

**AN EXPLORATION INTO THE SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS OF UNEMPLOYED
GRADUATES**

by

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Declaration

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I declare that “**AN EXPLORATION INTO THE SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS OF UNEMPLOYED GRADUATES**” 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.

(Busisiwe Magagula)

Date

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Abstract

Young people are often expected to find employment after completing their tertiary qualifications but they often face various challenges in finding employment. These challenges may be due to a variety of factors such as the type of qualification that they hold, structural changes in the economy, lack of skills and experience and the lack of relevant social networks. Furthermore, the current economic climate is characterised by low absorption rates of labour in the economy, poverty and inequalities. As such young graduates may experience various negative effects as a result of their unemployment, such as isolation, depression, decreased self-esteem, dependency, discontentment, loneliness, loss of social status and poverty. Social support has been found to have a buffering effect on people experiencing adverse life events such as unemployment. The focus of this current study was therefore to explore the social support experiences of graduates in the township of Mamelodi. This research study was a qualitative, interpretative phenomenological study. Snowballing sampling and purposive sampling were used to obtain research participants who attained tertiary qualifications. Smaller samples of between 6 and 10 participants are commonly used in interpretative phenomenological studies. As such, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 participants. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Thematic analysis was then used to extract themes from the participant interviews. The participant interviews indicated that the participants experienced a lack of finance as the most significant challenge during their unemployment, as they could not support themselves and their families. The participants experienced social support in the form of encouragement and information about possible employment opportunities from their family, friends, intimate partners and their community. Moreover, the analysis of the participants' interviews demonstrated that social support, especially from the family, was essential for the unemployed graduates to cope with the negative effects of unemployment, even though they did not want to burden their families with the responsibility of providing them with social support.

KEY TERMS: *Unemployment, graduates, social support, youth, tertiary qualifications, phenomenology*

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1. Introduction

The unemployment rate of young people rose from 32.1% in 2008 to 37.5 % in the second quarter of 2016 according to Statistics South Africa (2016). Unemployment is defined as being without work when one is looking for work actively, and is capable of working (Du Toit, 2003; Statistics South Africa (StatsSA, 2011). This definition includes people who have been actively looking for work for at least four weeks prior to being defined as unemployed (StatsSA, 2011). A young person with work experience is three times more likely to find work than one without work experience, but finding employment is difficult in the South African economic climate which is characterised by low absorption rates of labour into the economy, poverty and inequalities (Pauw, Oosthuizen & Van der Westhuizen 2008). Unemployment is a serious concern not only for South Africa, but also for other countries worldwide. Unemployment in itself is a concern because people who have the potential to contribute skills and output in the economy of the country are excluded from employment opportunities (South African National Treasury, 2011). In South Africa, young people aged 14-35 are regarded as youth (Development Bank of Southern Africa) DBSA, (2011). Young people from the age of 20-34 will be considered in this study, as young people aged 18 and older are considered as adults in South Africa (Strode, Slack & Essack, 2010). The majority of young people may see higher education as a way to alleviate poverty in their own lives and they may seek to use their qualifications to get employed or to start a business for themselves. Fleming, Loxley, Kenny and Finigan (2010) found that the majority of graduates who took part in their study did so in order to better their employment prospects. Graduates can be considered as individuals who have obtained any post matric qualification, that is, diplomas, degrees or technical qualifications and they will also be so defined in this study (Pauw, Oosthuizen & Van der Westhuizen, 2008).

The findings in the study by (Fleming et al., 2010) demonstrate that youths aspire to be educated in order to better their chances of being employed through education so that they can better their social mobility. Higher education has been hailed as a weapon to transform societies (Haveman & Smeeding, 2006). It has also been seen as a tool to provide skills, values, knowledge and viewpoints that will assist them to improve their communities. Higher education does not only contribute to the development of communities, but it also aids

individuals by offering them opportunities to advance themselves, (Human Sciences Research Council) HSRC, (2008).

Higher education has implications for families of those who are educated because families may save money and reduce their consumption in order to ensure that their children get an education after they complete high school. That may be done in order to ensure that their children have better employment opportunities in order to obtain a higher standard of living (Baum & Payea, 2005). Moreover, higher education in families has been associated with a decrease in household poverty, higher earnings and less dependence on society in general (Baum & Payea, 2005). Graduates leaving institutions of higher education may have expectations of a better life than what they had previously hoped. However, failure to obtain employment has been associated with less family support, a decrease in social networks, family conflict, stress, depression and financial hardship (Atkinson, Liem & Liem, 1986; Browman, Hamilton & Hoffman, 1996; Baum & Payea, 2005).

1.2 Graduate unemployment in South Africa

South Africa has a generally high unemployment rate (StatsSA, 2014). In South Africa, the youth segment is the most affected by unemployment, and this was exacerbated by the global recession (South African National Treasury, 2011). Moreover, young people under the age of 35 make up two-thirds of the unemployed population in South Africa (StatsSA, 2016). South Africa's history of segregation has also contributed to the employment prospects of graduates, in the sense that during apartheid Historically White Institutions (HWIs) received more funding as compared to Historically Black Institutions (HBIs). HWIs also offered better quality of education compared to HBIs (Van Broekhuizen, 2016). This segregation of tertiary institutions meant that white people received a better quality of education than Blacks, Indians or Coloureds who attended HBIs. Even though there have been policy changes that have been aimed at redressing these past injustices, the inequalities still remain. HWIs are still better funded than HBIs and HWIs still provide better quality education than HBIs (Van Broekhuizen, 2016).

According to StatsSA (2016), white graduates still have better employment outcomes than black graduates, as they are two times more likely to find employment than Black, Indian or Coloured graduates. This may be attributed to the higher institution they attended. Graduates from HWIs have better employment prospects than graduates from HBIs, as employers are said to have lower confidence in graduates from HBIs. This is because graduates from HBI's are believed to have a lower quality of education (Van Broekhuizen, 2016; Moleke, 2006). HBIs have historically had lower institutional capacity to cater for their students; they also have

greater numbers of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and lower quality of education as compared to HWIs (Van Broekhuizen, 2016).

Young people who have tertiary qualifications in South Africa are further disadvantaged because of the current low absorption of labour in the economy (Kraak, 2010). The rates of absorption may be attributed to skills mismatches and lack of skills. The lack of skills is a serious concern for the development of the South African economy as there are not sufficient human resources to meet the requirements of the job market (Pauw, Oosthuizen & Van der Westhuizen, 2008). Furthermore, there is a mismatch between the skills that young people have and the skills that are required by the economy as there is a shift toward more capital-intensive labour (Daniels, 2007).

Another disadvantage to young graduates in South Africa is that the qualifications that they may have studied for may be in oversupply. For example, Moleke (2006) found that there was a higher influx of graduates who had studied in the humanities than in the science fields, which creates an oversupply of humanities graduates in the labour market. Furthermore, there has also been an increase in the percentage share of Black, Indian and Coloured graduates in the past 25 years due to the abolition of apartheid, which has contributed to low labour market absorption of these graduates because there has not been much expansion of the labour market (Van Broekhuizen, 2016).

1.3 Statement of the problem

Unemployment is an adverse life situation and research has found that it influences people's lives personally, socially and economically (Pauw, et al., 2008; Moleke, 2006; Hlahla, 2008; Coetzee & Esterhuizen, 2010). The issue of the unemployment of graduates is a serious concern in South Africa, because graduates who hold tertiary education qualifications are not able to contribute to skills shortages and depend on the state resources for longer. Additionally, research has found that employment plays an essential role in the development of a person because it gives them status in society and promotes their economic freedom (Du Toit, 2003).

Additionally, society holds various misconceptions about unemployment and the unemployed, some of which include that it should be easy for graduates to access jobs (Crebert, Bates, Bell, Craginolini & Patrick, 2004), the problem of graduate unemployment is an exaggerated one (Centre for Development and Enterprise, 2013) and the unemployed are perceived as being simply lazy (Hipp & Anderson, 2015). Moreover, Tertiary graduates are expected to have a thriving career after they receive their qualifications by their social environments (Hlahla, 2008; Crawford, 2005). Research shows that when graduates fail to meet these

expectations they may find themselves isolated from the social systems in their environments which should presumably be the sources of support during unemployment (Goldsmith, Veum & Darity, 1997). The lack of social support from ones network has been associated with numerous negative effects such as isolation and decreased health (Gallie et al., 2003). This qualitative phenomenological study explored the social support experiences of unemployed graduates in the township of Mamelodi, Tshwane.

1.4 Social Support during unemployment

According to Vaux (1985), social support is made up of the following constructs, supportive behaviour, support network resources and subjective appraisals of support. Supportive behaviour refers to actions that members of a person's social network may take to assist them, such as giving them financial assistance and encouragement to continue searching for employment. Support network resources consist of the people who may be available in the social network of the unemployed person to offer support. The support networks may differ in composition and in the type of resources that are offered. Subjective appraisals of support refer to how individuals evaluate the support that is given to them either negatively or positively depending on their perception of it. Individuals may view support negatively if they perceive it as a way to control them or to diminish their autonomy. And they may perceive it positively if it aids them to achieve their goals (Slebarska, Moser & Gunnesch-Luca, 2009).

Social support has been found to be essential in buffering the effects of stressful life events such as unemployment (Lorenzini, & Giugni, 2012; Taylor, Budescu, Gebre, & Hodzic, 2012). Social support has been linked to other mediating variables such as self-esteem, resilience and optimism in unemployment (Slebarska, Moser & Gunnesch-Luca, 2009). Social support from a network can provide the unemployed with information regarding the job market and job acquisitions (Gallie, Paugam & Jacobs, 2003). The availability of support systems may help young people to become more innovative and to take the initiative through the skills that they may have obtained during their studies. Acquiring practical skills training at tertiary institutions may provide young people with an opportunity to improve their abilities. This type of support may encourage young graduates to participate in their own career development and create their own initiatives instead of them leaving tertiary institutions with just the theory that may seem impractical in the world of work. Support from their family members is also important because it will encourage them not to give up on their dreams but to pursue the kinds of work opportunities that they desire and not become the 'discouraged' unemployed (Pauw et al., 2008). The literature review in Chapter 2 provides further discussion on graduate unemployment. Support, from wherever it comes, may provide graduates with a sense of confidence in their abilities so that they can create opportunities for themselves. Support

systems may also help in linking them to job opportunities. Pascarella and Terrenzini (2005), state that networks can contribute to the employment status of a young person. Therefore, in a country such as South Africa that is characterised by high unemployment rates it may be difficult for young people to have access to opportunities for employment because they may be surrounded by people who are unemployed themselves. In a study conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HRSC) on the social security options for young people, the majority of young people who were employed said that they asked their family members, friends and neighbours to help them find work. By doing so, the majority of them found work in the companies where their family members, friends or neighbours worked (Altman, 2007). This points to the importance of having social systems when one is unemployed because they make it more likely for a person to find employment. The lack of social support has been associated with social isolation, reduced physical and emotional health, high blood pressure, increased smoking and drinking, and psychosomatic complaints (Gallie, Paugam & Jacobs, 2003; Croezen, Picavet, Haverran-Nies, Versschuren, De Groot & Van Veer, 2012).

1.5 Significance of the study

Researchers have highlighted the need to study youth unemployment in South Africa. Du Toit (2003) suggested that there ought to be ongoing in-depth research on youth unemployment in South Africa in view of the rising unemployment of young people. Furthermore, De Witte, Rothman and Jackson (2012) have recommended that research should be conducted to investigate the experiences of unemployed people because of the high incidence of unemployment in South Africa. Willemse (2015) recommended that research should be done on the role of social support in mediating the negative effects of unemployment.

Additionally, Ribton-Turner and De Bruin (2006) noted there were not a lot of studies that address the social support structures of the unemployed person in South Africa.

In view of the studies that have been done and the recommendations provided therein, this study seeks to contribute to knowledge about unemployment in South Africa by exploring the social support experiences of unemployed graduates. Moreover, because of the various challenges and misconceptions relating to graduate unemployment in South Africa (Centre for Development and Enterprise, 2013; Crebert et al., 2004; van Rheede, 2012).

1.6 Research questions

The present study will attempt to answer the following research questions:

- What challenges do graduates experience during unemployment in relation to their social network?
- What role does social support play for unemployed graduates?

1.6.1 Research aims and objectives

The aims of the present study are:

- Helping graduates to identify support systems that will assist them to become more resilient against the challenges that they may encounter.
- To highlight the role of graduates social networks in providing support during unemployment.

The research aims will be achieved through the following objectives:

- Exploring the experiences of unemployed graduates
- Exploring the role of social support in relation to graduate unemployment.

1.7 Chapter Outline

This study is structured as follows; **Chapter one** serves as an introduction to this study. It highlights the prevalence of graduate unemployment in South Africa and provides a short discussion on the importance of social support in relation to unemployment. **Chapter two** is a literature review of graduate unemployment, including the theories that can be used to explain the experience of unemployment, the theoretical framework guiding this research, the issues influencing graduate unemployment in South Africa and the effects of unemployment. Additionally, the chapter discusses social support in relation to unemployment. **Chapter three** is a discussion of the methodology used in this research and it consists of a discussion of the research approach, data collection methods, data analysis and ethical considerations. **Chapter four** contains a presentation and discussion of on the findings of this research. **Chapter five** is a conclusion to this study and it also offers discussions on the findings and recommendations of this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2. Introduction

Unemployment can have detrimental effects on individuals who are unemployed; ranging from psychological and economic, to social and physical effects (Moleke, 200; Du Toit, 2003; Paul & Batinic, 2010). Unemployment affects an individual's ability to be autonomous as it takes away their ability to take care of their own needs and those of their family members or loved ones. In South Africa, the incident of graduate unemployment is a problem because of the demand for skilled labour and graduates' inability to find work (Pauw, Oosthuizen & Van der Westhuizen, 2008; Makiwane & Kwizera, 2009). The unemployment problem in South Africa is mainly structural as many young people are not able to find work because the job market cannot currently accommodate them with the qualifications that they have (Pauw, et al. 2008). Swartz, Harding and De Lannoy (2012) propose that there is a general sense in the South African context that if a person works hard and excels, especially in terms of their education, then they will have better socio-economic prospects and outcomes than those who have not studied at tertiary level. This places a burden on young people because in certain instances they are looked upon as a source of financial support for their families after they complete their studies, which can be problematic without a job.

This chapter serves as a brief literature overview on some of the aspects of graduate unemployment, and employment in general. To commence, a brief overview of unemployment theories will be discussed, followed by the causes of unemployment, then the effects of unemployment will be discussed, followed by a discussion of social support, and lastly the theoretical framework underlying this study will be discussed.

2.1 Theories of unemployment

In an attempt to understand the phenomenon of unemployment, there have been various theories suggested and in this section of the chapter some of these theories will be discussed. The theories that will be discussed are the following; Jahoda's theory of latent deprivation, Fryer's theory of agency restriction, Warr's vitamin theory, Eisenberg and Lazarfeld's stages theory and Feather's expectancy-value theory. These theories provide a multidimensional understanding of unemployment and its possible effects on unemployed people.

2.1.1 Jahoda's theory of latent deprivation

Jahoda's theory of latent deprivation was developed from research into unemployment in the 1930s (Cole, 2007). The theory was based on a study that was conducted in a town called Marienthal in Austria, whereby the town was dependent on a single factory for employment and when it was closed there was widespread unemployment.

Jahoda and her collaborators viewed unemployment as a state of lack in relation to a set of enduring human needs that are provided by paid work. They suggested that what makes unemployment a problem is the lack of legitimate means through which people can obtain resources and the demoralizing state it places people in. The central theme in the theory of latent deprivation is the belief that paid work is in a way central to human development, especially to the adult male experience, and that its lack, in the form of unemployment is necessarily problematic. Therefore, the human costs of unemployment are central to this theory (Cole, 2007). Jahoda asserts that employment is an essential part of human wellbeing (Jahoda, 1982). She further states that unemployment is essentially destructive to the psychological wellbeing of individuals because it prevents them from experiencing the manifest and latent benefits of employment, which can have a psychological support role.

In Jahoda's theory, employment is a social aspect that provides both hidden and salient benefits, which are both essential for human wellbeing. The salient benefits are associated with income, and they are more intentional and deliberate, whereas the hidden or latent benefits are: time structure, regular shared experiences and social contact outside the nuclear family, links to transcending goals and purposes, the definition of a personal status and identity, and enforced activity. *Time structure* gives people a routine that helps them to organize their lives and plan the activities that they may want to take part in. According to Jahoda (1982), people are socialized from a young age to have structured time through schooling and other social activities such as sports, church etc. Time structure is the most important latent benefit essential to a person's mental wellbeing (Creed & Macintyre, 2001). Time structure may be defined as the way in which a person feels their time has been used purposively and how structured they feel it has been (Feather & Bond, 1983). The benefit that time structure brings to the unemployed person is in that it counteracts the feelings of hopelessness that may come as a result of unemployment. Employment may give people a sense that their time has been used purposively and that their life has some meaningful structure (Van Hove & Lootens, 2013).

Regular shared experiences and social contact outside the nuclear family provide individuals with different ideas, experiences and opinions that they would not have if they only spend time with their families (Paul & Batinic, 2010). People who are employed are able to develop more purposeful living and involvement in activities that transcend their individual purposes in order

to be part of a more *collective purpose*. Jahoda (1982) also proposes that when people are without work, they may have a “sense of purposelessness”. Waters and Moore (2002) in a study about the role of meaningful leisure activities and the reduction of latent deprivation found that the insufficient regular shared experiences may lead the unemployed to developing depressive tendencies.

Being employed, according to Jahoda (1982), likewise contributes to a person’s *status* in the society in which they live which also helps them to develop a sense of identity in society that they would not otherwise have if they were not employed. The availability of other social roles apart from the ‘job’ that an individual may have been occupied with can be used to cope with the effects of job loss (Jahoda, 1982). For example, Waters and Moore (2002) argue that women have multiple social roles such as being mothers and homemakers, which may help them to be less focused on their unemployment. The status enjoyed by those who are employed can be attributed to their ability to buy and own resources and make contributions to others as they are able to do so (Du Toit, 2003).

The last benefit of being employed according to Jahoda’s theory is that it offers people the opportunity to take part in *enforced activity* to eliminate passivity which could negatively impact on a person’s mental health (Paul & Batinic, 2010). According to Underlid (1996), taking part in regular activities outside of the home may mediate the effects of unemployment on the individual. Whereas, being inactive reduces general mental wellbeing in the unemployed. Unemployment according to Jahoda can cause a decrease in motivation and hope about their prospects of finding employment ultimately diminishing their self-esteem (Darity & Goldsmith, 1996). According to Jahoda, these benefits serve to fulfill enduring human needs and they also serve to maintain links with reality. She further stipulates that unemployment leads to the loss of both the hidden and salient benefits of employment, and moreover the loss of the latent/hidden benefits affects the psychological health of unemployed individuals (Jahoda, 1988).

People may find alternative ways of satisfying the latent functions of work in their lives, such as religious or political activities, but according to Jahoda only a few people will be able to achieve that (Jahoda, 1981). Jahoda maintains that even though people may work in conditions that are not good, work still serves to provide these latent functions and it also provides psychological support to those who are working, compared with those who are not working (Paul & Batinic, 2010).

2.1.2 Agency restriction theory

Fryer's theory of *Agency restriction* was a response to Jahoda's theory of latent deprivation. Fryer pointed out that people are active agents who are self-determined and striving to make sense of their lives by taking initiatives in order to make their lives 'work' through the achievement of their personal goals and expectations for the future. Fryer also argued that people are guided by their values and purposes and that they have control over their own lives (Fryer, 1992). This assertion is inherently opposite to Jahoda's contention that the unemployed were passive objects at the mercy of social institutions which may or may not be able to satisfy their psychological needs (Fryer, 1998).

According to Fryer (1988), the major inhibitor of individual agency is the lack of income. The lack of income influences an individual's wellbeing by causing uncertainty and in some cases reifying poverty. Unlike those who are employed and have a steady income, unemployed individuals are impeded from making future plans because of the lack of money. The relative poverty that may come with being unemployed may cause a deterioration of their psychological wellbeing (Fryer, 1988). Fryer also considered the loss of latent benefits of unemployment as being secondary to the loss of the manifest benefits of employment; which is plausible considering that the loss of income and the inability to take part in previously possible activities, due to their financial status, would probably affect how they perceive themselves (Fryer, 1992).

In an investigation of the agency restriction model, Fryer and McKenna (1987) identified two groups of unemployed men. One group consisted of men who had been laid off temporarily, whereas the second group consisted of those who were fired from their jobs. They found that these groups of men did not experience the deprivation of the latent benefits of employment equally. Those who were fired from their jobs experienced the deprivation more than those who were temporarily laid off. They attributed this to the fact that those who were temporarily laid off were more optimistic about their futures because they viewed their situation as being temporary. However, those who were fired were more distressed because they did not have any solid expectation about their future employment prospects (Fryer & McKenna, 1987).

Fryer (1992) also postulates that the lack of money decreases a person's ability to cope and it may cause a decline in their general well-being. The lack of money can also contribute to feelings of stigmatization and shame because the person may not be able to provide for themselves. According to the agency restriction model, unemployment also restricts people in terms of the type of activities that they can take part in such as going on holiday or purchasing household items that may require a lot of money, which inadvertently results in a change in lifestyle (Fryer, 1992). The lack of money may inhibit a person's ability to establish and

maintain their lifestyle as they may have to depend on others more than they might have been used to.

Furthermore, studies have demonstrated that unemployed individuals experienced more financial stress and depression than those who are employed (Jackson, 1999; Kokko & Pulkkinen, 1997). Likewise, in a study conducted to evaluate the subjective experience of financial strain, it was found that financial strain as a result of unemployment also contributes to deteriorating family relationships (Whelan, 1994). This may be due to the unemployed being more worried about how they are going to meet their needs and sustain themselves and their families (Hagquist & Stanin, 1996). In a study to investigate the impact of unemployment on families, Zedlewski and Nichols (2012) found that the financial strain that comes from being unemployed not only puts pressure on the existing families resources but it also affects the future prospects of children indirectly affected by unemployment. This may occur due to the financial restrictions that they may experience. Furthermore, financial strain may contribute to poor health outcomes due to the limited funds that may be available for healthcare services (Zedlewski & Nichols, 2012).

2.1.3 The stage theory

The stage theory by Eisenberg and Lazarfeld (1938) states that people's response to unemployment can be described in the following stages: In the first stage, of shock, individuals may experience disbelief about their unemployment situation and attempt to make sense of it, as in crises situations. The unemployed person may attempt to find work in the hope that their situation may change so that they can re-adapt to the life that they were used to while they were employed. After the intensity of the first stage, the unemployed person may go into a defensive retreat, which is the second stage, because of the actual realization of their predicament as finances start to become depleted and they lose contact with acquaintances and associates from their previous employer. They may begin to withdraw from their usual activities such as social clubs in an attempt to curb their spending. In the third stage the unemployed individuals may become pessimistic about their future and their prospects of employment, which may sink them into a deeper state of depression, distress and anxiety (Winefield, 2009). The pessimistic attitude about their future prospects at the end will lead them to accept their unemployed state and adapt to their life, as it is (Crawford, 2005). Eisenberg and Lazarfeld (1938) proposed that these stages may depend on the individuals' biographic and psychosocial factors, their social status, their economic status, age, gender, personality and any interplay between these factors.

Arnetz, et al., (1987) developed their own version of the stage theory of unemployment. They postulate that in the stages of unemployment a person experiences different emotions. Their theory consists of 5 stages.

In the first stage, a person experiences the danger of losing their job. In this stage the individual experiences anxiety over the impending job loss. Arnetz et al., (1987) suggest that at this stage individuals must anticipate a negative effect on their immune system such as increased hypertension. At this stage the individuals may experience fear about their future outcomes and anger about the situation (Eisenberg & Lazarfeld, 1938).

In the second stage, the unemployed individual experiences the job loss itself. During the first and the second stages of unemployment, the unemployed person may experience sufficient levels of social support. They may also have high levels of anxiety because of the impending job loss and the realization that there will be a huge financial change in their lives (Kapuvari, 2011). Thoughts about the reality of their employment status may cause them to develop harmful tendencies such as excessive drinking (Kapuvari, 2011). Arnetz et al., (1987) also mention that unemployed persons may develop depression, and problems related to their immune system. These reactions to the impending unemployment and the actual job loss may not occur in the same way for all people as some people may become reluctant to face their reality.

In the third stage, the individuals experience the honeymoon stage whereby they experience unemployment without any financial problems. In this stage, the shock of being unemployed may be diminished and the unemployed person may start developing a sense of hope about their job situation as they anticipate finding new work opportunities and restoring a sense of order in their lives (Guindon & Smith, 2002).

In the fourth stage, the unemployed person would experience difficulties in their finances. During the fourth stage of unemployment the individual may start to become discouraged if their anticipation of finding work is not fulfilled and the financial pressures increase (Kapuvari, 2011). Furthermore, the unemployed person may experience frustration and burnout as their efforts to find employment are not fulfilled. Their quality of life may be impeded during this stage, which may cause a deterioration of their health and increase their stress levels (Guindon & Smith, 2002).

In the fifth stage, the unemployed person experiences a period of permanent unemployment without hope of finding a job. The unemployed person may finally admit that they are unemployed and may find ways to adjust to their present life while attempting to find a job or other way to make an income (Kapuvari, 2011).

