

**MEANING IN WORK: THE DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION
AND EVALUATION OF A LOGOTHERAPY INTERVENTION IN A
HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION**

by

CORNELI VAN DER WALT

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SUPERVISOR: PROF D J GELDENHUYS

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DECLARATION

Name: Mrs C van der Walt

Student number: 3158-975-8

Degree: PhD in Consulting Psychology

MEANING IN WORK: THE DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF A LOGOTHERAPY INTERVENTION IN A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

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

SIGNATURE

DATE

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SUMMARY

MEANING IN WORK: THE DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF A LOGOTHERAPY INTERVENTION IN A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

Over the past five decades, universities across the globe have been subjected to powerful forces of change that have impacted their definition, governance and funding structures, and managerial practices. In South Africa, the reform process was amplified by the country's apartheid legacy and the political and socio-economic realities. Consequently, the transformation has resulted in the corporatisation of universities and the re-engineering of the academic profession into a managed profession that brought about a changed work environment with less secure conditions of employment, more expectations and increased work pressure, with diminished autonomy.

The changed and changing South African higher education environment has had and continues to have its effects on academic employees' well-being, health and morale. Limited research has investigated the sense of purpose and meaning and psychological health of academic employees. Moreover, there is an absence of empirical studies that have reported on the development and evaluation of a brief group-based meaning-centred intervention that focuses on both the sense of purpose and meaning, and psychological health of academic employees.

The primary aim of the study was to first explore the meaning and/or meaning frustration embedded in the academic employee experience, in order to develop and empirically assess a brief group-based meaning-centred intervention in a higher education setting. The intervention was articulated from a logotherapy perspective of Viktor Frankl's system of psychotherapy.

An intervention mixed methods design, consisting of four interdependent phases, was used to pursue the aim of the study. The phase one qualitative single case study was used to explore and describe the sense of meaning and/or meaning frustration embedded in academic employees' experiences. This was used as a means of developing and supporting the intervention that was implemented in the phase three quantitative quasi-experimental single-group pre/posttest study. Phase two was thus an applied phase where the intentional mixing of the qualitative and quantitative phases took place. Likewise, phase four was an applied phase since it was used to draw conclusions based on the integration of the phase one findings and the phase three results.

The results of the quantitative study indicated that the majority of academic employees

who participated in the study had a sense of definite purpose and meaning ($M_{PIL-post} = 114.59$, $SD_{PIL-post} = 18.04$) and psychological health, despite the changed and changing HE landscape. The main finding suggests that a logotherapy brief group-based intervention, with a strong cognitive restructuring component, may have a positive impact on the sense of purpose and meaning of academic employees, whilst reducing the presence of symptoms of depression, posttraumatic stress, binge eating and panic. The experience of purpose and meaning in work, and adaptive psychological coping, was related to academic employees' sense of making a difference in students' development, the appreciation they have received from students, their freedom of choice, their view of work as a calling, the unique benefits of working in HE, meaning beyond the meaning in the moment (ultimate meaning) and making a difference in colleagues' (staffs') lives.

Limitations in the study are noted and recommendations are made to formalise existential analysis as a research method of meaning informed organisational assessment.

Key terms: cognitive behavioural therapy, complexity, context, existential analysis, existential phenomenology, Viktor Frankl, higher education, logotherapy, frustration of meaning, meaning in life, meaning in work, mixed methods research, psychoanalysis, psychological health, search for meaning, systems theory

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
CBT	Cognitive behavioural therapy
CCM	Constant comparison method
DAG	Drawing association groups
DRR	Director
FG	Focus group
FGI	Focus group interviews
GHE	Global higher education
HE	Higher education
HEI	Higher education institution
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
HOD	Head of academic department
HPCSA	Health Professions Council of South Africa
IEASA	International Education Association of South Africa
IOP	Industrial and Organisational Psychology
IP	Intervention programme
IRB	Internal regulation board
LAE	Lecturing academic employee
MLQ	Meaning in Life Questionnaire
NA	Negative affect
NCHE	National Commission on Higher Education
NLAE	Non-lecturing academic employee
PA	Positive affect
PIL	Purpose in Life test
PDSQ	Psychiatric Diagnostic Screening Questionnaire
RATE	Rector's Award for Teaching Excellence
RE	Rational emotive
REBT	Rational emotive behavioural therapy
SA	South Africa/n
SAHE	South African higher education
UNISA	University of South Africa

Statistics

n	Number of participants
N	Total number of participants
M	Mean group value
SE	Standard error
SD	Standard deviation
p	p-value
z	z-value

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND SCIENTIFIC ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?

(Albert Einstein)

1.1 INTRODUCTION

“Prominent scholars have suggested that struggling to find meaning in life is centrally important and may be inherent to all people” (Weinslan, Ryan & Deci, 2012, p. 81). This study is about the development, implementation and evaluation of a brief meaning-centred group-based intervention at a higher education institution (HEI). The intervention is based on Viktor Frankl’s theory of logotherapy. Frankl regarded seeking meaning as the core motivation for human beings and as crucial for psychological health and personhood, as it is for survival (Steger, Frazier, Oishi & Kaler, 2006; Weinslan et al., 2012). As such, this research describes an intervention mixed methods study in which the principles of logotherapy were used in small groups in a higher education (HE) setting.

In Chapter 1 the background and scientific orientation of the research is provided. It gives the rationale for conducting this research study; articulates the problem statement, research questions and the aims of the study; demarcates the research project in terms of the paradigm perspectives; details the research design and methodology; provides a layout of the chapters to follow, and concludes with a summary of the chapter.

The background and rationale will include discussions on the international and the South African higher education (SAHE) landscapes; the impact thereof on South African (SA) academics and their careers; the emotional interlock between organisational and individual change processes and loss; the well-being of SA academics; and the importance of meaning for SAHE.

1.2 THE HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

The international HE landscape is the focus of discussion in the subsection below.

1.2.1 The international higher education landscape

International perspectives on HEIs claim that academic employees are a key resource (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009; Rowley, 1996). Rowley (1996, p.11) maintains that they particularly

account for a significant component of the budget and have a significant role to play in achieving the objectives of the institution. The performance of academic [employees], both as teachers and researchers and also as managers, determines, to a large extent, the quality of the student experience of [HE] and has a significant impact on student learning and thereby on the contribution that such institutions can make to society.

Across the globe, universities have been subjected to powerful forces of change in the past 50 years, with multifaceted and widespread impacts (cf. Altbach et al., 2009; Bundy, 2006; Kotecha, 2006; Maassen & Cloete, 2002). Understanding these changes is a difficult task because of their scope and complexity (Altbach et al., 2009). “One can, without risk or exaggeration speak of an academic ‘revolution’ – a series of transformations that have affected most aspects of postsecondary education worldwide” (Altbach et al., 2009, p. 1).

Reform packages emerged at the HE systems level (Bundy, 2006). They define universities, their governance and funding structures, as well as their managerial practices and how core activities should be performed (cf. Altbach et al., 2009; Bundy, 2006; Kotecha, 2006; Maassen & Cloete, 2002). As a result of these packages, the traditional academic profession has been deconstructed and consequently reconstructed into a managed profession (cf. Altbach et al., 2009; Bundy, 2006; Maassen & Cloete, 2002).

At the employee level, the impact is reflected in a relative decline of salaries, less secure conditions of employment, diminished autonomy and lower self-esteem (Bundy, 2006). Consequently, the atmosphere in universities has changed and is described as “busier and more apathetic, newer and more neglected, more impersonal, more fragmented” (Halsey, 1992 as cited in Bundy, 2006, p. 8).

Moreover, a direct link has been identified between the increasing amount of differentiation and fragmentation in modern organisations and the disappearance or loss of meaning in work (Chalofsky, 2010). The loss of meaning has an adverse impact on the motivation of employees, resulting in motivation theories being regarded as a surrogate for a search for meaning (Chalofsky, 2010). Hence, Chalofsky (2010) argued that if an individual’s work is meaningful in and of itself and the organisation is a place where the individual feels safe, valued and well treated, then there would be no need to motivate him/her to work.

1.2.2 South African higher education landscape

The combination of globalisation, the legacy of apartheid and SA's political and socio-economic reality posed (and continues to pose) many challenges for the HE sector (Bundy, 2006; Gibbon & Kabaki, 2002; Webster & Mosoetsa, 2001). The 1994 democratically elected government identified an education landscape characterised by social, political and economic inequalities of a class, race, gender, institutional and spatial nature as a key area for economic and social transformation and development (Badat, 2007). Consequently, the reform of the SAHE system was extensive due to the implementation of a wide array of transformation orientated initiatives which left no domain of HE untouched (Badat, 2007). It has included

the definition of the purpose and goals of HE; extensive policy research; policy formulation, adoption, and implementation in the areas of governance, funding, academic structures and programmes, and quality assurance; the enactment of new laws and regulations; and major restructuring and reconfiguration of the institutional landscape and of institutions (Badat, 2007, p. 5).

Despite these extensive reform initiatives, there are views that the process did not exactly go as planned and that the outcomes of some of the reform initiatives were not completely unexpected (cf. Cloete, 2002, 2015, 2016a, 2016b; Habib, 2013).

1.2.3 The impact of the reform initiatives on SA academics and their careers

Academic careers have been profoundly shaped by the reformation of the HE system over the past 20 years (White Paper, 2013). This was triggered by global changes in academic work and local political pressures and is evident in numerous factors that affect academic work (e.g. publication pressure, the corporatisation of universities, greater administrative responsibilities, resource constraints, pressure to bring in outside funding, the growth and use of technology to support academic work and the pressures of teaching in a context of low throughput rates) (White Paper, 2013).

The combination of rapid changes presented major challenges for academic employees. It resulted in paradigm shifts, the implementation of new policies and practices, changes in values, attitudes and behaviour, and a multiplicity of roles (e.g. teacher, researcher, advisor, facilitator, colleague, marketer, tutor, writer, manager) as well as the quest for constant innovation (Rothmann, Barkhuizen & Tytherleigh, 2008; Viljoen, 2006; Viljoen & Rothmann, 2002).

The effects of these changes were noticed in academics' deteriorating relationships with management, an intensification of their workloads, a loss of shared identity and feelings of insecurity, distrust, impotence and being regulated (Bundy, 2006; Gibbon & Kabaki, 2002; Webster & Mosoetsa, 2001). Unsurprisingly, Mapesela and Hay (2005) identified a range of both negative and positive emotions triggered due to academic employees' interpretations of the new reform policies as a violation of their academic roles and freedom, or not (see Chapter 2, section 2.5).

1.2.4 The emotional interlock between organisational and individual change processes, and loss

Negative consequences of organisational change have been identified as

low morale, stress, low self-esteem, disorientation, mistrust, loss of direction and control, anxiety, uncertainty, insecurity, outrage, sadness, eroded loyalty, lack of commitment, fear, excessive caution, and low risk taking (Shanley, 2007, p. 543).

All changes involve losses (cf. Franklin, 2003; Kübler-Ross, 1969; Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005; Viljoen & Rothmann, 2002). The relationship between employees and the organisation is thought to be deep-seated, largely unconscious, intimately connected to the development of identity and as having emotional content (Bloom, 2011). The interconnection between individual and collective identity denotes a tendency for organisational change to manifest as loss and grieving processes (Bloom, 2011).

Moreover, organisational and individual actions mirror each other when experiencing difficult emotions that are too threatening or too painful to acknowledge (Lewis, 2012). Diamond and Allcorn (2009, p. vi) explained this dynamic as "artefacts of human nature" since it is individuals' creations, imagination and operations that give existence to organisations. As such, an explicit link between the human mind (and nature) and organisational life (and mind) is implied. Diamond and Allcorn (2009, p. vi) encapsulated this interrelation as

objectively, subjectively, intersubjectively conceived interrelational systems existing outside and inside the human mind. Their experiential nature encompasses their social, economic, technological, and political attributes. These relational and structural tensions, ambiguities, and eccentricities are the essence of the workplace.

Difficulties managing the change process may be reflected in employee reports on the changes as stressful and worrying (Shanley, 2007). It may cause emotional responses

(e.g. anxiety and grief reactions) that escalate to levels that would typically be associated with traumatic incidents (e.g. disasters, catastrophes or abuse) (Shanley, 2007; Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005). As such, emotional states that an individual may experience during change processes are equilibrium, denial, anger, bargaining, chaos, depression, acceptance, openness, readiness and re-emergence (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005). Viljoen and Rothmann (2002) compared these emotional experiences to individuals who find themselves in the midst of the mourning process as described by Kübler-Ross (1969). Similarly, Franklin (2003) wrote about Adams, Hayes and Hopson's (1976) seven stage model of the relationship between life transition or change and self-esteem. This model delineated the stages as immobilisation, minimisation of the implications, depression, acceptance, testing out new ways, searching for meaning and internalisation. The above nomenclature clearly suggests the experience of loss and grief. Franklin (2003, p. 182) explained these emotional processes by avowing that

[c]hange is endings, transitions and new beginnings. It's about being able to say 'goodbye' to something old in order to say 'hello' to something new. Inevitably there is an element of loss as well as gain. The process of change requires acknowledgement, an understanding of the processes involved for individuals within an organization and it also requires time to be fully integrated.

Despite the intimate relationship between organisations and individuals, the personal and emotional facets of organisational reform processes may be downplayed, not recognised, or even considered to be a personal weakness (Flagello, 2014; Franklin, 2003; Shanley, 2007). This is ascribed to the prominent focus on managerial thought, action and training, and implies the negligence of the human factor that may be reflected in employees' dissatisfaction, diminished loyalty and reduced productivity with the ultimate risk of poor business performance (Shanley, 2007). Moreover, when these emotions and tensions are unacknowledged, it may affect the well-being of employees which may hinder the organisation from fulfilling its role (Lewis, 2012).

1.2.5 The well-being of SA academics

With respect to the well-being of SA academic employees, several local studies (cf. Barkhuizen, 2005; Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010; Coetzee & Rothmann, 2005; Field & Buitendach, 2011; Rothmann et al., 2008; Rothmann & Essenko, 2007; Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006; Viljoen, 2006; Viljoen & Rothman, 2009) were conducted in HEIs during the period 2005 to 2011, mainly in the field of Industrial and Organisational Psychology (IOP). The impact of the typical factors that operate in

organisations and thus also in the academic world of work was explored in these studies (see Chapter 2, section 2.5, Table 2.3). This body of research started to emerge approximately a decade after the beginning of democratisation in 1994. The factors investigated were occupational stress, ill-health, job characteristics, burnout, job-satisfaction, optimism, sense of coherence, work engagement, organisational commitment and work-related well-being of academic and support staff in HE. The aforementioned reflected a need to have an understanding of the factors that adversely impact and/or mitigate the influences that negatively impact the well-being, health and morale of academic employees whilst in the midst of major and ongoing institutional changes (see Chapter 2, section 2.5).

On the individual level, the outcome of the studies indicated high levels of tension (e.g. headaches, nausea, muscular tension/pains and insomnia) and presented a clinical picture of anxiety and depression (e.g. panic attacks, constant irritability/anger, mood swings, tiredness, inability to cope, avoidance of other people and suicide ideation) (see Chapter 2, section 2.5, Table 2.3) (Kaplan & Sadock, 2003). The main recommendation gleaned from these studies was that HEIs should intervene to reduce the occupational stress of academic and support staff. Interventions to enhance the meaningfulness of work were recommended as part of a holistic treatment outcome (cf. Barkhuizen, 2005; Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010; Coetzee & Rothmann, 2005; Field & Buitendach, 2011; Rothmann et al., 2008; Rothmann & Essenko, 2007; Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006; Viljoen, 2006; Viljoen & Rothman, 2009).

1.2.6 The significance of meaning for HE

Burger (2012, p.53) argued that “organisations, assisting employees to find meaning in work is by no means an altruistic venture – it makes business sense”. This refers to the consistent association of benefits to employees and organisations (Burger, 2007, 2012; Burger, Crous & Roodt, 2008; Steger, Dik & Duffy, 2012).

Benefits signify the positive relationship between the experience of meaning and change readiness, work motivation, positive work attitudes and organisational commitment (Burger et al., 2008). In the context of change, the meaning that employees find in the workplace is considered as a fundamental factor determining employees’ attitudes towards organisational change efforts (Burger, 2007; Burger, Crous & Roodt, 2012). Geldenhuys, Łaba and Venter (2014) identified a meaningful job as work that provides fulfilment, autonomy, work satisfaction and engagement, working relations and learning experiences.

On an individual level, various empirical studies provided support for a positive association between meaning in life, life satisfaction, psychological health and the ability to cope effectively with past stressful life events (cf. Brat, 2001; Hill, Burrow, O'Dell & Thornton, 2010; Lantz & Lantz, 1992; Litwinczuk, 2007; Marsh, Smith, Piek & Saunders, 2003; Steger, 2012; Whitehead, 2003; Wong, 2010). In addition, a sense of meaning has been shown to be associated with reduced levels of anxiousness and depression, and increased levels of self-confidence, self-acceptance, resiliency, work enjoyment, achievement, responsibility, self-control, hope, faith, love, happiness and subjective well-being (cf. Kleftras & Psarra, 2012; Schulenberg & Melton, 2010; Steger, 2012; Steger et al., 2006).

Therefore, employees who consider their work as meaningful and serving a higher purpose view their work as more central and important, place higher value on their work and may ultimately report greater job satisfaction, work unit cohesion and well-being (Steger et al., 2012). It has been found that employees who “say their work is meaningful and/or serves some social or communal good report better psychological adjustment, and simultaneously possess qualities that are desirable to organizations” (Steger et al., 2012, p. 2).

Mayhew (2005) noted that changes in an organisation that trigger emotional reactions and concurrent loss processes suggest that individuals may move from a sense of meaning to a sense of meaninglessness (or lowered levels of meaning) that will require them to renegotiate meaning in the workplace in order for them to adjust to and find meaning in their changed work circumstances. Likewise, Burger (2007) argued that organisational change poses a threat to employees' experience of meaning in the workplace that often brings about resistance to change. Therefore, an understanding of “how to create, experience, manage, and maintain meaningful work” may culminate in “optimum and sustainable work outcomes for individuals and organizations” (Albrecht, 2013, p. 239).

Moreover, Kahn (1990) defined psychological meaningfulness as a state where individuals have a sense of reaping the benefits from investing their physical, cognitive and/or emotional energy in the workplace. When individuals feel that they are appreciated, valued and that they are making a difference, they are free to give to and receive from others and the work itself. In contrast, individuals experience a sense of meaninglessness when little is asked or expected of them and when there is little room for them to give or to receive in their work roles (Kahn, 1990). It is clear that psychological meaningfulness reflects how people invest themselves in tasks and roles that satisfy personal and existential needs for meaning in work and life (Kahn, 1990).

As such, the importance and centrality of a sense of meaning has been highlighted and it was established that it has been researched and applied in the organisational, psychiatric/psychological and health contexts (cf. Burger, 2007, 2012; Burger et al., 2008, 2012; Brat, 2001; De Klerk, Boshoff & Van Wyk, 2009; Hill et al., 2010; Lantz & Lantz, 1992; Litwinczuk, 2007; Nygren, Alex, Jonsen & Gustafson, 2005; Schreurs, Bakker & Schaufeli, 2009; Whitehead, 2003; Wong, 2010). Likewise, the significance of work in an individual's experience of life as meaningful has been emphasised (cf. Burger, 2007; Burger et al., 2008; Burger et al., 2012; De Klerk, 2005; Dik, Byrne & Steger, 2013; Driver, 2007; Geldenhuys et al., 2014, Scholtz, 2013; Scholtz, Crous & Thomas, 2015; Van Jaarsveld, 2004).

It is clear that an individual's experience of meaning in life and in the workplace can have numerous benefits, not only for the individuals themselves, but also for organisations (cf. Burger et al., 2008; Burger, 2012; Kleftaras & Psarra, 2012; Marsh et al., 2003; Schulenberg & Melton, 2010; Steger et al., 2012; Steger et al., 2006). In particular, meaning has proven to be an important factor in dealing with changing life circumstances which includes changes in the workplace (cf. Burger, 2007, 2012; Burger et al., 2008, 2012; Scheurs et al., 2009).

It is alarming that the growing body of research pertaining to academic employees' morale and well-being indicates that the changes happening in this environment are taking their toll on the human component and that this poses serious challenges and cost implications for HEIs if left unaddressed (see Chapter 2, section 2.5, Table 2.4) (cf. Barkhuizen, 2005; Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010; Coetzee & Rothmann, 2005; Field & Buitendach, 2011; Rothmann et al., 2008; Rothmann & Essenko, 2007; Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006; Viljoen, 2006; Viljoen & Rothman, 2009).

Steger and Dik (2009) argued that meaning matters for well-being regardless whether the meaning is experienced in a specific life domain (e.g. work) or in an individual's life as a whole. However, they maintained that for those individuals who search for "global meaning in life, experiencing career meaning improves well-being and confidence in their career decisions" (Steger & Dik, 2009, p. 316). Therefore, it is apparent that the ability to find meaning in life and work may not only have benefits for individuals and/or groups of academic employees, but also for HEIs. This suggests a need for a more holistic and deeper understanding of academic employees' sense of meaning in work and life.

1.3 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There are limited studies pertaining to meaning in life and the use of logotherapeutic principles in the SA context, especially in the HE sector (Du Plessis, 1983, 1984, 1986, 1989; Hutchinson, Stuart & Pretorius, 2007; Makola, 2013; Makola, 2014; Makola & Van den Berg, 2008a, 2008b; Mason, 2014a; Mason, 2014b; Mason, 2017; Mason & Nel, 2011; Scholtz, 2013). The few studies that the researcher could find focused on the purpose and meaning in the lives of students and how this impacted on their academic performance, coping and development. Likewise, the researcher could only find a small number of studies pertaining to meaning and applying logotherapeutic theory and principles in the SA organisational context (Burger, 2007; Burger, 2012; Burger et al., 2008; Burger et al., 2012; Makola, 2013; Makola, 2015; Van Jaarsveld, 2004).

The studies in the SA organisational context were mainly empirical studies (Burger, 2007; Burger, 2012; Burger et al., 2008; Burger et al., 2012; Makola, 2013; Makola, 2015; Van Jaarsveld, 2004). The findings of these studies supported the application of logotherapy principles in the organisational sphere (Burger, 2007; Burger, 2012; Burger et al., 2008; Burger et al., 2012; Makola, 2013; Makola, 2015; Van Jaarsveld, 2004).

Fundamentally, meaning in life is regarded as a positive variable of psychological health, adaptive coping and a marker for development (Steger et al., 2006; Steger, 2012). Steger (2012) argued that, although there is no solid evidence that meaning in life reduces stress or psychopathology, there is substantial evidence to make a case for meaning in life to be considered as part of the overall picture of psychological health and functioning. Therefore, Steger (2012) suggested that meaning in life deserves to be studied as an essential outcome variable for therapeutic intervention and/or the inspiration for new meaning-based interventions.

It is clear that the changing SAHE environment has had (and may continue to have) effects on academic employees which may involve diminished or a loss of meaning for some but no research has been done to explore the meaning experiences of academic employees amidst various and ongoing changes in the HE sector. As such, the following gaps in the existing body of IOP and/or HE literature can be identified:

- There are limited qualitative investigations to explain the phenomenon of meaning in the HE context.
- There are limited empirical investigations that focus on the sense of meaning of academic employees.

- There are limited empirical investigations that focused on the psychological health of academic employees.
- No research study could be found that focused on the development and implementation of a logotherapy brief group-based intervention to enhance the sense of meaning of academic employees.
- No research study could be found that reported on the efficacy of a logotherapeutic brief group-based intervention among academic employees.
- No research study could be found that used a mixed methods research design to assist with the development, implementation and evaluation of a logotherapeutic brief group-based intervention for academic employees.

Altbach et al. (2009, p. 89) argued that academic employees are a neglected corps in relation to other “more important” institutional matters. They contended that, in essence, it is people (e.g. well qualified academic employees) or, in other words, the “software”, that make HEIs successful over and above impressive “hardware” (e.g. state of the art campuses, impressive resources and technology, an innovative curriculum, etc.). Therefore, the research primarily acts upon the question of whether a logotherapy brief group-based intervention, utilising the principles of Frankl’s theory and logotherapy, can be developed and successfully applied in a HE setting.

1.3.1 The research questions

Following on the above, seven sub-questions were formulated in order to answer the primary question whether a logotherapy brief group-based intervention, utilising the principles of Frankl’s theory and logotherapy, can be developed and successfully applied in a HE setting.

The questions are as follows:

- 1.3.1.1 What are the characteristics of the current HE environment?
- 1.3.1.2 What does Viktor E. Frankl’s theory and logotherapy entail?
- 1.3.1.3 What are the sources of meaning and/or meaning frustration for academic employees’ in their work?
- 1.3.1.4 How can a logotherapy brief group-based intervention be developed?
- 1.3.1.5 How can a logotherapy brief group-based intervention be applied in a HE setting?

- 1.3.1.6 What is the impact of a logotherapy brief group-based intervention in a HE setting?
- 1.3.1.7 What are the implications of the results for the brief logotherapy group-based intervention?

The following are the research aims.

1.4 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The central research aim is to develop and apply a logotherapy brief group-based intervention in a HE setting. To accomplish the aim, the following sub-aims were delineated:

1.4.1 The specific aims related to the literature review were:

- 1.4.1.1 To describe the changed and changing HE landscape and the consequences for and impact thereof on academic employees (specific aim one).
- 1.4.1.2 To conceptualise Viktor E. Frankl's theory and logotherapy (specific aim two).

1.4.2 The empirical aims related to the study were:

- 1.4.1.3 To explore and describe the meaning and/or meaning frustration embedded in the academic employees' work experience (specific aim three).
- 1.4.1.4 To develop and implement a logotherapy brief group-based intervention for academic employees based on their work experiences (specific aim four).
- 1.4.1.5 To determine the impact of a logotherapy brief group-based intervention on the sense of meaning and psychological health of academic employees (specific aim five).
- 1.4.1.6 To identify and discuss the implications of the results for the logotherapy brief group-based intervention and to make recommendations for future research (specific aim six).

1.5 PARADIGM PERSPECTIVES

The professional and meta-theoretical contexts for this study are discussed in sections 1.5.1 and 1.5.2. The professional context refers to the discipline of IOP and the sub-discipline of organisational psychology. The meta-theoretical context refers to pragmatism as the guiding research paradigm for the study.

The operational definitions for the core constructs assessed in this study (sense of purpose and meaning in life, presence of meaning, search for meaning and psychological health) are provided in section 1.5.3. The psychological paradigm that provided the lens for interpretation is discussed in section 1.5.4. The psychological paradigm refers to humanism or phenomenology with reference to Frankl's existential theory and logotherapy.

1.5.1 Professional context

This research is part of the discipline of IOP and the sub-discipline of organisational psychology.

As an applied division of psychology, IOP is "both an academic and an applied field concerned with the study of human behaviour related to work, organisations and productivity in a particular type of location, that is, almost any kind of organisation" (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2010).

The field of organisational psychology "is concerned with the organisation as a system involving individuals and groups and the structure and dynamics of the organisation. The basic aims are fostering work adjustment, satisfaction and productivity, as well as organisational efficiency" (Theron, 1999, p. 17).

As such, the impetus of the IOP academic field is "to generate new knowledge and solutions with a view to addressing the critical challenges and issues stemming from the particular socio-economic contexts in which organisations are located" (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2010). This is realised through studying diverse topics (both theoretically and empirically) in the various subfields of IOP (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2010). The field of applied IOP then draws from the psychological principles and new knowledge and solutions generated by research to solve problems in the work context (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2010).

1.5.2 Meta-theoretical context

The pragmatist approach was indicated as a philosophical basis for this research project because "it draws on many ideas, employing 'what works', using diverse approaches, and valuing both objective and subjective knowledge" (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011, p. 43). The pragmatist position is the most useful philosophy to support mixed methods research since it is non-foundational and does not strive for essential and timeless truths (cf. Creswell, 2009; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007;

Marshall, Kelder & Perry, 2005; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016; Plowright, 2011).

Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) explained the formal link between pragmatism and mixed methods research. They argued for both quantitative and qualitative research methods to be used in a single study requiring the forced-choice dichotomy between quantitative research (e.g. postpositivism) and qualitative research (e.g. social constructionism) to be abandoned, including metaphysical concepts such as truth and reality. They rather argued for a practical and applied research philosophy to guide methodological choices. Therefore, the research question(s) should be of primary importance, even more important than either the method or the philosophical worldview that underlies the method (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Plowright, 2011).

By abandoning the forced-choice dichotomy, qualitative research provides several advantages for research into meaning in work and life, partly because of the nature of its methods and partly because of the nature of the topic (O'Connor & Chamberlain, 2000; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Qualitative methodologies are typically applied to a research question to explore how and why a phenomenon occurs, to develop a theory or to describe the nature of an individual's experience (Fetters, Curry & Creswell, 2013). Since there is a difference between the objectives and ontological and epistemological stances of qualitative and quantitative perspectives, qualitative researchers value and give priority to the participants' own experiences and points of view (e.g. thoughts, feeling and perceptions about the phenomenon being investigated); seek to avoid the burden of the researcher's viewpoint through the use of predetermined theoretical frameworks or measures; seek to provide rich descriptive accounts of phenomena; promote understanding rather than prediction; provide interpretation rather than facts; and seek to include the value systems and social contexts of individuals in any interpretation (Creswell, 2003; O'Connor & Chamberlain, 2000).

Likewise, quantitative research is referred to as positivist and/or post-positivist research and empirical science (Creswell, 2003) which typically entails some form of empirical study. However, regardless of the form of study, it is considered to be reductionist since its intent is "to reduce the [research] ideas into a small, discrete set of ideas to test, such as the variable that constitute hypotheses and research questions" (Creswell, 2003, p. 7). In contrast to qualitative research, the experiences and voices of participants are disregarded. However, despite this disadvantage and the notion that it reflects an objective reality "out there in the world", quantitative research offers benefits such as numeric measurements and the testing or verifying of ideas translated to hypotheses in order to understand phenomena like meaning in work and life (Creswell, 2003, p. 7).

Therefore, the ontological (nature and form of reality/truth), epistemological (nature/theory of knowledge) and axiological (role of researchers' values in the scientific process) assumptions of pragmatism (Aliyu, Bello, Kasim & Martin, 2014; Creswell, 2003; Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Lor, 2011; Pickard, 2013; Pickard & Dixon, 2004; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016; Ponterotto, 2005; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2004) imply that:

- The viewpoints about reality are diverse and suggest the appreciation of objective, subjective and intersubjective realities and their interrelations;
- Knowledge is gained through iterations of independent observations and subjective constructions, founded in pragmatic justification (what works for whom in specific contexts and, as such, informed by community-based specific need-based standards); and
- The influence of a researcher's values is particularly important for stating the research questions and drawing conclusions even though attention is given to carefully contained value biases and uncontained values and lived experiences.

Bishop (2014) provided an alternative though complementary view on the pragmatist approach. She maintained that "one interpretation of pragmatism for mixed methods research is to ask not whether the knowledge produced by research accurately 'represents' reality but whether it has valuable external consequences in the context of the researcher's own time and place" (Bishop, 2014, p. 7). She also held that mixed methods research advocates "a shared aim for all research – to produce positive changes in the world" (2014, p. 7). For organisational psychologists, this implies that such consequences may include improved quality of life for individuals with a particular condition (e.g. low sense of meaning in life, lack of resiliency skills, poor adjustment skills, poor stress management skills, low morale, low self-esteem, less adaptive psychological functioning, among others) (Bishop, 2014).

An overview of the operational definitions for the core constructs that were measured in this study is presented in the subsection below.

1.5.3 Operational definitions

The operational definitions for the core constructs were:

1.5.3.1 Sense of purpose and meaning in life

According to Frankl (1988, 2000, 2006), individuals' primary motivation is the will to meaning, or to search for and find meaning and purpose in human existence (Crumbaugh

& Maholick, 1969). “Meaning in work refers to the subjective experience that one’s work has significance, facilitates personal growth, and contributes to the greater good” (Allan, Duffy & Douglas, 2015, p. 324). Allan et al. (2015, p. 324) argued that “meaning in work is considered a sub-domain of meaning that acts as a potential source of meaning in life”. Likewise, Isaksen (2000) argued that meaning in work is not fully determined by work conditions since meaning is regarded as an existential capacity of human beings. Hence, “there is some reason to suspect that meaning in work may translate into higher meaning in life” (Allan et al., 2015, p. 324).

When the will to meaning is interrupted or blocked, existential frustration (an existential vacuum) may emerge (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1969; Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006). Individuals are thus challenged to find that unique meaning for themselves (Melton & Schulenberg, 2008). As such, the sense of meaning and purpose in life was defined as the extent to which participants have found purpose and meaning in life as measured by the Purpose in Life test (PIL) (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1969).

1.5.3.2 Presence of, and Search for meaning

Steger et al. (2006, p. 81) defined Presence of meaning as “the sense made of, and significance felt regarding the nature of one’s being and existence”. This definition allowed participants to use their own criteria for meaning (Steger et al., 2006). In addition, Search for meaning in life was defined as “the strength, intensity, and activity of people’s desires and efforts *to establish and/or augment* their understanding of the meaning, significance, and purpose of their lives” (Steger, Kashdan, Sullivan & Lorentz, 2008, p. 200).

The following are the operational definitions for Presence of meaning and Search for Meaning:

a Presence of meaning

Presence of meaning was defined as how full of meaning the participants felt their lives were, as measured by the Presence subscale of the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) (Steger et al., 2006; Steger, 2010).

b Search for meaning

Search for meaning was defined as how engaged and motivated participants were in efforts to find meaning or deepen their understanding of meaning in their lives, as measured by the Search subscale of the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) (Steger et

al., 2006; Steger, 2010).

1.5.3.3 Psychological health

Frankl (1988, 2000, 2006) suggested that the difficulty in finding purpose and meaning in life is related to frustration, emptiness and boredom that could lead to several psychological problems (e.g. depression, anxiety, eating disturbances, substance abuse/dependency) (Crumbaugh & Maholic, 1969).

Participant psychological health was therefore defined as the absence or presence of minimal symptoms on the depression, anxiety (post traumatic stress, obsession compulsion, panic, social anxiety, generalised anxiety), bulimia/binge eating and substance abuse/dependency subscales as measured by the Psychiatric Diagnostic Screening Questionnaire (PDSQ) (Zimmerman, 2002).

See Chapter 4, section 4.3.5.1(d) for the rationale for including this instrument in the overall design of the intervention.

1.5.4 Humanism or phenomenology as the psychological paradigm for this study

The psychological paradigm for the study is humanism. It is referred to as humanism in America and phenomenology in Europe (Theron, 1999). The phenomenological view is founded in the thinking of European existentialist philosophers and has free will as its basic tenet (Theron, 1999). At its core, free will refers to people who are “free to set their own goals in life and are responsible for their own choices” (Theron, 1999, p. 12).

Frankl’s theory falls within the ambit of existential phenomenology (Graber, 2004; Kimble & Ellor, 2000; Lantz, 2000; Shantall, 1997). His self-actualisation theory and therapy provide a way to search for and discover meaning in work and life (Theron, 1999). Frankl (1986, 1988, 2000, 2006) claimed that the disappearance or loss of meaning in contemporary societies leads to much suffering, therefore he proposed that the will to meaning or, in other words, the freedom to search for and discover meaning in life, is the primary motivating force in the lives of all individuals. For that reason, it is possible for individuals to search for and discover meaning in the present, despite difficult and stressful conditions and/or realities (Frankl, 1986, 1988, 2000, 2006).

Basically, the search for meaning is about individuals’ commitment to meaningful values, goals or attitudes that are realised through a clear intention in life (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2012; Pattakos, 2004). “Actualizing such values is not only the quid quo pro of the human quest for meaning, it also provides a useful point of reference on reflecting on the search

for meaning in work, including working in HE” (adapted from Pattakos, 2004, p. 107). Meaning can only be discovered through an individual’s reflection on life experiences and active engagement in the world with other people (Shantall, 2002, 2003). This reflects a dynamic in which both the individual and the organisation act together to determine the experience of meaning (Geldenhuys et al., 2014).

Frankl’s theory (1986, 1988, 2000, 2006) therefore provided a lens for the interpretation of the phase one qualitative study and the phase three quantitative study. Therefore, the key theoretical concepts relevant to the study are:

- Conscience is “that capacity which empowers a person to seize the meaning of a situation in its very uniqueness” (Graber, 2004, p. 203).
- Existential frustration is “frustration of the will-to-meaning (which) may lead to neurosis. It is in itself neither pathological nor pathogenic. A man’s conscience even his despair, over the worthwhileness of life is a spiritual distress by no means a mental disease” (Graber, 2004, p. 204).
- Existential neurosis, as opposed to clinical neurosis, is a “sense of despair over the meaning of life” (Graber, 2004, p. 204).
- Existential vacuum is “a general sense of meaninglessness and emptiness, an ‘inner void’, an ‘abyss-experience’” (Graber, 2004, p. 204).
- Freedom – “freedom to something – a freely taken attitude towards these conditions” (Graber, 2004, p. 205).
- Logotherapy “focuses on the meaning of human existence as well as on man’s search for such a meaning. According to logotherapy, the striving to find meaning in one’s life is the primary motivational force in man. It is a psychotherapy which not only recognizes man’s spirit, but actually starts from it” (Graber, 2004, p. 206).
- Meaning in life is “neither reachable nor unreachable, not repeatable or replaceable. The meaning of life lies in pursuit” (Graber, 2004, p. 206).
- Noögenic neuroses “do not emerge from conflicts between drives and instincts but from conflicts between various values” (Graber, 2004, p. 208).
- Self-transcendence is “our ability to reach beyond ourselves to people we love or to causes that are important to us” (Graber, 2004, p. 209).
- Values “do not drive a man; they do not push him, but rather pull him” (Graber, 2004, p. 210).
- Will-to-meaning, according to logotherapy, is “the striving to find a meaning in one’s life [which] is the primary motivational force in man” (Graber, 2004, p. 210).

Frankl (1988, 2000, 2006) considered his theory and logotherapy to be non-specific and compatible and complementary to other theories and approaches. For this reason, the researcher also drew from other theories and approaches (e.g. clinical, family systems, and psychoanalytical perspectives) to enhance analysis and to invite results that might not have been intended or specified (Palma, 1976). However, the researcher ensured that Frankl's theory remained the primary lens for analysis and interpretation throughout the study.

The following is a discussion on the research design for this study.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is the key to all types of research studies. Research designs are “the plans and the procedures for research that span the decision from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis” (Creswell, 2009, p. 3). The factors informing the decision of a research design are the nature of the research problem or the issues being addressed, the researcher's personal experiences, the audience for the study, the philosophical assumptions (metatheories) that the researcher brings to the study, procedures of inquiry (called strategies) and specific methods of data collection, data analyses, logic by which interpretations are made and the reporting of the findings (Creswell, 2009, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

A mixed methods approach was central to this study (cf. Creswell, 2013; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013; Fetters et al., 2013; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016; Rogers, Day, Randall & Bentall, 2003). However, in the domain of mixed methods research, additional factors may have to be considered when designing a study (for example, how to use the secondary data results when the secondary should be incorporated into the primary data set) (cf. Bamberger, 2012; Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016; Rogers et al., 2003).

1.6.1 Intervention mixed methods approach

An intervention mixed methods design was utilised in the study. It is a design that draws from both the embedded and exploratory mixed methods research designs (cf. Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013; Fetters, et al., 2013; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016; Rogers et al., 2003).

Characteristically, this type of design entails adding a larger framework that incorporates

the basic design into one of the basic designs (Fetters et al., 2013). The larger framework may then typically involve a multistage, an intervention, a case study or participatory research framework (Creswell, 2013; Fetter et al., 2013; Rogers et al., 2003). In essence, it is about embedding (or nesting) a secondary method within a primary quantitative or qualitative research design (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016; Rogers et al., 2003). The rationale is that one set of data has a supportive, supplementary and/or complementary secondary role in the study or, in other words, is of service to the primary design (Bamberger, 2012; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016; Rogers et al., 2003).

It is apparent that a multitude of possibilities exist for intersecting mixed methods with other approaches (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). Researchers following this approach “add a level of complexity to their use of mixed methods by intentionally intersecting (embedding or joining) a mixed methods design with another research design, methodological approach, or theoretical framework” (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016, p. 138). Embedding one methodology within another leads to “interlocking contrasting inquiry characteristics in a framework of creative tension” (Caracelli & Greene, 1997 as cited in Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016, p. 140).

Figure 1.1 represents the intervention mixed methods approach as it operated in this study (cf. Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013; Fetters et al., 2013; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016; Rogers et al., 2003) and shows that the study was divided into four phases.

Phase one was about the preliminary development of the intervention to be implemented in the phase three quantitative study and conducting the qualitative study *before the* phase three quantitative study.

Phase two entailed the development of the preliminary intervention, based on the meaning and meaning frustration embedded in the academic employees’ work experiences (phase one), or in other words developing the design of the phase three quantitative study (or intervention). Phase two was thus regarded as the phase where the intentional mixing or embedding took place.

The quantitative study was conducted in phase three, or in other words the implementation of the intervention.

In phase four final conclusions were drawn, the implications of the results of the intervention were discussed and recommendations for future research were made.

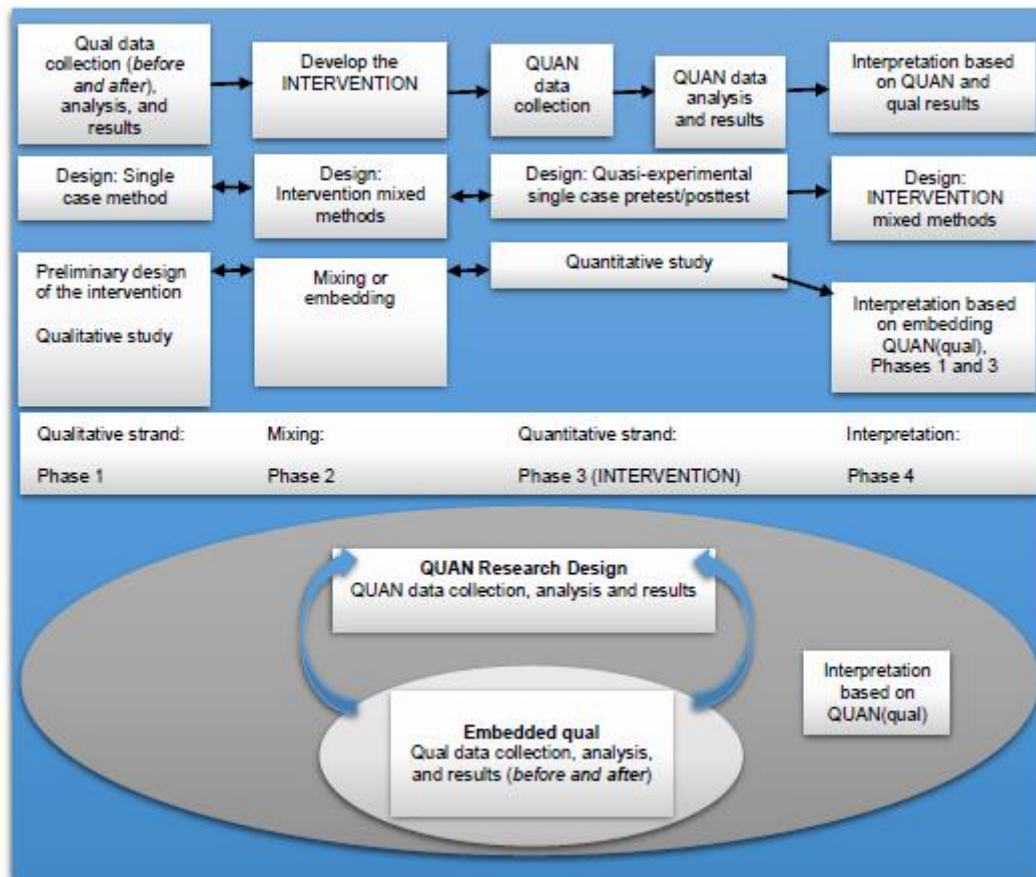


Figure 1.1. *Intervention mixed methods design*

Summaries of the different phases and the objectives and methodologies of each phase is provided in Figure 1.2.

