulating the multidimensional nature of the phenomenon.

## 4.6 MULTIDIMENSIONAL CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF WELL-BEING

Keyes (2002) introduced a comprehensive perspective on well-being by combining aspects of hedonia *and* eudaimonia and represented these in a multidimensional model of mental health.

### 4.6.1 Keyes model of mental health

Inspired by the indisputable evidence of the effects of mental illness, the predominant view of mental health from a psychiatric perspective and the lack of viewing it as a positive phenomenon, Keyes developed the model of mental health to assess well-being (Keyes, 2005; Keyes, 2007). Keyes (2007) was of the opinion that although a focus on mental illness can reduce it, curing mental illness will not necessarily promote mental health or is an indicator of the presence of it. Keyes therefore viewed mental health as a positive phenomenon that encompasses more than a mere absence of mental illness and operationalised it as comprising of positive feelings and functioning (Keyes, 2002; Keyes, 2005; Westerhof & Keyes, 2010). He (Keyes) based his model on the definition of mental health as proposed by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2005) as “a state of well-being in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community” (p. 2). This definition assumes a psychological perspective and incorporates components of well-being and effective individual and community functioning. Drawing on well-being research, Keyes operationalised and defined these components, together which represent mental health (Westerhof & Keyes, 2010). Keyes model consists of two continua, namely, mental health and illness as unipolar dimensions rather than a single bipolar dimension (Keyes, 2005). In order to be considered mentally healthy, symptoms of positive feelings *and* functioning need to be present (Huta & Waterman, 2014; Keyes, 2002; Page & Vella-Brodrick, 2009). According to Keyes model, positive mental health comprises a combination of three components of well-being, namely, feelings of happiness (emotional well-being), positive functioning (psychological well-being) and societal functioning (social well-being) (Westerhof & Keyes, 2010). A detailed discussion of emotional well-being, psychological well-being and social well-being was

provided in sections 4.4.2 and 4.5.1. High levels of these well-being dimensions represent complete mental health (flourishing) and low levels represent incomplete mental health (languishing) (Rothmann, 2013; Westerhof & Keyes, 2010).

Rothmann (2013) extended Keyes' model into the South African work context and developed a framework for flourishing at work (Janse van Rensburg, Rothmann, & Diedericks, 2017). Rothmann (2013) integrated a variety of theoretical flourishing frameworks and incorporated hedonic and eudaimonic components in his framework. According to Rothmann (2013), employee flourishing consists of three dimensions, namely emotional well-being (positive and negative affect and job satisfaction), psychological well-being (autonomy, competence, relatedness, learning, meaning and purpose and engagement) and social well-being (social acceptance, social growth, social contribution, social coherence and social integration (also see Janse van Rensburg et al., 2017). When applied to the work context, emotional well-being relates to employee's perceptions of the positive emotions and job satisfaction they experience in their work environment. As discussed in section 4.3.1.1, positive emotions are essential for optimal functioning; they act as solutions for negative emotions and fuel psychological resilience (Fredrickson, 2001). Job satisfaction refers to the attitudes, feelings and emotions employees derive from their jobs (Rothmann, 2013). In addition to autonomy, competence and relatedness, considered the psychological well-being components of Rothmann's framework which were discussed in section 4.3.1.1, at work psychological well-being also consists of the distinct aspects of learning and meaning and purpose. Influenced by Ryff's (1989) dimension of personal growth, learning in the work context refers to the knowledge and skills employees acquire and apply in their jobs. Meaning and purpose relates to employee's perceptions regarding the significance and purpose of their work (Janse van Rensburg et al., 2017). The engagement component in Rothmann's (2013) framework differs slightly to the definition proposed by Schaufeli et al. (2002) as discussed in section 4.3.4.1. According to Rothmann (2013), work engagement is considered the positive work-related state of mind employees bring into their work roles but consists of the dimensions of vitality and dedication as absorption did not predict important work outcomes. The last dimension of Rothmann's (2013) flourishing at work framework pertains to the social aspect associated with the work environment,

namely social well-being. In an organisational environment, social well-being (Keyes, 1998) consists of social acceptance (being positive towards and acknowledging diversity), social growth (believing in the potential of the organisation), social contribution (adding value to the organisation), social coherence (making meaning of the organisation one works in) and social integration (feeling part of the organisation one works in) (Janse van Rensburg et al., 2017; Rothmann, 2013).

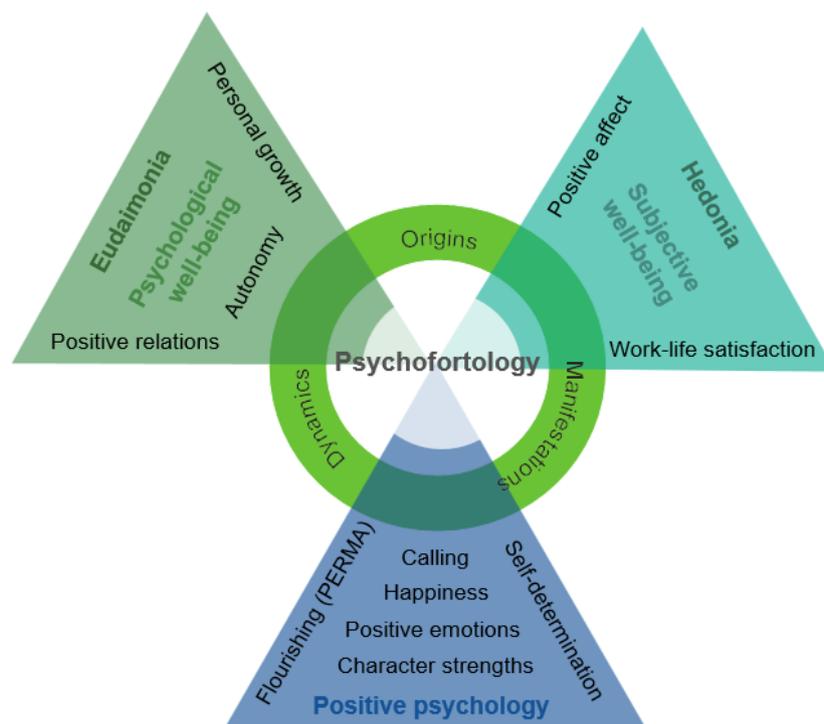
In the next section, I present my conceptual framework of well-being, thus making sense of the abundance of literature on well-being. This framework guided my interpretations of the data and informed the construction of the conceptual model of volunteer well-being.

#### **4.7 A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF WELL-BEING**

It becomes evident from the preceding discussion of the literature that while various conceptualisations and operational models of well-being exist, well-being is also a field of study, which is approached from various orientations, namely, a coping, strength and resource orientation and a hedonic and eudaimonic philosophy. Within the orientations of positive psychology, which encompasses salutogenesis, fortigenesis and psychofortology, various constructs such as, for example, character strengths, hardiness and engagement are used to describe and indicate well-being. On the other hand, hedonic and eudaimonic philosophy has resulted in psychological and subjective conceptualisations, dimensions and operational models of well-being, thus distinguishing well-being as arising from pleasure and happiness, or living a life of virtue (Deci & Ryan, 2008a).

As my research aim was to gain an in-depth perspective and understanding of volunteer well-being, I thus endeavoured to gain insight into the origins, nature and dynamics of the volunteer's well-being. I therefore approached well-being as a field of study rather than a singular conceptualisation or operational model. Given that well-being is a dynamic and multidimensional phenomenon (Fleuret & Atkinson, 2007; Ryan & Deci, 2001), I therefore included the orientation of psychofortology (as it falls under the umbrella of positive psychology but also encompasses salutogenic and

fortigenic thought) and hedonic and eudaimonic philosophy as part of my conceptual framework to acquire knowledge and ultimately garner an understanding of volunteer well-being. Such an approach supports Kerns, Waters, Adler, and White’s (2014) view of approaching well-being from a multidimensional perspective, because “a unidimensional notion obscures potentially valuable information” (p. 263). Similarly, Sarvimäki (2006) believes that focusing on only one aspect of well-being such as subjective experiences of pleasure and happiness offers a “very one-sided and limited view of human well-being” (p. 9). Seligman and Pawelski (2003) support these views by stating that “simple hedonic theory, without consideration of strength, virtue, and meaning, fails as an account of the positive life” (p. 160). I present my conceptual framework in Figure 4.1.



**Figure 4.1:** Conceptual framework of well-being

Psychofortology, which focuses on the origins, nature, dynamics and manifestations of well-being, as well as the enhancement thereof (Coetzee & Cilliers, 2001; Wissing & Van Eeden, 1997, 2002), forms the foundation of the conceptual framework proposed here. To garner an understanding of volunteer well-being I focused on where the volunteer’s well-being comes from, how it manifests itself and the dynamics

thereof. The various constructs, conceptualisations, dimensions and models which are used to describe and indicate well-being within the orientations of positive psychology, eudaimonic and hedonic philosophy, and as discussed so far, were used to understand the origins, manifestations and dynamics of the volunteer's well-being. The positive psychology component of the framework includes constructs such as happiness, positive emotions, character strengths and calling, fortigenic constructs such as resilience and engagement, as well as well-being theories such as flourishing (PERMA) and self-determination. Eudaimonia and hedonia, which shed light on whether well-being arises from pleasure and happiness or living a life of virtue (Deci & Ryan, 2008a), form the other components of my framework. The eudaimonic component of the framework reflects psychological well-being constructs such as positive relations with others, autonomy and personal growth (Ryff, 1989). The hedonic component of the framework reflects subjective well-being concepts such as positive affect and work-life satisfaction (Diener et al., 2003).

#### **4.8 IN CONCLUSION**

The aim of this chapter was to provide a conceptual framework of well-being as the meta-theoretical perspective in this study. This framework informed the analysis of the data and the construction of the conceptual model. Prior to presenting the research findings, in the next chapter I provide details of the way the research process unfolded, highlighting the way I gathered my data. This serves as a methodological audit trail to enhance the rigour of how the study was conducted.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **THE RESEARCH PROCESS – PROVIDING A NATURAL ACCOUNT OF THE FIELDWORK**

*Great things are done by a series of small things brought together*  
(Vincent Van Gogh).

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Throughout Chapter 2, I referred to the term 'journey', as this word appropriately represents how I experienced the entire research process and signifies that there was a starting place, a place where I ended up, as well as places in between. There was also direction to my research (Turner, 1998) and in Chapter 2, I gave details of the methodological direction that guided the research process. Although I made the source of my research and methodological interest and my methodological path explicit, I believe it to be valuable to report in more detail how the research process naturally unfolded (i.e. describing the places in between).

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a natural account of the way in which the data gathering process unfolded, thus illustrating how the study, and in particular the fieldwork component of it, proceeded naturally. In congruence with the authentic nature of qualitative research, reporting on how the research process transpired in real life aligns with my phenomenological orientation, as well as the confessional self-reflexive writing style that I explained in Chapter 1. Such an approach has also been followed by other qualitative researchers in the field of IOP such as Bvuma (2014) and is reminiscent of what Becker (1970) originally called reporting on the *natural history* of a research project. According to Schurink (2005), a natural account of the research process includes a description of the phases in the process of conducting a study and typically covers the way in which data were gathered and analysed. Reporting on the research in this way also provides evidence of how the study transpired and adds to its rigour in that it represents an audit trail of the entire process. Korstjens and Moser (2018) describe the audit trail in qualitative research as the responsibility of the researcher to

make transparent research decisions in the process of sampling and gathering and analysing data. Apart from providing an audit trail of the fieldwork phase of this study, a natural account of the process also demonstrates my adherence to ethical research conduct and presents an example of my research decisions and activities for other students.

As I have up to this point in the thesis presented how this study started and how the methodology unfolded, and because the following chapter will focus on the data analysis stage, in this chapter I explicate the “places in between”, that is, how I went about gathering my data. This includes, among other things, details of how I captured, managed and stored the data and how I used field notes, as well as a description of the qualitative data analysis software I used. Secondly, in this chapter I also describe the participants who formed part of this study, because they entered the study during the fieldwork phase. Data analysis, as the consequent phase in the research process, is addressed in the next chapter, Chapter 6.

## **5.2 GATHERING DATA**

As part of providing a natural account of the fieldwork, in this section I explicate the way the pilot interviews were conducted, as well as how I continued to sample participants and prepared for my interviews with them. After conducting the interviews, I also reflect on how I captured and transcribed the data, as well as the way I used field notes and software to manage the data for analysis.

### **5.2.1 Conducting pilot interviews (April 2016)**

In Chapter 2, I indicated that during the proposal phase of my research, although I identified the in-depth interview as the most suitable data gathering method, I approached the overall research process with an open mind and endeavoured to adopt a flexible research strategy (Snape & Spencer, 2003). I therefore opted to conduct two pilot interviews, which I also refer to as entry-into-the-field interviews. While conducting interviews appears to be a natural thing to do (Silverman, 2010), like quantitative researchers, qualitative researchers are advised to conduct a pilot to test

their interview questions/guide and to enable them to practise their interviewing skills (Creswell, 2007; Magnusson & Marecek, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The purpose of these interviews was also for me to gain a better understanding of the environment and certain contextual issues (see Levers, 2006) such as language and the suitability of my sampling criteria. Prior to the pilot interviews, I decided to set up a meeting with my supervisor to discuss the structure of the interview as well as my proposed interview questions. My nervousness about conducting the interviews and particularly the pilot interviews is evident in the following extract from my diary dated 16 March 2016:

*Met with my supervisor today re prep for the initial interviews. Feeling nervous. Doubting my own ability as to whether I will be able to ask the “right” questions and evoke the “right” responses from the participants.*

However, during this meeting my confidence grew, and I knew I was eager not to delay this process any longer. Being satisfied with the interview guide and questions, I proceeded to schedule a date for the pilot interviews.<sup>45</sup> Creswell (2007) advises that pilot cases should be selected based on convenience, access and geographic proximity. Based on the essential selection criteria, which I identified in Chapter 2 (see section 2.8.2), as well as guidance provided by Creswell (2007), I obtained a list of participants who fitted my selection criteria from the gatekeeper of the NPO.<sup>46</sup> Using geographic proximity (Creswell, 2007) as the main criterion, I selected two participants from the closest hospital on the list. I telephoned these prospective participants, explained the purpose of my research and requested their participation. To my relief both agreed. After the telephonic conversation, I sent both participants an SMS confirming the time, date and venue of the interview. As part of my preparations and taking into consideration Unisa’s ethical guidelines, I revised and where necessary amended the participant information sheet and consent form, which I had already drafted as part of my application for ethical clearance at the university.

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<sup>45</sup> The pilot interviews were conducted on 19 April 2016.

<sup>46</sup> As part of the ethical application process, permission was obtained from the NPO prior to conducting this research study. The permission letter sent to the NPO is available as Appendix B.

Given Legard et al.'s (2003) and Silverman's (2010) recommendations, I decided to tape-record<sup>47</sup> the interviews. To ensure that I was comfortable with the equipment and that it worked (Legard et al., 2003; Yin, 2016), I practised a recording at home with one of my husband's colleagues. Once all the logistical and technical arrangements had been taken care of, I took cognisance of my role in this process and the fact that I was the primary research instrument (Creswell, 2007; Lichtman, 2010; Merriam, 2002). This suggests that to a large extent the success of the interview depended on my personal and professional qualities (Legard et al., 2003). Although my anxiety is evident from the diary extract provided in the previous paragraph, I took comfort from my background and experience. I am a registered IO psychologist and, prior to joining the academic world, I gained interviewing, training, and facilitation and presentation experience in the corporate sector. Given that the role of the interviewer is "indispensable" (Babbie & Mouton, 2006, p. 249), however, I did not take this experience for granted and continued to prepare myself for the interviews by consulting the relevant literature (e.g. Dahlberg et al., 2008; Van Manen, 2016).

Following the pilot interviews, I experienced feelings of both relief and uncertainty. Relief set in as I finally had the data collection process going. Although extracts from my diary indicate that I was prepared and had enough time to settle down before the interviews started, I was still unsure as to whether the information I had obtained was adequate. In addition, not even the best planning could prepare me for the environmental interruptions (Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2013) I encountered. External noise could at times be heard from inside the venue.<sup>48</sup> These interruptions seemed to affect me more than they did the participants and luckily could not be heard on the recordings. I did, however, acknowledge that I could not use such a venue again. My initial nervousness was lessened by the first participant who put me at ease with her clam nature and the second interview went a lot better because I had started to feel more confident. The purpose of these interviews was also to enable me to gauge contextual issues (Levers, 2006) such as language, as I had been concerned mainly

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<sup>47</sup> The participants were informed via the participant information sheet and consent form that the interviews would be tape-recorded. I also explained this to each participant verbally prior to each interview.

<sup>48</sup> The venue was organised for me by the gatekeeper of the NPO. It is a space that is used as an office but is also a coffee/tea area for the volunteers. I was also given the use of the conference room, which is a separate space with its own door. This venue was chosen, as it was the most convenient for the participants.

about the African languages. I had not even considered Afrikaans, which turned out to be the second participant's home language. Still feeling unsure about the data I had gathered, I wanted to discuss the transcriptions with my supervisor, but only after I had obtained a feel for the data myself. The meeting with my supervisor was only scheduled for the beginning of June as I had experienced delays with the transcriber. After my initial overview and my supervisor having perused the data, we both agreed that the interview guide and my approach to the interviews elicited sufficiently rich and relevant data and that I could continue with the rest of my interviews.

### **5.2.2 Sampling the rest of the participants**

As indicated in Chapter 2, I employed a purposive (Yin, 2016) sampling strategy in this study. Suitable participants were chosen on the basis of essential selection criteria (Merriam, 2009), namely, geographic location (volunteers in Gauteng province) and volunteers who fitted the definition of a formal volunteer and who had been volunteering their services to the NPO for a period in excess of 12 months. I chose to sample participants from four hospitals in Gauteng province. After obtaining a list of participants who met my selection criteria from the NPO gatekeeper, I selected a further six participants. These participants were approached in the same manner as the participants for the pilot interviews: telephonic contact was made where the purpose of the research was explained and participation was requested. An SMS confirming the time, date and venue of the interview was also sent.

### **5.2.3 Preparing for the rest of the interviews**

In adherence with my institution's ethical guidelines, all research participants were provided with a participant information sheet and an informed consent form (see Appendices C and D). The participant information sheet contained details of the purpose of the study, the nature of the participant's participation, the potential benefits, and information on confidentiality. Researchers have ethical responsibilities towards their participants, who have to understand the purpose of the research, how they were selected, the benefits and risks (informed consent), that their confidentiality will be safeguarded, that any personally identifiable information will be anonymised and,

lastly, that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any point without consequences (King, 2010). All the participants were provided with hard copies of these forms and signed these prior to the interview.

In addition to the ethical documents, I also provided each participant with a bottle of water as well as a transport allowance. Although providing research participants with an incentive/compensation for participating in research is a controversial issue (Liamputtong, 2007; Mita & Ndebele, 2014), it is customary for the NPO to reimburse volunteers for travel if they are asked to attend a special meeting, function, special training or research-related activities outside their normal activities. As the value of this allowance was agreed with the gatekeeper and is reflective of what the volunteers would receive generally, it may be viewed as adequate but non-coercive (Fisher, 2003; Rubin & Babbie, 2016). It was also presented not as an incentive but as compensation for costs incurred as a result of the study (Mita & Ndebele, 2014).

When preparing for the interviews I relied predominantly on the participant information sheet, as well as the interview guide (see Appendix G) to ensure that I was familiar with the interview questions (Babbie & Mouton, 2006). Since in-depth interviews are relatively unstructured and informal and may be compared to a conversation (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Yin, 2016), I formulated the introductory part of the interview guide to reflect this. I further indicated to the participants that their personal insights and experience were of the utmost importance and that they should regard the interview as an open, semi-structured discussion rather than an interview per se, as they would be doing most of the talking. They were encouraged to share their thoughts, opinions and experiences with me and there were no right or wrong answers.

Considering the time delays I experienced with the transcription of the pilot interviews, I decided to employ the services of a different transcriber as I reasoned that I did not want to experience the stress caused by the delays again. I made contact with a new transcriber who was referred to me by my supervisor, discussed time and cost arrangements, and provided her with a transcription confidentiality agreement (see Appendix F), which she signed and sent back to me the same day. After receiving

such a quick response, I was certain that the process would go a lot smoother this time around.

#### **5.2.4 Conducting the rest of the interviews (July 2016)**

Earlier on I indicated that I conducted the pilot interviews at a venue that was the most convenient for the participants and which was close to the NPO head office. The head office is situated on the premises of two public hospitals in the central business district of Pretoria. According to Morris (2015), the participant should be given the opportunity to choose the venue; however, the venue should be comfortable for both the participant and the interviewer. The following two participants requested that the interviews be held in the vicinity of where they conduct their voluntary work. But, owing to the interruptions I had experienced at the venue where the pilot interviews were held as a result of the noise, I requested the gatekeeper to secure another venue for me for the next two interviews. Accordingly, a conference room was secured at the NPO head office. At this point I need to acknowledge the impact that the second pilot interview participant (PR2) had on me. During the interview, PR2 mentioned what a big problem parking was for the volunteers, as they did not always get parking inside the hospital premises and, as a result, some of their cars had been stolen previously. Being riddled with guilt that the gatekeeper had arranged parking for me inside the hospital premises for the pilot interviews, I took a taxi to the second round of interviews. This guilt is evident from the following extract from my diary dated 19 July 2016:

*Conducted second round of interviews today. I took an Uber taxi to these interviews due to PR2's response of parking problems (how volunteers struggle with parking and their cars get stolen).*

The next four participants were sampled from the remaining two hospitals in Gauteng. These two hospitals are situated in townships. Three weeks prior to the interviews, violent protests<sup>49</sup> had erupted in the areas where the hospitals are situated due to

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<sup>49</sup> Details of these protests are available in the following articles:  
<http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/2016/06/21/Watch-The-day-Pretoria-burned-what-happened-in-Tshwane>  
<http://www.timeslive.co.za/sundaytimes/stnews/2016/06/21/In-Pictures-Tshwane-in-chaos1>

political issues. Given this protest action, the vicinity of the hospitals, the fact that the gatekeeper could not secure a venue for me at these hospitals and being a female, I considered my own safety (Morris, 2015) and asked the four participants if they would be willing to conduct the interviews at the NPO head office. To my relief, all four agreed.

Although I still experienced anxiety before each interview – this can be mainly attributed to not knowing whether I would obtain adequate information for interpretation purposes – after the third interview, I no longer relied so heavily on my interview guide and the process started to feel a lot more natural. At the beginning of each interview, the participants were all unsure of what was expected of them. Legard et al. (2003) indicates that the researcher needs to help the participant understand what their role is as the interview situation can be unknown to them (Babbie & Mouton, 2006). After introducing myself, putting each participant more at ease and explaining the purpose of the research, they started to feel more comfortable. I then provided them with the participant information sheet and the consent form and gave them time to peruse the forms before proceeding with the interview. Thereafter I used prompts from the interview guide to explain both my and their role as well as the structure of the interview to each participant (refer to section 5.2.3 – preparing for the rest of the interviews).

All the interviews proceeded with the participants telling me about themselves and providing me with a narrative of their life story. This was followed by a reflection on how it came about that the participants had started volunteering. The participants' experiences of volunteering were discussed which included references to specific examples of interactions with patients in the hospitals. At the start of two of the interviews, the participants highlighted that what they would be sharing with me was based on their Christian background. Finally, at the end of the interview (at the end of each discussion I asked participants if there was anything else that they would like to add), three of the participants in particular mentioned organisational issues that they wanted to discuss.