Both theories of unemployment mentioned here describe unemployment in the form of stages, and they both acknowledge that the stages are not linear but rather they may occur differently as people are different (Kapuvari, 2011; Eisenberg & Lazarfeld, 1938). For example, people who have a high sense of self-esteem are more likely to remain optimistic about their chances of being re-employed than those who have a low self-esteem (Kapuvari, 2011; Shamir, 1986). Furthermore the support that an unemployed person receives during their period of unemployment may play a critical role in minimizing the effects of unemployment, more so during the last stage of unemployment (Butchart, 1997; Guindon & Smith, 2002).

2.1.4 The Vitamin theory

Warr (1987) introduced the vitamin theory of employment. The main thesis of his theory was that vitamins exert particular functions on our bodies in the same way that a job and other environment characteristics influence mental health. Warr proposed that as our bodies require certain vitamins in order to function effectively, so our mental health requires certain job characteristics or environmental features in order to function effectively (De Jonge & Schaufeli, 1998). He proposed that there are nine vitamins or job characteristics that influence mental health outcomes. The vitamins are as follows, (1) job autonomy, (2) job demands, (3) social support, (4) skill utilization, (5) skill variety, (6) task feedback, (7) salary, (8) safety, and (9) task significance.

He argued that if there was an over-exertion of certain work vitamins, for example, autonomy - whereby a person is given free reign without any limitations and expectations that would have a negative outcome on both their work output and the individual himself (De Jonge & Schaufeli, 1998). The negative outcomes would result in the individual's employer not gaining anything from their labour, and working would be a purposeless activity for the individual (Warr, 1994).

Warr (1987) theorized that the absence of some of these vitamins would have a negative impact on the mental health of the individual. Furthermore, as with vitamins, a correct balance of each is needed in order for a person to function effectively in their workplace. A deficiency of vitamins can be detrimental as well, that is, if a person does not feel safe enough to work in a particular environment that will have a negative effect on their work and on the individual. The lack of safety will result in frequent absences from work, anxiety or them looking for alternative employment that will offer them the safety that they require in a working environment (Warr, 1994).

Vitamins that have a negative effect (also called Additional Decrement or AD vitamins) on the individual when present in large quantities are the following: opportunity for control, opportunity

for skills use, having externally generated goals, variety, environmental clarity and opportunity for interpersonal contact. These vitamins may have a negative effect in instances whereby an individual may feel coerced into using their skills when they do not want to. Whereas vitamins that have no negative effect even when present in large quantities or have a constant effect (also called CE vitamins), are the following: the availability of money, physical security and having a valued social position (Warr, 1994). As an example, people who have blue-collar occupations (lower paying unskilled jobs), may experience an increase in salary as a life-changing scenario, whereas those who are in white-collar employment (higher paying skilled jobs) may not necessarily appreciate the increase in salary in the same way as the lower paid unskilled labourers.

He proposed that mental health comprises of the following components: affective wellbeing, competence, autonomy, aspiration and integrated functioning (Warr, 1994). *Affective wellbeing* refers to the emotional wellbeing of an individual in the environment that they are in, whether they are working or not. *Competence* in this regard refers to a person's ability to manage relatively well in their environment. *Autonomy* in terms of a person's mental wellbeing refers to their ability to be self-sufficient in their environment. Another aspect of a person's mental health is their *aspiration* to establish and realize their goals. The last aspect of a person's mental health is their ability to have *integrated functioning*; that is, their ability to balance the relationships that encompass their general well-being (Warr, 1994). Thus, when the job characteristics or an individual's environment do not provide these components efficiently, an individual may experience a decline in the mental health components needed for them to function effectively in a work environment (Warr, 1987).

Furthermore, individuals may differ in the way that these vitamins influence their mental health. These differences may be in the form of baseline mental health, values and abilities (Warr, 1994). That is, an individual who has a more negative outlook on features of their environment is likely to react negatively towards those features. In terms of unemployment Ezzy (1993) mentions that the vitamin theory can be used to understand the extent of the change that occurs from unemployment to employment. Thus, a person who has been previously unemployed may experience a positive change in terms of their environmental characteristics such as gaining an additional social role and having more externally derived goals (Ezzy, 1993).

2.1.5 The value-expectancy theory

The value-expectancy theory states that, "*a person's actions are related to the expectations that the person holds and the subjective values that are associated with alternative instrumental actions and their possible outcomes*" (Feather, 1992, p.110). The value

expectancy theory is concerned with how a person's expectations, values and assumptions influence their actions. In terms of the value-expectancy theory, the individual is viewed as an active agent who is able to assess situations in terms of available alternative actions and their possible consequences, which is a similar assertion to Fryer's agency restriction theory (Fryer, 1992). The interaction of a person's values and expectations is thought to motivate a person towards an action (Wigfield, 1994).

Values in this theory are said to reflect desired beliefs and outcomes that a person would like to have. The expectancies refer to person's beliefs about how well they hope to do in a task (Wigfield, 1994). There are two types of expectancies. Efficacy expectancies refer to whether an individual believes that they will be able to accomplish a task or not. Outcome expectancies refer to expectations about the propensity of behaviour to bring forth desired outcomes or results (Wigfield, 1994).

People's choices are influenced by their values and expectations according to this theory (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Not only do values and expectations influence choices they also have an influence on an individual's persistence, effort and performance in a task. Wigfield and Eccles (2000) identify four components of achievement for individuals, i.e., attainment value, cost, intrinsic value and the usefulness of the task. The attainment value of the task refers to the significance that is attached towards a certain goal. The cost refers to what an individual will have to put in, in order to achieve a goal. The intrinsic value of a goal refers to the enjoyment that one gets from achieving a goal. The usefulness of the task refers to what the attainment of that goal will mean to the individual in the future, for example, getting a job may help a person to afford better housing. A person's belief in their ability to achieve a task also has a bearing on their expectation for success as it will propel them towards achieving their goals (Wigfield, 1994).

Furthermore a person's needs influence how they assess a situation (Rodriguez, Lasch & Mead, 1997). A person may evaluate a situation as either being good or bad depending on the characteristics of that situation, that is, if unemployed, they may perceive the actions that are required to find work in a positive or a negative manner by virtue of the characteristics (needed educational qualifications and skills) of the employment that they are looking for. Therefore an individual looking for employment may evaluate their chances of obtaining a certain job depending on the characteristics required for that particular job. If in their evaluation of that particular job, they determine that they do not have the particular characteristics for it, they may start looking at it in a negative light. However, if they are a perfect fit for that position, they will view the job in a positive light. Negative perceptions about a job may discourage

further search for employment, whereas a more positive outlook will encourage job-seeking behaviour for the unemployed person (Schöb, 2012).

The outcomes or expectations that a person may have when looking for employment may be the following: salary, utilization of time and skill, contacts, variety, contribution to society and loved ones (Feather, 1992). Therefore, in the evaluation of employment opportunities a person will look at the value that the employment opportunity will bring to them.

The blend of a person's expectations and values will determine how much motivation (if any) they will have in looking for employment or opportunities that will lead them to it. When a person's expectation of finding employment is not met or the opportunities that they find are not sufficient in satisfying their values, they may experience frustration and sadness. They may further attribute failure to obtain their desired employment to their own personal characteristics or to situational factors such as the economy (Vansteenkiste, Lens, De Witte & Feather, 2005).

Lynd-Stevenson (1999) conducted a study to investigate the future employment status of young people utilizing the value-expectancy theory as a theoretical framework. The study found that the theory is useful in explaining the predictors of future employment status. Furthermore, the values and expectancies that a person has are influenced by the context from which they come (Lynd-Stevenson, 1999) and cannot be merely understood by looking at the individual. Another interesting finding from this research is that individuals who placed a high value on finding work were more likely to find permanent work than those who did not. Individuals who had a high expectation of finding work also had better permanent employment outcomes than those who did not (Lynd-Stevenson, 1999). An individual with a high expectation to find work is said to be more likely to pursue opportunities to find employment and they would also be more willing to take on a variety of work opportunities which may increase their chances of finding work (Vansteenkiste, Lens, De Witte & Feather, 2005). These findings may be seen to solidify the value-expectancy theory's assertion that expectations and values play a vital role in predicting individual outcomes.

The theories discussed above indicate the limitations that unemployment places on the individual, such as, the deprivation of the latent functions of work, finance and utilization of skill, autonomy and a change in lifestyle. They also highlight the negative consequences that unemployment places on them such as depression, anxiety, distress, and poverty. Even though graduates may not have entered the workplace environment, they may look forward to the opportunity to make a contribution in their families and to practice what they have learnt through tertiary institutions. This may lead to them experiencing disappointment in not

obtaining a job after graduation. In the section below the causes of unemployment will be discussed in relation to the South African context.

2.2 Causes of graduates unemployment in South Africa

In a study about the job search experiences of graduates in Africa, Moleke (2006) found that young people who have tertiary qualifications are further disadvantaged when looking for employment in terms of the following causes: race, gender, structural changes in the economy, the type of qualification, and institution of graduation. Furthermore, they are disadvantaged in terms of the skills mismatch/shortage and the effects of social networks. Unemployment is a major concern and below are several factors that influence unemployment in the South African context.

2.2.1 Race and unemployment

During the apartheid period, the South African social structure was designed with the aim of excluding the black majority of the population and restricting them to underdeveloped poor areas of the country, resulting in the exclusion of 80% of the population (Swartz et al., 2012). The apartheid systems' systematic exclusion of many black people from employment, healthcare, education and land ownership resulted in increased impoverishment of the majority of the population. Certain jobs were reserved for white South Africans. For instance, in the mines whereby skilled work and managerial work was reserved for only whites under the Work Reservation Act of 1911, leading to the majority of the black population of the country being placed in jobs that required little or no skill (Deane, 2005). Black people were only allowed to live in urban or more developed areas of the country provided it was for employment purposes, and the only employment they were allowed to engage in was essentially menial labour for the privileged race of the time. The black population was restricted to working as labourers and were not allowed access to more skilled work categories because the apartheid government regarded them as being incapable of doing work that was above that of a labourer (Swartz et al., 2012).

In 1994 a new democratic government was voted into power and with it came changes that were aimed at creating equal opportunity for all South African citizens, but mainly focused on the previously disadvantaged black population. These changes were aimed at ensuring that the historical injustices that existed to benefit the white population were dismantled and that other races could have the same educational, economic and political opportunities that were only previously reserved for the white population. 'Equal constitutional rights' for all South Africans is an example of some of the change that has occurred since that time. Despite the

changes that have taken place since the abolition of apartheid, inequalities persist in South Africa (Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

A report for the Human Sciences Research Council on '*The employment experiences of South African graduates*' found that black Africans and coloured people remained with the lowest prospects of finding employment when compared with other races, even if they have the same qualifications (Moleke, 2006). This is disturbing considering that private and public employers committed themselves to adhering to the Employment Equity Act (55 of 1998) which states that preference should be given to Affirmative Action candidates (Black, Coloured, and Asian people and women, and people with disabilities).

The divisions that were brought forth by the apartheid government can still be seen in the current democratic dispensation, and their effects are still visible even in the present decade. Geographical divisions according to race are still very evident, black people are predominantly living in townships and rural areas, whereas the white minority continue to live affluently, continuing to own most of the resources in the country (StatsSA, 2014). These divisions of people according to race and the exclusion of black people from fully participating as co-citizens in the country, continue to have a major impact on the way that black people see themselves and also on their ability to take hold of the resources that may be available to them even at present (Seekings, 2003).

The effects of the apartheid system are not only material effects, but they are also emotional consequences of poverty and unemployment such as loss of dignity and autonomy, purpose and a coherent structure to life, a sense of security and safety, and the onset of feelings of hopelessness (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). These effects may further contribute to people's lack of understanding of their rights and absence of a sense of belonging in their country. If not addressed these effects may spill over to succeeding generations, as they may not have the role models that could possibly inspire them to make meaningful changes for their developmental outcomes (Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

The income inequalities that currently prevail in the South African context continue to persist in part because of the internalization of inequalities that still shape social behaviours. A clear example of the continuing persistence of these inequalities can be seen in the wealth distribution of the country as well as the majority of the country's resources which are owned by a minority population (Seekings, 2003). According to Fiske and Ladd, (2004), this perception of the internal coherence of differential privilege is reproduced throughout South Africa across all racial lines, classes and gender.

Knowing that such racial disparities exist might also discourage Africans from searching for employment opportunities. The history of racial prejudice may be another reason why job search is a particular problem in South Africa. Some white employers might have strong beliefs about what Africans can and cannot do, which might make them unwilling to give a chance to someone who is qualified (Kingdon & Knight, 2004). However, many young people are still optimistic about their future in South Africa, although some realize that there may be impediments in their path to success, such as finances, access to quality education and widespread poverty among the black population (Steyn, Badenhorst & Kamper, 2010).

The inequalities that are present in South Africa further lend to the notion of South Africa being described as a country with two nations. One is characterized by affluence and great opportunities for economic growth and opulence and the other characterized by lack of economic opportunities and poverty (Letseka, Breier, & Visser, 2010).

A study conducted by Naudé (2008) found that the employment differences amongst races in South Africa are due to spatial mismatch. The majority of the black population is situated in areas with little economic activity and the jobs that were available at the time were reserved or located in certain areas only, which limited black peoples' access to jobs. Currently there is a shift, with many people who previously resided in rural areas moving to the cities in order to find work. There is a growing sense within the black population that location matters, with rural people (especially former homeland inhabitants) having a 16% lower chance of finding employment in their location than urban inhabitants (Naudé, 2008).

Spatial mismatches also influence black peoples' ability to find work even when income level and educational background is taken into consideration due to limits placed by residential patterns and community immobility on some black peoples' access to opportunities that may be located in more developed areas (Naudé, 2008). For example, the Gauteng Province is known as the Economic hub of South Africa and as a result, there are more people who are migrating to Gauteng to find work from other provinces because of the perception that there are more job opportunities in Gauteng (Ehlers, Maja, Sellers & Gololo, 2000). In the case of the white population, Naudé (2008) found that the cost of finding employment and the distance from the city did not have any impact on their employment prospects.

2.2.2 Education and type of qualification

Makiwane and Kwizera (2009) state that young people without education in the current climate are the ones who will be the most affected by the challenges of being unemployed such as not having financial security and its resulting poverty because of the dynamic society that they find themselves in. The only limits for young people towards achieving quality

education in South Africa according to Makiwane and Kwizera (2009) are race and gender inequalities. Furthermore, the most pressing impediment in young black peoples' path is money, as many of them struggle to complete their tertiary education because of financial constraints (Makiwane & Kwizera, 2009; Letseka et al., 2010). Other factors that may influence education attainment in South Africa are gender, family background, educational background of the learner, and the choice of what to study (Letseka et al., 2010). With close to 50% of people in South Africa living below the poverty line, young people seek alternatives to improve their lives and those of their families (StatsSA, 2014). StatsSA (2014) reported that there was an increase in number of social grant recipients from 3 million in the year 2000 to 15 million in the year 2011. The increase in the number of social grant recipients may be an indication of the increased dependence on government resources for sustenance. Higher education may be seen as an option by young people to better themselves both socially and economically because of the high unemployment rate and the pressure from families for income generation.

Young people are encouraged to choose vocations that will best suit their personalities and abilities in accordance with their high school subjects so that they will be able to pursue careers in certain professions. Those who are fortunate enough to obtain high school marks that enable them to study for a tertiary qualification may do so with the expectation to fit into a vocation that most interests them (Pollard, Williams, Hill & Hillage, 2005). Students are influenced by interest in a particular field of study, the possibility of finding work in that field of study and the possible remuneration that comes with doing that job when selecting what they would like to study at a tertiary institution (Letseka et al., 2010)

Graduates from historically black institutions (HBIs) take the longest period of time to get absorbed into the labour market as opposed to graduates from historically white universities (Makiwane & Kwizera, 2009; Moleke, 2006). This means that black graduates are further disadvantaged, more so than their peers in other tertiary institutions, when they do complete their qualifications. This is attributed to the perceived inferior quality of the education obtained from historically black institutions (Makiwane & Kwizera, 2009). Graduates from historically white universities are assumed to have better skills that can be better correlated with the labour market than those from historically black universities because students from historically black universities mostly studied for qualifications in the humanities and education (Moleke, 2006).

A further pointer to the effect of these inequalities can be seen in university graduation rates. On one hand, white students, although a minority in the terms of general South African student population, were found to have twice the number of students graduating from tertiary

institutions. Black students on the other hand, had lower graduation rates compared to white students, which may be due, in part, to factors such as finances and lack of information (Letseka, et al. 2010). Richter, et al., (2005) in "*the status of the youth*" report produced for the Umsobomvu Youth trust, to determine the wellbeing of South African youth, found that only 50% of black young people actually complete their tertiary qualifications. In a study (Letseka et al. 2010), it was found that the majority of students who dropped out of university in the first year of study did so because of "wrong career" choice, which can be linked back to their previous high schools not offering them sufficient career guidance.

A study conducted by Maharasoa and Hay (2001) among three universities in South Africa found that students in the faculties of natural sciences at different universities reported that they believed they had better employment prospects than students in other faculties. As their faculties made it possible for them to meet with prospective employers in their final year of studying towards their degrees. Graduates from faculties of engineering and natural sciences reported that they were more certain when thinking about their employment prospects because they get assurance from their sponsors, which tend to be prospective employers, about their chances of employment in the event of them completing their studies. The humanities graduates were found to be more pessimistic about prospective employment after graduation because of the lack of interest from employers in graduates from the humanities due to the belief that they may not possess practical work skills (Maharasoa & Hay, 2001). A study conducted by Kingdon and Knight (2004) to determine the nature of unemployment in South Africa found that the effects of historically low investments in African education still impact post-apartheid employment outcomes. The current democratic government has made one of its mandates to create institutions that are free of these disadvantages through making institutions of higher learning more inclusive of all races, and funding universities that were previously disadvantaged equally or more than historically white universities to address the imbalances that were previously created by apartheid (Badat, 2010).

According to Pascarella and Terrenzini (2005), young people who do attain tertiary education are faced with the prospect of unemployment because they do not have skills that are required in the world of work. Some graduates do not have the networks that could possibly link them to jobs, or those that they do have, are insufficient for this particular area in their lives. This may leave some graduates with limited opportunities to be active in the world of work apart from volunteering in organizations and getting internship opportunities, which are limited because of the type of qualifications that are required to enter into some organizations.

When young people's expectations of being employed after attaining their tertiary qualifications are not realized, they may experience disappointment as their dreams of

becoming independent and becoming contributing members of society are thwarted. Employment offers the opportunity for young people to be included in the economy and in society; it creates a sense of dignity and accomplishment. Graduates may leave tertiary institutions with a sense of achievement and optimism about the future (South African National Treasury, 2011). However, unemployment fosters dependence upon others, low or no sense of achievement and low self-determination. Graduates who complete their tertiary education and are unable to find a job may leave with a low sense of achievement (South African National Treasury, 2011).

2.2.3 Gender

The World Bank report on the gender disparities that exist in the world of work (World Bank, 2014) found that the employment of women can assist in raising the gross domestic product of their countries. The employment of women could raise the per capita growth of their country because their employment would increase the general productivity of their country (World Bank, 2014). The employment of women can also aid in the alleviation of poverty and in better health outcomes for their children. Yet even with these promising gains that could be made through the employment of women, their productive potential remains minimal and is slightly declining when compared to men globally (World Bank, 2014).

The disparities that exist in the employment of women are in the form of the household, markets, formal and informal institutions. The female's primary responsibilities in the household are still centered on household chores and child rearing, for example, and that results in the limited participation of women in the economy. In the formal economy, women still earn less than men, even when education levels are similar (Duflo, 2012).

Makgetla (2004) posits that even though the education levels of women in the 10 years after democracy had increased, women still faced higher unemployment rates when compared to males, and this is attributed to race and gender. African women who had a tertiary qualification in 2003 were also likely to earn less than a white male who had a matriculation certificate in the same year. Makgetla (2004) also mentions that another reason why the employment of African women may be lower than that of men and that of women of other races can also be attributed to the fact that they mostly had qualifications in education and the humanities.

According to Du Toit (2003) in a paper presented at the Minnesota International Counseling Institute (MICI) on the *South African youth unemployment problem*, women aged 15-24 had a higher unemployment rate when compared to males in the same age category. Young women's prospects of finding work are low because of age, as age can be an indicator of working experience (Mahwele, 2009). Employers may be reluctant to hire someone who does

not have any experience because of the costs that may go into teaching the person about the work. The South African employment sector is still very patriarchal (Mahwele, 2009). There are limited women in professions that are considered 'male dominated' such as engineering, ICT, architecture, and law. Women are often found in service-oriented fields such as nursing, teaching and clerical work (Grubb, 1999). Women who reside in more rural areas of South Africa are less likely to be employed than women who reside in urban areas because of the availability of job opportunities and access to information that women in urban areas do not have (Mahwele, 2009).

Women have lower employment prospects than men and there is a 14% differentiation in employment outcomes between men and women in South Africa (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2012). The South African workplace still favours white men, followed by white women, while black men and black women make up the last preference. Black women have been especially marginalized in the South African workplace, even from apartheid times (Marthur-Helm, 2005). This may be due to them often taking traditional roles of becoming wives and mothers earlier in their lives in order to escape the poverty that they may be facing. Women have been found to have lower rates of economic activity when compared to men in the formal economy (Africa Economic Outlook, 2012) as they may take on roles that do not actually earn them an income. Women also face various obstacles such as discrimination when entering the labour market. With the introduction of the Employment Equity Act of 1998 and the introduction of Affirmative Action within the Act, women still seem to be behind in the workplace, especially in the corporate and public sectors (Mathur-Helm, 2005; Makgetla, 2004).

Furthermore, South African women who are employed are faced with limited advancement opportunities in the organisations where they work because of the prevailing patriarchy that gives them partial access to decision-making roles which thus produces a glass ceiling effect by limiting their career advancement (Booyesen, 1999). Murthur-Helm (2005) argues that in certain instances women fail to take up roles that could advance their careers because of an innate belief that they are secondary to males. She postulates that some women in South African organizations take pride in not challenging the existing status quo, and they gracefully accept the positions that are allocated to them by society and in the organisations which have employed them. The focus on addressing past imbalances may have overshadowed the issues of gender equality as well, because although the affirmative action (a concept contained in the South African Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998) promotes the advancement of women. The focus has generally been on the advancement of the previously disadvantaged in general and not solely on women *per se* (Marthur-Helm, 2005).

2.2.4 Structural changes in the economy

Structural changes in the economy refer to changes in the participation of the economic sectors, that is the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors. For example, there may be times when the secondary sector, which focuses on the manufacturing of goods and services, creates the largest portion of employment opportunities in the country's economy, and determines the kind of skill and education level required of employees at that particular time. If there is higher demand for labour in the secondary sector, it may affect the employment of people who have skills that are relevant for the tertiary sector (Moleke, 2006). As a result, people with higher tertiary qualifications will be affected by structural changes in the economy as the changes determine employment trends.

South Africa's unemployment is structural in nature. Furthermore, the damaging effects of previous colonial and apartheid policies have brought about serious and long-lasting effects on the South African economy (Cramer, 2010). A long history of racialized dispossession, human oppression and unequal access to resources and services has left an enduring negative legacy in South Africa (Cramer, 2010). According to Pauw et al (2008), the structural nature of South Africa's unemployment rate is also a result of the lack of skills that exist in the country in the midst of high unemployment. Therefore, young people with tertiary qualifications may find themselves jobless because the economy does not require the skills that they have at that particular time. Furthermore, the skills and the qualifications that most of the graduates hold are not in demand as there is an over-supply of them (Moleke, 2006). Young people also lack soft skills such as communication, maturity and professionalism, which are demanded by the world of work. Furthermore, young people may not be able to find work because they have no proven tangible skills, which puts them at a disadvantage when they are compared to older workers (South African National Treasury, 2011).

Unemployment has been linked to the inability of the economy to cope with the massive increase in the economically active population (Makiwane & Kwizera, 2009). The primary sector has shed jobs since the abolition of the apartheid system, with the financial, retail and social services sectors increasing their employment numbers. This has consequently led to an increase in the demand for skilled labour (Banerjee, Galiani, Levinsohn, McLaren & Woolard, 2008). There is an increased inflow of people into the formal economy and a slow outflow of people from the formal economy resulting in low absorption rates into the world of work according to Banerjee et al., (2008). There has also been a move away from more labour intensive means of production such as in mining and the agricultural sector, which has led to a decline in the demand for those skills, leading to increased unemployment especially in areas where those means of production were utilised (Banerjee et al., 2008).

The South African economy consists of a relatively technologically advanced sector which has developed, in part through racialized exploitation, but large parts of the population have not found a place in the formal economy, as the development of the formal economy has been hampered by the much racialized policies that initially served it (Cramer, 2010).

2.2.5 Lack of skills

Skills shortage in South Africa is a threat to economic growth and development because the absence of skills means decreased productivity and investment (Daniels, 2007). Investors may be afraid to invest in a country that will not efficiently produce the resources that will earn them returns on their investments because of the scarcity of skills required for their investment to produce the required returns (Centre for Development and Enterprise, 2013).

With the current move away from more labour intensive economic sectors to more capital intensive sectors, there has been increased unemployment in labour intensive economic sectors such as mining and manufacturing. If those who were previously employed in the labour intensive sectors are not re-skilled they may find themselves in long-term unemployment because of the labour market's inability to absorb them. Re-skilling of the labour force and skills transfer is essential for creating a stable labour force, yet South Africa finds itself in a state where there are few skilled people. Thus skills cannot be easily transferred and there are limited opportunities for re-skilling; and companies make limited efforts in providing skills transfer to their employees (Daniels, 2007). Companies are wary of making investments in their employees because of fear that their employees may use those skills to find alternative employment and there is the issue of differential treatment of employees in companies in terms of gender and race (Daniels, 2007).