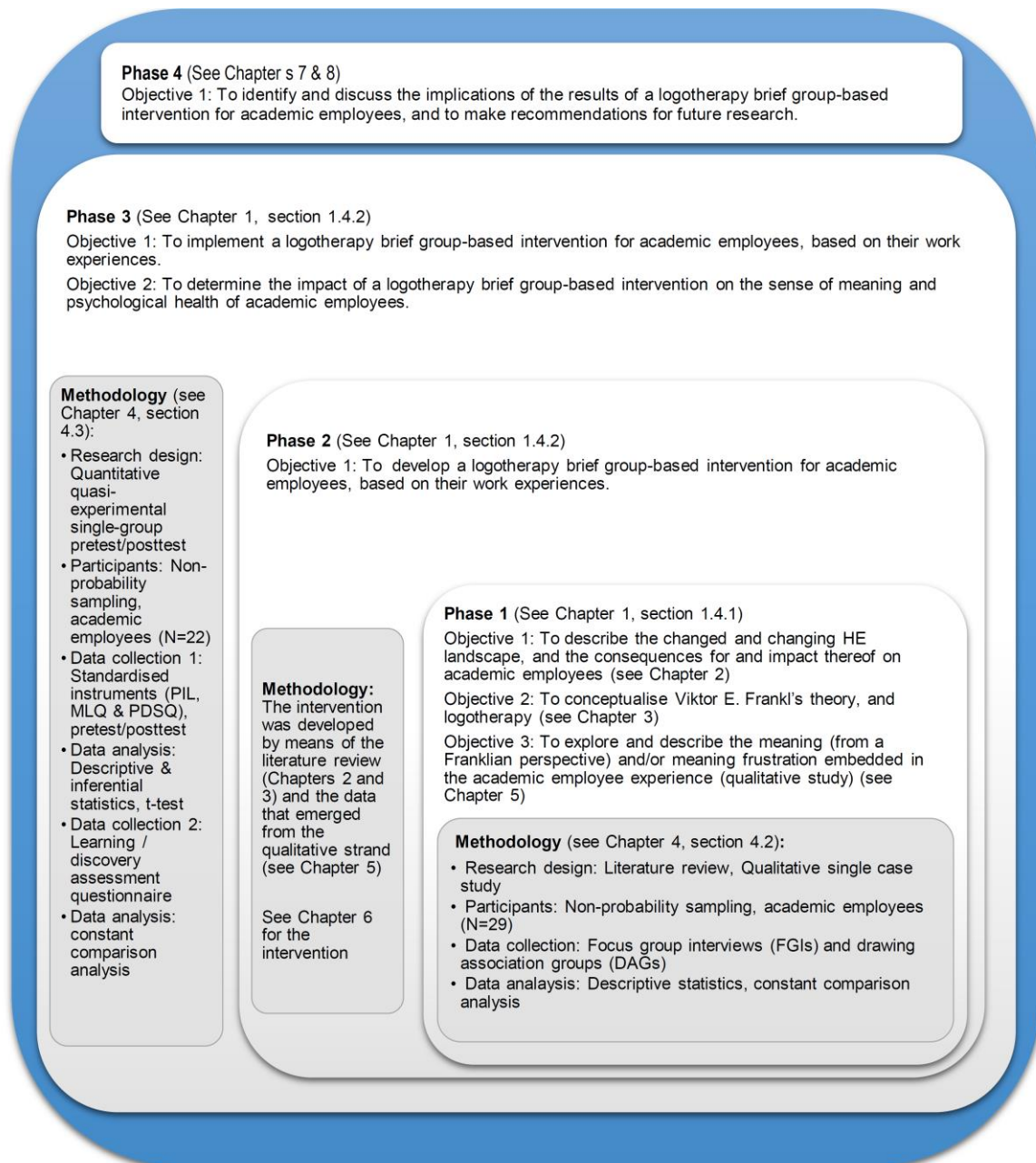


Figure 1.2. Phases of the intervention mixed methods design

The phase one study entailed the literature review, the preliminary design of the intervention and the qualitative study to explore the meaning and/or meaning frustration phenomena in context.

The phase two study consisted of the development of the preliminary design of the intervention (see Figure 1.3) to be implemented in the phase three quantitative study. The development was informed by the findings from the phase one qualitative study (the

academic employees' meaning and/or meaning frustration experiences). This was regarded as the phase where the intentional mixing of the qualitative and quantitative strands took place. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, p. 63) explained a strand as “a component of a study that encompasses the basic process of conducting qualitative or quantitative research: posing a question, collecting data, analysing data and interpreting results based on that data”. As such, four key decisions determined the different ways in which the quantitative and qualitative strands of the study connected and interacted with each other. These decisions were:

- the level of interaction between the strands;
- the relative priority of the strands;
- the timing of the strands; and
- the procedures for mixing the strands.

Phase three was the quantitative study (the implementation of the intervention). It included the assessment of the participants' sense of purpose and meaning in life and their psychological health before and after the programme was conducted.

Phase four, the final stage of the study, involved drawing final conclusions, discussing implications and making recommendations.

Figure 1.3 below gives an outline of the preliminary design of the intervention.

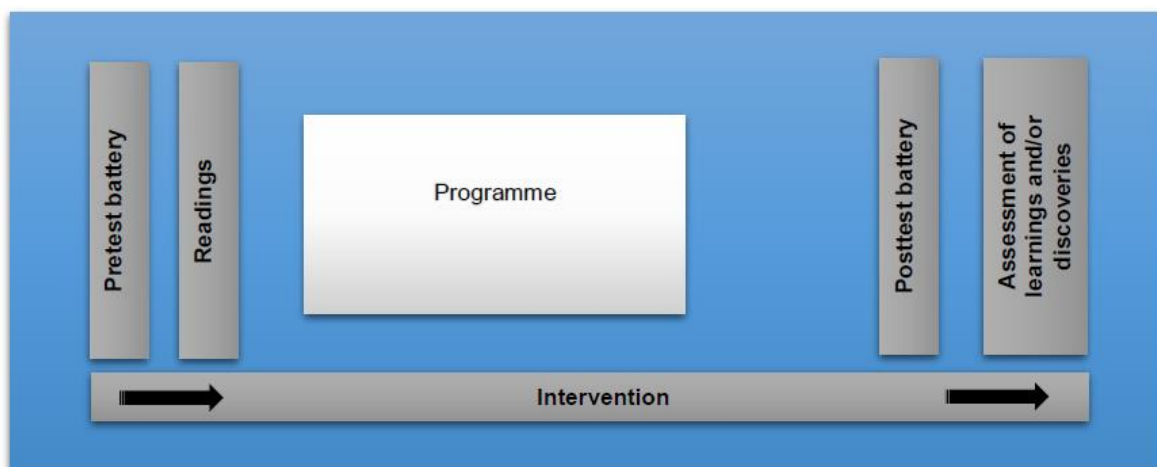


Figure 1.3. Preliminary design of the intervention

The key elements of the intervention mixed methods research process and practices in

this study is presented in section 1.6.1.1 (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

1.6.1.1 Design purpose

“The premises of [the embedded] design are that a single data set is not sufficient, that different questions need to be answered, and that each type of question requires different types of data” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 91).

In this study, qualitative data was added before and after the empirical study. The rationale was to understand the phenomenon and characteristics of the setting (contextual factors) so that an intervention would work when applied to a real-life situation and to assist in explaining the results of the intervention (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Fetters et al., 2013). Fundamentally, the qualitative results enhanced the planning, understanding or explanation of the quantitative results (Bamberger, 2012; Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Rogers et al., 2003).

1.6.1.2 Research approach

A pragmatist approach was used as a philosophical basis to support the intervention mixed methods research design (see section 1.5.2).

1.6.1.3 Design procedures

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, p. 92) prioritised the “timing [*before*, during, after, or some combination] of data collection and analysis of the supplemental data relative to the primary strand” and “the reasons for adding in the supplemental data” as fundamental to the procedures for the embedded design regardless of which approach (quantitative or qualitative) is placed in the primary role. Creswell (2013) and Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) suggested steps to be followed for implementing qualitative data *before and after* the treatment protocol (the intervention) in an empirical (quasi-experimental) study. The following are the steps

- (1) Designing the overall empirical study and deciding the reason for the inclusion of qualitative data;
- (2) Collecting and analysing qualitative data to enhance the empirical study;
- (3) Collecting and analysing quantitative outcome data for the empirical study; and
- (4) Interpreting how the qualitative results enhanced the empirical study procedures and/or understanding of the empirical study outcomes.

The following are the steps as applied in this study (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

1.6.1.4 Data analysis steps and decisions

Steps in mixed methods data analysis refer to “the procedures taken in a logical order by the researcher when conducting data analysis for a mixed methods design” whereas decisions in mixed methods data analysis refer to “those critical points in data analysis when the researcher needs to decide what option to select for analysis” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 214).

The researcher developed a data analysis typology for the intervention mixed methods design based on the steps and decisions for data analyses for the exploratory sequential and embedded mixed methods designs as suggested by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011). Table 1.1 provides the data analysis typology of the steps and the decisions for the intervention mixed methods design in this study.

Table 1.1
Typology of the steps and decisions for the intervention mixed methods design

Embedded exploratory sequential design: Connected data analysis				
Embedded design		Exploratory design		
Data analysis decisions	Data analysis steps	Data analysis steps	Data analysis steps	Data analysis decisions
Decide how to use the secondary data results. Decide when the secondary data should be incorporated into the primary data set.	1. Analyse the secondary qualitative data set where it is embedded within (<i>before and after</i>) the primary design by connecting using the steps involved in the exploratory design.	1.1	Collect the qualitative data.	
		1.2	Analyse the qualitative data qualitatively by using analytic approaches best suited to the qualitative research question.	
		1.3	Design the quantitative strand based on the qualitative results.	Decide what data can be used in the quantitative follow-up.
Develop the preliminary intervention and pilot test the new intervention. Decide how best to assess the efficiency of the new intervention.				
	2. Analyse the primary data set to answer the primary research questions.	2.1	Collect the quantitative data.	
		2.2	Analyse the quantitative data quantitatively using analytic approaches best suited to the quantitative and mixed methods research questions.	
Decide how the secondary data supports or augments the primary data.	3. Interpret how the primary and secondary results answer the qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods questions.	3.1	Interpret how the connected results answer the qualitative, quantitative and mixed method questions.	Decide how the quantitative results build or expand on the qualitative findings.

From the sequential exploratory design perspective, the researcher firstly collected qualitative data, analysed it and then used that information to develop and support a follow up quantitative phase of data collection to enhance understanding of the empirical

study outcome (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016).

In addition, the researcher collected qualitative data after the quantitative phase to enhance understanding of the empirical study results (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). In this way, the quantitative strand connected to the qualitative strand after the quantitative strand (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Moreover, from the embedded (before and after intervention) design perspective, researchers then embed (or nest) qualitative data within a quantitative phase of data collection (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). Figure 1.4 below gives an outline of the before and after intervention mixed methods design.

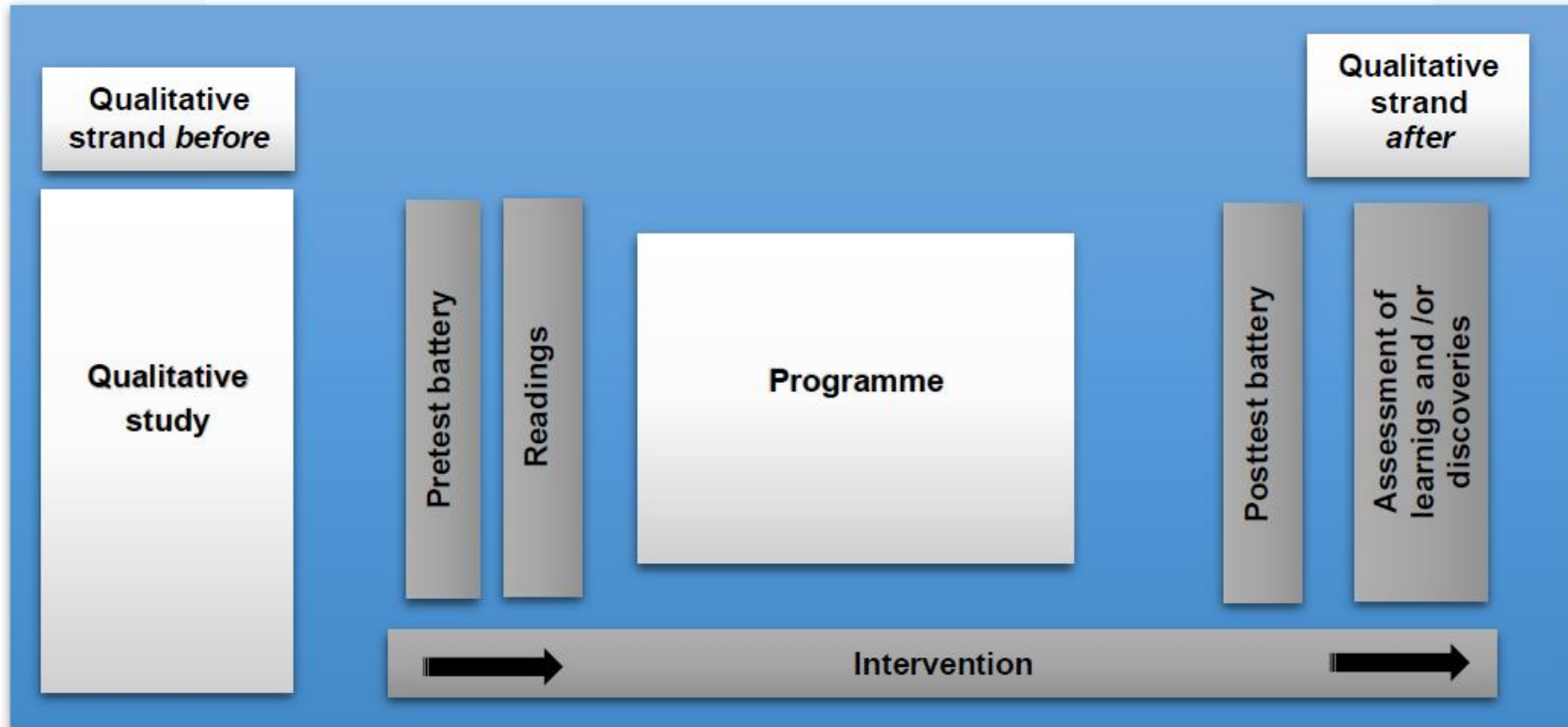


Figure 1.4. *Preliminary design of the intervention*

Since data was connected across research phases, the researcher had to decide how the findings would be interpreted to draw conclusions or inferences and meta-inferences (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The researcher adopted the suggestions made by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) regarding drawing conclusions, namely,

- To draw meta-inferences at the end of the study, despite the possibility of drawing inferences after each phase (quantitative and/or qualitative). Therefore, the meta-inferences were included in the larger interpretation being made in the conclusion or discussion section of the study; and
- To attach the inferences when the supporting data was being used (e.g. whether the before quasi-experiment qualitative data led to a better design of and/or implementation of the intervention and/or whether the post-intervention qualitative data [after] illuminated the results).

At its core, drawing conclusions is a dynamic process and, in this study, was guided by the research questions (Creswell, 2013; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016).

1.6.1.5 The mixed methods research questions

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) argued that, when two databases are implemented sequentially as in some exploratory and embedded designs, mixed methods data analysis tends to be much simpler. They ascribed the simplicity to the quantitative and qualitative data that is analysed in different phases and not merged. Nevertheless, the data analysis needed to be responsive to answering the mixed methods research question(s) that arose due to the sequential and embedded approaches (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Hence, the mixed methods questions in this study were

- How did the FGIs and DAGs with academic employees help to develop and support a logotherapy brief group-based intervention?
- How did the learning and/or discovery assessment questionnaire assist in explaining the results of the logotherapy brief group-based intervention in a HE setting?

The embedded design questions indicated how the embedded (qualitative) data helped to provide a supportive role for the major form of (quantitative) data (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

1.6.1.6 Mixed methods research framework

For this study, the researcher utilised an adapted mixed methods research framework (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Figure 1.5 below presents the mixed methods research framework (adapted from Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

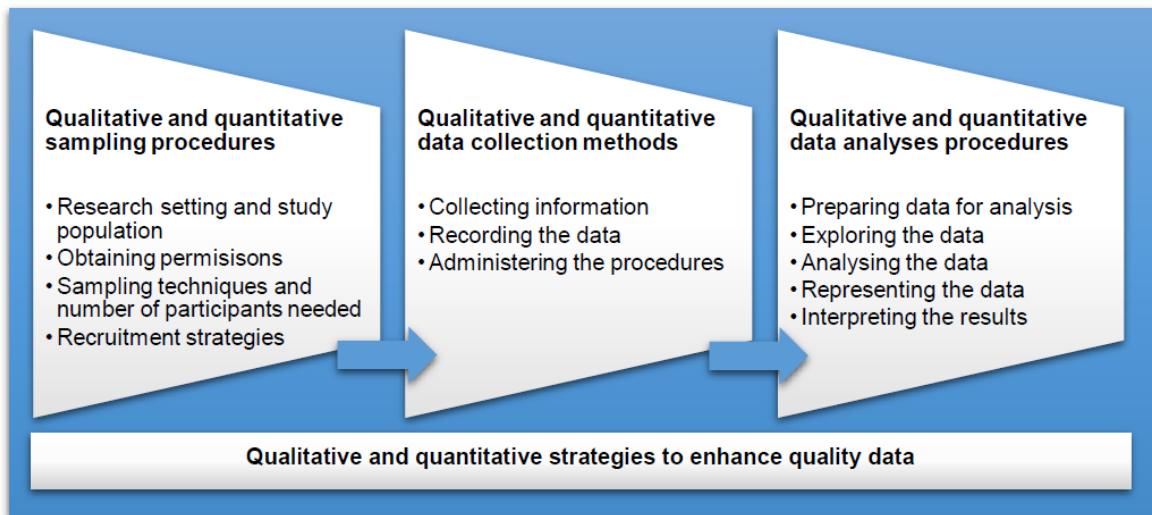


Figure 1.5. Mixed methods research framework

(adapted from Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011)

The various components of the mixed methods research framework are discussed in Chapter 4. The strategies to ensure quality data in mixed methods research is discussed in section 1.6.1.7.

1.6.1.7 Strategies employed to ensure quality mixed methods data

Validity in mixed methods research is defined as

employing strategies that address potential issues in data collection, data analysis and the interpretations that might compromise the merging or connecting of the quantitative and qualitative strands of the study and the conclusions drawn from the combination (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 239).

Nevertheless, discussions about validity in mixed methods are in the beginning stages since the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches may bring about challenges beyond the validity concerns that arise in the separate quantitative or qualitative methods procedures (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Despite these differences, scholars agree that the quality of the respective quantitative and qualitative results determine the quality of the inferences drawn from an entire mixed methods study (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). For this reason, Plano Clark and Ivankova

(2016) warned against the failure to observe appropriate quality standards for the quantitative and qualitative methods used in a study. Such failure may “lead to a chain of erroneous conclusions resulting in less credible study outcomes” (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016, p. 166).

Furthermore, Plano Clark and Ivankova (2016) suggested that the first step in assessing the quality of a mixed methods study should be the evaluation of the quality of data and the results in the quantitative and qualitative strands of the study, using common quality standards adopted in quantitative and qualitative research. Likewise, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) argued for the need for the specific validity checks for both the quantitative and qualitative strands.

The following are the steps that were taken to reduce the potential validity threats when connecting data in exploratory, sequential and embedded designs (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The steps are grouped into data collection issues, data analysis issues and interpretation issues.

a Data collection issues

The researcher

- Selected appropriate individuals for the qualitative and quantitative data collection; and
- Used appropriate sample sizes for the qualitative and quantitative data collection.

b Data analyses issues

The researcher

- Chose strong qualitative findings to shape and support the empirical study; and
- Embedded qualitative data in the empirical study with a clear intent of its use.

c Interpretation issues

The researcher

- Took full advantage of the “*before and after*” qualitative data findings for the empirical study; and
- Related the stages in the study to each other.

Moreover, the researcher actively used strategies to enhance the quality of the data in the qualitative and quantitative phases (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; McMillian & Schumacher, 2006; Shenton, 2004; Tobin & Begley, 2004; Tredoux, 2004; Wise, 2011) and discussed

the limitations of the study's design as part of the larger interpretation of the study (see Chapter 8, section 8.4). The validity threats for the quantitative and qualitative strands of the study are discussed in Chapter 4 (see section 4.2.7 [qualitative strand] and section 4.3.8 [quantitative strand]).

The following is a brief discussion of the first phase qualitative single case study.

1.6.2 Phase one qualitative study: Single case study design

The first phase of the research took the form of a qualitative study (see Chapter 4, section 4.2). The study had a threefold purpose, firstly, to explore and to develop an understanding of the meaning phenomenon in context, secondly, to allow meaning and/or meaning frustration themes to emerge and thirdly, to develop an understanding of how these themes could aid the logotherapy brief group-based intervention development and implementation during the phase three quantitative study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

The study utilised the single case study method. The fundamental purpose of case study research is to reveal a phenomenon based on an in-depth and real-time understanding of a case by detecting and describing issue-relevant meanings (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

Detailed descriptions of the first phase qualitative study's sampling procedures, data collection methods, data analysis procedures and strategies employed to enhance data quality are provided in Chapter 4 (see section 4.2).

A brief discussion on the third phase quantitative quasi-experimental single group pretest/posttest design is included in the subsection below.

1.6.3 Phase three quantitative study: Quasi-experimental single-group pretest/posttest design

The third phase of the research took the form of a quantitative study (see Chapter 4, section 4.3) (Creswell, 2003). A quasi-experimental single-group pretest/posttest design provided the framework. The fundamental purpose of quasi-experimental designs is to determine "cause and effect" and it involves "the direct manipulation of conditions" such as the impact of a logotherapy brief group-based intervention on the sense of meaning and psychological health of academic employees (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 24).

Detailed descriptions of the quantitative study's sampling procedures, data collection

procedures, data analysis procedures and strategies employed to enhance data quality are provided in Chapter 4 (see section 4.3).

The strengths and challenges in using the intervention mixed methods design is the focus of the discussion below.

1.7 STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES IN USING THE INTERVENTION MIXED METHODS DESIGN

There are several advantages specific to the intervention mixed methods design (Bamberger, 2012; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011):

1.7.1 Advantages

1.7.1.1 The embedded design can be used when researchers do not have sufficient time or resources to commit to extensive quantitative and qualitative data collection because one data type is given less priority than the other.

1.7.1.2 By addition of supplemental data, the researcher is able to improve the larger design. Moreover, the inclusion of a quantitative component can make the qualitative approach more acceptable to quantitative-biased audiences.

1.7.1.3 Since the different methods are addressing different questions, this design fits a team approach well, where members on the team can focus their work on one of the questions based on their interests and expertise.

1.7.1.4 Separate phases make the before-trial design straightforward to describe, implement and report.

1.7.1.5 The focus on the different research questions means that the two types of results can be published separately.

1.7.1.6 The design may be appealing to funding agencies that are less familiar with mixed methods research because the primary focus of the approach is on traditional quantitative or qualitative design.

1.7.1.7 The researcher can produce a new intervention (treatment protocol) as one of the potential products of the research process.

However, there are also many challenges associated with the intervention mixed methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Rogers et al., 2003):

1.7.2 Challenges

- 1.7.2.1 Researchers need to have expertise in the quantitative or qualitative design used in addition to expertise in mixed methods research.
- 1.7.2.2 Researchers must specify the purpose of collecting qualitative (or quantitative) data as part of a larger quantitative (or qualitative) study.
- 1.7.2.3 Researchers must decide at what point in the experimental study to collect the qualitative data in relation to the intervention (i.e., before, during, after, or some other combination). This decision should be based on the intent of including the qualitative data (e.g., to develop the intervention, to explain the process of the participants during treatment or to follow up on results of the experimental trial).
- 1.7.2.4 It can be difficult to integrate the results when the two methods are used to answer different research questions. However, the intent of the embedded design is not to merge two different data sets collected to answer the same questions. Researchers using an embedded design can keep the two sets of results separate in their reports or even report them in separate papers.
- 1.7.2.5 The two phases in a before-after-trial design require considerable time to implement. Researchers need to recognise this factor and build time into the plan of their study.
- 1.7.2.6 It is difficult to specify the procedures of the quantitative phase when applying for initial internal regulation board (IRB) approval for the study.

The following section gives an overview of the ethical procedures as applied in the study.

1.8 ETHICAL PROCEDURES

The researcher gave consideration to the ethical matters relating to the different aspects of the research project.

The essential purpose of ethical research is to protect the welfare and the rights of research participants, although there are many additional ethical considerations that should be addressed in the planning and implementation of research work (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 2004, p. 65).

Before the commencement of the study, ethical approval was obtained from the University of South Africa (UNISA) and the research site's human ethics committees (the IRBs).

Durrheim and Wassenaar (2004) outlined three ethical principles, namely, autonomy,

nonmaleficence and beneficence. Autonomy refers to the participants' rights such as the voluntarily and informed consent of research participants, the freedom of participants to withdraw from the research at any time and the participants' rights to anonymity in any publication that might arise from the research. The principle of autonomy was addressed in the participant research invitations for both the phase one and phase two studies where the aim and importance of the study, risks, rights and confidentiality of the participants were discussed (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). This principle was addressed again before the commencement of the actual proceedings of the various study groups, e.g. FGIs and DAGs for the phase one study and the intervention implementation sessions for the phase three study. All participants consented to voluntarily participation in writing.

Nonmaleficence is the principle of no harm to participants. This requires the consideration of potential physical, emotional or social harm that may be inflicted on any of the participants involved in the study (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 2004). Steps should be taken to avoid or minimise any potential harm to the participants. Although no physical risks, discomfort or unpleasant emotional experiences were anticipated, the aforementioned was minimised by professional facilitators (both the moderator and researcher were professional psychologists) who took cognisance of participants' emotional reactions in the phase one study. Likewise, the researcher implemented the intervention in the phase three study and took cognisance of the participants' emotional reactions. Participants were debriefed after the phase one study groups, as well as after the implementation of the intervention at the time of the phase three study (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.5.2). Debriefing was about providing participants with an opportunity to correct any misconceptions about the research and the moderator and researcher took reasonable steps to minimise any discomfort participants might have experienced (Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), 2006). If participants wanted further discussions about their meaning in life, it was arranged that they would be referred to the Student Counselling and Support Department where they could consult with professional psychologists without any costs.

Beneficence requires the study to be designed in such a way that it is of benefit. If the study is not directly beneficial to the research participants then, at least, it should be beneficial to other researchers and society at large (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 2004). The mere discussions about a sense of meaning in the FGIs and DAG settings might have assisted in building personal awareness and assisted participants to make sense of and find purpose within a changed and changing work environment. Participation in the intervention might have assist in building participants' personal awareness and power,

enabled them to cope better with changing life situations and improved their capability to cope with a changed and changing work environment. In addition, the FGI and DAG settings, as well as the intervention group setting, provided a space to share experiences and to strengthen collegial relationships.

The outcome of the study may assist researchers, workplace professionals and HEIs to make informed decisions regarding the need for further research in this area, as well as the need for implementing interventions in group settings to enhance academic employees' meaning and purpose in life. When logotherapy principles are comprehended, they can also be applied by academic employees in their classrooms during their lecturing endeavours or in their informal interactions with students. Lastly, the study contributed knowledge to the specific fields of logotherapeutic application in the IOP and SAHE contexts.

The raw data, in the form of the questionnaires, audio recordings, transcripts and notes, will be stored securely for the appropriate period of time according to the requirements of the IRBs. All data is treated to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and the institution involved in the study (HPCSA, 2006). Participants were ensured that no personal information would be recorded in their employee files and that all inferences would be drawn at the group level.

1.9 CHAPTER LAYOUT

This research study is presented in eight chapters:

Chapter 1: Background and scientific orientation to the research

Chapter 2: Higher education within the global world and contemporary South Africa

Chapter 3: Viktor Frankl's theory and logotherapy

Chapter 4: Intervention mixed methods study

Chapter 5: Research findings of the phase one qualitative study

Chapter 6: The logotherapy brief group-based intervention

Chapter 7: Research results of the phase three quantitative study

Chapter 8: Conclusions, contributions, limitations and recommendations

1.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 1 provided the background, scientific orientation to and rationale for the research. It briefly explored the international and national HE landscapes and the impact of the changed and changing SAHE landscape on academic careers. The interlock between

organisational and individual change processes was noted, as well as the negligence of personal and emotional facets of change. The status of academics' well-being and the significance of meaning for HE were emphasised.

Thereafter, the problem statement, research questions and aims were presented. The professional context (IOP, organisational psychology) and pragmatism as the meta-theoretical context for the study were discussed. This was followed by presenting the operational definitions for the core constructs measured in this study, as well as the interpreting psychological paradigm that is humanism or phenomenology with special reference to Frankl's theory and logotherapy.

The central research approach for the study is the intervention mixed method design. The rationale for the approach was explained and a mixed methods research method was presented. References were made to the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study. Attention was given to the steps taken to enhance data quality for the mixed methods design and the advantages and disadvantages of the intervention mixed methods design were outlined. Finally, the ethical procedures for the research project were discussed. The chapter concluded with the chapter layout.

CHAPTER 2: CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGHER EDUCATION WITHIN THE GLOBAL WORLD AND CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICA

The image of man in Frankl's works is the image of the 'responsible self'. One's essential task then becomes simply to be what he can be, to do what he can do, to honor what he sees through his own eyes and to say truthfully what he sees—to live authentically. And he must resist factors that exert pressures on him to live otherwise. The basic task then is always present—and always within one's capacity (Wirth, 1976, p. 124).

2.1 INTRODUCTION

HEIs do not exist in a vacuum (Marginson & Van der Wende, 2007; Odendaal & Roodt, 2001; Pillay, 2011; Salmi, 2012). They have expanded and comprise new types of institutions with the intent of developing a closer relationship between tertiary education and the external world (Pillay, 2011). The relationship is characterised by greater responsiveness to labour-market needs, enhanced social and geographical access to tertiary education, high level occupational preparation in a more applied and less theoretical way, and accommodation of the growing diversity of qualifications and expectations of school graduates (Pillay, 2011). “Competitive markets, rapidly changing communications and information technologies, and globalization are dimensions of the environment from which organizations struggle for competitive advantage” (Diamond & Allcorn, 2003, p. 493) therefore it is necessary to take into consideration the global and local contexts when studying what is happening at HEIs in order to understand its behaviour, the full dynamics of its achievements and its potential for enhancement (Diamond & Allcorn, 2003; Odendaal & Roodt, 2001; Salmi, 2012).

Given the above statements, in Chapter 2 insight into the characteristics of the global and local HE contexts in which the study operates and some of its dynamic influences is given. Therefore, a discussion on the key trends in global higher education (GHE) is provided which are globalisation and massification. Moreover, in Chapter 2, aspects of the SA national and HE contexts is deliberated; some of the consequences of the changed and changing HE organisation is illuminated, including the effects and pressures of the changed and changing SAHE landscape for academic employees.

2.2 KEY TRENDS IN GLOBAL HIGHER EDUCATION

“Globalisation broadly refers to rising global trade and increased flows of people, capital, ideas and technologies across borders in recent decades” (NDP 2030, p. 21). It has compelled HEIs to respond to the challenge of transforming into institutions that are connected to the global world, irrespective of country of origin (Meyer, Bushney & Ukpere, 2011; Popescu, 2015). In view of that, HEIs had to undergo considerable functional and structural changes as they adapt to meet the needs of a global and knowledge-based economy (Meyer et al., 2011; Popescu, 2015).

Despite the pressure for transformation, there is consensus that GHE has withstood revolutionary changes in the past century, characterised by transformations unprecedented in scope and diversity (Altbach et al., 2009; Going Global 2012, 2012; NMC Horizon Report, 2013; *SCUP Academy Report 2014*, 2014). Moreover, since HEIs extended their connections and operations beyond the traditional boundaries of particular towns, cities and/or countries, significant relationships have transpired between the location of the institution and the scope, nature and phase of institutional globalisation. This refers to the extent of globalisation in developed countries contrasted with those in third world countries (Altbach et al., 2009; Meyer et al., 2011; Salmi, 2012).

Altbach et al. (2009) compiled a report titled *Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking an Academic Revolution* in preparation for the UNESCO 2009 World Conference on Higher Education (HE). The report gave an account of the changes that took place in the GHE landscape during the period 1998 to 2009. They emphasised that the majority of trends that were discussed in 1998 remained the same and/or intensified over the 10-year period. Nevertheless, they singled out massification as a key reality and driver of change during this period (Altbach et al., 2009).

Altbach (2013, p. 12) affirmed that massification and the global knowledge economy remained the two main drivers of HE transformation worldwide and that they “continue to produce unprecedented change, making it even more difficult to understand the nature of change and how to adjust to changing circumstances”. In this regard, Johal (2014, p. 2) noted that it was realised in the HE sector that it could not remain stagnant and, for that reason, the changes continued at an accelerating rate which made it “difficult to predict what the outcome will be when the dust settles”.

Globalisation appeared to be the “big bang development” that stimulated a chain of events in the HE sector. The majority of trends developed as a result of globalisation, with

unavoidable and deeply interrelated dynamics (Altbach et al., 2009). The complexity and ambiguity of the trends and their dynamics operating in contemporary global and local HE contexts, in combination with the aim of the study, informed the decision to focus the present discussions mainly on globalisation and massification as the two main drivers in the HE sector.

2.2.1 Globalisation

Although globalisation has been around since the late 20th century and is considered to be in danger of becoming a cliché, it is a force to be reckoned with and therefore its influence on HE should not be ignored (Altbach, 2013; Altbach et al., 2009; Altbach & Knight, 2007; Chisholm, 2009; Meyer et al., 2011; Yang; 2003).

Yang (2003, p. 271) defined globalisation as “the complex intersection between a multiplicity of driving forces, embracing economic, technological, cultural and political change”. For Altbach and Knight (2007, p. 290), globalisation consists of the “economic, political, and societal forces pushing 21st century [HE] toward greater international involvement” and they encapsulated it as “the context of economic and academic trends that are part of the reality of the 21st century”. This suggests that HEI realities are

shaped by an increasingly integrated world economy, new information and communications technology (ICT), the emergence of an international knowledge network, the role of the English language and other forces beyond the control of academic institutions (Altbach et al., 2009, p. iv).

The abovementioned depicted globalisation as an inescapable and multifaceted influence that manages to manifest in every aspect of human life, including the HE sector and its institutional life.

Altbach et al. (2009) identified the following as key trends and drivers of change in GHE:

- Globalisation and internationalisation;
- Access and equity;
- Quality assurance, accountability and qualification frameworks;
- Financing HE;
- Private HE and privatisation;
- The centrality and crisis of the academic profession;
- The student experience;
- Teaching, learning and assessment;

- Information and communications technologies and distance education;
- Research; and
- University-industry linkages.

This study focuses on the centrality and crisis of the academic profession that cannot be uncoupled from the other identified key trends and drivers of change in GHE. Internationalisation developed in response to globalisation and although the terms are used interchangeably, they are sometimes confused (Altbach et al., 2009; Altbach & Knight, 2007). On a practical level, internationalisation is the vehicle through which globalisation is realised. Altbach et al. (2009, p. iv) defined internationalisation as

the variety of policies and programmes that universities and governments implement to respond to globalization that typically include sending students to study abroad, setting up a branch campus overseas, or engaging in some type of inter-institutional partnership.

These policies and programmes include students learning about other cultures to provide cross-cultural understanding, to provide access to HE in countries where local institutions cannot meet the demand, to upgrade the international perspectives and skills of students and to enhance foreign language programmes (Altbach & Knight, 2007). However, strategising around globalisation and rolling out action plans should not be done without careful consideration because local realities of wealth, language and academic development, among other factors, should be considered when the degree is established to which institutions are motivated and able to internationalise (Altbach et al., 2009).

No doubt, the impact of globalisation is wide spread. It has made its mark within the HE sector and also includes:

- the integration of research;
- English as the dominant academic language for scientific communication;
- the growing international labour market for scholars and scientists and the unparalleled mobility of students and scholars;
- the growth of communications firms and of multi-national and technology publishing;
- the use of advanced information technology (IT);
- new ways of financing HE and the concomitant acceptance of market forces and commercialisation;
- the global spread of ideas about science and scholarship; and
- the enhancement of the curriculum with international content (Altbach, 2013;

Altbach & Knight, 2007; Johal, 2014).

Altbach and Knight (2007) deemed globalisation as unchangeable, but internationalisation as more flexible and involving choices. Globalisation has never meant global equality because it has increased the gap between the rich and the poor, guaranteed the perpetuation of privilege and maintained the caprices of the rich (Yang, 2003). Altbach et al. (2009) noted the negative consequence of globalisation in HE systems in an international academic mobility that favours well developed educational systems and institutions that result in an increase in inequality among national HE systems.

Centres and peripheries are a well-established feature of the academic world and are reflected in an impression that the strongest universities are seen as centres of excellence which are founded in their research prowess and reputation whereas African universities, for example, “have found it extremely challenging and complex to find their footing on the [GHE] – they barely register on the world institutional ranking and league tables and produce a tiny percentage of the world’s research output” (Altbach et al., 2009, p. v). Unsurprisingly, Marginson and Van der Wende (2007) believe that globalisation is not always a neutral matter because of its multifaceted nature. Interpretations of globalisation are coloured by different agendas and its reception is affected by various contemporary tendencies. As such, globalisation and its consequences cannot be separated from the notions about power and politics as they operate in all spheres of life, including the HE sector, therefore White and Epston (1990) noted that the web of knowledge and power is inescapable.

Meyer et al. (2011) provided an outline of the positive impact of globalisation for HE, as well as the negative impact thereof, illuminating several challenges and problems for HEIs to consider. Positively, it is believed to

- enrich the HE curriculum, to improve institutional operations and to increase the accountability of institutions;
- assist in creating world-class transferrable standards and quality insurance systems;
- formalise international best practices and sound support systems;
- foster global relationships to advance research, science and innovation;
- cultivate global citizenship;
- increase the number of people who are empowered with internationally recognised HE qualifications;
- benefit more students through developing innovative programmes that recognise

prior learning;

- encourage resource sharing through working together to address national and global problems;
- create electronic learning environments;
- enhance the global reputation and ranking of institutions through hosting and/or participating in international conferences;
- build confidence in international communication; and
- increase international funding.

On the other hand, Meyer et al. (2011) suggested that globalisation

- causes differences in the quality of education;
- causes a break-down of the traditional values, intellectual character and critical thinking of university life;
- threatens marginalised cultural values, customs and systems;
- fosters resistance from strong national cultures and rigid social systems;
- causes an increase in institutional managerialism due to an increase in uncertainty and ambivalence;
- causes strong national education systems to prioritise local needs;
- causes profit making enterprises to interfere with academic staffs' legitimate academic functions;
- promotes retention challenges due to high level academic teaching skills shortages;
- restrains student mobility due to an absence of global qualification frameworks;
- causes difficulties in free international movement for both students and staff;
- produces more inequality between institutions based on unequal resource distributions;
- disempowers the poor in developing countries which culminates in the perpetuation of the elitist nature of HE;
- leads to poor understanding of HE systems in the developing world;
- neglects the needs of poorer countries (e.g. skills development versus research);
- widens the digital divide between rich and poor countries;
- may result in the rejection of contributions from other regions by western journal reviewers; and
- provides criticism against the validity of the international university ranking system.

The positive and negative impacts of globalisation, as depicted by Meyer et al. (2011),

clearly communicate the benefits, dilemmas, challenges and pressures of globalisation. Globalisation has different implications for HEIs depending on their positions in the education marketplace spectrum that varies from first to third world countries. Therefore, the globalisation phenomenon requires HEIs to take into consideration their missions, local realities and both the positive and negative impacts thereof in order to set realistic strategic priorities for the design and roll-out of their action plans. When these factors are consciously taken into consideration, HEIs may succeed in balancing and/or outweighing the negative consequences of globalisation.

The next section includes a discussion on massification.

2.2.2 Massification

Massification has been around since the end of the Second World War and is, like other trends, at a “deeper stage” of ongoing revolution (Altbach et al., 2009, p. iii; Guri-Rosenblit, Sebkova & Teichler, 2007; McGregor, 2009). The term “massification” describes the rapid increase in student enrolment in HEIs (Mohamedbhai, 2008). Generally, at the national level, HE is regarded as an essential tool for human capital development, sustaining economic growth, restructuring society and promoting national unity (Mohamedbhai, 2008). The prevailing belief in many countries is that education is a necessity for social mobility and a *carte blanche* for moving up the ranks of society, hence, economic success has become a driving force for the growing demand for widened access to HE and to change the elitist nature of universities (Altbach et al., 2009; Guri-Rosenblit et al., 2007; Mohamedbhai, 2008).

Massification is also depicted as a typology in terms of the elite, mass and universal HE. Elite reflects a national enrolment ratio of up to 15%, mass represents a ratio of up to 50% and universal is a ratio in excess of 50% (Arimoto, 2001; Mohamedbhai, 2008). Worldwide, the percentage of the relevant age cohort enrolled in HE has grown from 19% (approximately 100 million students) in 2000 to 26% in 2007, with the most remarkable gains in upper middle and upper income countries (Altbach et al., 2009; Mohamedbhai, 2008). In low income countries, tertiary-level participation has improved only marginally, from 5% in 2000 to 7% in 2007, and Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest participation rate in the world (5%) (Altbach et al., 2009).

Massification is considered to be a process that is progressing and moving through diverse phases. During the first phase, HE systems struggled to cope with the demand, the need for expanded infrastructure and a larger teaching corps (Altbach et al., 2009;

Beerkens-Soo & Vossensteyn, 2009). However, during the period 1998 to 2008, systems began to wrestle with the implications of diversity (e.g. students' different levels of academic preparation, varied interests and expectations, and varied background characteristics such as first generation, working and mature students) and to consider which subgroups were still not included and appropriately served (Altbach et al., 2009; Beerkens-Soo & Vossensteyn, 2009). Like globalisation, massification has a life of its own and Altbach et al. (2009) identified the inevitable outcomes of massification, namely, a greater mobility for a growing segment of the population; new patterns of funding HE; increasingly diversified HE systems in most countries; a general overall lowering of academic standards; and other tendencies (Altbach et al., 2009). Altbach (2013, p. xi) maintained that massification has several predictable trends that he referred to as the "iron laws" of massification. Table 2.1 gives an overview of the trends ("iron laws") that emerged due to the dramatic expansion of enrolments over the past few decades.

Table 2.1
Trends (“iron laws”) of massification
 (Altbach, 2013)

Widened access and quality deterioration

HE, on average, has decreased in quality. As access has been widened to ever larger groups, the academic preparation and probably the native ability of many students, has decreased. Less money is spent on each student and the conditions of study have deteriorated.

Inequality

There is much greater inequality in HE worldwide. This includes academic institutions, student access and other aspects. Top universities, usually established institutions, remain excellent and probably, on average, have improved. Academic institutions at the bottom of the hierarchy have not improved and are perhaps worse. Many of these institutions are “demand absorbing” private schools with inadequate staffing and facilities.

Differentiated academic system

Massification requires a differentiated academic system with institutions serving varied needs and populations, thus there is more variability amongst institutions. Many countries have not yet created such systems, although they will inevitably emerge.

Quality of the academic profession

On average, the quality of the academic profession has deteriorated. A growing number of academics do not have advanced degrees and financial and other pressures have made an academic career unattractive to the “best and brightest”.

For-profit

The private sector, much of it for-profit, expands dramatically, now accounting for a majority of enrolments in many countries. With noticeable exceptions, the quality of the new private sector is poor. Globalisation also creates realities that affect HE.

International knowledge network

An international knowledge network dependent on the Internet, increased use of English as the main scientific language and growing linkages among academic institutions, is a central reality of academe.

Global universities

Universities, especially at the top of the academic system, are increasingly part of the global knowledge system.

Academic domination and peripheries

The traditional academic centres, especially in the large English-speaking countries, dominate the world system and many universities, especially in the developing countries, find themselves involved but peripheral in the network.

Student mobility

International student mobility increases, with flows largely from developing and middle-income countries to the traditional academic centres.

The “brain drain”

The “brain drain”, what is commonly referred to as brain exchange, also expands, flowing largely from developing and middle-income countries to the main centre in North America and Europe for the most part, although there is considerable variation – such as within the Middle East.

Table 2.1 shows that massification (like globalisation), may have both positive and negative outcomes for HEIs, their employees and students. At its core, it signals change in HEIs and for the manner of doing business in the HE organisation and the HE sector. How HEIs, their employees and students embrace the changes will ultimately determine the outcomes for each stakeholder. As such, some stakeholders may find it difficult to

stay current, though others may see new opportunities and feel encouraged to innovate.

On the whole, though, massification has serious implications for university funding models. Fundamental to massification are the ongoing debates about the public good versus the private good and how to finance HE. Traditionally, universities were seen as institutions that provided education in the scholarly professions of law, medicine and theology, as well as scientific disciplines (Altbach, 2015). Universities, as independent and sometimes critical institutions, became the custodians of societal histories and cultures through preserving, interpreting and expanding those histories and cultures (Altbach, 2015). In the 19th century, the roles and responsibilities of universities were expanded by, firstly, adding research to their responsibilities and secondly by service to society (Altbach, 2015). Traditionally, “postsecondary education has been seen as a *public good*, contributing to society through educating citizens, improving human capital, encouraging civil involvement and boosting economic development” (Altbach et al., 2009, p. xii). Subsequently, HEIs were mainly funded by the state or the church due to their valuable contributions to society and the service mission that justified support (Altbach, 2015). In this regard, Altbach (2015, p. 2) contended that

universities were places for learning, research and service to society through the application of knowledge. Academe was afforded a significance degree of insulation from the pressures of society—academic freedom—precisely because it was serving the broader good of society. Professors were often given permanent appointments—tenure—to guarantee them academic freedom in the classroom and laboratory to teach and to do research without fear of sanctions from society.