The length of each interview varied between 60 and 90 minutes.<sup>50</sup> One interview in particular took up more time – the participant was however immersed in the process and I felt no need to interrupt him. All the interviews were conducted in English, except for the second pilot interview where the participant at times alternated between English and Afrikaans. During this interview, I also spoke in Afrikaans when necessary. According to Olson (2016), in most qualitative research designs, participants will be interviewed at least twice. I conducted three follow-up interviews – these were a lot more informal and took up less time. The follow-up interviews were started by reflecting on our previous discussion and thereafter I indicated that the purpose of the follow-up discussion was to confirm, probe and clarify a few things resulting from the initial interview (Olson, 2016). In summary, 11 interviews were conducted, consisting of the initial two entry-into-the-field interviews, the remaining six interviews and three follow-up interviews. As mentioned in chapter 2 (see section 2.8.3), because the entry-into-the-field interviews elicited rich and relevant information in relation to the phenomenon under study, I included them as part of my formal data set (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003; Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

After an interview has been conducted, it is subsequently transcribed (Saunders et al., 2016). Kvale (2007) points out that due attention should be given to both the quality of the interview as well as the transcription thereof, as transcriptions “tend to be regarded as the solid rock-bottom empirical data of an interview project” (p. 93). This author indicates that the one basic rule in transcription is to state how the transcriptions were made. I now discuss how the data were transcribed, which forms part of the process of capturing and managing the interview data.

### **5.2.5 Capturing, managing and storing the interview data**

Throughout the research process, I made use of various methods to capture the interview data. All the interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder (Olympus recorder). Considering the time that it takes to transcribe interview data (Silverman, 2010), I opted to use the services of a professional transcriber who

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<sup>50</sup> This excludes the time the participants took to read the participant information sheet and to sign the consent form.

transcribed all the interviews into MS Word format. As part of preparing the data and prior to loading the transcribed interviews into the ATLAS.ti software package, I removed all personal identifiers<sup>51</sup> from the documents for confidentiality purposes (Hennink et al., 2011) and thereafter converted the documents to rich-text format. All electronic records of the data were stored safely on my laptop computer, which included the audio recordings and transcribed interviews. Paper-based records of the consent forms were also stored safely in a file at my home.

#### *5.2.5.1 Transcribing the interview data*

The interview data were transcribed verbatim. Frequent repetitions were not retained but pauses were included (Kvale, 2007). The participant's words and mine were clearly distinguished by separate paragraphs. Two symbols were used, **R** to indicate the researcher and **I** to indicate the interviewee. After the interviews had been transcribed, I proceeded to format the documents and included margins to enable me to make notes (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Cohen et al., 2000). Given (2016) and Josselson (2013) advise that once the interviews have been transcribed, the accuracy thereof should be checked. All the transcriptions were printed and read whilst listening repeatedly to the audio recordings. Whilst checking for accuracy, I was also able to do a preliminary analysis of the entire interview. During this process, I also made notes of non-linguistic features of speech such as sobs, laughing and noise interruptions (Hepburn & Bolden, 2017; Josselson, 2013; Willig, 2008) that were not included as part of the initial transcription, as well as general notes on the interview and my impressions of the participant. As part of the process of listening to the accuracy of the interviews I used this opportunity to determine whether I needed to conduct any follow-up interviews and with whom, and I identified what needed to be probed/clarified further.

Although all the interviews were conducted in English, I did encounter translation issues with one interview, as in their responses this participant alternated between English and Afrikaans. Hennink et al. (2011) suggest that when interviews are

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<sup>51</sup> As part of protecting the rights and interests of the research participants, all personal identifiers such as names and references to the NPO were replaced with pseudonyms for confidentiality purposes.

conducted in a language that differs from that of the researcher, translation is not always necessary, especially if the researcher is bilingual. Throughout most of the interview, the participant responded in English and only used phrases/words in between when they could not find the appropriate English term. As I felt comfortable with Afrikaans, I therefore opted to retain and analyse the original language as it occurred throughout the interview.<sup>52</sup>

### **5.2.6 Using field notes during the data gathering process**

Patton (2015) maintains that taking field notes during the research process is not optional. Although my field notes were compiled predominantly from a descriptive perspective, where I noted down what I observed before and after each interview, I also incorporated my feelings about the participants and what they said during the interview process (Patton, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). As there are no rules as to what should be included/excluded in a field note (Olson, 2016; Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018), I also noted down my general impressions and any challenges I experienced. Knowing that it would not be possible for me to capture everything at a particular point in time (Patton, 2015), I also kept a separate diary in my handbag and noted important information on my cell phone. As mentioned in Chapter 2, I also made use of a reflexive research journal throughout the entire research process (Braun & Clarke, 2013) in which I documented aspects such as my thoughts, feelings and methodological decisions. In hindsight, I recognise the value of these notes and my journal, as it would not have been possible for me to recall this significant information at a later stage (Patton, 2015). The field notes and my journal were also my way of monitoring my own biases and subjectivities during the gathering and interpretation of the data (Merriam, 2002), thereby enabling me to recognise the impact of my own perspectives on the research process (Snape & Spencer, 2003).

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<sup>52</sup> English translations were provided when the narratives are presented verbatim in Chapter 6.

### **5.2.7 Using ATLAS.ti to manage and analyse my data**

Saunders et al. (2009) point out that analysing qualitative data is a demanding process. This became apparent to me once I obtained the transcriptions from the pilot interviews and realised the amount of data that was generated by just two interviews. I therefore opted to make use of qualitative data analysis software to assist me with the process. According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), researchers who do not use software beyond programs such as Microsoft Word will be hampered in comparison with researchers who do. Computer software in qualitative studies provides researchers with functionalities such as making notes, coding, storage of data and data linking. A variety of programs, such as ATLAS.ti, CAT, NVivo and MAXQDA, are available that form part of the genre of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) (Miles et al., 2014, Silverman, 2010). As CAQDAS software is not always readily available to students (Saunders et al., 2009), I relied on the software made available to me by my institution as a student and staff member, namely ATLAS.ti. The institution also afforded me the opportunity to attend ATLAS.ti training and to obtain the software thereafter.

Although the training on ATLAS.ti familiarised me with the program, I only grasped its full benefit once I started analysing my data. I took cognisance of the fact that ATLAS.ti, like all the other CAQDAS programs, will not analyse the data for you; the software is purely a tool that supports data analysis (Babbie & Mouton, 2006; Friese, 2014; Miles et al., 2014). As about eight months had elapsed between the time I attended the training and the time I started to analyse my data, I had to familiarise myself with the program again and used the manual to guide me and refresh my memory. This process was slow and time-consuming, and I found myself frequently accessing the help function. As a result, I made mistakes along the way such as erroneously deleting codes. The value of the program did, however, outweigh the obstacles and frustrations I experienced. ATLAS.ti enabled me to store and maintain the large amounts of unstructured data, search for and retrieve the data easily and make notes and modify codes and concepts throughout the analysis process (Friese, 2014; Miles et al., 2014). Lastly, the use of ATLAS.ti provided an audit trail which

increases the validity of the research results as the entire analysis process is transparent (Friese, 2014).

Throughout this study, I refer to the individuals who were involved in this study as *participants*. I cannot agree more with Given (2016) that this term fittingly captures the complexity of the research relationship, as the term 'subject' has a clinical connotation. In the next section, I describe the participants who formed part of this study. Although providing details of the research participants such as their nature, makeup and any relevant descriptive characteristics (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012) is common in qualitative research, my intention with this section is to honour the individuals who let me into their world and to make explicit the lasting impressions they made on me.

### **5.3 DESCRIBING THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

Qualitative research is context specific and requires the researcher to pertinently describe the context of the study. Apart from describing the broader context of the study (which I did in Chapter 1), contextualisation also includes a description of the participants. I subsequently introduce the participants in the order in which they were interviewed. I interviewed eight participants in total. PR1 and PR2 were the participants who were interviewed as part of the pilot interviews and subsequently formed part of my formal data set (see section 2.8.3).

#### **5.3.1 PR1**

My first interview was conducted with PR1. She was the first interview participant and I truly did not know what to expect. In came a young, warm and softly spoken 34-year-old black female. PR1 grew up in Limpopo in a family of three brothers and a sister. She recounted how during her childhood she had to become independent quickly and make her own decisions, as her parents were not able to guide her, being uneducated. PR1 works, volunteers and studies part time. Her employment in a department of a Gauteng metropolitan municipality enables her to support herself and fulfil her calling at the same time. I experienced PR1 as mature for her age. My impression was that I

had yet to meet anyone who, at a stage when they are building their life, was able to look beyond themselves so selflessly.

### **5.3.2 PR2**

My second interview was conducted with PR2, a 54-year-old white female. PR2 has spent most of her life in Pretoria. She is currently married and has a daughter. She spoke fondly of her husband and described how he is the main support in her life. PR2 has endured much physical and emotional pain in her life. She lost her son too early and was declared incapacitated at the age of 46 after a car accident. Prior to this, she spent 23 years in the corporate sector as a receptionist in an organisation aimed at advancing language and culture. The accident resulted in a series of back operations and subsequently a knee operation. During this time, PR2 also lost her mother. Recounting this emotional and physical pain brought tears to both our eyes – PR2's mother passed away while she was having the knee operation, as a result she was hospital bound and did not have a chance to see her or say goodbye. Although PR2 was open to conducting the interview, her nervousness became evident when she called me on the morning of the interview asking if she could bring a fellow volunteer with her. However, after the introductions and the details of what was expected had been discussed, she indicated that she was comfortable as I had made her feel at ease. Her increasing feeling of ease started to become evident when the interview started. PR2 became talkative and freely narrated her experiences. PR2's passion for volunteering was revealed by her excitement when she spoke about her work at the NPO. I saw PR2 as a kind woman with great strength.

### **5.3.3 PR3**

The next interview did not pan out quite like the first two interviews. Although the way PR3 laughed reminded me of my uncle, I cannot deny that I initially experienced bias towards this participant. My biases are reflected in my diary/field notes (19 July 2016):

*PR3 was quite intimidating. He was loud. As he came to the NPO's door I asked "are you PR3?" and he responded, "who knows my name?" I felt taken aback after that. He decided to read the participant information sheet in another venue/room as he jokingly said, "I'm intimidating him". I politely indicated to him that he is welcome to do so.*

This bias crept in during the interview and I recall feeling irritated as it took an extremely long time for PR3 to relate his life story. Because of this bias, I opted to approach PR3's transcript last when I checked the accuracy of the transcription and made an initial naïve reading of the interview data. Admittedly, following this process my views on PR3 changed, as it was only after I had analysed the data that I realised what an invaluable contribution his long life story made to understanding how this participant had started volunteering. As PR3 recalled his life story, I started to see a man with compassion. PR3 is a 61-year-old black male who grew up in a family of two children. His childhood was spent between Soweto and Lichtenburg. After completing secondary school, PR3 joined the motor manufacturing sector where he gained mechanical and electrical experience. He eventually also completed a diploma in theology. Although he was introduced to volunteering during his theological studies, he could not pursue it, as he had to give it up in order to take care of his father (who had had a stroke) after his mother passed away. PR3 currently dedicates his time to volunteering and running his own electrical business.

#### **5.3.4 PR4**

PR4 is a 58-year-old white male who was brought up in Warmbaths and Pretoria. Prior to volunteering, he spent most of his working life in the civil service at the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs in an administrative capacity, where he was responsible for processing mining company applications for prospecting and mining rights. In our initial telephonic conversation, I got the impression that he could be the "*engineering type*". His precision (which, according to me is stereotypical of the engineering type) was confirmed for me in an SMS he sent me before our interview was due to start: "*Hallo Aleks, please excuse me, I will be 8 minutes late. PR4*" (PR4, personal communication, July 19, 2016). I considered this also to be indicative of someone who

has a general respect for people. The following extract from my diary/field notes (19 July 2016) reveals my first impressions of PR4:

*PR4 was reserved and soft spoken/not intimidating. Struck me as the “Engineering type”. I was worried that he would not be able to provide rich stories/responses but I made use of a lot of probing questions and I felt the interview was quite successful.*

My overall perception of PR4 is that of a man with a calming and caring spirit. This caring spirit became evident during the interview when he mentioned that he had sympathy and empathy for other people – prior to becoming involved in volunteering, he took care of his brother and he is now taking care of his mother who suffers from Alzheimer’s disease.

#### **5.3.5 PR5**

PR5 is a 42-year-old black female who grew up in Hammanskraal. She has two brothers and a sister. She is now married with two children. PR5 has endured great hardship in her life and, as a result, she did not have the opportunity to finish school. In order to support herself she performed odd jobs from electrical work to cooking in a canteen and working at a hairdresser. PR5 was open and did not hesitate to recount the abuse and hardships she had suffered – it was as if she trusted me. After the interview, I reflected on PR5’s tough life and the difficulties she had endured. I perceived PR5 as a woman with inherent goodness and an enduring spirit, as despite her tough upbringing and the difficulties she currently faces, she cannot see herself doing anything other than volunteering.

#### **5.3.6 PR6**

PR6 is a 60-year-old black male who grew up in Atteridgeville. Family life meant growing up as one of four boys, him being the third boy. Although initially he was not fond of going to school, he passed with flying colours and later went on to graduate as a general nurse. After gaining work experience, he specialised as a psychiatric nurse

and spent ten years working in the United Kingdom. Upon seeing PR6 for the first time, I saw a man with class. In my diary, I described him as the most intriguing of all the participants owing to his profession and, in general, I found his life story very interesting. As a result of South Africa's history, many black people did not have the opportunity to be educated. In addition, it is very rare for a black person to go and work overseas – PR6 achieved both and I admired him for it. PR6 very early on experienced a calling to volunteer but did not act on it because of his occupation – he felt torn between the scientific and the spiritual world. Being humbled is the only adequate phrase that expresses how I feel about a man who gave up everything he achieved (despite his circumstances) to follow his calling.

### **5.3.7 PR7**

PR7 is a 58-year-old black female who was raised in a large family with three brothers and six sisters. She was brought up in Bothaville in the Free State but eventually moved to Gauteng in the late 1980s in search of employment. She is married with one child. PR7 spent most of her working life in the laundry department of a public hospital but eventually had to take early retirement for health reasons. A brief stay in hospital as well as her exposure to the hospital environment during her employment steered her towards volunteering. PR7's passion for volunteering became evident when she described her need to help, encourage, comfort and give hope to people. This passion is fuelled by perseverance, as PR7 openly acknowledged the challenges she faces as she does not always have the financial means to enable her to volunteer. After our discussion was concluded, I came to the realisation that my initial perception of PR7 having *nothing* was unfitting. PR7 has a calling which goes further than something of material value.

### **5.3.8 PR8**

PR8 is the last participant I interviewed. PR8 is a 53-year-old black female who grew up in Limpopo among two siblings. She is currently married with three children. Her story is very similar to that of PR7. Owing to limited employment opportunities in Limpopo, she relocated to Gauteng. Her dedication is evident in the fact that she

worked for the same employer for 20 years until her early retirement – brought on by severe arthritis. This arthritis also prevented her from continuing with the crèche she established after retirement. PR8's arthritis and her compassion for people led her to the volunteering context, which she continues to be active in even though she faces extreme hardships, mainly financial difficulties. Despite her current hardships, PR8 was jovial throughout the interview, laughing and smiling as she recounted her passion for people. I perceived PR8 as a strong woman who does not let any circumstances prevent her from going forward.

#### **5.4 IN CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I intended to provide a transparent and natural account of how I went about gathering my data and the subsequent management thereof. This chapter therefore portrays the realities and challenges associated with doing real-life research (Sparkes, 2002; Trafford & Leshem, 2012) and provides an audit trail of the methodological strategies and decisions I applied whilst conducting the fieldwork. To further contextualise the research, the participants, who played a valuable role in this study, were introduced and described. The subsequent chapters, Chapters 6 and 7, respond to the ultimate aim of this research. In Chapter 6, I present my research findings, and describe and explain the analysis thereof. These findings form the groundwork on which the conceptual model presented in Chapter 7 is based.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS: APPLYING PHENOMENOLOGICAL HERMENEUTICAL ANALYSIS**

*Speak, so that I may see you (Socrates).*

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, I present the research findings as they were constructed from the first two stages of the phenomenological hermeneutical analysis – the data analysis method used in this research. As such, the chapter presents my interpretation of volunteer well-being as constructed from the work–life experiences of volunteers in a South African volunteering context. This chapter forms the groundwork on which the conceptual model of volunteer well-being (and ultimate aim of this research) was based. The final step in the three-stage data analysis process entails a comprehensive understanding of the data, which represents an interpretation of the data as a whole. The conceptual model is based on this third and the final phase of the phenomenological hermeneutical analytic process and is presented in the following chapter.

In the subsequent sections, I therefore present the findings as constructed from the practical application of the first two stages of the phenomenological hermeneutical analytic process. The naïve reading (first stage) is followed by the thematic structural analysis (second stage), which reflects the themes that were constructed from the data.

#### **6.2 NAÏVE READING**

To start with, owing to the immense amount of data generated during the interviews, I did a naïve reading of each of the transcribed interviews, thereafter doing the same with all 11 interviews as a whole. This naïve reading of the text provided me with insight into the psychological nature and functioning of the volunteers' well-being. As such, in reading through the transcripts I was constantly aware of psychofortology as the

foundation to my conceptual framework, pointing to the origin, nature, dynamics and manifestations of well-being. During this reading I became aware of a variety of personal resources that give the volunteer the capacity to be well. These resources, which emanate from various facets of the volunteer's self, seem to some extent establish a propensity for well-being in the volunteer; it is almost as if the volunteer, having specific intrapersonal resources, displays an innate potential for well-being. Shedding light on where the volunteer's well-being originates from or on what it is founded, these intrapersonal resources reflect inherent capacities, motives, needs and ways of approaching life that stimulate their behaviour to act, seek and engage in volunteer work. It is, then, in the act of volunteering that these intrapersonal resources come to fruition and the potential for well-being develops in displays of well-being behaviours and sentiments. These unique well-being resources seem to play a dual role in the volunteers. Initially, they act as a stimulus for their volunteering behaviour and, in the work environment, the volunteers rely on these intrapersonal resources for sustained motivation and to cope during times of hardship. Intrapersonal resources include, for example, faith and being directed by a need to help other people. Enacting their intrapersonal resources, such as a concern for and desire to help others in the work environment, leads to a variety of positive well-being consequences, which manifest in emotions such as happiness and affective-cognitive states such as dedication and perseverance. As such, volunteering helps the volunteer to experience psychological well-being, satisfaction and positive emotions. These positive well-being consequences of working as a volunteer manifest despite the challenges the volunteers face and further reinforce and affirm the volunteer's unique intrapersonal dispositions, leading to sustained well-being.

This naïve reading was followed by the thematic structural analysis, which was constantly and iteratively confirmed against the naïve reading and vice versa (cf. Beck et al., 2017; Lindseth & Norberg, 2004). I moved back and forth between my initial holistic and intuitive perspective on the story of the data (naïve reading) and the structured themes identified from sections of meaningful text. In this way, I was constantly applying the circular analytic action of the hermeneutic circle (Geanellos, 2000), using each phase in the analytic strategy as a critical reflection and verification of the other.

### **6.3 THEMATIC STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS: RESULTING THEMES AS GROUNDED IN THE DATA**

From the thematic structural analysis, two main themes were constructed. These two themes, together with their respective sub-themes, are presented in this section by grounding them in the data. My interpretations of the data were influenced by my preconceived knowledge of relevant literature and also by my initial naïve sense that volunteer well-being originates from within and manifests in observable positive thoughts, feelings and experiences. Bazeley (2009) points out that qualitative researchers too often rely solely on participant excerpts to analyse and report on their data. To avoid this, my findings include my interpretations of the data supported by verbatim excerpts from the participant interviews and by theory relevant to my conceptual framework (refer to Chapter 4). I expressed the themes and sub-themes using verbs to reflect their dynamic nature, rather than merely using a descriptive noun, which may give the impression of a static condition. According to Lindseth and Norberg (2004), using verbs to label themes in this manner expresses lived experience better than nouns. The following two main themes were constructed from the data, and are discussed in the consequent subsections:

- Innate well-being potential originating from a unique intrapersonal disposition
- Showing up with well-being in the workplace

#### **6.3.1 Innate well-being potential originating from a unique intrapersonal disposition**

In the first main theme, I explicate the sources of the volunteers' well-being. The naïve reading led me to question where the volunteers' well-being comes from or on what it is founded, and this essentially is what this theme is about. The volunteers' well-being originates from a unique intrapersonal disposition which consists of an inner drive, an other-directed life orientation and a 'calling' work orientation, which represent the intrapersonal capacities and characteristics, unique needs, motives and orientations to life which interactively inspire the volunteers to take action. The first main theme is thus conceptualised from three sub-themes, which in turn are meaningfully

constructed on related categories in each. The first theme, together with its sub-themes and related categories, is depicted in Table 6.1 on the following page and discussed in the text thereafter. This table illustrates the thematic structural analysis of meaning units (sections of verbatim text) and my condensation of the meaning thereof in related categories and sub-themes, which I maintain are conceptually fundamental to the first main theme. This manner of reporting a phenomenological hermeneutic analysis is typical in studies applying this method, including for example Lindseth and Norberg (2004), Henricson et al. (2009), Victor and Barnard (2016) and Wallengren, Segesten, and Friberg (2008).

**Table 6.1:** Structural analysis of theme 1: Innate well-being potential originating from a unique intrapersonal disposition

Meaning units	Condensation	Categories	Sub-themes
<p>I, at first I met with one of the other volunteers, you see, that is the procedure if you are new, you know, you go with somebody, and then I came for a second time with the same person, and then I just decided okay, I want to continue with this, you know. (PR4)</p> <p>You know volunteerism is a matter of choice. (PR3)</p> <p>Volunteer is to work with your own ability, you do not, somebody does not push you. I want to volunteer, I want it. (PR7)</p>	<p>Being self-determined</p> <p>Showing autonomous agency by making a free and deliberate choice</p>	<p>Self-determination and autonomous agency</p>	<p>Well-being originates from a unique inner drive</p>
<p>... ek nou eerder wil in NPO, sieklike mense gaan spandeer as om by die huis te sit (I would rather spend time with the ill patients than to sit at home). (PR2)</p> <p>I can just, I cannot just sit and do nothing, no, I cannot. (PR7)</p> <p>I cannot sit here every day thinking of this pain, there is some other people there at hospital, they have got this pain also, I must go and say to him, no man God will help you, I must go and encourage the person. (PR8)</p>	<p>Being driven by an innate desire to be useful</p>	<p>A desire to be productive</p>	
<p>... I heard that here there was another gentleman by the name of XXX, he was having another NPO in the city, a soup kitchen and so on. And at some point, I saw him and I said to him; "Listen, how can I get involved?" he said; "Ag man, here there is nothing. The main project that I am relying on is at the hospital." This place, they used to call it in early 2005, they used to call XXX Hospital, that's before they changed to XXX. He said; "I'm there and there is training if you want to know about HIV, if you want to continue with Pastoral counselling for the sick and so on, everything is there." And then I came here, and they introduced me to their courses, and I decided to enrol in HIV and Aids. (PR3)</p>	<p>Wanting to grow and learn</p>		
<p>I'm the type of person who sort of wants to do something for the people. (PR3)</p> <p>Because I have heart for people. I like helping people in a way that I can. (PR3)</p> <p>I have got compassion with people, as long as when I see people, I see the image of God. (PR8)</p> <p>I am a person that have sympathy and empathy with other people, you know, in their time of suffering. (PR4)</p> <p>I pray for everybody in this hospital, hospitals in the whole world because I know when I lay in the bed how they are feeling. You can do nothing. I cannot bath, I cannot brush my teeth, my husband must help me because I am in a stut (brace). (PR2)</p>	<p>Being driven by an intrinsic need to help others</p> <p>Having compassion</p> <p>Having empathy</p>	<p>People-centredness characterised by care, compassion and empathy</p>	<p>Well-being originates from an other-directed life orientation</p>

Meaning units	Condensation	Categories	Sub-themes
<p>I work for God, not for XXX, for God. (PR2)            Uh, for my side to volunteer, I don't think it is a volunteer, it is just the work from God. (PR5)</p> <p>You know actually it's one of the Christian principles where Jesus says, "If you want to be number one, start by serving." You get the point? If you want to be a leader, a leader is measured by the service that he or she provides. (PR3)            And I take her XXX's hands in my and we pray together for her, bed in ICU and we pray for time in the theatre. (PR2)</p> <p>I am not working but there are some other parts as a challenge. I think it is the challenges, I see my children, don't have anything to eat or clothes, they said, mama, we want money to go to school. I don't have money, I am not working but I trust God. (PR5)</p> <p>... when I feel down, and I can say "I am not so bad", because the people in NPO in hospital is lying down, they don't got legs, they don't got stomach cancer and everything you know. And then I say, "thank God that I can make a difference, that you pick me up every morning". When I wake up in the morning, I say thank you to God that I can do a difference for somebody else. (PR2)</p> <p>And I got a voice from God, go to NPO and do something for the sick people because they are laying in the bed and they can do nothing for themselves. (PR2)</p>	<p>Being focused on God by serving Him</p> <p>Being directed by Christian principles and practices</p> <p>Depending on God</p> <p>Deriving strength from and showing gratitude towards God</p> <p>Receiving guidance from God through a religious calling</p>	<p>Being religiously rooted and focused on God</p> <p>Work as a calling</p>	<p>Well-being originates from an other-directed life orientation</p> <p>Well-being originates from a work orientation centred on being driven to conduct work that is a 'calling'</p>
<p>Ok, first of all being a volunteer I find that it is a calling. It is a calling and it is a passion and being a volunteer, I found that you leave patients with hope. (PR2)            Uh, there is no difficult, I love this job. (PR5)</p> <p>Ok, volunteering, it is – I think this one, this one more especially this one – volunteering at NPO – it is being a spiritual counsellor, I found it being a calling like when you are called for something, when you are called for being a Pastor, when you are called to be a doctor, you are with that thing inside of you. (PR2)            Ja (yes), you see to be a volunteer, it springs from the heart. (PR3)            Basically it, it was like a desire, like a passion sort of, like something that ah ... was inspired into me, of course by the Holy Spirit. (PR6)</p>	<p>Doing work that is a passion</p> <p>Doing work that stems from an intrinsic motivation</p>	<p>Work as a calling</p>	<p>Well-being originates from a work orientation centred on being driven to conduct work that is a 'calling'</p>

### 6.3.1.1 *Well-being originates from a unique inner drive*

Under the sub-theme, well-being originates from a unique inner drive, I present two categories that helped me to conceptualise this sub-theme. These categories represent the volunteers' unique inner drive, as reflected in their self-determination and autonomous agency and in an innate desire to be productive.