Furthermore, those without skills have limited chances of being employed, as private companies are less likely to hire a person without skills because of the costs they will have to incur to train that person (Daniels, 2007). There has been a growing need for more qualified skilled people in the South African labour market because South Africa is a developing country (Department of Labour, 2013).

Another characteristic of South African unemployment is that most of the people who are unemployed are between the ages of 15-35, most of whom do not have tertiary qualifications or any skills. Also, although young people may have tertiary qualifications, there is a growing trend among graduates not being able to find work because they do not have the skills that are required by the job market (Pauw, Oosthuizen & Van der Westhuizen, 2008).

In a study conducted to assess the graduate unemployment problem in South Africa between 2010 and 2011, the Department of Labour (2012), found that although graduates have qualifications that are required to enter the workplace, they lack the necessary skills and experience that are required for them to be able to take advantage of available employment opportunities. The study found that many jobs that are advertised are either for low income or are highly skilled jobs for which new graduates cannot apply, because they do not have the necessary skills and experience.

Employers also require people who have soft skills, such as communication and interpersonal skills that cannot be acquired by simply having a degree (Pauw, Oosthuizen & Van der Westhuizen, 2008). The skills that are currently in demand in the country are now geared more towards business, engineering and community and social services (local, provincial and national government). Therefore, there is a need for a strategy to ensure that graduates are re-skilled or urged to study fields that will help eradicate the skills shortage and mismatch (Department of Labour, 2012).

Six priority areas for job creation have been identified which are infrastructure, agriculture, mining, manufacturing, green economy and tourism. The only issue with these identified priority areas is that some of the jobs created are seasonal or temporary and most of them require low level skills which put graduates who may want to have better employment prospects at a disadvantage (Department of Labour, 2012).

2.2.6 Social networks and unemployment

The majority of people find work through the social contacts that they have such as friends, family and acquaintances (Tassier & Menczer, 2008; Burns, Godlonton & Keswell, 2009). The quality of social networks has an impact on the job prospects of the unemployed person, as those networks may influence what kind of job or employment opportunities are available to graduates (Floro, Valodia & Komatsu, 2008).

Living in a household where there are employed people increases the likelihood of an individual finding a job, because that person is more likely to have resources such as finances to go and look for work instead of being constrained, as in the case of those who live in households where no one is employed (Burns et al. 2009).

Tassier and Menczer (2008) found that African Americans, Hispanic and Asian people had more difficulty finding work than Caucasian Americans because of their minority race status in the United States. The above statement is contrary to the South African situation because

in South Africa the black majority of the country's people find themselves in poverty and unemployed (StatsSA, 2013).

Tassier and Menczer (2008) found that randomness in friendships or relationships causes some people to get more information relating to job opportunities than others. Furthermore, minority groups tend to have non-random social networks, which could limit them to job opportunities that may be available, whereas people who have random social networks tend to have greater employment opportunities available to them.

People with non-random networks tend to withhold information that they may have regarding job opportunities in order to keep those opportunities for those within the network (Tassier & Menczer, 2008). Taking the above statements into account, it is imperative that graduates be exposed to a variety of people and that they develop social networks with people who are outside of their current network structure so that they can better their employment prospects. In South Africa, jobs are found mainly through word of mouth and other informal means such as doing door-to-door job searching (Altman, Mokomane, Wight & Boyce 2012). Graduates ought to be encouraged to take the initiative and not be passive about looking for work so that they may have better employment prospects.

Two studies indicate the importance of having social networks when unemployed. Firstly, in the study by Burns et al. (2009), census data was utilized to investigate the relationship between social networks and employment, and it was found that employers are more likely to employ people who were referred to them by someone in their social network. When most of the people in an individual's network are unemployed the chances of that person being able to find a job are reduced and that leads to further discouragement about looking for work. Secondly, a study conducted by Altman, Mokomane, Wight & Boyce (2012) to determine the search strategies that young people use to find work, found that the majority of the employed youths reported that they were able to find work due to people in their social network, mainly family and friends. Family and friends can act as references for their unemployed family members or friends when there are job opportunities in the company that they work for. This may increase the likelihood of their family members finding employment. Thus, having a person in one's network who is employed ensures, in some cases, that the unemployed person will have more information about possible employment opportunities.

Klasen and Woolard (2008) posit that in the African culture, it is imperative for family members to support one another and this is evident in how family members take those who are unemployed into their homes to support them in times of unemployment. Unemployment forces the youth to attach themselves to families, relatives or loved ones who are able to take care of their basic needs for survival. This in turn places a strain on the family resources, not

only financially, but also affecting how the family copes with that change (Klasen & Woolard, 2008). This strain of support may have negative effects on the family that is required to be the source of financial support for the unemployed person.

2.2.7 HIV/AIDS and unemployment

HIV/AIDS is one of the most pressing issues affecting South Africa. The prevalence of the disease as well as the high rates of unemployment contribute to poverty rates in the country (Levinsohn, Shisana, McLaren & Zuma, 2011). In 2013, StatsSA (2013) found that there were 5.26 million people infected with HIV/AIDS in South Africa, and 16% of the infected population was aged between 15-49 years. HIV/AIDS certainly has an impact on the employment of young people and those who are of working age because it is more prevalent among them (Du Toit, 2003). The above statistics show that the HIV/AIDS pandemic has affected the working age adults in South Africa in that it may have negative future implications on the skills. Scarce skills could be lost to the disease if nothing is done to create more awareness about the treatment and prevention of the disease (StatsSA, 2013).

Individuals who are living in poverty can be more likely to become HIV positive because of the limited means through which they can make money (Levinsohn et al., 2011). In their mid-year report of 2013, StatsSA (2013) found that people who live in poor areas and are unskilled were at a greater risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. These facts are alarming because people living in poor areas may not have sufficient access to medical treatment facilities as people who live in more developed areas of the country. The lack of access to medical facilities is due to the past racial geographical allocations, which poses a double disadvantage to them (South African Human Rights Commission, 2014), as they face poverty and illness.

Migration to more affluent areas can be associated with the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. Young people moving to the more affluent areas may be more at risk of contracting the disease as they strive to adapt to their new environments and take part in riskier sexual encounters that may expose them to the disease. A study conducted by Human Sciences Research Council (2014) on HIV/AIDS found that young South Africans are continuing to take part in risky sexual encounters and that knowledge about the transmission of the disease has declined. The study found that young people were more likely to start sexual experimentation before turning 15, with more than one partner. The study also found that 1 in 10 young people were HIV positive but did not know it, which poses a further risk of them unknowingly transmitting the disease to others.

There are varying arguments regarding the association of HIV/AIDS and the rate of unemployment in South Africa; one being that HIV/AIDS constrains economic growth because

it affects those who are of working age, which represents a loss in economic output. The second argument is that HIV/AIDS has a minor impact on economic growth because unemployment rates are high in South Africa (HSRC, 2014). Both arguments hold true for South Africa, the high prevalence of the disease among young people can contribute to the current and future loss of productivity and economic growth. The loss of productivity and economic growth prospects may have negative implications for poverty alleviation efforts in the country. The high unemployment rate among the young is distressing because the risk of HIV and AIDS is high amongst them, not only because of their age, but also because of the risk of falling into poverty because of unemployment (South African Human Rights Commission, 2014).

In companies requiring specific skills and expertise HIV/AIDS affects the availability of people who possess the required qualifications. Companies may have to train new personnel in order to replace the lost labour. This will cause companies to lose money through the training of new staff and paying out death benefits to the family of the deceased (Haacker, 2004). The HIV/AIDS pandemic has contributed to poverty and inequality because it has affected the workforce, families and industries. The following section discusses the effects of unemployment on individuals.

2.3 Effects of unemployment

When individuals are unable to obtain employment they may experience various negative effects, some of which are outlined below.

2.3.1 Psychological effects of unemployment

Depression

Certain life events have the ability to produce *depression* in people such as events that involve loss and disappointment (Dooley, Catalano & Wilson, 1994), and unemployment can be categorized as such an event. According to Dalbert (1997), people experiencing unemployment often experience despair, they ruminate about their fate and they consistently question why they are unemployed. An obvious issue of concern to those who are unemployed is the lack of ongoing finances, which could cause them to have financial strain, which in turn may impact on their mental health. People who are unemployed may be prone to depression, more so if they have had to borrow money to support their living expenses because it shows others that they are incapable of meeting their own needs (Dalbert, 1997).

The onset of depression in unemployed people may affect their job search behaviour (Price, Choi & Vinkur, 2002). For example, their motivation to look for work could be lowered as a

result of depression. If the unemployed persons start to compare themselves to those who are working it could lead them to experience low self-esteem which will increase their susceptibility to depression Sheeran, Abrams and Orbell (1995). Furthermore, there is a link between social comparison and depression according to (Sheeran et al. 1995). Social comparison can take place on an individual category and on a social category (Sheeran et al., 1995). On an individual basis comparison, a person can compare where they are at the present stage, and where they would have liked to be at the same stage. If they experience a discrepancy between the two stages, that may lead them to experience depression. On the social comparison category an individual may compare himself/herself with others with similar characteristics in order to determine whether or not they have progressed to the same extent as their peers. In the analysis of the *Epidemiological Catchment area project in the United States of America*, it was found that depression was likely to be found more in women than men who were experiencing unemployment (Dooley et al., 1994). In the case of unemployed graduates, there has been a lot of research conducted to show the link between unemployed graduates and depression. For example, researchers have demonstrated that unemployed graduates reported more depressive symptoms and lower self-esteem due to the lack of purposeful time activity (Feather & Bond, 1983). Unemployment and decreased psychological well-being (Schaufeli & Yperen, 1992), Decreased wellbeing and propensity for depressive symptoms (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005), additionally, Goldsmith et al., 1996, found that unemployed graduates experienced low self-esteem and low self-worth, which contributed to depression among some of the graduates who took part in their study.

Self-esteem

Self-esteem refers to an individual's view of themselves (Heatherton, Wyland, Lopez & Snyder, 2003). People who have high self-esteem are able to cope better with challenges, they have a better outlook of their future and they are happier. Individuals with lower self-esteem are more pessimistic about their lives and may experience a number of emotional reactions such as depression. How a person thinks they are perceived by others is at the core of their self-esteem. Self-esteem is believed to arise when an individual receives negative appraisal from key figures in their lives such as friends and parents; and the negative feedback is then internalized and taken as truth (Heatherton et al., 2003). A person's need to belong also influences their self-esteem (Macdonald, 2006) and as a result, individuals who feel they do not fit into a particular environment may feel isolated in and irrelevant to that environment.

Lackovic-Grgin, Dekovic, Milosavljevic, Cvek –Soric and Opacic, (1996) argue that there is a correlation between graduate unemployment and low self-esteem as unemployment lessens the value of what they have achieved throughout their studies. Unemployment may lead some

to have diminished expectancy regarding their futures, which may contribute to changes in self-esteem and self-evaluation. In a study about self-esteem, unemployment and homosexuality, Crawford (2005), found that younger people have lower self-esteem than older people, which could be because older people are more likely to view adverse life events more favourably than younger people.

Unemployed individuals have been reported as having a lower sense of *self-esteem* (Fischer, Greitemeyer & Frey, 2008) as individuals who are unemployed may perceive their unemployment status as a reflection of their abilities (Guindon & Smith, 2002; Winefield, Tiggerman, & Tiggerman, 1992). Low self-esteem may be associated with an increased likelihood of not being re-employed as those individuals may doubt their abilities to succeed in obtaining employment.

It is also an issue of concern because if individuals remain in that state for longer periods and they do not do anything that could better their situation, they may depend on others for longer periods (Du Toit, 2003). From the above evidence it is apparent that low self-esteem could be an inhibitor to graduates finding employment because it impacts upon the way that people perceive themselves and their abilities, and lowers their motivation to find work.

Frustration and Hostility

According to Dolard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer and Sears (1939; p.7) *frustration* is, '*keeping people from some attractive goal only if the people were expecting the satisfaction that they would have obtained from meeting that goal*'. Berkowitz (1989) proposed that obstacles that cause frustration in people lead them to experience negative feelings which may cause them to react aggressively. The greater the obstacle that stands in the way in a person's way of achieving their desired goal, the greater their aggression will be (Berkowitz, 1989). Unemployment may cause individuals to be frustrated as it diminishes an individual's ability to be autonomous, which may result in them having an increased potential of being aggressive (Fischer, Greitemeyer & Frey, 2008).

Hostility can be the result of an individual's inability to reach a goal that they have set or it can be regarded as a learned reaction to stressful events (Kivim, Elovain, Kokko, Pulkkinen, Kortteinen & Tuomikoski, 2003). For some individuals hostility is a way to cope with stressful life situations and in some instances, the hostility that unemployed people may experience can influence their health outcomes negatively (Kivim et al., 2003). According to Kivim et al. (2003), hostile individuals are unable to benefit from the support that is given to them, due to the high psychological and physical reactivity they may have, which may in turn cause them to negatively view support efforts from others. The inability to accept support from others will add

to the burden of unemployment as support has been found to be a buffer against adverse life situations (Lakey & Cohen, 2000). Hostility in individuals who are unemployed can be influenced by the environment in which they exist, and can be affected by their gender, education, age, and financial strain (Eversson, Kauhenen, Caplan, Goldberg, Julkunen, Youmilento & Salonen, 1997). People who have lower social economic status experience more hostile feelings toward others and they are at risk of having cardiovascular diseases (Eversson et al., 1997). Hakulinen (2013) proposes that people who grow up in an environment that is characterized by low socioeconomic status and poor familial relations would be more hostile when experiencing unemployment. They may view their unemployment status as a hopeless situation and may be cynical about any opportunities to better their circumstances.

A study conducted by Kivim et al. (2003) to determine the relationship between hostility, health and unemployment found no link between hostility and unemployment in women. The study also found that men who had hostile tendencies and were unemployed had more negative health outcomes than men who were employed. However, Eversson et al., (1997) argue that women are more hostile than men when they experience unemployment. This in turn, predisposes them to heart conditions (Shapiro, Goldstein & Jamner, 1995). However Macgregor and Davidson (2000) claim that the differences between men and women can be attributed to the way in which they express hostility. Shapiro et al.,(1995) argue that women are covertly hostile whereas men are more overt in expressing their hostility. Younger adults have been found to be more hostile than older adults because older adults have more resilience and are able to handle stressful situations better than younger adults (Hamarat, Thompson, Aysan, Steele, Matheny & Simons, 2002).

The discussions above demonstrate some of the effects that graduates may experience as a result of being unemployed. Graduates who are unemployed have been found to experience lower levels of psychological wellbeing due to the various stressors that they experience as a result of unemployment (Omoniyi & Osakinle,2011).Additionally unemployed graduates have been found to experience greater psychological distress than employed graduates. Interestingly unemployed graduates who experience lower levels of psychological distress as compared to their peers were more likely to find employment in the near future (Schaufeli & Van Yperen,1992).

2.3.2 Social effects of unemployment

Discontentment

The social effects of unemployment, according to Omoniyi and Osakinle (2011) are social discontentment among the youth and widespread unhappiness, which could be evidenced by the increase in suicide rates and social disruption among the youth. An example of social disruption, which may be due in part to youth unemployment can be seen in the case of the increase in service delivery protests throughout South Africa, which are mainly driven by the youth (Burger, 2009). Recently the South African Institute for Race Relations (SAIRR), reported that increased unemployment and increased expectations are some of the sources of the social unrest leading to service delivery protest (SAIRR, 2015). Discontentment in South Africa has also risen as a result of the perception that the government's actions against unemployment have been ineffective due to corruption, the mismatch of skills and market demands, and the poor education system (HSRC, 2012). Perceptions of government's inefficiency in addressing socio-economic problems such as unemployment and the provision of basic services may be some of the issues that are at the core of discontentment among the youth. The most recent example of discontentment of graduates in South Africa has been the '*hire a graduate*' campaign which took place in the Eastern Cape province in February 2017. Students from the University of Fort Hare, Walter Sisulu University, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and some vocational colleges took to the streets to demonstrate their discontent about being unemployed. There have been similar instances in other provinces whereby graduates have resorted to standing on street corners to beg for jobs in the hopes that they will be spotted by possible employers. This example shows the desperate measures that young people have taken to highlight their state of affairs demonstrate the sense of urgency that they have.

Dependency

Arnett (2004) proposed that the transition to adulthood consists of taking responsibility for oneself, making independent decisions and being financially independent. Interruptions in transitioning from being an adolescent to being an adult impedes on the development of young people's independence (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007). For graduates, it may be disheartening to be at the a stage whereby they have an important aspect (education), to transition to employment but fail to due to the lack of work opportunities.

Young people's transitions from dependency to independence may be prevented by the political, economic and demographic factors (White & Rogers, 1994). Political factors that may influence young people's transition from dependence to independence may include the availability of social security benefits such as grants. Economic factors that may influence their transitions to independence are structural changes in the economy. The demographic factors

that may affect their independence may include issues from their parental home such as the separation of parents (White & Rogers, 1994).

Unemployment may result in younger people becoming more dependent on their families for longer than they anticipated (Du Toit, 2003). Young people in South Africa do not have a particular social grant allocated to assist them while they are unemployed. The unavailability of such a grant may mean that they become increasingly dependent on their families to meet their basic needs. For those who do not come from families which have sufficient financial resources, it may mean that they become indirectly dependent on the social grants (e.g. old age, child, and disability grants) provided to some members of their households to meet their basic needs (StatsSA, 2009). The above situation poses further inequalities for young people who come from families which are not able to take financial responsibility for them, in the sense that they are unable to leave their parental home in order to become independent adults (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007). The situation may become further exacerbated for unemployed graduates by the fact that they are not only dependant on their families for basic needs but are dependent on them to assist them to search for work (Altman et al., 2012)

Crime

Crime may be seen as a symptom of inequality, unemployment and poverty, (Gauteng Treasury, 2009). With limited access to money to sustain their basic needs, unemployed people may be drawn to crime in order to sustain the shortfall (Bangane, 1999). Mafiri (2002) postulates that young people may be more tempted into a life of crime in order to support themselves and their families. Crime in itself is a threat to social security, economic productivity, and the general safety of people.

In a study to determine the association between crime and unemployment in two areas of the KwaZulu-Natal province, Tshabalala (2014) found that married men who were unemployed had the highest propensity to commit crime due to familial responsibility. The most common crimes that are committed by those who are unemployed are fraud and theft (Tshabalala, 2014). Crime also influences the rates of mortality. In South Africa young males are at a higher risk of being victims of homicide (Institute for Security Studies, 2014), and this directly affects the labour supply of the country.

In 2014, Statistics South Africa (2014) Second Quarter report demonstrated the impact of crime across some provinces in South Africa as follows: Gauteng 70%, Kwazulu-Natal 69%, Western Cape 60% and the Eastern Cape at 62%. The report also revealed that crime had the following effects of businesses: decreased productivity, decreased motivation, loss of staff and decreased creativity. There was also increased spending on protection services in order

to protect businesses against crime, which inadvertently contributed to diminished earnings (Grant Thornton South Africa, 2014). Studies have shown that educational attainment reduces the chances of taking part in most types of crime (e.g. Lochner, 2010). However, graduates may have a limited propensity to take part in white collar. Furthermore, studies have shown that most individuals who are incarcerated are likely to have lower educational attainment (Lochner, 2007; Hjalmarsson, Holmlund and Lindquist, 2015). As a result, education may have a positive effect on reducing graduates involvement in criminal activities as it also contributes to better chances of them obtaining employment.

Poverty

Inadequate and low-quality housing, underfunded schools, few recreational activities, restricted access to services and public transportation, limited opportunities for employment - all characteristics of poor neighbourhoods - contribute to the social, economic, and political exclusion of individuals and communities, making it more difficult for people to return to work. In a six-country study, an increased risk of mortality was associated with higher neighbourhood unemployment rates (Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, 2010). These factors are further exacerbated by a lack of education, unequal access to resources, lack of political governance, economic instability, markets and lack of personal initiative to move out of poverty (Rural poverty report, 2011).

The high incidence of unemployment in South Africa is also a contributor to the levels of poverty because it limits people's ability to earn an income (NALEDI, 2006). Poverty restricts people from entering the mainstream economy because they lack finances. It further inhibits people's movement to move to economically affluent areas as they have to focus on meeting their basic needs first. It can be pervasive to other family generations if it is not addressed as those affected by it may have limited resources to plan for the future.

The causes and contributing factors of unemployment need to be addressed at a policy level because there are a myriad of reasons why poverty is persistent in South Africa (NALEDI, 2006). In the current economic climate characterised by high unemployment, unemployed graduates face the prospect of persistence poverty due to unemployment (Mncayi, 2016). For graduates experiencing unemployment, poverty can be an inhibitor in terms of getting information about work opportunities (Verhaeghe, Van der Bracht, & Van de Putte, 2015). Additionally, graduates from poorer families are more likely to remain in the circle of poverty due to the lack networks that can connect them to employment opportunities (Verhaeghe et al., 2015).

Substance abuse

Unemployment may be thought of as a significant risk factor for substance use and abuse. People who are unemployed may start using or increase the use of illicit substances (drugs, alcohol and prescription medication) as a result of unemployment. Furthermore, those who are unemployed may be prone in some instances to risky alcohol consumption, such as binge drinking and taking part in harmful behaviour (Henkel, 2011).

The use of illicit substances is said to be more prevalent amongst males than females. However, females are said to abuse prescription medication more than men (Henkel, 2011). The use/abuse of prescription medication may be a result of the association between unemployment and some psychological effects of being unemployed (e.g. depression). Individuals who are unemployed and are depressed, for example, may be given prescriptions, such as sedatives and antidepressants and if they have an addictive personality, they may develop an addiction to those substances (Henkel, 2011). For others, being unemployed may mean reducing their intake of such illicit substances in order to increase their job search efforts (Khan, Murray & Barnes, 2002).

Education may moderate the use of drugs and alcohol for some (Khan et al., 2002). In a study about alcohol consumption and alcohol abuse, Hammer (1992) found that young people who were unemployed did not consume alcohol as much as their employed counterparts, but they seemed to move towards cannabis instead, or toward joining deviant sub-cultures such as gangs. The abuse of illicit substances is not only unhealthy for those who use them, it also affects productivity and diminishes the chances of them finding work (Henkel, 2011). In a study to determine drug use patterns in young adulthood and post-college employment, researchers found that there was a correlation between being unemployed and drug use amongst college graduates (Arria, Garnier-Dykstra, Cook, Calderira, Vincent, Baron, O'Grady, 2013). Using drugs, during and post college is essentially detrimental to graduates employment aspirations.

Loneliness

Winefield and Tiggeman (1985) classify loneliness as a predisposing factor to unemployment. Loneliness is subjective; it depends on personal attributions (Rubinstein, Shaver & Peplau, 1979). A person may have many social and familial relationships and still feel lonely in those relationships whereas others may have limited social and familial relationships and yet they may not be lonely because of their personal attributions (Rubenstein et al., 1979). The loneliest people according to Rubenstein et al., (1979) are the unemployed, poor, those belonging to minority groups and those who are uneducated. This is arguable because people are able to

have meaning and companionship even whilst experiencing unemployment, being uneducated, being poor or belonging to minority groups (Underlid, 1996; Schöb, 2012).

Weiss (1974, in Creed & Reynolds 2001) makes a distinction between two types of loneliness, that is, social loneliness and emotional loneliness, with the assumption that different relationships are able to meet certain relational needs that other relationships cannot. Social loneliness occurs when individuals do not engage in 'satisfying social networks' (Creed & Reynolds, 2001). Emotional loneliness occurs when a person loses an intimate relationship or when it is absent (DiTommaso and Spinner, 1997). Creed & Reynolds (1974) contends that relationships that would be the most beneficial to individuals would be those whereby the individual's strengths and abilities are acknowledged and where the person's self-worth is enhanced. It is mostly in working relationships where a person's abilities and strengths would be recognized (Creed & Reynolds, 2001). The acknowledgement of strengths and abilities that is provided in the working relationship can be likened to the latent and manifest benefits of work that are identified by Jahoda, (Creed & Reynolds, 2001).

Being unemployed may bring with it lack of social integration, which may inadvertently increase social loneliness in unemployed young people (Creed & Reynolds, 2001). It is in relationships with others that a person meets their need for belonging, acceptance and love, and the satisfaction of these emotional needs is essential to a person's development, Maslow (1974). The development of social relationships with peers and co-workers is thus essential to meet the emotional and social needs that an individual may have and, concurrently, they may avert the social and emotional loneliness that individuals may experience in adverse life situations. The assertion could therefore be that employment may prevent unemployed graduates from experiencing social and emotional loneliness depending on their perception toward being unemployed.

Status

Employment affords people status among their peers; it gives them a social role (Harvey, 1998). The role that a person plays in different areas provides them with a sense of identity which could be diminished if they are unemployed. Unemployment may bring with it the loss of friendships and social contacts to those who have been previously employed (Harvey, 1998). Being unemployed may cause people to self-categorize themselves as somehow below those who are employed (Schöb, 2012). Furthermore, unemployment may cause shame to the unemployed person by causing them to perceive him/herself as a failure. Unemployed people may also be isolated by some members of their social group on account of their unemployment status. The loss of social status also has an influence on the

employment opportunities of the unemployed person, because many job opportunities are found through a person's social network (Ali, Fall & Hoffman, 2012).