The ongoing debates and the emergence of different views about the social and financial status of HEIs and their concurrent funding models culminated in the development of specific trends in the area of HE financing. HE is increasingly being viewed as a major engine of economic development and government tax revenues are not keeping pace with rapidly rising costs of HE and massification. That presents major challenges for systems that traditionally provided access to free or highly subsidised tertiary education (Altbach et al., 2009). As a result, the traditional funding model has become unsustainable and the customary pact between HE and society has become problematic, resulting in pressure on systems to restructure the social contract between HE and society at large (Altbach et al., 2009; Maassen & Cloete, 2002). Since HE was incrementally seen as mostly benefiting individuals, a consequence of the restructuring process was a social shift from viewing HE as a public good to increasingly viewing it as a private good (Altbach et al., 2009; McGregor, 2009).

In addition, financial pressures from the neo-liberal orientation of international funding agencies have also emphasised HE as a “private good” (Altbach et al., 2009; McGregor, 2009). The diminishing public support, both at the political and financial fronts, has become more tangible (Maassen & Cloete, 2002). As a way to relieve the financial burden on the state, parents and/or students have to assume more responsibility for tuition and fees and HE systems and institutions are also increasingly expected to generate larger percentages of their own revenue (Altbach et al., 2009; McGregor, 2009).

Another consequence of massification is the development of private HEIs. This became visible in a greater inclination of privatisation of services once provided by the state because of a widespread political inclination towards privatisation (Altbach et al., 2009). Privatisation and its funding models have led to increasing austerity in universities and other postsecondary institutions, for example, overcrowded lecture halls, outdated library holdings, less support for faculty research, deterioration of buildings, loss of secure faculty positions and faculty brain drain as the most talented faculty members moved abroad (Altbach et al., 2009).

The above suggests that open access and an increase in student numbers have serious resource implications. Hence, resources do not only refer to physical and institutional structures and funding, but also to the pressures that massification puts on the human constituent of HE, the academic employees.

The subsequent discussion is about facets of the SAHE context.

2.3 THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL AND HE CONTEXTS

All over the world, global trends and pressures drove HEIs to become part of their countries’ national development policies with Finland, Ireland and the East Asian Tigers as the prime examples (Maassen & Cloete, 2002). After a period of relative isolation, SAHE was not only confronted with the reality of globalisation that presented numerous and accelerating changes in culture, communication and production, but also with political, social and economic transition processes (Maassen & Cloete, 2002; NCHE Report, 1996; Reddy, 2004; Scott, Yeld & Hendry, 2007).

“The apartheid education system denied access to educational opportunities to black South Africans” (Green Paper, 2012, p. 22). Shortly after SA’s first democratic election, late President Nelson Mandela issued a proclamation appointing a National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) to “preserve what is valuable and to address what is defective and requires transformation” (Maassen & Cloete, 2002; NCHE, 1996, p.1).

According to Maassen and Cloete (2002), the Commission's two central tasks were to rid HE of the aberrations of apartheid and to modernise it by infusing it with international experiences and best practices. Consequently, the SAHE sector has a double load to carry which refers to "an additional duty to contribute to the consolidation of democracy and social justice as well as the growth and development of the economy and redress the imbalances institutionalised by apartheid" (Viljoen, 2006, p. vi).

Attributable to the democratisation of the country, there have been enormous changes in the SA education sector during the last two decades. Democratisation meant a larger exposure to global economic forces that have compelled the SA society to become more competitive (Crosser, 2010). This has necessarily required a re-evaluation of the skills needed for socio-economic development (Crosser, 2010). As a result, the new democratic government drove a radical restructuring of HE aimed at making it more accessible, diversified, stronger, more focused and efficient (IEASA, 2011; White Paper, 2013). To drive the restructuring process, five key policy objectives were formulated (White Paper, 2013, p. xi):

- A post-school system that can assist in building fair, equitable, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic SA;
- A single, coordinated post-school education and training system;
- Expanded access, improved quality and increased diversity of provision;
- A stronger and more cooperative relationship between education and training institutions and the workplace; and
- A post-school education and training system that is responsive to the needs of individual citizens, employers in both public and private sectors, as well as broader societal and developmental objectives.

Expanding student numbers and improving access to HE for, in particular, disadvantaged black individuals, were seen as keys to overcoming apartheid inequalities, creating a stable society and producing the skills needed to drive economic growth (Green Paper, 2012; IEASA, 2011; White Paper, 2013). Universities were required to enrol many more students of all race groups and to build a student body that more accurately reflects SA's demographic make-up (Green Paper, 2012; IEASA, 2011; White Paper, 2013). For that reason, a specific goal of the National Plan for HE (Asmal, 2001) was to increase participation from 15% to 20% for the 18-24 age cohorts. Almost a decade later, statistics (White Paper, 2013) communicated the expectation that participation rates in universities should increase from 17.3% in 2011 to 25% in 2030, translating from 937,000 student enrolments in 2011 to 1.6 million enrolments in 2030.

Responding to the expectations, HEIs merged and some technikons became universities of technology (Du Pré, 2006; IEASA, 2011; Reddy, 2006; Scott, 2006). These new born HEIs opened their doors to students of all races and curricula were transformed to be aligned with a knowledge-driven world while also becoming more locally relevant (Du Pré, 2006; IEASA, 2011; Reddy, 2006). HEIs strived to train growing numbers of different types of graduates essential to economic growth and development but also to produce scholars able to tackle SA's problems through research that is responsive to all of society's needs (Du Pré, 2006; IEASA, 2011; Reddy, 2006; Scott, 2006).

Since this plan was implemented, the student population has diversified enormously, implying that the current HE system has to accommodate and address the varied needs of students coming from a range of backgrounds (De Jager & Van Lingen, 2012; Reddy, 2006; Scott et al., 2007). This refers to individuals coming from historically disadvantaged backgrounds, an increasing number of foreign students from English and non-English countries, students with special learning needs, for example, students with physical and/or mental disabilities and mature students (students qualifying for recognition of prior learning and distance education students) (De Jager & Van Lingen, 2012; Scott et al., 2007).

Moreover, the education and training system's biggest challenge is to increase throughput in selected high skills areas needed for SAs economic development (Crosser, 2010; White Paper, 2013). This has become a challenging task as it is widely agreed that a significant percentage of students entering HE is academically and socially under prepared for HE and that such under-preparedness is most likely to cause them a lot of stress and affect their academic achievement and retention (Scott et al., 2007). At the same time, first generation students are facing additional psychological, educational and social challenges that may increase their stress (De Jager & Van Lingen, 2012; Scott et al., 2007). Adding to this already multifaceted population are students who were exposed to psychological trauma, infected and affected by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), and students who have adopted alternative sexual orientations (De Jager & Van Lingen, 2012). Amalgamating the multifaceted population with the impact of the broader SA socio-political reality of violence, crime and unemployment, it is apparent that the contemporary face of student populations has noticeably changed and that they bring unique challenges to HEIs across the country.

Consequently, as student enrolment increased and student participation became more diversified, so student performance, success and throughput became increasingly

beleaguered. Improving student access, success and throughput rate has not only become a very serious challenge and an ongoing battle for the SAHE sector, but also a priority for national policy and institutions themselves, in particular, improving access and success for those groups whose race, gender or disability status has previously disadvantaged them (De Jager & Van Lingen, 2012; Green Paper, 2012; Scott et al., 2007; White Paper, 2013).

Policy developments have been aimed at democratising the education system, overcoming unfair discrimination, expanding access to education and training opportunities, and improving the quality of education, training, and research (White Paper, 2013, p. 1).

For that reason, various policies were implemented after the 1994 transition to establish a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and non-discriminatory social order. Table 2.2 provides an overview of the actual and intended implications of the policies and pressures for SAHE employees.

Table 2.2

Actual and intended implications of the policies and pressures for SAHE employees

(Gibbon & Kabaki, 2002)

Access and redress	Many historically advantaged institutions had, for the first time, first-time entry students who were underprepared for tertiary studies, with inadequate English proficiency. There was an immediate demand on academic employees for bridging programmes, academic development programmes and student support. The growing diverse student population challenged academics' fundamental assumptions and attitudes which led to the establishment of academic employee development programmes that provoked a reassessment of curricula and pedagogical practices.
Equity	To bring the academic employee profile in closer alignment with student and national demographics, changes were effected in human resources recruitment and promotion strategies.
Co-operative governance	The existing governance structures of council and senate were reconstituted to ensure deepening and extended stakeholder participation and decision-making. Professors' automatic membership of senate had been replaced in some institutions by a representative presence and the presence of other stakeholders. The aforesaid produced considerable undermining of the traditional academic authority.
Responsiveness and quality	The establishment of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) demanded for high-quality academic programmes that were responsive to both social reconstruction and economic development needs. Responsiveness and quality became part of the accreditation of programmes and qualifications. Academic employees gave an enormous amount of time and energy to re-examine and reconstruct academic curricula.
Institutional autonomy and public accountability	Policy affirmed institutional autonomy required that institutions and employees became accountable for the ways in which public monies were used. The use of national resources was to be assessed against the goals established in government policy and through the mechanisms of statistical returns and three-year rolling plans.

Key to the effectiveness of the reform policy initiatives is how well HEIs are achieving their objectives. Some shortcomings may permeate new policy initiatives and complete success with regards to implementation is unlikely. Likewise, full compliance with new rules and regulations may not necessarily result in the achievement of policy objectives if aspects of the design of the policy initiatives are problematic.

Therefore, it is not a surprise that the HE restructuring process did not go without serious growing pains and criticism about implementing the new education policies and curricula without careful consideration (Cloete, 2002; McDonald & Van der Horst, 2007). Despite the strong enrolment growth, institutions were not generating enough graduates and many of them lack the skills needed to support national economic development in the 21st

century (Pillay, 2011). Pertaining to policy developments and implementation, Van Louw and Beets (2008, p. 475) maintained that

[s]ymptomatic of the latter is the [HE] transformation of recent years and the consequent 'policy epidemic' which Ball (2003, 215) describes as 'an unstable, uneven but apparently unstoppable flood of closely inter-related reform ideas [which are] permeating and re-orientating education systems in diverse social and political locations which have very different histories'.

McDonald and Van der Horst (2007) argued that educational innovation and change always requires careful planning and thinking. They noted that

[i]f educational change is to keep pace with changes in society and if education is to maintain standards and values that transcend particular times and particular societies, the education system needs to be carefully and thoughtfully managed, instead of merely left to 'happen' (McDonald & Van der Horst, 2007, p. 2).

Van Louw and Beets (2008) asserted that the nature of institutional cultures, as the product of socio-political processes, structures and agencies, may ultimately determine the possibilities of an authentic shift to a HE that is relevant to the needs and demands of society.

With regard to policy development and implementation, Maassen and Cloete (2002) made a case for the differences between policy intention and policy implementation outcomes. They asserted that

[t]he interactive nature of the policy process, the number of actors involved in policy-making and policy-implementation, and the growing but uncontrollable effects of the reform modes of thought offered by globalisation offer some of the explanatory frames necessary when trying to account for the differences between policy intentions and policy outcomes (Maassen & Cloete, 2002, p. 51).

Although Maassen and Cloete (2002) acknowledged that the policy implementation process can improve, they believed that the differences should be interpreted as the unintended effects of human intervention rather than an implementation failure. Some readers may regard this argument as an excuse however there is substantial evidence in organisational literature that points to the subtleties of the human element and the definite role it plays in organisational behaviour. Therefore, it is considered as a key factor when looking into the successes and/or failures of organisational change efforts (cf. Bovey & Hede, 2001; Carr, 2000, 2001, 2002a, 2002b; Carr & Gabriel, 1991; Czander, 1993;

Diamond & Allcorn, 2009; Gould, Stapley & Stein, 2001; Hirschhorn, 1990; Hirschhorn & Barnett, 1993; James & Clark, 2002; Kets de Vries, 1991; Kets de Vries & Miller, 1984; Menzies-Lyth, 1990).

It is agreed that major organisational change efforts may create substantial mental and emotional challenges for employees and may require, in response, distinctive conditions in order to adequately contain the heightened levels of anxieties evoked and manage the painful experiences created by such transformations (Krantz, 2001). Moreover, Bovey and Hede (2001) believed that organisational change is usually managed from a technical point of view (e.g. strategies, calculating profitability and rationalising resources), without recognising or understanding how the human factor influences the success or failure of change. Likewise, Walsh, Crisp and Moss (2011) pointed out that employees do not respond to this technical orientation in passive or rational and predictable ways. Ironically, these authors noticed that the change agents themselves (administrators and managers), whilst appearing to hold the technical orientation, do not conform to it either (Walsh et al., 2011). Kets de Vries (2004, pp. 184–185) provided support for this view, stating that

[t]hough we base business strategies on theoretical models from the ‘rational economic man’, we count on real people (with all their conscious and unconscious quirks) to make and implement decisions. Even the most successful organizational leaders are prone to highly irrational behavior, a reality that we ignore at our own peril.

Despite the conflicting views on and intricacies of the explanations offered for the differences between policy implementation and actual policy outcomes, intended or unintended, the consequences of the changed SAHE landscape remain and continue to put academic employees under pressure.

Against the background of the changed and changing global and national HE landscapes, it is obvious that HEIs, as organisations, will not remain the same. The focus of the discussion to follow is on the changed and changing HE organisation.

2.4 THE CHANGED AND CHANGING HE ORGANISATION

Nearly everywhere, governments are asking their respective HE systems to participate more effectively and efficiently in producing a better educated, culturally enriched, and more economically secure society (Meek, Goedegebuure, Kivinen & Rinne, 1991, p. 451).

The transformation in SA HEIs was triggered by external and internal political and socio-economic changes. External triggers were and continue to be business environments, globalisation and competition, political forces, legislation and technological changes, whereas the internal triggers were and continue to be the new democratic dispensation that resulted in new legislation to address socio-cultural inequalities and to position SA to compete globally (Odendaal & Roodt, 2001; Rothmann et al., 2008; Viljoen, 2006; Viljoen & Rothmann, 2002).

Typically, the major interests at stake in national and global HE systems are social justice, competence, efficiency, academic freedom, autonomy or accountability, decentralisation or centralisation and transparency (DoE Report, 2001; Rhoades, 1983). Inevitably, within each national system, these interests are negotiated and trade-offs are effected (Rhoades, 1983). This implies that HEIs are, to a large extent, characteristic of the political and socio-economic systems in which they are embedded (Habib, 2013).

The HE landscape in SA has changed dramatically during the post-apartheid era to ensure sustainable economic, social and political reconstruction and development, and is still in a process of rapid changes (Viljoen, 2006). It appears as if the overall impact of the political transition on SA HEIs has been positive, based on the joint effects of the increased pressure on universities to become more accountable, in combination with massified and diversified access to universities (Habib, 2013). On the negative side though, there has been an erosion in HEI's autonomy since the HE sector has become much more interfering (Habib, 2013).

Berg, Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura (2003) argued that erosion in HEI is a reality that should not be avoided. These authors argued that

[a]ll institutions are eroded by the passage of time. Improvements in technology, economic realignments, and changes in societal values render most organizations obsolete within a generation or two. Institutions of HE are among the most permanent, but they too become irrelevant if they fail to adapt to changing conditions. The challenge all [HEIs] face is how to keep providing value under conditions of constant change (Berg et al., 2003, p. 41).

These authors also believed that, if the education provided by HEIs is perceived by the public as of lesser value, it will be reflected in decreased student enrolments and public funding, as well as the withdrawal of donors who will find other targets for their beneficence (Berg et al., 2003). Therefore, the progression of HEIs, in the face of constant change, remains a tricky affair (Berg et al., 2003).

Following the history and development of universities as organisations, it became apparent that it was common international practice during the 1960s and 1970s to single out their organisational specificity (Musselin, 2006). At the time, two prominent trends were identified concerning the character of the academic profession. First, most publications on the nature of the academic profession held that universities were unlike other organisations and second, that they tend to follow national patterns (Musselin, 2006).

In reaction to the emerging trends, two contesting trends developed in the 1980s (Musselin, 2006). The “specificity” characteristic of universities was dealt with through introducing managerial tools from the industrial sector to ensure that universities become more entrepreneurial, corporate and accountable (Musselin, 2006). In essence, it was suggested that universities would then become like any other organisation. Likewise, the “sacred” characteristic of universities was dealt with by requesting them to go through economic rationalisation and an organisational shift. The intention was to weaken the influence of the national models and therefore reduce the organisational variety among universities (Musselin, 2006).

Almost three decades later, it appears that the contesting international trends have managed to find their way into the SAHE sector. The trends have been noticed in Habib’s (2013) assertions regarding the significant negative impact of SA’s economic transition on HEIs. Habib (2013) noted that universities have become increasingly corporatised and that they now behave like business entities that are characterised by management practices and accountability mechanisms. Consequently, “power has shifted from structures like Senate (where academics predominate) to Finance and Council (where administrators and external stakeholders are in the majority)” (Habib, 2013, p. 65).

In 1964, Rourke and Brooks (1964, p. 155) noted that, although “[u]niversities are the source of constant intellectual and scientific innovation for the society as a whole ... university personnel are highly reluctant to accept changes in the operation of the university itself”. Likewise, Barnett (2011) indicated that HE systems are not only often slow when addressing and reacting to change but are also slow to accomplish real change. Van Daalen and Odendaal (2001) also emphasised that educational institutions are extremely resistant to change regardless of their creed to open minds and challenge established doctrine. Authentic change requires a level of maturity which translates to minimal defensiveness, critical reflection in practice and the ability among organisational members to agree on and fully articulate difficulties and challenges experienced (Diamond, 2012).

Delineating the reluctance to change, Maassen and Cloete (2002) asserted that, traditionally, HEIs, especially universities, were dominantly run by academics (e.g. professors) and that “institutional administration was seen as an ‘unavoidable evil’ necessary to create the optimal circumstances for the professors to operate autonomously” (p. 23). Rourke and Brooks (1964) maintained that the reluctance to change may be ascribed to faculty members’ steadfast resistance to any innovation in university management; administrative officers’ own difficulties accepting departures from the traditional way of doing things; and university personnel who struggle to accept the idea of looking beyond their immediate environments into the campus itself.

Rourke and Brooks (1964, p. 155) concluded that “this resistance to reform cannot simply be written off as a lack of vision or a defense of vested interests, for often it is founded upon deeply felt assumptions about the purpose of [HE]”. HEIs have become professional organisations, with the academic profession as the dominant one (Maassen & Cloete, 2002). In the SA context, Mapesela and Hay (2005) observed that, in many instances, perceived resistance to change was not about academics’ resistance to reform itself, but rather antagonism towards the abundance of new policies and their consequences and effects.

Maassen and Cloete (2002) claimed that, as organisations, HEIs have four specific characteristics, first, that knowledge provides the organisational building blocks, second, that these knowledge-based structures lead to a high level of organisational fragmentation, third, that these institutions have loosely articulated decision-making structures and, fourth, that change generally takes place in an incrementally, grassroots way. Following from this, Maassen and Cloete (2002) argued that these unique characteristics set HEIs apart from other types of organisations. The differences translate to HEI’s lack of a single clearly defined production function, thus demonstrating low levels of internal integration, academic staff’s commitment to their discipline and profession exceeding their commitment to the institution, the low ability of institutional management to hire and fire staff and that institutional managers are more accountable to stakeholders than to their business counterparts.

The traditional characteristics of HEIs

make it difficult to initiate and steer organisational changes in them from the outside. This doesn’t mean that these organisations are not influenced by external factors, but the exact effect of these factors are impossible to control and very difficult to predict (Maassen & Cloete, 2002, p. 27).

Kulati and Moja (2002) identified three organisational characteristics that distinguish HEIs (especially universities) from other private sector organisations that pose a challenge to effective leadership in HE:

- HEIs have goals and objectives that are not only diverse (teaching, research and community service) and ambiguous, but are also highly contested and even contradictory.
- The fragmented nature of the HE organisation has given rise to a potentially anarchic organisational structure, culminating in semi-autonomous departments, schools, chairs and faculties that act like small sovereign states as they pursue their distinctive self-interests and stand over and against the authority of the whole.
- The decentralised nature of decision-making, organised around the production, preservation and dissemination of an intangible commodity (knowledge), has given rise to a highly fragmented authority structure which is focused on autonomous disciplinary units, in which members' loyalty is split between the organisation (which provides their livelihood) and the disciplinary networks and allegiances that transcend institutional boundaries and are the source of the unit's or individual's academic prestige.

Contextualising the perspective on HEI organisation, Musselin (2006) explored three facets of universities. First, she explored the extent to which universities differ from other public services through reviewing the shift from specific university models to the more recent conception of universities as ordinary organisations. Second, she identified the specific organisational characteristics of universities and the universality thereof and third, she explored the impact of recent reforms and transformations in HE on university governance.

United States' (US) organisation sociologists developed four fundamental models in the 1960s with the predominant goal to characterise universities' decision-making processes to depict their nature (Musselin, 2006). The four models were the collegial, political, bureaucratic and organised anarchy models.

The collegial model understood universities as consensual value-based entities. It assumed the existence of a standing institutional community that shares the same norms and values, and that is inherently connected by the foundation, history and story of the institution (Musselin, 2006). Such connectedness enables consensual institutional decision-making and the ability to overcome individualistic and private antagonisms (Musselin, 2006). This model also correlated with the research field of university cultures

that developed in the 1980s which encouraged the idea that universities, more than any other organisations, are characterised by the influence of specific values (Musselin, 2006).

The political model contested the value-based vision of universities by implying that neither institutional nor academic values had the ability to reduce divergent interests (Musselin, 2006). This model suggested that “universities are filled with conflict and power relationships that are to be taken into account in order to understand the negotiation and political exchanges that structure decision-making” (Musselin, 2006, p.2). It was contended that the degree of power a department has will determine its level of support from the environment and its likelihood to negotiate resources (Musselin, 2006).

The bureaucratic model acknowledged that universities “are a decentralized type of bureaucracy, and more so for the organization of teaching than of research” (Musselin, 2006, p. 2). Therefore, HEIs were defined as professional bureaucracies, implying that bureaucratic features and rational logic were part of their configuration.

The organised anarchies model, or the loosely coupled system model, depicted universities as multiple-goal orientated, unclear technological and fluid participatory entities. In essence, the tenets of this model challenged the tenets of the rational and political models (Musselin, 2006).

From the mid-1970s, no new organisational models for universities emerged. The four existing models were rather combined in three ways, arriving at three conclusions about the decision-making processes and characteristics of universities (Musselin, 2006):

- Universities could meet each of the four models and they could thus be one or combinations of them.
- Diverse domains in the university (e.g. funding, teaching, research, etc.) drew from different models in terms of their decision-making. This implied that the specificity of universities was to shelter different decision-making models.
- Collegiality and bureaucracy were two successive stages experienced by universities before they shifted more recently to the corporation and to the entrepreneurial models.

In the SA context, this is illustrated by Kulati and Moja’s (2002) reflections on the manner in which HEIs were governed and managed in the past. It is mirrored in their relationships with the former apartheid state and their managerial styles and practices (Kulati & Moja, 2002). For example, the historically white Afrikaans-medium and historically black

universities were characterised by highly centralised and autocratic management styles and practices. In contrast, many of the historically white English-medium universities (which were largely opposed to the government's apartheid policy) were characterised by a stronger collegial tradition where the culture of decision making was more participatory, at least, among the professoriate (Kulati & Moja, 2002).

However, in the last decade, the specificity of HEIs was eroded by the importation of non-academic models in universities (e.g. corporation model, entrepreneurial model, managerial model among others) (Musselin, 2006). This is also true for SA as reflected in the writings of various SA scholars (cf. Gibbon & Kabaki, 2002; Habib, 2013; Kulati & Moja, 2002; Nash, 2013).

In 1996, Moja, Muller and Cloete pointed to the worldwide emergence of a shift in the relationship between the state and civil society from self-regulation and state intervention to "more co-operative, interactive, and functionally interdependent forms of state/civil society regulation" (Cloete, 2002, p. 89). This gave way to a national discussion on state/HE relationships, as well as the opportunity to introduce three ideal types of state regulation models which are state control, state supervision and state interference (Cloete, 2002).

At the time, the state supervision model "was highly influential within the NCHE, and underpinned the 1997 White Paper" (Cloete, 2002, p. 90). Essentially, the idea was that a single co-ordinated HE and training system would be achieved through state co-ordination (Cloete, 2002; White Paper 3, 1997). Co-operative governance had implications for the relationships of HEIs with the state and structures of civil society (Cloete, 2002). The state assumed a steering and co-ordinating role whereas institutional autonomy had to be exercised within the limits of their accountability (Cloete, 2002). Hence, it also required the establishment of new relationships and partnerships between HEIs and civil society (Cloete, 2002).

The new policy framework redefined the relationship between HEIs and the state (Kulati & Moja, 2002). The expected shift was considered to be difficult since it required both parties to move from previously (pre-1994) "being conflictual and confrontational to becoming partners within a co-operative model of governance" (Kulati & Moja, 2002, p. 233). The main tension identified was more about HEIs finding their place in their new market situation, rather than between the HEIs and the state (Kulati & Moja, 2002). This was reflected in challenges that leadership faced from tensions within their institutions which was captured as the interaction between leadership, institutional culture, capacity

and resources (Kulati & Moja, 2002).

Kulati and Moja (2002, p. 235) pointed out that “[i]n essence, the nature and structure of the HE organisation and the value framework underpinning its institutional culture, sit uncomfortably alongside the mantra of management”. This clearly communicates the uneasiness, tension and anxiety about this newfound relationship and what it requires in the institutional context. Falk (1967, p. 243) argued that

every social structure is value orientated, and [HE] is no exception ... Values indicate how human societies try to meet their needs and thus lift the human existence above that of a mere animal. Values in [HE] concern themselves with such needs as the search for truth, for freedom, and for communal good. To attain these values, [HE] employs mechanisms of student selection, recognition of scholarly talent, appointment of professors, and development of academic institutions. The assumption is that these structural elements will promote the attainment of the values.

Therefore, this section can be concluded with the following statement by Cloete (2002, p. 105-106) who stated that

[w]hile Nelson Mandela’s famous walk to freedom resulted in a definable moment of triumph of [SA’s] first democratic election in 1994, the new SA is a complex mixture of remarkable achievements and unexpected disappointments. Similarly, the progressive road of [HE] transformation, based on a grand policy narrative, and driven ‘co-operatively’, from the centre by the new government, can claim many achievements. However, the path also led to consequences and effects not remotely anticipated in 1994.

The following discussion gives an indication of some of the consequences and effects for the human component of HEIs, the academic employees, resulting from the transformed and transforming HE landscape, and its concurrent frameworks, policies and processes.

2.5 THE CONSEQUENCES AND EFFECTS OF THE CHANGING AND CHANGED HE LANDSCAPE FOR ACADEMIC EMPLOYEES

A central reality of the HE landscape worldwide is that very few universities managed to escape the powerful forces of change in the past quarter century (Altbach et al., 2009; Bundy, 2005; Meyer et al., 2011; Viljoen, 2006). Many countries, such as Canada, Australia, Russia, China, the United States of America and Great Britain, went through restructuring processes over the past two decades that have resulted in significant

changes in the nature of work, working conditions, demands for greater accountability, value for money, efficiency and quality, an increase in remote and autocratic management styles, and an erosion in pay and job security (Altbach et al., 2009; Bundy, 2005; Mostert, Rothmann, Mostert & Nell, 2008; Viljoen & Rothman, 2009).

Unsurprisingly, there is a growing body of evidence that academia throughout the world has become a highly stressful occupation (cf. Altbach et al., 2009; Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010; Bundy, 2005; Gibbon & Kabaki, 2002; Mostert et al., 2008; Viljoen & Rothmann, 2009). This is also true for SA academia. Barkhuizen and Rothmann (2008) maintained that the traditional academic profession was conceived as a relatively stress-free job and academics have, in the past, been envied for their tenure, light workloads, flexibility advantages such as overseas trips for study and/or conference purposes, and the freedom to pursue their own research. This picture has though changed dramatically as a result of the loss of these attractions and advantages over the past two decades (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008).

Low-stress HE environments have been replaced by an overload of demands, with an undersupply of response capabilities, and are now commonly considered to be stress factories (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008, p. 321; Rothmann & Essenko, 2007). Bundy (2005) reported that academics are suffering from a loss of status and esteem due to their diminished autonomy, less secure employment and fewer promotional prospects. This has resulted in unsettling pictures of HE that are portrayed as “a powerful discourse of crisis, loss, damage, contamination and decay” to sites of “social anxiety and fear” and loss that has become “constitutive of current academic identity” (Bundy, 2005, p.89). Viljoen and Rothmann (2002) added that employees in the midst of transforming institutions may experience intense feelings of pain, fear, vulnerability, uncertainty and anxiety. In contextualising these intense emotional experiences, it is obvious that they reflect the reactions of individuals in emotional turmoil and crisis. This appears within the process of mourning as described by Kübler-Ross (1969), that is, denial, resistance, understanding, action, collaboration and institutionalisation (Viljoen & Rothmann, 2002). The new HE policy development and implementation processes are therefore a controversial and much discussed matter.

In the period since 1994 ... [HE] policy, labour policy and market influences intersected and interacted in the complex field of institutional relationships within which academic employees fulfil their duties, pursue their careers and ambitions and earn their livelihood (Gibbon & Kabaki, 2002, p. 198).

Mapesela and Hay (2005, p. 111) found that “[c]hange and transformation, brought about by new policies, are no easy phenomena to deal with – particularly if they coincide with other socio, political and economical pleas for change”. Unsurprisingly, much academic critique details the negative impact of the policies on the HE system (Habib, 2013).

Mapesela and Hay (2005) not only gave an indication of how the emergent policies (1996 to 2001) served the needs of academics, but also how they may potentially threaten academics’ job satisfaction because they often interpreted the policy overload as a violation of their academic roles and freedom. Mapesela and Hay (2005) also indicated some of the possible effects and emotional states that academics might have experienced (and may still be experiencing) as a consequence of the emerging policies. These emotions may vary from fear, loss, apprehension, lack of enthusiasm, demotivation, frustration, tension, hurt (damage), hostility, turmoil, trauma (nightmare) and dissatisfaction to satisfaction, gifts of grace, motivation and excitement (Mapesela & Hay, 2005). However, this range of emotions is to be expected in a situation of change that leans toward the negative side of the spectrum. Negative emotions are difficult to deal with and may be regarded as personal weaknesses, therefore these emotional experiences may not be recognised as a result of organisational changes and pressures (Flagello, 2014; Franklin, 2003).

Despite the range of emotional experiences, it is evident from the above that the role of the academic profession has been redefined and that it has become multidimensional (Gibbon & Kabaki, 2002). Webster and Mosoetsa (as cited in Gibbon & Kabaki, 2002) explained its new nature and what it implies:

What was now demanded was expertise in a whole range of areas such as academic development, quality assurance, assessment, strategic planning, recruitment and marketing, areas that were previously seen to fall outside the domain of academic work. This dramatic increase in the intensity and range of work, also involved, amongst other things, having to deal with more students who were not adequately prepared for academic work, greater pressure to publish and fewer support staff. In order to maintain a competitive edge, academics now have to change the quality and nature of their service. Indeed, in some cases, the consistency of ‘the product’ is monitored through continuous surveys and other forms of assessment. In this context, teaching increasingly requires a standardised display of feelings that is susceptible to measurement. In the process, the identity of professional academics is changed to units of resource whose performance and productivity must constantly be audited....

Professionalism is seen as being eroded, and replaced with 'the new auditable competitive performer' (p. 224).

A survey conducted by Webster and Mosoetsa in 2001 (Gibbon & Kabaki, 2002) indicated that, as a consequence of the changes, academic employees perceive their relationship with management as one that has shifted from equals or colleagues to that of subordinates, resulting in a split of "us and them" that creates a gap between the two groups (Gibbon & Kabaki, 2002). A significant degree of antagonism is expressed towards management. An academic staff union representative said that

[a]cademics do not feel that fellow academics are running the university. They feel very insecure and they feel that they are being monitored. There is no longer that sense of community and trust in the university (Webster & Mosoetsa, 2001, p. 15).

In addition, academics have also lost their sense of shared identity and community because it is

the combination of [all of] these features that [have] given universities their unique and paradoxical characteristic of being the engine of innovative ideas and practices on the one hand, whilst on the other also being extremely resistant to change (Kulati & Moja, 2002, p. 237).

It is therefore obvious that SA academics have had to face a combination of stresses related to the ripple effects of academic work globally as well as the stresses due to local developments at an accelerated pace. These stresses refer to the radical transformation of the SA society and the demand that education should be transformed culminating in issues such as redress, equity, governance crisis, size and shape, mergers, restructurings, downsizing, increased domestic and international competition, cuts in government funding, changes in management style and structure, rapid changing technology, an ever increasing demand for higher quality products and services, pressure for more research outputs, lecturing bigger classes and supervising more postgraduate students (Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010; Bundy, 2005; Mostert et al., 2008; Viljoen & Rothmann, 2002, 2009).

The call from Government for the revitalisation of the academic profession in 2012 had a sense of urgency (Green Paper, 2012). Altbach et al. (2009) claimed that academic staff is a neglected corps in relation to other "more important" institutional matters and reasoned that

[n]o university can achieve success without well-qualified, committed academic staff. Neither an impressive campus nor an innovative curriculum will produce good results without great professors [or academic staff]. [HE's] worldwide focus on the 'hardware' – buildings, laboratories, and the like – at the expense of 'software' – the people who make any academic institution successful (Altbach et al., 2009, p. 89).

Consequently, SA HEIs have a complex and important task in terms of staffing and it is crucial that they sustain adequate levels of academic staff, build capacity within the system, develop future generations of academics for the system and substantially improve equity (White Paper, 2013).

Though still limited, there is a growing body of SA research, mainly in the field of IOP, that depicts both the negative (weaknesses) and positive (strengths) factors that also operate in the academic world of work, such as occupational stress, ill health, job characteristics, burnout, job satisfaction, optimism, sense of coherence, work engagement, organisational commitment and work-related well-being of academic and support staff in HE (cf. Barkhuizen, 2005; Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010; Coetzee & Rothmann, 2005; Field & Buitendach, 2011; Rothmann et al., 2008; Rothmann & Essenko, 2007; Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006; Viljoen & Rothman, 2009).

This body of research started to appear approximately a decade after the beginning of democratisation in 1994. It suggests an emergent need to identify factors that play a role in the well-being, health and morale of academic employees whilst in the midst of major and ongoing institutional changes. Table 2.3 provides a summary of the findings of the studies mentioned during the period 2005 to 2011.

Table 2.3
Summary of findings of some studies (2005-2011) pertaining to academic and support staff well-being, health and morale

Source	Study population	Findings
Coetzee & Rothmann (2005)	Academic and support staff at a HEI (N = 372)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major occupational stressors identified were workload, job characteristics, work relationships, pay and benefits. • Compared to the international norm, high levels of physical (e.g. headaches, nausea, muscular tension/pains and insomnia) and psychological ill health (e.g. panic attacks, constant irritability/anger, mood swings, tiredness, inability to cope and avoidance of other people, suicide ideation) were found. Experience of perceived

Source	Study population	Findings
		lack of commitment from the organisation ¹ .
Rothmann & Jordaan (2006)	Academic staff in three HEIs (N = 471)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job resources (such as growth opportunities, organisational support and advancement) predicted work engagement (vigour and dedication), whereas job demands (overload) impacted positively on dedication (a component of work engagement when organisational support was low to moderate). Job insecurity was negatively related to dedication.
Rothmann & Essenko (2007)	Support staff members at a HEI (N = 334)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicators that job overload and a lack of job resources contributed to burnout among support staff. • Burnout (exhaustion and cynicism) had a mediating effect on job demands and a lack of job resources on ill health. • Dispositional optimism had a mediating effect on exhaustion and cynicism.
Barkhuizen & Rothmann (2008)	Academic staff in HEIs (N = 595)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compared to normative data, academics reported higher levels of stress relating to pay and benefits, overload and work-life balance. • Differences were found between the levels of occupational stress and ill health of the demographic groups. • Two stressors, namely, work overload and lack of work-life balance contributed significantly to ill health of academics. • Four occupational stressors contributed significantly to the commitment of academics to their institutions which were work overload, job control, resources and communication, and job characteristics.
Rothmann, Barkhuizen & Tytherleigh (2008)	Academic staff in HEIs (N = 279)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job demands and a lack of job resources predicted burnout (exhaustion and cynicism) of academics, which led to physical and psychological ill health. • Dispositional optimism had a main effect on burnout and ill health. • A lack of resources (including resources needed for learning and growth, resources needed to attain goals of the organisation), social support (opportunities for interaction with and support from colleagues) and rewards, increased academics' level of exhaustion and cynicism.
Mostert et al. (2008)	Support staff at a HEI (N = 292)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compared with normative data, average levels of occupational stress were reported. • Stressors that mainly influenced organisational commitment were job control, resources, communication and work relationships. • Absenteeism and presenteeism escalated the losses suffered by the HEI.
Viljoen & Rothmann (2009)	Academic and support staff at a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different organisational stressors contributed

¹ The term organisation and institution will be used interchangeably in this study.

Source	Study population	Findings
	university of technology (UoT) (N = 353)	<p>significantly to ill health and low organisational commitment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress about job security contributed to both physical and psychological ill health. • Overload and job aspects contributed to psychological ill health. • Stress about job control and resources contributed to low organisational commitment. • Low individual commitment to the organisation was predicted by five stressors, namely, work-life balance, work overload, job control, job characteristics and pay.
Bezuidenhout & Cilliers (2010)	Female academics in HEIs (N = 187)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average levels of burnout, with definite signs that the experience of burnout was on the increase. • The cynicism sub-dimension of burnout showed increased levels. • Work engagement scores were just above average. • Sense of coherence scores were low.
Field & Buitendach (2011)	Support staff members from a HEI (N = 123)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affective organisational commitment had a positive relationship with satisfaction with life, well-being and work engagement. • Happiness and work engagement predicted organisational commitment.

Overall, the main recommendation from these studies was that HEIs should intervene to reduce the occupational stress of staff. To alleviate the stresses experienced, multifaceted interventions were proposed and it was emphasised that such interventions should have several aims that should take place on various levels. Table 2.4 indicates the proposed interventions on the intended levels, as well as interventions in other specific areas.

Table 2.4

Recommendations to reduce the occupational stress of staff

(adapted from Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010; Coetzee & Rothmann, 2005; Rothmann & Essenko, 2007; Viljoen & Rothman, 2009)

Primary intervention (Directed at the work situation and/or coping capacity of the employee)	Secondary intervention (Directed at employees and specific groups who were already showing signs of stress from getting sick and to increasing their coping capacity)	Tertiary intervention (Directed at individual employees who have suffered ill health or reduced well-being as a result of strain in the workplace)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions aimed at reducing or altering stressors, such as provision of a more supportive climate (including more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress management training (burnout prevention), including, for example, relaxation training, biofeedback, cognitive restructuring, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress management intervention, focusing on the rehabilitation of individuals who have suffered ill health or reduced well-being as a

constructive feedback on job performance), changes in decision making processes to increase employee participation and reduce stress levels concerning job control, redesign of job tasks (e.g. task enrichment and enlargement) to increase employee autonomy and control over job functions and work schedules, reduce overload to an equitable and manageable workload (e.g. recruit more research assistants and tutors to help through research and teaching to ease time constraints and other pressures on academics), flexi-time, delegation of authority, providing adequate resources and communication, tangible evidence of commitment from the organisation and establishment of a more equitable system of reward and resource distribution.

time management, goal setting, work-life balance, promoting healthy lifestyles and physical activity and conflict resolution strategies.

- Intervention directed at increasing optimism (e.g. cognitive-behavioural therapy).
- Intervention aimed at enhancing the meaningfulness of work, as well as a sense of coherence.

result of strain in the workplace, aimed at reviving physical and psychological health.

Other specific areas of intervention may include:

- Optimisation of group effectiveness and team building.
- Participative decision-making and management practices.
- Organisational support, including increased social support, good work relationships, communication, information, a sense of belonging and a shared vision.
- Rebuilding trust relationships.
- Organisational commitment to fairness and equity.
- Academic leadership skills to ensure organisational support in being fair to staff members by coaching them and by interviewing them on a regular basis about their personal functioning, professional development and career development.
- Development of coping strategies especially with regard to dealing with change and transformation.
- Continuous development of staff to ensure that they remain competitive in an ever-changing world of work and to ensure a variety of learning opportunities and autonomy in their jobs.
- Advancement opportunities (remuneration, promotion and training) should be addressed.

The findings of the abovementioned research studies were an essential step towards raising awareness about and identifying factors impeding and/or enhancing the well-being, health and morale of academic employees and support staff in the SAHE context as major changes took place and are continuing to take place. It also provided guidelines

to HEIs on what should potentially be done in order to address and mediate these factors.

Furthermore, students are fundamental to the SAHE sector. The trend of student unrest and protests became prominent in 2015 (Chetty & Knaus, 2016; Schlebusch, 2015). This is putting the academe under immense pressure due to the loss of academic time and the ripple effects thereof with the expectation of delivering the same product. Section 2.6 investigates some of the pressures that the student protests evoke, specifically for academics.

2.6 THE SAHE PARADOX INTENSIFIES THE PRESSURE ON THE ACADEME

“SA has experienced a dramatic increase in the amount of protest action in the last two years. The most notable has been service delivery protests and protests that have been led by students across the country” (Schlebusch, 2015, p. 12). Students protested against high institutional fees, structural inequalities, symbols of colonialism and language policies that led to a lack of HE transformation (Chetty & Knaus, 2016; Schlebusch, 2015). Consequently, various campuses across the country were struck with boycotts and strikes (Cloete, 2016a).

Arguably, these protests are considered to be class actions against SA’s existing exclusive HE system that is based on race and class rather than the demand for free education (Chetty & Knaus, 2016; Cloete, 2016a). This contention is founded in the observation that the majority of students who participated in these actions were from the black poor and black working-class groups (Chetty & Knaus, 2016; Cloete, 2016a). Cloete (2016a, 2016b) pointed out that, while both rich and poor students revolted, those who tried to destroy fee records had debt and poor academic records.

Badat (2009) indicated that there were problematic tensions between a number of HE values and goals due to an increase in the presence of diverse social actors, interest groups and organisations in the HE landscape. “For example, to the extent that government and other actors seek to pursue social equity and redress and quality in [HE] simultaneously, difficult political and social dilemmas arise, especially in the context of inadequate public finances” (Badat, 2009, p. 461). Hall (2016) ascribed the students’ underlying anger to the legacies of racial discrimination and colonialism, high levels of unemployment and noticeable and increasing income inequality. According to Cloete (2016a, p. 8), the root cause of students’ unhappiness and the driving force for their actions is the final realisation that “this pretence by government and the HE system to address inequality through HE was not working, and will not work” (Cloete, 2016a, p. 8).

Moreover, the argument is “that [HE] does not solve inequalities, it can only keep them from unsettling” (Piketty as cited in Cloete, 2016a, p. 8).

As a consequence, violent student actions such as the destruction of university property required the police to come onto campuses to assist in restoring order, whilst senior management and the student leader corps negotiated with each other and with government (Cloete, 2016a).

Providing insight at a deeper level, Cloete (2016a) profiled the protesting student groups into three categories:

- The first group is the middle and upper middle class group from model C and private schools. This is a privileged, guilt-ridden group that expresses feelings of alienation that may be interpreted as a mechanism to allay their social conscience about “inequality, the plight of the poor, and perhaps, above all, their great disappointment about the prospects of a failed HE development project, and the fading ‘rainbow’ aspirations of the new SA” (Cloete, 2016a, p. 5). Essentially, this group knows that getting a university degree will protect their “iron cage of privileges”. For this group the future looks uncertain.
- The second group is a mixture of the missing middle and the poor. Their disillusionment has turned into anger because they know that the HE development project has failed them. They also have an inherent knowledge that they are excluded from the “rainbow” group. Their last resort is the university and not the state because they perceive the attainment of a university degree as their only chance for social and economic advancement. They have little hope of paying back their debts and it is possible that they may experience uneasiness because they are at a significant risk of dropping out of their undergraduate studies. For this group, the future looks bleak.
- The third group is politically driven and appears to be a competition between different political parties and factions. They are also referred to as the “third force” and appear to be supported financially. They hope for political positions after university. Their strategy is to recruit and instigate different groups from amongst the disillusioned and the angry. Over and above disturbing the status quo, one of their goals may also be to blur the boundary between the university and the community.

Chetty and Knaus (2016) believe that the perceived perpetrators (government and the HE system) do not recognise that the student actions are fundamentally a class struggle by the black youth. According to Chetty and Knaus (2016, p. 3),

[t]hey dismiss it as unruly behaviour and a lack of respect for the new 'progressive' order governing universities. Protesters are berated for not understanding universities' financial pressures; they are viewed as being insensitive to their peers who just want to get on with their education without disruptions.

Furthermore, Chetty and Knaus (2016) specifically called upon academics since they are perceived to be a silent, discouraged and suppressed voice in this conflict. Their silence may be interpreted as the academe giving consent to the growing crisis in inequalities because

[o]nce again, it's the youth who has the courage to resist the system, just as they did during the Soweto 1976 uprising. They do so at great personal risk. But students should fear less the angry policemen with their rubber bullets than the racist academe that covertly discriminates against the poor (Chetty & Knaus, 2016, p. 3).