#### *a Well-being originates from being self-determined and demonstrating autonomous agency*

The volunteers are prone to well-being as a result of their characteristic self-determination and autonomous agency. They take responsibility for and are in control of their own lives and choices, as opposed to being directed by external forces, and this drives them to make their own decisions. This self-determination is firstly demonstrated by PR4 who is active in shaping his own life and takes responsibility for it by describing how, after hearing about the volunteering organisation through an advertisement on the radio, his interest was piqued and he decided to inquire about it:

*... then one day I listened on Radio Pulpit about a program of XXX, you see, and that is where I became aware of the organisation, and then one day I came here, to XXX's office. I met XXX, she is not with XXX anymore, and she, you know, just to inquire about what I have heard on the radio, so she invited me to come and see for myself, and then I came.*

Acting on the invitation to explore the environment, he firstly *"met with one of the other volunteers, you see, that is the procedure if you are new, you know, you go with somebody, and then I came for a second time with the same person, and then I just decided okay, I want to continue with this, you know"*.

Similarly, PR5 makes it apparent that she is not pressured by an external force to volunteer, she does so voluntarily (my insertions in square brackets are intended to clarify meaning):

*I am not just going to the [job], for, you know what, when you enter in a hospital, yes, there is a register, the coordinator put them to know we are there or what ... you are under some person who want you to clock, and you work under pressure, I am not working under pressure. When I am tired, or God wants to speak to me, I just stand and listen.*

Both PR4 and PR5 made a personal decision to become involved in volunteering. This personal and informed decision was based on a willing engagement which was free from external coercion. However, such self-determination on the part of the volunteer is not only evident in relation to the volunteering environment. PR1's self-determination is revealed in the manner in which she approached her life from an early age:

*You see, growing up, seeing other children, their parents helping them and you growing up being self-independent, it makes you feel sad but at the same time at the end you appreciate who you are because of that is an eye opening – you grow up knowing what you want and where you want to go. Because most of the children that I grew up with, their parents taking care of them and doing everything to them, today like they are still depending on their parents in such a way that everything the parents have to take decisions for them and even if a person is matured like me, they are waiting for their parents to take a decision for them... somebody has to come to a point where you have to take decisions on yourself.*

In addition to being self-determined, the volunteers are also autonomous agents, thus having the capacity to make their own choices. This agency on the part of the volunteer is demonstrated by the free yet deliberate choices they made to engage in volunteer work. PR7 resolved to become a volunteer of her own free will because it was something she wanted to do: *“Volunteer is to work with your own ability, you do not, somebody does not push you. I want to volunteer, I want it.”* She (PR7) further emphasises how *“I want to volunteer because I help someone who does not have help.”* PR3 highlights that volunteering is *“a matter of choice”* and the deliberate choice to become involved in volunteering is confirmed by PR4 who indicates that volunteering *“is something you want to do.”* Likewise, PR1's decision to engage in

volunteering was autonomous: *“You come here voluntarily. You come here using your own time for someone’s life.”*

The preceding narratives echo the volunteering literature by defining free choice as a core characteristic of volunteering (refer to section 3.3 of Chapter 3). Several studies on volunteering have linked autonomy orientation to engagement in prosocial activities, job satisfaction and intentions to remain within the volunteer organisation (see Boezeman & Ellemers, 2009; Gagné, 2003; Haivas, Hofmans, & Pepermans, 2013).

The volunteer’s autonomous agency is further evident from PR6. Even though he (PR6) had received a religious calling, thus being summoned by an external power, God, to the volunteering environment, he chose not to oppose this calling but rather to act on it: *“he (God) said go and pray for the sick, and I went and I, because to show that it was God it was a little bit weird, it was a little bit weird, I mean just imagine, you just get a vision, it says you must go to XXX, the next thing you go and you do not know where you are going.”* Although it may appear that to a certain extent PR6 was influenced to become involved in volunteering by the religious calling he experienced, his free choice is nevertheless apparent, because earlier on in his life he had received a similar calling: *“So I felt the call of God upon my life when I came back to, from the United Kingdom, and then what I did, because God was always calling me to this but I did not want to do it.”* Yet, at the time he chose not to act upon it: *“... but I did not quite want to do it, I did not want to do it.”*

Theoretically, autonomy is closely related to the concept of eudaimonia, which emphasises acting virtuously (Deci & Ryan, 2008a). Considered a dimension of psychological well-being, autonomy can be defined as “self-determination, independence, and the regulation of behaviour from within” (Ryff, 1989, p. 1071). Acting autonomously is therefore related to the psychological construct of self-determination, which refers to behaviour/action emanating from the self (vs other), thus acting volitionally, according to one’s own will (Roth & Deci, 2013; Wehmeyer, Little, & Sergeant, 2009). The word ‘autonomy’ is derived from the Greek words *autos* (self) and *nomos* (rule). Thus, autonomous actions are governed by the self and are

congruent with an individual's sense of self (Ryan, Deci, & Vansteenkiste, 2016). According to Ryan and Deci (2004), autonomy is important for optimal functioning and affects well-being. It also is recognised as being important for wellness, as disturbances in autonomy may result in the development of psychopathology (Ryan et al., 2016).

Therefore, to describe the origin of the volunteers' well-being, I labelled this category 'well-being that originates from being self-determined and demonstrating autonomous agency', thus indicating the independent, deliberate action and freedom of choice that drives the volunteer. It would appear that the innate predisposition of being self-determined and demonstrating autonomous agency is a resource for the volunteers' well-being; it establishes the potential for well-being because when acting in accordance with this facet of the self, several well-being manifestations result (as reflected in the second main theme).

*b Well-being originates from a desire to be productive*

The need to be productive lies at the heart of the volunteers' experience of being well. Volunteers' seem to have an innate desire to be useful in their daily lives, despite their circumstances and challenges. After retiring for health reasons, PR7 explains how she was not happy to sit at home and feel as if she were doing nothing:

*I decided to retire because of my health, my health, I was not alright because the work was too much for me, and then I was 55 years old, and then I retire, and then I stay at home. When I am at home I think about the patient because there are other patients there at the hospital, the patient who did not have the relatives, and they struggled a lot at the hospital and I decided to go there, not doing nothing.*

She (PR7) further emphasises that she could not sit at home knowing that she had the opportunity to volunteer and contribute to the patients in the hospital: *"I do not want to sit at home doing nothing whereas there is somebody who want me to comfort her or him."*

Similarly, PR8, who is also retired wanted to participate in new tasks as opposed to being inactive as a result of her health challenges, had this to say:

*I cannot work anymore because my, even now my hands and my arthritis, I have got a serious arthritis. Yes, so I was at home, when I was at home I just sit at home, I am trying to do some, I am trying to do a crèche, that crèche operate only two years because this arthritis was very serious. So, I closed the crèche on 2012, ja (yes) then I closed that crèche, I stay at home. When I am busy staying at home I start thinking now, I am just sitting here, I do not do nothing, what must I do, man at home I start the thing, now this arthritis goes on, goes on, goes on because I am staying. So it comes, one day when I was sleeping I start to think man, no man this sickness is going to kill me because I do nothing, I must start now, I am going to rise up and I am going, some people they are dying, they do not have some, I must go and tell the people about something, encourage people at hospital.*

Despite her discomfort, PR8 is adamant that she needs to be productive explaining that she “cannot sit here every day thinking of this pain, there is some other people there at hospital, they have got this pain also, I must go and say to him, no man God will help you, I must go and encourage the person.”

PR1 describes how she constantly strives to do something constructive thus ensuring she is always occupied:

*Most of the time if I am free I will come here like now and one o'clock we will be going home, we will be finished here at the hospital. I know that that is the time for me to go and study, to go to the library or actually I just made sure that all of my spare time I spend it in something, doing something. Either I am studying or I am helping somebody or I am doing something.*

The volunteers' desire to be useful in daily life is further evident from PR2, who lost her job after being declared incapacitated. Rather than stagnating, however, she opted to come to the NPO to contribute to something worthwhile: “I lost my job and I come

to NPO and I do the course two years ago and I go to XXX and I work for God.” Despite experiencing certain limitations as a result of her injuries, she chooses to keep herself busy as opposed to being at home: “... ek wil nou eerder in XXX, [met] sieklike mense gaan [tyd] spandeer as om by die huis te sit” (*I would rather spend time with the ill patients than to sit at home*). The extent of PR2’s desire to be useful is visible in the variety of activities she is actively involved in, all of which are illustrated in her weekly schedule:

*Monday is, I work with the SAP (South African Police Service) and when there is accidents or robberies or everything ... Monday is this time. And when I am not busy, I pray for the people in the NPO. Because you cannot go out of Pretoria North. And then I – Tuesday is NPO. Wednesday is NPO. Thursday is “ouetehuis” (old age home) – all the old people. And Friday is me and my husband come to NPO.*

The volunteers’ innate desire to be useful can theoretically be linked to the need for competence, which is a key concept of Ryan and Deci’s (2000) SDT. Competence, considered to be an aspect essential for well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017), is a basic psychological need pertaining to the experiencing of effectiveness (Ryan et al., 2016). The volunteers’ narratives make it clear that they want to be productive and to contribute in their daily life.

The volunteers’ desire to be productive is further strengthened by a need to grow through developing and learning new skills. As PR3 describes, the volunteers are independently seeking out opportunities to do so: “I came here, and they introduced me to their courses, and I decided to enrol in HIV and Aids”. This was the start of PR3’s volunteering journey at the NPO as, after attending this course, he wanted to use this knowledge to “implement or try to do it on practical basis. And then this is the place for such things”. Theoretically, the need to grow is linked to personal growth, which is considered a dimension of psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989).

In addition to the independent deliberate action and freedom of choice which acts as a resource for the volunteers’ well-being, their desire to be productive provides them

with the capacity to be well by stimulating them to be industrious, this being core to their experience of well-being. Acting as a motivational factor, this desire inspires the volunteer to act and engage in volunteer work where the need to be productive is realised.

Apart from a unique inner drive, a pertinent other directedness is core to the volunteer's well-being. I discuss this particular life orientation as the next sub-theme.

### *6.3.1.2 Well-being originates from an other-directed life orientation*

Under the sub-theme, 'well-being originates from an other-directed life orientation', I present two categories. These categories reflect the volunteers' other-directedness, as characterised by being people-centred and having a religious orientation to life.

#### *a Well-being originates from being people-centred*

The volunteers derive their well-being from a uniquely deep-rooted people-centred orientation to life. This people-centredness is primarily rooted in an intrinsic desire to help those in need. As such, this orientation to life drives the volunteers to care for, assist and contribute to the interests of others. As described by PR1, this intrinsic need is inherent to her personality: *"I find that helping people is one of my, I don't know if I can call it a weakness or a ... because I can give what I have and remain with nothing by helping someone."* This seems to suggest that the needs of others are more important than her own, illustrating how deeply ingrained and important this orientation is. She (PR1) further explains that *"sacrificing for somebody of which I found it a weakness in my personality"*, meaning that *"if I found you not having food and I have the last here I can say okay"*. PR1 provides an example of how she applied this orientation in her life by making sacrifices as a result of recognising the suffering of others: *"I had to change my accommodation because of I saw how people they live and how I live. I was like 'no I cannot live like this while others they are suffering outside'. I rather use the small that I am having and do something."*

Similarly, PR3 indicates that he has a “heart for people. I like you know helping people in a way that I can. Ja (yes) if it means buy you food I will buy you food” and also explains that he is “the type of person who sort of you know wants to do something for the people you know” because “there is something inside of me that needs to do good”. Although a people-centred orientation to life is also inherent to PR3’s personality, he explains how it is further entrenched in him through his African values:

*Among the Africans, when somebody has lost a spouse or a child, then we go there and then, you know by going there it is the same as saying “Listen, I am here if there be any need, I am willing to get involved”, and they ask you to go and fetch water, they ask you to go and fetch wood and so forth. And during the circumstances of their mourning, then you provide some kind of help.*

The intrinsic need to care for others, which was highlighted by the preceding narratives, is theoretically linked to the need for relatedness, which is a key concept of Ryan and Deci’s (2000) SDT, as well as kindness, a character strength that falls under the virtue of humanity (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Although relatedness entails experiencing social connectedness, feeling cared for and significant among others, contributing to and giving oneself to others is equally essential to this need (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Kindness is considered a “pervasive tendency to be nice to others” (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 296) and entails being compassionate and concerned about the welfare of others. These narratives also echo the literature, in particular positive relations as a dimension of psychological well-being, which entails expressing concern for the welfare of others (Ryff, 2013).

Apart from an intrinsic need to help others, having compassion is also central to the volunteer’s people-centred orientation to life. Entrenched within society (Strauss et al., 2016), compassion is concerned with the suffering of others and is regarded as a social and relational emotion (Cassell, 2009; Jimenez, 2013). Although this description suggests that compassion is a feeling, Goetz, Keltner, and Simon-Thomas (2010) contend that compassion also “motivates a subsequent desire to help” (p. 2).

Compassion is therefore regarded as a dynamic process that encompasses noticing, feeling and responding to the suffering of others (Kanov et al., 2004).

The volunteer's compassion is apparent from PR4, who explains that *"I am a person that have sympathy and empathy with other people, you know, in their time of suffering."* PR5's compassion, which is founded in experiencing her own suffering, drives her to ease the anguish of others spiritually: *"... in my heart there was a, I don't know how to speak it, uh, a heart for that sick people because I come from there. I was so sick, I was feeling the love, to love them and show them that Jesus is the only way, there is no other way than Jesus"*. Similarly, PR8's compassion motivates her to respond to the suffering of others by providing them with spiritual inspiration: *"... but my spirit inside, I have got some, I have compassion with people, I want to encourage people with the words of God, you know."*

Being compassionate enables the volunteers to provide a support system for the hospital patients. This entails acting as a family member who can listen to their fears and just be a presence next to their hospital bed:

*Sometimes some of these patients, they do not have anybody who come and see them, and when you come there and you are just, because most of the time, like I say, it is just listening, you know, counselling is more about listening, it is not about solving their problem, you can give, offer alternatives here and there, you know, but most of the time just listen to the patient, listen what they are saying, they have got a story to tell and they do not know who to tell because everybody is in a rush, doctors are in a rush, nurses are in a rush, and even their relatives sometimes, they, ja (yes) some are fortunate, maybe they have got some support system, but not all of them have got support system, and you are their support system before you are their counsellor, you are coming in as a counsellor but you are their support system as well because they need somebody who can just be there and listen to their story. (PR6)*

Likewise, PR4's compassion drives him to encourage and listen to the patients and give them hope:

*I realised, you know, it really makes a difference when we come here and speak to people, to encourage them, it is, sometimes it is very difficult for them, it is, because every day they experience the medical side of things and there is not really somebody to come and sit down with them and just listen to them, listen to their fears or frustrations and things, and then you come there and you listen and you see in their eyes and you hear in their voice, they appreciate it that somebody take the time and, to sit down with them and listen and just give them hope.*

In addition to being compassionate, the ability to feel empathy, in other words understanding another person's circumstances, characterises the volunteer's people-centredness. Considered a character strength which falls under the virtue of humanity (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), empathy is defined as "another-orientated emotional response elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone else" (Batson, Ahmad, & Lishner, 2009, p. 418). Empathy also entails "sharing the perceived emotion of another" (Eisenberg & Strayer, 1997, p. 5) or imagining the difficulties experienced by another person (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Empathy is believed to be a source of altruism (Batson et al., 2009).

The volunteer's empathy stems firstly from their own experiences. PR2 who underwent a back operation, explains how she is able to understand the pain, suffering and difficulty the patients are feeling and experiencing because of her own medical history: "... when I get out of the 8 weeks, I will tell God 'I know now how the people in the NPO, in the hospital feel'. Because I cannot tell you I know how you are feeling if you are not going through this." PR2 further mentions how she prays "for everybody in this hospital, hospitals in the whole world because I know when I lay in the bed how they are feeling". Similarly, PR5 is also aware of what it entails to be a patient in the hospital: "I come from there. I was so sick." Additionally, PR7 not only understands what it feels like to be a patient in the hospital but she is also familiar with the services the volunteers are providing the patients with owing to her direct experience: "I was at

*hospital five years back, and when I was in hospital there comes a pastor and talk with me about God, and said God is love, and I take that message and restore my, my soul.”*

Although PR3 might not have a true understanding of the patients' affective state, he is nevertheless familiar with the hospital environment and the pain and suffering the patients are enduring as a result of his previous volunteering experience. His empathy therefore stems from having the capacity to imagine what the patients are going through:

*You know the experience of going to the hospital and look at those people who were people that were suffering with Tuberculosis. I've never found a place anywhere in the world where I've been that suffered from TB. The same or more than in Cape Town, in Western Cape, my goodness! Tuberculosis. You find people that is so thin. Tuberculosis, not HIV and Aids. Tuberculosis.*

Being people-centred presents a unique other-directed orientation to life in general and further reflects the foundations of the volunteer's well-being. The establishment of a disposition for well-being in the volunteer, such a people-centredness, is based on being driven by one's care and compassion for others and the ability to feel empathy. Representing the needs and feelings that motivate the volunteers to find appropriate contexts to engage in, this unique facet of the volunteer's self, when applied in a volunteering context, results in positive well-being consequences (reflected on in the second main theme). The volunteer's other directedness is also exemplified by its focus on a higher spiritual source, which I discuss next.

*b Well-being originates from being religiously rooted and focused on God*

A profound religious attitude, namely, a belief in and commitment to God, seems to be at the core of the volunteer's experience of well-being. This religious attitude is based on feeling rooted as a result of one's religion and intersects with all aspects of the volunteer's life including the workplace. Such an attitude reflects another dimension of being other-directed in terms of the volunteer's orientation to life; in this instance being

strongly focused on a divine entity, namely God. According to Ellison (1983), a religious orientation and commitment are related to, and considered an aspect of, spiritual well-being. The volunteers' focus on God is apparent as they have made it explicit that their effort is directed towards God himself and that they conduct volunteering as a service to Him: *"I work for God. I did not work for me, I work for God, who created me"* (PR7) and according to PR5, *"to volunteer, I don't think it is a volunteer, it is just the work from God"*. PR5 also indicates that *"I'm going to the hospital for the purpose of God, for the sick people"*. PR2 further emphasises that *"I work for God, not for XXX, for God"*. Similarly, PR4 sees volunteering as a *"service in the kingdom of God"*.

Being rooted as a result of one's religion also entails abiding by and being directed by specific principles. The volunteers in this study were directed by Christian principles and teachings, as laid down by God and the Christian religion. These engendered their behaviour to serve others and encouraged the activity of volunteering, as explained by PR3:

*You know actually it's one of the Christian principles where Jesus says, "If you want to be number one, start by serving." You get the point? If you want to be a leader, a leader is measured by the service that he or she provides. And if you want to be number one, be a slave to everyone. Oh no, be a slave to everyone, what does that imply? Then this is something that will motivate you at the end of the day, to say "Oh by the way, I have been created to serve and to do good work. Where can I fit in now? Oh, here's a man, this man is so dirty and he's hungry."*

According to Lewis, MacGregor, and Putnam (2013), religion is positively associated with civic engagement. Similarly, PR6 explains that for him to be anointed, in other words to *"have the power of God flowing through you. Anointing is the power of God in somebody's life, miracle working power of God, yes"*, he is required to serve others. As PR6 wants to continue receiving this miracle healing power from God, he knows that he needs to conduct service-oriented activities such as volunteering and this inspires him to take appropriate action:

*If you want the oil to flow in your life you need to give, you need to give something, you need to give, because if you do not give you do not have anything that is flowing, it is only when you feel the vessels that the Lord will feel you, if only you understand, like I say I will be spiritual. So it is only when you, that is why I was always wanting and anointing all my life, because I know there is a call of God on my life and I know I cannot do it without an anointing, without being anointed, but I know that if I want to be anointed I need to give something, so I need to give my service, that is why I am giving my service voluntarily.*

Christian practices and teachings furthermore direct the volunteers in their work role, as they focus on these teachings and practices. PR1 explains: *“There is something that I am relying on – it is the Bible. Most of the things that I do, I do according to the Bible.”* Acts of worship such as prayer and ministry and providing patients with hope and encouragement from a spiritual perspective are the focal point of the volunteer’s work role as described by PR8:

*I am going to encourage them with the words of God and pray, and I am going to hospital and encourage people and read the words of God and pray and encourage them that it is not the end, you are going to be healed, and if you are healed you are, God will help you, no more coming back here.*

This is also demonstrated by PR2 who recounts how she supported a patient: *“... and I sit on the chair next to her and I pray for her and I ask her “can I pray for you”. And I give her one scripture, and I read in the Bible for her and I lay my, I ask her if I can lay my hands on her.”* Whilst volunteering, the volunteers express the virtue of love, which is central to Christianity (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). This love is evident from PR1’s explanation:

*... as myself I am trying to practise the Bible, that is what I have to give out to the patients and that love it is not all about them reminding them that they are sick, reminding them that they have got problems. That love is to show them that there is a purpose for everything, there is an end out of everything and God gave us all these problems, but knowing that he gave us the strength to come out of them and we conquer our problems or whatsoever situation that you are going through and that is the love of giving that hope to the next person.*

PR6 further explains that he tells the patients he loves them because

*... when you start ministering you can see they need the love of God, because I believe Christianity is more about love than anything else. They have made it about a lot of things, about money, about tricks and all that, you know, but I believe personally that Christianity is all about love and I believe that God has wired us to love and to be loved.*

Although the volunteer's actions are predominantly focused on God and carried out in His service, signalling their commitment to Him, the volunteers also depend on God during times of difficulty, such as relying on Him for guidance to solve challenging problems faced in the workplace. This is noticeable in PR1's explanation of dealing with a challenging patient whilst volunteering:

*I think, you know sometimes when you are a spiritual giver, you must ask God for a descending spirit, a descending spirit that will help you to choose and to separate things and to do the right decision. So, sometimes when things like this are happening, I just ask God to help me how to come out of this or how to solve this.*

God also acts as a support mechanism for the volunteers. This fosters their own belief in themselves that they will be able to deal with the demands posed by life. PR5 has faith that God will assist her with the challenges her family is experiencing: "I see my children, don't have anything to eat or clothes, they said, mama (*mom*), we want

*money to go to school. I don't have money, I am not working but I trust God. Because we are living by God's grace, we are living by God's grace".*

He (God) is further the source of the volunteer's strength and gratitude. PR2 explains that *"when I feel down, and I can say "I am not so bad", because the people in NPO in hospital is lying down, they don't got legs, they have stomach cancer and everything you know. And then I say, 'thank you God that I can make a difference, that you pick me up every morning'"*. According to Steger and Frazier (2005), religiousness contributes to and fosters well-being by providing social support, coping resources and a sense of self-esteem.