Social status has an influence on the kinds of opportunities and resources that are available for an individual. People who are living in a low socioeconomic environment may have lesser access to opportunities and resources based on their geographical location. Furthermore, social status has an effect on the aspirations of the unemployed, because of the limited exposure that they have to employment opportunities and available resources (Ali et al., 2012). People who are at the lower end of the social economic ladder are further exposed to psychological distress and economic deprivation due to unemployment (Whelan, 1994).

The impact of unemployment on a person's social status can be influenced by their gender and family roles (Artazcoz, Benach, Borrell & Cortez, 2004). If a man loses his job and is unable to provide for his family, this may cause some dissonance to his role as the provider. That may be why unemployment is more negatively experienced by men than it is by women (Smith, 2006). Whelan (1994), in a study about social class, unemployment and psychological distress, found that men who came from affluent family backgrounds were more likely to experience psychological distress. Women are more likely to adopt alternative social roles such as being homemaker, whereas men may find it difficult to adopt other roles apart from being the 'provider' (Smith, 2006; Schöb, 2012). Furthermore, (Artazcoz et al., 2004), posit that women who are unemployed and unmarried may also become distressed if they are unable to assume other social roles.

Married men who receive unemployment benefits experience more psychological distress than men who are single according to Artazcoz et al., (2004). Furthermore, men who were employed as manual labourers were at higher risk of psychological distress as a result of unemployment because they may not have sufficient resources to remain in the same social status that they had as a result of being unemployed (Artazcoz et al., 2004). Furthermore, Geiger (2012) proposed that it is the type of support that an individual receives from others that determines their subjective social status. Moreover, individuals who are able to keep their subjective social status intact are able to deal better with being unemployed (Geiger, 2012).

2.3.3 Economic Effects of unemployment

Decreased Consumer spending

Consumer spending has an impact on the course of the economy, as it influences the consumer's propensity to purchase and invest in the economy. Consumer spending is influenced by consumer confidence in their future finances (Garner, 1991). As a result,

unemployment poses a danger to the economy, as it leads to decreased consumer spending because people will not easily spend on items that are not essential to their livelihoods (Bangane, 1999). They will rather spend their money on essential items such as food and shelter (Waters, 2000). Furthermore, poor people may find it difficult to apply for credit because they may not have any income or wealth that they can borrow money against (Research Institute of Applied Economics, 2014).

Unemployment will also cause people to postpone the purchase of durable goods such as electronic appliances in order to ensure that they have savings to take care of any unexpected needs (Carroll & Dunn, 1997). Conversely, in a study to understand spending patterns during times of unemployment, Hill, Rodeheffer, Griskevicius, Durante and White, (2012), found that people's desire to purchase beauty enhancing products increased during unemployment. Women are more likely to purchase beauty products such as lipstick in order to attract possible partners, even though they may be in a financial crisis.

However, tertiary graduates have been found to contribute to spending, not only because of their higher economic status, but also for their propensity to spend on items that are thought to enhance the environment (Laroche, Bergeron & Barbaro-Forleo, 2001). Moreover, they are more likely than non-graduates to spend more on services and goods. Graduates also contribute to consumer spending through the financial assistance that they provide to their families to take care of their day to day needs (Wall, 2010).

Government resources

Unemployed people may also remain dependent on State resources such as the Government Grant to meet their basic needs, which also places a burden on State resources (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2012; Children's Institute, 2013). The number of people receiving social grants increased exponentially from 1994 to 2014. The South African Social Security Agency (Sassa, 2015) reported that social grant recipients increased from 4 million in 1994 to 16.3 million in 2014. Even though social grants have had a positive impact on the lives of South Africans in general, there is still concern as to whether the country will be able to sustain them in the long run (AfricaCheck, 2015).

Individuals who are employed will be forced to pay more tax in order to make up for the shortfall in government welfare services; which is the result of low income from taxes due to inadequate state tax coffers (May, 1998; Bangane, 1999). It may be plausible to think that the resources used to meet the country's welfare needs could be better spent on activities that would enhance the country's development such as infrastructure development. Morh and Rogers (1995) consider the high spending on welfare services in the country as a waste because it

contributes to the limiting of economic development. The insufficient contribution of taxes may negatively influence the amount of money that is allocated to the essential services of the country such as health, education and social services (StatsSA, 2014). The lack of investment in the country's citizens will affect the availability of skilled labour and the general well-being of the country National Development Plan (NDP), 2012).

Foreign direct investments play an essential role in the endeavour to eliminate unemployment. They may however be threatened in instances whereby the government raises taxes or tariffs in order to augment its income shortfalls to make provision for social security (Brander & Spencer, 1987). Government policies ought to attract direct foreign investment by minimizing taxes for companies that want to invest in the country and also ensure that there is skilled labour available (Balcerzak & Żurek, 2011). It appears like an impossible task to tackle unemployment, solve the country's economic development issues and to fight against the scourge of poverty. However, the South African government's National Development Plan has been hailed as the perfect solution to address these issues as it seems as if it is structured in such a way as to alleviate poverty and inequality (National Development Plan, 2012).

Graduates have the potential to reduce government spending because graduates are likely to be less dependant on state resource (Baum & Payea, 2005). Tertiary graduates have the potential for higher earnings than non-graduates do. As such, graduates are more likely, than non-graduates to contribute to tax reserves, leading to decreased reliance on government spending (Baum & Payea, 2005). Moreover, tertiary graduates are likely to influence others to follow the same path and as a result they contribute to building a better society both in monetary and non-monetary ways (Baum & Payea, 2005).

Loss of skill

According to Arulampalam (2001), the period between unemployment and employment may result in the loss of skill by the unemployed person, as there may be advances in the previous work field. The unemployed may take on jobs that offer lower remuneration as compared to their previous employment in order to meet their living expenses (Arulampalam, 2001). Tertiary graduates have been found to take low-paying jobs in order to counter unemployment, but that contributes to them being underemployed (Abel, Deitz & Su, 2014). Additionally, in instances whereby graduates cannot find employment opportunities, they are likely to lose any skills that they may have acquired through their studies, lowering the value of their qualifications (Abel et al., 2014). Moreover, researchers have noted that graduates are taking longer to find employment after completing their qualifications (Abel et al., 2014). Some of the reasons for this have been discussed in the discussion of the causes of unemployment above. Long periods of unemployment may impede chances of the unemployed re-entering the world

of work, because employers may attribute their unemployment status as being, 'bad employees, who are unable to keep jobs' (Arulampalam, 2001). Moreover, long periods of being unemployed have negative effects on the future income of the unemployed (graduates or not) Abel et al., 2014. Unemployed individuals find it hard to find employment because employers may be reluctant to employ a person who will need further training as they will increase the cost of hiring them. Furthermore, if a person remains unemployed for a long period it is more likely that they will experience a loss of skills. Other negative effects of unemployment such as depression may be exacerbated because of the loss of skills (Esterban-Pretel, 2005).

In more developed countries (e.g. Italy, United States of America and Germany) whereby the state provides social security grants for the unemployed, the loss of skill does not hamper the unemployed individual's chances of finding employment. The availability of opportunities to become re-skilled in a trade or to further one's education in those countries makes it easier for individuals to re-enter the job market (Gangl, 2004; Brandt & Hank, 2010). This is not the case in South Africa, as there are no social security options for the unemployed (Altman, Mokomane, Wright & Boyce 2012).

Inequality

Unemployment further increases the income gap between the poor and the rich (Bangane, 1999). Inequality within a country may influence political and social instability in the form of riots and increasing crime rates (Research Institute of Applied Economics, 2014). The increase in criminal activities linked to crime committed by the unemployed leads to material losses (e.g. theft of motor vehicles and household goods) for those who are victims of crime (Bangane, 1999). The increase in the rates of crime further contributes to decreased social cohesion due to the fear of victimization (Hanson, Sawyer, Begle & Hubel, 2010).

Ehrhart (2009) proposed that there is a link between inequality and high fertility rates, which in turn reduces investment into education resources, as the number of children per family increases. Ehrhart (2009) argues that poor families tend to augment the number of children in their families in order to make up for the limited resources that they have to advance their children's education. This in turn increases unskilled labour in the economy, which also means that the economy will mainly consist of low paid, unskilled labourers (Research Institute of Applied Economics, 2014). Limited resources to advance children's education may contribute to the persistence of the poverty cycle in poor households and to income inequality (National Development Plan, 2013). Waters (2000) states that economic deprivation as a result of unemployment may contribute to distress in individuals. This may be as a result of them

adopting a more evasive coping mechanism (such as avoidance) to deal with their unemployment.

Graduates may contribute to decreasing inequalities in that by getting educated they will have better opportunities of being employed and providing for their families. Education serves as a form of cumulative advantage in that those who have tertiary qualifications obtain better future earning potential, which will have residual effects on their future social and economic mobility (DiPrete & Eirich, 2006).

The current section has demonstrated some of the effects that unemployment can have on an individual and could be applicable to an unemployed graduate and as well as on those around them. These issues are also interrelated and they influence each other. Economic uncertainty can be considered as an antecedent of decreased life satisfaction as young people may not be able to make permanent financial decisions regarding their own needs. Moreover, financial deprivation may limit their opportunities to grow if they do not have the financial resources (Winkelmann & Winkelmann, 1998). There may be various resources that people use to deal with adverse life situations such as empowering themselves and seeking out assistance from others. In the following section, social support will be discussed.

2. 4. Social support

Social support is viewed as a complex process unfolding in an ecological context (Vaux, 1985). It is the exchange of resources between individuals that is aimed at enhancing the well-being of the receiver (Shumaker & Brownell, 1984). It involves transactions between people and their social networks, including the dynamic development and maintaining of support network resources, the management of incidents to elicit social support from the network and the synthesis of information (what the person thinks about the support) to yield support appraisals. The process is shaped by features of both the person and the social ecology. According to Vaux (1985), social support can be viewed as a meta-construct consisting of three components: the support network resources, supportive behaviour, and subjective appraisals of support.

The *supportive network resources* may be described as a set of relationships through which an individual receives assistance with dealing with demands and achieving goals (Vaux, 1990). Support networks that a person has may differ in size, composition, structure, quality of relationships and the diversity of wisdom that the networks embody (Vaux, 1990). Social support in itself can be seen as a resource as it can be linked to other mediating variables such as self-esteem, resilience and optimism in unemployment (Slebarska, Moser &

Gunnesch-Luca, 2009). Social support can serve as a buffer against the effect of unemployment by assisting individuals to view their situation in a more optimistic manner.

Supportive behaviour includes emotional, feedback, guidance, and practical, material interaction. In terms of a person who is experiencing unemployment, supportive behaviour can take the form of information regarding possible job opportunities, skills to improve employment prospects, encouragement to keep looking for jobs and so on (Vaux, 1985). Schilling (1987) states that social support has to be pertinent to the person to whom it is given. If the individual to whom the support is given is unable to accept the support due to a collapse in their relationship with the giver, the giver's act would be viewed as futile. Therefore, it will be difficult for people who do not have good interpersonal relationships with those in close proximity to them to receive social support. They would have to look for alternative sources of support in their times of difficulty.

Support appraisals are subjective appraisals or evaluations, global or focused, that people make of their support network resources and the supportive behaviour that occurs within those relationships (Vaux, 1985). An individual's appraisal of the support resources that they obtain from others as well as their network's ability to provide them with support influences how they view the support that they receive from others. Their appraisal of the support will also be dependent on their impression of the support given (Lakey & Cohen, 2000). Lakey and Cohen state that those who believe that the social support they receive from others is adequate will view the support in a more positive manner, whereas those who perceive it as inadequate will view it more negatively. Social support may be viewed negatively as well, if it is seen as a threat to their self-efficacy and or as a form of control over them (Slebarska, Moser & Gunnesch-Luca, 2009). Social support has been understood to be effective in mediating the effects of stressful situations (Schilling, 1987; Linn, Sandifer & Stein, 1985). Social support has also been credited for other benefits such as emotional support, tangible assistance and informational guidance. It has also been positively associated with physical and mental health (Croezen, Picavet, Haverran-Nies, Versschuren, De Groot & Van Veer, 2012). The lack of social support has however been linked to reduced physical and emotional health and psychosomatic complaints (Croezen et al., 2012).

These elements or components are not fixed, they are subject to different influences, have distinct relationships and have different properties. They reflect the dynamic process between the person and their social environment (Vaux, 1985). In this research the availability of social support to unemployed graduates is one of the components that was investigated, as well as its influence on the unemployed graduates.

Social support can also be negative if it promotes negative behaviour or causes stress to the person who is given the support, for example, teenagers with friends who encourage them to take part in illicit activities such as drug and alcohol use. Although they may need it to help them adapt to a school environment, for example, its overall effect on their development is negative (Lourel, Hartmann, Clason, Mouda & Petric-Tatu, 2013). Social support may also have negative consequences on individuals who may feel that they cannot reciprocate the support given to them. The inability to reciprocate the support may cause them to feel as though they are incapable of contributing to other people and that they are incapable of taking care of themselves (Lourel et al., 2013). In the section below, the theoretical framework for this study is discussed.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

2.5.1 The Theory of Human Ecology

Bronfenbrenner's Theory of Human Ecological Development stems from the model of Social Ecology (Duncan, Bowman, Naidoo, Pillay & Roos, 2007). This model conceptualizes the individual as being in continual interaction with his/her social and physical environment. The model assumes that there are similarities between social and biological systems, thus the *human ecological model*. The focus of this model therefore is on the interaction between the individual and his/her environment, with the assumption that a person's behaviour is a result of the interaction between individuals and the contexts to which they are vulnerable (Duncan et al., 2007). According to this model a person is influenced by the physical, social, economic, environmental, spiritual, and the political environment. These inadvertent environments are the contexts within which a person's behaviour can best be understood. Bronfenbrenner's theory of human ecological development has some similarity with Lazarus' transactional model of stress (Lazarus, 1990) and the general systems theory that was initially introduced by Emile Durkheim (Brandell, 2011), in that the interplay between the person and his/her environment influences their outcomes. Lazarus (1990) states that:

Once a person has appraised a transaction between him/herself as stressful, coping processes are brought into play to manage the troubled person and environment relationship, and these processes influence the person's subsequent appraisal and the intensity of the stress reaction. (Lazarus, 1990; p.3).

Human Ecological Development can be defined as,

The scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation, throughout the lifespan, between the growing human organism and the changing immediate

environments in which it lives, as this process is affected by relations obtaining within and between these immediate settings, as well as the larger social contexts, both formal and informal, in which the settings are embedded (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; p731).

The general ecological model contains two propositions. Proposition one states that *throughout the life course, human development takes place through the processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between active, evolving bio-psychological human organism and the persons, objects, and the symbols in its immediate environment* (Bronfenbrenner, 1994;p.38). The proposition also states that in order for the interaction to be effective it must occur on a fairly regular basis over extended periods of time. These interactions are called proximal processes. The proximal processes can be observed in the form of parent-to-child, child-to-child activities, solitary play, learning new skills, studying, athletic activities, and performing complex tasks (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

The second proposition states that *form, power, content, and direction of the proximal processes affect the developing person, in the environment (both the immediate and more remote) in which the processes are taking place* (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; p38), that is, the nature of the developmental outcomes under consideration. The influence of the process varies systematically as a function of the environmental process context and the characteristics of the person. The proximal process has the effect of reducing or buffering environmental differences in developmental outcome. These processes constitute the engines of development, as it is by engaging in these activities and interactions that an individual makes sense of the world and understands their place in it. They both play their part in changing the prevailing order while fitting into a person's existence (Tudge, Makrova, Hatfield, & Karnik, 2009). According to Duncan et al., (2007), the principles of human ecological development are as follows:

a) Interdependence

The human ecological model proposes that the multiple components of a social context are interrelated and those components influence other parts of an individual's context. Therefore, a change in one part of an individual's context may produce changes in other parts of their context. For example, for an unemployed graduate, changes in the structures of the economy influence the availability of work opportunities in their study field.

b) Distribution of resources

The distribution of resources within a person's environment is influenced by how those resources are created and how they are defined in that environment. Furthermore, the distribution of resources within a social ecological context is prioritised in accordance with the needs experienced in that environment (Duncan et al., 2007). The high concentration of work opportunities in the Gauteng Province of South Africa, for example, as compared to other provinces (due to the various industries that are in the province) means that more financial resources are put in place for the continuation of these industries. Therefore, job seekers flock to areas where resources (employment) are located.

c) Adaptation

Adaptation in the human-ecological model refers to the process through which people cope with the available/changing resources in their environment. When there are not sufficient resources in a person's environment, it will influence how they adapt to their environment in order to sustain their lifestyle (McLaren & Hawe, 2005; Duncan et al., 2007). For example, in the context of unemployment, some people may choose to be creative and find alternative means of making money, whereas others may fall into a trap of depression and despondency. Having fewer resources may trigger adaptive responses in some people. The understanding of human behaviour requires the understanding of much more than a single context. It requires the examination of multi-person systems of interaction not limited to a single setting, and must take into account aspects of the environment beyond the immediate situation containing the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The human ecological environment is regarded as a set of nested structures, each inside the other consisting of the following:

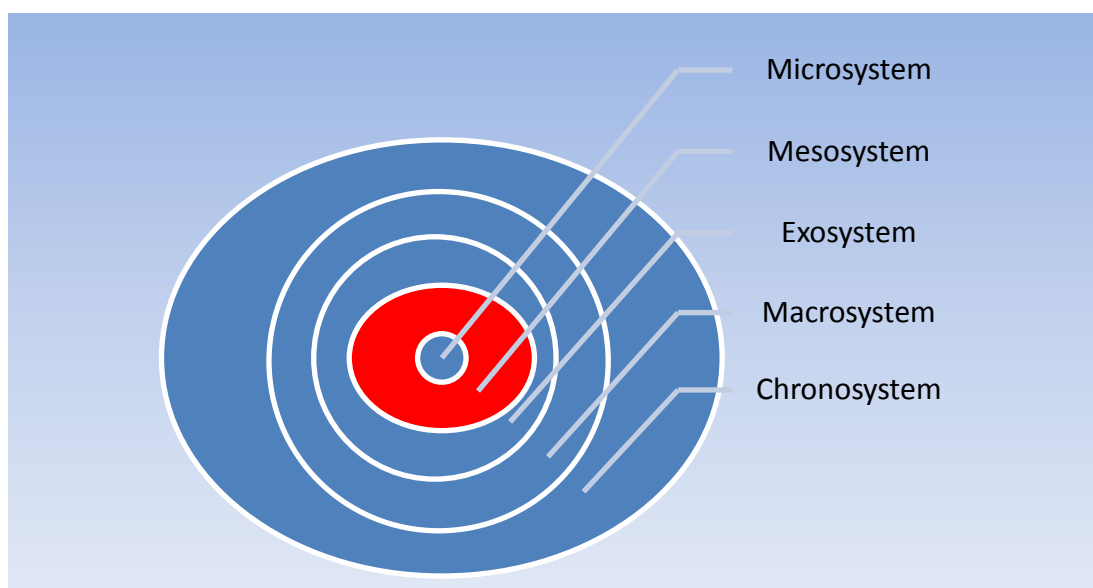


Fig 1 - Theory human of ecological development, (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

I. The Microsystem

A microsystem consists of social roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, social and symbolic features that invite, permit or exhibit engagement in sustained progressively more complex interaction with and in the immediate environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). For example, school, family, peer group, and workplace or the complex of relations between the developing person and the environment in an immediate setting containing that person (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). A setting is defined as a place with particular physical features in which the participants engage in particular roles for particular periods. The factors of time, place, physical features, activity, and participants constitute the elements of a setting. It is within the immediate environment of the microsystems that proximal processes operate to produce and sustain development, but their ability to do so depends on the content and structure of the Microsystems (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

II. The Mesosystem

It comprises of the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person, for example, the relations between home and school, workplace and so on (Ryan, 2001). The interaction that occurs in these settings may influence the development of a person. For example, adolescents who experience bullying at school may benefit from the support they obtain from their parents in addressing the issue (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The reciprocity of the effects of one system on another, however, has not been established. That is, it has not yet been proven that there will be mutual support from one microsystem to another microsystem. The expectations from two microsystems may also be conflicting (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). As an example, in one instance an adolescent's family may expect them to further their studies through tertiary education, whereas the adolescent may also experience pressure from friends to travel instead of studying further. The tension that arises from the conflicting expectations may cause some form of internal conflict on the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

III. The Exosystem

The exosystem is the extension of the mesosystem. It comprises of linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, the least of which does not contain the developing person, but in which the developing person lives (e.g., for a child, the relationship between the home and the parent's workplace, for a parent, the relationship between the school and the neighbourhood peer group). It embraces other specific social structures, both formal and informal, that do not themselves contain the developing person, but impinges upon or

encompasses the immediate settings in which that person is found, and thereby influence, demarcate, or even determine what goes on there (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Krishnan 2010).

IV. The Macrosystem

This system consists of the overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exosystems characteristic of a given culture or subculture, with particular reference to the belief systems, bodies of knowledge, material resources, customs, lifestyles, opportunity structures, hazards and life course options that are embedded in each of these broader systems. It may be thought of as a societal blueprint for a particular culture or subculture (Krishnan, 2010). This system refers to the general prototypes existing within a culture or society that set the pattern for the structures and activities occurring at the concrete level, e.g. a school. Macrosystems are blueprints, most of which are informal and implicitly carried in the minds of the society's members as ideology made manifest through custom and practice (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Bronfenbrenner, 1993).

V. The Chronosystem

It encompasses change or consistency over time not only in the characteristics of the person, but also of the environment in which that person lives. Examples of this aspect are the changes over the life course in the family structure, socioeconomic status, employment and place of residence (Krishnan, 2010).

2.5.2 Social Support, the theory of human ecology and unemployment

Interest in social support has risen mainly because of the role of social support as an intervention tool (Vaux, 1985). Social support is obtained from people who are in a person's social network and it has been identified as enabling the use of adaptive coping strategies in individuals who are unemployed (Linn, Sandifer & Stein, 1985). A more complete understanding of social support can only come from understanding it as a complex process involving transactions between people and their social networks that unfold in an ecological context (Vaux, 1985).

In terms of the network or resources, the ecological theory assumes that the larger a person's network is, the better it will be able to provide them with diverse resources. For example, if a child grows up in a family where both parents are working, that child will have better resources than a child who grows up in a single parent family where that parent may not be able to link the child to the resources that they need for their upbringing (Catalano, Hansen & Hartig, 1999). As such, in the case of unemployed graduates it would be essential for them to have large network resources in the form of employed family members, and access to information

resources that would assist them to find work (for example, newspapers adverts, and access to job search sites). Access to the requirements of jobs that they may want to do would also assist them to prepare themselves for the work that they would like to do in future. Therefore the unemployed graduates may have to align themselves to their network support resources in order to obtain their desired outcomes - a job. At the *microsystem level* of the theory of human ecology, the individual may need to develop coping mechanisms that will assist them in finding a job (Heed, 2012). According to Bronfenbrenner's theory of ecology (1994), the proximal process has the effect of minimising or buffering against societal differences in an individual's outcomes, in that if interactions within a person's network are not fluid enough, they may in turn cause distress to the individual because they are interlinked (Catalano et al., 1999). Therefore, graduates at this level need to develop the relationships that they have in their support networks to ensure that the support offered is beneficial to them.

The *mesosystem level* of the ecological model has to do with the relations with support networks in their environment. The relations would be in the form of their family members, potential places of work and other organizations that may be offering services to graduates, such as labour centres. Close proximity to the network is also crucial as it will determine how accessible the resources in a person's network are. It is at this level that unemployed graduates may have to rely on their support networks to assist them to identify work opportunities, which requires them to have good interpersonal skills with their loved ones and other people in their networks to make the process of finding work easier for them.

The social skills that an individual has may also determine the availability of social resources as those who are able to exchange and maintain social relationships are more likely, according to Vaux (1985), to have the resources they may need when the time arises. They are also more likely to appraise those relationships positively because of their ability to maintain such relationships. Graduates who are unemployed thereby have an individual duty to ensure that they develop their relationships with their social networks to ensure that there is a free flow of information that they may require to obtain employment.

Another important point regarding networks is their composition, as that will determine the kind of support that is available when required. That is if the social support networks which a person has are not capable of providing the resources that a person needs in order to thrive, they will be inadequate to meet their needs (Vaux, 1985). The profitability of social networks also depends on an individual's willingness to use those supportive networks, thus the profitability of supportive networks may be impeded by lack of trust, independence and a poor history in social relationships (Vaux, 1985). Therefore, graduates may be required to communicate their

needs to those in their support networks so that their needs can be adequately met, that is if their supportive networks are able to provide such support to them.

The prevalence of support is also crucial as it will determine how a person views the support they have received, as either beneficial or not. Previous experiences may determine how a person views the support that they receive from others and they will also determine the individual's help-seeking behaviour (Catalano et al., 1999). That is, if a person views support that was offered to them as having been reluctantly offered they may consider not asking for support on future occasions for fear of their requests not being attended to as they would like them to be. The consistency of the support plays a role as well, in how people appraise their support networks as it may determine whether a person views the support as being readily available or not, and whether it will be available during times when they need it most (Catalano et al., 1999).