These authors suggested that the academics are absent from the debate and forsake their responsibility in the quest for authentic social change, more specifically, the racial and class divide. Likewise, Cloete (2016a) suggested ways to create opportunities for academics to participate and to break their silence about pertinent issues in the HE and SA contexts. Cloete (2016a, p. 6) suggested that "Vice-Chancellors of Universities [in SA] should go beyond asking for more funding from government, and unite in their demand that political party activity on campuses be strictly regulated". He emphasised the scholarly arguments by Mattes and Luescher-Mamashela (2012) about the education-citizen nexus that entails the positive relationship between citizen education and the quality of democracy. Cloete (2016a, p. 6) also advised that universities should consider following the international practice of citizenship education that translates to

undertaking citizen education in a systematic and intentional co-curricular development of attitudes, skills and competencies that supports the approach of universities as training grounds for democracy, and not as political hot houses.... This is one of a number of possible ways in which the thus far silent academics could contribute within the area of their expertise, rather than be self-blaming, or self-righteous or continue to think that they may be living in Africa but they are exceptional.

These arguments clearly communicated the authors' frustration and disappointment with the perceived "silent academics". Their arguments are also a call for help with respect to

widespread and complex political and socio-economic matters that impact the SAHE sector and broader society negatively.

The systems perspective postulates that what happens in one part of the system affects other parts. Hall (2016, p. 2) explained that

universities are a miner's canary for wider issues in HE. Income inequalities and widening participation, while extreme in [SA], are issues for many countries. Unfair acts of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity and other identifiers are common concerns.

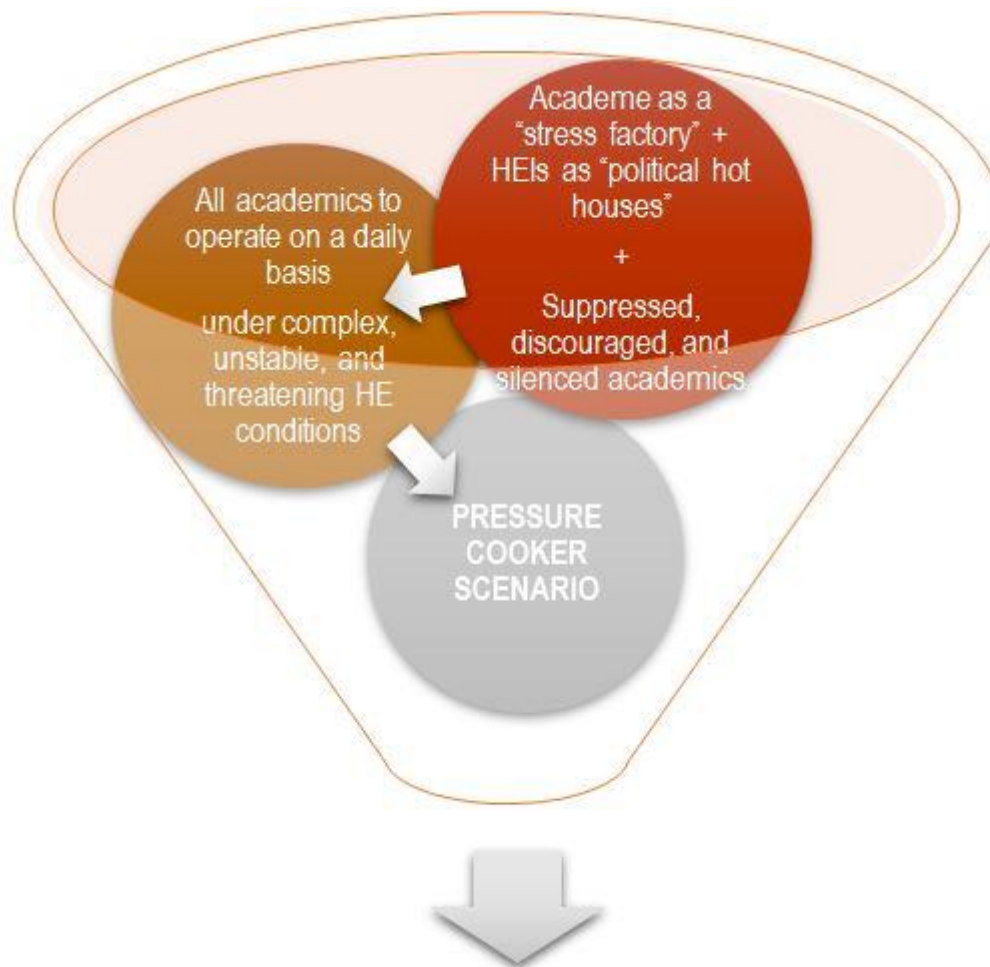
The contention is that HEIs are shaped by the political and socio-economic systems in which they are embedded (Habib, 2013). In this regard, Cloete (2016a, p. 6) argued that SA, as a whole, is on a knife's edge and

[u]niversities – with their strategic location in the contestation for resources (both material and social capital) – are merely a symptom. Rather disingenuously, both students and the government are blaming the universities by accusing them of colonialism, racism and lack of transformation, but remaining silent about how, in some cases very legitimate demands have become entangled and embroiled in party contestations and the struggle for access to resources, and the maintenance of privilege.

From the above, it is apparent that there are differing perspectives about the actual silent partners and their covert agendas, the real roots of the conflicts and who should be blamed for the numerous crises in HE and the SA society. Consequently, more pressure is exerted on the HE system and the academics, specifically referring to being called upon to play their role in effecting social change in SA. Guilt, regardless if it is appropriate or inappropriate, is intentionally inflicted on academics as an attempt to get them to reflect on their silence. As the thinkers in the academe, they are expected to generate ideas that may assist in addressing these challenges (Chetty & Knaus, 2016). However, only time will tell if the academics would be able to overcome their discouragement and respond to the call.

Looking at the overall picture, universities have become a well-located hub for a number of SA's past political and socio-economic transgressions and pain but they are also a container for students' (and possibly others from the broader SA context) growing disillusionment and anger pertaining to the universities' failure to be "the miracle cure" for some of SA's political and socio-economic challenges. As the fires of anger, hurt and rage

are literally and symbolically burning high in the HE sector, the question is: what will, in the end, happen to the academics, the so-called human capital of HE, that are finding themselves in the midst of the burning fires and increasing pressures? Since academics feel discouraged and suppressed, should they also be burdened with guilt for being silent? This scenario is illustrated in Figure 2.1 below.



Potential outcome for academics if the prevailing HE conditions^{*} persist:

Some academics may thrive, some academics may just hang, and some academics may go down.

* Precautionary note: Potentially deadly if the HE container's "pressure regulator" is not working optimally, implying that the "pressure cooker conditions" may have debilitating consequences for some of the human constituent of HE if not equipped adequately to operate effectively under changed, changing and uncertain conditions. The overall implication for SAHE is clear.

Figure 2.1. Potential outcomes for academics if the prevailing HE conditions persist

Masepele and Hay (2005, p. 127) cautioned that

[the] lack of realism about what a developing HE system with limited financial and human resources can achieve in a short period of time may harm the entire HE fraternity, delay the aspired transformation of the system, as well as hamper the

development of the society substantially, something that SA cannot afford.

Cloete (2016b, p. 10) stated that the lesson to learn is that “bad policies [including apartheid] have long lasting consequences and cannot be redressed or be wished away in a decade or two”. Likewise, Badat (2009, p. 466) wrote that

O'Donnel and Schmitter (1986, pp. 3-4) have written of transitions in terms of ‘the numerous surprises and difficult dilemmas’ of ‘elements of accident and unpredictability, of crucial decisions taken in a hurry’ ..., of actors facing insolvable ethical dilemmas and ideological confusions, of dramatic turning points reached and passed without an understanding of their future significance.

In addition to the observations noted above, this also describes the nature of institutional change in post-1994 SAHE.

Although not everything is negative, it is apparent that there are no quick fixes and easy answers for the difficulties that the SA society and the HE sector are grappling with. The impression is that academics are caught in the middle of the conflicts and, as a consequence, they are expected to be miracle workers. Because academics are regarded as a neglected corps (Altbach et al., 2009), they may have to deal with many changes whilst continuing to work under challenging conditions.

2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The primary objective of Chapter 2 was to provide insight into the HE sector that has changed radically over the past few decades. In order to fulfil the objective of this chapter, a number of secondary objectives were addressed. The key trends of GHE were discussed which are globalisation and massification and it became apparent that the trends intended and unintended dynamics generated a new operating context for HEIs. This was intensified by the democratic dispensation that required SA HEIs to implement new policies and practices to provide for and support a much more diversified student population. In addition, HEI organisations have also changed and this has put academics under tremendous pressure since they have to make paradigm shifts at an accelerating pace and deal with changed work conditions and roles, presumably with varying degrees of readiness to adjust to and manage the changes.

Institutional change literature has revealed the dynamics of change as inevitable tensions, contestations, paradoxes, contradictions and ambiguities (Badat, 2009). Unsurprisingly, organisational change puts a great strain on the ability of employees to contain their

anxieties and may pose a threat to some employees' well-being and experience of meaning in the workplace. In the long run, this may have significant cost implications for HEIs.

CHAPTER 3: VIKTOR E. FRANKL'S THEORY AND LOGOTHERAPY

Consider first the teacher's life-impact. There is no way to assume that meaning will increase in students' lives during their tertiary education years, but the best hope for its doing so is to have them 'sharing time and space with teachers whose lives meaning runs strong enough to be contagious' (adapted from Wirth, 1976, p. 124).

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Viktor Frankl is the founder of Logotherapy which has come to be called the Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy (after Freud's psychoanalysis, and Adler's individual psychology) (Kimble & Ellor, 2000, p. 9).

Logotherapy finds its philosophical roots in existentialism and phenomenology, its psychological roots in psychoanalysis, and individual psychology, and its spiritual roots in a profound commitment to the human being as an irreducible spiritual creature (Kimble & Ellor, 2000, p. 9).

In Chapter 3, an explanation of the theoretical basis of Viktor Frankl's theory and logotherapy to enhance meaning in human existence is provided. This is imperative for the purposes of Chapter 5 where the sources of meaning and/or meaning frustration for the academic employees who participated in the study will be presented and discussed. Since the development and implementation of the logotherapy brief group-based intervention will be informed by the findings from Chapter 5, the process of developing the logotherapy brief group-based intervention will not be addressed in this chapter but in Chapter 6. Likewise, the supporting logotherapy techniques (as applied in the intervention) will not be addressed in this chapter but also in Chapter 6. The outcomes of the logotherapy brief group-based intervention will be presented in Chapter 7.

Therefore, in this chapter, a theoretical overview of aspects of existential phenomenology in relation to logotherapy is provided that leads to a biographical account of the origin and development of Frankl's theory and logotherapy and an explanation of his view of human beings. Lastly, the key concepts of logotherapy is discussed, namely:

- meaning (logos);
- the basic tenets of logotherapy (freedom of will, will to meaning and meaning of life);
- existential frustration, existential vacuum and noögenic neuroses;

- the tragic triad;
- conscience and self-transcendence;
- ultimate or supra meaning; and
- the spiritual dimension, noöynamics and mental health.

The following is a theoretical overview of aspects of existential phenomenology in relation to logotherapy.

3.2 EXISTENTIAL PHENOMENOLOGY

Frankl is regarded as one of the foremost representatives of existential psychology and the existential phenomenology movement (Graber, 2004; Kimble & Ellor, 2000; Lantz, 2000; Shantall, 1997).

Existentialism became popular in Europe as a response to the age of anxiety, anguish, crisis and dehumanization of man. In this age, man suffers from problems of isolation, alienation and meaninglessness. The problems were not sufficiently answered by psychoanalysis (Ponsaran, 2007, p. 342).

Freud's conception of psychoanalysis was considered to be objective and scientific (Saiger, 1996). Existentialists argued that objective, universal and certain knowledge is an impossible philosophical ideal that results in the rejection of the views and methods of science (Graber, 2004). Consequently, existential psychiatry developed to answer the problems that were left unresolved by psychoanalysis (Ponsaran, 2007).

Although Rollo May introduced the concept of existential psychotherapy to the US in 1958, Irwin Yalom's seminal work, *Existential Psychotherapy* (1980) was the first comprehensive textbook on existentialism (Ponsaran, 2007). Frankl played a central role in developing existential psychotherapy. He drew from concepts like freedom, responsibility, values and meanings whilst in the process of developing his theory and therapy (Ponsaran, 2007). Fundamentally, logotherapy is focused on existence in the specifically human or spiritual dimension that sets itself apart from the mechanical functioning in the biological dimension of life (Crumbaugh, 1971). For that reason, logotherapy has been included under the heading of existential psychiatry/psychology or humanistic psychology as a form of existential philosophy (Crumbaugh, 1971; Frankl, 1988; Ponsaran, 2007).

Rollo May (1958 as cited in Ponsaran, 2007, pp. 343-344) identified the following similarities between existentialism and existential psychotherapy:

- Both are concerned with individuals in crisis, that is, with human beings who, in one way or the other, deviate in their life structure from the pattern of the “normal” (*condition humaine*).
- Both analyse crisis or limit situations as they reveal themselves in anxiety, estrangement, despair and their concomitants and derivatives.
- Both lament over the loss of the “sense of being” that results in the subordination of existence to professional and vocational specialisation and submission to the demands of the conformist life structure of the “organisation man”.
- Both conceive of the ultimate limit situation – death.

According to existentialism, humans have no essence but only their existence that refers to those existential conditions that are part of being human (Stumm, 2008). Yalom (1980) conceptualised the existential conditions as four themes that form a fundamental part of human existence, namely, death, freedom, existential isolation and meaninglessness. He believed that many of the conflicts and concerns that individuals may exhibit stem from the four themes (Eliason, Samide, Williams & Lepore, 2010). The following is a summary of the themes (Eliason et al., 2010):

- *Death* is the tension between the awareness of the inevitability of death, individuals’ mortality and the wish to continue to be.
- *Freedom* is a terrifying concept because, without structure and framework, freedom implies that individuals are totally responsible for their lives. Distress occurs when individuals confront the groundlessness, void or abyss of nothingness versus their wish for structure.
- *Existential isolation* suggests a disconnection or isolation from the self, rather than isolation from another. Yalom believed that intrapersonal conflict results from the tension between individuals’ awareness of their absolute isolation and their wish for contact or their desire to be part of a larger whole. Ultimately, individuals all leave the world as they entered it, alone.
- Individuals are meaning-seeking organisms. Given the absence of any preordained design, individuals are all responsible for finding the meaning of their existence. Conflict and distress occurs when they seek to find that meaning in a universe that is *without meaning*.

Frankl was influenced by these existential themes (Ponsaran, 2007). He identified five general areas in which all experiences arising from human existence can be placed: the meaning of life, death, suffering, work and love (Graber, 2004). “These themes evoke

man's² freedom and responsibility, his uniqueness, life's transitoriness, death, committing to values and goals and finding meaning in life" (Ponsaran, 2007, p. 343). Frankl believed that these five areas of experience are filled with meaning potential that provide opportunities for development (Graber, 2004).

Existentialism aims at guiding the individual in discovering for himself just who he is, what he wants to be and in finding means of establishing this identity. Logotherapy is the only form of existentialism to develop a technique of therapy to accomplish this aim (Crumbaugh, 1971, p, 375).

Existentialism utilises a philosophical method called phenomenology developed by the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), the founding father of phenomenology (Boeree, 2006; Cooper, 2003; Gallagher, 2012). Phenomenology was initially explained as "a rigorous process developed to go beyond an exclusive focus upon the physical world in an attempt to take human experience into scientific consideration" (Lantz, 2000, p. 220). Edith Stein (1964 as cited in Lantz, 2000, p. 220) defined phenomenology as "a process of reflection and struggle directed toward the discovery of essence and spirit". Frankl (1988, p. 7) suggested phenomenology to be

an attempt to describe the way in which man understands himself, in which he interprets his own existence, far from preconceived patterns of interpretations and explanation such as are furnished by psychodynamic or socio-economic hypotheses.

Boeree (2006) explained phenomena as the content of man's consciousness (e.g. things, relationships, events, thoughts, images, memories, fantasies, feelings, acts, among others). Therefore, phenomenology, as a method, attempts to allow the contents of consciousness to reveal themselves and to speak through human experiences (Boeree, 2006). Phenomenology attempts to give a description of the way things appear in human conscious experience (Boeree, 2006; Gallagher, 2012).

Experience is not an empirical fact, but should rather be understood in the purity of its essence (Gallagher, 2012). Experience then becomes a priority over reality, since the phenomenologist acknowledges that "the way things appear in conscious experience may be very different from the way things actually are in reality" (Gallagher, 2012, p. 8). Although, the phenomenologist "is not concerned about how things are actually in reality; the phenomenologist is rather concerned about how we experience things" (Gallagher,

² The terms human beings, people, individuals, and man are used interchangeably in this study, and is regarded as inclusive of the female gender.

2012, p. 8). People's collection of experiences constitute their lifeworld, the world as they live it, the meaningful background for all their actions and interactions (Gallagher, 2012).

This implies that individuals and their environments (or *lifeworld*) constitute an interdependent unity that cannot be compartmentalised (Osborne, 1990). An experience such as the meaning of work and life can thus not be studied without taking into consideration how the lifeworld or context has influenced the experience and vice versa (Osborne, 1990).

In the domain of logotherapy, Frankl not only utilised the phenomenological method to develop his view of human beings, but also to arrive at the reality of conscience (Ponsaran, 2007). The treatment relationship is considered to be the central treatment factor in Frankl's existential approach (Lantz, 2000) and is used

to facilitate [individuals'] phenomenological struggle to gain awareness of meanings and meaning potentials (i.e. spirit), as well as better understanding of coping patterns (i.e. essence), that could be used to more effectively actualize the meaning potentials in [their lives] (Lantz, 2000, p. 220).

Therefore, logotherapy sets itself out to comprehend individuals in their totality which includes their ambitions, successes, failures and constant search for meaning (Ponsaran, 2007).

Boeree (2000) argued that existential phenomenology "as a philosophy or a psychology, is not a tightly defined system by any means". An existential phenomenological approach to life rather describes how individuals experience the world for themselves (Graber, 2004). Likewise, Du Plock (2005) said that the existential-phenomenological approach does not aim at constructing explanatory models but rather strives to understand situations by exploring the immediate (in the moment) experience which is not seen as originating in one individual, but always in the *lifeworld* of human beings which is their environmental or contextual givens.

A biographical overview of Frankl's life and work illuminates the birth and development of his theory and logotherapy.

3.3 BIOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW OF THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF VIKTOR FRANKL'S THEORY AND LOGOTHERAPY

Viktor Emil Frankl was born on 26 March 1905 in Vienna, into a middle class Jewish family and died in the same city on 2 September 1997 at the age of 92 years (Graber,

2004; Pytell, 2000; Shantall, 2003). His father, Gabriel Frankl, was from Moravia and was the director of the Ministry of Social Services. His mother, Elsa Lion, was from Prague (Boeree, 2006). Like Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and Alfred Adler (1870-1937), Frankl grew up in a middle-class Viennese environment and, it is assumed, on a timescale that meant that they were influenced by the same events (Marshall, 2011).

Frankl was an intellectually gifted and curious child and, from an early childhood, sensed a depth to life and pondered its meaning (Boeree, 2006; Graber, 2004; Marseille, 1997). Freud, the Father of Psychoanalysis, lived in a district not far from where Frankl was born and, during the period 1899 to 1909, the Frankl's lived diagonally across the street from where Alfred Adler, a former student and associate of Freud and the Father of Individual Psychology (or Adlerian Psychoanalysis) practiced at Czerningasse No. 7 (Burger, 2007; Marshall, 2011). By the age of four, Frankl had already made a decision to become a medical doctor (Boeree, 2006). He was nine years old when World War I (WWI) broke out and he witnessed the turmoil and chaos consequent to the post WWI era in his native city (Graber, 2004).

At the age of 14, Frankl's science teacher claimed that human beings and their lives are nothing more than a mere combustion process (Marseille, 1997, Shantall, 2003). Frankl questioned the teacher's claim by asking "What meaning does human life have then?" (Marseille, 1997, p. 1; Shantall, 2003). At 15, Frankl studied various subjects that interested him, such as natural science, philosophy and especially psychology (Graber, 2004). In 1920, Sigmund Freud (then 64 years old) dominated the psychological scene internationally (Graber, 2004). Freud's Psychoanalysis ("Will to Pleasure") was known as the First Viennese School of Psychotherapy (Graber, 2004, p. 20).

Frankl was 16 years old when "he held a lecture in a philosophical circle in Vienna about the Meaning of Life" (Marseille, 1997, p. 1). His correspondence with Freud led to an article publication in Freud's *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* (Pytell, 2000). Frankl's beliefs about individuals' meaning in life started to develop in contrast to Freud's pandeterministic views of humans being totally determined by heredity and environment (Graber, 2004).

Frankl entered the University of Vienna to start his medical studies (Graber, 2004). Despite considering specialising in dermatology or gynaecology, he later decided to specialise in psychiatry (Graber, 2004). Frankl was attracted to Adler and his Association for Individual Psychology and became a follower and member of the association (Graber,

2004; Marseille, 1997; Pytell, 2000). He found a somewhat more open system in Adler's ideas than Freud's ideas (Marseille, 1997). In 1925, he published an article in Adler's *International Journal of Individual Psychology*, titled "Psychotherapy and World View: On the Fundamental Critique of Their Connection" in favour of "Adlerianism and rejecting Freudian iconoclasm". This was realised through exploring his principal intellectual concerns that were the meaning of life and the role of psychotherapy while abandoning the "biological and anthropological point of view, that marked his article published under Freud" (Boeree, 2006; Burger, 2007; Pytell, 2000, p. 284).

Adler's system of thought was known as the Second Viennese School of Psychotherapy ("Will to Power") (Graber, 2004, p. 20). Frankl started to develop ideas that were outside Adler's traditional framework. In 1926, he used the term logotherapy for the first time in a public lecture (Boeree, 2006). He also published his second article in the *International Journal of Individual Psychology*. The subject of this article was the psychology of intellectualism, also referred to as "psychologism" (Pytell, 2000).

In 1927, Frankl was asked to leave Adler's circle since his ideas deviated from Adler's traditional thought system (Burger, 2007; Graber, 2004; Marseille, 1997). "Just as Adler had left Freud's *Psychoanalysis* to find his own school of thought, Frankl, in turn, left Adler's *Association of Individual Psychology* to found the Third Viennese school of psychotherapy" (Graber, 2004, p. 9). Frankl began to refine his ideas for the Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy ("Will to Meaning"), that is, Existential Analysis and Logotherapy (Boeree, 2006; Graber, 2004, p. 20).

The refinement of Frankl's ideas was shaped by various intellectual influences and the *Zeitgeist*. The *Zeitgeist* referred to the collapse of the stock market in 1929 and the start of the Great Depression, resulting in rampant inflation rates, high levels of unemployment and an increase in the numbers of suicides (Graber, 2004). "Especially the young seemed hopeless and despairing, questioning the meaning of their existence" (Graber, 2004, p. 8). In terms of intellectual influences during this period, Frankl aligned himself with two other departing members of the Adlerian Association, Rudolf Allers and Oswald Schwartz (Pytell, 2000). In addition, the works of Max Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics* and Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, also played a significance role in shaping his thinking, and freeing him from "psychologism" (Pytell, 2000).

After receiving his medical degree in 1930, Frankl practised as a medical doctor and continued with his training in neurology and psychiatry (Boeree, 2003; Pytell, 2000).

From 1933 until 1937, he worked as the head of the female suicide ward at the state hospital, *Am Steinhof* (Boeree, 2003; Pytell, 2000). In addition to his work, Frankl founded counselling centres in Vienna and other Austrian cities, primarily for the youth in distress and the unemployed (Boeree, 2006; Graber, 2004). During this period, the fundamental formulations of Existential Analysis and Logotherapy took shape (Graber, 2004). “By 1933, he had systemized his ideas and talked about logotherapy – treatment through finding “meaning” (Graber, 2004, p. 8).

In 1937, Frankl was a professor in neurology and psychiatry at the University of Vienna Medical School and opened his own practice in neurology and psychiatry (Boeree, 2006; Shantall, 2003). In 1938, Nazi troops invaded Austria (Boeree, 2006; Shantall, 2003). At the outbreak of World War II (WWII), Frankl was director (during the period 1940 to 1942) of the Neurological Department of the Rotschild Hospital in Vienna, the only hospital for Jews in Vienna during the Nazi regime (Boeree, 2006; Graber, 2004; Shantall, 2003). The hospital functioned as a communal centre for Jews and was also one of the few places where Jews could work (Pytell, 2000). It was during this period that he began to write the manuscript containing his ideas, entitled *Ärztliche Seelsorg*, published after the war and in English as *The Doctor and the Soul* (Boeree, 2006).

Frankl married his first wife in 1942. Although Frankl obtained an American immigrant visa to the US in 1942, he declined the visa out of concern for the safety of his elderly parents (Boeree, 2006; Shantall, 2003). The Nazis forced the young couple to abort their first child (Viktor Frankl Institute Vienna, 2016b) and Frankl, his wife Tilly, his parents and brother were arrested and deported to a concentration camp in Theresienstadt in Bohemia in September 1942 (Boeree, 2006; Marshall, 2011). Frankl spent three years in four concentration camps, Theresienstadt, Auschwitz, Kaufering III and Tuerkheim (Marshall, 2011). Both of his parents, his wife and his brother died between 1942 and 1945 (Boeree, 2006). Only his sister, Stella, survived because she managed to escape and emigrated to Australia a short while before the Frankl family was sent to the camps (Boeree, 2006; Shantall, 2003).

When Frankl was moved to Auschwitz, the full-length manuscript for *The Doctor and the Soul*, an outline of the basic concepts of logotherapy, was sewn into the lining of his overcoat (Boeree, 2006; Frankl, 1986; Shantall, 2003). The manuscript was lost when his possessions were confiscated and destroyed (Boeree, 2006; Frankl, 1986; Shantall, 2003). The concentration camp experience posed an authentic challenge to Frankl because he had “to live what he has written, to practice what he has preached” (Shantall,

2003, p. 10). The concentration camps served as a testing ground for the basic concepts of logotherapy (Frankl, 1986). It confirmed one of the main tenets of logotherapy,

the theory that the basic meaning orientation of an individual ... the 'will to meaning' – has actual survival value.... those inmates who were oriented towards the future, whether it was a task to complete in the future or a beloved person to be reunited with, were most likely to survive the horrors of the camps (Frankl, 1986, p. x).

Frankl's "will to meaning" was activated through his "desire to complete his work, and his hope that he would be reunited with his wife and family someday", an impetus that gave him hope in what seemed like a hopeless situation (Boeree, 2006, p. 2).

[M]y strong desire to rewrite my manuscript surely contributed to the chances of my survival. When, a few months before my liberation from my last concentration camp, I was suffering from typhus and, as a physician, know that a vascular collapse during sleep was the principal danger, I tried hard to keep myself awake by scribbling shorthand notes on the back of small scraps of paper that a comrade has stolen for me, together with the stub of a pencil. Later these notes proved to be very helpful when I started reconstructing the manuscript (Frankl, 1986, p. x).

In April 1945, Frankl's camp was liberated and he returned to Vienna only to discover the deaths of his family (Boeree, 2006). In 1946, he overcame his despair and was appointed as the director of the Vienna Neurological Policlinic, a position that he held until 1970 (Boeree, 2006; Graber, 2004). With his reconstructed book *The Doctor and the Soul*, he regained his teaching position at the University of Vienna Medical School (Viktor Frankl Institute Vienna, 2016b). In the same year, he wrote the book *Man's Search for Meaning* that detailed his experiences in the Nazi concentration camps (Graber, 2004; Marshall, 2011).

Frankl married his second wife Eleonore Schwindt (Elly) in 1947 and they had a daughter, Gabrielle, in December of that year (Boeree, 2006). In 1948, he received his PhD in philosophy, with a dissertation titled *The Unconscious God*, which examined the relations between psychology and religion (Boeree, 2006). In the same year, he was promoted to Associate Professor of Neurology and Psychiatry at the University of Vienna (Boeree, 2006; Viktor Frankl Institute Vienna, 2016b). In 1950, he founded and became the first president of the Austrian Medical Society for Psychotherapy (Viktor Frankl Institute Vienna, 2016b). In 1955, he was promoted to Professor at the University of Vienna and began guest professorships at international universities and became increasingly well

known in circles outside Vienna (Boeree, 2006; Viktor Frankl Institute Vienna, 2016b).

His professorships, honorary doctorates, awards, honorary memberships and eponyms from all over the world are too many to list. His many awards include The Oskar Pfister Prize by the American Society of Psychiatry and a nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize (Boeree, 2006; Viktor Frankl Institute Vienna, 2016b). As a guest professor at several universities in the United States, Frankl gave lectures at 209 universities on five continents (Graber, 2004; Viktor Frankl Institute Vienna, 2016b). He received 29 honorary doctorates from universities in all parts of the world, including SA (Graber, 2004; Viktor Frankl Institute Vienna, 2016b).

Up to 1997, Frankl's best known work, *Man's Search for Meaning* (1959), had sold over nine million copies in the United States alone and was indicated by the Library of Congress as one of the ten most influential books in America (Viktor Frankl Institute Vienna, 2016b). The readers of Japan's "Yomiuri Shimbun" newspaper voted for the book as one of the ten books to be passed to the 21st century (Viktor Frankl Institute Vienna, 2016b). Besides that, Frankl authored 39 books which, to date (2017), have been published in 47 languages, including Afrikaans (Viktor Frankl Institute Vienna, 2016b).

The American Medical Society, the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association have officially recognised Frankl's logotherapy as one of the scientifically based schools of psychotherapy (Graber, 2004). According to the American Journal of Psychiatry, his work is "perhaps the most significant thinking since Freud and Adler" (Viktor Frankl Institute Vienna, 2016b).

Frankl continued to teach at the University of Vienna until 1990, when he was 85 (Boeree, 2006). In 1992, friends and family established the Viktor Frankl Institute in his honour (Boeree, 2006; Viktor Frankl Institute Vienna, 2016b). After the first institute was established, there were many institutes to follow (Marshall, 2011). Up to 2016, 26 institutes and societies have been established all over the world (Burger, 2007; Marshall, 2011). In SA, the Viktor Frankl Foundation was established in 1986 (Burger, 2007).

In 1997, Frankl completed his autobiography and published his final work, *Man's Search for Ultimate Meaning*, based on his doctoral dissertation (Boeree, 2006). He died on 2 September 1997 of heart failure. The 1997 *Newsletter* of the Viktor Frankl Institute, by Dr Robert C. Barnes, captures Frankl's legacy as that of "the last of the great European philosophers and psychiatrists of the Twentieth Century" (Marshall, 2011, p. 6).

The discussion below explains Frankl's view of human beings.

3.4 FRANKL'S DIMENSIONAL ONTOLOGY

According to Frankl (1988, 2000, 2006), human beings have a three-dimensional nature, comprising a body (biological or physical dimension), a psyche (psychological dimension), and a spirit (spiritual³ or noölogical dimension). Frankl (Graber, 2004; Frankl, 1988, p. 22) understood the three dimensions as a dynamic whole, with inseparable though diverse components, that he encapsulated as “unity in spite of multiplicity”. As a result, “the dimensions of human beings penetrate one another completely, just as a three-dimensional space, width, height, and depth mutually penetrate one another at every point” (Lukas, 1998, p. 9). These dimensions are an essential reflection of the “dimensions of human existence” and imply that people exist on many dimensions simultaneously (Graber, 2004, p. 68).

Frankl reckoned that “man is spirit” and claimed the spiritual reality of human beings to be neglected (Graber, 2004; Shantall, 1997, p. 560). Frankl (1988, p. 23) understood that dimensional ontology rests on two laws, first, “[o]ne and the same phenomenon projected out of its own dimensions into different dimensions lower than its own is depicted in such a way that the individual picture contradicts the other” and second, “[d]ifferent phenomena projected out of their own dimension into one dimension lower than their own are depicted in such a manner that the pictures are ambiguous”. He believed that if any of the dimensions is disregarded, incomplete two-dimensional pictures of human beings are projected (Frankl, 1988, 2000; Graber, 2004; Shantall, 2003). More specifically, a disregard of the spiritual dimension culminates in “a shadow, a caricature, an automaton of reflexes, a helpless victim of reactions and instincts, a product of drives, heredity, and environment” (Fabry, 1987 as cited in Graber, 2004, p. 68).

Frankl's line of reasoning was shaped by the historical context and intellectual climate of the time (Dickson, 1975; Graber, 2004). He asserted that the strongest motivation in human beings to be their will to meaning and thus the primary reason for most of their behaviour (Crumbaugh, 1971; Lantz & Ahern, 1994). His thinking contradicted those of Sigmund Freud and Alfred Adler, who maintained the will (or drive) to pleasure and the will (or drive) to power as the strongest motivation in human beings (cf. Crumbaugh, 1971; Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006; Graber, 2004; Shantall, 1997, 2003). He did not regard self-actualisation as individuals' ultimate destination, as central to the self-actualisation theory of Abraham Maslow and the self-concept theory of Carl Rogers (Frankl, 1988; Shantall, 2003; Wong, 2006; Moore, 1997a, 1997b).

³ Within the frame of logotherapy “spiritual” does not have a religious connotation but refers to the specifically human dimension” (Frankl, 1986, xvii).

Freud's view of human beings reduced an individual to a "hedonistic or pleasure-seeking animal needing only fulfilment of instinctive drives" which he summed up under the term "libido" or sexual energy. He felt that sex was the basic and all-pervasive human instinct (Crumbaugh, 1971, p. 375). Although human beings are animals and a biological understanding of the animal is important, this position becomes problematic when the spiritual aspect is omitted and individuals are reduced to mere animals living in an animalistic way (Lantz, 1986; Shantall, 1997, 2003).

Alfred Adler, once a student of Freud and considered as a competitor in the early history of psychoanalysis, "thought that man is primarily motivated by the need for mastery, tempered by an equally instinctive social interest" (Crumbaugh, 1971, p. 375; Dickson, 1975). Adler's school of thought, referred to as individual psychology, focused on the sense of inferiority rather than the sexual drive and regarded the will to power as being the motivating force in human behaviour (Dickson, 1975). When delineating the will to power, it is revealed as the struggle for superiority, conquest, security, increase in any direction, basically, "the great upward drive" (Meyer, 1997, p. 142).

Most individuals aspire to be successful and achieve something worthwhile in life (Marshall, 2011). Frankl (as cited in Marshall, 2011) believed that those individuals tend to display two dimensional thinking patterns that alternate between success and failure:

This is a popular view amongst people who are interested in increasing their wealth, competing against others, attaining prestige, etc. - all those who are judgemental, and evaluate human achievements according to their consequences, the opinion of the majority, or, according to how much gain they will have at the end. This dichotomous way of measuring and evaluating the degree of our success can make one vulnerable to unpredictability, or happenings beyond our control (p. 22).

Frankl regarded Freud's strive for pleasure as "a compensatory escape from the emptiness of failure to find meaning in life" and Adler's strive for power or mastery urge as "a means of search [for meaning of life]" (Crumbaugh, 1971, p. 376). He did not consider self-actualisation as individuals' primary intention or ultimate destination (Frankl, 1988). Rather, "[s]elf-actualization, if made an end in itself, contradicts the self-transcendent quality of human existence" (Frankl, 1988, p. 38). Frankl (Marseille, 1997) rather regarded pleasure and power as the by-products of a person's will to meaning and striving to answer life's questions. Similarly, self-actualisation "is the unintentional effect of life's intentionality" (Frankl, 1988, p. 38). Excessive concern with self-actualisation correlates

with frustration of the will to meaning (Frankl, 1988).

Since Frankl (1986, 1988, 2000) believed that individuals are more than psyche, that they are rather spirit (noös), he developed a model drawing from the concepts of Max Scheler's anthropological layer model and Freud's strata of consciousness to understand human beings in their fullness (Frankl, 1986, 1988, 2000 1988; Graber, 2004). According to Scheler's model of concentric layers, an individual can symbolically be depicted as a cylinder consisting of three layers (like the Russian doll effect) that represent the somatic, psychic and noëtic or spiritual dimensions (Frankl, 1988, 2000; Graber, 2004; Lukas, 1998). The spiritual dimension is at the core of the person and is regarded as the person, "who, in the words of Max Scheler, is not only the agent but also the 'center' of spiritual activity" (Frankl, 2000, p. 34). Frankl (2000, p. 34) argued that we may rather speak of the "spiritual person and 'its' psychophysical overlay" than referring to the person's spiritual existence and psychophysical facticity. Although an individual has a body and a psyche, like many other creatures on earth, the spiritual or noölogical dimension is unique to human beings and distinguishes the individual as a spiritual being (Frankl, 1986, 1988, 2000).

The physical dimension (must) is present in all living things such as plants, animals and humans. The psychological (can) dimension is present in animals and humans and the spiritual (ought) dimension is only present in humans and is thus uniquely human and personal (Graber, 2004; Lantz & Ahern, 1994; Lukas, 1998). Delineating the must, can and ought dimensions in view of Frankl's ontology, Lantz and Ahern (1994) stated that

we physically 'must' have food, shelter, water, clothing and adequate medical services in order to survive.... In the psychological dimension the person is free and 'can' make actualization choices at the social and psychological levels of existence. In this Franklian view, it is possible for the person to exercise will and freedom in a way that both respects the self and others and allows the choices that the person 'can' make to be used to give or take from the world in either a narcissistic or self-transcendent way.... In Frankl's ontology the spiritual, noetic, or existential level refers to the things we 'ought' to do because we are all called to do them by the real meaning potentials that exist for the self in the world beyond the self. In Frankl's view the 'ought' or spiritual dimension can help us transcend our physical 'must' limitations and can help us enrich our choices at the dimensional level of 'can' (p. 164).

It is apparent that the level of intricacy of each dimension is determined by the developmental level and sophistication of the living thing or being on earth. The

dimensions need to be seen as a complex and dynamic integrated whole that simultaneously exists at any specific moment in time (Graber, 2004; Frankl, 2000). An individual then exists as “diversity in unity” and it is important not to overlook one of these dimensions (Graber, 2004, p. 70). The lower dimension is necessarily included in the higher one; it is included in it and encompassed by it (Graber, 2004). So, physiology is overarched by psychology and psychology is overarched by noölogy (Graber, 2004).

Freud’s strata model of consciousness augments the complexity and dynamism of Frankl’s view of human existence. “Any human phenomenon, whether belonging to the personal axis [spiritual dimension], or to the somatic-psychic layers, may occur on any [level of awareness]: the unconscious, preconscious, or conscious” (Frankl, 2000, p. 36). This implies that

spiritual phenomena may be unconscious or conscious, the spiritual basis of human existence, however, is ultimately unconscious. Therefore, the center of the human person in his very depth is unconscious. In its origin, the human spirit is unconscious spirit (Frankl, 2000, p. 37).

Though there is an intricate interplay between the different dimensions in their varied states of awareness, the spiritual dimension remains the highest level (conscious or unconscious) and the core of human existence (Frankl, 1988, 2000; Graber, 2004).

Each of the three dimensions has its own characteristics. Table 3.1 summarises the characteristics of the somatic, psychic and noölogical dimensions (Fabry, 1974; Graber, 2004; Lantz & Ahern, 1994; Lukas, 1998; Morrison, Burke III & Greene, 2007; Palma, 1976; Wong, 2012b).

Table 3.1
Characteristics of the somatic, psychic and noölogical dimensions

Dimension	Living beings on earth	Characteristics
Somatic / biological / physical "Must" Sub-noëtic dimension, susceptible to sickness	Plants Animals Human beings	Physical or organic body Organic actions of cells Chemical and physical processes Biological and physiological functions of the body Regeneration and death of cells Pain
Psychic / psychological / mental "Can" Sub-noëtic dimension, susceptible to sickness	Animals Human beings	Awareness Self-awareness Intellectual talents Emotional states Sensations Drives Instincts Desires Passions Acquired behaviour patterns Social impressions
Spiritual / noëtic / existential "Ought" Essence of life Voice of meaning (unconscious) Healthy core, immune against sickness Medicine chest of logotherapy	Human beings	Intentionality (decisions of the will) Creative and artistic interests Goals and purpose in life Capacity to be awed by experiences Ideas and ideals Conscience Understanding of values Love (beyond the physical self) Hope Compassion Humour (laughter) Ability to forgive Religious encounters Awareness of mortality Ethical sensitivity Inspiration Intuition Dignity Strive for meaning (will to meaning) Freedom of and capacity to make choices Responsibility and response-ability Self-transcendence

It is apparent that the spiritual dimension distinguishes individuals from animals and other creatures (Frankl, 1988, 2000). Individuals tend to operate mostly on the sub-noëtic level, implying that they only draw from the physical and psychological dimensions (Das, 1998). Neither of the dimensions represents genuinely human characteristics (Das, 1998). Individuals are only considered as truly human when they go beyond (transcend) the physical and psychological dimensions, whilst accessing and utilising the virtues of the spiritual or noölogical dimension (Das, 1998; Lukas, 1998). The spiritual dimension is

considered as the healthy core of humans (Fabry, 1974). Although the human spirit can be blocked by physical and/or psychological illnesses, it cannot get sick (Fabry, 1974). The aim of logotherapy is to remove the blockages so that individuals would be able to make use of the virtues of the human spirit (Fabry, 1974). The unique virtues of the human spirit help individuals to retain or regain their mental health (Fabry, 1974) therefore the human spirit is referred to as the medicine chest of logotherapy (Graber, 2004).

The following is an overview and discussion of the core concepts of Frankl's theory within the framework of logotherapy.

3.5 LOGOTHERAPY

Frankl's psychotherapy, known as logotherapy or meaning therapy, is a treatment approach aimed at helping individuals to search for and find meaning in their existence (Lantz, 1986). It is a "value based, meaning-centred philosophy and psychotherapy, with application across a broad range of physical and emotional difficulties" (Schulenberg, Schnetzer, Winters & Hutzell, 2010, p. 95). Its holistic orientation makes it applicable in a wide variety of disciplines (e.g. medicine, counseling, pastoral care, education, management) (Wong, 2012b).

Although Frankl developed his basic ideas prior to WWII, his commitment to his thoughts intensified and expanded because of his experiences in the Nazi death camps (Frankl, 1986, 1988, 2000, 2006; Lantz, 1986). Frankl (2006) argued that, although individuals cannot avoid suffering, they have the capacity to choose how to cope with it, discover meaning in it and move forward. His concentration camp experiences, his views on human behaviour, the major concepts of logotherapy and some of its treatment methods are described in his seminal work *Man's Search for Meaning* (1962, 1984, 1992, 2006).

Frankl's conviction about the will to meaning was based on his observations during his time in the concentration camps (Frankl, 2006). He observed that those who died first were those who gave up on life and who had lost all hope for a future (Frankl, 2006). He concluded that the deceased died less from lack of food or medicine than from lack of hope and something to live for (Frankl, 2006). Frankl understood "human beings as entities who want to shape life in a meaningful way and who get psychically ill when the will to meaning becomes frustrated" (Lukas, 1998, p. 3). He also witnessed how individuals survived because they hoped to see loved ones again, had projects they felt a need to complete or had great faith (Boeree, 2006). These observations confirmed Nietzsche's words, "He who has a Why to live for can bear almost any How" (Frankl,

2006, p. xi). So, when everything that makes life meaningful is taken away from individuals or when they are in the midst of battling with pain and despair, meaning makes suffering more bearable and provides reasons for living (Wong, 2012b).

Frankl reckoned that the will to meaning or search for meaning gives life a task quality and an individual's "awareness can best be described as a consciousness of responsibility, the awareness of life as a given task" (Shantall, 2003, p.18). Frankl maintained that "man should not ask what he expects from life, but should rather understand that life expects something from him" (Frankl, 1986, xxi). This suggests that individuals have a responsibility to answer to life.

Frankl derived the term "logotherapy" from the word "therapy" and the Greek word "logos" that he translated as meaning and is thus literally interpreted as "treatment or healing through finding meaning" (Frankl, 1988; Graber, 2004, p. 40). Apparently, the dictionary definition of the word "logos" explained it as "the controlling principle of the universe" or, in theological terms, "the World (or Will) of God" (Graber, 2004, p. 40). In Frankl's view, "*meaning* is [thus] the controlling principle of the universe; it is at the centre of life towards which we all move, consciously or unconsciously" (Graber, 2004, p. 40).

Frankl (1988) believed that, as a psychotherapy, logotherapy is more than a mere technology or more than psychological engineering. It is rather based on an encounter where human beings meet to confront each other with logos (meaning) of ontos (being) (Frankl, 1988, p. 8-9). In such an encounter (I to Thou), individuals are freed from their ontological deafness because they truly listen to one another (Frankl, 1988). However, this does not necessarily free them from their ontological blindness since they "still have to make the meaning of being shine forth. This is the step taken by logotherapy" (Frankl, 1988, p. 9).

Logotherapy is more than "mere analysis", since it is concerned with both ontos (being) and logos (meaning) (Frankl, 1988, p. 9). It is considered to have an activist nature in comparison with ontoanalysis and it was suggested by Ludwig Binswanger that it "could lend itself as the therapeutic supplement to ontoanalysis" (Frankl, 1988, p. 9). Frankl warned however that logotherapy should not be seen as a panacea or a cure-all therapy, since it "is indicated in certain cases, and contraindicated in other ones" (Frankl, 1988, p. 9).