Being focused and committed to God also entails being open to receiving guidance from Him. Through a religious calling God provided guidance to two of the volunteers by showing them the work role He wanted them to fulfil. In particular, two of the volunteers were called by God to the work role of volunteering. From a religious viewpoint, individuals are called by God to serve in a unique vocation, which is carried out in the service of God and the community (Wrzesniewski et al., 2013). PR6 explains how, through a religious calling, God showed him what He wanted him to do with his life by providing him with a new purpose:

*... years and years I wanted to volunteer, do the volunteer work but I never really have the volition, you know, if you know what I mean, I did not have the oomph to go and do it, because the passion was not ignited, ja (yes). Though I wanted to do it, I did want to do it but, from the time to 2012, when I came back from overseas, it was on my heart but not until, I think it was last year, ja (yes), 2014, this is 2015, ja (yes), I am one year now, one year two months. So ja (yes), it was not until then that one day I had a dream, it was a vision actually, in the morning, and God said to me go to XXX, I said why should I go to XXX because I do not know anybody in XXX and I do not have a relative, I do not have, you know, I like asking God questions myself, when he speaks to me I speak back and I ask him, I said Lord why should I go to XXX because I do not know anybody, I do not have a friend, I do not have a relative who is in XXX Hospital, why should I go to XXX, he said go and pray for the sick, and I went and I, because to show that it was God it was a little bit weird, it was a little bit weird, I mean just imagine, you just get a vision, it says you must go to XXX, the next thing you go and you do not know where you are going.*

PR2 had a similar experience during her recovery from a back operation: *“And I got a voice from God, go to NPO and do something for the sick people because they are laying in the bed and they can do nothing for themselves.”* According to the literature, a religious calling stems from God or a higher spiritual power. Discernment, which entails using methods such as prayer and ‘listening’ may be used to identify this calling (Hall & Chandler, 2005). Although PR6 questioned this dream/vision, asking God why he should go to this hospital, he surrendered and responded to God’s call on his life. Likewise, PR2 used prayer to confirm her calling: *“And I pray, and I and my husband pray and pray and pray and God gave me an answer – go and do this work.”*

In addition to being people-centred in a caring, compassionate and empathetic manner, other-directedness is evident in being rooted in and deriving strength from a strong religious attitude. Both these aspects of being other-directed are instrumental in the well-being experience of the volunteer. Like the first sub-theme, both of these aspects again seem to provide the volunteer with the potential for innate well-being, which comes to fruition in the volunteering work they do.

The last sub-theme that forms part of this main theme and which establishes the volunteer's disposition to or potential for well-being, pertains to their particular work orientation.

### *6.3.1.3 Well-being originates from a work orientation centred on being driven to conduct work that is a 'calling'*

The volunteer's well-being furthermore stems from a particular work orientation, which is strongly based on/directed by a need to conduct work that is regarded as a calling; in other words, work that one is passionate about rather than work that is a means to an end. Over and above their religious calling, this calling orientation to work specifically stood out for me in the narratives of both PR1 and PR3, who regard volunteering as a work role that is a calling, thus work that one has a passion for. According to PR1, *"being a volunteer I find that it is a calling. It is a calling and it is a passion"* which *"you will do it with passion and love"*. PR3 shares this view: *"I think it's a calling."* According to Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, and Schwartz (1997), individuals view their work as either a job, a career or a calling. Being passionate about the work that one is doing is clarified by PR1, who explains that such passion entails having an intense love for the work that one does:

*Ok, a calling it is like something that you have a passion. Something that you have love when you do it. You have that, you do it whole heartedly with love. That is why you will be able to come here without somebody giving you an allowance to come here, compensation to come here. You come here voluntarily. You come here using your own time for someone's life. Do you understand me? That is how calling, I can call it ... you do it whole heartedly with no boundaries, with no whatever. But you come whole heartedly, so ja (yes), you don't have that thing. If they don't give me money for petrol, I am not going there. If they don't give me food, I don't go there. No, you come with love and the understanding on what you are doing.*

PR5 exemplifies her passion for her job by emphasising how much she *"love[s] this job. I love this job"*. This type of calling work orientation stems from an inner desire

and motivation on the part of the volunteer to conduct such work and is reflected in the words of PR3: “[Y]ou see to be a volunteer, it springs from the heart.” PR1 also explains that volunteering entails being “with that thing inside of you”, thus suggesting that the desire to volunteer comes from within. In PR6’s explanation of how it came about that he started volunteering, he also makes it apparent that volunteer work stems from an intrinsic motivation for such an occupation:

*Ja (yes), I was at home, all this time, years and years I wanted to volunteer, do the volunteer work but I never really have the volition, you know, if you know what I mean, I did not have the oomph to go and do it, because the passion was not ignited, ja (yes). Though I wanted to do it, I did want to do it but, from the time to 2012, when I came back from overseas, it was on my heart but not until, I think it was last year, ja (yes), 2014, this is 2015, ja (yes), I am one year now, one year two months.*

Theory suggests that experiencing a calling to work has positive effects for both individuals and organisations (Wrzesniewski et al., 2013). The individual positive effects are work and life satisfaction, finding work meaningful, being more motivated and experiencing engagement with work. Based on a review of the literature on work as a calling, Duffy and Dik (2013) found a link between living out a calling and well-being outcomes such as life meaning and life satisfaction. These authors thus suggest that engaging in work that is aligned with a calling may enhance well-being. Other scholars, for example Duffy, Bott, Allan, Torrey, and Dik (2012) and Wrzesniewski et al. (1997), have also found an association between calling and well-being.

In conjunction with the people-centred and religiously rooted orientation that characterises the other-directed manner in which the volunteers approach life, the volunteer’s well-being is further founded on the unique manner in which they approach their work environment, that is, from a calling work orientation. A calling orientation presents a unique orientation to work that reflects an approach based on being motivated to do work one has a passion for. Furthermore, the desire to do such work stems from within the person. This orientation, which drives the volunteer to seek and engage in appropriate volunteer work roles consonant with it, is like the previous sub-

theme, core to the volunteer's experience of well-being and provides the volunteer with innate well-being potential.

This concludes the discussion of the first theme together with its sub-themes and related categories. In this first theme I presented the origins and nature of the volunteer's well-being. From the narratives I gathered that the volunteer's well-being originates from a variety of personal resources which represent a unique intrapersonal disposition on their part. Reflective of unique capacities, needs and ways of approaching life, these personal resources impact on the volunteer's well-being by providing them with the capacity to be well and further drive their decisions and behaviour by encouraging them to seek volunteer work where they can apply and act in accordance with these resources. Because the data indicated a positive link between the enactment of the volunteer's unique intrapersonal disposition and the consequences thereof in the volunteering context, I subsequently constructed the second main theme. In the second main theme I present the manifestations of the volunteer's well-being thus demonstrating how their well-being manifests in the volunteering environment.

### **6.3.2 Showing up with well-being in the workplace**

The naïve reading led me to question how the volunteer's well-being manifests in the volunteering environment, in other words during the act of volunteering, and this is what this theme is about. The volunteers' well-being is revealed through various positive consequences such as the personal growth they experience, the engaged state of mind they demonstrate and the positive emotions they exhibit in the workplace. The second theme with its sub-themes is depicted in Table 6.2 on the following page. This table illustrates the structural analysis of theme two from the meaning units and my condensed meanings thereof in terms of categories and sub-themes.

**Table 6.2:** Structural analysis of theme 2: Showing up with well-being in the workplace

Meaning units	Condensation	Category	Sub-themes
So I am spiritually enriched by the work that I do, you know, because I do not have a full time job. (PR4)	Experiencing spiritual growth and affirmation	Growing spiritually and developing self-esteem	Experiencing personal growth
Yes, it makes a big change in my life as I can tell you this how I am feeling. I see it in my eye, in my – hoe ek dit sien nè, is dat ek maak (how I see it is that I make), we make more time for somebody else and it make me grow inside and when I feel down, and I can say “I am not so bad”, because the people in NPO in hospital is lying down, they don’t got legs, they don’t got stomach cancer and everything you know. (PR2)	Self-esteem improves		
So yes, God can heal, God can heal I know, I know it by experience. Well, my experience is spiritual, but spiritual things are in the spirit, so you cannot explain them medically. (PR6)	Gaining spiritual experience		
I feel, I feel, I feel sorry for them, I must walk, I must pray for them, I cannot, I cannot go because the ward is stinky, no, it is human being, they must get healed, they must be comforted. (PR7) ... yesterday was too cold, I say no man today I cannot go to hospital, it is too cold, but there is something coming, you will think it is too cold, some of people, they do not have visitors, go and visit to hospital and encourage people. (PR8)	Willingness to persist despite obstacles, challenges and difficulties	Vigour	Demonstrating engagement
... there are times when it feels like you are interfering with people’s lives and to some people’s attitude in the hospital – it is like you are interfering with them. You know when you come to a person and the person says; “Hey listen, I have my own pastor.” And then the nurses will say; “Hey, sorry we are doing our jobs and then it’s like you are disrupting all these things.” You understand? But at the end of the day you need to sort of come here. I don’t know if you don’t have courage, what must you do. Must you take a glass of dop (alcohol) and come and do this, knowing that you anticipate some of these things you know, that “Ai, by the way, so and so in that ward doesn’t need me. But I am going there.” You surprise that you go and say “I am going there, let that person say whatever they want to say, but at the end of the day, after helping with that I can then feel peace, and then I am able to sort of you know enjoy life.” Because if I do nothing, then really, you feel guilty. (PR3)	Resilience to continue the work		
I will not stop to volunteer; as long as I am still here on earth I can do some, because I cannot stop because I have got compassion with people, as long as when I see people I see the image of God. (PR8) ... no I say as long as I am still alive I am going to do this. (PR8) ... I am a volunteer at XXX hospital, and I enjoy most of it, I am devoted, I am committed. (PR6)	Endless commitment and devotion	Dedication	
I don’t want to go outside of this hospital because I love these people. I can see when I am not here, I finish three weeks, three weeks at home when my mother was dead. That I can feel, I am empty, empty. I am praying for them, but I just want to be near them. (PR5) Because when I am not going to the hospital, my heart is not good. (PR5)	Significance of the volunteer work		

Meaning units	Condensation	Category	Sub-themes
<p>So I pray for them, I pray for them and I believe God will make a difference, even after, even if I do not see them. Even if it will take time, and I pray that, I pray as if I am the only one that will pray. (PR4)</p> <p>... and when I got airtime I phone, hey how are you, I say hey I am at home, I say can I come and see you. (PR8)</p> <p>... and then also the, to meet with other volunteers as well, you know, and we share, and we encourage each other, we share testimonies and that kind of thing. (PR4)</p>	<p>Inability to detach oneself from work</p> <p>Being involved in the work environment</p>	Absorption	Demonstrating engagement
<p>... after helping with what I can then I feel peace, and then I am able to sort of you know enjoy life. (PR3)</p> <p>... there is job satisfaction and then you know that you have done a good work for somebody, and you have changed their life, and you get fulfilled, that is what life is all about is it not. (PR6)</p> <p>So you can see it is very therapeutic, those are the things that give me job satisfaction, those are the things that make me to continue doing this. (PR6)</p> <p>... you get this fulfilment and fulfilment is all about knowing that you are doing the right thing, knowing that this is my purpose, that God has called me to do this, and I am making a difference in somebody's life. (PR6)</p>	<p>Feeling peaceful</p> <p>Feeling satisfied</p> <p>Feeling fulfilled</p>	Work-life satisfaction	Exhibiting positive emotions
<p>I enjoy NPO, very much. (PR2)</p> <p>I'm happy because I am doing God's work. (PR5)</p> <p>I feel so good want (because) I can help them. (PR7)</p> <p>Hey I feel, I feel happy, I mean when they say come, and most, sometimes, in that senior, for that nurses, they say pray for us because this work is too hard for us, we are, sometimes we do not like each other, we have got, I say to him you know what, God can, we are going to pray with you, everything will be all right. (PR8)</p> <p>And this help me to opgewonde om te weet jy het 'n verskil te maak (to be excited knowing that you have made a difference). I made a difference, you make a difference in another person's life. (PR2)</p>	Feeling joy, happiness and excitement	Happiness	
<p>... there is hope, you know, sometimes you see a patient and yoh, will this patient ever experience better health again, you know, and then maybe one day you will see him here when you come to one of the clinics, after he has been discharged, and you see yoh it is a different person that you see now, you know, and you realise it, there is really hope, there is really hope. (PR4)</p>	Feeling hopeful	Hope	

Meaning units	Condensation	Category	Sub-themes
<p>And then I say, “thank God that I can make a difference, that you pick me up every morning”. When I wake up in the morning, I say thank you to God that I can do a difference for somebody else. (PR2)</p> <p>I found that it was by the grace of God because in that ward there were few and I gave her most of my time with her and she spent more times talking those things. I only spoke a few things with her, but with her she spoke more things and by that I ended up praying for her and she really appreciated what I did for her and she really said “you are the first person that I allowed to pray for me because all these people they were just casting and breaking whatever that they were doing, I didn’t understand and they didn’t understand me, but you, you understand me at least”. And I said “ok, we thank God and just remember that God loves you”. (PR1)</p> <p>... we saw that the patients are healed and even they are discharged, they are calling us to thank God what has done. (PR5)</p>	Feeling grateful	Gratitude towards God	Exhibiting positive emotions

### 6.3.2.1 Experiencing personal growth

Through the act of volunteering, even though retired or without full-time employment, the volunteers are continuing to grow as people by enriching and developing themselves. Engaging in volunteering, a novel challenge at this point in their lives, enables them to experience growth on a spiritual level. As PR4 is without full-time employment, volunteering serves two purposes. Firstly, it enriches him on a spiritual level: “So I am spiritually enriched by the work that I do, you know, because I do not have a full-time job” and secondly it matures him spiritually by reinforcing his religious rootedness:

*Well, it strengthened my view of God you know, it strengthens my view, that God is graceful, he is a God of understanding, he is a God that cares. So it helps me in my own life, you know, and also when I get days that I am not, that I am doubting or just feel a bit down, you know, then I can sort of look back to the times when I saw other people and see the difference that God made in their lives, in their time of distress and, you know, feeling helpless and that kind of things. So that is, it strengthens me in my faith and my understanding of who God is.*

The personal growth the volunteers experience when volunteering is not limited to growing and developing on a spiritual level however; it also includes experiencing a better view of the self through improved self-confidence and self-esteem. For PR2, helping hospital patients enables her to experience inner growth as a result of increased self-confidence, reflecting overall enhanced self-esteem:

*Yes, it makes a big change in my life as I can tell you this how I am feeling. I see it in my eye, in my – hoe ek dit sien né, is dat ek maak (how I see it is that I make), we make more time for somebody else and it make me grow inside and when I feel down, and I can say “I am not so bad”, because the people in NPO in hospital is lying down, they don’t got legs, they don’t got stomach cancer and everything you know.*

Similarly, through volunteering PR4, who describes himself as introverted, has experienced an increase in his self-confidence. He (PR4) describes how he initially doubted whether he should continue with the volunteer work

*... because of my personality, you know, I am not, my nature is not an outgoing person, to be an outgoing person, so you meet people that is, you know, that you do not know, you are not sure how to start the conversation and how they will respond to your, to your conversation with them, you know.*

but

*... then you grow in confidence as the time go by and you see no but people are comfortable, you know, they, I saw they are comfortable with me, and because I am a listener rather than a talker, you know. So, and then I saw that people appreciate it, you know, when you sit down and you show interest in them and afterwards you, you know, they say thank you very much and that gives you confidence for the next week.*

In addition to experiencing spiritual growth and affirmation, as well as improved self-confidence and self-esteem, the volunteers are also gaining spiritual experience. PR6 is developing himself and enhancing his belief system through the spiritual experience he gains whilst volunteering. As a psychiatric nurse, PR6 explains that at times his medical background was in conflict with his beliefs and planted doubts in his mind:

*You know when I did nursing, and they told me that some of these things cannot be cured, cancer cannot be cured and all that, and when I started to become a pastor I heard that cancer can be cured, only God is the one who can cure cancer. So it was a conflict in my mind and the devil used to use that every time I pray for somebody the devil would tell me no she is not going to be healed, you know XXX, you are not dumb, you have done psychiatry and you know that this lady, she needs chemotherapy and ja (yes) sometimes I believed that and it caused a lot of doubt because now, in the bible, the principle is that if you do not doubt, if you believe then God will do the part.*

However, through volunteering, PR6 has gained more and more spiritual experience thus also reinforcing his new occupation and faith:

*[I]t is very beneficial, the volunteer work, and the, what is beneficial about the volunteer work is that what you get from it is the practical aspect and the experience, you know sometimes praying for somebody, laying hands on them and seeing them recover, according to what the bible says, because sometimes when we read the bible we think it is just a history book.*

According to the literature, in order for psychological well-being, optimal functioning and flourishing to manifest, individuals need to experience personal growth (Ryff, 1989).

Reflected in this first sub-theme is one of the manifestations of the volunteer's well-being; namely, their experience of personal growth. Personal growth is experienced through spiritual growth, improved self-confidence and self-esteem, and growing spiritual experience. The volunteers are not stagnating but rather growing and developing and maturing in both their faith and in their self-regard. It is thus in the act of volunteering itself that the volunteers experience psychological well-being.

#### *6.3.2.2 Demonstrating engagement*

In the workplace, the volunteers are demonstrating an engaged state of mind. Schaufeli et al. (2002) define engagement as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (p. 74) and indicate that it is considered to be an antipode to burnout. This is supported by Strümpfer (2003), who regards engagement as a psychological variable that creates resistance to burnout. Furthermore, engagement is a component/element of the PERMA model and contributes to well-being (Seligman, 2011).

This engaged cognitive state is firstly displayed through the volunteers' vigour which is characterised by a willingness to persist and resile despite obstacles, challenges and difficulties on the part of the volunteer. *Vigour*, that is, persevering in the face of

difficulty and having mental resilience (Schaufeli et al., 2002), is apparent. The volunteers are faced with various contextual and personal challenges. The contextual challenges relate to dealing with patients and include encountering negative, disinterested and disagreeable patients, as well as challenges in the hospital environment such as exposure to viruses, insufficient parking and interruptions from doctors and nurses. Personal challenges on the other hand encompass financial and health constraints. The contextual challenges, specifically negative and disinterested patients, are explained by PR2:

*There are very negative patients. There is very, very ... baie baie negatiewe pasiënte (very, very negative patients) because they wait for the theatre and they say don't eat and they didn't eat for one, two, three, four days and then they say no, there was an accident, they take somebody else in your place in the theatre ... then the doctor is not nice to me, the doctor don't tell me – and then you sit and you must make it positive. You must take the negative out and you must make it positive for the patient.*

For PR4,

*... what is a bad experience for me is when I tried to talk to patients and, you know, with the purpose to encourage them and to say that, you know, after sickness there is hope, you know, God heals people and God will take them through this difficult period of their lives, and you know when patients just sort of give you a cold shoulder, you know, and say no I am not interested, you know, because I know, I have this hope in me and I want to share this hope, and people just say no I am not interested in that.*

The challenges related directly to the hospital environment include parking issues: “The parking is a big problem for us, you know. But XXX help us to park here, but it is very far to walk for my back and my knee operation, but I do this with XXX, we wait for her together and walk together, but it is very far” (PR2); viruses: “because it is sick people, you can get a virus” (PR2) and the role of the doctors and nurses: “but the challenges that we get is that when you go to patients you find a doctor there and as

*a volunteer the doctors come, have preference, I mean they come first, so when you find them there you must leave them because they have got privilege more than you”* (PR6). Hospital conditions are also a challenge for the volunteers, as described by PR7:

*[T]here is patient who get the accident, and that ward is stinking very bad, but we stand there and pray for the patient, and lay a hand with the patient. You cannot stand for ten minutes the way the ward is so stinky, yes stinky, but we can stand about 30 minutes talking about the patient and praying with the patient.*

Despite these conditions PR7 continues to volunteer because: *“I feel, I feel, I feel sorry for them, I must walk, I must pray for them, I cannot, I cannot go because the ward is stinky, no, it is human being, they must get healed, they must be comforted.”* Lastly, the financial challenges the volunteers face become clear in the following quote: *“... sometimes I do not have money to go to hospital, but that is why, that is, if I do not have money I just say no, okay when I have got money I go”* (PR8). It is apparent that these challenges are recognised but handled with fortitude, thus demonstrating vigour.

PR2 narrates her experiences of dealing with death, which is common in this environment. Nevertheless, her perseverance is noticeable: *“And last night 11h45 she passed away, but I was here in the week and I say ‘may God bless you’, but she cannot hear me, she is on the machine. So, now this is the second time, but there is so lots of it. But this is ‘ruk my hart en dit gee vir my’ (it shakes my heart and gives me) – it has helped me to do it again – to come back again.”* The perseverance to continue despite the financial difficulties PR7 faces are pertinent: *“... sometimes I have not got the money for the taxi and then I walk with my foot to go to the hospital.”* Some of the volunteers experience their own health issues, yet this does not deter them, rather their people-centredness drives them to continue, as explained by PR8:

*When I come to hospital some of our, our, some of the senior at the hospital say man you are, also you are going to pray for the sick because you also, you are sick person, I say the sick is for this body, but my spirit inside, I have got some, I have compassion with people, I want to encourage people with the words of God, you know.*

The virtue of courage is also applicable to the above narratives and would seem to be conceptually related to vigour. Courage entails exercising the will to accomplish goals despite the presence of obstacles (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

PR3 demonstrates his mental resilience (also an aspect of vigour) by explaining how the positive consequences of volunteering and the negative consequences of not volunteering drive him to continue volunteering: *“Ai, by the way, so and so in that ward doesn’t need me. But I am going there. You surprise that you go and say I am going there, let that person say whatever they want to say”*. Resilience is defined as “patterns of positive adaptation during or following adversity or risk” (Masten, Cutuli, Herbers, & Reed, 2009, p. 118). According to Strümpfer (2003, 2006), resilience represents a learnt strength, which develops from overcoming challenges, thus allowing an individual to rebound from adversity and move away from burnout.

Dedication is characterised as having no ending and reflects the endless commitment, devotion and sense of significance for the individual volunteer, as well as the importance they attribute to volunteering (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Accordingly, dedication encompasses the second aspect that reveals the volunteers engaged state of mind in the work environment. The volunteer’s *dedication* is apparent in the narratives. In particular, PR8 demonstrates the extent of her dedication, which stems mainly from her people-centred and religious orientation to life, when she explains: *“I will not stop to volunteer; as long as I am still here on earth I can do some, because I cannot stop because I have got compassion with people, as long as when I see people I see the image of God.”* PR2 also strongly emphasises her dedication by indicating that, *“I will do NPO till God come and take me or until when I, ek het genoeg krag (*I have enough strength*), and then every day when I can come I will come.”* PR6 further

emphasises his strong devotion and commitment by saying, *“I am a volunteer at XXX hospital, and I enjoy most of it, I am devoted, I am committed.”*

The significance of volunteer work for the volunteers becomes apparent when they mention what they feel when they have to be absent from the work environment for a while. Two of the participants told of feeling pain in this regard: *“There are times that you can have the edge and then think of the tight schedule that you have. There are times when I cannot come on Tuesdays and I feel pain if I cannot come on Tuesday”* (PR3), as well as emptiness: *“I don’t want to go outside of this hospital because I love these people. I can see when I am not here, I finish three weeks, three weeks at home when my mother was dead. That I can feel, I am empty, empty. I am praying for them, but I just want to be near them”* (PR5).