The supportive relationships may also be influenced by a variety of socio-ecological factors such as individualism. In cultures where self-reliance is promoted individuals may feel pressured to depend on themselves and not on a social network for assistance. Social roles also impact on the availability and use of social support resources, for example being poor, a single parent, or religious affiliation (Vaux, 1985). Women more than men tend to benefit more from social networks and are more likely to use them when they need them. Men tend to have larger social networks, but are more likely to rely on themselves in difficult situations (Friedman, 2011). Women who live in poverty are said to have a higher need for social support because of financial strain, inadequate access to information and the fact that their social network may be unable to sufficiently meet their support needs (Friedman, 2011). This may be the case in situations where members of their social networks may be in the same situation that they are in. In a collectivist cultural context, such as South Africa, one would expect that there would be a lot of support resources, for those who are unemployed, from their network resources.

At *the exosystem level*, community or private organizations where graduates can go to be linked to possible job opportunities can become a source of frustration, if they are unable to offer the support that graduates may require at that time. For example, in some universities there are graduate offices that help students who are about to complete their qualifications, to find jobs. Graduate students can become discouraged if resources such as community organizations are not able to provide them with the help that they seek when they need it.

The *macro system level* of the ecological model is made up of the culture, sub-cultures, and bodies of knowledge and opportunity structures that may influence the availability of employment opportunities at the community level. The economic and political structures can

be an example of structures that influence graduate unemployment in that it is at this stage that decisions regarding policies are made. For example, the Employment Tax Incentive Bill was introduced to encourage companies to hire young people as there is a high incidence of youth unemployment in South Africa (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2013). At the macro system level of the human ecological model, awareness about youth unemployment needs to be highlighted so that youth unemployment can be effectively dealt with. The expectations of society regarding the developmental outcomes that young people ought to have after graduation can be used as an example because they serve as a guide for young people as to what they are supposed to do with their lives, for example, settling into a career and having a family (Goodwin & O'Connor, 2005). This example can also be applicable to the chronosystem level because expectations imply that certain things should be done at a specified time.

As discussed in the above paragraphs, there are two dimensions to social support. Firstly the person who is the recipient of social support has to evaluate the supportive actions that are shown to them. The second dimension would be that of those offering the support to the unemployed individual and their ability to provide relevant support for those in need of support. Buffering the negative effects of stress, social support enables the management of stress producing situations and regulation of emotional response, minimising stress and positively impacting health. Research has shown social support to be associated with wellbeing, the absence of distress and better health outcomes (Gore, 1978; Cramer, 1991; Du Toit, 2003; Slebarska et al., 2009). Through social support young unemployed graduates may be able to progress from the negative effects of unemployment and thereby have better employment prospects.

Individuals cope better with stressful conditions when social support is available to them and when they are integrated into a social network that is perceived to be positively supportive. Social support, therefore, has been identified as playing a central role in insulating individuals from stressors and maintaining health (Vaux, 1985; Lakey & Cohen, 2000).

In terms of graduate unemployment, social support can assist graduates to have better outcomes, personally and in terms of their personal career outlooks depending on the type of support they receive from those around them, the resources that their supportive environments have to offer, and their perception of the support that they receive from others.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter has shown that there are many factors that lead to graduate unemployment in South Africa such as institution of graduation, in terms of the structural changes in the economy, gender, social networks, the skills that graduates have, the level of qualifications that they have, as well as the type of qualification that they have.

Work has different meanings and dimensions to it, such as sustaining life, economic contribution, social identity and psychological wellbeing. The context that is demonstrated in the causes relating to the unemployment of graduates shows the importance of considering how the state of graduate unemployment in South Africa has come to be and the different levels at which it can be addressed. Some of the factors that influence graduate unemployment are often looked at individually without considering how all these factors are interrelated. These factors may lead to negative consequences for young people such as despair, anxiety and uncertainty regarding their futures, which may impact their job search behaviour and their perception of their own abilities.

The theory of human ecological development can serve as a tool to view the way in which unemployment affects graduates, as it allows all the environments in which unemployed graduates exist to be evaluated. The theory also serves as a way to determine how the different contexts that are around the unemployed graduate, influence their ability to find work. The availability of support systems may help young people to become more innovative and to take initiative through the skills that they may have obtained during their studies.

Acquiring practical skills training at tertiary institutions may provide young people with an opportunity to identify the skills, which they have acquired through their qualifications and how to apply them to the different fields of work. This type of support may encourage young graduates to participate in their own career development and create their own initiatives instead of them leaving tertiary institutions with just theory that may seem impractical in the world of work. Support from their family members is also important because it will encourage them not to give up on their dreams but to pursue the kinds of work opportunities that they desire and not become the 'discouraged' unemployed. Social support may provide unemployed graduates with a sense of confidence in their abilities so that they can create opportunities for themselves in whichever form or avenue. In the next chapter the method that was used to conduct the research is discussed.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3. Introduction

In this chapter the research methodology used to conduct the research is discussed. Firstly a description of the chosen research paradigm is given, followed by a description of qualitative research. Thereafter the research design is explained. Methods to ensure validity and reliability in qualitative studies are detailed and lastly the ethical considerations are discussed.

Research methodology provides a way for social scientists to view the world (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Wahyuni (2012) describes it as a model through which research may be undertaken in a specific domain. It can be understood as a road map for carrying out research. Research methodology contains various sets of beliefs that guide a researcher in the type of methods that they ought to use in their research (Wahyuni, 2012). Moreover, research methodology that is used in a study depends on the type of paradigm from which the researcher is approaching the research, their knowledge and experience. The most common classification of research methodology is either qualitative or quantitative research methodology (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). This research study is a qualitative, interpretative phenomenological study. Phenomenological studies aim to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and to investigate how and why decisions are made (Walliman, 2011).

3.1 Research paradigm

Paradigms refer to the underlying beliefs that are used as the basis for conducting research (Krauss, 2005). Research paradigms dictate the methodological, epistemological and ontological assumptions from which the researchers operate (Terre Blanche, et al., 2006). The following section describes the research paradigm that was used in this study.

3.1.1 Interpretivist paradigm

The interpretivist paradigm is said to have developed from Husserl's phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994). In this paradigm, reality is constructed from multiple realities (Krauss, 2005) and the aim is to understand the world of human experience (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Moreover, in the interpretive paradigm, social constructions are deemed as the primary components of knowledge (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). These social constructions may take the form of language, shared meanings and consciousness (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). The interpretive paradigm also argues that individuals are influenced by their environment, and their perceptions of that environment (Willis, 2007). Furthermore,

interpretive researchers rely on participant's views of the situation at hand in order to understand their reality (Willis, 2007). In this paradigm researchers adopt an empathetic and inter-subjective stance towards reality (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Interpretive studies may use the following data collection tools, interviews, observations, document reviews and visual data analysis (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). These techniques of data collection assist in understanding how the individual/group understands the world around them. There are five examples of interpretive research, namely: symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, naturalistic inquiry, hermeneutics and realism.

Phenomenology - holds that people's understanding of reality is based on their subjective experience of their reality. What distinguishes this phenomenology from other types of interpretative research methods is that the subjective experience is at the centre of understanding reality (Mertens, 2010). Moreover phenomenological researchers are interested in understanding how people understand and interpret their world.

The interpretative paradigm was selected because this research seeks to explore how participants understand their reality and the subjective meanings that participants give to their experiences. Furthermore, people's reality can be understood through listening and interacting with them (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Moreover interpretive phenomenology was selected since this research seeks to explore the participants' experiences of social support and how they appraise the support that is given to them. The next section contains a discussion on the approaches of research and the most appropriate approach for this research.

3.2. Qualitative research design

Research design refers to the action plan that the researcher has put in place to ensure that the research happens in the way that they have envisioned it (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Research design in qualitative studies should not be too technical, but it ought to be flexible and iterative. Many factors may influence the change in the initial research design, such as the inaccessibility of research participants and insufficient resources (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

Denzin and Lincoln (2007; p.3) provide the following definition of qualitative research: *Qualitative research* is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field-notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self (Denzin & Lincoln, 2007). At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural

settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2007).

In qualitative research, pictures, interviews, documentation (such as diary entries,) and observations may be used as data collection methods. The context of research is essential in qualitative research as it provides a rich understanding of the subject's life world and their interaction with it (Krauss, 2005). The context of research provides a whole picture of the phenomenon that is being studied by enabling the researcher to be immersed in it and to gain an understanding of the subjects' experience. Qualitative research allows for researchers to be flexible, creative and open to where their research will take them (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The use of qualitative research may depend on the nature of the problem that is being investigated, the competence of the researcher, or personal preference. Qualitative research allows researchers to understand people's experiences of a phenomenon, their feelings and thoughts in *their* context. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest that there are three components to qualitative research; firstly the data, which comprises of interviews, documents, audio-visual material and observation. Secondly, the procedures used to interpret and organize the data. The third component of qualitative research is the reporting of the data which can take the form of written reports in the form of journal articles or oral presentations.

Qualitative research contains many interpretative activities, but none is privileged over the other. Qualitative research emphasizes the relationship between the researcher and what can be known and it also stresses that reality is socially constructed (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Krauss (2005) argues that the ability of qualitative research to produce meaning makes it a powerful instrument for understanding people's experiences. Qualitative research has disadvantages. Firstly findings derived from qualitative research cannot be generalised. Secondly, the researcher is the one who interprets the findings based on their own understanding and lastly because the researcher conducts the analysis alone, the context of the meaning may be lost (Denscombe, 2003).

There are different methods of dealing with qualitative data. That is, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, discourse analysis, case studies, inductive thematic analysis, narrative analysis and mixed methods (Krauss, 2005). The methodology that is chosen for a study depends on what the researcher wants to know and not on their epistemological interests. Focus on the most appropriate research methodology rather than interests, will ensure that the correct methodology for a research study is utilized (Krauss, 2005). Creswell (2003) posits that there are three considerations that ought to be made when selecting a research design, that is; the research problem, the personal experience of the researcher and the audience that will read the research report. This approach was selected for this research

as it is appropriate for the interpretative paradigm and it was identified as the most suitable to addressing the research questions identified in this study.

3.2.1 Phenomenology

Phenomenology is the study of human experience and the way in which things appear to the consciousness, the word phenomenology is a compound of two Greek words, *phainomenon* and *logos* (Landrigde, 2007). Eagleton (2011; p.49) describes phenomenology 'as a form of methodological idealism which seeks to explore human consciousness and a world of possibilities'.

Husserl named his philosophical method Phenomenology as he argued that a person's reality is the only 'pure phenomena' from which real understanding can begin (Groenewald, 2004). The aim of phenomenology according to Groenewald (2004) is the return to the way things are in reality. Phenomenologists are concerned with understanding social and psychological phenomena from the perspective of those experiencing it (Welman & Kruger, 1999). The phenomenological approach attempts to explore personal experiences and is concerned with an individuals' perceptions of an event or experience (Smith, 2004). Husserl contended that it is possible for a person to be certain about their experiences and as a result a person's reality can be ascertained by what they experience only in their personal consciousness (Groenewald, 2004). There are two approaches to conducting phenomenological studies, that is, descriptive phenomenology and interpretative phenomenology.

3.2.2. Descriptive phenomenology

This form of phenomenology claims that people's perceptions are influenced by their ideas and judgments (Willig, 2008). The description of phenomena is understood as being essential in understanding human experience, whereas the interpretation of human experience is secondary. In descriptive phenomenological studies, researchers ought to bracket their past experiences or perception about the phenomena that is being investigated (Willig, 2008). The aim of the description is to ensure that the participants' expression of their experience is preserved.

There are six stages to descriptive phenomenological analysis according to Giorgi and Giorgi (2008) namely:

- i. Obtaining a concrete description of the phenomenon of interest.
- ii. Adopting a phenomenological attitude toward that phenomenon.
- iii. Reading the entire description to get a sense of the whole description.

- iv. Re-reading the description and identifying meaning units that capture different aspects of the whole.
- v. Identifying and making explicit the psychological significance of each meaning unit.
- vi. Articulating the general structure of the experience of the phenomenon.

3.2.3. Interpretative phenomenology

Interpretative phenomenology stems from Edmund Husserl's philosophy, it describes an individuals' perception of an account or object or event as opposed to producing an objective statement of the object or statement itself (Smith, 1996).

A double hermeneutic is involved in Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), whereby the participants try to make sense of their own experience and the researcher attempts to make sense of the participants attempts to make sense of their experiences (Smith, 1996). Interpretative phenomenology uses a hermeneutic and questioning stance. The aim of IPA is therefore to explore an area of concern, flexibly and in detail, without rushing to make generalisations about that area of concern (Smith, 1996).

In Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis studies, homogenous samples are desired because of the smaller sample sizes (6-10) that are used in this approach (Smith, 1996). Smaller sample sizes used in IPA studies may be seen as a disadvantage when comparing them to other methods such as grounded theory, but the small sample sizes used in IPA have the advantage of allowing for more in-depth analysis of the data, (Pringle, Drummond, McLafferty and Hendry 2011).

It is not possible, according to Pringle et al., (2011), to make generalizations from using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. However, similarities between cases can be identified and the implications of the findings can be far-reaching as they can have an impact on theory. As such researchers utilizing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis are encouraged to think in terms of theoretical transferability instead of empirical generalisability (Pringle et al., 2011).

Interpretative phenomenological analysis was chosen as a method for conducting this research as it enables people to choose the meaning that they want to attach to their experiences without having to limit their experiences to pre-conceived ideas. Furthermore, this method also allows participants to share their experiences and give them the meaning that they would like to attach to their social support experiences as unemployed graduates.

3.3 Sampling method

Sampling involves the selection of specific individuals that represent a population to obtain data from them, which will be used for research purposes (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 2000). There are two types of sampling, namely probability and non-probability sampling. Researchers choose the type of sampling technique that they would like to use, depending on the objectives of their study. The difference between these two types of sampling is that in non-probability sampling, the researcher looks for cases that are typical or contain significant information related to the phenomena being studied (Frey et al., 2000). In probability sampling, however, all individuals who are within a particular population have an equal chance of being selected in the study, to eliminate researcher bias in the selection (Cozby, 2009). For this study, non-probability sampling was utilised because the study required participants who have the experience of being unemployed graduates. There are four types of non-probability sampling methods; that is, convenience sampling, quota sampling; purposive sampling, and snowball sampling (Marshall, 1996). In convenience sampling cases are selected based on the availability of research participants. Quota sampling involves the selection of subgroups within a population, quota sampling can be beneficial in instances where various views are needed (Marshall, 1996).

The participants for this study were selected through purposive sampling and snowball sampling. In purposive sampling, samples are selected based on the characteristics that they hold. Purposive sampling refers to a non-probability type of sampling which includes only certain individuals who are of interest in the study (Cozby, 2009). Teddlie and Yu (2007) describe purposive sampling as a kind of sampling, where units (individuals, groups of individuals or institutions) are selected based on a specific purpose to answer a research question or questions. The units of analysis that are selected in purposive sampling are selected based on their ability to provide answers to the research questions and for their ability to elicit in-depth information. Smaller samples are also selected to obtain rich data from each research participant (Teddlie & Yu, 2007).

Snowball sampling was also utilised in this study to obtain participants because other participants referred individuals whom they knew who were experiencing unemployment like themselves. The individuals who were referred had the same characteristics as their referees and they were able to provide information that was in line with the criteria that was used to select participants

Browne (2005) defines snowball sampling as a participant recruitment method that relies on the participant's social network. Waters (2015) regards snowball sampling slightly differently

from Browne (2005) in that he regards it as a method that is used to access participants who are hard to reach due to the sensitivity of the phenomenon that they have experienced or are experiencing; or whereby another sampling method needs to be augmented due to the scarcity of participants (Waters, 2015).

Snowball sampling may offer '*unique knowledge*' about particular social networks and systems which may not be obtainable through other sampling techniques (Noy, 2008). Additionally snowball sampling demonstrates the location of participants within social networks and the cohesiveness of that network (Noy, 2008). The implication of the social nature of this sampling method is that participants may be excluded or included in a research study based on the proximity of their relationship to the social network (Browne, 2005).

Waters (2015) argues that even though snowball sampling may be used to augment research samples it can be time consuming and tedious, mainly because it requires the researcher to identify participants who may have access to an individual who is attached to a network. A further disadvantage according to Waters (2015) is that this sampling method may lead to a distortion of a phenomenon, because it is likely that the participants who have been found contain similar characteristics as they may be from the same social network.

3.3.1 The sample and sampling criteria

In IPA studies research samples are usually small, to allow for detailed analysis of each of the participant's experiences (Teddlie & Yu, 2007; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). In IPA studies, sample sizes are not prescribed due to their interpretative nature, however, studies have used 3- 10 participants (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Furthermore IPA studies aim to understand a particular phenomenon and not to generate theory, which necessitates the in-depth analysis of particular cases. Homogenous samples are often used in IPA studies to draw from the experiences of participants who have experienced a particular phenomenon. The use of homogenous samples also allows the researcher to compare the experiences of participants in order to determine whether there are similarities or differences between the participants' experiences. Not only do homogenous samples enable the researcher to obtain differences and similarities between participants experience, but they also reveal the various dynamic factors that influence human behaviour (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Therefore, in this study, the following criteria were used to obtain participants:

- *Graduates who have obtained qualifications from different tertiary institutions.*

Graduates between the ages of 20 and 35 who have obtained qualifications from different tertiary institutions were selected, because the literature review chapter demonstrated that the

institution from which a graduate comes has an influence on their employment prospects (Moleke, 2006). The participants who took part in this study came from various tertiary institutions in and around Pretoria. The institutions in which they studied varied in that some were technical colleges, formal universities, and others studied in private colleges.

- *Graduates must be residing in Mamelodi*

In addition, graduates residing in Mamelodi were selected as a township that is developing in the metropolitan city of Tshwane. It houses a number of governmental departments and business corporations, which graduates may consider in their search of employment opportunities. Those who are from other provinces may consider it as a good place to find employment opportunities as well. Although some of the participants who took part in this study came from other provinces, they were residing in Mamelodi at the time of the interviews.

- *Graduates must have been unemployed for a period of less than three years after graduation.*

Graduates had to have been unemployed for a period of less than three years after graduation. After three years of looking for work without any success, discouragement may set in and cause individuals to think that they have slim chances of finding employment (StasSA, 2014). People may become discouraged job seekers when they stop looking for work after long periods of searching for work (Dooley & Prause, 1995). The participants who took part in this study met these criteria in that they had been formally unemployed for less than three years, and some participants were actively volunteering in the community without receiving any income.

3.4 Data Collection Technique - Semi-structured Interviews

There are different ways of gathering qualitative data (Walliman, 2011). In this research, face-to-face, in-depth interviews were utilised to gather research data from the participants. Interviews may simply be described as conversations. In qualitative research the researcher uses interviews to facilitate a conversation whereby the participant is encouraged to explore their lived experience (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Therefore, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were used in the study as they allow for individuals to clearly articulate their own experiences in their own manner. Semi-structured interviews are utilised in IPA studies as they are flexible and allow for any arising issues to be discussed in real time. Semi-structured interviews are also advantageous as they provide for any ambiguities that relate to the questions to be clarified at the time when

questions are asked (Cozby, 2009). Thus, the advantages of the semi-structured interview could be summarized as follows;

- It facilitates rapport/empathy,
- Allows a greater flexibility of coverage and allows the interview to go into novel areas and
- It tends to produce richer data.

On the negative side,

- This form of interviewing reduces the control the investigator has over the situation,
- It takes longer to carry out, and
- They are harder to analyse, (Smith, 2008).

When conducting semi-structured interviews the researcher ought to develop rapport quickly with the participants in order to foster a sense of trust and to adhere to time constraints. Another reason for establishing rapport quickly is because in some instances researchers may only conduct a single interview with the participants (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). By developing rapport with the participant, the researcher creates an atmosphere for the participant to share their experience freely. Rapport also ensures that both the participant and the researcher are free to clarify any misunderstanding that may arise during the process of the interview (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

Researchers conducting semi-structured interviews must be aware of the power differentials that may occur in the interview process. That is, the researcher walks into the research space with a set of questions and expects the participant to answer those questions and thus assumes a position of authority over the participant. The researcher must attempt to bridge the power differentials by being flexible in the interview and allowing the participant to lead the process by telling of their experience in their own way, without feeling pressured (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

3.5 Researcher as the instrument

In qualitative research the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection, unlike questionnaires that are used in quantitative research (Terre Blanche' et al. 2006; Mertens, 2010). The researcher is the one who decides what questions are going to be asked, in what order they are going to be asked, who will be interviewed, and they decide what to observe. The researcher automatically brings bias into their research study through the values that they hold, their assumptions and beliefs. As such the researcher has to be aware of their own

values, biases and beliefs in order to ensure that the research focuses on the phenomenon at hand. In order to be an effective research instrument the researcher needs to build rapport with participants. Being the primary instrument for data collection in this research, I learnt early on that it was essential to build rapport with the participant in order for the interviews to take place. I would 'break the ice' by introducing myself to the participant and telling them that I was also from the same area. This helped them and me to ease into the interview by identifying issues that were of concern to us in the area, such as unemployment.

In qualitative research, the researcher and the participants are both actors in the research process. By taking part in qualitative research, researchers enter into the life worlds of their participants. They enter into their participants' life worlds by delving into their psyche and social contexts as students who want to understand the meaning attached to their daily experiences (Kopala & Suzuki, 1999). When a researcher has been granted permission to enter their participants' world, they have to relinquish their control over the process and their role as an 'expert' about the phenomenon. Taking up the role of an expert may however be beneficial at the initial stage of the research in order to gain access to participants, but after access has been granted the researcher has to adopt the role of an eager student, eager to learn about them (Kopala & Suzuki, 1999). Taking up the role of an eager student means that the researcher has to allow him/herself to be challenged by the participant's experiences, contrast these with their own experiences, and perceive the differences and similarities between them. After obtaining permission from the participants to take part in the study, I specifically asked the participants to share their experience so that they could share what they had undergone. Having been an unemployed graduate myself, I was able to empathise with their experiences. Moreover, I realised that even though we had experienced a similar situation, our interpretation or experience of it was not the same. Furthermore, asking them to share their experiences helped them to voice their stories and as one participant said, it was like a session of 'debriefing' for her, as she had not previously shared her experience with a stranger. As such, the participants were able to share their experience of being unemployed and I was also able to learn from their experiences.

In interpretative phenomenological analysis, it is acknowledged that any knowledge that comes from the research is a direct result of interpretation from the researcher's interpretation of the participants' life world (Willig, 2008). Therefore the research is phenomenal as it represents the participant's view of the world and it is interpretative because it represents the researcher's interpretation of the participants' life world (Willig, 2008).

3.6 Data Analysis - Thematic analysis

IPA studies use the following steps to analyse data, they are not prescriptive but are a guide for the analysis stage. The first stage *is reading and re-reading the transcript and making initial notes*. The reading of the transcript multiple times allows the researcher to immerse themselves in the data and to contextualise the research by remembering the atmosphere of the research. Through reading and listening to the interview multiple times, the researcher may glean new insights from the interviews (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). This step also assists the researcher to recall what happened during the interview and to make any comments about any issues of significance that may have arisen from the interviews. The initial notes from the transcripts ought to be made on the left hand side of the text (Willig, 2008).

The second step of the IPA analysis phase involves *transforming the initial notes into emergent themes*. The notes made during the first stage should reflect the original transcriptions from which they were made, because these notes will be used by the researcher to develop emerging themes from the data (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). These 'themes' should reflect the characteristic or the essence of the text (Willig, 2008). These themes can be placed on the right hand side of the text. At this stage psychological terminology may be used to make up the themes.

The third stage involves looking for relationships among the emerging themes, through looking for similarities amongst the themes. At this stage, the researcher attempts to create structure in the analysis (Willig, 2008). The themes that are identified ought to be connected and should reflect the initial recorded data.

The final stage of the analysis involves presenting the main themes from the transcripts as a whole. Willig (2008) suggests presenting them in table form. At this stage themes that are not relevant will fall away. The final table ought to show themes that were pertinent in all the transcription texts (Langridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2013)

In interpretative phenomenological studies, meaning is central, as the aim is to understand the content and complexity of the meanings rather than their frequency. This involves the investigator engaging in an interpretative relationship with the transcript (Smith, 2008). While the investigator is attempting to capture and do justice to the meanings of the respondents to learn about their mental and social world, those meanings are not obvious, they must be obtained through a sustained engagement with the text and a process of interpretation (Smith, 2008).

3.7 Ensuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Studies

Guba and Lincoln (1985) formulated four requirements needed to ensure trustworthiness in research. These are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility in qualitative studies refers to ensuring that the process used to carry out the research is actually followed. This can be done by using any of the following participant checks, the use of peer debriefers, reflexivity by the researcher, and thick descriptions (Morrow, 2005).

Mertens (2010) however, proposes that in qualitative research the following methods can be used to achieve credibility namely **prolonged and persistent engagement** which involves the researcher remaining in the field long enough to gather the themes that represent the phenomenon that is being studied. **Peer debriefing and member checks** entail having the researcher check with participants that the narratives of their experiences have been accurately captured. **Progressive subjectivity** involves researchers monitoring their own constructions of the phenomena that they are studying from inception of the research till the final stage. **Negative case analysis** requires the researcher to seek out cases that do not fit with the initial categories. Negative cases may contribute to the authenticity of the research and necessitate further research. **Triangulation** involves the use of different sources of evidence in order to validate the research findings. Guba and Lincoln (as cited in Mertens, 2010) postulate that triangulation of data may be unnecessary in qualitative research because it may diminish the value of subjective research.