Frankl (1988) argued that Freudian psychoanalysis and Adlerian individual psychology, are not nullified but rather overarched by logotherapy or the specifically human

dimension. These schools of thought are reinterpreted and re-evaluated by logotherapy, in fact, rehumanised by it (Frankl, 1988). Seeing these schools of thought in the light of a higher dimension does not impose a value judgement but rather means that they are seen in the context of a dimension that is more encompassing and inclusive (Frankl, 1988).

Frankl held Freud's psychoanalysis and Adler's individual psychology to be complementary and supplemented by logotherapy (Palma, 1976).

That is precisely what I have attempted to do with existential analysis⁴ and logotherapy: to supplement, not to supplant, the existing psychotherapy and, thereby, to make the underlying image of man into a whole, a total image of true man, an image in all its dimensions, thus doing justice to that reality which belongs only to man and is called existence (Frankl as cited in Palma, 1976, p. 23).

Palma (1976) delineated the complementary relationship between the various psychotherapies. Frankl's intention was not that "one type of analysis can replace another type, or that one type of analysis can uncover a particular dimension or level as well as any other" (Palma, 1976, p. 23). Frankl regarded logotherapy as a non-specific psychotherapy therefore he argued that "analysis or therapy in one area or on one level may very well complement theory and therapy on another level and that the one may have beneficial results in an area not directly intended or specified" (Palma, 1976, p. 23). Frankl alleged that logotherapy activity is not restricted to "*instinctual facts* within unconscious" (Frankl, 2006, p. 103). Within the logotherapy framework, "*existential realities*" are important "such as the potential meaning of existence to be fulfilled as will to meaning" (Frankl, 2006, p, 123).

Although Frankl singled out the treatment relationship as a key factor in his existential approach, he emphasised that the treatment relationship should be a priority in all treatment modalities (Frankl, 1988; Lantz, 2000).

What matters is never a technique per se but rather the spirit in which the technique is used. This holds not only for drugs and electroshocks, but for Freudian psychoanalysis, for Adlerian psychology and for logotherapy as well

⁴ Generally, existential analysis in the form of logotherapy, is a psychotherapeutic method intended to make people conscious of their responsibility, thus the spiritual, or existential (Frankl, 2000; Graber, 1994). "[T]he self becomes conscious of itself" (Frankl, 2000, p. 29). In contrast, in psychoanalysis, people become conscious of instinct or in other words id and ego drives (Frankl, 2000). Existential analysis (special) – "Insofar as existential analysis by definition is analysis of human existence in terms of responsibility, special existential analysis is analysis of psychic illness in terms of responsibility" (Frankl as cited in Graber, 1994, p. 204).

(Frankl, 1988, p. 29).

Fundamentally, it is the means through which individuals strive to gain awareness of meaning and meaning potentials, as well as to develop a better understanding of coping patterns (Lantz, 2000).

The concept of “meaning” as understood from Frankl’s point of view and the basic tenets of logotherapy is delineated in section 3.6.

3.6 MEANING (LOGOS)

Wong (1997) conducted a series of studies to gain insight into people’s implicit theories on the meaning of life. He identified three generic defining components of meaning, which are cognitive, motivational and affective. Table 3.2 outlines the three components (adapted from Wong, 1997).

Table 3.2
The three components of meaning

Cognitive	Motivational	Affective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprises beliefs, schemas and expectations. • It includes all the cognitive processes that help individuals to make sense of the world. • It enables individuals to predict and explain events and personal experiences and give them a sense of coherence. • It facilitates the choice of a particular life goal. • It is the cornerstone of personality development: I am what I think. • Cognition evolves out of past life experiences and cultural imperatives and it forms the foundation of meaning structures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consists of goal setting and striving behaviour. • Motivation manifests itself in choice, persistence and other goal related behaviours, but stems from cognition. • Individuals’ core values determine their priorities and purpose in life. • Individuals tend to invest time and energy in projects to which they attached value and significance. • Values are deeper than attitudes; they reflect individuals’ fundamental beliefs, world-views and cognitive schemas. • Individuals’ goal setting and striving are largely dictated by what they think. • Meaning is actualised from both the pursuit and attainment of goals that are consistent with their beliefs and value systems. • Motivation is the fuel that moves people forward towards their destiny. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The affective state of feeling fulfilled or good about one’s life comes from two sources, namely, beliefs in the significance of life and the actual pursuit of a worthy goal. • It is an inevitable outcome of synchronisation between positive thinking and purposeful living. • Emotion serves as a barometer of the degree of meaningfulness.

Wong (1997) determined that meaningful living requires all three components, which translates to individuals (1) having a set of positive beliefs about their lives; (2) pursuing what they really want in life; and (3) feeling good about the way life is unfolding (Wong, 1997). Wong (1997, p. 88) defined personal meaning in a general way as “an individually constructed and culturally based cognitive system, which influences the pursuit of activities and life goals. Positive beliefs and purposeful living inevitably endows life with a sense of significance and fulfilment”.

Frankl (1986) believed that meaning in life cannot be defined in a general way since it is something unique, real and concrete for each individual as it presents itself through the tasks of life. Frankl (1970 as cited in Shantall, 2002) argued that, like love, meaning cannot be forced, willed, demanded, commanded or ordered. He contended that meaning “within the domain of human manipulation ... cannot be dissected by human reason” (Shantall, 2002, p. 18).

Shantall (2002) alleged, in her work, *Life's meaning in the face of suffering*, that it was not an easy task to define meaning. Similarly, Morrow (1990) pointed out that Frankl does not have a prefabricated epistemology on offer to define the concept of meaning. Therefore, within the Franklian framework, a definition of meaning would not be possible. However, to grasp Frankl's notions on the subject of meaning, a description of the ways in which meaning is experienced is given below (Shantall, 2002).

Frankl, in his seminal work, *Man's search for meaning* (2006), said that “meaning of life differs from man to man, from day to day and from hour to hour. What matters, therefore, is not the meaning of life in general but rather the specific meaning of a person's life at a given moment” (p. 108). To illustrate the phenomenon, he metaphorically asked a chess champion what the best move in the world would be. The chess master answered that “[t]here simply is no such thing as the best or even good move apart from a particular situation in a game and the particular personality of one's opponent” (Frankl, 2006, p.108).

Frankl (1986) explained that there is no generally valid and universally binding life task. Individuals setting out to make the best moves in an absolute sense are at risk of being tormented by “eternal doubts and endless self-criticism, and would at best overstep the time limit and forfeit the game” (Frankl, 1986, p. 61). According to Frankl (2006, p. 18), individuals

should not search for an abstract meaning of life. Everyone has his own specific vocation or mission in life to carry out a concrete assignment which demands

fulfilment. Therein he cannot be replaced, nor can his life be repeated. Thus, everyone's task is as unique as is his specific opportunity to implement it.

Meaning is not experienced through introspection, but rather when values are realised through individual choice and when meaning potentials are fulfilled (Morrow, 1990). Although these individual choices and potentials are present in any given situation, they may be dormant (Morrow, 1990). Meaning is thus unique, context specific, a value-based choice and unrepeatable (Morrow, 1990; Shantall, 2003). This entrusts individuals with the task and responsibility of listening carefully to what each situation is requiring of them or what it is they are called upon to do or to be (Frankl, 2006). The answer may not necessarily be found in something intellectual, but rather in something individuals may experience in the simplicity of fulfilling their daily tasks (Frankl, 2006). It is apparent that meaning is to be discovered rather than be created and that it requires "the intuitive grasp of an open and receptive mind" (Frankl, 1970 as cited in Shantall, 2002, p. 23; Shantall, 2003). It also implies that "[w]hat is meaningful for one person may be trivial to others" (Wong, 1997, p. 88).

Though receiving the gift of meaning, individuals have to accept and fulfil the challenges and tasks that life presents to them irrespective of their contexts and/or circumstances (Frankl, 2006; Shantall, 2003). Wong (1997) emphasised the importance of taking into consideration context when working with a phenomenon like meaning, since individuals' cognitions, perceptions and behaviours are necessarily influenced and formed by the social context in which they were raised and, in a broader sense, the contextual givens of situations they may find themselves in, such as the SAHE landscape. Therefore, "meaning systems are highly idiosyncratic, because they are largely the product of unique personal histories and mental makeup" (Wong, 1997, p. 88).

The discussion below explains the key concepts in logotherapy.

3.7 KEY CONCEPTS IN LOGOTHERAPY

The key concepts section will include discussions on the three basic tenets of logotherapy; the pathways to meaning; existential frustration, existential vacuum and noögenic neuroses; the tragic triad; conscience and self-transcendence; ultimate or supra-meaning; and the spiritual dimension, noödynamicis and mental health.

3.7.1 The three basic tenets

Logotherapy originates from three basic beliefs that are freedom of will, will to meaning

and meaning in life (Frankl, 1986, 1988, 2000, 2006). Freedom of will and meaning in life “are virtual axioms, which elude scientific proof” and have “been established by many thinkers and philosophers prior to Frankl” (Lukas, 1998, p. 5). However, will to meaning, “is provable through appropriate experimental psychological studies and has been proved” (Lukas, 1998, p. 5).

The core tenet of logotherapy is the belief that will to meaning or the search for meaning is the primary motivating force in the lives of all individuals (Crumbaugh, 1971; Frankl, 1986, 1988, 2000, 2006). The three tenets operate in an interconnected mode (Wong, 2012b). As such, individuals are intrinsically and uniquely motivated to search for meaning, to make sense of and experience their lives as worthwhile (will to meaning) (Schulenberg et al., 2010; Shantall, 2003; Wong, 2012b). Because human life has purpose, meaning can be found in all circumstances (meaning in life) (Schulenberg et al., 2010; Shantall, 2003; Wong, 2012b). For this reason, individuals are free to choose and take responsibility for their choices in order to live a meaningful life (freedom of will) (Schulenberg et al., 2010; Shantall, 2003; Wong, 2012b).

The three basic beliefs is discussed in section 3.7.1.1 to 3.7.1.3

3.7.1.1 Freedom of will

Freedom of will, or having choices, is a core concept of the existential and/or humanistic traditions while being cognisant of the finiteness of being and the predicament of individuals being subjected to a variety of conditions or limitations (e.g. biological, psychological and sociological) (Frankl, 1988, 2006; Wong, 1997). Delineating the conditions or limitations, it may be the effects or impact of instincts (internal biological drives) and/or the environment (e.g. external social and/or political and socio-economic stresses), physical problems and limitations (e.g. illness), senility, immaturity or the influence of the past (Lantz, 1986; Lantz, 1998; Lantz & Ahern, 1994; Lukas, 1998).

Frankl (1988, 2000, 2006; Graber 2004; Shantall, 2003) argued that, although individuals cannot control what happens to them, they can always control or choose what they will feel and do about whatever conditions and/or situations may confront them despite the nature thereof. Wong (1997, p. 88) noted that, in extreme conditions, “there are a minimum of two conditions: to give up [flight] or to fight. However, in most situations, there are several alternate courses of action”. In certain situations, the choice may be limited to an attitude towards the situation (Morrison et al., 2007). Likewise, “a decision to do nothing, to let circumstances take their course ... represents a specific approach in life”

(Shantall, 2003, p. 36). It is in this realm that logotherapy distinguished itself through the therapeutic imperative of recognising and valuing individuals' capacity to choose (Wong, 1997).

The capacity and freedom to choose a stance and reaction to any given set of circumstances requires that individuals take responsibility for their choices or actions. "Logotherapy sees in responsibility the very essence of human existence" (Frankl, 2006, p. 109). Frankl (Wong, 2012b) explained responsibility in terms of the self, other individuals, societal values and the suprahuman⁵ dimension. Morrison et al. (2007, p. 104) emphasised that "responsibility is an equal partner with choice. Individuals cannot blame others for the consequences of their choices. They must take ownership". Freedom without responsibility threatens to degenerate into chaos of arbitrariness (Frankl, 1988). Frankl famously stated that "I like to say that the Statue of Liberty on the East Coast should be supplemented by a Statue of Responsibility on the [South] Coast" (adapted from Frankl, 1988, p. 49).

3.7.1.2 *The will to meaning*

Meaning fulfilment is personal. It is "unique and specific in that it must and can be fulfilled by [individuals] alone; only then does it achieve a significance which will satisfy [their] own will to meaning" (Frankl, 2006, p. 99). The will to meaning is considered as the most basic and primary motivating force in people who strive for meaning to fulfil in life and work thereby actualising as many value potentialities as possible (Frankl, 1962, 1988, 2000, 2006; Lukas, 1998). Essentially, this means that all individuals want something worthwhile and purposeful to live and work for, they want to feel needed and called upon to carry responsibility for something or someone (Shantall, 2003).

Meaning fulfilment has two complementary parts, "an 'internal' part, the striving and longing for meaning, and an 'external' part, the meaning offered by a situation" (Lukas, 1998, p. 5-6). As much as meaning is personal, it also has a universal character since "[t]his motivational dynamic is found in all civilizations and cultures and under all conditions of human living" (Lantz, 1998, p. 95). The conditions are inclusive of circumstances of destitution, as well as circumstances of plenty (Shantall, 2003).

As pointed out in section 3.4, the belief about the will to meaning challenges the positions of Freud and Adler that respectively allege that the will to pleasure (or implicit drive for

⁵ Supra-meaning is the ultimate meaning which "... necessarily exceeds and surpasses the finite intellectual capacities of man" (Frankl in Graber, 2004, p. 210).

happiness, mostly observable in sexual activities and aggressive behaviour) and the will to power (drive for status or superiority) are the primary motivating forces fundamental to the majority of human behaviour (Frankl, 1988, 2000). Contesting these beliefs, Frankl (1988, 2000) argued that the will to pleasure and power are replacements for and/or derivatives for the will to meaning.

Frankl was not against success and happiness. His argument was that “[s]uccess and happiness must happen, and the less one cares for them, the more they can” (Frankl, 1988, p. 35). Frankl (1988, p. 34) explained that

[t]o the extent to which one makes happiness the objective of his motivation, he necessarily makes it the object of his attention. But precisely by so doing he loses sight of the reason for happiness, and happiness itself must fade away.

The dynamic puts individuals at risk of developing endless cycles of neurotic patterns of behaviour which may also account for many sexual neuroses (Frankl, 1988). Likewise, Frankl considered the power principle or the need for status and success to be self-defeating. People exhibiting their status drives are at risk of eventually being dismissed as status seekers (Frankl, 1988). This implies that pleasure and power are not the primary goals but rather the by-products of meaningful living (Frankl, 1988). Pleasure, happiness and power occur because something meaningful was done (Frankl, 1988; Marseille, 1997).

Like Frankl, Lukas (1998) cautioned that the image of human beings can be distorted when the noëtic dimension is not considered. She encapsulated the key distortions as pan-determinism, psychologism, reductionism and collectivism (Lukas, 1998). These distortions emerge when noëtic phenomena (see Table 3.3) are not taken into account and inappropriately attributed to the psychological dimension instead, or in Lukas’s (1998, p. 14) words, “what amounts to a projection of the noëtic onto the psychic dimension, which Frankl rightly warned against”.

Table 3.3
The four distorted images
 (adapted from Lukas, 1998)

Second dimension of human beings: psyche	Third dimension of human beings: spirit	Procedure:	Distorted image
Fate (the past, biological, psychological and sociological conditions; within the second dimension: instincts drives, moods)	Freedom (within the third dimension: acts of the will and emotional stance, attitude toward the past, attitude toward biological, psychological and sociological conditions)	inappropriate attributing third dimension onto second leads to distortions	Pan-determinism
Susceptibility (psychic dimension can become ill)	Intactness (noëtic dimension cannot become ill)	When the noëtic existence is omitted, only a susceptible psychic apparatus in human beings can be seen	Psychologism
Pleasure-orientation (striving for pleasure and its satisfaction, striving for reinforcement and attention to self-realisation)	Meaning-orientation (striving for meaning and value fulfilment, devotion to a task, attention to other human beings)	When the meaning orientation of human beings is not acknowledged, it may happen that all motives are interpreted as expressions of (secret) drive needs	Reductionism
Character (sum of congenital and inherited characteristics of a human being)	Personality (individual quality of a person, which emerges out of shaping the self)	When the personality of individuals is ignored, they may be assessed according to their character type	Collectivism

These distorted images or errors have to be prevented since they are like “sins against the human spirit’, from which no good could come” (Lukas, 1998, p. 14). Frankl advocated a holistic view of human beings (Marshall, 2011) therefore, logotherapy rejects the two-dimensional distortions, since those procedures result in the loss of a whole dimension (Frankl, 1962; Marshall, 2011). More specifically, self-transcendence, a key characteristic of the spiritual dimension, gets lost (see section 3.7.5 for a discussion on self-transcendence) (Frankl, 1962, 1988).

Wong (1997) noticed that many individuals just go on with their daily business without thinking much about life’s meaning. He argued that

Will to Meaning is a latent motivation, which is often suppressed by survival

instinct, the pleasure principle, and the will to power. But when all the things and people that sustain us are taken away, Will to Meaning often comes to the fore; because without meaning, life would be too painful to endure. The quest for meaning may also be aroused by a spiritual awakening, or a turning point in life, when we realize that we cannot continue living in the same direction. The need for meaning may be unconscious, or latent, but it is always there (Wong, 1997, p. 89).

Frankl (1988) provided an explanation for this phenomenon from a developmental perspective. He argued that individuals' preferences to draw from the pleasure principle and/or power principle and/or will to meaning may reflect their level of development.

In principle it would be justified to assume ... that the Freudian pleasure principle is the guiding principle of the small child, the Adlerian power principle is that of the adolescent, and the will to meaning is the guiding principle of the mature adult (Frankl, 1988, p. 41).

Frankl (1988) believed that, despite the apparent absence of a will to meaning in certain individuals or ignorance of life's meaning, it may manifest at a later stage because essentially it is present, though dormant because

this fact is no longer embarrassing as soon as we recognize that life is a *Zeitgestalt*, a time gestalt, and as such becomes something whole after the life course has been completed. A certain phenomenon may, therefore, form a constitutive aspect of humanness and yet manifest itself only in an advanced stage of development. Let us consider another definitely human capacity, that of creating and using symbols. There is no doubt that it is a characteristic of humanness, although there is no one who has ever seen a new-born baby with a command of language (Frankl, 1988, p. 41).

The purpose of logotherapy is to facilitate the quest for meaning because the greatest task for all individuals is to find meaning in their lives (Frankl, 2006; Wong, 1997).

3.7.1.3 Meaning in life

Freedom of will and will to meaning make it possible for people to transcend conditions to find meaning in existence (Wong, 2006). Basically, the meaning in life is contained within the concrete experiences of daily life (Graber, 2004). Therefore, life questions individuals and they have to answer (Frankl, 2000). Individuals have to respond by being responsible that necessarily requests a "response-in-action" in the "here and now" (Frankl, 2000, p.

29).

Consciousness is the human characteristic or capacity which reveals the meaning of a situation in its very uniqueness (Graber, 2004). Meaning must be discovered, detected or found by oneself, by one's own conscience and cannot be created or given (Graber, 2004; Wong, 2006) (see section 3.7.5 for a discussion on conscience). Ultimately, every person is unique and irreplaceable and the meaning of the moment is for him/her and not for anyone else (Frankl, 1988).

The pathways to meaning is discussed in section 3.7.2.

3.7.2 Pathways to meaning

Frankl (1988, 2000, 2006; Shantall, 2003; Wong, 2012b) suggested three ways to find meaning which are when individuals, first, give or contribute to the world through their work, tasks, duties and creations; second, what they take or receive from the world in terms of their encounters and experiences; and third, in the stand (a courageous attitude) they take in their predicaments and unavoidable suffering.

An activity should have some significance or importance for an individual to gain some sense of meaning from it (DeWitz, 2004). It is thus possible that the most ordinary activities may contribute to an individual's meaning under the right circumstances. Meaning can be discovered only through a person's reflection on life experiences and active engagement in the world with people (DeWitz, 2004). It is thus obvious that many daily activities (e.g. eating, driving, etc.) do not greatly influence a person's sense of meaning (DeWitz, 2004).

The three pathways correlate with three types of categorical values that may promote a sense of meaning, which Frankl referred to as creative, experiential, and attitudinal values (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006). Logotherapy utilises the three categories of values, also collectively known as the "meaning triad", as avenues through which meaning may be discovered (Lewis, 2011; Schulenberg et al. 2010). The meaning triad is a "deceptively simple formulation" that "actually contains a great deal of wisdom" which "has clinical implications" (Wong, 2012b, p. 624).

Fundamentally, "meanings are understood by values" (Frankl, 1988, p.56). Frankl (1988) provided a simple definition for values. He defined it as "those meaning universals which crystallise in the typical situations a society or even humanity has to face" (Frankl, 1988, p. 56). Although he spoke about meaning universals, he argued that "there is no such

thing as a universal meaning of life but only the unique meanings of the individual situations” (Frankl, 1988, p. 55). The universal meanings refer to those situations which have something in common since there are also “meanings which are shared by human beings across society and, even more, throughout history” (Frankl, 1988, p. 55). Therefore, collectively the universal meanings are also understood as “the human condition” (Frankl, 1988, p. 55).

Moreover, Frankl (1988) maintained that

the possession of values alleviates man’s search for meaning, because at least in typical situations he is spared making decisions. But, alas, he has also to pay for his relief, for in contrast to the unique meanings pertaining to unique situations it may well be that two values collide with one another. And value collisions are mirrored in the human psyche in the form of value conflicts and as such play an important role in the formation of noögenic neuroses.

See section 3.7.3 for a discussion on noögenic neuroses.

Logotherapy provides “an empowering approach that encourages decisions that are adaptive and proactive, promoting individuals to examine their choices in relation to their values. Simply put, logotherapy focuses on value-behavior congruence” (Schulenberg et al., 2010, p. 95). Essentially logotherapy thus asks if individuals are “living their lives and making decisions consistently with their values” (Schulenberg et al., 2010, p. 95). Logotherapists are tasked to assist individuals to recognise and prioritise their most important values and, in parallel, request them to revise their assumptions and attitudes in order to enhance their capacity to adjust to their life circumstances (Schulenberg et al., 2010; Wong, 2012b).

3.7.2.1 Creative values

So, against this background, individuals find themselves in the domain of the creative values when they find meaning in achieving tasks by becoming involved in work, applying themselves to something or other or simply doing a project, hobbies, work or a good deed (Lewis, 2011; Shantall, 2002). This involves values people experience through what they contribute to or give to life and therefore feeling fulfilled as people.

On a practical level, creative values translate to people finding meaning when

doing a job well; by having made or created something good or beautiful or of merit; by deeds of which the person feels proud (like taking good care of his or

her family, being a good father, mother, husband or wife; by achieving good relationships with others; by rendering any service that is regarded as valuable) (Shantall, 2002, p. 23).

Lewis (2011) considered that creative values “encompass all acts that give something to life that would not otherwise exist” and it is thus individuals’ contribution to life (Shantall, 2003).

The magnitude of individuals’ activities is not of relevance, but rather how they fulfil their task(s) in the space in which they have been placed (Shantall, 2002). This suggests that “the size of these tasks is irrelevant”, however, it is rather about the values “lying behind whatever task is being wholeheartedly performed” (Shantall, 2002, p. 23). The unimportance of the nature of the tasks and corresponding job titles is clear (Shantall, 2002).

The creative value pathway to meaning highlights human beings as

responsible, creative, and free agent[s] capable of self-regulation, self-determination, and goal striving. It also suggests that the meaningful life is an achieving life, that is, that each person has the opportunities to develop his or her potentials and achieve something significant (Wong, 2012b, p. 624).

3.7.2.2 *Experiential values*

The experiential values pathway includes “all experiences of truth and beauty discovered in the world and as well as loving encounters with other human beings” and it may be “actualized through nature, art, dance, music, and literature and through relationships of love and acceptance” (Lewis, 2011, p. 8). Although individuals are assigned tasks by life, they are also presented with many experiences. These experiences may be rich with meaning, “if not neglected or pushed aside as of lesser importance”, meanings that are “indispensable to our well-being and sense of fulfilment as human beings” (Shantall, 2002, p. 23).

In everyday life, the experiential values involve the benedictions individuals receive from life and it manifests when they experience something or interact with another individual they value (e.g. family, friends, co-workers, etc.); the love they feel for another person; viewing great art or natural wonders; listening to music; and experiencing culture, goodness and truth, among others (DeWitz, 2004). In this domain, individuals are required to engage in behaviours that bring them in contact with other individuals, such as an exclusive or intimate togetherness with loved-ones, the joy of a sense of team spirit or

a friendship, the warm feeling of belonging that is experienced by being an inherent part of a close-knit community or, in contrast, the meaning enclosed in solitude and quiet communication in a situation of aloneness (Shantall, 2002).

The implications of the experiential value pathway are richer than the implications of the creative value pathway (Schulenberg et al., 2010; Wong, 2012b). The creative pathway is about giving to the environment through work or creative pursuits, whereas the experiential pathway is about receiving gifts from life, or taking in from the environment (Frankl, 1988; Schulenberg et al., 2010; Wong, 2012b). In addition, the experiential value pathway is not only about the capacity to appreciate, but also to show gratitude.

It means savoring every moment of the day and appreciating the gifts of relationships and the gifts received from nature. Our lives are enriched when we are mindful of whatever happens to us and around us. It means that we are open to all that life has to offer with sensitivity and gratitude, even when life hurts (Wong, 2012b, p. 624).

3.7.2.3 Attitudinal values

When individuals are confronted with difficult or tragic events in their lives, they may either overcome, or fail to overcome those situations (De Witz, 2004). In the domain of the attitudinal pathway, individuals experience value through the attitude they have towards life, especially towards inescapable suffering or strokes of fate (Frankl, 1988). Not all strokes of fate consist of illness. Some strokes of fate involve a loss of value, for example, the break-down of relationships (marriage, family, friends); death of loved ones; end of professional and vocational careers; great disappointments; mistakes that cannot be corrected; material losses; and so forth (Lukas, 1998).

According to Frankl (1988, p. 70),

life never ceases to hold a meaning, for even a person who is deprived of both creative and experiential values is still challenged by a meaning to fulfil, that is, by the meaning inherent in the right, in an upright way of suffering.

According to Wong (2012b, p. 624), attitudinal values are

probably the most important to human survival and flourishing in times of adversity and tragedy. The attitudinal avenue encourages the defiant human spirit to go deeper, higher, and broader – digging deeper into one's inner resources, reaching higher for hope and inspiration, and reaching out to connect with other

suffering people.

In the domain of the attitudinal pathway, individuals draw from virtues such as courage, dignity, compassion, bravery, a good sense of humour and so forth (Graber, 2004). Attitudinal values operate on a higher level than creative and experiential values and are actualised through the stance taken toward unavoidable suffering (Lewis, 2011).

If one chooses bravery over cowardice, mercy over revenge, or justice over appeasement, then the attitudinal value has been actualized. A meaningful life is, therefore, a life in which these values are actualized to the greatest possible degree (Lewis, 2011, p. 9).

Freedom of choice plays a key role in the domain of the attitudinal pathway (Schulenberg et al., 2010). Certain things in life cannot be changed and there is no apparent choice in those situations (Shantall, 2003, p. 89). Lukas (1986, p. 20) understood the area of fate as “the totality of all determining factors”, more specifically, “what lies beyond human freedom – beyond our power and responsibility”. The past and everything that others do and are, belong to the area of fate (Fabry, 1974; Shantall, 2003). “What is past is past. It is over and done with. The past can only be changed if [individuals] learn from it, have a change of attitude towards it, take out memories of meaning from it” (adapted from Shantall, 2003, p. 89). Likewise, individuals do not have control over others.

It is not within the area of our freedom to dictate what others should do or should be like. *We cannot change others, only ourselves in relation to them.* Our change may provoke change in others, but it is never guaranteed and cannot be manipulated, expected or asked for (Shantall, 2003, p. 89).

Lukas (1998) understood that fate, somehow, has its way in everything, especially those events that touch the essence of human life which are events perceived as life threatening, events that evoke painful memories (e.g. shocks or stress situations that were endured in the past) and events that are socially detrimental – real or imagined (e.g. disgraces, embarrassments in front of other people).

In unchangeable situations, attitude may be the only choice left (Fabry, 1974; Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006). Fabry (1974, p. 133) argued that only when “a person realizes that he has a choice, he can go ahead to find a solution”. Fate challenges individuals and provides them with opportunities to make choices. Lukas (1986, p. 20) regarded fate to be “the springboard of our freedom – the challenge to respond to fate in various ways and to be response-able for [their] choices”. Hence, fate

is not the cause of human thoughts and actions but their precondition. It does not explain [their] reactions but triggers them. Fate makes [individuals] human because it forces [them] to choose among the available potentialities, and thus to make use of [their] human freedom (Lukas, 1986, p. 20).

It is apparent that logotherapy claims that if individuals “are making decisions and living their lives according to their values, then they are likely to perceive their lives as being meaningful” (Schulenberg et al., 2010, p. 95).

The following is a discussion on existential frustration and the existential vacuum that is characterised by a sense of meaninglessness that may put individuals (e.g. organisations, communities and/or societies) at risk of developing noögenic neuroses.

3.7.3 Existential frustration and noögenic neuroses

Logotherapy speaks of existential frustration when the will to meaning becomes frustrated (Frankl, 2006). Existential frustration is a universal human experience since it is not unusual for the will to meaning to be obstructed by external circumstances, or internal hindrances (Wong, 2012b).

Existential frustration may culminate into an existential vacuum. An existential vacuum is “a general sense of meaninglessness and emptiness, an ‘inner void’, an ‘abyss-experience’” (Graber, 2004, p. 204). When individuals make decisions without giving attention to their values, their lives may be characterised by a feeling of emptiness and meaninglessness (Schulenberg et al., 2010).

Frankl (2006) alleged that the existential vacuum is “a widespread phenomenon of the twentieth century” as evidenced by a state of boredom (Frankl, 2006, p. 106; Wong, 2012b). Likewise, Graber (2004, p. 126) maintained that

people in doubt and confusion are plagued by an existential vacuum, an inner emptiness or void that presents as the boredom of a meaningless existence. They may drift into conformity and apathy. Their avenues to finding meaning appear blocked because access to their noetic energies is obstructed.

Smallman (2014) explained that at the root of the existential vacuum may be frustrations with present life circumstances, for example, employment, interpersonal relationships, economic and social affairs. This happens when individuals fail to find meaning in their existence and psychosocial situation despite their freedom to do so (Lantz, 1986). This phenomenon is also ascribed to “industrialization, the loss of traditional values, and the

dehumanization of individuals in the modern world” (Wong, 2012b, p. 625) and is regarded as a reflection of our troubled times (Lantz, 1986).

Whenever individuals are experiencing an existential vacuum, they would like to fill it (Boeree, 2006; Schulenberg et al., 2010). As a result, “stuff” will be rushing in that can be condensed to social norm violations, distress symptoms, material goods, superficial things and/or addictive behaviours (Boeree, 2006; Schulenberg et al., 2010; Wong, 2012b). More specifically, “stuff” is identified as material things like monetary success and power; promiscuous sex and pleasure; busyness at work; alcohol and/or drugs; eating beyond all necessity; living the high life; conformity (individuals wish to do what others do); totalitarianism (individuals do what others wish them to do); conventionality; anger; hatred; and individuals spending their time attempting to destroy what they perceive to hurt them (Boeree, 2006; Frankl, 2006).

Individuals’ misguided efforts may develop into frustration and despair, and may result in certain neurotic vicious cycles that can never be satisfied since their defining quality is that whatever they do will never be enough (Boeree, 2006; Wong, 2012b). These neurotic cycles may be characterised by “psychiatric and existential symptoms, such as anxiety, depression, despair, confusion, and the experience of anomie (meaninglessness)” (Lantz, 1986, p. 125).

Frustration of the will to meaning may also result in neuroses which originate in the noölogical dimension, the specifically human dimension of existence (Frankl, 2006). According to Barnes (Smallman, 2014), research has established that approximately 20 percent of existing neuroses are noögenic in nature. This happens when the existential vacuum combines with neurotic symptoms (Crumbaugh, 1971) and is then termed noögenic neuroses. Noögenic neuroses contrast clinical neuroses that are rooted in the psychological dimension (Frankl, 2006).

Such psychopathologies are the results neither of instinctual conflicts nor individual psychodynamics where the id, ego, and superego compete; rather they result from existential frustration, leading to anxiety and depression. Where functional illnesses (‘pseudo-neuroses’) and *reactive* and *psychogenic* neuroses largely originate in the *psyche* (or mind), an *iatrogenic* and *collective* neuroses arise from medical interventions and society respectively, the root of noögenic neuroses is in the noös (human spirit) (Smallman, 2014, p. 6).

Noögenic neurosis is a “sense of despair over the meaning of life”, as opposed to clinical neurosis (Graber, 2004, p. 204). “Conflicts between societal expectation and personal

desires, as well as tension between different value sets (e.g. family opinions versus those of peers) may also cause frustration leading to noögenic neurosis” (Smallman, 2014, p. 6).

“Existential frustration is in itself neither pathological nor pathogenic. A man’s concern, even his despair, over the worthwhileness of life is an *existential distress* but by no means a *mental disease*” (Frankl, 2006, p. 102). Therefore, psychotherapy is not the appropriate therapy when individuals suffer from noögenic neuroses “but rather logotherapy, a therapy, that is, which dares to enter the specifically human dimension (Frankl, 2006, p. 101).

When speaking of the existential vacuum and noögenic neurosis, Frankl (2006) also referred to Sunday and collective neuroses. Frankl (2006, p. 107) described Sunday neurosis as

that kind of depression which afflicts people who become aware of the lack of content in their lives when the rush of the busy week is over and the void within themselves becomes manifest. Not a few cases of suicide can be traced back to this existential vacuum. Such widespread phenomena as depression, aggression and addiction are not understandable unless we recognize the existential vacuum underlying them. This is also true of the crisis of pensioners and aging people.

Boeree (2006) explained that it often happens that when individuals finally have the time to do what they want, they do not seem to do anything. As a result, they go into a state of panic when they retire, students get drunk every weekend and/or submerge themselves in passive entertainment every evening (Boeree, 2006).

By itself, the term “collective indicates” that it is reaching beyond the individual and that it may involve a whole community or even a society. According to Frankl (Das, 1998), a collective neurosis is a disorder that has developed due to the contemporary conditions of life and is typified by four major symptoms. First, individuals have an aimless day-to-day attitude towards life that stems from the uncertainty about the future, second, a fatalistic attitude arises out of a lack of control over their own lives, third, collective thinking takes over so that the individuals relinquish their personal responsibility to the judgment of the group and, fourth, fanaticism which stems from group loyalty and leads to the denigration of others who think or act differently. Frankl identified human fear of responsibility and the desire to escape from freedom to be the root of these symptoms (Das, 1998).

The above suggests psychological problems that point to the widespread phenomena of

depression-aggression-addiction, also known as the mass neurotic triad (Frankl, 1988, 2000). Wong (2012b) indicated a link between these psychological problems and the potential of an underlying existential vacuum (Wong, 2012b). The mass neurotic triad is fed or driven by an underlying energy of despair (Graber, 2004). Welter (1987 as cited in Graber, 2004, p. 134) delineated the energy of despair or the driving force of the neurotic triad:

- Depression: Depressed persons who are *desperate* may attempt suicide. Suicide is the crispest statement of *despair* and lack of meaning.
- Addiction: Addicts' *despair* shows in their attempts to numb themselves or seek a thrill with some substance or behaviour.
- Aggression: Aggressive persons, in their *despair* turn to trying to control others by violence.

It is apparent that each of the three conditions may involve a form of violence and, per se, aggression does so by definition (Graber, 2004). In the case of depression, it is violence to the self, though, in the case of addiction, any violent behaviour that is present may be worsened, for example, many alcoholics are often more aggressive when they drink (Graber, 2004). Violence is held to be "a *noogenic neurosis* or disturbance due to moral conflicts or from spiritual problems" (Graber, 2004, p. 134). And despair is identified as the root cause of violent behaviour (Graber, 2004).

Closely related to the mass neurotic triad is the tragic triad. The tragic triad as an inescapable part of human existence is illuminated in the subsection below.

3.7.4 The tragic triad

Human beings are facing three existential problems or negative facets of human existence that are death, suffering and guilt (Lantz, 1986; Wong, 2012b). "There is no human being who may say that he has not failed, that he does not suffer, and that he will not die" (Frankl, 1988, p. 73). Likewise, Lantz (1986) stated that

[a]ll people must die, all people must suffer before they die, and all people must at some time in their life face the responsibility they have in living and the existential guilt associated with the fact that no person is capable of completely fulfilling their responsibility to life at all times. (Lantz, 1986, p. 126).

"Suffering within the traditional parameters of psychiatry and psychology, has no meaning" (Shantall, 2002, p. 98). This has serious implications for societies and human existence, and implies missed opportunities for behaviour adjustment and personal

growth.

Having no meaning, the prevailing psychotherapeutic approach is, therefore, that the effects of suffering like guilt and rage, have to be eliminated, smoothed over by interpretations that will allow the sufferer to readjust to society. That society itself may be sick, that the sufferer questions his or her own part in that society, that guilt is a revolutionary force seeking to establish a new world with different norms, higher ideals, are usually not considered (Shantall, 2002, p. 98).

Frankl (1988) divided inescapable suffering (fate) into the third triad,⁶ known as the tragic triad of pain (suffering), guilt and death, which clearly speaks about the temporal aspect of human existence (Palma, 1976). "What threatens man is his guilt in the past and his death in the future. Both are inescapable, both must be accepted. Thus man is confronted with the human condition in terms of fallibility and mortality" (Palma, 1976, p. 20). The only way to overcome these existential problems is when individuals are capable of finding meaning in their death, suffering and existential guilt (Lantz, 1986).

Suffering without meaning leads to despondency and individuals experiencing despondency are often caught up in the tragic triad of pain, guilt and grief which may result in them struggling with the neurotic triad of depression, aggression and addiction (Graber, 2004). Even though the outer manifestations of depression, aggression and addiction appear vastly different, the underlying energy that drives the triad is the same – despair that signals noögenic distress (Graber, 2004).

Pain refers to a person's suffering and can originate from the physical and/or psychological and/or spiritual dimensions (Graber, 2004). The physical dimension varies from the pain of teething to the pain of acute and chronic illness (Graber, 2004). Pain from the psychological dimension originates from the disappointments of life; the pain of interpersonal conflicts; betrayal of trust; the pain of goals not reached; anguish of loneliness; the agony of victimisation; and the loss of meaningful work (Graber, 2004). Pain originating from the spiritual dimension refers to pain that affects individuals in the form of doubts and loss of faith; struggles in prayer life or communication with God;

⁶ In essence, logotherapy is explained by four triangles. The first triangle constitutes of the three basic tenets of logotherapy, which is freedom of will, will to meaning, and meaning of life. Meaning of life is divided into the second meaning triangle, which is creative, experiential, and attitudinal values, or in other words the pathways to meaning. Attitudinal values are divided into the third triad, also known as the tragic triad, which is meaningful attitudes towards pain, guilt and death, or in other words when people experience despondency (Frankl, 1988). People in despondency or despair may feel helpless and overwhelmed by fate, and will tend to struggle with the neurotic triad of depression, aggression, and addiction, which represents the fourth triangle (Graber, 2004).

spiritual confusion and indifference; and the loss of vision and hope (Graber, 2004).

Guilt is a complex subject. Generally, it makes individuals aware of their fallibility and is regarded as a feeling that signals that something is wrong (Graber, 2004; Wong, 1997). At its core, it offers individuals an opportunity to change (Graber, 2004; Wong, 1997). Fallibility or failure refers to that which individuals were responsible for and relates to personal pasts (Graber, 2004). It is “an appeal to abandon old patterns, and to make new and better decisions” (Lukas, 1989 as cited in Graber 2004, p. 128). In other words, guilt also offers individuals an opportunity to reaffirm their morality and to restore a sense of responsibility (Shantall, 2002).

Guilt is usually interpreted from two angles. It is considered to be justified and appropriate or as unjustified and inappropriate. Guilt is justified and appropriate when it stems from mistakes and when an individual makes a wrong decision (Graber, 2004; Tilghman-Osborne, 2011). Guilt is unjustified when individuals failed in something they were not responsible for, or it was not possible for individuals to make decisions, or to have control over what was happening (e.g. illnesses, traumatic incidents like accidents, crime, child molestation, rape, etc.) (Graber, 2004; Tilghman-Osborne, 2011). Unjustified guilt is regarded as unavoidable suffering (Graber, 2004).

Death brings to individuals an awareness of the transitoriness of life which is the fact that they are mortal and only live in the world for a period of time (Graber, 2004). The transitoriness of life has a task quality as “the prospect of death creates the uniqueness of life and gives it meaning” (Binnebesel, 2014, p. 237; Frankl, 2000). Transitoriness is centred on the three fundamental facts of human existence, which are a will to meaning, a meaning in suffering and a freedom of will (Frankl, 2000).

For in the face of the transitoriness of his life, he is responsible for using the passing opportunities to actualize potentialities, to realize values, whether creative, experiential, or attitudinal. In other words man is responsible for what to do, whom to love, and how to suffer. Once he has realized a value, once he has fulfilled a meaning, he has fulfilled it once and forever (Frankl, 1988, p. 74).

But if there is meaning, it is unconditional meaning, and neither suffering nor dying can detract from it.... In the past nothing is irrecoverably lost but everything is irrevocably stored. [Individuals] only see the stubble field of transitoriness but overlook the full granaries of the past in which they have delivered and deposited, in which they have saved, their harvest (adapted from Frankl, 1988, p. 156).

This implies that individuals' freedom of choice empowers them not to only choose their way of living, but even to choose their way of dying (Frankl, 2000).

That is why life does not lack a meaning until the last breath, until a man's death. Even through death, however, life does not lose its meaning; for this meaning does not consist in preserving anything for the future, but rather storing it in the past. Therein it is saved forever (Frankl, 1962, p. 101–102).

The search for meaning is very likely to be effected by these existential experiences of pain (Wong, 2012b). The term “tragic triad” and what it communicates at face value, may create the impression that logotherapy is a pessimistic approach towards life. Frankl (1988, p. 73) argued that logotherapy is rather “an optimistic approach to life, for it teaches that there are no tragic and negative aspects which could not be by the stand one takes to them transmuted into positive accomplishments”. Similarly, Wong (2012b, p. 624) maintained that

this attitude is also based on the belief that an individual life cannot be destroyed if it is devoted to something bigger, higher, and more lasting than itself. Having the right attitude towards suffering and life indicates that one has reflected on one's life experiences and learned to make sense of the difficulties, predicaments, and paradoxes of life (p. 624).

Wong (2012b, p. 624) observed that “logotherapy recognises every crisis in life as an opportunity for personal transformation and developing a mature worldview”. Frankl (2006) claimed that meaning is to be found, not only in enjoyment and creativity, but also in suffering because “if there is a meaning in life at all, then there must be a meaning in suffering. Suffering is an ineradicable part of life, even as fate and death. Without suffering and death human life cannot be complete” (Frankl, 2006, p.67). While suffering is not a prerequisite for meaning, it tends to trigger the search for meaning (Wong, 2012b).

Frankl (2000, p. 123) argued that the potential meaning of unavoidable suffering (“a fate that cannot be changed”) must not be confused with masochism, since masochism “means accepting unnecessary suffering”. Paradoxically, people's “ability to embrace and transform suffering is essential for authentic happiness. Frankl observed that homo sapiens are concerned with success, whereas the homo patiens (the suffering human beings) are more concerned about meaning” (Wong, 2012b, p. 625).

Logotherapy is less concerned about the source of suffering than how to overcome it. It

helps individuals realise concrete meanings and choose the right attitudes (Graber, 2004; Wong, 2012b). It may assist individuals to access the reservoir of strengths and virtues available to them and apply the power of the spirit (noös) to overcome suffering in any category (Graber 2004). Frankl has observed that people are willing to endure any suffering if they are convinced that this suffering has meaning.

Conscience and self-transcendence are key concepts in Frankl's meaning therapy. The discussions in section 3.7.5 section focuses on these concepts.

3.7.5 Conscience and self-transcendence

This section will include discussion on conscience and self-transcendence.

3.7.5.1 Conscience

Conscience is at the core of Franklian theory and finds itself at home in the spiritual or noëtic dimension (see Table 3.1). In its simplest form, Frankl (1988, p. 63) explained conscience as “the intuitive capacity of man to find out the meaning of a situation”. Therefore, the only way to grasp meaning gestalts in what individuals do and experience (individuals' lives) is through the intuitive capacity of the conscience (Frankl, 1988; Graber, 2004).

Conscience stems from an unconscious ground and the characteristics of the unconscious are inherently part and present in the awake conscience (Frankl, 2000). Frankl (2000, p. 39) depicted conscience as a dynamic entity and explained it as “precisely those momentous, authentic – existentially authentic – decisions that take place completely without reflection and thus unconsciously. Precisely where it originates, conscience delves down into the unconscious”. At its core, the unconscious is the home of the authentic self and contains the voice of meaning. It is regarded as the source for artistic inspiration, religious faith, beliefs, intuitions and so forth (Graber, 2004). Conscience now becomes pre-logical, intuitive and transcendent (Frankl, 2000).

Besides, conscience is also “an appreciation of values, which is a precursor of all that is moral that every human being instinctively carries within himself. It is the original unconscious ethical sensitivity that is part of our basic existential equipment” (Lukas, 1998, p. 23). This contrasts with Freud's notion of the superego which is depicted as “the sum total of adopted norms and traditions, that is, our oral traditions of moral awareness with which we were immunized during our growing up years by our parents, teachers, church and state authorities” (Lukas, 1998, p. 23).