The last aspect that illustrates the volunteer’s engagement, namely, that of absorption, refers to the inability on the part of the volunteer to detach themselves from their work (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Some of the volunteers are so deeply *absorbed* by their work that they even think about the patients outside the hospital environment. PR2 and PR4 pray for the patients when they are not able to volunteer: *“When I got my pray time, I can pray for the patients. When I cannot come to the hospital, I got my pray time at home”* (PR2). Some volunteers also choose to conduct follow-up visits or telephone the patients once they have been discharged from hospital: *“... we do the follow up to see what is going on after that, what the word done”* (PR5). The volunteer’s absorption is also characterised by the relationships they have formed with the other volunteers. This demonstrates the volunteer’s involvement and immersion in their work environment. PR2 regards the other volunteers as her new family: *“... we are a family; new family and God give me a new family.”* The importance of these relationships is further emphasised by PR4: *“... what also means a lot to me is our group of volunteers, you know. To share and, so that means a lot to me, you know, because afterwards, after we are finished in the wards, we go to the tearoom there and, on an informal basis we share and we become spiritual friends.”*

In addition to experiencing personal growth, the volunteers’ well-being is further observed and demonstrated through the engaged affective-cognitive state they

display and related aspects thereof. As such, this engaged state is indicative of their well-being and represents the volunteers' general attitude, connection and approach to their work role and environment. This brings me to the third and last sub-theme, namely, exhibiting positive emotions as a manifestation of the volunteers' well-being.

### 6.3.2.3 *Exhibiting positive emotions*

When volunteering, positive rather than negative feelings arise and are displayed by volunteers. These feelings seem to reflect the way the volunteers experience the work role of volunteering. Satisfying their unique intrapersonal resources in the work environment, specifically a desire to help others and enacting their faith, leads to the volunteers experiencing satisfaction with life and work. This satisfaction is demonstrated by PR3: *"... after helping with what I can then I feel peace, and then I am able to sort of you know enjoy life"* and PR6: *"... so we do not get any pay but the satisfaction that you get is to know that you have given some things to somebody. Sometimes some of these patients, they do not have anybody who come and see them."*

PR6 makes specific reference to both job satisfaction and fulfilment: *"... there is job satisfaction and then you know that you have done a good work for somebody, and you have changed their life, and you get fulfilled, that is what life is all about is it not."* The job satisfaction PR6 experiences is specifically related to the patients' reactions to the Christian principle of love which he focuses on whilst volunteering:

*I tell the patients, I tell them, I say I love you, and when I say that some, they are not obviously emotional, they will not show their emotions, but you can see that this person, she start to glow, you get this person, you come to them, they are depressed, and the minute you say you love them they glow, they radiate from the face and their countenance change. So, you can see it is very therapeutic, those are the things that give me job satisfaction, those are the things that make me to continue doing this.*

In addition to work–life satisfaction, happiness and joy is also apparent. Happiness is experienced because the volunteers can focus on God and help those in need. PR8 narrates how, *“when I am busy doing the volunteering, I am going to hospital, when I am coming back I feel happy, I say I am doing the work of God”* and that *“[v]olunteering makes me happy because you help another people”*. Similarly, PR5 indicates that: *“I am happy with this job, I am happy.”* PR5 makes it clear that her happiness stems predominantly from her faith: *“I’m happy because I am doing God’s work.”* Excitement emerges from the effectiveness that the volunteers experience in their work role: *“And this help me to opgewonde om te weet jy het ‘n verskil te maak (to be excited knowing that you have made a difference). I made a difference, you make a difference in another person’s life.”* The volunteers do not just feel content, however; they also experience more elated feelings, as described by PR3: *“I feel my blessings you know, my thrills and so on after helping with anything thing that I could.”*

Overall, volunteering is experienced as being enjoyable. According to PR2 she *“enjoy[s] NPO very much”* and she comes to the hospital *“with a joy in me”*. PR2 explains how she enjoys volunteering because of the variety it offers: *“... every day it is nice to come back, because it is not, two days is not the same or two patients is not the same.”* In a similar vein, PR6 indicates that volunteering is not only enjoyable but also rewarding: *“I enjoy it, I enjoy it, I enjoy the volunteer work, it is so rewarding yes.”* In particular, PR7’s enjoyment stems from being able to help and comfort the sick patients: *“... is nice to help the, the sick people, it is nice”*. She (PR7) further narrates how good she feels after helping the patients: *“I feel so good want (because) I can help them.”* This enjoyment is further evident from PR1’s first encounter with the volunteering environment and stems from providing support to the patients, specifically on a spiritual level:

*So, it happens that I was off and then I came with him here and we went to the chapel and I was like “wow, that is nice”. We worshipped, we shared the word and then after we went to the wards. And after doing that, after going out of the wards I was like “wow, I really enjoyed that”. I felt, I felt this peace within, I felt free like something like it went out of me and I was like, it is for the first time I feel this and I think that I felt it was like ... I felt good for helping someone, more or less especially spiritually.*

Receiving a warm welcome from the patients and being appreciated by them elicits added contentment. This is evident from PR2’s explanation of how she feels when seeing the positive reactions of the patients towards her: *“I go on a mountain when somebody, I come in the room and they will smile and say ‘did you come to me special or did somebody send you to me?’.”* PR7 shares the same sentiment: *“The mommy of the little babies, they are welcoming us, and then they said last week mama you were here and I got healed, now the Doctor said two weeks, three days, four days I am going home. It is nice so.”* Being thanked by the patients for visiting and praying with them makes the volunteers feel good: *“I feel good, I feel good, I feel good”* (PR7).

The essence of these narratives appears to be positive affect, a dimension of subjective well-being, which entails experiencing numerous positive emotions and moods (Diener, 2000; Diener et al., 2003). Positive emotions furthermore “initiate upward spirals toward emotional well-being” (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002, p. 175) and are a psychological phenomenon that helps create resistance to burnout (Strümpfer, 2003). According to Froh (2013), positive emotions feel good in the present and increase the likelihood of feeling good in the future. Positive emotion is also a component/element of the PERMA model, which contributes to well-being (Seligman, 2011).

Hope and gratitude were also evident in the narratives. These are variables that contribute to positive emotions by introducing positive feelings into a person’s life (Strümpfer, 2003). Although Strümpfer (2003) makes specific reference to optimism, Peterson and Seligman (2004) maintain that there is considerable overlap in the literature between hope, optimism, future-mindedness and future orientation, all of

which represent a “cognitive, emotional, and motivational stance toward the future” (p. 570). Although hope and gratitude are considered to be character strengths which fall under the virtue of transcendence (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), they are also considered emotions (Fredrickson, 2009). Peterson and Seligman (2004), who are of the opinion that hope is more emotional, support my interpretation of hope as an emotion in this sub-theme.

Despite the challenges and adversity present in the work environment, such as dealing with ill patients who might not recover, PR4 explains that he nevertheless experiences feeling hopeful that a positive future exists and that these challenges can be resolved:

*[T]here is hope, you know, sometimes you see a patient and yoh, will this patient ever experience better health again, you know, and then maybe one day you will see him here when you come to one of the clinics, after he has been discharged, and you see yoh it is a different person that you see now, you know, and you realise it, there is really hope, there is really hope.*

Hope and optimism are linked to a range of positive outcomes such as physical and psychological well-being and freedom from negative emotions (Du, Bernardo, & Yeung, 2015; Edwards, 2013; Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004; Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

When experiencing gratitude, a sense of appreciation is felt which stems from an experience that has not necessarily been earned or deserved (Strümpfer, 2003). A distinction can be made between two types of gratitude. Personal gratitude entails thankfulness directed toward a specific person, whereas transpersonal gratitude is directed toward God or a higher power (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). According to Strümpfer (2003), for people with a religious conviction, a higher spiritual power is usually thanked. PR2 expresses her gratitude to a higher spiritual power, specifically God, when volunteering:

*And there is lots of patients that I can tell you, but this one was for me so special, but I didn't take her name and her number because you know it was for me so special and when I go out, I come to my car and I thank God for every patient.*

PR2 further highlights her gratitude to God for following the religious calling He bestowed upon her after having a positive encounter with a patient: *"And when I get out of this room, I can cry outside, I will not cry in front of the patients and I say "Thank you, God that I listen to your voice."* God is further thanked by PR2 for enabling her to make a difference in the lives of others: *"When I wake up in the morning, I say thank you to God that I can do a difference for somebody else."* This gratitude is also further expressed by PR5 who recounts a positive testimony from a patient: *"We said, wow, we thank God."* Gratitude, which is linked to consequences such as optimism, positive states, positive emotions and successful functioning over the life course, contributes to living well (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) and well-being (Park et al., 2004).

As indicative of the volunteer's well-being, I labelled this sub-theme, 'exhibiting positive emotions', as these emotions demonstrate the positive well-being consequences that are displayed by the volunteers in the workplace. As such, it seems that volunteering enables the volunteer to experience feelings of well-being, which manifest as work-life satisfaction, happiness, hope and gratitude. Moreover, these positive emotions appear to be related to the volunteers applying their intrapersonal resources in the work environment, resulting in the volunteers feeling well.

This concludes the discussion of the second theme together with its sub-themes and related categories. In this second theme I presented the manifestations of the volunteer's well-being, in other words the well-being behaviour they display and the feelings they experience in the workplace. From the narratives I conclude that the volunteer's well-being is demonstrated through various well-being consequences such as personal growth, affective-cognitive states reflecting engagement and positive emotions. Of significance in this theme is the positive and reciprocal link between the origins of the volunteer's well-being (as presented in theme one), which they enact in the volunteering context, and the consequences thereof (as discussed in the second

main theme). The convergence of the origins of the volunteer's well-being, as reflected in a unique intrapersonal disposition, in an appropriate work environment such as volunteering, provides the context for experiencing psychological well-being, satisfaction and positive emotions. These positive well-being experiences and consequences also seem to play a reciprocal role by affirming the unique intrapersonal dispositions of the volunteer, and thus sustaining their well-being.

To conclude the practical application of the first two stages of the phenomenological hermeneutical analytic process, in the last section of this chapter I again reflect explicitly on my background and how it may have influenced the research process, the participants who formed part of this study and my interpretation of the results. As the hermeneutic researcher needs to make explicit their pre-understandings (Crowther, Ironside, Spence, & Smythe, 2017), I end this chapter with a relevant self-reflection in this regard.

#### **6.4 REFLECTING ON MY PRE-UNDERSTANDINGS**

In descriptive phenomenology, bracketing, which entails the researcher suspending their presuppositions, is a key feature of the research process. Heidegger, however maintains that this can only be partially achieved in hermeneutic phenomenology because, like the participants, the researcher is embedded in the lifeworld that is under research (Davidsen, 2013; Kafle, 2011). Hence, the researcher's preconceptions, embedded in her personal profile, may influence the research and its findings in various conscious and unconscious ways. He (Heidegger) therefore emphasises approaching the audience of the research with reflexivity and transparency to enable them to make up their own mind as to its credibility (Davidsen, 2013). In acknowledging that I have brought my own prejudices to the research study, I reflect on my background and how it could have affected the research process, the participants and the interpretation of the research findings.

From section 1.6 of Chapter 1, it becomes apparent that the NPO the volunteers are affiliated to is faith-based. Although I am a practising Christian, my intention was not to conduct my research specifically at an organisation of a religious nature. Rather, as

explicated in Chapter 2, it was my involvement in the community engagement project at this NPO that predisposed me to engage in this research topic and project. Sampling in this study therefore occurred naturally. Being acutely aware of the purpose of this organisation, I did not ignore it but strived not to make the organisation's religious purpose a feature of the data collection process, attempting rather to consciously focus on the aim of the research and the volunteering context. This is reflected in the interview guide (see Appendix G). It did however become evident that the participants' beliefs form a core feature of their work–life experiences, as reflected in my constructions of their narratives. For example, prior to posing any questions, PR4 stated that *“Okay can I just say that, I think most of what I will say will be against my Christian belief”* because the NPO is an *“organisation based on spiritual principles”*. I acknowledged this but did not delve deeper into this statement as the details were revealed during the interview; furthermore it was not my role to judge or make conclusions (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004). Although I recognised that my own beliefs were less prominent in my life compared to the participants, I tried not to let this undermine my interpretations of their narratives. This I did by reflecting on my interpretations of data that reflected religious beliefs with my supervisor and by confirming in follow-up interviews that my understanding reflected the participant's intended meaning. I also compared my analysis iteratively with well-being theory as presented in Chapter 4. Nevertheless, despite employing these strategies I need to acknowledge that my own beliefs may have influenced my openness to the data. Ultimately, I cannot deny that my own beliefs may have made me more attuned to the participants expressions of religiousness because I was able to identify with their experiences. Like the volunteers, in my own life my beliefs provide strength during difficult situations leading me to experience hope and gratitude.

As a result of my involvement in the community engagement project at this NPO, I also consider myself a volunteer. Although I do not conduct the same work as the research participants (volunteers), I am familiar with what they do. Furthermore, my involvement in the NPO provided me with intimate knowledge of this context and, as I have noted before, predisposed me to engage in this research topic and project. In addition, prior to conducting the interviews I immersed myself in the volunteering literature, which provided me with further insight into this dynamic field. As a result of

this cumulative knowledge, when conducting the interviews and analysing the data I was mindful to avoid drawing premature conclusions (Glinka & Hensel, 2018; Houser, 2012). This entails thinking that I “know the truth” (Glinka & Hensel, 2018, p. 254). Hence, rather than assuming that I knew what the participants were referring to or speaking about, I endeavoured to explore their experiences comprehensively using probing questions and conducting follow-up interviews. Furthermore, as I was intrigued by the well-being of the volunteers due to their challenging personal and work contexts and the fact that they could persevere regardless of these difficult circumstances (refer to Chapters 1 and 2), I ensured that I engaged a “wonder and openness to the world while reflexively restraining pre-understandings” (Finlay, 2008, p. 1). I therefore strove to “stay persistently curious” (LeVasseur, 2003, p. 419) about the research phenomenon of volunteer well-being. Houser (2012) indicates that premature conclusions can also be made as a result of incorrect interpretations and of grounding themes on isolated responses. In order to avoid this, I provided multiple excerpts from the narratives that support the findings and interpretations. Furthermore, the iterative nature of the hermeneutic circle acted as a verification strategy that enabled me to constantly confirm my interpretations with the data and the relevant well-being theory (as presented in Chapter 4).

According to Bailey (2007), researchers will most likely interview participants who are vastly different from them in terms of characteristics such as gender, race, ethnicity, and social and education status. I differed from the participants in many ways, as I am a white, middle-aged, educated female, with the majority of the participants being of a different race, age and social and education status to me. Given that power and authority is a pertinent issue in qualitative research (Crowther et al., 2017), I became aware of the fact that a hierarchical dynamic could emerge, especially in terms of the race, gender and age difference. Although the perception exists that the researcher exerts power over the participants, likewise the participants can exert power over the researcher by, for example, withholding information (Tisdell, 2008). I was conscious of the fact that I was younger than all the participants, as well as the possibility that the male participants could exert their traditional gender role status over me. However, prior to conducting the interviews, I decided to suspend all these pre-understandings and opted to focus on the relationship instead. I did this by establishing rapport with

the participants; explaining the nature of the study and monitoring the interview for mood/affect (refer to Appendix G). In addition, I used my reflexive journal to note and monitor any biases. The fact that I am very different from the participants in terms of my personal profile could also have impacted on meaning making and consequently the findings of this research. Although the findings contribute to the body of knowledge on volunteering and well-being, they do not however represent the *only* truth but rather *one* perspective and construction of the research phenomenon, namely, volunteer well-being, which is specific to this study.

## **6.5 IN CONCLUSION**

This concludes the conceptualisation of the themes that were constructed from the data. I grouped the identified themes into two main themes, and then discussed these while simultaneously integrating the narratives with the literature. The next chapter presents a conceptual model of volunteer well-being. This model also provides a comprehensive understanding of the data as a gestalt and reflects the final step in the phenomenological hermeneutical analytic process.

## CHAPTER 7

### A COMPREHENSIVE UNDERSTANDING: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF VOLUNTEER WELL-BEING

*When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe (John Muir).*

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1 (refer to section 1.4) I indicated that in order to achieve the aim of this research, namely, to enhance understanding of volunteer well-being and to develop a conceptual model of volunteer well-being, a twofold approach would be followed. Initially, the work–life experiences of volunteers would be explored to develop an understanding of volunteer well-being. Thereafter, this understanding would be used to develop a conceptual model. The findings of the thematic structural analysis, which reflect my understanding of the research phenomenon, namely, volunteer well-being as constructed from the data and merged with theoretical notions, were presented in Chapter 6. In this chapter, I present a conceptual model of volunteer well-being, which depicts my comprehensive understanding thereof, synthesising the findings in a meaningful whole. This represents and portrays the comprehensive understanding phase (the third and last stage) in the phenomenological hermeneutical analysis method. Apart from deriving a comprehensive understanding of the data alone, the construction of this model is also based on integrating the findings from the thematic structural analysis with the conceptual framework of well-being that I advanced in Chapter 4. This model therefore truly represents a comprehensive understanding of the data, integrated with the literature. In this way I am fulfilling the ultimate aim of this research.

In this chapter, I firstly provide a theoretical orientation to what a conceptual model entails. This is followed by an explanation of my comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon, namely volunteer well-being, and how it is linked to the conceptual framework proposed in Chapters 1 and 4. I conclude this chapter by

presenting the ultimate output of this research, namely, a conceptual model of volunteer well-being.

## **7.2 THE NATURE OF A CONCEPTUAL MODEL**

According to Bernard and Ryan (2010), building, testing, displaying and validating models is a major part of the research process. In general, models depict simplifications of real things. Conceptual models, in particular, synthesise research findings and may be an outcome of research (Tolley, Ulin, Mack, Robinson, & Succop, 2016). Conceptual models provide an overall picture of the phenomenon in question but may vary in their level of abstraction and the breadth of the phenomenon explained (Burns & Grove, 2011). Although these models are theory driven – based on theory/theoretical notions (Jonker & Pennink, 2010) – they are more abstract than theories and explain phenomena of interest, express assumptions and reflect a specific philosophical stance. Through models, complex realities are reduced, allowing a better understanding of these complexities (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). Models provide for alternative ways of knowing and understanding, facilitating understanding for both the researcher and the reader (Radnofsky, 1996). Radnofsky (1996) further explains how models have served as didactic illustrations,<sup>53</sup> allowing viewers such as, for example, a medieval churchgoer to understand religious texts through paintings, frescos and stained-glass windows.

As the conceptual model is a representation of the research phenomenon, namely volunteer well-being, prior to presenting the model I firstly provide my understanding of volunteer well-being as it was constructed from the data and how that links to the conceptual framework on well-being presented in Chapter 4.

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<sup>53</sup> I too relied on didactic illustrations (Radnofsky, 1996) when coming across particularly complex theories such as, for example, Antonovsky's (1996) salutogenic model. In order to craft my own understanding, I relied on Google images as a means of visually making sense of the theory.

### 7.3 AN UNDERSTANDING OF VOLUNTEER WELL-BEING

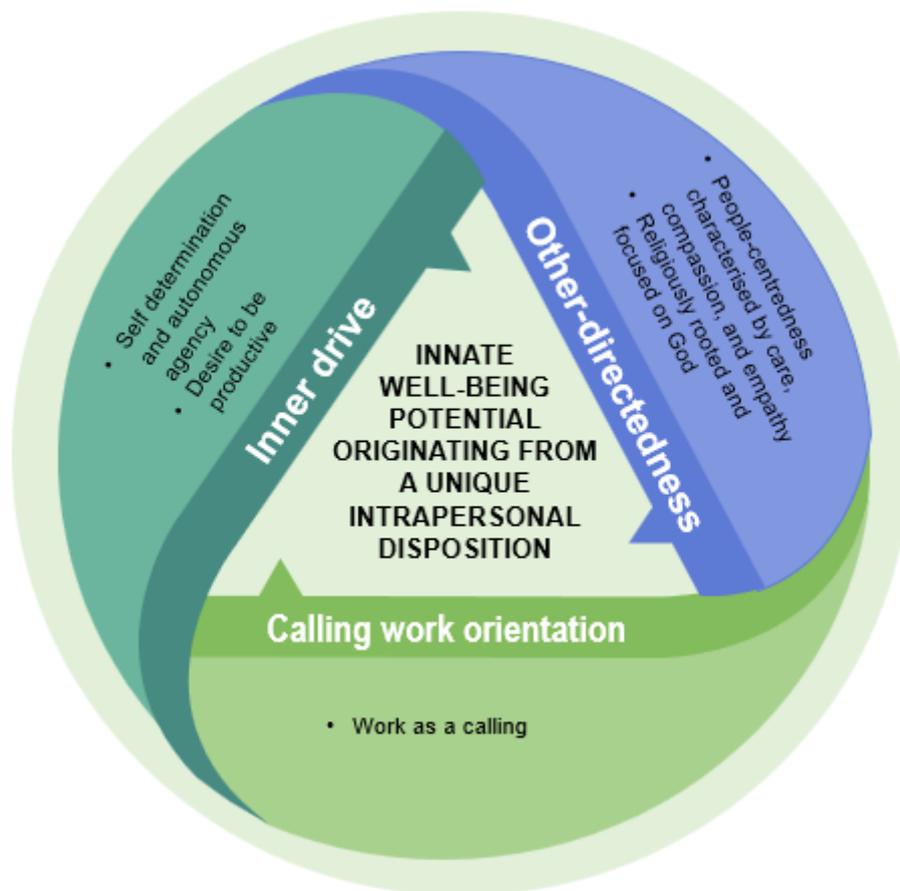
The conceptual framework presented in Chapter 1 (figure 1.1) and further developed in Chapter 4 (figure 4.1) guided the aim of this study and ultimately informed my construction and understanding of volunteer well-being. In order to obtain an enhanced understanding of volunteer well-being I focused on where the volunteer's well-being comes from (*origins*), how it reveals itself (*manifestations*) as well as its *dynamics*. Hence, my research and interpretations of the data was guided by psychofortology, which is defined as the study of the origins, nature, dynamics and manifestations of well-being as well as its enhancement (Coetzee & Cilliers, 2001; Wissing & Van Eeden, 1997, 2002). The premise of psychofortology therefore formed the foundation of the conceptual framework. To build an understanding of volunteer well-being I applied these essential notions of psychofortology, believing that if I could conceptualise where the volunteer's well-being comes from (*origins*), how it reveals itself (*manifestations*) and the *dynamics* thereof, a useful and comprehensive model of volunteer well-being could be constructed. In the following sections I therefore theorise on the core concepts that form the basis of the conceptual model presented in this chapter, namely, the origins of the volunteer's well-being, how well-being manifests itself in their work environment and how these aspects of well-being are interrelated in the dynamics thereof.

The first core concept I discuss, which forms part of the conceptual model and which contributed to my understanding of volunteer well-being, is the origins of the volunteer's well-being. This core concept explicates where the volunteer's well-being comes from or what it is founded in.

#### 7.3.1 Origins of volunteer well-being

As reflected in the first main theme which was constructed from the data (see Chapter 6), volunteer well-being is founded in an innate well-being potential originating from a unique intrapersonal disposition that seems to be characteristic of the volunteer. The volunteers' innate potential or proneness to well-being lies in a unique intrapersonal disposition which comprises an inner drive, an other-directed life orientation and a

calling work orientation. The origins of the volunteer's well-being are illustrated in Figure 7.1.



**Figure 7.1:** Volunteer well-being is founded in an innate well-being potential originating from a unique intrapersonal disposition

The inner drive depicted in Figure 7.1 presents the first personal resource which emanates from various intrapersonal facets of the volunteer's self and which is regarded as part of the origin of the volunteer's well-being. This inner drive, as reflected in the volunteer's self-determination and autonomous agency and in an innate desire to be productive, comprises both the capacity and need for independent action, freedom of choice and a desire to be useful in daily life on the part of the volunteer. These intrapersonal facets resemble an inner drive that motivates the volunteer to act in correspondence with this inner drive, irrespective of difficult and inhibiting circumstances.