Transferability refers to the extent to which the results of the study can be transferred to other contexts. Although qualitative research does not aim to generalise findings, the applicability of the study to other contexts is essential to warrant that the results were achieved in a rigorous manner (Morrow, 2005). The transferability of research findings assists researchers to determine whether or not there are similarities or differences between different research contexts. Transferability of research findings is dependant solely on the readers of research as it is up to them to determine whether the research is similar to or different from their context (Mertens, 2010). Moreover, the transferability of research findings can be increased through the use of multiple cases, that is, researchers may collect various cases of the phenomena to strengthen the research results.

The consistency with which research is conducted in qualitative studies is referred to as *dependability*. This can be ensured by keeping a record of all the steps that were carried out in the research to ensure that the study is replicable. This may be done through an audit trail of all activities that took place in the research process (Morrow, 2005).

Confirmability addresses the issue of objectivity in qualitative research. Qualitative research is never objective, therefore the research must represent as closely as possible, the voices/views of the participants represented, rather than the researcher's personal biases (Morrow, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In qualitative research confirmability demonstrates the coherence within a research project. That is, there has to be internal coherence within the research, concerning the data, findings, interpretations and recommendations (Kopala & Suzuki, 1999).

Furthermore qualitative research is subjectively grounded, meaning that research in qualitative studies, inherently contains researcher bias. Even though subjectivity is inherent in qualitative research, there are ways of minimizing or limiting the researcher's bias in the research. This can be done through bracketing, reflexivity, and representation (Kopala & Suzuki, 1999). *Bracketing* involves the researcher actively being aware of their own biases and putting them aside in order to ensure that they do not interfere with the research. One way of bracketing oneself in research is to immerse oneself in literature as it will expand the researcher's own views about the phenomena that are being studied (Moustakas, 1994). *Bracketing is not an easy process, for me*, it not only included engaging with the literature about unemployment and graduate unemployment in particular. It also included bracketing my own experiences of being an unemployed graduate so that I would not infer my own experiences to theirs. Even though it is impossible to be completely unbiased, constantly striving to keep my judgements and assumptions aside assisted me to reduce some bias. *Reflexivity* is a method whereby the researcher discloses their assumptions, biases and values which may influence their research findings. In IPA this method is also used for the researcher to share their experience (Moustakas, 1994). Reflexivity in research may be achieved through keeping a reflexive journal from the beginning of the research until the last stage; the researcher may also consult with peers or a team of researchers. . At the start of the data collection period I kept a diary, whereby I would make notes of each interview and my experiences during the interviews. This assisted me in planning for the upcoming interviews (e.g. finding a quieter location for the interviews) so that I could adapt my questions or presentation where necessary. Taking time to reflect about each interview assisted me to improve each interview because I learnt to review the interview questions to accommodate the participants. Furthermore, writing down each interview helped me to identify some of the biases that I may have had about the participants or any other issue discussed during the interviews. Furthermore, I took a few notes during the interviews in order to seek clarity from the participants about what they had said. I also took time at the end of each interview to make notes of what transpired and also to listen to the interview recording and make notes of any issues that seems pertinent. *Representation* in qualitative research is about ensuring that the

participant's voice is evident in the research. Representation may be achieved through asking for clarification concerning what the participant may have said and assuming the role of a naïve enquirer, not the authority over the participant's experience (Morrow, 2005). This was achieved by asking the participants for clarity as mentioned above. In addition to that, I took time after each interview to ask the participants about their experience of the interview, and to ask them to share any comments or additional information relating to the interview. This not only helped to augment the data, but also to improve the upcoming interviews.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Issues that are dealt with in phenomenological studies may be of a sensitive nature, considering that they require participants to share their own experiences of what has happened to them (Walker, 2007), as was done in this study. The following discussion focuses on the ethical principles that were followed in this study.

3.8.1 Informed consent

Informed consent entails informing the participants about the main purpose of conducting the study, the possible risks and benefits of the study, and what will be required from the participants (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). Informed consent also entails informing participants of their right to withdraw from the research at any time.

In this study, participants were given informed consent forms to sign in order to show that they agreed to take part in the study. The forms, detailed the purpose of the study, why the participants had been selected for the study and what would be required of them. The issue of informed consent may be contentious in cases whereby the researcher may have insufficient advance information about how the research will proceed. Informed consent may also be an issue in instances where deception is used in order to obtain spontaneous responses from participants (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008).

3.8.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

The principle of confidentiality in research involves not discussing the information that an individual gives to others unless they consent to it, and also ensuring their anonymity when the findings are presented (Wiles, Crow, Heath, & Charles, 2008). Confidentiality in qualitative

studies is different from that in quantitative studies because qualitative research requires the researcher to quote what the participant has said, and in most cases this information may end up in journals or reports. In quantitative studies, participants select pre-constructed values as their responses. Therefore, researchers conducting qualitative studies ought to ensure that they protect their participants' identity in cases where they require their confidentiality to be upheld (Willing & Stainton-Rogers, 2008).

In this study, confidentiality of the participants was kept by ensuring the participants' identities are not disclosed to anyone. Only the researcher and the researcher's supervisor had access to the participants' data. The data was safeguarded to ensure that no one had access to it. Anonymity in this study was ensured by giving the participants pseudo-names so that their identities were protected.

3.8.3 Beneficence

Beneficence means that the risk to participants should be as low as possible and while offering the greatest benefit to participants (Cozby, 2009). This principle concerns the use of psychological knowledge, the knowledge gained from the research to contribute to the common good for participants, researcher and society at large (Langdridge & Hagger-Johnson, 2013).

This study offered participants the opportunity to be heard, to share their experiences so that they can be acknowledged. In research the payment of participants is not considered a benefit since it does not ensure that all possible risks are averted. Participants may benefit from research through increased knowledge and empowerment (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

3.8.4 Non-maleficence

The principle of no harm to participants is difficult to implement in qualitative research because it may be hard to determine the kind of harm that could occur to participants (Kopala & Suzuki, 1999). Furthermore the researcher is often left to decide whether any harm is occurring to participants during the research process. Qualitative research often requires participants to share their experiences, which inadvertently means that their lives will be the object of scrutiny and there is a possibility that their identities will be exposed (Kopala & Suzuki, 1999). Terre Blanche' et al., (2006) proposed that in research, harm is usually considered in terms of physical or psychological harm, but often neglect that 'wrong' may be done to participants. Participants may be 'wronged' in instance, where they are observed without their permission. Therefore, it is essential to protect the autonomy of the participants by recognising their right to privacy. Furthermore, the researcher continually appraises the emotional status of

participants during the interviews and reminds them of their right to withdraw if the interview becomes too overwhelming for them (Kopala & Suzuki, 1999).

Participants who took part in this study were reminded of their right to withdraw from the study if they no longer felt comfortable in taking part during the interviews.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the research paradigm, research methodology and research design used in this study. This study adopted an interpretive phenomenological design.

Moreover, the research process, data collection tools, data analysis method and issues relating to trustworthiness in qualitative research were discussed. In this study, the researcher served as the research tool as required in qualitative studies. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants and they were assured of their confidentiality, anonymity, and of their right to withdraw from the study. All the interviews were done with the participants' consent. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the transcribed interviews. The ethical guidelines guiding qualitative research were discussed. In the next chapter the findings and discussion will be outlined.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

4. Introduction

In this chapter the findings from the participants' interviews are discussed. Thereafter a summary of the participants' backgrounds is given, followed by a discussion of the major themes with supporting quotations from the participant interviews. The major themes derived from the interviews are the following: motivation for studying further; challenges of searching for employment; various factors contributing to unemployment: the experience of unemployment, and buffers against unemployment. These themes are discussed in relation to the findings of previous research.

4.1 Participants' background

This section describes the participants' backgrounds. Pseudonyms were assigned to all the participants in this study in order to protect their identity. The use of pseudonyms in qualitative research has been identified as a mechanism through which the identity of the participants can be protected in order to safeguard their anonymity and confidentiality (Saunders, Kitzinger & Kitzinger, 2015). Furthermore, protecting the identity of participants may be considered as an obligation that researchers have toward their participants (Giordano, O'Rielly, Taylor & Dogra, 2007).

a) Elizabeth

Elizabeth is a young woman aged 23. She has a certificate in early childhood development from South Africa's online distance-learning institution. Elizabeth has experienced various struggles in her life, including the loss of her mother at the age of 11. Losing her mother seems to have had a tremendous impact on her upbringing, because since her mother passed away she has not had a stable home. At first she lived with her aunt (Mother's sister) but she decided to move out after she became pregnant.

Currently she is living with her two older sisters in a squatter camp. There are three shacks in the yard, one for each sister. They live separate lives; they do not share resources such as food or responsibilities like babysitting for one another. Elizabeth explained that she could even go hungry without her sisters noticing, because they do not have a sisterly bond. She blames her oldest sister for her current situation. This, she said, is because her sister misused her grant money while she was still underage and rather spent the money on her boyfriend. Her other sister is also not 'present' in her life because according to Elizabeth, she is an alcoholic. The turbulence in her relationship with her sisters has caused her to dissociate herself from them even when she needs their support.

Being unemployed has had a severely negative impact on her, more so because she has to raise three young children on her own with minimal support from the fathers of her children and her family. She explained that being unable to find people to look after her children while she looks for work, has been one of the impediments to finding a job. Another contributing factor to her unemployment has been the lack of finances to look for work because most of the money that she gets is used to support her and the children. She also mentioned that not having sufficient skills may have also contributed to her unemployment because the kind of job that she wants requires experience. Furthermore, she has experienced shame as a result of her unemployment. She explained that the shame she feels comes from the fact that a lot of her former schoolmates are employed while she is still struggling.

The main sources of support in her life are people that she has met in the community, such as a neighbour who introduced her to a community centre in their area. At the community centre she receives counselling and has also made friends whom she can talk to about her issues. Even with the situation that she finds herself in, she remains hopeful that she will find a job. Her future plans include opening an early childhood development centre (ECD) to help the children in her community and to create awareness about the issues of child abuse.

b) Rick

Rick is a young male in his early thirties. He has been married for two years. He is currently living with his wife. They do not have any children as yet. Rick has a diploma in Theology and he has a degree in social work and currently he is completing a degree in Community Development. After completing his diploma in Theology, Rick decided to change his career path to Social Work and Community Development because he wanted to have a career that would ensure he would have a community oriented job which would not be limited to a church. He mentioned that working in a church could also be a disadvantage in the future because churches have different doctrines.

Rick explained that unemployment had affected him in the sense that he could no longer provide for his family. His wife was now the main 'provider' in the home and that naturally caused a lot of strain in his relationship with his in-laws because he was not providing for their daughter. Furthermore, Rick experienced judgment from others because he was not able to support his wife. Being dependent on his wife also brought shame for him because he has to depend on her for the most basic things, such as toiletries and transportation money.

His main sources of support are his wife, friends and his church. He relies on his wife for emotional and financial support, his friends provide him with encouragement and financial support. The church

provides him with spiritual support and encouragement. He hopes that his studies will allow him to have an impact on his community and to make a tangible contribution to society.

c) Thandaza

Thandaza is a married mother of two children, and she was 32 at the time of the interviews. She is a volunteer at the community centre. She holds various academic qualifications, namely a bookkeeping diploma, and she has certificates in hotel management, minute-taking, and travel and tourism. She is originally from Limpopo, and came to live in Mamelodi in 1999. She has volunteered in various organisations in the hope of gaining practical work experience, but her efforts have been fruitless thus far. This present period of volunteering has been the longest for her; she has been at the community centre for almost two years now. She said that the community centre has provided her with support during this period of unemployment because she has found people who have similar experiences to her own, she is able to share her experiences with them, and they are able to give her the support that she requires. She has given up hope about finding a job with her other qualifications (hotel management, bookkeeping, travel and tourism and minutes-taking).

She relies on support from people at the community centre and from her husband. She does not rely on support from her family of origin, mainly because they are poor. She mentioned that she comes from a poor family and that asking them for support would not be possible because they need support from her.

The main difficulty during her unemployment has been financial in nature. Being unable to plan for her future and that of her children has caused her a lot of distress. Day-to-day financial lack has been a constant reality for her, because she and her husband have had to live off the little income that he gets from his job.

Thandaza remains optimistic that she can still find work. Being unable to find a job has pushed her to study further; at the time of the interview she was pursuing a six-month certificate in HIV/AIDS from Unisa, in the hope that it will open other opportunities for her so that she can take care of her family and her children.

d) Mphonyana

Mphonyana is an Information Technology (IT) graduate, in her early twenties and she is also a single parent. She was about to turn 22 at the time of the interviews. She has looked for work for over a year without success. Mphonyana said that she went into a career in IT because of her interest in the field and because she believed that as IT is such a dynamic field she would be able to get a job in the field. She mentioned that her other interests are forensic investigation and being a paramedic.

She lives with her parents, a younger sibling and her child. She mentioned that she was shy and had difficulty in talking about herself. Her family has great expectations about her finding a job because of her education, but are disappointed that she has not been able to find employment yet. She also mentioned that some of her relatives think that she is just lazy and does not want to work.

She relies on her family for financial support more so because she has a child. Her family was disappointed that she had a child while she was unemployed. She does not want to rely on them a lot because they already do so much for her. She fears asking them for money even when it is in connection with job opportunities because they are reluctant to give her money for her daily needs. She has a strained relationship with the father of the child, and relies on him to help support their child.

Now that she is unemployed, there is a rift between her and her friends because they have found jobs and she has not. According to her the rift came to be because she can no longer live the same lifestyle that they lived while they were still at tertiary. She felt that she had to seclude herself from them seeing as she was not at the same level because they were employed and she is not. Separation from her friends seems to have had the greatest impact on her, because it has isolated her from a life that she was accustomed to. She said that she felt that they had deserted her on account of her unemployment and because they were in a better financial position than her. She has participated in various volunteering positions, but feels that these have been insufficient, because what she wants is a job in the IT field so that she can take care of her child.

e) Dinah

Dinah is a young lady in her late 20s. She is a single parent. She recently completed a certificate in food and beverage management. Before she enrolled for a certificate in food and beverage management, she was enrolled for a nursing qualification, but in the first year of study, she realised that she no longer 'liked' nursing and stopped her studies. She said that she disliked the environment mainly because of the treatment she received from the teaching staff and the college and the way in which they portrayed the profession. In her view, the nurses responsible for training them treated them like 'slaves' and forced them to do things that she did not consider to be part of the nursing profession.

At the time of the interview she was living with her father and her son. According to Dinah, her father was not happy when she disclosed that she was pregnant because she had just terminated her nursing studies and the child was an added financial burden on him. She said that her father gave her a job at his Tuck-shop and that the money from that job assisted her with some of her needs, such as toiletries. After she had her child, her father decided to give her money to pursue a food and beverage certificate because she would no longer be able to do the nursing qualification.

The father of her child is still present in her life and attempts to help her where he can in regards to her financial needs. Some of her relatives were also disappointed when she became pregnant, because they had high hopes for her as she is her father's first-born child, but they have since accustomed themselves to the situation.

She has been unable to get a job through her certificate so far. She has various ideas of starting a business in order to have an income, but so far none of those ideas have materialised, mainly due to finances. She is optimistic about her future and remains hopeful that she will find a job and that her business plans will succeed. At the time of the interview, her child was already six years old and in grade R. She mentioned that she receives help from her family to take care of him and to babysit while she looks for work.

She said that being unemployed for her meant that she was now more secluded because she spends most of her time at home alone and does not go out much. She mentioned that she does not have many friends at the moment because of her seclusion.

f) Mathlale

Mathlale has been in Mamelodi for over six months (at the time of the interview). He is currently staying with a family member in Mamelodi. He moved to Mamelodi in order to find work. He has been applying for various positions since he completed his Diploma in Public Management but has been unsuccessful.

He enrolled for a B.Sc. degree whilst busy with his public management studies. He decided to also pursue a B.Sc. degree because his older brother alerted him to the need for B.Sc. graduates in South Africa, especially the opportunities for teaching Maths and Science. He stated he believed that people who have tertiary qualifications have to work and that was his main motive in searching for a job.

His main sources of support are his family, girlfriend and some of his friends. He has received support in terms of finances and encouragement from his family. Some of his friends have given him support in terms of encouragement and information about prospective job opportunities. He seems to have a good understanding of what unemployment can mean to various people and that seems to have carried him through. In the interview he mentioned how unemployment can affect people depending on their family socioeconomic situation, family and outside pressure to find work, and peer pressure to live a certain lifestyle and own a car.

He said that he is not pressured by his family to find work, but they have told him that finding a job will be easy for him since he has a tertiary qualification and most of his family members do not. He said that even though his family has not pushed or pressured him to find a job he wants to find one, so that he can take care of himself and his unborn child. According to him, finding a job after completing a tertiary qualification is a normal progression in society and he wants that for himself.

g) Mpendulo

She is a young woman who has an honours degree in Psychology and aspires to be a clinical psychologist. At the time of the interviews she was 27 years old. She is married and has a young son. She was raised by a single parent and she has an older sister. Her initial motivation to study further after matric was that she saw it as a natural progression in society. After completing high school the natural progression would be to go to tertiary after which a person ought to get a job and live the good life. She expressed it as, *'buying a huge house, fancy car and having lots of money'*.

Her introduction to psychology was by accident. She was intending on studying for a degree in engineering but at the time of registration she was told that the programme was already full. The registration advisor at the university told her to rather enrol for a degree in Psychology because the programme was still open. A year later she enrolled for an undergraduate degree in Psychology at another university. Her motivation for studying was mainly her mother. She said that her mother used to tell her that she would earn peanuts if she did not pursue a tertiary qualification. Another motivating factor for her was that in the year she took a break from her studies, she got a part-time job as a secretary and she realised that her mother's words were very true, and that she needed to study further in order to live the life that she wants.

Her studies at University were not completely smooth, as she had to rely on NSFAS (National Financial Aid Scheme) to pay for her studies. NSFAS is a financial aid scheme from the South African government that assists tertiary students who cannot pay for their studies based on their socioeconomic status. She also had to get accustomed to a new language of learning, English, after she had been taught in N Sotho as a primary and high school learner. She said that she quickly adapted to the change through the support of her friends and family throughout her studies. Furthermore, she said that even though she had people that she could rely on for support, she had to motivate herself and believe in herself in order to succeed through her studies.

At the time of the interview she was looking for a job because she had just got married and had a toddler. She wanted to be able to take care of her child and to help her husband with their day-to-day needs. Not only that, she wanted to be able to assist her mother and her sister because her mother was not employed. She had applied for various jobs since receiving her honours degree and was unsuccessful. She had used various methods to search for work such as sending her CVs to various companies and applying for advertised jobs. The process of applying for jobs brought some disillusionment to her about the current state of job opportunities in South Africa, as she stated that, *'there are not enough jobs in South Africa...'*

She said that she has also realised that a university degree does not always guarantee that a person will be employed when they complete their studies. She suggested that universities should partner

with various companies in order that their students can get some form of training while completing the studies so that they can have some work experience when they start looking for work.

h) Alexander

Alexander is a man in his early 30s. He is a qualified upholsterer. He is a father of two and his girlfriend was expecting a third child at the time of the interview. He does not have any family in Pretoria and he is originally from Giyani, a town in the Limpopo Province. His two children live with his mother and sister back home, because he was unable to take care of them, so his mother agreed to assist him to take care of the children while he looks for a job. Alexander initially trained to be a security guard, but later decided not to continue in the job because of the late hours that he would have to work and for safety reasons as well. His desire to do upholstery began when he met a Portuguese man who had an upholstery business and he saw that he could actually do the job. So that man advised him to enrol for an upholstery course so that he could become a skilled upholsterer.

After he completed the qualification he thought that he would be able to get a job and he says that he was very excited at the prospect of doing something that he enjoys doing, something that would enable him to take care of his family. He has been looking for a job since he completed the qualification, but has been unsuccessful. He also had hopes of starting his own business and even bought the required equipment for upholstering but he has been unsuccessful even there. He said the major inhibitors for him to start a business were that he was living in an informal settlement and did not have sufficient space to carry out his business. Another inhibitor was that people in the township told him that it was too expensive to have their furniture upholstered and that they would rather buy new furniture. The last inhibitor that he mentioned was that it would be expensive to rent out space in town because of the rent that would be required, and the fact that there was no guarantee that he would have customers every month.

Alexander stated that being unemployed has been very hard for him, even though his girlfriend was employed. He said that because of his unemployment he has lost a lot of friends, even people who he had previously assisted. He was also disappointed that his girlfriend was not supportive toward him and that she did not understand his situation but instead she criticized him and did not believe that he was actually looking for a job. He also said that he felt that being unemployed had caused him to lose his role as 'the man' in the relationship because he was dependant on his girlfriend for everything. Furthermore, he was not able to financially support his children and his family back in Giyani. He said that his self-esteem had diminished because of that.

Alexander further said that he spent most of his time alone, since his girlfriend was at work. He said another reason that he decided to seclude himself from others was to avoid getting mixed up in 'wrong' things. Being unemployed, according to Alexander, has brought a lot of shame and distress

because he cannot afford to even buy minor basic things like cigarettes and bread when his girlfriend is at work.

Even though being unemployed has been challenging for Alexander, he remains hopeful that he will find a job one day. He said that his optimism stems from the fact that he has personally been around people who have been unemployed for more than 10 years and they found jobs after that period.

i) Thobile

Thobile is a woman in her late twenties. She is married with two children. She has an honours degree in psychology and she also completed training to become a trauma counsellor. She said that her motivation to study was that she wanted to achieve her dream of being a psychologist and also to help her family, since she is the first person in her family to obtain a tertiary qualification. She said she believed that education would make her different from other people in the sense that she would be able to think and plan better. She feels that she has developed as a person in that she is more hopeful about her future since completing her honours degree. Choosing to study further was not an easy decision for her because she had to leave her family in order to study and that came with challenges such as being independent and having to adjust to a new environment.

After she completed her internship as a trauma counsellor, she hoped to find a job, but has been unsuccessful thus far. She has applied for various jobs, but has only received letters of regret from possible employers. Furthermore, her biological family expects her to provide for them financially even though she is not currently employed. She mentioned that being unemployed has caused her to feel as though she has no control over her life because she is dependent on her husband for everything. Thobile does not have a lot of support from her biological family. Her parents passed away while she was still a child and she was raised by relatives. The main sources of support for her during and after her studies have been her aunt and her husband. She did not rely on the support of her friends during her studies, but rather chose to make her aunt and boyfriend as main sources of support. She said that her husband's support has been consistent from the outset, but her aunt's support has not been as forthcoming. She said that she feels as though her aunt wants her to repay the support that she gave her while she was still at University. She mentioned that even though her relationship with her aunt has been affected by her unemployment, she still needs support from her. She said that the lack of support from her family and the lack of acknowledgement for success in her studies have caused her a lot of stress because she feels that she cannot do anything about her current unemployment. She still has hope that she will find employment because she has been researching various avenues, such as starting her own counselling practice because she is a registered trauma counsellor. She mentioned that she has also opened herself to networking opportunities with her friends from university and with people working in the kind of jobs that she would like to work in.

j) Celia

Celia is a qualified auxiliary social worker and she has been unemployed for the past two years. She is married and has two young boys. She was aged 33 at the time of the interviews. Her husband is employed and he takes care of their family. She volunteers at the community centre as a counsellor for *nyaope* addicts that have been through rehab. She enjoys volunteering at the centre because she is able to practice her profession and it also gives some structure to her time. She said that she thinks that volunteering at the centre has given her status in the community because people can see her contribution to society even though she does not get paid for the work that she is doing. She has tried to start a small business selling chicken feet and sweets in order to augment her husband's salary, but that has not been fruitful because she said that she wants to do more for her children. Celia mentioned that she has had to learn to live on a strict budget because of unemployment. She has minimised her family's budget by cancelling her membership to stokfels and spending less on clothing.

She said that she felt that her family, friends and community have been very supportive of her throughout her unemployment. Her husband has been the breadwinner in their family and she feels that at times he cannot cope on his own and she wants to find a job in order to alleviate some of the financial strain he is under. Her friends have been supportive of her, but not to the extent that she would have liked them to be. She said that one of the reasons she feels her friends are not supportive is that they are not on the same educational level and that they cannot fully understand her experience. She is part of various community initiatives in her area and she stated that she felt her community was very supportive of her and her family, because they inform her of employment opportunities and she felt that she could rely on people within her community if she needed help.

She mentioned that her chances of being employed have improved since she started volunteering because she has been able to network with people who are working in the field of social development. She said that being a volunteer has also given her the opportunity to gain experience that she would not have otherwise received.

4.2 Presentation of major themes and sub-themes

Below is a presentation of the major themes, which were derived from the participants' interviews. The themes below were identified through reading, re-reading in the interview transcripts and making notes of about issues emerging from the data. Additionally the notes were transformed into emerging themes and subthemes, which best describe the participants narratives.

Motivation to study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family responsibilities - A positive influence on the community - Perceived needs of the country - Better future - Personal drive and career changes
Challenges in searching for employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The costs associated with job search - Pressure from family and friends - Financial family responsibilities - The marketplace
Factors contributing to unemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State of youth unemployment - Types of jobs - Lack of skills and experience - Insufficient relevant employment networks
Participants' experiences of unemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shame - A sense of depression - Isolation
Buffers against unemployment (Social Support)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Familial Support - Support from friends - Support from intimate partners - Support from community

Table 1- presentation of major themes and sub-themes

4.3 Discussion of major themes

In this section, the major themes from the participants' interviews are discussed. Themes represent certain patterns within the data and they grasp the most important ideas in relation to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The major themes of this study were the following: motivation to study, challenges in searching for employment, factors contributing to unemployment, the experience of unemployment and buffers against unemployment (social support).