Individuals inherit and internalise values, norms and rules that reflect restrictions and mandate responsibility through learning processes from church, parents, family and society (Lukas, 1998; Marshall, 2011). These values are explained as “what millions of people in our culture have found meaningful in similar situations and what has come down to us through tradition, law, and custom” (Fabry, 1974). Individuals are helped by these values in their search for the meanings of the moment (Das, 1998; Fabry, 1974).

Graber (2004) interpreted these values in terms of responsibility and responsibility. In her view, societal and cultural values and norms may be “seen as imposed from the outside – ‘I should’” and may have considerable authoritative influence (Graber, 2004, p. 84). Consequently, the imposed values and norms may become a person’s responsibility. Contrary to responsibility, “responsibility is a freely chosen response to an inner knowing – ‘I ought’” (Graber, 2004, p. 84). Responsibility is therefore an inner dictum, a self-imposed authority from within where individuals respond because they have decided to respond and not because they were forced to (Graber, 2004).

Boeree (2006) argued that, although societies attempt to summarise meaningfulness into codes of conducts, meaning is inherently not tied to a society’s values because meanings are unique to each individual. These values are considered to be general in nature and do not provide specific guidelines for individuals (Fabry, 1974). Additionally, Boeree (2006) maintained that tradition and traditional values are quickly disappearing from individuals’ lives. Likewise, Fabry (1974, p. 129) noted that values

can contradict each other, especially in times like ours where traditions are crumbling and authority is mistrusted, and we are torn by conflicting guidelines, or have no guideline we respect. In such times we are thrown back on our personal resources with nothing stronger to guide us than the weak and unreliable voice of our conscience.

Frankl (2000) pointed out that meanings cannot disappear, unlike traditions and values.

Traditions and values are crumbling. But meanings are not – cannot be – transmitted by traditions because in contrast to values, which are universal, meanings are unique. And as such they are transmitted, mediated to one’s consciousness, by personal conscience (Frankl, 2000, pp. 118-119).

Conscience functions in addition to and beyond Freud’s superego (Marshall, 2011). “When conscience is projected into the psychological dimension, it appears as a phenomenon similar to the super-ego” (Marshall, 2011, p. 31). However, conscience is

creative and empowered to take a stand for or against cultural norms or morals (Shantall, 2002) and thus rather functions as a supra-ego (Marshall, 2011). Shantall (2003, p. 23) argued that choice is seldom a distinction between right or wrong, “it is rather a choice if what is called for or ‘right’ in a particular situation”. This means that an individual has the ability to distinguish between right and wrong regardless of what cultural norms or morals dictate (Frankl, 2000; Graber, 2004; Shantall, 2002). It may thus happen that conscience commands an individual to do something which contradicts what is expected by the society to which the individual belongs (Das, 1998; Graber, 2004; Shantall, 2002).

When individuals challenge values offered by church, family or society without finding a centre of meaning within, an internal locus of authority, they are not only at risk of becoming purposeless and lost, but also feeling abandoned, bored, empty and depressed (Graber, 2004). In order to restore some kind of inner balance, they conform or they do what other people want them to do (Graber, 2004). Nevertheless, in the end “[a]n authentic value system is what is of importance. A value can only be meaningful ... if it stands the test of our personal conscience” (Shantall, 2002, p. 25). When individuals are closing their ears to the voice of their conscience, they are turning their backs on their responsibility for self-transcendence and what is required in a specific moment (Shantall, 2003).

The following is a discussion on self-transcendence.

3.7.5.2 Self-transcendence

When individuals rise above themselves regarding outward conditions, they are in the realm of the uniquely human capacity of self-transcendence (Frankl, 1988; Graber, 2004). It is about forgetting of the self, rather than being centred on the self (Das, 1998; Lukas, 1998). It is realised either toward another individual (by means of love, or other causes) or toward meaning (Frankl, 1988; Smallman, 2014).

Adding to this phenomenon, Wong (2015) explained self-transcendence, from a two-dimensional relational perspective, as a dynamic that operates in both vertical and horizontal spaces. In the vertical space

[s]elf-transcendence is, by definition, intrinsically relational. Vertically, self-transcendence reaches beyond the limits of time and space, to connect with the transcendental realm or to worship and to serve the Creator. Throughout his writing, Frankl has made it very clear that his concept of self-transcendence or the

supra-meaning transcends specific religious views and resides in the spiritual nature of being human (Wong, 2015, p. 5).

In the horizontal space,

self-transcendence transcends ego-concerns and self-interest to serve others. It is intrinsically compassionate and altruistic, given its spiritual nature. In self-transcendence, other people matter in their own right because of their intrinsic value. Loving our neighbours is its own reward. Showing kindness to strangers is its own reward. We engage in deeds of compassion and kindness because we are simply expressing our spiritual nature. This is fundamentally different from using other people as instruments for our own advancement and happiness (Wong, 2015, p. 5).

Fabry (Wong, 2012b) cautioned about the risk of merely switching from the vertical to the horizontal space. "The switch from a vertical to a horizontal value system has caused confusion and meaningless because many people reject the traditional guidelines and have no experience in finding their own" (Fabry, 1994 as cited in Wong, 2012b, p. 621). This relates to what Graber (2004) said earlier about the risk of challenging values offered by, for example, church, family or society without an internal locus of authority.

Smallman (2014) suggested that self-transcendence is a call for empathy rather than selflessness. He stated that it "is not a call to become unselfish as such, but to include others in our own interest through empathy" (Smallman, 2014, p. 7). By means of self-transcendence, individuals experience areas of life where meaning is available, for example, self-discovery, choice, uniqueness and responsibility (Graber, 2004). Furthermore, the capacity to self-transcendence allows individuals to discover meaning through reaching beyond the self and even allows them to find meaning in areas where they feel defeated (Graber, 2004).

In conclusion, conscience and its capacity for self-transcendence correlates with individuals' developmental levels and may be limited by certain conditions. At the time of birth and during the childhood years, conscience "is there as a potential, but does not function autonomously until adolescence. It remains intact in most cases. Though, its ability may be limited by severe illness, senility, or immaturity" (Lukas, 2000 as cited in Marshall, 2011, p. 31).

Logotherapy distinguishes between the meaning in the moment and ultimate meaning. The following is a discussion to differentiate ultimate or supra meaning from meaning in

the moment.

3.7.6 Ultimate or supra-meaning

Meaning in the moment denotes the meaning that individuals discover in daily situations. There is nothing spectacular in the meaning of the moment because it refers to the small daily events of life. However, some moments are subtler than others and some offer bigger choices than others. Despite its ordinariness, each situation and moment is unrepeatable and offers a specific meaning potential (Frankl, 1988). When individuals respond to the meaning offerings of the moment, they are living meaningful lives (Graber, 2004).

Frankl (2000, p. 143) believed that “[t]he more comprehensive the meaning, the less comprehensible it is. And if it comes to *ultimate meaning*, also, it necessarily is beyond comprehension”. Given that individuals “live in a dimension lower than that of the Ultimate”, they “can only trust that there is an ultimate meaning or answer for human suffering since on the human level, [they] cannot explain what that meaning is” (Shantall, 2002, p. 40).

Ultimate meaning refers to an experience of meaning as a universal order in which all individuals have a place (Graber, 2004). It will be determined by their worldviews, either in religious or secular terms (Graber, 2004; Wong, 2012b).

In this suprahuman dimension dwells the order which I have defined as ultimate meaning. One could also call it ‘suprameaning’ – an order whose laws we can violate only at our peril, regardless of whether we see the order in religious or secular terms: as God, Life, Nature, or the Ecosystem (Fabry, 1994 as cited in Wong, 2012b, p. 621).

It addresses the questions of “Who am I?”, “What is my purpose?”, “Where am I going?”, “How will I get there?” and “How will I fit into the whole scheme of life?” (Graber, 2004, p. 87). “The ultimate meaning of [an individual’s] life is not a matter of his intellectual cognition, but rather of his existential commitment ... Man takes a stand and makes a choice” (Frankl as cited in Graber, 2004, p. 87).

There is a direct relationship between suprameaning and spirituality. According to Graber (2004), spirituality is the common ground between religion and logotherapy. “[S]pirituality is an inherent part of being human; it is the essential core of a human being; it is the indwelling spirit of *theos* (Greek: God)” (Graber, 2004, p. 51). Smith (in Graber, 2004)

indicated that there are many paths to that core, be they religious or non-religious. Existential analysis⁷ uncovered an unconscious religiousness in the spiritual unconscious (Frankl, 2000). Unconscious religiousness has “a latent relation to transcendence inherent in man” or something or someone Higher (Frankl, 2000, p. 68). It is through the transcendent or spiritual dimension that the human person experiences ultimate reality or meaning (Graber, 2004).

Frankl argued that evidence of religiousness can be found in certain dreams.

Nor is it surprising occasionally to find flagrantly religious motifs in dreams of [individuals] who are manifestly irreligious, because we have seen that there is not only repressed and unconscious *libido*, but also repressed and unconscious *religio* (Frankl, 2000, p. 55).

However, spirituality is not religion. Frankl suggested religion to be “systems of beliefs and rituals” that were developed “to reach that spirit within, and to enter into communication with God/spirit” (Graber, 2004, p. 51).

Irreligious individuals do not recognise this transcendent quality, although they have a conscience and the same responsibility as religious individuals (Frankl, 2000). They simply do not ask what they are responsible for, or what their conscience stems from (Frankl, 2000). Frankl (2000, p. 62) argued that

the irreligious [individual] ... has not yet reached the highest peak [of ultimate meaning], but rather has stopped at the next to the highest. (This, of course, is the way the religious man looks at the irreligious.) And what is the reason the irreligious [individuals do] not go further? It is because [they do] not want to lose the ‘firm ground under [their] feet.’ The true summit is barred from [their] vision; it is hidden in the fog, and [they do] not risk venturing into it, into this uncertainty. Only the religious [individuals hazard] it.

For Frankl (2000), religiousness demands respect concerning individuals’ freedom of choice to refrain from any religious practices. Frankl (2000) argued that, although religion

⁷ “Existential analysis, in the form of logotherapy, is a psychotherapeutic method because it is concerned, in particular, with the neurotic mode of being and is intended to bring man – the neurotic, in particular – to an awareness of his responsibility. As in psychoanalysis, so in existential analysis man becomes conscious of something. But whereas in psychoanalysis it is the instinctual of which he becomes conscious, in existential analysis, or logotherapy, he becomes conscious of the spiritual, or existential. For it is only from the viewpoint of man’s spirituality, or existentiality, that being human can be described in terms of being responsible. What comes to consciousness in existential analysis, then, is not drive or instinct, neither id drives nor ego drives, but self” (Frankl, 2000, p.29).

may have a positive psychotherapeutic effect on an individual such as mental health and inner equilibrium, its primary aim is salvation rather than psychological solutions. “When an [individual] stands on the firm ground of religious belief, it is legitimate to draw upon his religious convictions, and there can be no objection to be making use of the therapeutic effect of these spiritual resources” (Frankl, 1962, p. 102).

Frankl developed logotherapy as a scientific discipline dealing with philosophy and techniques of treatment and it is thus irrelevant whether an individual or therapist’s persuasion is theistic, agnostic or atheistic (Frankl, 1988, 2000). Logotherapy sets itself out to address the central spiritual core through therapy and not through any particular religious persuasion (Frankl, 1988, 2000). This urges a logotherapist to utilise the spiritual resources inherent to the individual (Frankl, 1988, 2000). The task of the logotherapist is to make the spiritual unconscious more conscious (Frankl, 2000).

It is evident that individuals who do not profess faith in God can lead a meaningful life because of the presence of the inherent unconscious spirituality and unconscious religiousness (Frankl, 2000). Although it does not manifest at the conscious level, that which informs meaning or that which can transcend is unconsciously there. Individuals have always stood in an intentional relation to transcendence, even if only at an unconscious level. This does not imply “that God is unconscious to himself, but rather that God may be unconscious to [individuals] and that [their] relationship to God may be unconscious” (Frankl, 2000, p. 68).

Das (1998) captured the essence of the distinction between meaning of the moment and ultimate or suprameaning:

Ultimate meaning is related to meaning of the moment. Each one of us goes through life facing a series of unique situations. Each moment in each situation offers a meaning to fulfil – an opportunity to act in a meaningful way. This can be achieved through the pathways to meaning that are what you do, what you experience, and what stance you take in a situation of unavoidable tragedy. Ultimate meanings provide a framework and a set of guidelines for meeting day-to-day situations (Das, 1998).

The spiritual dimension, noöynamics and mental health is discussed in section 3.7.7.

3.7.7 The spiritual dimension, noöynamics and mental health

A psychotherapy that confronts individuals with the phenomena of meaning and purpose is likely to be criticised as too demanding (Frankl, 1962). Most theories about human

nature regard homeostasis (a tensionless state) as a desirable therapeutic goal (Graber, 2004). However, from a Franklian ontological perspective, the homeostasis principle has different implications. Within the physical dimension, homeostasis is always valid and, within the psychological level, it is valid most of the time (Graber, 2004). However, in the dimension of the spirit, it is invalid (Graber, 2004). Frankl (1962, p. 101) argued that

man of today is less endangered and being threatened of being overdemanding than by being underdemanding. There is not only a pathology of stress, but also a pathology of the *absence* of tension. And what we have to fear in an age of existential frustration is not so much tension per se as it is the *lack* of tension that is created by the loss of meaning. I deem it a dangerous misconception of mental health that what man needs in the first place is homeostasis *à tout prix*. What man really needs is a sound amount of tension aroused by the challenge of a meaning he has to fulfil.

Frankl (2006, pp. 104-105) considered mental health to be “a certain degree of tension, the tension between what one has already achieved and what one still ought to accomplish, or the gap between what one is and what one should become”. Mental health is thus attained through self-chosen worthy goals that create tension or what Frankl referred to as noö-dynamics (Frankl, 2006). According to logotherapy, the best way to deal with this tension is to embrace it and struggle through it.

Individuals’ search for meaning “may arouse inner tension rather than inner equilibrium” (Frankl, 2006, p. 103). Frankl regarded the pursuit for meaning as a motivating and a pulling force to attain goals that always involves decision-making, whereas he regarded the pleasure and power drives as pushing forces to satisfy personal needs to obtain a tensionless state (Frankl, 1988).

Graber (2004) explained the danger of a tensionless state in the spiritual dimension:

A tensionless state in the spirit would denote complete satisfaction, a lack of goals. Goals beckon only when conditions are not completely satisfying and leave room for change. When people lack the necessity to change, to create, to finish a project, to experience, or at least to brave unchanging fate, the need to live may be questioned (p. 106).

A tensionless state in the spiritual dimension is not a desired condition and may be a warning signal of existential frustration (Graber, 2004). In contrast, healthy noö-dynamics go beyond the ego and individuals’ own neediness (Frankl, 1988). “[N]oö-dynamics leaves

to man the freedom to choose between fulfilling or declining the meaning that awaits him” (Frankl, 1962, p. 101).

Kotchen (1960 as cited in Frankl, 1988, p. 48) stated that “a strong meaning orientation is a health-promoting and a life-prolonging, if not life-preserving, agent. It not only makes for physical but also for mental health”. Therefore, mental health or well-being is not about attaining equilibrium, or contentment, or a painless state (Frankl, 1962, 1988, 2006), but rather about living out a meaningful struggle to become what one can possibly be or, in other words, to live out life’s fundamental tensions in a meaningful way (Frankl, 1962, 1988, 2006). It is the tension that provides the motivation and drive to continue to strive for meaning or survival when all seems lost (Frankl, 2006). Logotherapy aims to create a certain sensible amount of tension to reorientate individuals towards the meaning in their lives, in order to enhance their mental health (Frankl, 2006).

3.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The aim of the chapter was to provide an understanding of Frankl’s theory and logotherapy to enhance meaning in human existence. This was done by providing an overview of aspects of existential phenomenology in relation to logotherapy, followed by a biographical overview of Frankl to provide some insight into how his lifeworld influenced the birth and development of his theory and therapy. His view of human beings was then explained to illuminate his understanding of the personality structure. Thereafter, the key concepts of logotherapy were discussed, namely, what is meant with meaning (logos); the basic tenets of logotherapy; existential frustration, existential vacuum and noögenic neuroses as the potential outcomes of meaning frustration; the tragic triad as an unavoidable part of human existence; conscience and self-transcendence; the difference and similarity between meaning in the moment and ultimate or supra meaning; and, lastly, the spiritual importance of goal setting that creates healthy tension (noödynamics) for mental health.

CHAPTER 4: INTERVENTION MIXED METHODS STUDY

Mixed methods thinking is regarded as the 'multiple ways of seeing and hearing'. Since multiple ways are visible in everyday life, mixed methods becomes a natural outlet for research (adapted from Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 2).

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary research aim is to develop and apply a logotherapy brief group-based intervention in a HE setting (see Chapter 1, section 1.4). In order to achieve the aim, an intervention mixed methods design was proposed in Chapter 1 as the guiding framework for this study. The design consists of four phases which are represented in Figure 4.1.

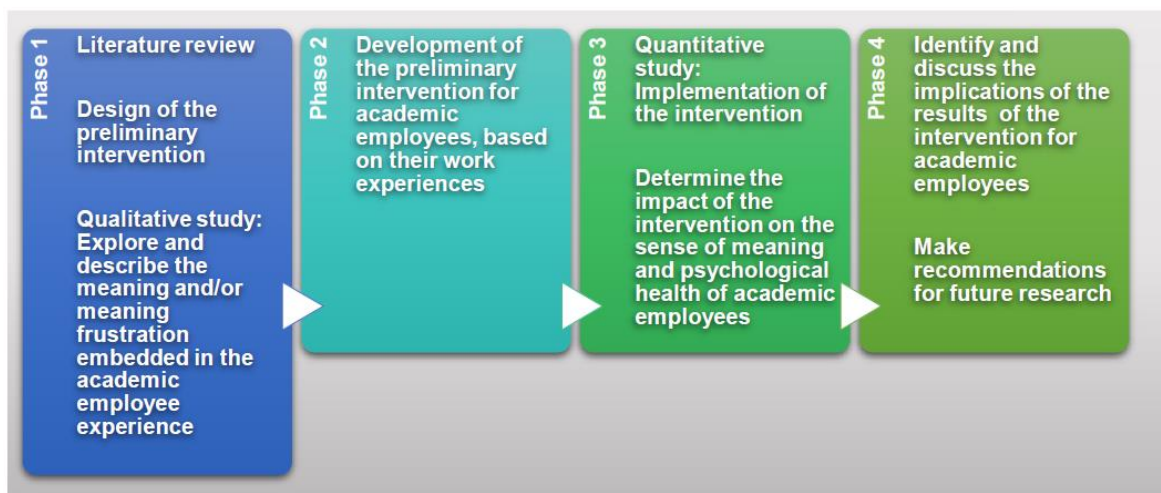


Figure 4.1. Four phases of the intervention mixed methods design

The fundamental purpose of the phase one study was to qualitatively explore and describe the sense of meaning and/or meaning frustration embedded in the academic employee experience (phase one), as a means of developing the intervention (phase two) and to assist with the implementation of the intervention in the phase three quantitative study.

Phase two was regarded as an applied phase or the phase where the intentional mixing of the qualitative and quantitative phases took place.

The fundamental purpose of the phase three study was to determine the impact of the logotherapy brief group-based intervention quantitatively on the sense of meaning and psychological health of the academic employees.

The fourth and final phase of the study was also regarded as an applied phase which was used to draw final conclusions based on the integrated phase one findings and phase three results, identify and discuss the implications of the results of the intervention, identify the limitations of the study and make recommendations for future research.

Chapter 4 details the core components (e.g. research strategy, research method, sampling procedures, data collection methods, data analysis procedures and strategies employed to enhance data quality) of the first and third phases of the study.

The following is a discussion of the core components of the first phase of the study.

4.2 PHASE ONE QUALITATIVE STUDY: SINGLE CASE STUDY DESIGN

The fundamental purpose of the qualitative study was to explore the meaning phenomenon in context (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). For that reason, the aim of phase one of the study was to explore and describe the sense of meaning and/or meaning frustration embedded in the academic employee experience to enhance the development of the intervention and to support the implementation thereof.

4.2.1 Research approach

A pragmatist approach provided a philosophical basis to support the different phases of the intervention mixed methods research design (see Chapter 1, section 1.5.2).

4.2.2 Research method

A mixed methods research framework was proposed in Chapter 1 (see section 1.6.1; see Figure 1.4). This study drew from the suggested framework. The framework is divided into four components, namely, sampling procedures (e.g. research setting and study population, obtaining permissions, sampling techniques and number of participants needed, recruitment strategies), data collection methods (e.g. collecting the information, recording the data, administering the procedures), data analysis procedures (e.g. preparing the data for analysis, exploring the data, analysing the data, representing the data, interpreting the results) and strategies to enhance the quality of the data.

Section 4.2.3 details the research strategy. Sections 4.2.4 to 4.2.7 detail the four components within the context of a qualitative design.

4.2.3 Research strategy

The first phase of the mixed methods study was aimed at exploring and describing

academic employees' meaning embedded in the academic employee experience. It took the form of a qualitative study with a case study design as framework.

The fundamental purpose of case study research is to reveal a phenomenon based on an in-depth and real-time understanding of a case by detecting and describing issue-relevant meanings (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Despite the fact that case studies do not infer causation and the results cannot be generalised, the multi-perspective analysis and findings can provide rich insight toward phenomena and an appreciation for the complexity of the case (e.g. the dynamics of the situation) (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Nieuwenhuis (2007) regarded case study research to be a tool to open up the possibility of giving voice to the voiceless and powerless, for example, the academic employees in a HE setting. The case was defined as academic employees working for more than three years at a HE organisation.

The themes that emerged from the case study assisted with the development of the design of the intervention and the structure and content of the brief group-based programme. It provided practical guidelines in terms of what should typically be attended to regarding the programme content and processes at the time of programme implementation during phase three of the study. It also assisted in understanding contextual factors that could affect the outcome of the intervention (Fetters et al., 2013).

Sections 4.2.4 to 4.2.7 below contain a description and/or discussion of the sampling procedures, data collection methods, data analysis procedures and strategies to enhance the quality of the data.

4.2.4 Sampling procedures

The section on sampling procedures includes the research setting and study population, obtaining permissions, sampling techniques, the number of participants needed and the recruitment strategies.

4.2.4.1 Research setting and study population

The identified site for the study was an HE organisation. The people identified to participate in the study were academic employees from three intact groups working at the HE organisation. The intact groups referred to heads of academic departments and/or directors, lecturing employees and non-lecturing employees. Non-lecturing academic employees represented employees working in the fields of academic development and

student development and support.

4.2.4.2 Obtaining permissions

It is standard practice for researchers to request

permission to collect data from individuals and sites. This permission often needs to be sought from multiple individuals and levels in organizations, such as from individuals who are in charge of sites, from people providing the data ... and from campus-based institutional review boards (IRBs) (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 175).

Fundamental to obtaining permissions is the intention to protect the rights of the individuals participating in the research studies and to assess the potential risk and harm that the research can cause to these individuals (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). A central responsibility of IRBs is to ensure that the potential benefits to the individual research participants (and to the organisation and society) will be greater than any potential risks to the participants in the research (Rosnow & Rosenthal, 1996).

The researcher first obtained permission to conduct all the phases of the study from the appropriate IRB at UNISA, the university where the researcher was registered for the intended degree and then approval from the research site's IRB. Once the approvals were granted, the researcher first approached the research sites' faculty deans to inform them and offer information about the study in order to get their buy-in and to get their permission to invite their staff members to participate in the study.

4.2.4.3 Sampling techniques and number of participants needed

In most circumstances, it is not possible and feasible to collect data from an entire study population (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013; Maree & Pietersen, 2007). Therefore, the sampling methods of purposive and convenience sampling were used to select the participants. Researchers use non-probability sampling when they select participants based on a specific criterion and/or their availability to participate (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013; Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009).

Purposive sampling was utilised since the researcher intentionally selected specific participants (e.g. academic employees) who were deemed to be knowledgeable and informative about the central phenomenon being explored in the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). A convenience sample was also selected because the researcher extended a research invitation to

academic employees at the research site, within the framework of a minimal set of criteria for participation. It was thus convenient to use the respondents because they were available and willing to participate.

The inclusion criteria for academic employees to participate in the qualitative study were:

- A minimum of three years working experience at the HE organisation as they were expected to have obtained knowledge about and experience within the HE context, institution and their work role;
- Participants who were likely to participate in discussions; and
- No specific artistic skills to participate in the drawing association groups (DAGs).

The exclusion criteria for the studies were:

- Participants who participated in the DAGs were excluded from the focus group interviews (FGIs); and
- Participants who were participating in the FGIs were excluded from the DAGs.

Maree and Pietersen (2007) indicated that sample size is an important consideration and that it requires practical considerations like time and cost in relation to the type of research; research hypotheses; financial constraints; importance of the results; number of variables studied; methods of data collection; the type of statistical analysis planned; accuracy of results required; and the size and characteristics of the population.

For qualitative studies, a small number of participants, who may provide in-depth information and facilitate a thorough understanding about the central phenomenon being explored in the study, is usually required (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In essence, the idea of qualitative research is not to generalise from the sample, but to develop an in-depth understanding about the central phenomenon from a few people (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). It is obvious that “the larger the number of people, the less detail that typically can emerge from any one individual” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 174).

Creswell (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) provided guidelines for qualitative sample sizes in general, for example, one to two people when a narrative study is conducted, 20 or 30 in a grounded theory project and four to ten for a case study. There are several guidelines in the literature regarding the typical number of participants in FGIs. McMillian and Schumacher (2006) suggested that a focus group (FG) consists of eight to 12 people, whereas Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007) suggested a range from six to 12 people. However, for complex topics like meaning in life, smaller groups of five to seven people are recommended (McMillian & Schumacher, 2006).

For this study, the number of people in the FGIs varied between four and six participants. However, the DAGs were considered as an experimental data collection method dealing with a sensitive topic in a conservative environment. In addition, the researcher considered the time available for conducting a DAG to ensure that sufficient time was available to spend with each participant's drawing. The researcher only included a few people in the DAGs which ranged between four and five participants (see section 4.2.5.2, Figure 4.2 for the data collection strategy).

4.2.4.4 Recruitment strategies

After the researcher obtained the buy-in of the deans (see section 4.2.4.2) and academic heads/directors, staff lists were requested from the heads' offices to obtain the email addresses of their staff members. The researcher extended an electronic invitation at the departmental level via the research site's email system to invite potential participants for the various study groups. The invitation offered a brief explanation of Frankl's theory, the aim of the study, the reason for requesting participation, the inclusion and exclusion criteria to participate in the various studies (FGIs and DAGs), study expectations, risks and discomforts associated with the studies, the rights of the research participants, the confidentiality of the research material and information regarding access to the research results (see Chapter 1, section 1.8 for Ethical procedures).

4.2.5 Data collection methods

The methods utilised to collect data were FGIs and DAGs. This section includes discussions on the demographic questionnaire, as well as the two methods utilised for data collection.

4.2.5.1 Demographic information

A brief questionnaire was developed to collect demographic data from the participants (e.g. age, gender, race, home language, years of working experience at the institution, job title, level of expertise, etc.) in order to describe their basic characteristics. To ease data collection and to protect participant identification, all items were developed to allow participants to respond using selected response scales.

4.2.5.2 Focus group interviews

Focus groups (FGs) entail the interviewing of a purposefully sampled group of people, rather than each person individually (McMillian & Schumacher, 2006). Powell and Single (1996, p. 499) described a FG as "a group of individuals selected and assembled by

researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research". FGIs were used to "obtain a better understanding of a problem or an assessment of a problem, concern, new product, program, or idea" (McMillian & Schumacher, 2006, p. 360).

FGs build on group processes (McMillian & Schumacher, 2006). According to Cilliers (1999, pp. 270-271), group processes "refer to group phenomena such as the communication patterns used by group members for information exchanges, group decision processes, leader behavior, power dynamics and conflict interactions", whereas group dynamics refer to "the psychodynamic phenomena in groups". Hence,

the [FG] strategy is based on the assumption that group interaction will be productive in widening the range of responses, activating forgotten details of experience and releasing inhibitions that may otherwise discourage participants from disclosing information (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, p. 90).

This is realised through "creating a social environment in which group members are stimulated by one another's perceptions and ideas" (McMillian & Schumacher, 2006, p. 360).

During the early stages of research, FGIs are regarded as an effective method for eliciting matters that participants think are relevant which may then be used to inform the designs and/or support of later studies (Smithson, 2000). Although FGs are considered to produce rich detailed data that is difficult to achieve with other research methods, it may happen that some participants may experience FGs as threatening (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). This refers to the unconscious dynamics that are inherent to FGIs and processes, and the defences that it may provoke against the feeling of threat (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008; Nieuwenhuis, 2007). This means that the participants may resort to defence mechanisms to alleviate the discomfort of anxiety provoked by the nature of FGIs. Hollway and Jefferson (2008) assume that the anxieties and attempts to defend against them may be the cause of important unshared information. The aforementioned informed the researcher's decision to conduct the DAGs in conjunction with the FGIs. Data collection took place between May and June 2014, over a period of approximately four weeks. The three FGIs and three DAGs were conducted concurrently (see Figure 4.2 for the data collection strategy).

Figure 4.2 depicts the data collection strategy. The first set of FGIs and DAGs consisted of the non-lecturing academic employees (group 1), the second set consisted of lecturing employees (group 2) and the third set consisted of the heads of academic departments

and/or directors (group 3).

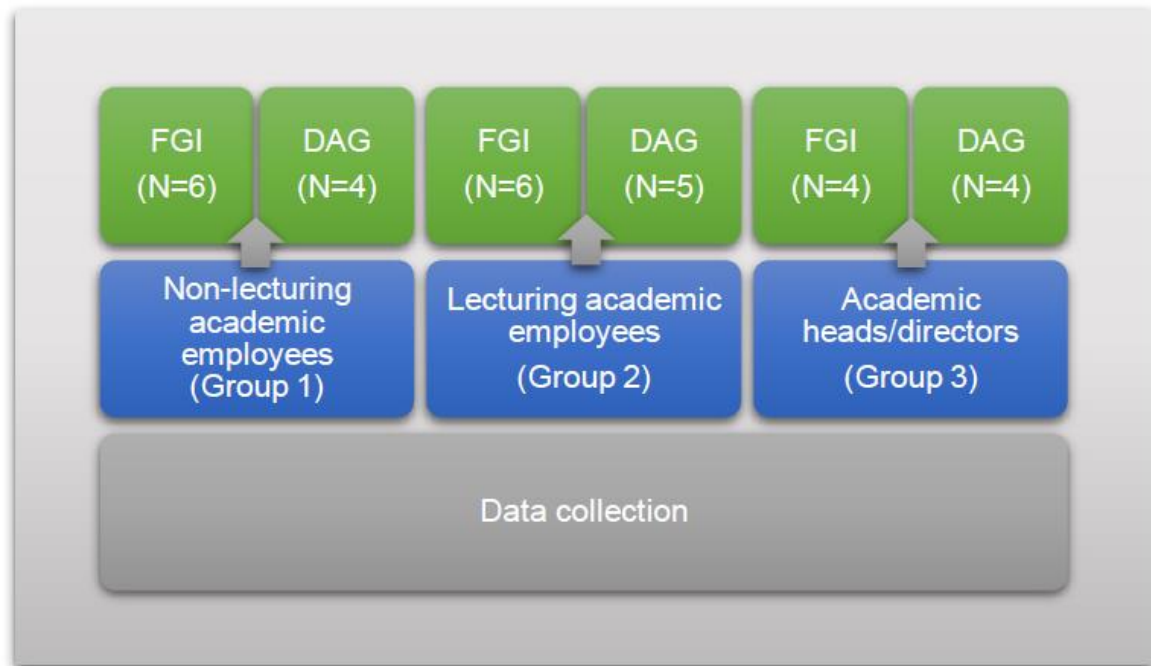


Figure 4.2. Data collection strategy

The total number of FGIs and DAGs conducted was limited due to practical considerations (e.g. availability of participants, time constraints and costs) (Maree & Pietersen, 2007).

The researcher drew from the pragmatic framework of Chioncel, Van der Veen, Wildemeersch and Jarvis (2003) to enhance the validity and reliability of the FGs (e.g. the researcher developed a protocol for basic requirements for FGI replicability, clear research questions, concise time schedules, attention to the group dynamics, role of the moderator, role of the researcher, etc.).

Since the researcher is an employee of the research site, an independent moderator was used to facilitate the FGIs to ensure greater objectivity on the part of the researcher. The researcher took a secondary role to the moderator. McMillian and Schumacher (2006) recommended a FGI facilitator or moderator to be skilled in both interviewing and group dynamics. The moderator was skilled in both interviewing and group dynamics.

The researcher opened the proceedings of the FGIs, explained the research study and the participants' rights, introduced the moderator and clarified her role in relation to the researcher's role. At the time, all participants consented in writing to voluntary participation, the proceedings to be audio and video recorded, and for process notes to be

taken (see Chapter 1, section 1.8 for Ethical procedures). The proceedings were audio and video recorded to enhance the quality of the data (see Chapter 4, Table 4.1). Demographic information was also requested from the participants to describe their basic features (e.g. age, gender, race, home language, years of working experience at the institution, job title, level of expertise, etc.). The moderator then proceeded with data collection.

The open-ended questions (adapted from Shantall, 2007) that guided the FGIs were:

- Question 1: What about my work is meaningful and satisfying to me?
- Question 2: What can I do to make my work more meaningful and satisfying?
- Question 3: Where have I shown strength and courage in my life dealing with change?
- Question 4: What part do I have in making our institution render a meaningful service?

After data collection, the moderator debriefed the participants to ensure the containment of any anxieties they might have had, to protect their dignity and to ensure that they felt that the time they had spent was for a good purpose (Rosnow & Rosenthal, 1996). Since the data collection took place over a period of four weeks, the researcher discussed the confidentiality of the research material to protect the project's integrity. After the proceedings, she also explained the way forward, the participants' access to the research material and the member checks to follow. The researcher then closed the proceedings and continued in her role as researcher of the topic.

4.2.5.3 Drawing association groups

Drawing is a powerful tool. Its power resides in its capacity to both give simple expression to complex feelings and ideas about organisational life and to provide a vehicle for change for the individual and the group during the sharing and exploration of what the drawing reveals (Nossal, 2010, p. 77).

Researchers may use drawings or pictures to elicit material that lies out of awareness and that generally underlies current problems and challenges in an organisation which may have an impact on the sense of meaning of employees (Mersky, 2008). The drawings or pictures created by the participants about their institution provided the researcher with rich data about both the conscious, unconscious and emotional experiences that participants had in their work roles and in relation to the broader institution (Kearney & Hyle, 2003; Nossal, 2010).

The researcher again drew from the pragmatic framework of Chioncel et al. (2003) and adapted it to be relevant to the method employed to enhance the validity and reliability of the DAGs (e.g. she developed a protocol for basic requirements for DAG replicability, clear research procedures, concise time schedules, role of the researcher and moderator, attention to the group dynamics, etc.). As with the FGIs, the researcher took a secondary role to the moderator. Biographical information was also requested from the participants (see sections 4.2.5.1 and 4.2.5.2).

The researcher followed the FGI procedures (see section 4.2.5.2) with respect to introducing the moderator, explaining the aim of the study, obtaining the participants' informed consent, permission to audio and video record the proceedings, to make process notes and obtaining the biographical information.

To create the drawings, the participants were requested to reflect on their work, their immediate work environment and the broader institutional sphere to gain an awareness of their thoughts and feelings. After a brief period of reflection, they were invited to make a drawing that represented their experience in their work role. The participants were allowed 15 minutes to complete their drawings and they were provided with coloured crayons and high quality A3 paper sheets to encourage creativity.

The researcher then followed an adapted methodology based on the methodologies in Mersky (2008), Kearny and Hyle (2003) and Nossal (2010). Fundamental to the adapted methodology is the technique of free association. Free association is a technique developed by the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) and is used in psychoanalysis and psychodynamic theory. Traditionally, “the free association method (i.e., the [person] tells whatever passes through his or her mind) has been used to tease out the psychological bases of people’s neurotic symptoms that apparently had no organic cause” (Rosnow & Rosenthal, 1996, p. 24). The application of free association in this study by requesting the participants to say what comes to mind in relation to the drawings, elicited a kind of information that was not structured in terms of conscious logic (e.g. FGIs or individual interviews), but rather to unconscious logic (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). “The associations follow pathways defined by emotional motivations, rather than rational intensions” (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008, p. 309). Using this methodology secured a kind of access to the participants’ experiences which would probably not be visible using only a more traditional data collection method such as FGIs (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008, p. 310).

The following is the protocol and process of the DAGs.

- The moderator explained the protocol and process to the participants and provided a simple explanation of the technique of free association. The participants were given the opportunity to ask clarifying questions. The protocol and process were then followed:
 - All participants had an opportunity to explain their drawings to the group.
 - Once a participant had explained his/her drawing, the moderator allowed for clarifying questions from the participants, researcher and herself.
 - The participants, moderator and researcher then free associated to the drawing while the drawer remained silent.
 - After all the participants shared their drawings, the moderator offered a general set of associations to the group.

The FGI protocol was followed on conclusion of the DAGs (see section 4.2.5.2). Figure 4.3 gives an overview of the central question and sub-questions that were formulated for the first phase qualitative study.

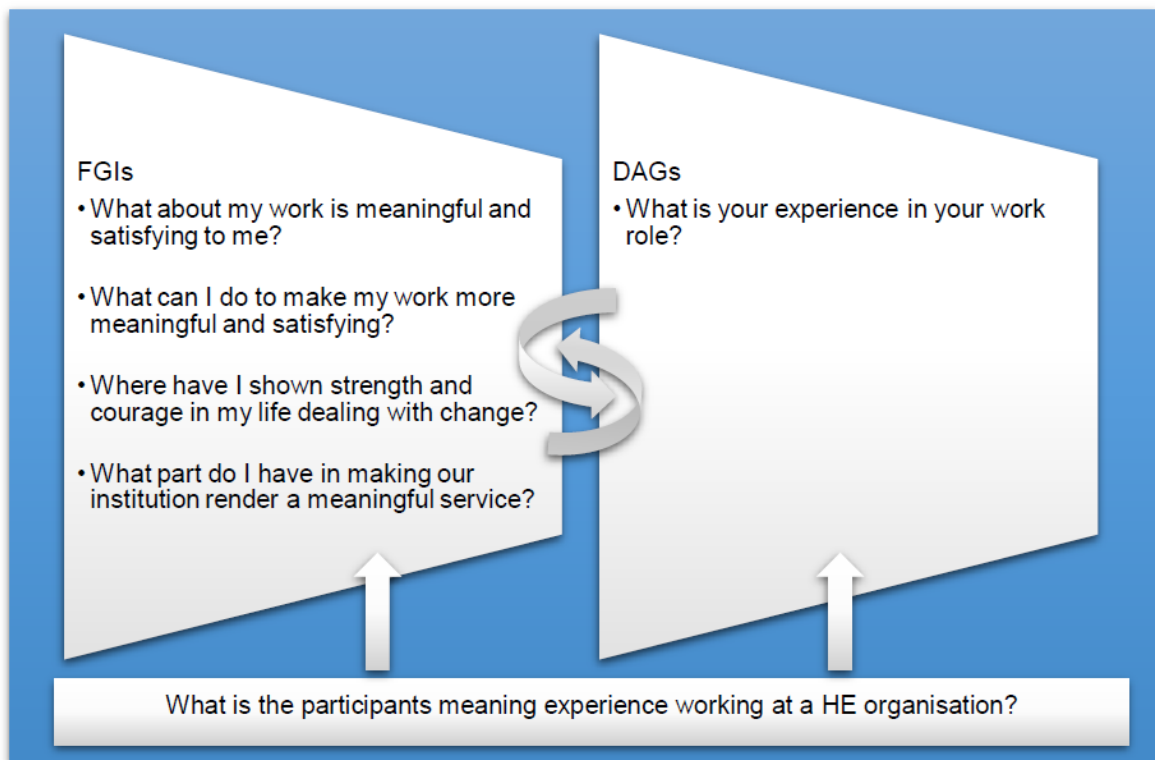


Figure 4.3. Overview of the questions formulated for the first phase qualitative study

A discussion of the data analysis procedures is presented in section 4.2.6.

4.2.6 Data analysis procedures

The researcher followed the generic data analysis procedures for designing mixed methods studies as proposed by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) (see Chapter 1, section 1.6.1.4).

The audio recorded data of both the FGIs and DAGs was transcribed by the researcher and an independent third party (see Chapter 1, section 1.8 for ethical procedures regarding the data storage). The verbatim group text, process notes and summaries of both the moderator and researcher were the units of analysis. The constant comparative method (CCM) of qualitative analysis provided the framework for analysing the transcribed verbatim data (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech & Zoran, 2009). Although this method was originally developed for the use in grounded theory methodology, it is now applied more widely as a method of analysis in qualitative research since comparison is also the dominant principle of the analysis process in other traditions of qualitative research (Boeije, 2002; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009).

Onwuegbuzie et al., (2009, p. 5) conceptualised a three stage process to depict the method of analysis. Stage one, the open coding stage, is where the researcher breaks apart the data into smaller units and attaches a descriptor or code to each of the units. During the second stage, known as axial coding, the codes are grouped into categories. During the third and final stage, the selective coding stage, the researcher develops one or more themes that express the content of each of the groups.

For the first stage study, the three stage process of Onwuegbuzie et al., (2009) was extended into a four stage process. The fourth stage was added to allow for separate though parallel CCM analysis processes of the data collected from the FGIs and DAGs. This allowed for emerging sub-theme verification from the FGIs and the DAGs and to look at differences and similarities between the various FGI and DAG sub-groups, namely, non-lecturing academic employees (NLAE), lecturing academic employees (LAE) and the heads of academic departments (HODs) and/or directors (DRRs). The emerging sub-themes were merged in step four to establish the themes and their sub-themes for discussion.

Figure 4.4 provides an outline of the CCM data analysis process.

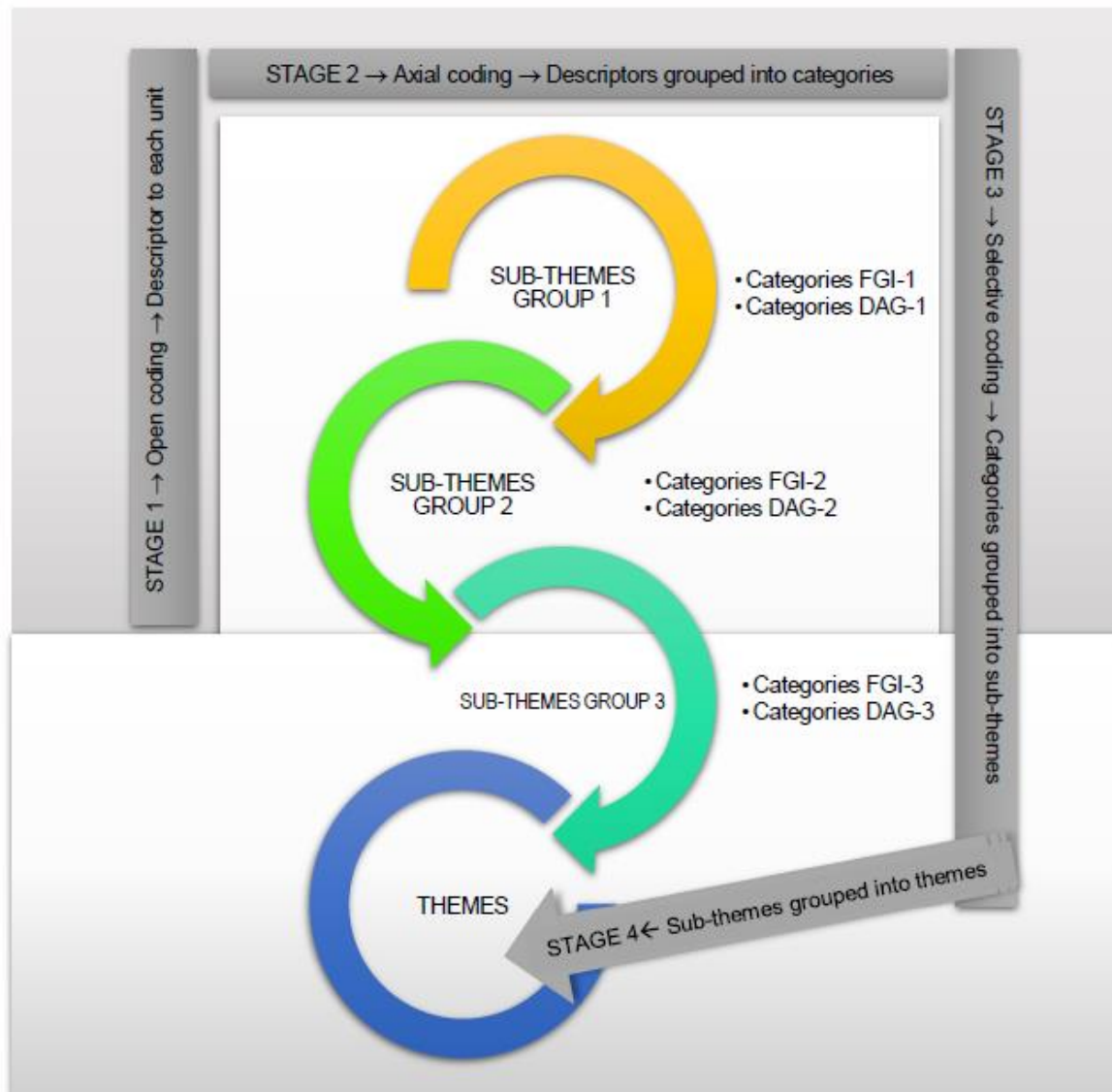


Figure 4.4. Overview of the four stages of the CCM analysis process

Because multiple groups were used for data collection, the groups were not only used for exploratory purposes but also for verification of emerging themes (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). The codes represented the underlying sub-themes within each theme (Onwuegbuzie & Potch, 2016). The themes and sub-themes were then related to and interpreted from Frankl's theory (Frankl, 1986, 1988, 2000, 2006). The themes and sub-themes were also interpreted from the clinical, family systems and psychoanalytic perspectives where deemed necessary (see Chapter 1, section 1.5.4).