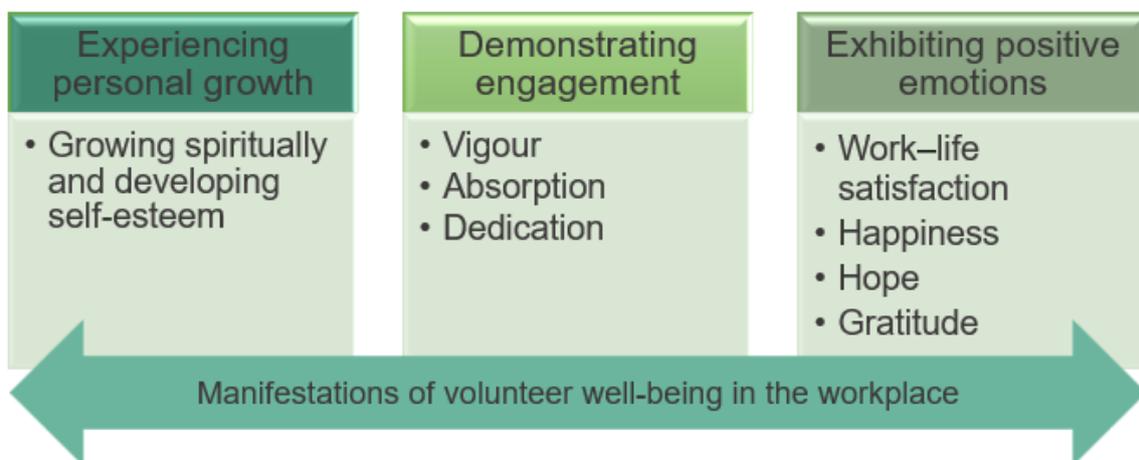
As illustrated in Figure 7.1, the volunteer's well-being is further founded in and strengthened by a very pertinent other-directedness and calling, which resembles a specific orientation to life and work. This other-directedness is rooted in, firstly, being people-centred, based on care, compassion and empathy. Secondly, their other-directedness manifests in their religious rootedness, which is based on a strong belief in God; a higher power being the centre of the volunteers' lives and the root of their strength and gratitude. The last aspect, which forms part of the origin of the volunteer's well-being and which establishes a proneness to well-being in the volunteer, is their orientation to the work environment which stems from being motivated to do work that they have a passion for and thus the desire for such work stems from within the person (i.e. regarding work as a calling). These intrapersonal resources, which emanate from various facets of the volunteer's self and which form part of the origin of the volunteer's well-being, provide the volunteer with the capacity to be well and inspire them to actively engage in volunteer type behaviour and seek out work that would correspond with and satisfy these resources.

The origins of the volunteer's well-being also relate to the volunteering literature presented in Chapter 3, in particular the motives which inspire the volunteer to engage in volunteering work. The origins presented above reflect the psychological motives for volunteering. The decision to volunteer and remain in the volunteering context for the volunteers in this study was predominantly based on intrinsic motives rather than a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motives as found in the unidimensional, two-dimensional, three-dimensional and multidimensional models that explicate volunteer motivation. The findings in this study correspond with the intrinsic dimension of volunteer motivation, thus confirming that caring about and helping others, as well as doing work for intrinsically motivating reasons, are fundamental to volunteer well-being.

In accordance with my conceptual framework, I obtained a further understanding of volunteer well-being by focusing on how the volunteers' well-being manifests or reveals itself in their work environment. In the following section I present and discuss the second core concept which forms part of the conceptual model, namely, the well-being behaviours and sentiments which the volunteers display.

### 7.3.2 Manifestations of volunteer well-being

The volunteers' well-being is firstly revealed in their experience of personal growth. The volunteers further display well-being by demonstrating aspects of engagement and exhibiting positive emotions. The manifestations of the volunteers' well-being are illustrated in Figure 7.2.



**Figure 7.2:** Manifestations of volunteer well-being in the workplace

The personal growth depicted in Figure 7.2 represents the first demonstration of the volunteer's well-being in the workplace. Volunteer well-being is firstly observed in the spiritual growth, improved self-confidence and self-esteem, and growing spiritual experience the volunteers gain in the work environment. The volunteers further demonstrate well-being through their engaged state of mind thus displaying behaviour such as vigour, absorption and dedication. Lastly, the volunteers' well-being is displayed through the positive emotions they exhibit which manifest as feelings such as work–life satisfaction, happiness, hope and gratitude.

Like the origins of the volunteer's well-being, the positive well-being consequences the volunteers experience also relate to the volunteering literature presented in Chapter 3. According to this literature, volunteering has an impact on and is beneficial to both the volunteer and the broader society. The findings of this study correspond with and

reflect the internal benefits that the volunteers derive from volunteer work such as personal growth, social interaction and life satisfaction (see section 3.7.3), thus confirming the positive consequences and well-being associated with engaging in and conducting volunteer work.

Having presented the core concepts which form the basis of my conceptual model and which informed my understanding of volunteer well-being, namely, where the volunteer's well-being comes from or what it is founded in and how it manifests itself, in the following section I link these concepts to my conceptual framework. As part of obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the data, the data must be integrated with the relevant literature (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004). According to my conceptual framework, the various constructs, conceptualisations, dimensions and models used to describe and indicate well-being within the orientations of positive psychology and eudaimonic and hedonic philosophy were used to understand the origins and manifestations of the volunteer's well-being.

### **7.3.3 Linking the findings to my conceptual framework**

In Table 7.1 on the following page I link the findings related to the first main theme, which reflect the origins of the volunteer's well-being, to the theory presented in my conceptual framework. Establishing links to the relevant theory shows how the data fits within the conceptual framework which was explicated in Chapters 1 and 4.

**Table 7.1:** Linking the origins of volunteer well-being to theory

Innate well-being from a unique intrapersonal disposition	potential originating	Link to conceptual framework	
		Component/theory	Construct
Well-being originates from a unique inner drive	Well-being originates from being self-determined and demonstrating autonomous agency	Eudaimonia (Psychological well-being)	Autonomy
	Well-being originates from a desire to be productive	Positive psychology (self-determination theory) Eudaimonia (psychological well-being)	Need for competence Personal growth
Well-being originates from an other-directed life orientation	Well-being originates from being people-centred	Positive psychology (self-determination theory)	Need for relatedness Character strengths (kindness, compassion, empathy)
	Well-being originates from being religiously rooted and focused on God	Positive psychology	Spiritual well-being Religious calling
Well-being originates from a work orientation centred on being driven to conduct work that is a 'calling'		Positive psychology	Calling

Theoretically, the findings reflected in the first main theme are linked to the eudaimonic and positive psychology component of my conceptual framework and reflect eudaimonic and positive psychology perspectives on well-being. The eudaimonic component is represented by autonomy and personal growth as dimensions of psychological well-being (see Ryff, 1989). The positive psychology related constructs are character strengths and calling and the need for competence and relatedness as part of Deci and Ryan's (2000) SDT theory. A comprehensive discussion of the theory related to the first theme was provided in Chapter 4.

In Table 7.2 on the following page I link the findings related to the second main theme, which reflect the manifestations of the volunteer's well-being to the theory presented in my conceptual framework.

**Table 7.2:** Linking the manifestations of volunteer well-being to theory

Showing up with well-being in the workplace	Link to conceptual framework	
	Component/theory	Construct
Experiencing personal growth	Eudaimonia (psychological well-being)	Personal growth
Demonstrating engagement	Positive psychology (PERMA)	Engagement Character strengths (courage)
Exhibiting positive emotions	Hedonia (subjective well-being) Positive psychology (PERMA)	Positive affect, work–life satisfaction Positive emotions Happiness Character strengths (hope, gratitude)

The findings reflected in the second main theme also link conceptually to the eudaimonic and positive psychology component of my conceptual framework and reflect eudaimonic and positive psychology perspectives on well-being. The eudaimonic component is represented by personal growth as a dimension of psychological well-being (see Ryff, 1989). The positive psychology related constructs are character strengths, positive emotions and happiness and engagement as well as positive emotions as components of Seligman’s (2011) PERMA model. These findings furthermore echo hedonic philosophy, in particular positive affect and work–life satisfaction as dimensions of subjective well-being, where the focus is on outcomes such as pleasure and positive affect (Ryan et al., 2008). A comprehensive discussion of the theory related to the second theme was provided in Chapter 4.

Apart from focusing on the origins and manifestations of the volunteer’s well-being, psychofortology also focuses on the *dynamics* thereof. Having explicated where the volunteer’s well-being comes from or on what it is founded and how it manifests itself, I now turn to discuss the last aspect that forms part of my conceptual framework and which informed my comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon, namely, the dynamics of the volunteer’s well-being. As such, volunteer well-being can only be fully understood when the relationship between the core concepts of the model is explicated and integrated with the relevant literature (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004).

### **7.3.4 The dynamics of volunteer well-being**

As constructed from the data I propose that volunteer well-being is founded in an innate well-being potential originating from a unique intrapersonal disposition and manifests in experiences of personal growth, engagement and positive emotions. In this conceptualisation, volunteer well-being is not limited to a static conceptualisation of inner traits, but rather an evolving construct that arises from the interactive dynamic between the concepts that explicate the phenomenon of volunteer well-being in a volunteering context. Volunteer well-being and the dynamics thereof therefore come to the fore through the convergence of the volunteer's unique intrapersonal disposition in an appropriate volunteering context that resembles this disposition. As such, these dispositions inspire the start or commencement of actions that also results in a well-being dynamic which is unique to the volunteer.

The unique intrapersonal disposition that seems to be characteristic of the volunteer is therefore the primary driver of their behaviour and the foundation of the volunteer's well-being, consequently being instrumental to their well-being. The three innate dispositions that would appear to be characteristic of the volunteer, namely, an inner drive, other-directedness and calling work orientation and from which they derive their well-being, provide the volunteer with the capacity and potential to be well and further motivate and drive the volunteer to actively seek out volunteer-type behaviour and work that aligns with this intrapersonal disposition. A well-being dynamic starts forming and becomes operational through the convergence of the volunteer's unique intrapersonal disposition in an appropriate volunteering context that aligns with this disposition. Such convergence and congruence of the origins of the volunteer's well-being in an appropriate volunteering work environment facilitates their well-being, thus making the volunteers feel well because they are acting in accordance with their inner drive and life and work orientation, and engaging in a work environment that aligns with, reciprocates and satisfies these predispositions. In this way the volunteers derive their well-being from living a life of virtue by enacting the true self in their work environment (Deci & Ryan, 2008a). Engaging in meaningful endeavours and reflecting the true self in the work environment is a hallmark of eudaimonic philosophy (Deci & Ryan, 2008a).

Eudaimonic philosophy focuses on the process of living well and the emphasis of eudaimonic research is on understanding what living well entails (Ryan et al., 2008). Aristotle viewed eudaimonia as a way of living rather than a feeling, state or appraisal. For Aristotle this entailed striving for excellence by actualising one's potential and actively pursuing virtues. These pursuits are, however, voluntary and reflect expressions of the self. Lastly, through these pursuits, individuals actualise their true self (daimon), and reflect on and deliberate their actions and aims (Ryan et al., 2008; Ryff & Singer, 2008; Waterman, 2008). Aristotle viewed this type of living as a responsibility and strongly emphasised that one ought to live according to one's true self (Waterman, 2008). Eudaimonia, according to Aristotle, involves "being actively engaged in excellent activity, reflectively making decisions, and behaving voluntarily toward ends that represent the realisation of our highest human natures" (Ryan et al., 2008, p. 145). According to this philosophy, well-being is a "process of fulfilling or realising one's daimon or true nature – that is, of fulfilling one's virtuous potentials and living as one was inherently intended to live" (Deci & Ryan, 2008a, p. 2). Actualising of the true self relates to being authentic, that is, acting in accordance with who you are. Authenticity is related to well-being and is demonstrated by the volunteers in this study when they experience well-being by acting in accordance with their inner drive and life and work orientation. This authentic enactment stems from engaging in a work environment that resembles, reciprocates and satisfies their innate predispositions, just as suggested in the eudaimonic principles of Aristotle.

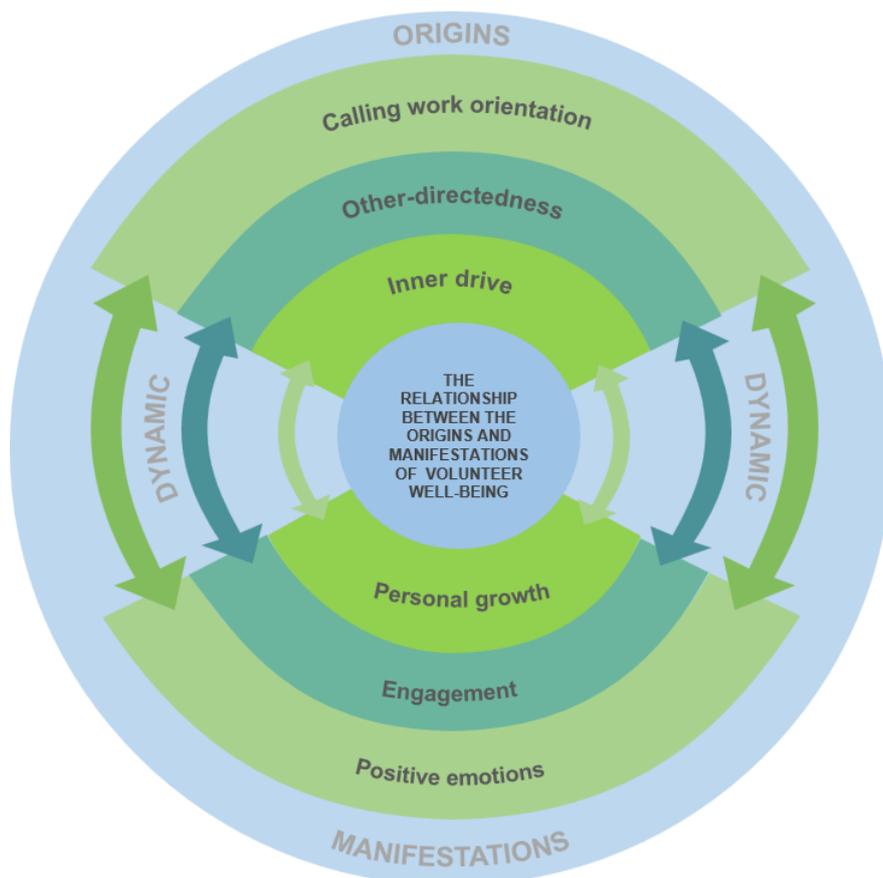
The convergence and congruence of the volunteer's unique intrapersonal disposition in an appropriate volunteering context not only facilitates their well-being but leads to further positive well-being experiences and consequences of personal growth, engagement and positive emotions, thus further building and enhancing the well-being of the volunteer. These consequences denote hedonic satisfaction and seem to represent the outcomes of living a life of virtue (Ryan et al., 2008). Although the emphasis of eudaimonic research is to understand what living well entails, identifying the consequences of this type of living is also core to this research (Ryan et al., 2008). Accordingly, the literature supports a positive relationship between hedonia and eudaimonia (Waterman, 2008). Ryan et al. (2008) note that the consequences of living well can be hedonic satisfaction as well as other outcomes such as health and

meaning. As discussed in Chapter 4, hedonia (or happiness) is described as the subjective experience of pleasure (Waterman, 2008) and is based on an outcome view of well-being (Ryan et al., 2008). Evaluating pleasure/happiness (conceptualised as subjective well-being) is done subjectively by measuring the presence/occurrence of positive emotions, the absence of negative emotions, satisfaction with life and satisfaction in various domains of life (Diener et al., 2003). Accordingly, maximising happiness is a core feature of hedonic philosophy (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

As such, it becomes evident that a positive relationship exists between the origins and manifestations of the volunteer's well-being in the volunteering context. Although at first this positive relationship between the origins and manifestations of the volunteer's well-being appears to be linear, it became evident to me from the data that the relationship between these concepts is not linear but rather tends to be reciprocal. The positive well-being consequences that the volunteer experiences whilst engaging in volunteer work not only enable them to experience psychological and subjective well-being and optimal functioning but further affirm and reinforce their inner drive and life and work orientation, thus sustaining their well-being and ultimately reflecting a spiral dynamic in their well-being. A reciprocal relation therefore starts forming between the origins that the volunteers enacted in the work environment and the positive consequences thereof. The positive well-being consequences experienced therefore seem to act as a feedback loop or a mutual interactive dynamic. The reciprocal positive relationship is evident from the following quote from PR6, who experiences job satisfaction, which in turn reinforces the religious calling that drove him to engage in volunteer work:

... that is the thing I was talking about, that is the, what do you call it, job satisfaction I was talking about, that you become satisfied, that you become fulfilled. You can see that your call, the call of God on your life, it was not in vain because sometimes you think okay, there is a call of God on my life, but you get this attack, sometimes you think but did really God call me, or is it true this thing that God calls people and that, you know, you get some attacks like that; but those attack will soon disappear when you can see that you can actually pray for somebody who is, who the doctors have said there is no hope for him, that he will be in hospital forever, and that person is, you know I was so surprised, you do not know, let me tell you.

I illustrate the reciprocal relationship between the origins and manifestations of volunteer well-being in Figure 7.3.



**Figure 7.3:** The reciprocal relationship between the origins and manifestations of volunteer well-being

**In summary**, the origins of the volunteer's well-being, namely, the unique intrapersonal disposition which comprises of an inner drive and life and work orientation, and the enactment thereof in a work environment that resembles this disposition, firstly makes the volunteers feel well and, secondly, leads to positive well-being experiences and consequences which build and enhance the well-being of the volunteer. In turn, these positive consequences affirm and reinforce the volunteer's inner drive and life and work orientation, thus sustaining their well-being and resulting in a reciprocal well-being dynamic, in which the act of volunteering becomes a way of both building and sustaining the well-being of the volunteer despite work-life challenges and difficulties. The origins and the manifestations of volunteer well-being thus relate to one another in a mutually interactive manner, spiralling to build and sustain the well-being of the volunteer and resulting in a cyclical well-being dynamic.

Reflecting on the similarities in my findings pertaining to the dynamics of volunteer well-being to the process models of volunteering, which I discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.9, affirms the well-being dynamic as presented above and illustrated in Figure 7.3. Although the volunteering models tend to focus on what motivates volunteers to engage in volunteering and the consequences for themselves and society, acting on one's motivational agency is logically related to well-being. According to the process perspective, two models have been proposed in the literature. Snyder and Omoto's (2008) model proposes that volunteering is based on three stages, the antecedents stage, the experiences stage and the consequences stage (Omoto & Snyder, 1993; 1995). Bussell and Forbes's (2003) model proposes that volunteering as a behaviour extends through the determinants of volunteering, the decision to volunteer and the volunteer activity stage.

In the antecedents and determinants phase, research has predominantly identified personal characteristics that motivate the volunteer to engage in volunteer work, which is similar to my pointing to the origins of volunteer well-being as located in the volunteer's intrapersonal disposition. What I have termed the 'authentic enactment' of the innate predisposition of the volunteer appears to fit the experiences stage of the volunteering process models. Accordingly, the experiences stage focuses on the act of volunteering and the consequent beneficial experience thereof for the volunteer.

This second stage seems to be reflected in the manifestations of well-being, as described in the psychofortology of volunteer well-being above, thus also reflecting the satisfaction associated with the enactment of the volunteer's true self in the volunteering context. Snyder and Omoto (2008) indicate that the stronger the match between the volunteer's motivation to volunteer, the more positive the consequences that the volunteers experience. However, the consequences stage, which focuses on the impact of volunteering not only on the individual level but on an organisational and societal levels as well, seems to fall outside the scope of this study.

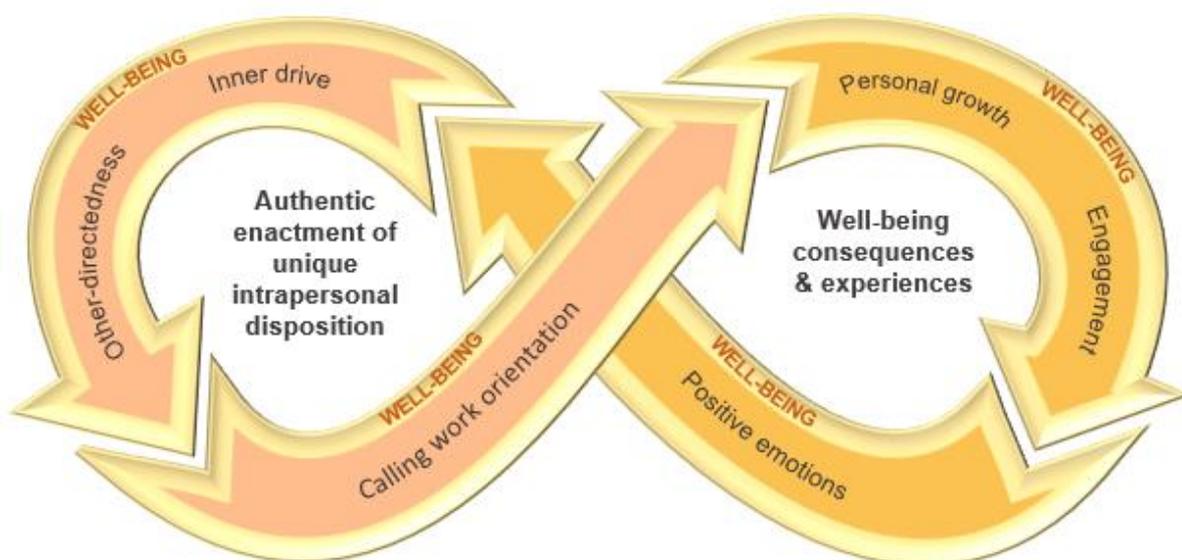
Although it was not the intention of this study to explore the motivation underlying the act of volunteering but rather to explore volunteer well-being, it seems evident that volunteer well-being is related to acting on what drives and motivates the volunteer intrinsically. Hence, the process models appear to affirm the idea that volunteers hold a unique set of dispositions or characteristics that drives a person to volunteer and in this study stimulates and sustains the well-being of the person doing so.

Having presented the final aspect that informed my comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon, namely, the dynamics of volunteer well-being, I now turn to putting all of the concepts constructed and developed to this point together, by presenting them in a conceptual model which depicts an enhanced understanding of volunteer well-being. Apart from depicting the origins and manifestations of volunteer well-being, the model also depicts the dynamic interrelationship between these two core concepts, thus illustrating my understanding of volunteer well-being as constructed from the data. The model as the ultimate output of this research represents a comprehensive understanding of the data as a whole.

#### **7.4 A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF VOLUNTEER WELL-BEING**

An in-depth exploration of and critical hermeneutic reflection on the volunteers' work-life experiences resulted in the construction and enhanced understanding of volunteer well-being, which I depict below in a conceptual model. Through this model I present my understanding of volunteer well-being as constructed from the data and as guided by my conceptual framework. I call the model the *psychofortology of volunteer well-*

*being in a volunteering context.* As depicted in the model, I propose that volunteers have an innate potential for well-being which comes to fruition in the act or context of volunteering. This innate well-being potential originates in a unique intrapersonal disposition comprising an inner drive, life and work orientation on the part of the volunteer. The convergence, more specifically the authentic enactment of the volunteer's inner drive, life and work orientation in an appropriate volunteering work context that resembles this disposition triggers and facilitates the volunteer's well-being, making them feel well, and results in well-being behaviour and experiences. Consequently, a reciprocal effect ensues where the positive well-being experiences lead to an affirmation of the self, sustaining the volunteer's well-being and further resulting in a perpetual reciprocal well-being process. In a sense, the authentic enactment of the volunteer's unique innate intrapersonal disposition sets in motion positive well-being consequences. Essentially, this reciprocal dynamic feeds into itself and, as such, this model also offers a route to not only building and enhancing well-being but also sustaining it. In Figure 7.4, I present the conceptual model in a visual form, thus portraying an enhanced understanding of the psychofortology of volunteer well-being in a volunteering context.