4.3.1 Motivation to study

The motivation to study further can be driven by a variety of factors, such as being able to compete for jobs and to have social and economic mobility (Lin, 2011). Other factors that may influence people's educational aspirations include social class, socioeconomic background, peers, educational ability, personal characteristics and neighbourhood environment (Stewart, Stewart, Simons, 2007). The most important or pressing factor that contributes to people's desire to study further is getting a job (Knutsen, 2011).

In this study the participants said their motivation to study was driven by family responsibility, influence in the community, perception of needs in the community, to have a better future, personal agency and to change careers. These motivational factors seem to centre around the individual, their family and the community.

Family responsibility

Responsibility to one's family was the most salient motivation to study as participants displayed a desire to improve their family situations and to take care of their responsibilities, such as ensuring that their children are taken care of and that their families' basic needs are met. The need to provide for one's family is driven by a desire to take care of the family, because in collective cultures individuals work for the greater good of their community. The following extracts from participants show this motivation.

'then I will be able to get an eight hour job, where I can get back home on time and not have to worry about who is going to take care of my children' (Elizabeth)

'As I'm saying it is the husband, man at home who is supposed to be providing for the family, you're the head of the family. And the family is looking up to you to do that, to produce for your family... And it has been tough for me' (Rick)

Financial deprivation due to of unemployment has been found to not only restrict unemployed graduates from carrying out their family financial responsibilities, but it also prevents them from fulfilling their obligations. More so, for men, who are often identified as 'breadwinners' by society (Waters & Moore, 2002). Young adults are often required to take on greater financial responsibility even as they strive for their own independent households. They may take on negative coping mechanisms, such as alcohol abuse, when they are unable to meet these financial responsibilities (Serido, Lawry, Li, Conger & Russel, 2014).

A positive influence on the community

Furthermore, participants stated that they wanted careers which would help them have a positive impact on the communities from which they come and on society as well.

'I love life being exposed; you know there are a lot of challenges, especially in the township setup...' (Rick)

'What made me enrol for a BSc degree was that I knew that in South Africa there is a need for people who have studied science and maths and a BSc would allow me to teach those subjects' (Mathlale)

'I want to teach kids, especially girls, because they are the ones that are mostly taken advantage of...' (Thandaza)

The comments from these participants echo the sentiments of the respondents of previous research (Hammond, 2002; Priyadharshini & Robinson-Pant, 2003), whereby participants searched for careers that would allow them to directly contribute to their society. Careers that are regarded as contributing directly to society are seen to be more rewarding, because the change that happens at societal level is immediately visible. For example in the teaching environment teachers can often see changes in their student's ability to grasp concepts first-hand (Price, Hall, Angus & Peter, 2013).

Perceived needs of the country

Some of the participants interviewed in this study said that they studied their qualifications based on the needs that South Africa has.

'I want my crèche to have a food garden because there is a lot of poverty here. I want to have aftercare facilities where children can come and stay after school' (Elizabeth)

The South African economy has become more capital intensive, which has translated into an increased demand for higher skilled workers (Bhorat, Cassim & Tseng, 2016). This means that the South African economy requires more educated and skilled workers in order for it to flourish. This shift towards more skilled and more educated employees signifies that there are better employment prospects for people who are educated and skilled.

Erasmus and Breier (2009) attribute the apparent increased need for educated and skilled workers to the inadequacy of the education system, emigration of skilled workers, South Africa's history and poor working conditions. The authors have outlined the critical skills that are needed in the country based on occupations where there are insufficient professionals. The occupations that are said to be in need are in the following professions: doctors, managers, social workers, engineering

professionals, nurses, law professionals, ICT and associate professionals, educators, town planners and artisans.

Better future

Research has demonstrated that those who attain tertiary qualifications receive increasing returns on their investments. Having a post-school qualification can be an assurance of future employment and good earnings (Cloete, 2009). Moreover, students in higher education perceive education to be beneficial because it offers a better economic future, income, job prospects and also because of the symbolic success that it displays (Cilesiz & Drotos, 2014). Furthermore, for some students, attaining a tertiary education can be a way to not only better their own lives but the lives of their loved ones. As some of the participants expressed;

'I want to be able to provide for my children's needs and to take them to better schools so that they can have a better future' (Celia)

'At the moment I am depending on my family to support my child, I want to be able to do that for myself... I want to be able to start my own business and have a life that I've always dreamt of' (Dinah)

Return on investment in higher education also benefits the country as well, because those who attain tertiary qualification contribute to economic growth and productivity (Bhorat et al., 2016). Jawitz and Case (1998) found that some students not only studied for their own economic betterment, but also to serve the country through their education. As a result it is plausible to argue that students who enrol at tertiary institutions do so with the aim of guaranteeing that they have better future outcomes.

Personal drive and career changes

Another motivational factor for some of the participants was their personal drive to have a future that is better than their past or current situation. Personal drive is 'the desire to improve or to meet certain standards (Goleman, 1996). This motivation was displayed in the following texts.

'I wanted to study further because I have big dreams for myself and I felt that I could not achieve those dreams if I did not study' (Thobile)

'Yes, I was trying to make life better for myself, but things are hard. At the moment I am trying to enrol for courses that are offered at the community centre, so that I can do something for myself and see where it will lead me' (Elizabeth)

The community centre where this participant volunteered offered short courses in computer literacy, life-skills, house-wiring and farming. These courses, which were not accredited, were offered by an NGO and volunteers.

This motivation to better oneself through studying has also been attested to in literature and our society is geared that way, tertiary education is seen as a natural progression from school (Bowman, 1990; Diprete & Buchmann, 2006; Bobbitt-Zeher, 2007; Langer & Topel, 2004). For example, this participant said the following:

'I wanted to study further because that is how things are done in society, and I knew that by studying I would improve my life and secure my son's future' (Mpendulo)

Studying post-school is a societal norm, to the extent that developing countries have overtaken Europe in terms of enrolment figures (Schofer & Meyer, 2005). In developing countries such as South Africa this surge in tertiary enrolments can be attributed to decolonisation, democracy and greater participation of women in education (Schofer & Meyer, 2005; Marthur-Helm, 2005; Makgetla, 2004). Some of the participants also mentioned that they were motivated to change careers so that they can better their careers and do work that they actually enjoy.

'I also have a diploma in theology. I am passionate about being a pastor and all of that, but I just decided to pursue something else because working with people, I thought it would be better to have a background of social work or psychology in order to be able to counsel others' (Rick)

This participant said this in response to why he studied community development and social work, whilst he had a theology diploma. Another participant stated that he studied further in order to change careers because he was initially a security guard, but wanted to do something that he loved, which is upholstery, so he had to study part-time whilst working.

'I think what has caused me to be unemployed currently is that I did not want to become a security guard anymore... I could have gotten a job by now... and in terms of the upholstery qualification, there aren't a lot of companies that do upholstery, and most of them are small businesses with one owner and that can be a problem because they cannot hire a lot of people' (Alexander)

People do not always remain in one job or career throughout their lifetime, but they may change their careers or jobs in response to economic situations and their satisfaction with their careers (Super, 1990; Smart & Peterson, 1997).

4.3.2 Challenges in searching for employment

The costs associated with job search

Applying for a job can take many forms. Participants in this study said that they forwarded their CVs to different places; they filled in online application forms, and gave their CVs to people who worked in various jobs. Mathlale explained that in order for him to apply for work he needed his family to send him money so that he could go to internet cafés and create a CV and that costs a lot of money. On top of that, he had to travel to the various organisations offering jobs in order to drop off his CV.

‘Yes, there are challenges to being unemployed, for example, when you want to apply for a job and there are four positions open; you have to consider the cost of applying for the job. Fast mail is expensive, which means that you may not be able to apply for all the jobs that are available. At the moment fast-mail is about R20, so that means that you have to pay around R80 and you may find that you do not have that money and as a result you cannot apply for those jobs’ (Mathlale)

‘But it is costly to apply for work because you have to travel from place to place looking for work. If there is a vacancy somewhere you still need money for transport and other things and at the same time you do not have money. You have to think about buying bread. You have to go to internet cafes and scan your documents, all of that requires money.’ (Thandaza)

‘When you don’t have money you cannot do anything... even when there is a job somewhere you might not be able to go because you don’t have money for things like transport’ (Alexander)

Lack of money makes it difficult for young people looking for work; it serves as a further impediment by limiting their job search efforts. Not having money to apply for jobs and to travel to places where there might be job opportunities undermines their job search efforts.

In their study, Posel, Casale and Vermaak (2014) argue that the high costs of searching for a job in South Africa makes it difficult for people who are unemployed to search for jobs. They argue that this is the case because many of the unemployed people in South Africa are more likely to come from poor households, which means that they have to balance searching for a job and considering the needs of a poor family.

Pressure from family and friends

Moreover, participants felt that they were under pressure from their families and friends to look for work. They said that their families and friends constantly asked them when they would start working because they have tertiary qualifications and that it should be easy for them to find employment.

'They want to know why you are not working, whereas you are educated, so that is the challenge that I have faced, always having to explain yourself to people' (Mpendulo)

Another participant told of how her family could not understand her situation, but rather chose to believe that she was lazy to find work. She said that her family members consistently asked when she would find work because she has a child to take care of. She mentioned that this pressure had come to a point whereby she would sit in her room just to avoid the questions and comments from her family.

'When I get home, I just sit in my room because I know that they are going to ask me questions...' (Mphonyana)

Another participant said that she did not allow the pressure from her family to get to her because she felt that there was nothing that she could do to change her situation. She said that she felt that she had done enough by going to university and that being unemployed was a situation that was beyond her control. She further mentioned that her family was pressuring her to find a job so that she could assist other family members to go to tertiary institutions since she had had that opportunity. Families in this study seem to assume that the transition from education to work is a smooth one, while ignoring or being oblivious of the fact that there are various factors which influence a person's employment outcomes. The assumption that the transition to work will be smooth may inadvertently cause their families to put pressure on graduates to find work (Goodwin & O'Connor, 2005). However, some of the participants said that their families understood that it was difficult to find a job even when a person held tertiary qualifications. As one participant explained,

'When I was at home, I did not have a lot of pressure because they know that things are not easy anymore' (Mathlale)

This participant's experience was an exception to that of other participants because instead of pressure, his family provided him with complete support.

Financial family responsibilities

It is imperative for a person to support one's family in the African culture (Woolard & Klasen, 2008). The participants in this study showed the same desire to support their families financially and to secure their children's future. Most of the graduates conveyed that their families expected them to support them after they completed their studies but were disappointed when they did not find employment. Most of the participants had children and they demonstrated a desire to be able to support their families financially.

'I have to be active, because I have a six-year-old, who can sing Rihanna's song, 'diamond', from start to finish. And I told her that I will send her to university through God's help, so that

she can study for a degree in the arts and major in music, stage, drama, theatre and dance... whatever she wants. I tell her about how hard things are as well' (Elizabeth)

The participants' desire to take care of their families and to provide financial assistance to them prompted them to have a future orientation for their children and themselves. In the extract above, the participant had hopes for her oldest child to attend university and achieve her dreams. In the extract below, the participant expressed frustration at being unable to plan for her children's future because she did not have enough money to save for her their future, let alone provide the things that she would like them to have currently, such as a better education, than what they had been receiving.

'Being unemployed has been hard because we have needs, we have children and our own wishes. I wish that my children would go to better schools. I wish I could save for their education. So when you are not working you won't be able to reach those dreams. You need to have money in order to be able to invest. How can a person save for their children's future if they cannot invest money?' (Thandaza)

'As an unemployed graduate the challenges that I am facing are in regards to money, I am married and I have a young child...' (Mpedulo)

The frustration expressed by Thandaza demonstrates what people who are going through unemployment may experience, living on limited resources, with limited support and great needs, such as taking care of children and providing for the daily needs of a family with limited financial resources. Even though some of the participants had partners who helped them financially, they still expressed a sense of lack and a desire to share the responsibilities of their households. This is in contrast to the notion that they ought to assume their matriarchal role and take care of their home whereas their husbands work.

Furthermore, having limited finances for their day-to-day needs caused the participants to be cautious as to how they spent their money. Some of the participants said that they had to adjust their wants in order to fulfil their most essential needs. Learning how to manage and live on a tight budget meant that they had to deny themselves things they needed at times such as buying new clothes and appliances for example. The participants stated that planning for the future was difficult because they could not make any financial investments for their future without any guaranteed income.

Two participants showed interest in starting their own businesses, but found it challenging as they did not have money to start their business and sustain them. Alexander completed an upholstery course and wanted to start his own business, but he has been unable to do so.

'Another stumbling block is that it is difficult to do this type of business in the township because people don't want to accept the prices that you give them. They want you to do the job, whereas you are not going to benefit anything from that. When you tell them the price of upholstering their furniture, they'll say, 'it's better for me to just buy new sofas because it is expensive to upholster them'. So it would be good to have such a business in town instead. The only disadvantage is that it is costly and sometimes you may spend up to 6 months without having any customers, so that could cost you as well'. (Alexander)

The job market

In a study to determine the coping mechanisms of unemployment, Wanberg (1997) determined that searching for a job is a stressful event for the unemployed because it forces them to come across consequences of being unemployed such as rejection and frustration, which may lead them to become disheartened in their job search activities. The participants involved in the current study also shared some challenges in their job search endeavours. These ranged from job posts which were actually scams for making money and volunteering in the hopes of getting a job.

A participant told of how he applied for a job online and was called for an interview. He was later told that he had got the job and to commence with training for the job in the coming week. When he arrived there he found that the company was actually a sham because the facilitator of that training told them that they could earn up to R150000 a month, but in order to work there, they were required to purchase books and software from the company. After some consideration the participant searched for the company online and found that it actually did not exist, but they were actually defrauding people by promising money in exchange for software and books that did not even exist.

Another participant said that most jobs were reserved for people of other races because when she applied for jobs she was often told that those jobs were reserved for people who could communicate in Afrikaans and because of that she was unsuccessful.

'For example, when you look at the... newspaper job adverts you find that there is a job that you qualify for but you cannot apply because they require an Afrikaans speaking person. I am not good in speaking Afrikaans but I am fluent in English, so race has an influence as well' (Thandaza)

Another challenge that participants experienced in their job search activities was that they did not want to work in jobs that would keep them from seeing their families and would limit their interactions with their families. One participant expressed it in the following manner;

'I could look for a job anywhere... ok... I may find a job that is very far, but I don't want to work far from my family. I don't want to work far from my family; I don't want to go wide... I am always careful that the decisions that we take, should be taken as a family.' (Rick)

This particular participant was recently married and did not want to be away from his wife even though it could mean that he found employment elsewhere.

4.3.3 Factors contributing to unemployment

State of youth unemployment

The participants were asked to share their experience about their understanding of what they considered to be the reasons for their lack of current employment. The current state of youth unemployment in South Africa was considered to be a contributing factor to unemployment. Participants showed an understanding that unemployment was currently high in South Africa and that it might not be easy for them to find work.

'I don't think that there are sufficient opportunities for graduates in our country... especially people that I know who have graduated in the financial sciences especially' (Mpendulo)

The current state of youth unemployment in South Africa was discussed in Chapter 2 and these participants' experiences attest to the reality of the status of youth unemployment in this country.

South Africa has one of the highest rates of unemployment in the world and it is highest among young people (Kingdon & Knight, 2005). Kingdon and Knight (2004) have noted that unemployment in South Africa is consistently rising. Furthermore the South African economy has been unable to absorb the current labour force (Pauw, Oosthuizen & Van der Westhuizen, 2006), which translates into high unemployment for people who are capable of and willing to work. The size of the labour force has risen due to the following reasons; increased participation of women and non-white South Africans in the economy and an increase in educational levels (Duflo, 2012; Kindgon & Knight, 2005).

Lack of skills amongst those who are 'able to work' has also contributed to unemployment in South Africa (Daniels, 2007; Pauw, Oosthuizen & Van der Westhuizen, 2006). Moreover, those who are educated may have skills that are not in line with the job market requirements (Department of Labour, 2012). This is the case because tertiary institutions are not producing graduates with the skills required by the labour market (Rasool & Botha, 2011). This high rate of unemployment contributes negatively to society through social exclusion, poverty, crime, and social instability (Rasool & Botha, 2011; Kingdon & Knight, 2005).

Types of jobs

The participants also mentioned that some of the jobs that were available for them to apply for were not in line with what they were anticipating. For example, some participants said they wanted jobs that would make it possible for them to spend time with their families and that would ensure their security as well. They wanted jobs that would secure their future but also help them to provide for their families.

‘A lot of jobs that are available now are restaurant jobs, but I can’t work at a restaurant because I am a parent and working at a restaurant will require a lot of time. Where will I leave my children? So I could not do that kind of work’ (Elizabeth)

Restaurant jobs are disliked for their long working hours and are said to be characterized by low wages and uncertainty as workers may be hired on a temporary basis (Kim, Nemeschansky & Brandt, 2016). These factors may impede their non-work related time demands such as family responsibilities. Rick explained his experience in the following way:

‘Theology was quite extensive, but the issue with theology is that what does a person do once they have no longer wanted to be in a particular congregation? Theology is good, but one has to make means to support his/her family, especially when you are married’ (Rick)

A pastoral career is often chosen in order to fulfil one’s destiny as some may see it as answering God’s call over their lives (Lauterbach, 2008). However, as with other careers, it has its challenges, such as having a lack of finances. Lauterbach (2008) proposes this lack of finances forces young pastors especially to look for alternative means of supporting themselves. In this case, Rick wanted to be able to support his family and for him, studying further was a way to do so.

There are various factors that individuals may consider when applying for a job. In two extracts the participants said that they wanted jobs that would help them support their families, that would keep them close to their families so that they can take care of them, and not be away from them. They also wanted to ensure that the jobs that they got would safeguard their families’ financial future. Warr’s Vitamin theory proposes that work offers certain ‘*vitamins*’ (e.g. salary, safety, job autonomy and task significance) that are essential for a person’s wellbeing. Therefore, people evaluate prospective jobs based on the benefits or disadvantages that they might have for their wellbeing (Warr & Inceoglu, 2012), as did some of the participants.

Lack of skills and experience

The participants acknowledged that one of the reasons for their lack of employment was that they did not have some of the skills required to be employed. Many of the participants questioned the

requirements of skills and experience because they said they could not understand why companies would require them to have work experience when they have never worked and do not have any experience. This issue arose from most of the participants and they expressed that not having experience was a barrier to them finding employment.

'In some instances, you apply for work and are rejected because of lack of experience, but in some instances, you don't even get a reply' (Thandaza)

'Since I just finished my qualification, I don't have a lot of skills. The only skills that I have are administration and financial management that I got from my in-service training. In many of the positions that I have applied for, a lot of skills were required, more than the ones that I have, so I think that that may have contributed to me being currently unemployed' (Mathlale)

Lack of skill has been consistently shown to be a contributor to unemployment in South Africa (Burger & Von Fintel, 2009; Daniels, 2007). The skills required in the current economic climate are geared toward more skilled labour rather than unskilled labour, and some graduates may find themselves unqualified (Dias & Posel, 2007; Kingdon & Knight, 2005; Mcgrath ,Badroodien, Kraak & Unwin,2004). Daniels (2007) suggested that one of the ways in which this skills gap can be narrowed is through the reskilling of the unemployed through various government interventions.

Other contributing causes to unemployment in the South African context are the following: childcare responsibilities, costs associated with job search in areas that are far from employment opportunities, ill health and lower levels of education (Posel et al., 2014).

Insufficient relevant employment networks

Not being connected to people who have information about particular jobs or who could facilitate entry to a job, according to some of the participants, limited their opportunities of finding jobs. People who have sufficient networks that can assist them to find work, have been found to have better prospects of finding work than those without relevant networks (Burns et al., 2009).

'I think that associating with people who could help me find work may help...' (Thandaza)

Therefore, people who have a network that is comprised of people who are employed or are linked to organisations that can offer them a job have better chances of finding employment because their network may assist them to get closer to their desired job.

'Those who received bursaries from companies seem to be the ones who get employed because they have to work for the companies that gave them bursaries...' (Mpendulo)

Graduates who receive bursaries from prospective employers may be more certain of their job prospects because their employment after graduation is almost guaranteed, unlike those who are not linked to any company (Letseka et al., 2010).

4.3.4 Participants' experiences of unemployment

Shame

Shame is common in people who are unemployed (Eales, 1989). The experience of shame can be considered to elicit feelings of depression and anxiety in unemployed people. The finance-shame model proposes that when individuals experience increased shame due to their unemployment, they are more likely to experience ill health (Starrin & Jonsson, 2006). The participants articulated that they felt a sense of shame, especially when they met with people who were in the same school as them. The participants explained that the reason for the shame was that they would think of the way things were in high school and as one participant said,

'I was the most intelligent person in my class, but where am I now?' (Elizabeth)

'When I look at other people, for example, my classmates,... and they say Thandaza are you still in the same place, you were a lot better than us in school, and I didn't expect you to be the one using a taxi' (Thandaza)

The constant comparison that they make of their current situation and their past achievement seems to be what drives them to this sense of shame about their employment situation. Sheeran, Abrams and Orbell (1995) proposed that when unemployed people compare their current self to their former self, they experience psychological distress. This was evident in the participants for the study, because they shared instances where they had met with people who they had been with previously in high school or tertiary. Contact with the people from their past brought back memories of the dreams and expectations that they had during their studies. In addition, these in turn lead to them feeling shame at their unemployment situation. Moreover, individuals who compare themselves to others are found to experience more depression and self-esteem issues (Creed & Muller, 2006).

A sense of depression

Dooley, Catalano and Wilson (1994) associate unemployment with depressive symptoms. The disillusionment about the lack of employment or their inability to find work may have contributed to a sense of depression in some of the participants because the goal of finding work was starting to seem unattainable. The participants in this study expressed that they felt depressed at times due to their unemployment.

'I sometimes think of the life that I would live if I were employed. It worries me a lot to think of the life that I might have to live if I do not get employed' (Mathlale)

'Being unemployed has seriously made me depressed. Especially when I look back at people who I went to school with... some of them are at Medunsa, studying medicine, the other one is a teacher. It has really made me depressed' (Elizabeth)

This participant's description of how she became depressed seems to stem from the comparisons that she made about her current life situation with that of the people with whom she went to school. Sheeran et al., (1995) posited that depression may be brought on by constant comparisons that people make with an individual and their social category.

Lack of finances and a reduction in personal control have been identified as pre-cursors to depression during unemployment (Price, Choi & Vinokur, 2002). Bartley (1994) also found a correlation between financial deprivation in unemployment and depression. This is said to be due to the unemployed person having lower expectations of their ability and experiencing alienation. Jefferis et al. (2011) propose that individuals who are unemployed ought to be given sufficient support to safeguard them against depression.

Isolation

Some of the participants interviewed in this study said that they felt they were isolated from their friends because of unemployment. Some had isolated themselves from their friends because they wanted to be on their own to avoid questions about why they were unemployed. Others felt that their friends did not want to be around them because they were no longer on the same 'level'. Unemployment places young people at a risk of living in poverty, more so if they come from poor families themselves. Poverty in turn puts them at a higher risk of exclusion (Gallie, Paugum & Jacobs, 2003). Unemployed, poor people may be at risk of social exclusion if they have low sociability, that is, limited access to friends and neighbours, and lack of participation in community activities (Gallie et al., 2003). The theory of social exclusion posits that people may be excluded based on a number of disadvantages that they may have, such as educational level, housing, employment and unemployment (Sen, 2000). People may be excluded by virtue of the educational qualifications they may or may not have. For example, in the current economic climate in South Africa, possessing a matric certificate can be gateway for work opportunities whereas not having one can be an obstacle hindering work opportunities (StatsSA, 2014).

In South Africa, housing was used to reinforce inequality by segregating races through the provision of low-standard housing for black people, which contributed to the exclusion of the majority of the population from job opportunities in the cities (Bond, 2000). People may also be socially excluded based on the type of employment they may have. The type of employment that one has dictates the lifestyle they will lead and the resources that are available for them (Sen, 2000). Furthermore, unemployment may serve as a cause for social exclusion because it may lead to deterioration in people's living standards which will inflict limited resources for the unemployed to look for work and limit their social activities.

According to Gallie et al., (2003), the limits that unemployed people have to impose on their lives lead to a fragmentation of social ties and increase their isolation from the life they might have been previously used to. Further exclusion of social ties may occur in the lives of the unemployed because relationships are mainly based on the exchange of value. Therefore, when the unemployed cannot reciprocate the value that their social ties are able to give, they may be isolated (Hartup & Stevens, 1997; Gallie et al., 2003).

Ulrich et al., (2008) propose that the unemployed are at a higher risk of experiencing psychosis when they are socially isolated and their expectations of finding employment are not met. People who are experiencing unemployment and lack sufficient social ties may be at a risk of experiencing loneliness (Dykstra, 1995). Jahoda's theory of latent deprivation also points out that unemployment diminishes people social networks and promotes social withdrawal.