Section 4.2.7 provides a discussion on the strategies employed to ensure data quality.

4.2.7 Strategies employed to ensure data quality

Fundamental to good qualitative research is the notion of trustworthiness (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Trustworthiness is also known as the neutrality of the research findings or decisions or “the standards of goodness” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Morrow, 2005). It asks the basic question of “How can the [researcher] persuade his or her audiences (including him or herself) that the findings of an inquiry are worthy of paying attention to or worth taking account of?” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 276). This is described by Mays and Pope (1995, p. 110) as:

[t]he basic strategy to ensure rigour in qualitative research is systematic and self-conscious research design, data collection, interpretation, and communication. Beyond this, there are two goals that qualitative researchers should seek to achieve: to create an account of method and data which can stand independently so that another trained researcher could analyse the same data in the same way and come to essentially the same conclusions; and to produce a plausible and coherent explanation of the phenomenon under scrutiny.

Guba and Lincoln (as cited in Morrow, 2005; Shenton, 2004) developed criteria to pursue the trustworthiness of qualitative studies. The criteria are credibility (in preference to the parallel quantitative criterion of internal validity), dependability (in preference to the parallel quantitative criterion of reliability), confirmability (in preference to the parallel quantitative criterion of objectivity) and transferability (in preference to the parallel quantitative criterion of external validity/generalisability) (Guba & Lincoln, 2008; Shenton, 2004). Intentional steps were taken by the researcher to enhance the credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability of the data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Table 4.1 below describes the criteria and the steps that were taken to enhance the trustworthiness of the data.

Table 4.1
Measures taken to enhance the quality of the data

Credibility (comparable with internal validity)

“Credibility deals with the accuracy of identifying and describing the subject of the study” (Wise, 2011, p. 1). It is about research that produces credible findings, “findings that are convincing and believable” (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 2004, p. 62).

Credibility was enhanced through taking the following steps (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Shenton, 2004; Wise, 2011):

- *Researcher background, qualifications and experience*

The credibility of the researcher was important as the secondary instrument of data collection and major instrument of data analyses. The researcher is a professional psychologist with experience

in group interviews and processes. Information about the researcher's background, qualifications and experience is provided in Chapter 6 that is focused on the logotherapy brief group-based intervention.

- *Moderator's background, qualifications and experience*

The credibility of the moderator was important as the major instrument of data collection. The moderator was a professional psychologist with experience in group interviews and processes.

- *Prolonged time in the field*

The researcher spent substantial time in the field. Persistent engagement with the participants assisted her to build trusting relationships, to develop an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, to convey detail about the site and the participants, and to clarify misunderstandings.

- *Tactics to ensure honesty in participants*

Ethical steps were taken to enhance honesty in participants. Each participant was given opportunities to refuse to participate to ensure that the FGIs and DAGs only involved those who were genuinely willing to take part and to offer data freely. The status and role of the moderator were confirmed. Participants were encouraged to be frank and were ensured that there was no right or wrong answers to the questions. It was made clear to the participants that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point without disclosing any explanation to the researcher.

- *Established data collection methods*

The correct data gathering methods were used for the phenomenon being explored and studied. The line of questioning used in the data gathering sessions was derived from successful comparable projects. The researcher also drew from the pragmatic framework of Chioncel et al. (2003) to ensure consistency in procedures across the various study groups (e.g. develop a protocol for basic requirements for replicability, clear research questions, concise time schedule, attention to the group dynamics, role of the moderator, etc.).

- *Persistent observation*

The researcher pursued interpretations in different ways (e.g. different methodologies answering the same question, interpretations from both the FGIs and the DAGs data) in conjunction with a process of constant and tentative analysis. She consistently looked for multiple influences and searched for what counted and what did not count.

- *Triangulation*

To elicit various and divergent constructions of reality that exist within the context is to collect information from different points of view. This study triangulated by using different methods in parallel (e.g. FGIs and DAGs) that asked different questions to develop themes and to corroborate findings. The use of different methods in parallel compensated for their individual limitations and exploited their respective benefits.

- *Referential adequacy*

An audio recorder was used to document the findings to provide a good record.

- *Negative and discrepant information*

The researcher searched for information that was contradicting the themes.

- *Member checks*

The researcher went back to the participants to check both the data and the initial interpretations. The aim was to correct obvious errors and to provide additional volunteer information. The participants were asked to read summaries of the FGI and DAG proceedings. The emphasis was

on establishing whether the participants considered the summaries to match their words and what they actually intended.

- *Rich, thick description*

The researcher provided thick descriptions to help place the reader in the context. It included a description of the setting, participants, processes and interactions. It also included a detailed description of the research methods (strategy of enquiry, the researcher's role, sampling, data collection, procedures for recording, storing and managing information, data analysis steps, including coding, interpretations, validation and data presentation).

- *Researcher's reflective commentary*

The researcher evaluated the project as it developed. This was done through a reflective commentary, focused on the data collection methods being used, the researcher's impressions of the data collection sessions and the patterns that appeared to emerge in the data collected. The commentary played a key role in the researcher's monitoring of her own developing constructions.

- *Peer debriefing*

The researcher reviewed her perceptions, assumptions, insights, methods and interpretations with a peer outside the context of the study. This allowed for bringing a fresh perspective.

- *External auditor*

The researcher drew on the expertise of her project supervisor to examine the process (research steps, decisions, activities) and product (narrative account, conclusions) of the study to determine its accuracy.

Dependability (comparable with reliability)

"Dependability refers to the degree to which the reader can be convinced that the findings did indeed occur as the researcher says they did" (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 2004, p. 64). It is about a researcher's account of the changes inherent in any setting, as well as changes to the research design as learning unfolded (Wise, 2011). Because qualitative researchers acknowledge that reality is socially constructed and that it changes all the time, dependability comes from capturing the changing conditions that occur in the setting and the study design in response to this reality (Wise, 2011). Therefore, the researcher was responsible for ensuring that the process of research was logically, traceable and clearly documented (Tobin & Begley, 2004).

The researcher strived for dependability through an audit trail where others may examine the documentation of data, methods, decisions and the end product. Reflexivity was central to the audit trail and the researcher kept a self-critical account of the research process, including internal and external dialogues (Tobin & Begley, 2004).

Confirmability (comparable with objectivity or neutrality)

"Confirmability is the degree to which the findings are the product of the focus of the inquiry and not of the biases of the researcher" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Moreover, "[c]onfirmability is concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of the findings are not figments of the researcher's imagination, but are clearly derived from the data" (Tobin & Begley, 2004, p. 392). Essentially, this is about whether another researcher outside the context of the study would be able to independently confirm the findings (Wise, 2011).

The researcher strived for confirmability through what Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Babbie & Mouton, 2001) referred to as a confirmability audit trail. The researcher set out to leave an adequate trail to enable others to determine if the conclusions, interpretations and recommendations can be traced to their sources and if they were supported by the inquiry. The researcher left trails with respect to audio recordings, written field notes, summaries and condensed notes, theoretical notes such as working hypotheses, concepts and hunches, themes that would be developed, findings and conclusions, methodological notes, audit trail notes,

programme development notes and a final report (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

Transferability (comparable with external validity)

Transferability is “the extent to which the findings can be applied to other contexts or with other respondents” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 277). In a qualitative study, it is the responsibility of others to demonstrate transferability of the findings to the receiving context (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The purpose of transferability will then be to allow other researchers to use the findings of this study to make comparisons with their own work (Kelly, 2004).

The researcher has assisted other researchers with their obligation through

- proving thick descriptions of the data in context with sufficient detail and precision to allow judgements about transferability to be made by the reader,
 - designing a study in which multiple informants (e.g. heads of academic departments/directors, lecturing staff and non-lecturing academic staff) and different methods (e.g. FGIs and DAGs) used, and
 - peer debriefing so that the account resonates with people other than the researcher (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Tobin & Begley, 2004; Wise, 2011).
-

The following is a discussion on the quantitative phase with its quasi-experimental single-group pretest/posttest design. It details the research approach, research method, research strategy, sampling procedures, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures and strategies to ensure the quality of the data.

4.3 PHASE THREE QUANTITATIVE STUDY: QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL SINGLE GROUP PRETEST/POSTTEST DESIGN

The fundamental purpose of the quantitative study was to determine the impact of the brief logotherapy group-based intervention programme on the sense of meaning, psychological well-being and life satisfaction of academic employees.

4.3.1 Research approach

A pragmatist approach was used as a philosophical basis to support the different phases of the intervention mixed methods research design (see Chapter 1, section 1.5.2).

4.3.2 Research method

A mixed methods research framework was proposed in Chapter 1 (see section 1.6.1). This study drew from the suggested framework. See section 4.2.2 for the four components of the framework. Sections 4.3.4 to 4.3.7 provide the detail of the four components within the context of a quantitative design.

4.3.3 Research strategy

A quasi-experimental single-group pretest/posttest design provided the framework for the study. The purpose of quasi-experimental designs approximates the purpose of the true experimental types (McMillian & Schumacher, 2006). It determines “cause and effect”, and it involves “the direct manipulation of conditions” (McMillian & Schumacher, 2006, p. 24). Generally, quasi-experimental designs are typified by the non-random assignment of participants to the experimental groups, the small number of people that participate in the groups and the absence of control or comparison groups (Creswell, 2012; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009).

4.3.4 Sampling procedures

The section on sampling procedures includes information on the research setting and study population, obtaining permissions, sampling techniques, the number of participants needed and the recruitment strategies.

4.3.4.1 Research setting and study population

The identified site for the study was the same HE organisation as in the phase one study. The people identified to participate in the study were male and female academic employees from three intact groups working at the HE organisation. The intact groups referred to heads of academic departments and/or directors, lecturing staff and non-lecturing academic staff. Non-lecturing academic staff represented employees working in the fields of academic development and student development and support.

4.3.4.2 Obtaining permissions

Permission for the third phase empirical study was obtained when the initial application was made to the IRBs at UNISA and the research site (see section 4.2.4.2).

4.3.4.3 Sampling techniques and number of participants needed

The researcher used the non-probability sampling methods of purposive and convenient sampling to select the participants as described in the first phase qualitative study (see section 4.2.4.3). The inclusion criteria for academic employees to participate in the quasi-experimental studies were:

- A minimum of three years working experience at the HE organisation as they were expected to have obtained knowledge about and experience within the higher education context, institution and their work role.
- Participants who were likely to participate in the process and in the discussions.

The exclusion criteria for the studies:

- Participants who participated in the FGIs and DAGs during the phase one study were excluded from the phase three quantitative study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

4.3.4.4 Recruitment strategies

The most appropriate dates for the study groups were determined in collaboration with the deans, academic heads and the research site's academic calendar that governs all activities to maximise the availability of the research participants. The researcher approached the academic heads ten weeks prior to the implementation of the intervention and staff lists were requested from their offices to get the email addresses of their staff members. The researcher followed the same procedure that was used in the phase one qualitative study regarding inviting people to participate in the phase three quantitative study (see section 4.2.4.4). The participants were assigned to the quasi-experimental groups in a non-random manner based on their availability to participate in the implementation of the intervention process during one of the four available dates that were scheduled in June 2015.

For practical reasons, the overall number of participants in the study was limited (e.g. time constraints, cost and the availability of the participants) (Maree & Pietersen, 2007). Implementing the intervention in small group settings provided a safe space where participants could "explore themselves as they share a single existence" (Jahanpour, Sareghin, Hosseini & Tekiyee, 2014). The small groups also provided more opportunity for participation and for learning to take place (Erasmus & Van Dyk, 2005).

Ideally, the intervention programme should have been implemented in small group settings with six to eight participants per group. Based on the availability of the participants, time constraints and cost implications, the four groups were unequal in size and varied between four and 12 participants.

A total number of 30 participants participated in the implementation of the intervention. Three participants did not hand back the posttest questionnaires and were excluded from the study. One participant left the site for other employment, another participant did not

renew her employment contract and did not hand back the posttest questionnaires in time for data analysis. The third participant did not complete the posttest questionnaires.

An additional five participants were excluded from the study. Three participants were excluded since they did not meet the criterion of a minimum of three years of working experience at the HE organisation (see section 4.2.4.3). Another two participants were excluded as a result of the data cleaning process. The pretest/posttest data of 22 participants was used in the final analysis. Table 4.2 provides a summary of the participant characteristics.

Table 4.2
Participant characteristics

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Citizenship	South African	21	95.45
	Other	1	4.55
Race	African	2	9.09
	Indian	1	4.55
	White	19	86.36
Gender	Male	5	22.70
	Female	17	77.30
Home language	English	5	22.73
	Afrikaans	16	72.73
	Other	1	4.55
Age groups	25 – 34	4	19.15
	35 – 44	3	14.29
	45 – 54	7	33.33
	55 and Older	7	33.33
Area of work	Faculty	20	90.91
	Academic Development	2	9.09
Faculty	Applied and Computer Sciences	1	4.50
	Human Sciences	14	63.60
	Management Sciences	5	22.70
	Centre for Academic Development	2	9.10
Job description	Head of department (academic)	2	9.10
	Senior lecturer	2	9.10
	Lecturer	14	63.60
	Junior lecturer	2	9.10
	Academic development practitioner	2	9.10
Years at HEI	3 – 5	11	50.00
	6 – 10	4	18.20
	11 – 15	4	18.20
	16 – 20	2	9.10
	21 – 25	1	4.50
Satisfied with current position	Yes	18	81.82
	No	4	18.18

The majority of the participants were white (86.36%) Afrikaans speaking (72.73%) females (77.30%) in the age groups of 45 to 54 years (33.33%) and 55 years and older (33.33%). As such, 66.67% of the participants were 45 years and older. The participants were mostly lecturing employees (90.91%) and 63.60% of them were affiliated with the Faculty of Human Sciences. Most participants indicated their job title as lecturer (63.60%) and 50% of the participants had worked between three to five (50%) years for the HEI, and 9.09% had worked between 16 to 20 years for the institution. Most of the participants

(81.82%) indicated that they were satisfied with their jobs.

4.3.5 Measuring instruments

This section includes information on the measuring instruments that are the demographic questionnaire, Purpose in Life test (PIL), Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ), the depression, anxiety, bulimia/binge eating and substance abuse/dependency subscales of the Psychiatric Diagnostic Screening Questionnaire (PDSQ) and the learning and/or discoveries questionnaire.

The following section includes an overview of the measuring instruments that were used to collect the participants' demographic characteristics and assess their meaning in life and psychological health (see Chapter 1, section 1.8 for ethical procedures regarding the data storage).

a Demographic information

The researcher utilised the same questionnaire that was developed for the first phase of the study to collect demographic information from the participants (see section 4.2.5.1).

b Purpose in Life test (PIL)

The Purpose in Life test (PIL), developed by Crumbaugh and Maholick (1969), was selected to measure the participants' perceived meaning in life. It was inspired by Frankl's theory and is considered to be a primary measure of meaning (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1969; McDonald, Wong & Gingras, 2012; Melton & Schulenberg, 2008). It is thus commonly used in research as a general tool to assess meaning (Schulenberg & Melton, 2010).

The PIL is an attitude scale that measures the extent to which individuals experience a sense of meaning in life. The 20 items on the PIL are scored on a seven-point Likert-type response format, with different anchoring points for each item. They range from 1 (feelings of no purpose), with 4 being neutral, to 7 (the greatest feelings of purpose in life). Examples of item content include enthusiasm (versus boredom), excitement in living, contentment in daily tasks and having a reason to be alive.

Scores (calculated based on the sum of the individual items) range from a low of 20 to a high of 140, with higher scores consistent with greater report of personal meaning (Schulenberg & Melton, 2010). PIL scores demonstrate good reliability and validity according to split-half (.87–.92) and test-retest methods (.79–.83) (Molasso, 2006;

Schulenberg & Melton, 2010).

Yalom (Marsh et al., 2003) noted that the PIL items appear to relate to several different constructs: life meaning (purpose or mission), life satisfaction (boredom, excitement, painfulness), freedom, fear of death, suicide and how worthwhile individuals perceive their lives to be. Therefore, it has been criticised on the grounds that many studies have reported different underlying factor structures for the measure, with limited evidence to suggest a consistently replicable model (Schulenberg & Melton, 2010). Despite the criticism, the PIL has been widely used.

c Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ)

Since there was no empirical evidence for the sense of meaning and purpose in life for academic employees, a decision was taken to triangulate the PIL's results with a contemporary measure of meaning. The Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) (Steger et al., 2006) was selected as an easy-to-use measure to assess individuals' subjective sense of whether they experience meaning and purpose in their lives (Presence), as well as whether they were currently and actively seeking meaning (Search) (Steger & Shin, 2010).

The MLQ is a 10-item measure, rated on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (absolutely untrue) to 7 (absolutely true). The Presence of meaning ("I have discovered a satisfying life purpose") and the Search for meaning ("I am looking for something that makes my life feel meaningful") subscales consisted of five items each. The measures for both subscales ranged between five and 35, with higher scores indicating higher Presence and Search (Steger, 2010). Interpretations and score descriptors are based on the scores on both subscales (Steger, 2010).

The MLQ demonstrated good reliability, test-retest stability, stable factor structure and convergence among respondents (Steger et al., 2006). The alpha levels across 15 studies were reported as ranging between .81 and .93 for the Presence subscale and .83 and .93 for the Search subscale (Rose, Zask & Burton, 2016).

Steger et al. (2006) noted that the MLQ does not provide answers for all the questions about the nature of meaning in life as a construct. McDonald et al. (2012) asserted that the content of the Search subscale reflects Frankl's will to meaning as a primary motivation though it falls short of confirming the belief that there is always meaning to be found in life regardless of the circumstances (McDonald et al., 2012).

d Psychiatric Diagnostic Screening Questionnaire (PDSQ)

The Psychiatric Diagnostic Screening Questionnaire (PDSQ) was used to explore aspects of the participants' psychological health (Zimmerman, 2002). The decision to include this instrument followed on the phase one qualitative study results that indicated a high level of negative emotions among academic employees. Negative affect is positively correlated with the frustration of meaning (Steger, 2012). Meaning frustration is positively correlated with psychological distress (Steger, 2012) therefore an explorative aspect was included in the logotherapy intervention (see Chapter 6 for the intervention).

The PDSQ is a brief self-report instrument designed to screen for indicators of the DSM-IV Axis I disorders most commonly encountered among individuals 18 years of age and older (Zimmerman, 2002; Zimmerman & Chelminski, 2006). It is intended to be used in any research setting where the screening for the indicators is of interest (Zimmerman, 2002). As such, it was clear that it was not intended to be used as a diagnostic tool.

The PDSQ is designed to provide information in six areas: bulimia/binge-eating; depression; anxiety (e.g. panic, post-traumatic stress, obsessive compulsion, generalised anxiety and social phobia); substance abuse/dependence (alcohol and drugs); somatoform disorders (somatisation and hypochondriasis) and psychosis (Zimmerman & Mattia, 2001a). The scale has 125 yes/no items and takes approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

For the purpose of the study, subscales of the PDSQ were used to explore the participants' psychological health in the areas of bulimia/binge eating (e.g. "Did you go on eating binges during which you ate a large amount of food even when you didn't feel hungry?"); depression (e.g. "Was decision making more difficult than normal nearly every day?"); anxiety (e.g. "Did you get very scared because you were feeling shaky or faint?"); and substance abuse/dependence ("Did anyone in your family think or say that you were drinking too much, or that you had an alcohol problem?").

Validated against diagnostic criteria and interview derived diagnoses, the PDSQ, over the course of 10 years and more than 3,000 administrations, has proven effective, convenient and reliable (Zimmerman, 2002). The PDSQ demonstrated good to excellent internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.8 for 12 of the 15 subscales (mean was 0.86) (Sheeran & Zimmerman, 2004). Test-retest reliability coefficients were greater than 0.8 for nine subscales and the mean of the test-retest correlation coefficients was 0.83 (Sheeran & Zimmerman, 2004). Cross validation analyses with other self-report measures and with the structured clinical interview for DSM-IV indicated that every PDSQ subscale

successfully measured the symptom domain for which it was designed (Zimmerman & Mattia, 2001a, 2001b).

e Learning and/or discoveries questionnaire

A brief open-ended questionnaire (learning and/or discoveries) was included in the post-intervention posttest battery to get an indication of the participants' learnings and/or discoveries after participation in the intervention. The assessment was aimed at obtaining qualitative information in addition to the results of the empirical evaluation (pre- and post-intervention measures). The rationale for the qualitative information was to enrich the quantitative results and to bring in another perspective.

The evaluation questionnaire consisted of two requests, namely,

- Please share your most important learning and/or discovery; and
- Please share how what you have learnt and/or discovered could assist you in your work and life.

4.3.6 Data collection procedures

Realising the quasi-experimental single-group pretest/posttest study entailed the following:

- Participants consented in writing to voluntarily participation.
- Participants completed the biographical questionnaire.
- Participants self-administered (on an individual basis) a battery of quantitative instruments (pretest) to assess their sense and purpose of meaning in life (PIL and MLQ) and psychological health (PDSQ), two weeks prior to the implementation of the programme.
- Participants were exposed to selected readings on Frankl's life and theory after the pretest however prior to the programme implementation.
- Researcher implemented the brief logotherapy group-based programme during one week.
- Participants self-administered (on an individual basis) the same battery of quantitative instruments (posttests) four weeks after participation in the intervention.
- Participants completed a brief qualitative questionnaire to get an indication of the impact of the intervention four weeks after their participation.

Figure 4.5 depicts the single-group pretest-posttest design (adapted from McMillan &

Schumacher, 2006).

Single-group pretest-posttest design			
<u>Group</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Treatment</u>	<u>Posttest</u>
A	Biographical questionnaire Battery of instruments	Readings on Frankl's life and theory Logotherapy intervention programme	Battery of instruments <u>Learning and/or discoveries assessment</u> Brief qualitative questionnaire

Figure 4.5. Single-group quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design

The data analysis procedures is discussed in section 4.3.7.

4.3.7 Data analysis

This section includes information on the units of analyses, statement of the core hypotheses and the statistical analysis procedures.

4.3.7.1 Units of analyses

The group pretest and posttest mean scores on the PIL, MLQ subscales and PDSQ subscales were the units of analysis.

4.3.7.2 Statement of the core hypotheses

To assess and describe the impact of a brief logotherapy group-based intervention programme on the sense of purpose and meaning of academic employees, the following hypotheses were tested:

- (1) A logotherapy brief group-based intervention will result in statistically significant differences between the group average pretest and posttest scores on the sense of purpose and meaning in life dimension as measured by the PIL (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1969).
- (2) A logotherapy brief group-based intervention will result in statistically significant differences between the group average pretest and posttest scores on the Presence of meaning dimension as measured by the MLQ (Steger, 2010).
- (3) A logotherapy brief group-based intervention will result in statistically significant differences between the group average pretest and posttest scores on the Search for meaning dimension as measured by the MLQ (Steger, 2010).
- (4) A logotherapy brief group-based intervention programme will result in statistically significant differences between the group average pretest and posttest scores on the bulimia/binge eating, depression, anxiety and substance abuse/dependency subscales as measured by the PDSQ (Zimmerman, 2002).

4.3.7.3 Statistical analysis procedures

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (Version 22) was used to perform the analysis. Descriptive statistics were calculated to give an overview of the participant characteristics. The use of descriptive statistics is the most fundamental way to summarise data with respect to the sample data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

The Wilcoxon matched pairs signed rank test, a non-parametric test, was used to observe differences between the pretest/posttest group scores for sense of purpose and meaning, Presence of meaning and psychological health. A non-parametric test was indicated since the assumptions upon which parametric statistics were based were not met (normal distribution of population, homogeneity of variance within different groups and data that is interval or ratio scale) (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

a Dependent and independent variables

The following gives an overview of the dependent and independent variables for the empirical study.

i Independent variable

The independent variable was the logotherapy brief group-based intervention on the meaning in life (PIL), Presence of meaning (MLQ-P), Search for meaning (MLQ-S) and the presence of symptoms of depression, post-traumatic stress, bulimia/binge-eating, obsessive compulsion, panic, social phobia, alcohol abuse/dependence, drug abuse/dependence and generalised anxiety on the PDSQ subscales.

ii Dependent variables

The dependent variables were:

- (1) Meaning in life as measured by the PIL;
- (2) Presence of meaning and Search for meaning, as measured by the MLQ;
- (3) The presence of symptoms of depression, post-traumatic stress, bulimia/binge-eating, obsessive compulsion, panic, social phobia, alcohol abuse/dependence, drug abuse/dependence and generalised anxiety as measured on the PDSQ subscales.

Table 4.3 below provides a description of the dependent variables.

Table 4.3
Operationalisation of the dependent variables

Variable	Operationalisation
Depression	Score exceeds the cut-off score of the DSM-IV symptom criteria for major depression disorder as specified by the PDSQ (Zimmerman, 2002).
Post-traumatic stress	Score exceeds the cut-off score of the DSM-IV symptom criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder as specified by the PDSQ (Zimmerman, 2002).
Bulimia/binge-eating	Score exceeds the cut-off score of the DSM-IV symptom criteria for bulimia/binge-eating disorder as specified by the PDSQ (Zimmerman, 2002).
Obsessive-compulsion	Score exceeds the cut-off score of the DSM-IV symptom criteria for obsessive-compulsive disorder as specified by the PDSQ (Zimmerman, 2002).
Panic	Score exceeds the cut-off score of the DSM-IV symptom criteria for panic disorder as specified by the PDSQ (Zimmerman, 2002).
Social phobia	Score exceeds the cut-off score of the DSM-IV symptom criteria for social phobia as specified by the PDSQ (Zimmerman, 2002).
Alcohol abuse/dependence	Score exceeds the cut-off score of the DSM-IV symptom criteria for alcohol abuse/dependence as specified by the PDSQ (Zimmerman, 2002).
Drug abuse/dependence	Score exceeds the cut-off score of the DSM-IV symptom criteria for drug abuse/dependence as specified by the PDSQ (Zimmerman, 2002).
Generalised anxiety	Score exceeds the cut-off score of the DSM-IV symptom criteria for Generalised anxiety disorder as specified by the PDSQ (Zimmerman, 2002).
Meaning and purpose in life	Differing from person to person, from day to day and from hour to hour, the specific meaning of a person's life at a given moment as measured by the PIL (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1969; Frankl, 2000).
Presence of meaning	How full individuals feel their lives are of meaning as measured by the MLQ Presence scale (Steger, 2010).
Search for meaning	How engaged and motivated individuals are in efforts to find meaning or deepen their understanding of meaning in their lives as measured by the MLQ Search scale (Steger, 2010).

4.3.7.4 Data analysis procedure for learning and/or discoveries questionnaire

The three stage constant comparison method (CCM) of data analysis provided the framework for analysing the transcribed verbatim data (see section 4.2.6) collected from the learning and/or discoveries questionnaire.

4.3.8 Strategies to ensure quality data

All good research requires the utilisation of procedures to ensure the validity of the data, the results and their interpretation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Validity is about “the extent to which inferences can be accurately made based on test scores or other measures” (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016, p. 162). For the empirical study, the researcher was concerned about issues of validity at two levels (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). (Zimmerman, 2002) The first level was about the quality of the scores from the instruments used and the second level was about the quality of the conclusions that could be drawn from the results of the quantitative analyses (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Fundamentally, quantitative validity means that “scores received from participants are meaningful indicators of the construct being measured” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The standards are drawn from statistical procedures or external experts (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Rosnow & Rosenthal, 1996). Therefore, researchers look for the following evidence:

- Content validity: The judgement about whether the items or questions are representative of possible items;
- Criterion-related validity: The extent to which a measure correlates with one or more criterion variables; and
- Construct validity: Whether the instruments measure what they intend to measure.

The researcher established the validity of the instruments prior to the study. The validity of conclusions drawn from the results concerns two additional forms of validity that are internal validity and external validity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). The researcher put measures in place when she designed the study to reduce threats to internal validity and external validity.

The following is a discussion of the measures that the researcher took.

4.3.8.1 Internal validity

“The internal validity of a study is a judgment that is made concerning the confidence with which plausible rival hypotheses can be ruled out as explanations for the results” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 258). It means that there was sufficient control over

variables other than the treatment and consequently it can be concluded that the treatment alone was the casual factor that produced a change in the dependent variable (Maree & Pietersen, 2007).

Table 4.4 gives a summary of the threats to internal validity and how the threats were mitigated in this study (adapted from McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 260; Tredoux, 2004):

Table 4.4
Summary of threats to internal validity

Threat	Description	Increasing internal validity
History	Unplanned or extraneous events that occur during the research may affect the results.	The researcher shortened the duration of the quasi-experiment (e.g. the intervention programme was implemented over the course of one week; the pretest assessment was two weeks before the implementation of the intervention, the posttest assessment was four weeks after the implementation of the intervention; the total duration of the quasi-experiment was seven weeks) to mitigate unplanned or extraneous events (confounding variables).
Maturation	An effect is due to maturational or other natural changes in the subjects (e.g. being older, wiser, stronger, tired).	
Selection	Differences between the participants in the groups may result in outcomes that are different because of group composition.	A biographical questionnaire that requested demographic data assisted with the evaluation of the representativeness of the groups and possible differences based on this information (e.g. age, gender, race, home language, years of working experience at the institution, job title, level of expertise, etc.). The inclusion of a pretest provided information about the participants' meaning in life, psychological well-being and life satisfaction prior to the intervention programme implementation. The inclusion of a pretest has assisted in statistical control for confounding effects on the outcome variables.
Statistical regression	Scores of groups of participants take on values closer to the mean due to the respondents being identified on the basis of extremely high or low scores or the statistical tendency for extreme scores on the first measure to move	Avoid the use of extreme scorers or outliers. The use of average scorers will minimise the threat due to statistical regression.

Threat	Description	Increasing internal validity
	closer to the mean on second measure.	
Instrumentation	Differences in results are due to unreliability, changes in the measuring instrument or observers.	Valid instruments with proven reliability were used. Self-administered instruments were used with clear and simple instructions about when and how to complete the questionnaires.
Attrition	The systematic loss of participants affects the outcome (e.g. drop-outs from study).	The researcher made provision for 36 participants, however only 30 participated in the programme and three participants dropped out.
Diffusion of treatment	Participants in one group learn about treatments or conditions for different groups.	Although complete confidentiality of the intervention programme could not be assured, participants were requested not to discuss the content of the intervention programme and the discussions that took place during the week of programme implementation (quasi-experiment) to mitigate diffusion of treatment.
Experimenter/researcher effects	Deliberate or unintended effects of the researcher influence participants' responses. Some of the more generic personal characteristics that may lead to bias include the experimenter's age, class, gender, race and so forth.	The researcher facilitated all the intervention programme sessions. The researcher took cognisance of her age, gender, race, language, etc. with respect to statistical control for confounding effect on the outcome variables.
Participant (Hawthorn) effects	Changes in behaviour in response to being a participant or being in an experiment.	The researcher has mitigated the effect by choosing a secluded venue that provided a more relaxed and intimate atmosphere. However, the Hawthorne effect was an unavoidable bias that the researcher tried to take into account when she analysed the results. Participants might have modified their behaviour since they were aware that they were part of an experimental study. This behaviour was extremely difficult to quantify.

The researcher took the threats to internal validity mentioned in Table 4.4 into consideration when she drew cause and effect inferences.

The threats to external validity is described in section 4.3.8.2.

4.3.8.2 *External validity*

“External validity is the extent to which the results of an experiment can be generalized to people and environmental conditions outside the context of the experiment” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 261) or in Tredoux’s (2004, p. 313) words, “a study has external validity when its findings or conclusions can be generalized beyond the confines of the design and the study setting”. This implies that “correct inferences can only be drawn to other persons, settings and past and future situations if the [researcher] has used [specific] procedures” (adapted from Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 211).

Table 4.5 gives a summary of threats to external validity and how they were addressed in this study (adapted from McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 261; Tredoux, 2004):

Table 4.5
Summary of threats to external validity

Threat	Description	Increasing external validity
Population		
Description of variables	Generalisation is limited to the operational definitions of the independent and dependent variables. It is concerned with the extent to which the variables in a study are adequately described and operationally defined. Variables can be defined too specifically.	The researcher took care to operationally define the variables to ensure meaningfulness in settings beyond the original study setting. The use of widely agreed upon definitions or multiple competing definitions were considered. See Table 4.3 for the operational definitions of the independent and dependent variables.
Ecological		
Multiple treatment interference	In experiments in which subjects receive more than one treatment, generalisability is limited to similar multiple-treatment situations because of the effect of the first treatment on subsequent treatments.	Participants only received one treatment (intervention programme). The researcher developed a proceedings manual to ensure basic requirements of reliability.
Time of measurement/treatment interaction	Results may be limited to the time frame in which they were obtained. Treatment causing immediate effects may not have lasting effects.	The posttest and learning assessment questionnaires were administered four weeks after participation in the intervention which provided useful information about the lasting effects of the treatment.
Novelty or disruption effect	Subjects may respond differently because of a change in routine and generalisation may be limited to situations that involve similar novelty or disruption (e.g. an initially effective treatment may become ineffective in time as novelty wears off).	The posttest and learning assessment questionnaires were administered four weeks after participation in the intervention which provided useful information about the lasting effects of the treatment.

The following is a discussion on the reliability of the research instruments.

4.3.8.3 Reliability

“Instrument reliability refers to the consistency of measurement or the extent to which the scores are similar over different forms of the same instrument or occasions of data collection” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 130). It is whether a particular technique, applied repeatedly to the same object, would yield the same result each time (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 119).

Cronbach's alpha coefficients are usually calculated to determine reliabilities, with a recommended normal cut-off value of 0.7 (Samuels, 2015). Reliability analysis is not recommended for small sample sizes, as in the case of this study (Charter, 2003; Samuels, 2015) therefore, reliability analyses were not attempted for the different measuring instruments even though the researcher considered the reliabilities of the instruments based on other research prior to the study.

A summary of the chapter is provided in section 4.4.

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The primary aim of Chapter 4 was to describe the core components of the phase one and three studies. This was done through detailing the research strategies, research methods, sampling procedures, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures and strategies employed to enhance data quality for both the qualitative and quantitative phases. Thereafter the strengths and challenges in using an intervention mixed methods design were outlined.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH FINDINGS OF THE PHASE ONE QUALITATIVE STUDY

Real learning and discovery can only take place when a state of not knowing can be borne for long enough to enable all the data gathered by the senses to be taken in and explored until some meaningful pattern emerges (Reilly, 2012, p. 308).

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 is about the results of the phase one qualitative study. It presents the overview characteristics of the participants then the results are discussed under the headings of meaning and meaning frustration, also referred to as sources of meaning and meaning frustration. That is followed by an integrated discussion on the sources of meaning and meaning frustration and the chapter concludes with a summary.

5.2 OVERVIEW CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Data was collected from 29 participants by means of demographic questionnaires. Table 5.1 below gives an outline of the characteristics of the participants.

Table 5.1
Overview of the characteristics of the participants

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Citizenship	South African	28	96.60
	Other ⁸	1	3.40
Race	African	7	24.14
	Indian	3	10.34
	White	19	65.52
Gender	Male	7	24.10
	Female	22	75.90
Home language	English	9	31.03
	Afrikaans	15	51.72
	Sotho/Tswana ⁹	4	13.79
	Nguni ¹⁰	1	3.45
Age groups	25 – 34	5	17.24
	35 – 44	11	37.93
	45 – 54	9	31.03
	55 and Older	4	13.79
Area of work	Faculty	16	55.17
	Academic development	9	31.03
	Student development and support	3	10.34
	Other ¹¹	1	3.45
Faculty	Applied and Computer Sciences	2	12.50
	Engineering and Technology	1	6.25
	Human Sciences	10	62.50
	Management Sciences	3	18.75
Job description	Director	2	6.90
	Head of department (academic)	4	13.79
	Senior lecturer	3	10.34
	Lecturer	8	27.59
	Junior lecturer	3	10.34
	Other ¹²	9	31.03
Years at HEI	3 – 5	15	51.72
	6 – 10	5	17.24
	11 – 15	2	6.90
	16 – 20	2	6.90
	21 – 25	5	17.24
Satisfied with current position	Yes	22	75.90
	No	7	24.10

⁸ Zimbabwean

⁹ Sotho/Tswana (North-Sotho, South-Sotho, Tswana, Venda)

¹⁰ Nguni (Ndebele, Swati, Tsonga, Xhosa, Zulu)

¹¹ Other (Director)

¹² Other (Academic development practitioner, Student development and support practitioner, Academic support)

The majority of participants were white (65.52%), Afrikaans speaking (51.72%) females (75.90%) in the age group 35 to 44 years (37.93%), followed by the age group 45 to 54 years (31.02%). Approximately half of the participants (65.51%) were affiliated with a faculty and 48.27% of them indicated that they were lecturers. The majority of the lecturers (62.50%) were based in the Faculty of Human Sciences. Approximately half of the participants (51.72%) had worked between three and five years for the HE organisation, followed by 17.24% who had worked between six and 10 years and 17.24% who had worked between 21 and 25 years. Most of the participants (75.90%) indicated that they were satisfied with their jobs.

Section 5.3 gives an overview of the sub-themes and themes that emerged from the FGIs and DAGs.

5.3 THEMES AND SUB-THEMES FOR MEANING AND MEANING FRUSTRATION

This section includes an overview of the themes and sub-themes of meaning and meaning frustration. Figure 5.1 gives an outline of the themes and sub-themes for meaning and figure 5.2 gives an outline of the themes and sub-themes for meaning frustration.

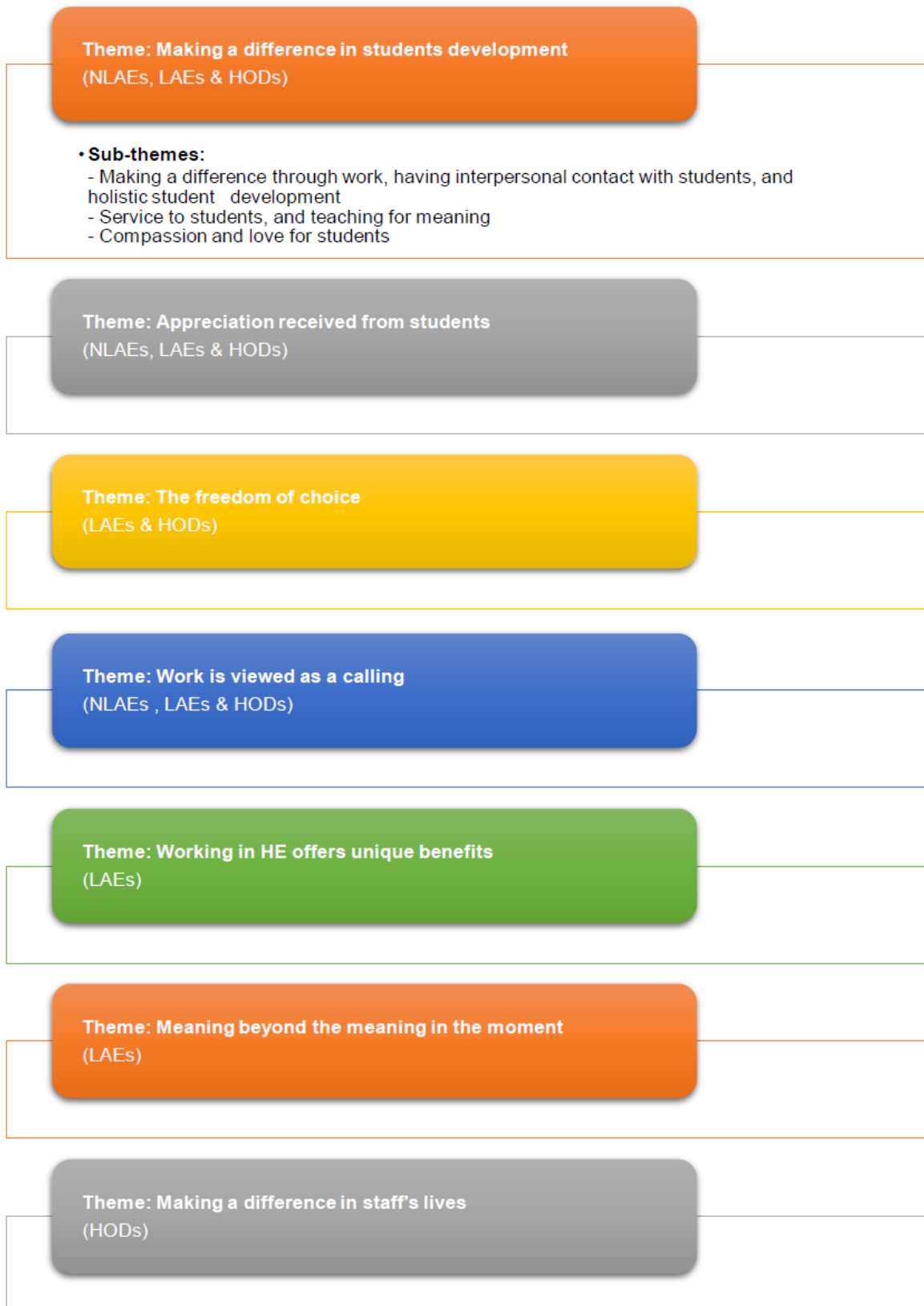


Figure 5.1. Themes and Sub-themes for Meaning



Figure 5.2. Themes and Sub-themes for Meaning Frustration

Section 5.4 includes a discussion on the qualitative findings.

5.4 DISCUSSION OF THE QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2 include discussion on the meaning and meaning frustration themes and sub-themes for academic employees.

5.4.1 Meaning

The themes or sources of meaning were making a difference in students' development; appreciation received from students; the freedom of choice; work viewed as calling; working in HE offers unique benefits; meaning beyond the meaning in the moment; and making a difference in staff's lives.

Section 5.4.1.1 includes a discussion on the theme of making a difference in students' development.

5.4.1.1 Making a difference in students' development

The theme making a difference in students' development emerged as the major source of meaning (see Figure 5.1, section 5.3) for academic employees. It was informed by three sub-themes that were: (1) making a difference through work, having interpersonal contact with students and holistic student development; (2) service to students and education for meaning; and (3) compassion and love for students. Meaning discovered in work finds itself in the domain of Frankl's creative values (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.2.1).

The following are the key findings that have emerged from the FGIs and DAGs to illuminate the three sub-themes or sources of meaning.

a Making a difference through work, having meaningful interaction with students and holistic student development

Making a difference, having meaningful interaction with students and developing students holistically emerged as sources of meaning that culminated in the experience of making a difference in students' development.

A strong theme of making a difference and empowering others through work emerged among NLAE participants. For example, a participant expressed the meaning that she found in her work as follows:

Creating designs that empower people to look and to be professional, to explain

theoretical themes in a visual manner which assists the learning experience of individuals. You are giving something, but what you receive back is so much more because you have touched so many people. You assist one lecturer, but in effect you are reaching hundreds of students, very indirectly, but it makes me happy to see happy faces (Participant 1, FGI, 14 May 2014).

From a Franklian perspective, the participant discovered creative value through what she contributed to or gave to others through doing her job, therefore she experienced meaning fulfilment. This may also be regarded as meaningfulness through “doing good” (Pratt, Pradies & Lepisto, 2013, p. 178) (see section 5.4.1.1 (b) on service to students). Given that the task that she performed bettered the lives of LAEs and students and that it advanced the cause of teaching and learning, the participant valued the task as worth doing and as significant (Pattakos & Dundon, 2017; Pratt et al., 2013). This shows that meaning for the participant is related to a higher purpose that is making a difference in the function of teaching and learning, and ultimately in society (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006). This reflects the transcendent quality of meaningful work, “that work is meaningful when individuals can subordinate themselves to groups, experiences, or entities that transcend the self” (Rosso, Dekas & Wrzesniewski, 2010)

The analysis also revealed cognitive stimulation as an aspect of meaningful work and an ability to see the bigger picture. By focusing on meaning’s big picture, whilst simultaneously seeking to notice work’s meaning moments, a search for ultimate meaning begins and never ends (Pattakos & Dundon, 2017). Moreover, the experience of meaningful work included a positive affective (PA) (happiness) component. Research demonstrates a positive correlation between meaning in life and PA (King & Hicks, 2012). Positive affect is frequently measured using mood adjectives like *happy, joyful, pleased, enjoyment or fun* (King & Hicks, 2012, p. 126). It is clear that meaning includes both the cognitive and emotional experiences of being significant (Schlechter & Engelbrecht, 2006). This is supported by Wong’s (1997) general definition of the three components of meaning that are cognitive, motivational and affective (see Chapter 3, section 3.6).