**Figure 7.4:** The psychofortology of volunteer well-being in a volunteering context

From the model, I hypothesise the following:

*Volunteers have a unique intrapersonal disposition, consisting of an inner drive, other-directedness and calling work orientation. Representative of an innate well-being potential, this unique intrapersonal disposition is stimulated when it is authentically enacted through volunteering work, thereby facilitating the well-being of the volunteer and resulting in consequent psychological and subjective well-being experiences. In a mutually interactive manner, the resulting well-being experiences build, enhance and sustain the well-being of the volunteer, leading to a cyclical well-being dynamic.*

The proposed model illuminates the complex nature of volunteer well-being and depicts an enhanced understanding of the origins, manifestations and dynamics thereof. Previous studies on volunteering and well-being (refer to section 1.2.4) have focused on well-being as an outcome of volunteering. This model suggests that well-being is not merely an outcome of volunteering, rather well-being is located within the individual volunteer as an innate potential or disposition for being well. Agency therefore seems to be a predominant driver of the volunteer's well-being. This suggests that the volunteers are active in shaping their own lives. The self as a concept is not unfamiliar to well-being theory, as the majority of conceptualisations of well-being are rooted in subjective interpretations where an individual determines their well-being for themselves. This is evident from the numerous questionnaires that have been developed to evaluate well-being. For example, the Personally Expressive Activities Questionnaire developed by Waterman (1998), which is used to measure eudaimonia as a subjective condition, and the Satisfaction With Life Scale developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985) which is used to measure subjective well-being. In addition, various psychologists such as Bandura (1982) and Antonovsky (1996) also consider the self as the primary driver of beliefs, perceptions, desires, attitudes and subsequent actions and motivation (refer to the discussion of self-efficacy and sense of coherence presented in Chapter 4). Furthermore, well-being theory and research have been dominated by the cognitive revolution, where the primary focus is on cognitive and intra-psychological aspects of human behaviour (Rosso et al., 2010). According to Wissing and Van Eeden (2002), conceptualisations

of well-being based on personality theories, such as psychological well-being, are mainly rooted in intra-psychological aspects of behaviour.

Lastly, the uniqueness of this model supports an alternative qualitative approach to understanding volunteer well-being and further contributes to characterising volunteer well-being from a multidimensional perspective.

## **7.5 IN CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the integrated data and the relevant literature were interwoven, using a conceptual model, to illustrate my understanding of volunteer well-being, thus depicting the psychofortology of volunteer well-being in a volunteering context as it was constructed from the data. Reflecting on the journey metaphor that I have used throughout this thesis, I view this model as the place where I ended up (Turner, 1998), indicating that the research aim set out in Chapter 1 of this thesis has been achieved. Having reached the conclusion stage, I now move on to the last chapter of this thesis.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **CONCLUDING THE RESEARCH JOURNEY**

*It is good to have an end to journey toward, but it is the journey that matters in the end (Ernest Hemingway).*

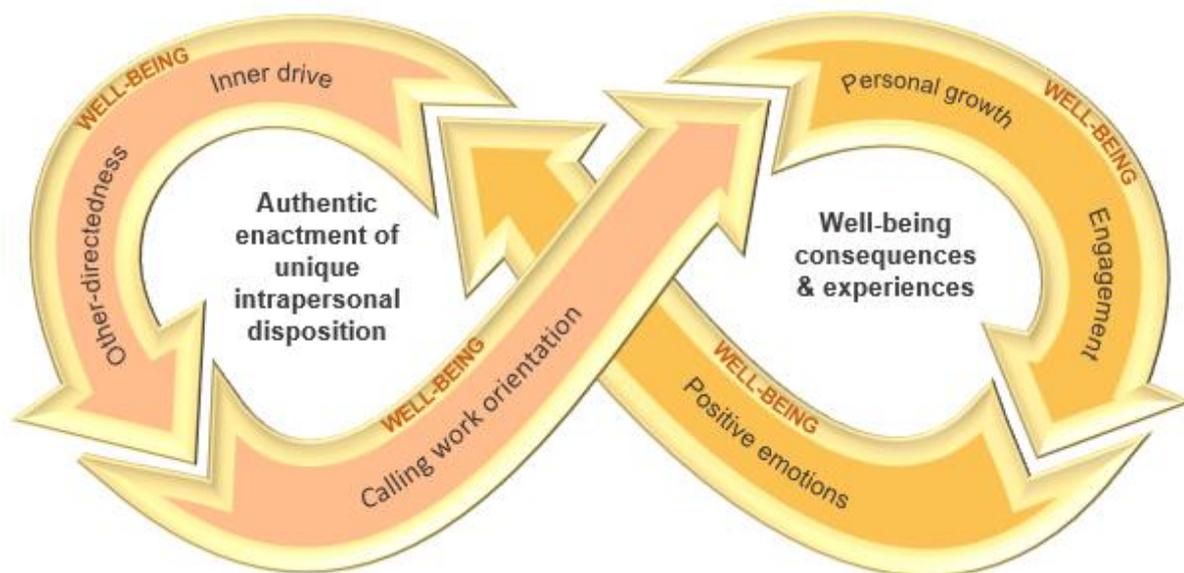
#### **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

Although I indicated in Chapter 1 (see section 1.10 – structuring of chapters in the thesis) that Chapter 8 would close this research journey, I came to the realisation that I actually found some closure already in Chapter 7 of this thesis when I presented the conceptual model. Closure for me represents a personal satisfaction with achieving the research aim. Having reached a point of personal closure, I devote this final chapter to providing an overall critical reflection on the research journey. In the first part of this chapter, I reflect on the entire research journey by providing a summary of the outcome of this study and how it was achieved. Thereafter, I provide a critical account of how rigour was ensured throughout the research. As rigour is used to evaluate research (Davies & Dodd, 2002), I chose to include this in the last chapter of the thesis as it enabled me to evaluate the thoroughness and quality of the research process after I had presented the methodology, the conceptual framework and the findings. Further reflecting on this research brings me to present the contributions, limitations and recommendations for further research and practice. Lastly, I provide my personal reflections on the overall research journey.

#### **8.2 SUMMARISING THE RESEARCH JOURNEY**

The overarching aim of this research was to enhance understanding of volunteer well-being and to develop a conceptual model of volunteer well-being through an in-depth exploration of volunteers' work–life experiences. This research emerged from my involvement in a community engagement project and was further refined by the literature on volunteering and well-being. The justification for studying volunteer well-

being arises from the importance of volunteering to our communities and society in general, as well as NPOs' reliance on volunteer labour. In order to address the research aim, I adopted a qualitative research approach and a hermeneutic phenomenological research methodology. In-depth interviews were used to explore volunteers' work–life experiences. A phenomenological hermeneutical analytic process, as prescribed by Lindseth and Norberg (2004), was used to analyse the data. The data were interpreted in accordance with my conceptual framework of well-being. A further critical reflection on the data together with the relevant literature resulted in the following conceptual model, titled the psychofortology of volunteer well-being in a volunteering context, which depicts my understanding of volunteer well-being:



**Figure 8.1:** The psychofortology of volunteer well-being in a volunteering context

This model illustrates my understanding of the origins, manifestations and dynamics of volunteer well-being in a volunteering context and, as such, represents the psychofortology of volunteer well-being. In essence, the primary assumptions theorised in this model are the following:

- Volunteer well-being is founded in a unique intrapersonal disposition which is characteristic of the volunteer. Consisting of an inner drive, other-directed life orientation and calling work orientation, this unique intrapersonal disposition

represents an innate well-being potential which establishes a natural capacity for and proneness to well-being on the part of the volunteer.

- The volunteer's unique intrapersonal disposition is stimulated through the authentic enactment thereof in appropriate volunteering work.
- The authentic enactment of the volunteer's unique intrapersonal disposition facilitates their well-being and leads to positive well-being consequences, including personal growth, engagement and positive emotions. In turn, these well-being consequences further build and enhance the well-being of the volunteer.
- Mutual interaction ensues between the unique intrapersonal disposition that the volunteers enact in the volunteering environment and the positive well-being consequences that emanate from this enactment. Affirming and reinforcing the inner drive and life and work orientation of the volunteer, the positive well-being consequences that the volunteers display in the work environment not only build and enhance but also sustain the well-being of the volunteer, resulting in a cyclical well-being dynamic.

### **8.3 RESEARCH RIGOUR**

According to Silverman (2010), qualitative research demands theoretical sophistication and methodological rigour. Rigour, which is described as the standard by which qualitative research is measured (Davies & Dodd, 2002), is essential, as research in general is not only scrutinised by researchers but also by governments and public and private-sector organisations. Therefore, it is imperative that a research project is of the highest quality (Silverman, 2010). Quality issues, especially in terms of achieving rigour, are, however, a contentious issue in qualitative research. While it was initially suggested that criteria befitting the qualitative paradigm be used to evaluate qualitative studies rather than adopting the criteria used for quantitative research (e.g. Leininger, 1994; Smith, 1996), this has since been refuted (see Morse et al., 2002). However, Corbin and Strauss (2015) note their discomfort with quantitative terms such as reliability and validity when discussing qualitative research. Adding to this contention are authors who suggest that a researcher's epistemological paradigm will influence the criteria used to assess rigour (e.g. Morrow, 2005; Rubin &

Babbie, 2010; Willig, 2008). Furthermore, the attempt to develop a universal set of criteria for qualitative research has also resulted in a variety of frameworks being developed in this regard (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015).

In light of this lack of consensus, for the purposes of this study I have chosen to adopt Krefting's (1991) criteria for trustworthiness, which are based on an interpretation of Guba's (1981) model, as in my opinion these criteria and accompanying strategies for assessing rigour are extensive and reflect my philosophy of science as explained in Chapter 2. I now discuss how rigour was achieved in this study according to each of the criteria and the accompanying strategies.

### **8.3.1 Truth value (credibility)**

Recognised as the most important criterion for assessing trustworthiness, truth value pertains to the credibility of the research findings (Krefting, 1991). Accordingly, the findings should be perceived as truthful by the researcher and need to further represent the participants and the research context. Human experiences as they are lived therefore need to be represented as adequately as possible (Krefting, 1991; Merriam & Grenier, 2019). The truth value of this study was sought using the following strategies to ensure that the participants' narratives are accurate reflections of their realities.

#### *8.3.1.1 Prolonged engagement*

Prolonged engagement entails spending extended time in the participant's everyday world to gain an enhanced understanding of their behaviour, values and relationships (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lundy, 2008). Prolonged engagement is grounded in anthropological fieldwork and has become a defining characteristic of qualitative research (Padgett, 2008). Prolonged engagement enables the researcher to move beyond the observer role to immersion in the research context, thus resulting in a joint experience that allows for greater understanding (Lundy, 2008). My understanding of the participants' everyday world was facilitated not only by the in-depth interviews that resulted in my engagement in the research context but also my involvement in a

community engagement project at the NPO. This latter involvement ultimately led me to identify my research topic, which I believe was a result of my immersion in and understanding of the context. Furthermore, through this project I became known in the NPO and eventually accepted (Padgett, 2008), and thus gained entry to the research field. Moreover, the managing director of the NPO was aware of and supported my research interest. Lastly, whilst collecting the data I spent an extensive amount of time in the field (see Creswell & Poth, 2018 and Lundy, 2008), conducting eight in-depth interviews and three follow-up interviews.

### *8.3.1.2 Reflexivity*

Throughout Chapter 2, reference was made to the importance of reflexivity as an essential requirement and quality control measure for qualitative research in particular (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In my opinion, reflexivity denotes transparency (cf. Yin, 2016). Reflexivity in this research study was ensured in three ways. In line with Braun and Clarke's (2013) recommendation, I kept a reflexive journal; secondly, I incorporated my reflexive considerations (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Willig, 2008) throughout the thesis. In addition to the use of a reflexive diary, I used photographs. The reflexive journal contained my own personal reflections on the research process in general, such as how I experienced the interviews and the analysis of the data. These reflections have been incorporated in the various chapters of this thesis. Further transparency was provided in the discussion of my research journey. In Chapter 2, for example, I gave an indication of how I came across this research topic and in Chapter 5 I provided a full account of the fieldwork; this transparency is further evident during the analysis and presentation of the data in Chapter 6.

Photographs were used to portray the realness of the research act and process. They can be used either as visual records or as diaries (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). I used them primarily as a visual diary and they were also another way of infusing reflexivity into the research process (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Since photographs can be used to illustrate the changes that occur as the research takes place (White, Woodfield, & Ritchie, 2003), I used them as a way to depict my choices, activities and thought processes.

### *8.3.1.3 Triangulation*

With its roots in navigational science and land surveying (Padgett, 2008), triangulation entails using a combination of different methods and theoretical perspectives to verify research findings (Ritchie, 2003) when studying a phenomenon (Flick, 2014; Merriam, 2009; Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Flick (2014) is of the view that although triangulation is a useful strategy it does not need to be undertaken in every qualitative study. Although I did not undertake triangulation in the manner in which it is described in the literature, I believe that the iterative nature of hermeneutic phenomenology, as the research methodology applied in this study, assured the integrity of the data (cf. Ritchie, 2003). The naïve reading of the data informed the subsequent structural analysis and vice versa. In the final step of the process, a comprehensive understanding of the data was informed by the previous two steps and existing theory. In this way, constant verification of the data took place.

### *8.3.1.4 Member checking*

With member checking, preliminary findings are verified by the research participants (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Padgett, 2008). Although this strategy guards against researcher bias (Padgett, 2008), Giorgi (2006a) argues that, in phenomenology, member checking in particular is “wholly indefensible theoretically” (p. 311) for two reasons. Firstly, as lived experiences are described from the natural attitude of the participant but interpreted from a phenomenological perspective by the researcher, it would be difficult for the participants to check this analysis (Giorgi, 2006a). This is supported by Crowther et al. (2017), who indicate that member checking is “not congruent with hermeneutic phenomenology” (p. 832). Padgett (2008) also identifies this as a problem associated with this rigour strategy and indicates that participants may not understand what they are checking, which may lead to possible disagreement as a result of their viewpoints. Secondly, as there is a difference between lived experience and the meaning of that experience, the participant is not necessarily the best person to judge the meaning of that experience (Giorgi, 2006a). In light of this, I chose not to let the research participants review or verify the findings. It is, however,

my intention to present the findings to the NPO and interested participants once this thesis has been examined.

#### *8.3.1.5 Peer examination*

Peer review in this study was undertaken on both a formal and informal basis. Discussions with my supervisor were not limited to the analysis of the data but included the entire research process, from discussing the intellectual boundaries of this study to the entry-into-the-field interviews. Therefore, there was constant dialogue, which I believe enhanced the integrity of this research. Additionally, I had frequent informal discussions with a colleague whose research topic was similar to mine and I also took the opportunities offered to discuss my ideas with friends (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

#### *8.3.1.6 Authority of the researcher*

As the researcher is considered to be the primary instrument in qualitative research (Creswell, 2007; Lichtman, 2010; Merriam, 2002), having the skills and competence to conduct the project is necessary (Krefting, 1991). In Chapter 5, I explicated my background and experience (see section 5.2.1), which assisted me with conducting the practical aspects of this study, that is, the interviews. Relevant literature enabled me to familiarise myself with qualitative research and phenomenology in particular, as research for my master's dissertation and research publications was conducted from a quantitative perspective. Furthermore, although I had gained entry to the research field through a community engagement project, which had cemented my acceptance in the NPO, for the purposes of this study, my role as the researcher was identified as that of a doctoral student to the participants and the NPO.

### 8.3.2 Transferability

Transferability, also referred to as generalisability<sup>54</sup> (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003), is concerned with whether research findings can be applied or transferred to broader contexts whilst maintaining their context-specific richness (Babbie & Mouton, 2006; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). According to Jensen (2008c), decisions about transferability are made on the basis of a full understanding of the context by the researcher. Transferability in this study was ensured by providing a thick description of the research and using an appropriate sampling strategy.

#### 8.3.2.1 *Thick description*

The first strategy that can be used to increase the transferability of a research study is thick description. Although Krefting (1991) uses the term “dense description”, I opted to use the term ‘thick description’ (Jensen, 2008c). Thick description entails providing a full account of the research context, participants and methodology (Jensen, 2008c; Merriam & Grenier, 2019). By providing a full account of the context, participant details and the methodology and methods used to conduct the research, other researchers will be enabled to make a judgement about the transferability of the findings (Krefting, 1991). These details were provided in Chapters 1, 2 and 5. In addition, the research findings included direct excerpts from the participants’ narratives.

#### 8.3.2.2 *Sampling*

Another strategy that determines the transferability of the data is selecting participants who are representative of the entire group of volunteers (Krefting, 1991). In this regard, Jensen (2008c) suggests using purposeful sampling. Details of the sampling criteria and the application of purposeful sampling were presented in Chapters 2 and 5. Furthermore, the sample of participants was representative on both a homogenous and a heterogeneous level and characterises the entire population of volunteers in the

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<sup>54</sup> Although both transferability and generalisability pertain to applying the research findings beyond the context of the study, the term ‘generalisability’ is associated with quantitative rather than qualitative research (Denscombe, 2010; Given, 2016).

NPO. Based on this, connections can be made to community-level behaviour and practice (Jensen, 2008c).

### **8.3.3 Dependability**

Dependability is equivalent to reliability in quantitative research (Jensen, 2008b); it pertains to replication and thus considers whether the research findings would be consistent if replicated under the same or similar conditions (Babbie & Mouton, 2006; Krefting, 1991). In order to support replication, research infrastructure, consisting of complete methodological information must be provided by the researcher (Jensen, 2008b). As the research context is prone to change, the research infrastructure also needs to support this variation by documenting deviations from aspects such as the research design (Jensen, 2008b). In this study, dependability was supported by an audit trail.

#### *8.3.3.1 Audit trail through thick description*

According to Yin (2016), qualitative research should be conducted in a publicly accessible manner. This entails making the research procedure transparent by describing and documenting it, thus providing an opportunity for review and scrutiny. In addition, qualitative research must be conducted methodologically. The research procedure should be orderly while at the same time anticipating variation (Yin, 2016). Transparency and methodicalness (Yin, 2016), achieved by leaving an audit trail (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), based on thick description enabled me to ensure dependability throughout this research study. Chapter 5, which provides a natural account of the fieldwork, also depicts congruence with the research design. Full methodological information (Jensen, 2008b) was provided in this chapter starting with the pilot interviews to information on how the data were transcribed and managed. This information will enable replication, as other researchers will easily be able to follow my research trail. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) compare an audit trail in research to the log a ship's captain uses to record the details of a voyage. These authors indicate that an audit trail should also provide details of how, during the analysis of the data, categories were derived. In Chapter 2, I provided intricate details

of the steps followed when analysing the data. These steps reflect a natural account of how the themes and sub-themes were developed.

### **8.3.4 Confirmability**

The last quality criterion for assessing trustworthiness pertains to confirmability. Equated to reliability in quantitative research, confirmability entails establishing the accuracy of the truth or meaning that was expressed in a research study (Jensen, 2008a). In other words, the researcher needs to provide evidence to show that interpretations of participants' narratives are rooted in their constructions and that the analysis of the data and subsequent findings reflect these constructions (Jensen, 2008a). A confirmability audit supported by reflexivity was used in this study to ensure confirmability, thus ascertaining freedom from bias. This audit will also enable other researchers to verify the research process and the interpretations of the data (Jensen, 2008a; Krefting, 1991).

#### *8.3.4.1 Confirmability audit (supported by reflexivity)*

In ensuring confirmability, Jensen (2008a) suggests making the research transparent by describing how the data were analysed and providing examples of the coding process. As discussed in the previous section (see section 8.3.3.1 – audit trail through thick description), in Chapter 2 I provided intricate details of the phenomenological hermeneutical analytic process used in analysing the data. In making the steps of this process explicit, I also infused reflexivity into each step, thus depicting how I, as the researcher, influenced the research process. In addition, I incorporated a methodological trail in my reflexive journal. Photographs of freehand notes as well as the memos, codes and families created in ATLAS.ti, were also provided in Chapter 2. Finally, the structural analysis, which depicts the coding process (Jensen, 2008a), that is, the sub-themes and main themes supported by the participants' narratives, was provided in Tables 6.1 and 6.2 in Chapter 6.

According to Fulton, Kuit, Sanders, and Smith (2013), a doctoral study has to be useful to a researcher's community of practice. In the next section, I reflect on the usefulness

of my research, in other words its contribution to knowledge and practice (Fulton et al., 2013).

## **8.4 CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH**

In Chapter 1, I presented the anticipated contribution that this research would make according to Mouton's (2001) three worlds framework, which consists of three worlds/contexts, namely, that of everyday life, science and meta-science. Similarly, in the next section, I discuss the contributions that originate from this research according to this framework.

### **8.4.1 Everyday life (pragmatic contribution)**

The pragmatic contributions of this research pertain to the management of volunteers and the application of contextually grounded knowledge and benefits that extend beyond the volunteer. I suggest that the conceptual model may be useful for the overall management of volunteers as it could inform the management of this important resource. Understanding the reasons (purpose) for volunteering may be used in the recruitment phase to ensure a fit between the volunteer and the potential organisation. Furthermore, the conceptual model could be used for coaching, mentoring and retention purposes, enabling the volunteer to navigate their experiences within the volunteering context. This research also contributes to providing an understanding of volunteers in a South African context, thus enabling South African volunteer organisations to apply contextually grounded knowledge in the management of volunteers.

Finally, I am confident that understanding the well-being of volunteers has far-reaching benefits. The theoretical background to this study, which I provided in Chapter 1, pointed to the importance of volunteers and their contribution to the economy, the broader community and society in general. I therefore believe that this research contributes pragmatically both directly and indirectly to the volunteer, society and the community. Owing to the impact and reach of volunteering, the beneficial consequences of volunteer well-being extend to the recipients of their services and in

some cases the recipients' families, which represent the broader community, in turn filtering down to society in general. These consequences also extend to the volunteers themselves and their families.

#### **8.4.2 Science (theoretical/body of knowledge contribution)**

On a theoretical level, this study contributes firstly to a better understanding of volunteer well-being by going beyond the consequences, impact or benefits and revealing the origins, manifestations and dynamics of volunteer well-being from a positive psychology paradigm, as well as a multidimensional well-being theoretical perspective. Qualitative scholars who have examined volunteering and well-being have focused on the consequences, impact or benefits of volunteering on well-being and predominantly favour psychological conceptions of well-being. In this study, the positive aspects of human behaviour were highlighted, thus providing insight into how positive behaviour can be enhanced. Theoretical information was also added to the body of knowledge on positive psychology and the well-being of volunteers, affirming the value of the impact of positive psychology specifically. Furthermore, this study provided contextually grounded knowledge of volunteer well-being in a South African context, thus addressing a theoretical gap in the volunteering literature.

Secondly, a contribution was made to the body of knowledge on volunteer well-being by means of the development of a conceptual model. As models are generally popular in both psychology and IO psychology (e.g. Maslow's model of motivation and personality expressed as a hierarchy of needs and the theory of work adjustment), I therefore chose to express my contribution in the form of a conceptual model. The originality of this contribution lies in the development of this model in a work domain that is underpinned by a dramatically different employer–employee perspective. Originality, according to Braun and Clarke (2013), does not necessarily entail something new; it may include generating something new because of the topic, approach or context. In addition, as models depict a simplification of real things (Bernard & Ryan, 2010), this model provides a simplified understanding of volunteer well-being and specifically the psychofortology of volunteer well-being. By means of a conceptual model, this study also provides an example of how to apply

psychofortology in creating meaning with regard to well-being in a particular research context.

In terms of the field of IO Psychology, the results of this study contribute to the body of knowledge on well-being and the understanding thereof in a work domain and unique employment context that has to date been unexplored by IO psychologists. The results suggest that the principles of IO Psychology such as optimal functioning and the fit between the individual and their work environment are equally important in volunteering contexts, pointing to the relevance of this profession in all types of organisations. A theoretical contribution is also made to the volunteering and well-being literature in IO Psychology. Lastly, this study also contributes to the theoretical need to understand how to create a sustainable and healthy volunteer workforce (refer to Lewig et al., 2007).

#### **8.4.3 Meta-science (methodological contribution)**

This research firstly contributes methodologically to both IO Psychology and the field of volunteering. Despite the definite increase over the past two decades of qualitative research in the field of IO Psychology, and regardless of its perceived value, quantitative research still tends to dominate the literature (O'Neil & Koekemoer, 2016). Furthermore, studies related to the well-being of volunteers have also been conducted predominantly from a quantitative perspective. This study therefore contributes methodologically to the discipline of IO Psychology and the field of volunteer well-being by adopting a qualitative phenomenological and hermeneutic research approach. On further investigating the research that has been conducted in the field of IO Psychology, specifically that included in the *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology* (the flagship journal of IO Psychology in South Africa), I found that well-being studies are conducted predominantly from a quantitative perspective. I could find evidence of only two studies that were conducted from a qualitative perspective (e.g. Cilliers & Flotman, 2016; Van Straaten, Du Plessis, & Van Tonder, 2016). A methodological contribution is therefore also made to well-being research in the discipline of IO Psychology. I also believe that a methodological contribution was made through the sample that was used in the study, which consisted of participants from

relatively low-income contexts, which as such does not reflect the typical samples of employees, scholars and students used in research in general.