' for example the people that I used to hang out with have distanced themselves from me...some even think that I have become useless...Like with some of my friends, I don't feel comfortable when I am around them...'(Alexander)

Isolation from friends and other social ties further causes the unemployed to be marginalised from the possible employment opportunities that could arise from such interaction (Gallie et al., 2003). From this discussion, it can be said that social isolation can be influenced by a person's lack of sociability rather than their unemployment because the participants in some cases chose to withdraw from people because they felt discomfort around them. Therefore, although in some instances people distanced themselves from them, they also withdrew from people.

4.3.5 Buffers against unemployment (Social Support)

Lorenzini and Giugni (2012) describe social support as a coping mechanism that people may use to cope with stressful events they may encounter. In this study social support was related to family support, support from friends, support from intimate partners and support from the community.

Familial support

Support from family came up as a significant source of social support for most of the participants. The support that was demonstrated to participants was in the form of encouragement, instrumental support, that is, assistance with day-to-day needs such as baby-sitting and information regarding available job opportunities. Some received money to help them cover any financial essentials they had, such as money to assist with looking for a job and to buy groceries. Social support has been shown to play an essential role in assisting individuals experiencing adverse life situations. Social support from the family, especially, seems to have played an essential role in the lives of the individuals who participated in this study. Social support from family has also been found to alleviate financial pressure from those who are unemployed. Social support from an unemployed person's family also increases their own optimism about their future (Taylor, et al.,2012).

'My family supports me a lot. If I were to call them now and tell them that I need transport money for a certain job, they would understand and send the money, because they want me to find a job as well' (Mathlale)

There is some contradiction in the participants' perception of support, in that they wanted to receive support from their families, but they did not want to burden their families with their unemployment issues. One participant mentioned that his reason for not wanting to rely on his family for support was that his family had its own struggles and he did not want to be a burden on them.

Another reason participants did not want to over-rely on their families was because some of them stated that they wanted to be self-reliant. They could perceive the social support available to them, but they did not want to overly depend on it. They showed a desire and appreciation for the support that they were receiving but at the same time they wanted to do things independent of their social support structures. Their need for social support and the desire to be independent of it at times, are seemingly two contradictory demands from their social support structures. Nonetheless, it is actually conceivable that they need a balance of the two. Taylor, et al.,(2004) argue that when people experience stressful life events, the availability of perceived social support is at times more essential than the support actually enacted. This implies that individuals going through stressful life events such as unemployment may merely need to know that there is support available for them in order for them to effectively deal with their situation.

Some participants said that they did not want to burden their families with their situation because they understood their families had their own issues, so they did not want to burden them any further. These participants inadvertently refrained from the support they could have received from their families, such as emotional support, instrumental support and information about employment opportunities. There are several reasons why unemployed people may not be receptive to social support. Firstly, they may perceive the supportive actions of others as being overly intrusive, which

may cause them more stress (Uchino, 2009). Secondly, unemployed people may perceive the support given as an effort to control them and interfere in their lives (Richardson, Barbour & Bubenzer, 1991). Thirdly, people who are unemployed may experience a sense of low self-esteem and distress at the prospect of asking for assistance from their loved ones (Bolger, Zuckerman & Kessler, 2000). Fourthly, the support that is available from a person's social network may not be adequate to meet the needs of the unemployed person and as such may not meet the needs of the recipient (Cohen & McKay, 1984). Furthermore, Taylor et al., (2004) argue that for collectivist cultures, requesting support from one's social network is a stressful activity because they are more concerned about the well-being of their group as opposed to their individual well-being. The above reasons for people not to accept the support may be because at times social support is more useful to participants when they perceive that it available than when it is given.

However, some participants in the study expressed that they experienced negative judgment and condemnation from other people because of their current state of unemployment. These came more from family and other people within their circle such as friends. Unemployment has been shown to provoke family conflict and stress (Broman, Hamilton & Hoffman, 1990). This in turn increases tension between family members. One participant shared his experience with his in-laws regarding his unemployment. He said that even though they did not overtly tell him that they disapproved of his situation, he could sense the tension towards him.

'And on my wife's side, they are not bad; they have not confronted me with anything. I think that they feel that their daughter is working... I mean I understand their feelings, but they have never said it to my face. I would be lying if I said that they did that, but you can feel it...' (Rick)

The tension that this participant in particular experienced from his in-laws seems to stem from the fact that their daughter has now assumed the role of 'the provider' in their marriage and that he has negated his responsibility to take care of their daughter. His wife's family could not understand his situation, although his wife had consented to being the breadwinner so that he can further his studies

Support from friends

Some of the participants also showed an appreciation of the role that their friends played in their lives. The most perceptible ways in which participants said that their friends provided them with support was through sharing their experiences with them, sharing information about job openings in their field and some participants also received financial help from their friends. Furthermore the presence of friends during unemployment is said to assist the unemployed by being a source of debriefing for them (Lorenzini & Giugni, 2012). Being able to share day-to-day experiences with friends also serves as a form of catharsis for those who are unemployed and also minimises the psychological distress that arises from being unemployed (Lorenzini & Giugni, 2012).

'The support that I have received so far has been that Lerato has listened to me without judging me' (Elizabeth)

Friendships are said to offer development resources. Furthermore friendships are said to provide a sense of well-being based on the quality and identity of the friendships (Hartup & Stevens, 1997). Moreover, people who have friends are recognized as having better outcomes when they experience adverse life situations such as the loss of a loved one (Dykstra, 1995). Friendships have been found to aid unemployed people to deal with the negative effects of unemployment because they provided a space for them to share their experiences and to share other things that may be a cause of concern for them. Friends may provide an essential employment network for individuals who are unemployed because they can alert them to jobs that are available or put in a good word for them when they are looking for employment (Seekings, 2003). Consequently the loss of friendships during unemployment disadvantages the unemployed by limiting their employment networks.

There were mixed appraisals from participants regarding friendships. For some of the participants friendships played a pivotal role in assisting them to deal with unemployment, whereas other participants felt that their friends had neglected them and regarded them as useless. Hartup and Stevens (1997) have proposed that although friendships provide a supportive role to people in various development tasks, we should recognise that not all friendships are beneficial. Some friendships can serve to demoralise. For instance, some participants said that some of their friends had made a mockery of their unemployment and they had distanced themselves from them; instead of reciprocating the support that they had received. The participants also expressed that they lost friends during their period of unemployment.

'My friends don't support me. I had a friend who was unemployed from 2009 and he recently found a job, I thought that he would be the one to support me because I supported him, but he looks down on me now. He has never even helped me to even find a job' (Alexander)

Mathlale mentioned that even though some of his friends showed him support, others were not as supportive, but rather chose to boast about their new jobs instead of being supportive friends.

'But there are some other friends who do not wish good things for you, and they will boast about their jobs to me, like my other friend who told me that I must not call him with my cents...' (Mathlale)

Mphonyana also told of how some of her friends had distanced themselves from her since she was unemployed. She felt that they had distanced themselves from her because she could no longer afford the lifestyle that they used to live while they were still studying. Another participant mentioned that he felt his friends isolated him because he was now *'useless'* to them.

Support from intimate partner

Intimate partners also served as a core component of the participants social support structure. The participants said that their partners provided them with emotional support by not putting pressure on them and also by constantly motivating them. Furthermore, in certain instances the partners also provided financial assistance for their day-to-day needs as well as money to search for employment.

'She doesn't pressure me to find work, but I think it's because she understands, she doesn't nag me about finding a job' (Mathlale)

'The good thing is that my partner is working and she is covering most of the things'. (Rick)

'Yes, my partner supports me a lot...' (Celia)

Support from an intimate partner has been shown to promote the emotional well-being of people who are experiencing unemployment (Lorenzini & Guigni, 2012). However, spousal tensions are also said to increase when one spouse is unemployed mainly due to the financial hardships that are a result of the unemployment of one spouse (Broman, Hamilton & Hoffman, 1990). The unemployment of one partner has been linked to lower marital satisfaction, poor communication in the marriage and lower marital adjustment (Larson, 1984). Unemployment has also been shown to have an impact on the mental health of the spouse of the unemployed person as they share in the day-to-day challenges that their partner experiences (Marcus, 2013). Song, Foo, UY and Sun (2010) postulated that individuals' marital support is not potent for couples from low socio-economic backgrounds, but that it is more salient amongst couples from high to middle-class/income backgrounds. These findings suggest that couples with low socio-economic status may experience lower levels of social support due to limited resources such as education, income, and internal locus of control (Song et al., 2010).

Unemployment may lead to marital dissolution (Hansen, 2005; Lampard, 1994), marital instability (Starkey, 1996), and family conflict (Landers-Potts, Wickrama, Simons, Cutrona, Gibbons & Conger, 2015). A participant in the study told of how his relationship with his wife had been negatively affected by unemployment to a point that he felt that she no longer respected him.

'The way that my wife perceived me has changed as well... she no longer respects me...'
(Alexander)

However, this participant's experience is quite different from the experience of another participant (Rick), who said that his wife was very supportive of him throughout his studies and his endeavour to search for work. This participant's experience is supported by the research findings of Liem and Liem (1988), who found married couples still, provided support to one another, even in the midst of conflict and financial strain on their relationship.

Support from the community

Having links to community based organisations such as churches, schools and non-governmental organisation provided participants with support during their period of unemployment. Participants said that the support they received from these organisations was in the form of encouragement and information regarding job opportunities.

Community organizations, in particular helped participants by moving them away from their usual sources of support and brought them into contact with people who were going through the same experiences. This helped them to realize that they were not the only ones who were unemployed and that there were resources that were available to help them to find work.

Furthermore, these organizations provided them with activities that could help them to focus on other things apart from their unemployment, such as being active participants in community development initiatives, volunteering as counsellors and so on. Participants expressed that taking part in such activities helped them to take their minds off the 'unemployment' and their daily struggles for the time that they were there.

'I have found that by volunteering I do not become discouraged and it gives me hope that maybe I will find something better. Staying at home and doing nothing, just causes a lot of stress. So when you volunteer, things become better because everyone brings their personal issues, we discuss them and laugh about them and everyone goes home relieved. And when you go home you are less stressed and you are able to cook for your family and sleep afterward' (Thandaza)

In the extract above the participant expressed that by volunteering, she was able to interact with people who were undergoing the same experience and who she could share her issues with. These community spaces served as 'outlets' for their frustrations and as spaces where they could also find hope. A participant mentioned that by continuously going to church and talking to his pastor, he was encouraged that things would get better and that encouraged him to 'go on' and not to give up his pursuit of his job. Another participant told of how since he started looking for a job, he was coming to realise that going to church actually gave people hope that their lives would get better and that some actually thought that by being in church, they would be able to find the work that they had been looking for at the time that God set.

'Some put their trust in their churches to help them find a job at a time that God has set...'
(Mathlale)

The participants expressed a sense of hope in the prospect of them finding employment in the future. This sense of hope was mainly driven by their observation of people in their communities who had found employment after years of looking for work.

‘What motivates me to continue looking for work is that I have seen people who have been unemployed for more than 5 years and they are still looking for work, so that gives me hope’
(Alexander)

This hope to be able to find work even in the midst of their unemployment situation, demonstrates resilience and inherent strength on the part of the participants. A study by De Witte, Rothman and Jackson (2012) demonstrated that the majority of unemployed people had a belief and expectation of finding work in the months following their participation in the study. The continued hope of finding employment is essential for the unemployed because persistence in looking for employment has been shown to increase the possibility of a person actually being employed (Wanberg, 1997; Wanberg, Glomb, Song & Sorenson, 2005). Furthermore, having an expectation of being employed and the value of finding a job have been shown to determine the motivation to search for a job and to take part in job seeking activities (Lynd-Stevenson, 1999).

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter provided a summary of the findings of this study of the social support experiences of unemployed graduates. It includes a presentation of the participants’ narratives, and a discussion of the major themes in relation to past research. The main findings indicate that the most pressing challenge for unemployed graduates relates to their finances. The lack of finances contributed negatively to other areas in their lives, such as their friendships and family relationships. Social support seems to have played a pivotal role in helping them to cope with the challenges that they experienced as a result of unemployment. Social support was experienced in the form of continuous encouragement and information about possible job opportunities, along with financial assistance. Although in many instances participants said that they did not want to ‘burden’ their social support networks, they were able to perceive instances whereby support was not given. The next chapter will provide a summary of the main research findings and the conclusions.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

5. Introduction

The purpose of this research was to explore the social support experience of unemployed graduates. Social support is described as the supportive actions that are provided by those who are in their social network. These supportive actions were demonstrated by various people in their network, such as friends, family and intimate partners. This research was carried out qualitatively using interpretive phenomenology. The findings of the research are discussed below, followed by a discussion on the limitations of this study and recommendations.

5.1 Summary of the research findings

Various themes emerged from the participant interviews. The themes were as follows: motivation to study, challenges in searching for employment, factors contributing to graduate unemployment, participants' experiences of unemployment and buffers against unemployment.

The participants' motivation to pursue higher education was driven by a variety of factors. The factors that were most salient in this research were: the desire to study in order to secure a better future for their children and themselves, to take care of their families, to become a positive influence in their communities through their education, and lastly, to change careers. The participants' motivation for studying seems to be more driven by issues that are beyond individual success. They wanted to have careers that would enable them to support their families financially and ensure that the future of their families is secured, as most of the participants came from families having low socio-economic status. They seemed to be more concerned about the well-being of people in their network. For example, they showed a desire to uplift their communities and to ensure better outcomes for their families. This is evidenced even by the type of careers that some of them pursued or were pursuing, such as social work, HIV/AIDS counselling, early childhood development and psychology. Another motivating factor in pursuing higher education was to change careers. Choosing a career is not a linear, once-off process (Super, 1990) but it is a progressive exercise. As such some of the participants in this study choose to leave their careers in pursuit of careers that would bring them satisfaction and secure their financial future. Some of the participants mentioned that their parents encouraged them to pursue higher education so that they could secure their own future financial stability. The motivations that the participants had for studying further served as a foundation for their educational pursuits and as the driving force for their success during their studies.

All the participants who took part in this study held a tertiary qualification of some level, ranging from certificates to university degrees, through which they hoped to obtain employment. There are various challenges that the participants experienced in their pursuit of employment, those being costs associated with searching for a job, pressure from friends and family to become employed, family, financial responsibilities, and the job market. The costs associated with searching for employment were an impediment to the job search of some of the participants. This was so because they had to allocate the little money they had to either finding work or meeting their daily needs such as buying food. Moreover, they were pressured by their families and friends to find employment. This is because they were expected to find employment after completing their studies. The participants said that their families and friends could not understand why they were unable to find employment even though they had tertiary qualifications. The participants also had the challenge of managing their financial family responsibilities in the midst of being unemployed. Some of the participants were married and had children and faced the burden of ensuring that their families were taken care of with the limited money. Even though some of them were receiving financial assistance from their families, they still wanted to take some responsibility for their families' finances. The job market also posed some challenges to the participants. These challenges ranged from jobs which were in fact scams, the language that is required for certain jobs and the location of jobs. The participants said that some of the jobs they applied for were actually scams because the prospective 'employers' wanted money from them. Some participants were discouraged by the fact that some of the jobs they qualified for required people who spoke fluent Afrikaans, whereas they could not. Additionally, the locations of the jobs that they could apply for posed an issue for some of the participants as they did not want to leave their families behind.

The factors that participants perceived as responsible for their unemployment were the following: the state of youth unemployment, types of jobs, lack of skills and experience, and insufficient relevant employment networks. The participants mentioned that they considered the high rate of unemployment in the country to be a contributor to their unemployment. Moreover, the types of jobs that were available to participants did not meet their expectations. For example, the participants said that many of the jobs that were available would not allow them to have sufficient time with their families and as a result, they wanted to get jobs that would allow them to be present in their families and to be able to provide for them. Additionally, the participants identified lack of skills as another contributor to their unemployment. The participants expressed that they could not understand why prospective employers would require them to have experience, when they had only recently completed their qualifications. Another contributor to the issue of skills was that the current skills requirements were geared towards more skilled labour (Dias & Posel, 2007). The lack of sufficient networks was also seen as a factor contributing to unemployment. The availability of networks has been found to increase chances of employment because the network can serve as an information resource concerning prospective job opportunities (Burns et al., 2009).

The participants also shared their experiences of unemployment. These were related to shame, a sense of depression and isolation. The participants shared how they experienced a sense shame because of their unemployment. This sense of shame seemed to have been driven by the comparisons they were making regarding their current situation and their past accomplishments. They also experienced shame because their former schoolmates had achieved far more than they had. The participants also expressed that they felt a sense of depression as a result of their unemployment. This sense of depression may have come as a result of their disillusionment about the availability of employment opportunities and constant comparison to others. Research has demonstrated an association between depression and unemployment (Jefferis et al., 2011; Price, Choi & Vinokur, 2002). Moreover, some of the participants said that they felt isolated from their friends as they no longer had the 'same standard' as them. They also isolated themselves from their friends because they felt that things had changed. Isolation from their friends further contributed to a decline in their social networks, which narrowed their probabilities of being employed through those networks.

The following emerged as buffers against the experience of unemployment: familial support, support from friends, support from intimate partners, support from the community and a sense of hope. Familial support was the most salient form of social support that participants received. The participants mentioned that their families provided them with financial support, encouragement, and instrumental support, in the form of assistance with day-to-day tasks. Social support from the family has been found to be instrumental in alleviating financial pressure and it also increased optimism regarding the future (Taylor, Budescu, Gebre & Hodzic, 2012). Even though participants identified social support as the most salient, they did not want to overburden their families about their situation. Instead, they wanted to be independent because they were more concerned about the well-being of their families.

However, some participants had more negative experiences of social support from their families. These participants said that their families judged them negatively because they were unemployed and were not able to provide for their own needs. Participants also received social support from their friends. Their friends provided them with support by giving them information about job openings, financial help, and by sharing their experiences with them. Nonetheless, some participants experienced negativity from their friends, as some looked down on them instead of supporting them. Some participants also felt that their friends had rejected them because they were unemployed. The participants also experienced support from their intimate partners in the form of encouragement and financial assistance. The community also provided the participants with support by providing them with opportunities to learn new courses and to be in contact with other people who were experiencing the same thing. This enabled them to share their experiences with people who had similar

experiences to their own. Having these experiences in their community gave them a sense of hope regarding their future outcomes. Developing a sense of hope during such an adverse situation demonstrates their resilience and innate strength. Furthermore, an attitude of expectation while unemployed has been shown to increase persistence and the possibility of finding employment (Wanberg, Glomb, Song & Sorenson, 2005; Lynd-Stevenson, 1999).

5.2 Limitations

There are various limitations to this study that ought to be borne in mind in the interpretation of these results. The participants of this study were graduates living in and around Mamelodi, a semi-urban area, mainly consisting of black/African people. The social support experiences of this group of graduates cannot be extended to include other South African populations because their context may differ from any other in South Africa, even though there may be similar attributes such as socioeconomic status.

Another limitation relates to the interpretation of the data. Qualitative research is inherently biased in that the researcher interprets the data in accordance with his/her subjective understanding of what the participants have said. Although I took care to describe the participants' experiences as clearly as possible and to bracket my own experiences, the results of this study ought to be understood as a subjective interpretation.

Additionally, the participants may have answered the interview questions in a socially desirable manner. Qualitative research is dependent on participants giving their honest understanding and interpretation of their experiences. Although I did my best to build rapport between me and the participants and to assure them of their anonymity, the participants are the ones who ascertain the veracity of the data, as the research data is made up of their experiences.

5.3 Recommendations

South Africa has one of the highest rates of unemployment in the world according to Africacheck (2014). Graduate unemployment is a subset of the major challenges that South Africa is facing at the moment, such as inequalities in income, poor education outcomes, and lower socioeconomic standing of the majority population. As such, addressing graduate unemployment will require that these underlying issues be resolved by the various structures (e.g. civil society organizations; government and the private sector). The National Development Plan (NDP) has been hailed as the answer to addressing these challenges and we can only hope that the proposals stated in the NDP will bear some fruit. The unemployment of graduates will have a harmful impact on the economy in the long run (Oluwajodu, Blaauw, Greyling & Kleynhans, 2015) because the economy will not benefit from the available labor supply. It is therefore recommended that the unemployment of graduates be addressed by educational institutions, civil society organizations, employers, and the

government. Educational institutions can address this by assisting graduates to identify possible employment and business opportunities that are available. Civil society organizations can assist by providing skills training for unemployed graduates. Employers ought to be encouraged to appoint new graduates with the aim of mentoring and developing their skills so that they can have some experience of the working world. The government can contribute to the fight against unemployment by adopting policies that will make it possible for various industries to accommodate new graduates, such as graduate intake subsidy (Oluwajodu et al., 2015).

The provision of social support at the family and individual level is the task of the social network of the unemployed graduate. Social support implies that there ought to be a relationship between the recipient of support and the person offering the support. Therefore, it is the duty of the unemployed graduates to build solid social networks that will assist them throughout their period of unemployment and beyond. De Witte, Rothman and Jackson (2012) have demonstrated that the lack of support from a person's social network during unemployment can have negative consequences for the emotional well-being of the unemployed person. Social support, although essential to the well-being of the unemployed person cannot be forced onto the recipients and the people who are in a person's network cannot be forced to provide support (Taylor et al., 2004).

Furthermore, community structures that can help graduates to search for jobs and provide them with skills that they may need to find employment ought to be encouraged. Community organizations in this research have been shown to play an essential role, not only in providing graduates with instrumental support, that is, information about possible jobs; but also to provide them with essential skills in their job search endeavours.

Further research may also be done to explore the impediments to and enablers of social support for unemployed graduates, as there were some participants who indicated that they did not receive support from their families and friends. There was also the paradox of the participants not wanting to overburden their families with their situation and yet familial support was the most salient type of support that they received. Moreover, future research could also identify ways in which social support is maintained throughout the period of unemployment. There is also a need to explore other coping mechanisms that may be available for unemployed graduates, more so because some of the participants indicated that they could not rely on their family and friends for support. Additionally, future research may explore unemployed graduates' experiences of social support in other areas such as more affluent areas and rural areas.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a brief overview of the main findings of this research, by providing a summary of the research findings. This research has found the graduates who took part in the study were motivated to study for qualifications that would benefit them, their families and their communities. Moreover, these participants faced various challenges in pursuit of their employment opportunities yet they remained resilient. The findings have shown that graduates experience isolation, shame and a sense of depression during the period of their unemployment. The research has demonstrated that graduates require support from their social networks throughout their experience of unemployment even though graduates may feel as though they are 'burdening' their social networks. The support of their social networks gave them hope that they would succeed in their pursuit of employment.

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Appendix A: Ethics clearance letter



Ethical Clearance for M/D students: Research on human participants

The Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology at Unisa has evaluated this research proposal for a Higher Degree in Psychology in light of appropriate ethical requirements, with special reference to the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Psychologists of the HPCSA and the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics.

Student Name: B Magagula

Student no. 45745897

Supervisor: Mr K Skosana

Affiliation: Dept. of Psychology, Unisa

Title of project:

An exploration into the social support experiences of unemployed graduates.

The proposal was evaluated for adherence to appropriate ethical standards as required by the Psychology Department of Unisa. The application was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology on the understanding that –

- All ethical requirements regarding informed consent, the right to withdraw from the study, the protection of participants' privacy and confidentiality of the information should be made clear to the participants and adhered to, to the satisfaction of the supervisor;
- All permission that may be required by the community structures will be obtained before the study commences;
- If further counseling is required in some cases, the participants will be referred to appropriate counseling services.

Signed:

Prof. M Papaikonomou

Date: 2015/10/27

[For the Ethics Committee]
[Department of Psychology, Unisa]

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 Psychology Department Ethics Review Committee.*
- 3) An amended application should be submitted 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.*

Please note that research where participants are drawn from Unisa staff, students or data bases requires permission from the Senate Research and Innovation Committee (SENRIC)

Appendix B: Consent Form

An exploration into the experiences of unemployed graduates

Dear prospective participant,

You are invited to take part in a research study that aims to understand the experiences that graduates have when they are unemployed. Before you decide whether or not to take part in this study, please take time to understand what the research is about.

The purpose of the study?

The study is conducted as a requirement of a master's degree in psychology and aims to study the effects of unemployment on people who have tertiary qualifications.

Why are you being invited to participate?

You have been selected to take part in the study because of your experience as an unemployed graduate and because the information that you have is valuable to this research.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time.

What will happen to me if I participate?

Interviews will be used to gather data and all that is needed approximately an hour of your time and your valuable input on the issue. The interview will be voice recorded and transcribed, after which you will be given the opportunity to verify the information in the transcript.

What are the potential benefits of taking part?

By taking part in this study you will be contributing to knowledge about the impact of unemployment on graduates. The information that you give will also be vital in assisting current students to be aware of the challenges that they may face after graduation.

Will what I say be kept confidential?

Your information will be kept confidential and your name will be kept anonymous throughout the research process.

Participant Signature:.....

Thank you!

Contact details_ Busisiwe Magagula: 0738500042

Appendix C: Interview guide

- 1) What did you study?
- 2) What led to tertiary education?
- 3) Did you come across any difficulties in your studies?
- 4) Who were your main sources of support during your studies?
- 5) In what ways did they support you?
- 6) How would you evaluate their support?
- 7) What are some of the challenges that you have faced, during your unemployment?
- 8) Do you still have support from others even now?
- 9) In what way are they supportive to you?
- 10) How would you evaluate the support given?
- 11) What steps have you taken to find employment?
- 12) Is there any advice that you could give to upcoming graduates that could be in the same situation as you?
- 13) Do you have any questions or comments about what we have spoken about?

Appendix D: Editing certificate