Secondly, I believe that the natural account of the research process will contribute methodologically to other IO Psychology students who want to pursue qualitative research. It is evident throughout the study that I struggled tremendously with the *how* of the entire research process. Although the literature provides theoretical information and strategies, the exact nature of the research process is not always clear, especially in terms of the data analysis phase. In this regard, a natural account of the research, which includes a description of how the findings evolved credibly from the analysis, may provide guidance for students in the field of IO Psychology. Furthermore, model development is an equally complex process often devoid of practical steps that demonstrate the construction thereof. In Chapters 2 and 7, I provided a detailed description of how the theory of model construction is applied and reported on, which may serve as a guide for other students.

Having discussed the contributions of the research, I now turn to reflecting on the limitations of this study.

## **8.5 LIMITATIONS**

According to Oliver (2004), all researchers are expected to be critical of their work thus reflecting on the limitations of their research. Although a research study is usually scrutinised by peers, fellow researchers or colleagues (Yin, 2016), in the next section I scrutinise my own research. Limitations pertain to the factors that may have had an effect on the interpretation of the findings or on the generalisability of the results (Lunenborg & Irby, 2008). Reflecting constructively on the research in general, I have identified the following limitations:

### **8.5.1 Faith-based volunteering context**

In Chapter 2, I explained how my involvement in a community engagement project simultaneously introduced and granted me access to the volunteering environment.

The convenient accessibility of the research site also proved to be a limitation of this study. Although the research participants were representative on both a homogeneous and a heterogeneous level, the volunteering context represented in this study is that of a faith-based NPO which operates in the health sector in the Gauteng and Western Cape provinces. This context does not therefore necessarily represent all volunteering contexts in South Africa. The ultimate output of this research, which was based on the findings of this study, namely the conceptual model proposed in this previous chapter, is therefore context specific. As such, volunteer well-being may possibly manifest differently in a non-faith-based volunteering context. In this regard, I identify the context as a factor that hampers the transferability of the results to the broader volunteering community. The transferability of the findings of this study is therefore limited to similar volunteering context(s).

### **8.5.2 Testing the model**

Bernard and Ryan (2010) allude to the importance of model testing, which forms part of the model development process, by indicating that “the real worth of a model, though, is not in its building, but in its testing – that is, whether it stands up against a new set of cases that weren’t used in building the model in the first place” (p. 141). Although the testing of the conceptual model was not an aim of this research, I do regard it as a limitation of this research study. Having confidence that the comprehensive understanding of the data reflects the current cases used to construct the model, it would nevertheless be valuable to not only test the model against more cases in the NPO that was used for this study but also against negative cases (Bernard & Ryan, 2010), as well as in similar and other volunteering contexts that differ from the context used in this study.

As no research is perfect (cf. Oliver, 2004), limitations are therefore anticipated. Despite their negative connotation, I am of the view that limitations naturally pave the way for further research. In light of the limitations identified in this study, I proceed to present recommendations for further research.

## **8.6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cottrell and McKenzie (2011) propose structuring the recommendations section of a thesis according to recommendations for practice or implementation, recommendations for improving the research and, lastly, recommendations for future research. Having adopted this proposed structure, I now present the recommendations that emerged from this study.

### **8.6.1 Recommendations for practice or implementation**

Given the importance of volunteers, the reliance of NPOs on volunteer services and the complex nature of the volunteering context, a need to sustain the well-being of volunteers is apparent. As this study provided an enhanced understanding of volunteer well-being, it is suggested that the NPO used in this study could implement the conceptual model for application to existing volunteer management practices. Furthermore, the application of the conceptual model may be used to evaluate current volunteer management practices with a view to applying the principles of the model in improving the effectiveness of these practices. Alternatively, the conceptual model may be used as a basis for developing practices that could sustain well-being during stages such as the attraction, recruitment, retention and mentoring of volunteers. Should no practices related to the well-being of volunteers exist, the results of this study could be used from an informative and awareness point of view, educating the NPO on the importance of volunteer well-being in general. Lastly, as the results of this study are transferable to similar volunteering context(s) only, the application of the conceptual model could possibly be extended to these contexts.

In concluding this section and being acutely aware that the findings of this study may not have the impact and reach that I anticipate, the findings definitely contribute to volunteering by demonstrating the importance of volunteer well-being. It is recommended that volunteer organisations consider the beneficial consequences of volunteer well-being if not from an implementation perspective then at least from a practice point of view. This may be facilitated by perusing the findings of this study. In addition, the application of IO Psychology principles to the volunteering context, a

context which has to date been relatively unexplored by IO psychologists, became apparent in this study, signifying the benefit of this profession for volunteering. In light of this, IO psychologists are encouraged to explore this context through further research or by practically applying IO principles to this work domain.

According to Cottrell and McKenzie (2011), researchers often combine the recommendations for improving the research and recommendations for future research. Recognising the overlap of the identified recommendations in these two subsections, I have also opted to provide a combined discussion that incorporates both these sections.

## **8.6.2 Recommendations for improving the research and for future research**

Research opportunities and improvements based on different contexts and samples, confirming the proposed conceptual model and adopting different theoretical and methodological perspectives, were identified.

### *8.6.2.1 Exploring different contexts and samples and testing the proposed model*

As the findings of this study are based on a faith-based volunteering context, future research could focus on studying the well-being of volunteers in both similar and dissimilar volunteering contexts, both nationally and globally. Furthermore, since the overall profile of volunteers in South Africa is not limited to the sample utilised in this study, it would be valuable to incorporate different demographic and socioeconomic groups in future research. In addition, future research could focus on confirming the proposed conceptual model. As the model was not tested, it is suggested that the model be tested firstly against a new set of cases in the NPO that was not used in building the model (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). Thereafter, the applicability of the model could be tested in similar contexts, as well as others that differ from the context used in this study. Empirical testing of the model is also recommended. Since the NPO operates in both the Gauteng and Western Cape provinces, further research could be conducted on volunteers in the Western Cape. Lastly, although the data did not reflect negative cases per se, which are regarded as divergent data (Brodsky, 2008), I viewed

all the participants' narratives as different. However, further research that incorporates a new set of cases could potentially result in data that diverge significantly from the current findings, thus further exploring and enhancing the proposed conceptual model.

#### *8.6.2.2 Adopting different theoretical and methodological perspectives*

It would be valuable to conduct further research on volunteer well-being by applying different theoretical and methodological perspectives. In accordance with the social constructionist research paradigm and the interpretive variant of hermeneutic phenomenology adopted in this study, I have rejected the existence of an ultimate truth (Galbin, 2014; Geldenhuys, 2015). I therefore do not claim that the findings and the conceptual model constructed in this study represent the *only* truth but rather *one* perspective and construction of the research phenomenon, namely, volunteer well-being, which contributes to existing knowledge in the field. Analysing the data from a different theoretical and methodological perspective may therefore result in different findings and research outcome.

As this study was informed by a positive psychological paradigm, it would be valuable to adopt an alternative perspective where future research focuses on the association between variables such as burnout and well-being. Since research on volunteering and well-being has focused solely on psychological conceptions of well-being, it is recommended that further research utilising a multidimensional perspective of well-being be conducted on volunteer well-being. Approaching the data from a different methodological perspective would also be valuable. The relationship between role identity and well-being has resulted in studies being conducted on these concepts among volunteers (e.g. Greenfield & Marks, 2004; Thoits, 2012). Given that the conceptual model places emphasis on the self as a driver of well-being, adopting a symbolic interactionist methodological perspective would provide valuable insights into understanding the way social roles, cultural factors and community perspectives influence the well-being of volunteers. As a research tradition, symbolic interactionism focuses on exploring behaviour and social roles and the way these influence decisions when reacting to one's environment (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Furthermore, as volunteering is influenced by the history, politics, religion and culture of a specific

region (Smith, 1999), understanding volunteer well-being from an ethnographic perspective would shed light on how social behaviour is shaped through communities (Snape & Spencer, 2003).

Having reached the end point of this journey and staying true to the confessional reflexive style of writing adopted in this thesis, I end this chapter with a personal reflection on the overall research journey. I thus shed light on the personal challenges I experienced, how I navigated them as well as the personal growth that resulted from this research project.

## **8.7 REFLECTING ON THE RESEARCH JOURNEY**

Minichiello and Kottler (2010) compare qualitative research to an adventure accompanied by excitement, stimulation, challenges, surprises and unforeseen obstacles. These authors further indicate that throughout this adventure every researcher will encounter their own “forms of adversity in the form of ambiguity and confusion” (p. 11). Without hesitation, I acknowledge that my journey very closely mimicked the adventure described by Minichiello and Kottler (2010). In this last section, I present some personal reflections of the research journey.

### **8.7.1 Valuing trust**

Having had time to reflect on the overall research journey and how it transpired, and despite frequently experiencing ambiguity and confusion (cf. Minichiello & Kottler, 2010), I cannot deny that in general I am overwhelmed with emotion when reflecting on how it transpired. This, I strongly believe, can be attributed to having *trusted* the journey. After abandoning my initial attempt at registering for my doctoral studies in 2013 due to uncertainty related to the choice of topic, I was subsequently led to this specific topic and was allocated the supervisor I requested. In the interim, however, I continued to refine my research skills by publishing two peer-reviewed journal articles. Finally stumbling upon a topic that excited me in mid-2014, I committed to pursuing my doctoral studies in 2015. Delaying my studies meant that my years of service at Unisa had increased, which enabled me to take nine months of research and

development leave as opposed to only six. This leave was instrumental to this journey, as I would not have accomplished what I did had I been based at the university.

### **8.7.2 Meta-theoretical turmoil ... and the interconnectedness of the research process**

Throughout this research journey, which started during the conceptualisation of this study, that is, during the research proposal phase, and continued until I had started formulating my conceptual framework as presented in Chapter 4, I experienced what I refer to as theoretical turmoil. Although I had identified well-being as the theoretical perspective, informed by a positive psychological paradigm, to be adopted in this study, I was unclear on how well-being would be conceptualised in this study. This may be attributed to the complexity and plethora of components, philosophies and models of well-being of which I had limited knowledge and understanding. This uncertainty and lack of clarity led me countless times to doubt whether I would actually achieve the aim of this study. It was only after I had made sense of the well-being theory and critically reflected on the research question, in other words what I wanted to know about volunteer well-being, that I was able to construct my conceptual framework. This led me to understand the impact and importance of the interconnectedness of the entire research process and the need for a theoretical framework (see Grant & Osanloo, 2014; Trafford, 2008). For example, the lack of a conceptual framework prevented me from being able to complete Chapters 1 and 4. Being a structured person, this led to a great deal of anxiety, as I felt *stuck*. At one stage, I could not move forward with either Chapter 1 or Chapter 4. Although this turmoil resulted in feelings of confusion and anxiety, I truly believe that the journey transpired as it was meant to and consequently resulted in significant growth for me, both in terms of theoretical knowledge and self-efficacy in voicing my perspectives in the field of well-being.

### **8.7.3 Applying my learning**

I believe that the significant growth I experienced throughout this journey will enable me to apply this learning in many ways. Firstly, as I had already started supervising

master's students in a co-supervisor capacity while I was busy with this doctoral degree, the growth I experienced has and will have an impact on the way that I co-supervise these and future students. I believe that the turmoil I have experienced will enable me to guide my students better, as I have gone through the process myself and have an in-depth understanding of the road that lies ahead. Furthermore, I have also learnt a great deal from the supervisory style adopted by my own supervisor, which is characterised by constructive, positive and encouraging feedback. This also led me to evaluate the way in which I provide feedback to my students. Secondly, I believe that this journey will have a significant impact on future research that I intend to conduct and publish. Although I still consider myself a novice researcher, I have a newfound confidence in my research ability and trust that future published research will reflect this. Having published two scholarly articles based on a quantitative perspective, I intend to apply this learning by focusing more on conducting research from a qualitative perspective, in particular adopting a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology.

## **8.8 CONCLUDING THE JOURNEY**

Although feelings of relief and satisfaction have accompanied the end of this journey, I cannot deny that at some point uncertainty has crept in again. Recently asked by my sister as to what I am going to do after this doctorate, I simply replied that I do not know. Perhaps the *what now* and the research expectations placed on academics have overwhelmed me. However, this study is a great accomplishment for me and I believe in its value. So, in anticipation of enjoying where I am now in my journey with this doctorate study and in my bigger journey as a researcher, I put my trust in whatever lies ahead and conclude this journey with the following statement by Seneca:

***Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end.***

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# APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER



## CEMS/IOP RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

8 December 2015

Ref #: 2015\_CEMS/IOP\_050  
Student #: 53335600  
Staff #: N/A

Dear Aleksandra Furtak (Hyra),

**Decision: Ethics approval**

**Address:** Department of Human Resource Management,  
AJH van der Walt Building, Pretoria

**Cell no:** 082 825 9356

**Tel no:** 012 429 2824 (W)

**E-mail:** hyraam@unisa.ac.za

**Supervisor:** Prof H A Barnard

**Title:** Facilitating the well-being of volunteers: a conceptual model

**Qualification:** Postgraduate degree/Non-degree output/Commissioned research

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the CEMS/IOP Research Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research.

The submitted documentation was reviewed in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the CEMS/IOP on 30 November 2015.

*The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:*

- 1) The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.*
- 2) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the CEMS/IOP Ethics Review Committee.*



- 3) *An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.*
  
- 4) *The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.*

Note:

*The reference number **2015\_CEMS/IOP\_050** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication [e.g. Webmail, E-mail messages, letters] with the intended research participants, as well as with the CEMS/IOP RERC.*

Kind regards,



---

Dr Sonja Grobler

**Chair: IOP Research Ethics Committee**

Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology

College of Economic and Management Sciences

AJH van der Walt Building, Room 3-76

+27 (0) 12 429 8272

## APPENDIX B: INSTITUTIONAL PERMISSION LETTER



### INSTITUTIONAL PERMISSION LETTER

#### Request for permission to conduct research at XXX

"Facilitating the well-being of volunteers: A conceptual model"

02 November 2015

Aleksandra Furtak (previously Hyra)  
AJH van der Walt Building, Room 3-10  
Department of Human Resource Management, UNISA  
012 429 2824 / 082 825 9356; hyraam@unisa.ac.za

Dear XXX,

I, Aleksandra Furtak (previously Hyra) am doing research with Antoni Barnard, a Professor in the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology towards a D COM (Industrial Psychology) at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled "Facilitating the well-being of volunteers: A conceptual model".

The aim of the study is to explore and describe the well-being experiences of volunteers in order to develop a conceptual model of volunteerism from a well-being perspective. Such a model would be aimed at enhancing an understanding of volunteerism in the context of well-being and optimal functioning in order to sustain and retain volunteers.

Your company has been selected because as a NPO you are highly dependent on volunteers to deliver your services and volunteers are the participant group that I am focusing on in my study. The study will entail the use of interviews to gain in-depth understanding of an integrated and holistic perspective of the phenomenon of well-being from a volunteering perspective. The benefits of this study are the development of a conceptual model for your and other NPO organisations. This model can be used for the management of volunteers in the application of interventions such as coaching, mentoring, assessment, recruitment and retention.

I do not reasonably foresee any potential risks associated with this study, however, in cases where the participants might feel uncomfortable or uncertain during or prior to the interviews, they will have a chance to speak to me directly for assurance on the objectivity of the research and regarding any other concerns/uncertainties that they may have or experience. This study will also be conducted with



University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
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adherence to strict institutional and researcher ethical guidelines and standards. Feedback regarding the findings/outcome of the study will entail a presentation of the findings and the conceptual model to your organisation and the volunteers. The final research report will also be available upon request.

Yours sincerely



Aleksandra Furtak (previously Hyra)  
Researcher

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On behalf of XXX

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Full name

---

Date



University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)

# APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET



## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

18 July 2016

Title - Facilitating the well-being of volunteers: A conceptual model

### Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Aleksandra Furtak and I am doing research with Antoni Barnard, a Professor in the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology towards a D COM (Industrial Psychology) at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled "Facilitating the well-being of volunteers: A conceptual model".

### WHAT IS THE AIM/PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The aim of this study is to develop a conceptual model of volunteerism from a well-being perspective through an in-depth exploration of volunteers' work-life experiences. Such a model would be aimed at enhancing our understanding of volunteer well-being in order to more effectively retain them and sustain their optimal functioning.

### WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

XXX and specifically XXX and XXX have granted me permission to obtain your details to contact you to participate in this project. You have been chosen because you currently are a volunteer and provide your volunteer services to XXX. Volunteers are the participant group that I am focusing on in this study. As a research participant, you were chosen out of a sample of 220 volunteers based on where you provide your volunteer services. Volunteers working specifically at XXX / XXX were chosen to participate in this study.

### WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY / WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH INVOLVE?

As a participant of this study, you will be expected to participate in interview(s) where your honest opinion, feedback and experiences will be required based on certain questions posed by the researcher. The study involves in-depth semi-structured interviews, which will be audio taped.



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The following are examples of questions that you may be asked:

1. How did it come about that you started volunteering?
2. What is it like to be a volunteer/to do volunteering work?

The time allocated to conduct the interview(s) is one hour and thirty (30) minutes. It is envisaged that your expected duration of participation will be for a minimum of forty-five (45) minutes and a maximum of two (2) hours.

#### **CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY?**

Participation in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participate. There is no penalty or loss of benefit if you decide not to participate. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

#### **WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

The possible benefit of your participation in this study is your contribution towards the development of a conceptual model of volunteer well-being for XXX and other non-profit organisations (NPO). It is envisaged that this model could be used for the management of volunteers in the application of interventions such as coaching, mentoring, assessment, recruitment and retention.

#### **WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED INCONVENIENCE OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

I do not reasonably foresee that you as a participant can be negatively affected in a financial or physical sense. In the event where you as the participant might feel uncomfortable or uncertain during or prior to the interview, you will have, a chance to speak to the researcher directly for assurance on the objectivity of the research and regarding any other concerns/uncertainties that you may have or experience.

Should adverse events arise or should you experience harm as a result of your participation in this study, you will be de-briefed by the researcher. The researcher is a qualified Industrial Psychologist and has facilitation experience. In the event that the de-briefing is insufficient, you will be referred to counselling services provided by Unisa.



### **WILL WHAT I SAY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?**

Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a fictitious code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that the research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Committee and my Supervisor. These individuals will however maintain your confidentiality by signing a confidentiality agreement. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records. Your anonymous data may also be used for other purposes such as a research report, journal articles, conference presentation, etc. Individual participants will however not be identifiable in such a report.

### **HOW WILL INFORMATION BE STORED AND ULTIMATELY DESTROYED?**

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet at Unisa for future research or academic purposes. Electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. After the 5-year period has lapsed paper based information will be shredded and electronic records will be permanently deleted.

### **WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?**

As it is customary for XXX to provide volunteers with a reimbursement for travel if you are asked to attend a special meeting, function, special training or research related activities outside of your normal activities, the researcher will therefore be providing you as the participant with a transport allowance to the value of R40.00 for the day for your participation in this study.

### **HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICAL APPROVAL?**

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the College of Economic and Management Sciences, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

### **HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS?**

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Aleksandra Furtak on 012 429 2824 / 082 825 9356 or fax 086 515 7970 or email address [hyraam@unisa.ac.za](mailto:hyraam@unisa.ac.za). The findings are accessible for a period of 5 years. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please use the contact details



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PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
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provided above. Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Professor Antoni Barnard, [barnaha@unisa.ac.za](mailto:barnaha@unisa.ac.za), 082 375 2696.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Furtak". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Aleksandra Furtak



University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
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[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)

## APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM



### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable). I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.

I agree to the recording of the interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Full Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX E: TRANSPORT ALLOWANCE



### RECEIPT OF TRANSPORT ALLOWANCE

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant name), confirm that I have received a R40 transport allowance from the researcher.

As it is customary for XXX to provide volunteers with a reimbursement for travel if asked to attend a special meeting, function, special training or research related activities outside of their normal activities, the researcher will therefore be providing you as the participant with a transport allowance to the value of R40.00 for the day for your participation in this study.

Full Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# APPENDIX F: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT - TRANSCRIBER



## Transcription Confidentiality Agreement

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby declare that I understand and agree to the following conditions with regards to the transcription of the audio recordings.

1. I understand that the audio recordings are received for the purpose of transcribing records of interview(s) held with the participants for the research study titled: "Facilitating the well-being of volunteers: a conceptual model".
2. I acknowledge that the research project is conducted by Aleksandra Furtak of the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, University of South Africa.
3. I understand that the identity of the participants and any individuals/ organisations/ institutions discussed as well as the content of the interview(s) are confidential and may not be revealed.
4. I undertake to treat all audio recordings as confidential content to which only I will have access. I will keep the audio recordings and any copied material secure.
5. I will return all copies back to the researcher on completion of the transcription.

Full Name of Transcriber: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Transcriber: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name of Primary Researcher: Aleksandra Furtak

Signature of Primary Researcher:

Date: 29 June 2016



University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
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Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)

## APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW GUIDE

<b>Introduction</b>	<p>Thank you again for agreeing to participate in my study and allowing me some of your precious time. As you have seen in the documents provided to you, this is a qualitative study on exploring the work–life experiences of volunteers from a well-being perspective.</p> <p>In qualitative research the personal insight and experience of the participant is of the utmost importance. I would therefore appreciate it very much if you would share your thoughts, opinions and experiences with me – there are no right or wrong answers. Although I will be presenting you with some questions to facilitate our discussion, I would like to emphasise that this is an open, semi-structured discussion. I am interested in you and you will be doing most of the talking – I will however be taking notes in between. I may also at times ask you follow-up questions – the reason for this is to ensure that I understand what you have said.</p> <p>My input will really be to facilitate the discussion and probe your experience, rather than to provide you with what I think. You are, however, welcome to ask any questions during our discussion should you need to any clarification.</p> <p>Do you have any questions before we begin?</p> <p>Are you comfortable?</p> <p>Can we continue?</p>
<b><u>Opening question</u></b>	<p>I would really like to know more about you, can you tell me about your life story?</p> <p>How did it come about that you started volunteering?</p>
<b><u>Key questions</u></b>	<p>Can you tell me about your experiences of being a volunteer?</p> <p>What has happened since you started volunteering?</p> <p>What is it like to volunteer?</p>

<p><b><u>Probing questions</u></b></p>	<p>How did you arrive at your decision?</p> <p>What did you do before?</p> <p>Why?</p> <p>How?</p> <p>How did it make you feel?</p> <p>Can you give me an example?</p> <p>How was it good/bad?</p> <p>Can you tell me a story about a meaningful volunteering incident?</p> <p>Can you tell me a story about an incident that made volunteering difficult</p>
<p><b><u>Conclusion</u></b></p>	<p>Is there anything at this stage that you would like to add/mention before we end our conversation?</p>
<p><b><u>General notes</u></b></p>	<p>Don't rush the participant</p> <p>Monitor the interview for mood/affect</p> <p>Occasionally ask if the participant he/she is comfortable/still comfortable</p>

## APPENDIX H: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE

*Alexa Barnby*  
*Language Specialist*

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Editing, copywriting, indexing, formatting, translation

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BA Hons Translation Studies; APed (SATI) Accredited Professional Text Editor, SATI  
Mobile: 071 872 1334  
Tel: 012 361 6347 alexabarnby@gmail.com

23 September 2019

To whom it may concern

This is to certify that I, Alexa Kirsten Barnby, an English editor accredited by the South African Translators' Institute, have edited the doctoral thesis titled "A conceptual model of volunteer well-being: a hermeneutic phenomenological study" by Aleksandra Maria Furtak.

The onus is on the author, however, to make the changes suggested and address the comments made.