Besides the experience of making a difference through their work, NLAE participants described having interpersonal contact with students as meaningful for them. The following is an example of such descriptions:

It is always nice to have direct contact with students, it is always nice to see the work they are doing and their progress. Students cannot write an essay, and later they have an essay that sounds like an essay, and that makes me happy

(Participant 2, FGI, 14 May 2014).

The participant also communicated enjoyment (PA) when working with diverse students and a variety of writing assignments from different subject areas. Again, cognitive stimulation and a PA component, but also interaction with students and a range of tasks were highlighted as aspects of meaningful work. The experience of valuing student interaction and the wealth that they bring, finds itself in the domain of Frankl's experiential values (Frankl, 2006; also see Chapter 3, section 3.7.2.2).

I am helping students with study methods... What is most satisfying for me is to see those students that I gave study methods to coming back saying that they have a study method now, and most of the students coming back are at least saying it is helping (Participant 3, FGI, 14 May 2014).

Feedback from students with respect to the usefulness of a task performed was regarded as a quality that enhanced meaningful interaction with students. Research supports a positive relationship between clear information about task performance, positive work attitudes and increased work quality (Moss, 2016; Walumbwa, Christensen & Muchiri, 2013).

A component of NLAEs' work is to develop and support students in a holistic way. When the participants spoke about the meaning they derived from their work, they did so from different perspectives. For example,

I basically coordinate all the functions of the clinic, making sure that all the equipment are on time ... making sure that health programmes are there, so that that aspect of their lives are covered, I coordinate all the events ... it becomes satisfying because you are building them in that aspect of their lives, because health play a major role in building a student holistically (Participant 5, FGI, 14 May 2014).

The participant experienced satisfaction through playing a role in developing students in a holistic way, though illuminating the health perspective. In addition,

... it is meaningful for me to help students with study methods and with psychometric testing ... With the psychometric testing, I help them to find out what type of person they are, and what they are most interested in (Participant 3, FGI, 14 May 2014).

The participant found meaning in her work through teaching students study methods and

through psychometric testing that implies satisfaction when working with students from educational and psychological perspectives. Holistic student development suggests the participant's intuitive grasp and acceptance of Frankl's three-dimensional nature of human beings, or what is referred to as his "dimensional ontology" (see Chapter 3, section 3.4).

b Service to students and teaching for meaning

The next sub-theme focuses on service to students and teaching for meaning as sources of meaning for LAE and HOD participants.

Service to students was a strong theme that emerged among all three groups of participants but stronger among LAE and HOD/DRR participants and the strongest among HOD/DRR participants. A HOD participant encapsulated it as

... providing services to students, watching the students develop, passing knowledge to students, and interacting with students (Participant 2, FGI, 19 June 2016).

The analysis revealed the majority of participants as having a service orientation. It was not per se focused on the why of service (e.g. one's true self or calling from God), but rather on the beneficiaries of their work (e.g. students) (Pratt et al., 2013). Purkey and Siegel (2013, p. 126) noted that administrators and faculty members at HE organisations "work in a field with a particular obligation to the larger community. Service is a natural part of a university's institutional mission – service toward students, on one level and service on behalf of the future, on another, more abstract level". An orientation towards service finds itself in the domain of Frankl's creative values. As a spiritual value, service to others has a transcendent quality (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006) (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.5). Transcendence was about reaching beyond themselves to students and also to the cause of teaching and learning (Graber, 2004).

Research that explicates a service orientation includes work on prosocial behaviour and altruism. Altruism and caring for others is not only key to the well-being of individuals, but also to humanity as a whole (Wong, 2012b). Prosocial behaviour suggests that "workers are motivated by making a positive difference in the lives of other people by promoting the welfare of others" (Pratt et al., 2013, p. 179). Research supports a positive relationship between strong altruistic or prosocial values and workers who seek positions that allow them to do good and help others (Pratt et al., 2013). Altruism and helping behaviour are strongly related to the experience of PA and PA to the experience of meaning (King & Hicks, 2012). McDonald et al. (2012) affirmed altruism as a significant source of meaning.

This suggested a positive relationship between altruism, helping others and the experience of meaning (King & Hicks, 2012; McDonald et al., 2012).

From the analysis, it became apparent that some of the LAEs are teaching for meaning, though with varying degrees. Teaching for meaning indicated their inherent belief that student success should be supported by the hidden curriculum in the classroom, suggesting that academic success was supported by personal meaning and commitment (Dansart, 1993).

To demonstrate these claims, a LAE participant expressed the meaning that he found in his work as follows:

I like to work with the first-year students because you can groom them from the start and say what are expected of them ... There is a little bit of counselling, but I also tell them that there is assistance and that they can pass. It is not that they must stay in their cocoons. To grow they must come out of their cocoons and believe in themselves. And all of them can become a human being with specific skills and knowledge (Participant 4, FGI, 18 June 2014).

Fundamentally, students go into HE to find meaning and purpose for their life and to determine what they are to be (Tate, Williams III & Harden, 2013). One of the central principles of logotherapy is the need for a certain amount of tension in an individual's life (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.8) (Frankl, 2006). Through teaching for meaning, the participant indirectly facilitated an opportunity for the students to set goals for themselves through informing them about the expectations of HE (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.8 on the role of goals in the search for meaning). This is tapping into the tension that students are experiencing in terms of their past experiences and future possibilities (Tate et al., 2013).

As a result of gaining a tertiary qualification, a new world of possibility and potential may await them with respect to career possibilities and social capital (Tate et al., 2013). Frankl referred to this healthy tension as noöynamics which are created through self-chosen worthy goals (Frankl, 2006) (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.8). According to logotherapy principles, "the best way to deal with the [tension] is to embrace it and struggle through it" (adapted from Tate et al., 2013, p. 84). Moreover, the participant's awareness of the students' tension and potential "struggle" was demonstrated when he drew on the metaphor of a cocoon that signifies the metamorphosis of a caterpillar to a butterfly. This transformation required the new butterfly to wrestle to get out of the cocoon and to make it push harder to free itself from the cocoon to make its wings stronger. The harder the "struggle", the more beautiful and stronger the wings become. The participant thus

acknowledged the tensions inherent to students' HE journey in preparation for what awaits them in the world of work and adulthood.

The participant also made the students aware that assistance is available to them. Tate et al. (2013) maintained that it is important to acknowledge that assistance is available whilst encouraging students to take responsibility for their own lives and endeavours, otherwise it can turn from productive to damaging (see Chapter 3, e.g. sections 3.7.1.1 and 3.7.5.1 on the role of responsibility in the search for meaning). In addition, the participant demonstrated another core logotherapy belief when he spoke about the uniqueness of every student and the potential they have to become what they ought to be (Frankl, 2006) (see Chapter 3, e.g. sections 3.6 and 3.7.1.2). This suggested appreciation for the potential of each student (see section 5.4.1.2 on appreciation).

“Logotherapy is ultimately education toward responsibility; that [people] must push toward the concrete meaning of [their] own existence” (Frankl, 2000; Graber, 2004, p.83). This implied that, when LAEs were teaching for meaning, students should become aware of their responsibilities (Graber, 2004).

Encouragement to take responsibility is illustrated in the following extract:

I have told [the students] that I would be growing them, grooming them, but that it is not my job to get them through. I have told them that I can teach them by using different ways of teaching ... but that it is their job to pass (Participant 4, FGI, 18 June 2014).

The participant encouraged the students to discover meaning through finding value in performing their duties (Shantall, 2002). Ultimately, LAEs cannot give meaning to their students (Frankl, 2000). “What they may give, however, is an example, the existential example of personal commitment to the search for the truth” (Frankl, 2000, p. 119). It is clear that some LAE participants found meaning in their work through teaching students for meaning. Teaching students for meaning finds itself in the domain of Frankl's creative values (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006). However, it is clear that higher purpose was implicit to teaching students for meaning because it also has an implication for society at large. As such, it had a transcendental quality.

The next sub-theme focuses on compassion and love for students as a source of meaning.

c Compassion and love for students

Another theme that emerged among all three groups of academic employees in one form or another was related to the compassion and love they felt for students and, to a lesser extent, the love received from students. The theme was the most prominent among LAE and HOD/DRR participants.

“In logotherapy, love is a central aspect of the meaning in life” (Schulenberg et al., 2010, p. 96). Although various types of love exist in the literature (e.g. familial, romantic, friendship, justice and knowledge, God, truth, beauty, etc.), the focus was on compassion and love in relation to students. Sprecher and Fehr (2005, p. 630) defined compassionate love as

an attitude toward other(s) either close others or strangers or all of humanity; containing feelings, cognitions, and behaviors that are focused on caring, concern, tenderness, and an orientation towards supporting, helping, and understanding the other(s), particularly when the others is (are) perceived to be suffering or in need.

The central features of all forms of love are trust, care, responsibility, honesty and understanding (Aron & Aron, 2012; Le, 2005). When love is combined with unselfishness, putting others first and sacrificing for others, compassionate love comes to the fore (Aron & Aron, 2012).

The phenomenon of compassionate love was demonstrated in the following quotations. It varied from supporting and helping students to graduate, to the more personal level where concern and care were expressed about the circumstances and realities of some of the students. It was also demonstrated in the additional steps that were taken, in some instances, to assist students:

... helping the students and making sure that they graduate and [that] they graduate in time without problems and we try to help them and assist them (Participant 3, FGI, 19 June 2014).

For me, it is to keep focus and to stay positive and that is sometimes very hard within this context to know that whatever I am fighting for is for the good of the students and, on a daily basis, I have to actually unfortunately do a lot of fighting (Participant 1, FGI, 19 June 2014).

... we want to give a service to the students and if they do not get money, they do

not get food, if they do not get money and we are trying to get [money] you know. If they do not get food, then they cannot concentrate in class. It is a service to the students and that is why we do it (Participant 4, FGI, 19 June 2014).

From a Franklian perspective, the participants actualised experiential value through grasping and appreciating the uniqueness of their students through their compassion and love for them (Frankl, 2006; Shantall, 2003) (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.2.2). The quotations from the participants are reminiscent of Frankl's view on people who rose to the challenge of enduring difficult situations as long as they believed that there was a point to their suffering because "having a Why to live for enabled them to bear the How", (Frankl, 2006, p. xi).

In this context, the fundamental agenda of love was a belief in the worth and/or potential of students that was not yet actualised but ought to be actualised and thus aimed to release the student from the HE system to realise that worth fully (Frankl, 2006; Shantall, 2003; also see section 5.4.1.2 on appreciation). It provided students with a means of becoming "Somebody", a person with an 'identity, a meaning for existence, a place in life, a worthwhile cause'" (Crumbaugh 1973, p. ix).

The former reflected altruistic behaviour. Compassion was fundamental to altruism and positive relationships (Wong, 2012a). "Compassion enables one to be willingly vulnerable in order to reach out to others" (Wong, 2012a, p. 15). This links to the Franklian concept of self-transcendence that belongs to the spiritual dimension that Frankl emphasised as a uniquely human capacity (Frankl, 1988; see Chapter 3, section 3.7.5.2). Love therefore was regarded as a striking manifestation of self-transcendence (Frankl, 1988).

A necessary aspect of love is the experience of love from others that is referred to as "perceived partner responsiveness" (Aron & Aron, 2012). Perceived partner responsiveness in the context of the lecturer-student dyad, is illustrated in the following extract:

For me, as long as my students are happy, I will do what the HEI expects of me, that is it. [Students] love to come and visit and, at the end, I think this is why I am at the HEI. This is why I am at the HEI. Forget about the parking, forget about the ... (Participant 2, DAG, 18 June 2014).

Compassionate love was regarded as a form of mature love (Sorokin as cited in Le, 2005). Mature love required cultivation and intent to move beyond a self-centred orientation to other foci and was thus independent rather than dependent on another and

connected to larger social networks (Le, 2005). For itself, mature or compassionate love(rs) “are less dependent on having their love reciprocated, and extend their love beyond family, community, or national boundaries” (Le, 2005, p. 74). Meaning ultimately remains “an expression of some degree of love in relationship to another Being” (Crumbaugh & Henrion, 2004, p. 32). “The more intensive and expansive the loving and being loved, the more the benefits (in some instances meaning)” (Aron & Aron, 2012, p. 188).

5.4.1.2 Appreciation received from students

Appreciation received from students was a strong theme that emerged among all three groups of participants. Appreciation received from colleagues was mentioned by only one participant. It became apparent that LAE participants also expressed appreciation towards their students. As such, appreciation can be regarded as an important source of meaning for academic employees. Notably, the theme was more prevalent among LAE and HOD participants than NLAE participants.

Adler and Fagley (2005, p. 81) defined appreciation as

acknowledging the value and meaning of something – an event, a person, a behaviour, an object – and feeling a positive emotional connection to it. Experiences of appreciation enhance positive mood and feelings of connection to the appreciated stimulus and/or to the nature of existence (i.e. in of a feeling of awe and wonder).

The definition depicts appreciation as having both affective and cognitive components (Fagley & Adler, 2012). Appreciative ability was defined as “the ability to perceive the positive inherent generative potential within the present’, by being able to envisage the ‘mighty oak in the acorn’” (Thatchenkery & Metzker as cited in Shein, Crous & Schepers, 2010, p. 2). This was about “the ability to envision, from what exists in the present, the realistic potential of the future” (Shein et al., 2010, p. 2).

The following quotation indicated a participant’s satisfaction (PA) experienced in relation to appreciation expressed by colleagues:

I get great satisfaction when seeing the positive, the positive impact of that and hearing it from the people [colleagues] that I assist (Participant 1, FGI, 14 May 2014).

Appreciation is a composite construct and gratitude is regarded as an aspect of

appreciation (Fagley & Adler, 2012). The next three quotations shared the joy (PA) experienced in relation to gratitude and appreciation expressed by students and the perceived motivational (reward) and compensating nature thereof.

...one thank you, or one positive thing you get from a student makes up for the hundreds of students who do not care... (Participant 3, DAG, 18 July 2014).

It is always nice when the students come back and tell me 'Ma'am I have found a job'. That is very rewarding and I get lots and lots of e-mails and phone calls and sometimes I do not remember their names, but as soon as they say 'how is the classes' you know it comes back (Participant 4, FGI, 19 July 2014).

You know, the nicest part of all of this is the feedback. After the marks were published, I heard them screaming and shouting ... they WhatsApp or phoned me to say 'Ma'am thanks, I got a B or D' and 'thank you for helping me' and the one guy said 'you know what, no other person in my life in SA (he is a Zimbabwean guy) treated me like you did'. Then I felt that I have done what I could for all of them and that is really nice (Participant 4, DAG, 18 July 2014).

The participants have made a difference in the students' lives and, in response, the students expressed their appreciation. It was clear that the rewards that the participants got from the gratitude and appreciation that they received from students and/or colleagues played a significant role in their experience of meaning (Kahn & Fellows, 2013). Organisational research reported an explicit relationship between rewards (extrinsic and intrinsic) and effort, motivation and job performance (Kahn & Fellows, 2013). Appreciation was regarded as an intrinsic reward since the participants felt recognised and valued by students and colleagues for the work that they had done (Kahn & Fellows, 2013). "A sense of appreciation enables [individuals] to discover what's valuable – in fact to create value – where others might not even notice it. It enriches people's lives ..." (Janoff-Bulman & Berger 2000 as cited in Fagley & Adler, 2012, p. 6). A sense of appreciation found itself in the domain of what Frankl referred to as experiential values that were about the benedictions of life (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.2.2).

An appreciative ability in a LAE participant was demonstrated in the following quotation:

I like interacting with my students and I get much satisfaction from them participating in class and engaging in discussions ... What I appreciate much in my students is to see that, at the end of the day, they have gained some confidence, that some of them took ownership of their responsibilities and that they really developed in all human aspects (Participant 1, FGI, 18 June 2014).

The quotation was rich in terms of the present and the realistic potential of the students' future as individuals who have developed in a holistic way (Shein et al., 2010). At its core, was compassionate love for students and the participant's ability to see the bigger picture. In effect, it spoke about Frankl's noöynamics, his contention about the tension in what students ought to accomplish in order to become somebody (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.8). In addition, another LAE participant demonstrated appreciative ability when she expressed feelings of privilege:

I am a lecturer and I am in front [of the class] and I do enjoy it ... The students, some of them are always grateful, positive and then a lot of them have so many problems. We do not know about some of them, if they will open up to you and say 'I have tried to commit suicide like last week' [sigh]. And then it is heart-breaking to think that I am so privileged and some of these people [students], their lives are miserable and I do not know what the solution is and I cannot give them a quick fix for their problems and that is depressing (Participant 2, DAG, 18 June 2014).

The participant referred to some students' appreciative ability when she mentioned their gratitude and positive demeanour. However, her appreciative functioning was activated when she compared her situation to those students with worse alternatives (Rusk, Vella-Brodrick & Waters, 2015). This links with the logotherapy technique of dereflection that is about the capacity to self-distance or detach to focus on something more constructive (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.1.2).

Concluding this theme, scholarly literature showed the ability to appreciate and a sense of being appreciated promote positive affect; encourage helping behaviour and interpersonal trust; cultivate more satisfying relationships; promote good quality sleep; and enhance coping with stress (Adler & Fagley, 2005; Fagley & Adler, 2012). Ultimately, it promoted well-being, but also played an important role in enhancing individuals' capacity to remain engaged and to build resilience to cope with challenges in the workplace (Fagley & Adler, 2012; Pattakos & Dundon, 2017). Fagley and Adler's (2012) work therefore supported the link between appreciation and the experience of meaning in work.

5.4.1.3 The freedom of choice

Choice was a strong theme that emerged among LAE and HOD participants. Logotherapy highlighted people's ability to make choices (freedom of will) however also to take responsibility for the choices that they have made (Schulenberg et al., 2010) (see Chapter 3, e.g. section 3.7.1.1). The quotation below illustrates where a participant referred to the

challenges of her jobs within the broader HE organisation while communicating her awareness that she had a choice in how she reacted to the challenges that she was experiencing and what it then suggested for task performance.

For me it is about job satisfaction. If someone is not happy with what they do in the eight hours that they are here, then they should not be here and my attitude is also no one forces anyone to be here. So you know, we have got to fix stuff, but we still have a choice. So if it is my choice to be here, I still have to be present and do what I have to do and, you know, get on with it. And if I do not want to be here then you know ... (Participant 1, FGI, 19 July 2014).

Based on Frankl's theory, the participant should be seen in relation to the meaning of her whole life or the tasks, duties and requirements of her life (Shantall, 2003) because "her freedom is seen as a freedom to responsibility. [Her] life is not [her] own. [Her] life [has] been given to [her] and will be required of [her]" (Shantall, 2003, p. 73). The participant did not use her challenging work circumstances (e.g. poor delivery by service departments, unproductive mentality, lack of work pride, etc.) as an excuse or justification to avoid what was required of her. Her contention reflected a conscious and self-responsible person who made a decision to perform her duty, based on her value system and her conscience, her sense of responsibility, "what ought to be done" (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.5.1) (Frankl, 2006; Shantall, 2003). Her reference to job satisfaction suggests that meaningful work has standards and aims that she cared about and what she carried out. This implied that the standards and aims have been satisfied therefore she experienced job satisfaction and discovered meaning in challenging work. This is also an illustration of how the participant dealt attitudinally with the challenges in her work (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.2.3).

The quotation from another participant emphasised that the "HE glass" can either be perceived as half empty or half full showing that academic employees have the opportunity to choose how they view any situation (Pattakos, 2004).

But, if you have to compare the apples and pears, I mean, it is difficult but still, if you do not want to be here, you could have resigned. And after all that, I still want to be here, it is very nice in a sense, but the negative parts are there (Participant 3, DAG, 18 June 2014).

The participant managed to shift her focus of attention to something else even though she communicated an awareness of the presence of what was perceived as negative. From a Franklian perspective, this is all about the capacity to deflect attention from the problem

situation to something else, hence, to build coping mechanisms for dealing with stress and change (Frankl, 2006; Pattakos & Dundon, 2017) (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.1.2).

Participants frequently referred to the “darkness” that they perceived in the HE organisation. One participant took a stance against the perceived “darkness” and challenged the other participants in terms of having a choice in the matter.

... not everyone sees the darkness, it is your choice.... The colour is dark so everything is not just bright, but the sun is shining on everyone. There is also other beautiful things to be noticed which are already part of our environment. These guys [students] are here to learn, the sun is shining on them as well. Yes, the sun is shining on everyone, but you [LAE participants] have a choice. That guy had a choice, he is not walking, he has a bicycle ... (Participant 1, DAG, 18 June 2014).

Once again, the ability to shift the focus of attention from the negative to the appreciation the beautiful (positive) things in the workplace was illustrated. The participant was referring to an earlier association about an employee who used a bicycle to get to work. The employee was perceived as someone who had made a constructive choice in terms of physical exercise as a way of coping with the stress that was associated with the challenges and negativities in the workplace.

Another participant indirectly spoke about making the choice to assist the students whom she perceived to be underprepared for HE when she mentioned her feeling of responsibility towards them:

What gives me meaning is that feeling of a little bit of responsibility towards my students ... like I should do something extra just to help them because they are not ready, they are not really university material when they enter the gates, maybe one out of a 100 is ready, so it gives me meaning to help them and to coach them a little bit and, obviously, also when you teach your subject and you can see that they have improved (Participant 6, FGI, 18 June 2014).

The participant experienced meaning through taking responsibility (see Chapter 3, sections 3.6 and 3.7) and showed compassion and love for her students in her willingness to walk the extra mile for them. She fulfilled meaning through being directed at and serving the other (students) and through witnessing their development. The aforementioned may be regarded as an intrinsic reward for the participant. The participant’s path to self-transcendence or serving the greater good was clear. Moreover,

it was obvious that the freedom to choose her attitude has created a different experience for the participant (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006; see Chapter 3, section 3.7.2.3).

5.4.1.4 Work is viewed as a calling

“Why people become academics can be assumed to be for different reasons, and these are likely to be somewhat context and time-specific, and be influenced by many factors” (Webbstock & Sehoole, 2016, p. 307). Although not always stated directly, participants’ love or passion for their work was another theme that strongly emerged. The following are two examples of how love for work had operated in different ways in the workplace.

The first quotation reflected a difficult time in a NLAE participant’s work history. It denoted a period of suffering that triggered questions about her purpose in the workplace:

... the question mark is where I have asked myself ‘why am I here’. So that is the question mark, asking myself what is the purpose of me being here and then I realised, the a-ha moment, I realised that it goes back to my heart, my passion for what I do (Participant 2, DAG, 14 May 2014).

A period of suffering created awareness in the participant regarding the love and passion that she had for her work. Frankl (2006) held that suffering is unavoidable, though individuals have a choice in how to cope and discover meaning in it (see Chapter 3; section 3.7.4). The participant’s awareness was facilitated when she asked higher purpose questions that suggested the “why” for her work (De Klerk, 2005). The realisation about the purpose and meaning that she found in her work helped her through. Meaning in work was not a luxury, but rather a source of inspiration that gave momentum to the participant (Pattakos & Dundon, 2017). In addition, an understanding of the why of her work may help the participant to manage stress and to build resilience (Frankl, 2006; Pattakos & Dundon, 2017).

Another LAE participant expressed the love for what she was doing as follows:

I love what I do. There is constant communication and some of the students make the class quite fun. It is a more relaxed environment where we play a little bit of music and there is always this interaction. Because we are constantly working with art we are always looking at students’ work and saying so what do you think about this and how can we improve and what can we do here to fix it. So, there is always engagement and the fun comes in when the other students comment on another student’s work (Participant 2, FGI, 18 June 2014).

The love that the participant expressed for her work was related to the communication and interaction between students and the “buzz” that it created, as well as the interaction between the students and herself, all within a creative and non-traditional classroom environment. Creative and experiential values were thus realised that culminated in a deep sense of meaning for the participant which was a joyful experience (PA).

The third example demonstrated a deep connection between a HOD participant and her role as teacher:

First of all, teaching is my life. I have always said that when I grew up I never wanted to be a teacher, anything but a teacher. My heart was on becoming a doctor, but teaching has grown on me and that is my life (Participant 2, DAG, 19 June 2014).

The participant also spoke about other opportunities that came up and the possibility of leaving the institution:

... but it is still close to my teaching, I do not think I could ever be divorced from the teaching thing (Participant 2, DAG, 19 June 2014).

Analysis and reflection revealed what may be referred to as a “life’s calling”. Although it appeared, at face value, to be a career or vocational calling, Wong (2011) explained that a calling “is not just about work and career – it is also how one responds to life and various situations”. Conceptualisations about a calling typically involve three elements, namely, that it has intrinsic value, that it involves helping others and it has a sense of destiny and/or moral duty (Pratt et al., 2013). The latter resonated with Frankl’s concept of will to meaning (see Chapter 3, sections 3.7.1.2) and is about individuals’ motivation to discover their unique callings (meanings) in life (Wong, 2011). This clearly speaks about the motivational component of meaning (see Chapter 3, section 3.6).

Fabry (1994 as cited in Wong, 2012b, p. 623) defined the call to meaning as life that “challenges individuals with demands to which they have to respond if they are to live a fulfilled life”. Therefore, “one’s primary concern is to discover and surrender to the call of meaning” (Fabry, 1994 as cited in Wong, 2012b, p. 623). Likewise, Dik and Duffy (2009, p. 427) defined calling as

a transcendent summons, originating beyond the self, to approach a particular life role in a manner oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and that holds other-orientated values and goals a primary motivation.

Frankl's concept of self-transcendence supported these scholars' views of calling (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.5.2). "The call [is] to devote one's life to serving others and to improve oneself in order to fulfil one's potential" (Wong, 2011). He also noted that "a specific sense of calling is to discover a special niche or life role that makes use of one's unique talents, temperament, and experiences" (Wong, 2011). Individuals' callings may change over their life span, depending on their development stage, station in life and the demands of each situation (Wong, 2011). This was clearly reflected in the quotation from the participant who spoke about new opportunities that suggested a "new calling".

5.4.1.5 Working in HE offers unique benefits

A strong theme that emerged among LAEs was about the perceived benefits they have because of working at the HE organisation. These benefits ranged from a flexible work environment and developmental opportunities, good salaries and research incomes, to paid holidays. Meaning in work has an unavoidable and explicit link with the rewards that employees get from their work (Kahn & Fellows, 2013).

From a phenomenological perspective (see Chapter 3, section 3.2),

work meaning lies in the eye of the beholder, it is an idiographic matter. Individuals may derive meaning from any number of different aspects of their work (e.g., opportunities for personal growth, self-expression, service to others); alternatively, they may view their work less in existential/intrinsic than utilitarian/extrinsic terms (e.g., as a source of pay rather than self-definition (Lent, 2013, p. 153).

The following is a quotation that expressed the participant's perceived value of the workplace benefits:

... the development opportunities that I have as an academic also gives meaning to my work environment and then I think all of us agree flexible working hours is important for a mother. So, in my instance, that also gives me meaning because I can organise my family life and my work environment and balance the two (Participant 5, FGI, 18 June 2014).

The participant derived meaning from two distinct sources that were (1) professional development, as well as (2) flexible work hours, specifically in the context of her role as a mother.

With respect to professional development, the participant felt that

I just think it is important as an academic to always develop yourself and if there is opportunities that the university offers to grab those opportunities, like me and ... we did our diploma in HE and that helps you a bit to get motivated and to feel that you can develop yourself and, in that way, you can also be a better lecturer to your students (Participant 5, FGI, 18 June 2014).

It suggested that the participant's work challenged her to an extent that she was motivated enough to develop her skills, deepen her knowledge and learn new behaviours that resulted in expanded repertoires of knowledge and skills (Kahn & Fellows, 2013). SA research (Webbstock & Sehoole, 2016, p. 303) confirmed that SAHE organisations "offer many opportunities for the professional development of its academic staff". Ironically, research also indicated that "there tends to be a lack of coherence, and often little sense of purpose, in such offerings and therefore a low uptake of professional development opportunities [by LAEs], despite incentives and rewards" (Webbstock & Sehoole, 2016, p. 303). From a Franklian perspective, professional development can be seen as a creative value-add (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.2.1). Ultimately, the meaning is to be found in the challenge, since it "allows [individuals] to grow in ways that [they] have not yet grown. It calls on [them] to use a different part of [themselves] in the way that a new sport calls on both familiar and unfamiliar movements" (Kahn & Fellows, 2013, p. 113).

The participant derived meaning from her work environment since it enabled her to actualise values in, for example, the family context. This denoted meaning in the domain of Frankl's experiential values (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.2.2), resulting in an experience of work-family (life) balance. Family and work are the most important domains for many adults (Whitehead & Kotze, 2003, p. 77) (see Chapter 6, section 6.5.2, Table 6.2 for the developmental tasks of adulthood) because "[a] sense of balance concerns the choices [that individuals] make between the time [they] spend at paid work, unpaid work (work at home, with family, as a volunteer), and pleasurable pursuits" (Chalofsky, 2010, p. 22). Life balance (time, involvement and satisfaction in various roles) is a fluid state and work-life balance balance will thus vary over time (Chalofsky, 2010). At the core of work-life balance is a sense of purpose and meaning that is flexible enough to adapt to changing needs and conditions (Chalofsky, 2010). Ultimately, "[m]eaningful work requires interplay of all these elements and they all come together in the term, *integrated wholeness*" (Chalofsky, 2010, p. 23). This emphasised the composite and multifaceted nature of a phenomenon like meaning in life and work.

Elaborating on work benefits, the next quotation emphasised the importance of vacation leave:

... the flexi time, it is a nice job, I do have a kid now, and it is nice to know that you have holidays and you getting paid for it. That is a positive thing, an advantage. We are very privileged to have it since I have been in the corporate world and when you come from there you will know that this is a very nice job ... (Participant 3, DAG, 18 June 2014).

The participant also valued flexible work hours since she had a child to take care of. A work benefit like vacation leave made time away from work possible without financial worries. Paid vacation leave may indirectly contribute to meaningful work because it allows for meaningful experiences in the personal and/or familial contexts, such as going on holiday with loved ones and, for example, to experience the wonders of nature. This denoted meaning in the domain of Frankl's experiential values (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.2.2). Moreover, it was noted that the participant's appreciative functioning was activated when she spoke about privilege as a result of comparing her work at the HE organisation as more favourable than the work she previously had in a corporate environment (Rusk et al., 2015) (see section 5.4.1.2).

The next quotation illuminated the value of money or remuneration:

I put the clock with the smiley face because one of the reasons that I am working here is the flexibility and all of that is just really nice and then I put some money because the money is not bad and if you are doing research and whatever, all the money that comes in from there is very good ... (Participant 2, DAG, 18 June 2014).

The participant emphasised that the faculty that she was based in did not expect LAEs to be at work and in their offices when not engaged in the classroom or in a meeting. The participant indicated that she was in a position to do a lot of work from home, thus enjoying and appreciating the flexibility of her work environment. She also referred to a good salary and the extra income that she was able to generate from doing research and participating in an event like the Rector's Award for Teaching Excellence (RATE). This implied that the HE work environment offered various opportunities to supplement a good salary with income from other sources while being cognisant of the additional pressures that it may bring. A recent study by HESA (Webbstock & Sehoole, 2016) asserted that permanent senior academic staff are generally reasonably well paid, however, their positions were more difficult due to the pressure of more demands like producing more research and teaching a student cohort with diverse levels of preparedness.

Since people assign different uses and meanings to money, the Franklian perspective left

it to the participants “to decide what is meaningful and what is not, or, for that matter, what is good and what is bad” (Frankl, 2000, p. 122). Therefore, the following deliberation “is not a value judgement of facts but rather factual statements about values” (Frankl, 2000, p. 122). Frankl (1988, 2000) warned about the will to money as a form of the will to power (position and status) and thus preventing the recognition of an underlying existential vacuum. “Once the will to money takes over, the pursuit of meaning is replaced by the pursuit of means. Money, instead of remaining a means, becomes an end. It ceases to serve a purpose” (Frankl, 1988, p. 96). Once individuals’ will to meaning was reawakened and meaning begun to dawn, any over concern with money (which is the mere means to an end rather than the end itself) might have subsided (Frankl, 2000). For itself, meaning in relation to the value of money remained in the eye of the beholder.

5.4.1.6 Meaning beyond the meaning in the moment

Frequent references to meaning beyond the meaning in the moment or ultimate meaning were made (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.6). It manifested when LAE participants spoke about a perceived battle between good and evil in the HE organisation. The moderator noted that

I am very aware of the theme that has been going through, the comments and the balance through the dark side with the badness and the goodness and it reminds me of the battle between good and evil (Moderator, DAG, 18 June 2014).

Meaning beyond the meaning in the moment also emerged when LAE participants spoke about God, within the context of the HE organisation, but also beyond it. The following are quotations that demonstrated some of the participants’ awareness of a Higher Being and the perceived battle between good (light) and evil (darkness) in the HE organisation.

The participant in the quotation to follow mentioned that she was initially advised by family members not to take a position at the HE organisation since it was perceived by the surrounding community as a dangerous place. Despite the advice, she decided to accept the position:

I just took a leap of faith when I came here and this is what I do every day, I ask God to protect me. That is the only way I can come here (Participant 4, DAG, 18 June 2014).

By praying for protection, the participant was “professing [her] belief in God” and she thus

“positions herself in historical and cultural systems that are resources of meaning for her” (O’Connor & Chamberlain, 2000, p. 83) that signalled a theological context for meaning in work (O’Connor & Chamberlain, 2000).

The quotation from the next participant reflected a stressful and potentially traumatic time in the HE organisation’s life cycle and history:

... at this place [referring to the HE organisation] we have been praying. There were dark times at the university ... we were hunted and there were cameras and your phone was tapped ... the only way that most of the people here could live day-to-day was to pray. There were people praying on the stoeps [in the corridors] and it was sort of a community effort against this evilness and it took time to get rid of the evil ... prayers were answered and miracles happened ... (Participant 1, DAG, 18 June 2014).

The above suggested a time of organisational suffering (cf. Driver, 2007), resulting in a call for communal action and responsibility (Shantall, 2003). From the quotation, it appeared as if active compassion flowed which united the employees in the HE organisation in their fight against the perceived evil (Shantall, 2003). Frankl (1977 as cited in Shantall, 2003, p. 77) believed that “[t]here is hope for survival only if mankind is united by a common will to common meaning”. It also implied that the power of good was released through positive action, e.g. employees responding to the call and communal prayer in the corridors (Shantall, 2003). The participant’s reference to answered prayers and miracles that happened suggested that the HE organisation’s employees “could take up their lives again as a statement that what they stood for, was not and could not be destroyed” (Shantall, 2003, p. 152) (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.6). This denoted a transition from the psyche to the spiritual dimension. It required existential commitment rather than intellectual cognition that implied that individuals took a stand and made choices (Graber, 2004). This contention found itself in the domain of Frankl’s attitudinal values (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.2.3):

I did not draw any of the darkness and all those things because I am looking at the cross and Jesus’ love for me and that must keep me up because if I do not look at that I go down the drain. (Participant 4, DAG, 18 June 2014).

In the participant’s comment about ultimate meaning, she illuminated God’s love as a nourishing source that kept her going (hopeful) and that helped her to surpass the perceived darkness in the HE organisation. This clearly indicated a need to balance the nourishment of various selves (mental, physical, emotional and spiritual) in the less-than-

ideal-and-free world (Chalofsky, 2010; cf. Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).

5.4.1.7 Making a difference in staff's lives

HODs and DRRs have multiple tasks. They are expected to implement and drive contemporary HE organisations' triple mission of teaching and learning, research and community engagement (Webbstock & Sehoole, 2016). The HOD and DRR participants perceived the growth and development of the staff that reported to them as important. More specifically, a strong theme of making a difference in staff's lives emerged as a source of meaning among HODs and DRRs. For example,

... and the other part is the staff and the satisfaction to see my staff grow and that is what keeps me earthed (Participant 1, FGI, 19 June 2014).

The quotation was about the participant's satisfaction (PA) to see her staff develop in the professional context that implied joy about the developmental accomplishments of her staff. Research has identified career achievement as a major source of meaning (McDonald et al., 2012). This clearly suggested meaning in the domain of Frankl's creative values. Moreover, the participant illuminated her staff's development as a grounding experience when she mentioned that it kept her earthed. It spoke about the capacity to be awed by their development and it also spoke about the ability to appreciate (see section 5.4.1.2). The capacity to be awed by experiences found itself in the domain of spiritual values (see Chapter 3, section 3.4, Table 3.1). Similarly,

... interaction with them [staff] and watching them develop and grow and assisting those who need assistance (Participant 2, FGI, 19 June 2014).

The participant highlighted interaction with staff, supporting them and witnessing their development and growth as a source of meaning.

Since academic employees play a key role in achieving HE organisations' triple mission, qualified and vocationally driven LAEs have become a valuable resource for HE organisations (Webbstock & Sehoole, 2016). This is reflected in the following quotation:

... the staff, to see how they grow and how they develop, to take them through their own studies and assisting them in making time available for them to do their studies and to do their research and [to] put that [research] into knowledge, new knowledge and get that out into the market, to write those articles and to study those articles, but most of all, I enjoy seeing my staff grow (Participant 3, FGI, 19 June 2014).

It was clear that HODs and DRRs derived meaning not from only witnessing the development of their staff component, but also when they supported their staff whilst in the process of improving their qualifications and when they produced publishable research. It was obvious that they made a difference in their staff's lives through serving them (see section 5.4.1.1 (b)). However, publishable research also denoted significance and making contribution to and possibly a difference in the broader scholarly environment. This suggested a value-add in the domain of Frankl's creative values (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).

The following includes discussions on the themes and sub-themes (sources) of meaning frustration.

5.4.2 Meaning frustration

The themes of meaning frustration will include discussions on the sources of meaning frustration that were: negative affect (NA) as an indicator of meaning frustration; concern about HE change outcomes and purpose; students' unfulfilled basic needs; LAEs as a container for the prevailing negativity in the HE organisation; silo functioning and impaired inter-personal and inter-disciplinary relationships; high administration loads and poor service delivery; pressure of qualification improvement, academic competition and professional envy/jealously; positivity as a defence against negativity; and a seeming lack of support from leadership.

5.4.2.1 Negative emotions as an indicator of meaning frustration

Negative emotions emerged as a strong theme among all three groups of participants, however, more so among LAE and HOD participants. It was clear though that it was the strongest theme among LAE participants. Hence, every HE organisation

is an emotional place because it is human intervention, serving human purposes and dependent on human beings to function. And human beings are emotional animals; subject to anger, fear, surprise, disgust, happiness, or joy, ease and unease (Armstrong, 2007, p. 11).

That is why the flow of feelings and thought in action was tangible during the data collection process. The following are three quotations that give an indication of some of the emotions encountered.

... when I entered the university, there was a lot of hope, whatsoever and maybe using the brown colour to symbolise the feeling of hopelessness that things never

change, the things that I once anticipated never happened. And somehow, I also used different colours to express different feelings, different conflicting feelings and it is like [the HE organisation] is evaporating into the clouds and basically we were left with nothing ... as much as the sun is full, it is full [of] sunshine [participant showing with her hands a full circle] now it is overshadowed by the moon, hopelessness, despair, confusion (Participant 3, DAG, 14 May 2014).

That is why I have the crying and the frustrated face and the happy face, because I experience these emotions all in one day. Sometimes, you know, it is just like your walk into this campus and I do not have a parking space and then I must fight with the security guard to allow me to park and that is frustration. And then it is like, really, I just want to come here and do my work and for my students, but they are not letting me do this ... (Participant 2, DAG, 18 June 2014).

... you draw triangles and the triangles itself are very angst because of the core and you echo those images even in the negative circle, negative space, which you left without any colour. So that perpetuates feelings of angst, as you say, the darkness and the mirroring and when you mirror something you kind of amplify whatever it is. So whatever angst you feel in terms of the anxiety or negativity, it is amplified in more than one way ... that cross is exactly where your anger is. Not right here in the sideways entering, or the end, it is just from the middle (Participant 4, DAG, 19 June 2014).

The emotional themes that emerged during the data collection and analysis processes were about the feelings that the participants expressed in terms of their frustration, anger, blame, negativity, resentment, danger, anxiety, uncertainty, confusion, disappointment, boredom, emptiness, hopelessness, sadness and jealousy which are collectively referred to as “the negativity”. When exploring academic employees’ meaning in work, emotions, experiences, perceptions, observations and stories about the HE organisation demanded attention (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009). These emotions may be fundamental to the participants’ frustration of will to meaning in work (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009). In support, Steger (2012, p. 173) explained that “at a basic level of psychological distress is the experience of negative affect and emotions. Research indicates that meaning in life is inversely related to negative affect and emotions”.

The following theme shows concern about HE change outcomes and purpose.

5.4.2.2 Concern about HE change outcomes and purpose

HOD/DRR participants expressed their concern about HE change outcomes and

questioned the purpose of HE. Illustrating this contention, the following is an extract from their DAG (19 June 2014).

A participant made an association with respect to the phenomenon of globalisation and communicated her awareness that the world is much bigger than the immediate world of the HE organisation:

Yes you know, how do we fit into a world out there and it is not just a world out there, it is a global world. It is not just [a world] to an outside [HE organisation] (Participant 4).

The participant's awareness reflects the vastness of the globalisation experience (e.g. see Chapter 2, section 2.2.1). Another participant then brought up the phenomenon of mass education and his view of it:

Could I add to that? You know, when I spoke about the wall just now [referring to his own drawing] you guys said 'O, Pink Floyd'. Now when you look at the video clip on Yahoo for 'Another brick in the wall' from Pink Floyd, it talks about what I wrote in my teaching philosophy many years ago when I said that 'the university has become a machine and students are just fitting into a mould and as long as you comply to that mould you will be graduated. But if you do not comply – thou shalt not be graduated'. So, those graduates coming out with no features [referring to the students in the drawing] indicate that they have lost their individuality and have become the mould fitting the mould of the university (Participant 1).

The participant compared the contemporary university to a production machine with the output "students who have complied with the form of the machine". His view is reminiscent of what Frankl called conformism and totalitarianism (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.3). In either case, freedom, value and purpose are lost (Graber, 2004). This suggests a loss of meaning with respect to the freedom, value and purpose that was traditionally associated with HE with clear implications for the HE organisation's identity. Mapesela and Hay (2005) associated the perceived loss of purpose with the HE policy overload (see Chapter 2, section 2.5). Diamond and Allcorn (2009) asserted that organisational identity comes under attack in a world of constant change. Change is for example effected through policies, mergers and right-sizing (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009). Mapesela and Hay (2005) hypothesised that the aforementioned changes may pose a threat to academics' job satisfaction.

The comparison of the university to a production machine related to another participant's view on the purpose of education and how a phenomenon like mass education may defeat that purpose:

And it is defeating the whole idea of education. I mean education is there to open our eyes and our ears and our minds and education here is obviously taking it away (Participant 3).

The association suggests that mass education (in its current form in SA), is refuting the intended purpose of education. The loss of purpose, as perceived by the participant, is supported by Altbach's (2013) view on the negative outcomes of massification (see Chapter 2, section 2.2.2). Purpose goals are higher-level goals and suggest the "why" for a certain behaviour (De Klerk, 2005). Meaning is related to higher level goals (De Klerk, 2005). The participant thus indirectly asked the existential question whether their work truly matters and if they are making a difference, to themselves, for others and the SA society at large (Pattakos & Dundon, 2017). Questioning their experience of purpose and significance with respect to work points to an underlying frustration of meaning or even meaninglessness in the domain of Frankl's creative values. It may also point to the loss of the transcendental characteristic of HE.

The associations then moved to linking mass education to mass production:

And one also sees the two levels that you speak of graduation, the kind of complete separation of the figures who come in and the figures who graduate. There is this kind of factory mentality, that kind of conveyor belt thing ... You can tell that 'the education' is opposed to those ones who are still airy fairy coming in with ideas of Zuma rights and anything else. What is scary are those kids coming in, looking like little Zuma's with their shower caps. That is scary ... they have no features at all and so one wonders about what they are actually leaving with ... (Participant 4, DAG, 19 June 2014).

It is clear that the contemporary SAHE organisation is portrayed as a "production factory" where the worth of the "product" is questioned (e.g. "made in China?"). In this regard, Purkey and Siegel (2013) described six characteristics of the philosophy that underpins the "efficient factory" or the "production factory". The characteristics are: mass production; uniform product; cost effectiveness; technology; centralised control; and workers as functionaries. According to Purkey and Siegel (2013), the focus in the "efficient factory" is on quantity; minimum standards of quality; sameness; a high level of monitoring to ensure maximum production; a high priority on cost effectiveness; the factory may often be

surrounded by fences and have gates with guards on duty around the clock; technological advances are greatly valued and are introduced as quickly as possible; authority flows from the top down; workers are expected to be punctual, obedient, conforming and busy; and workers' schedules are regulated in various ways. Although these scholars believed the characteristics to be suggestive of the "efficient factory", they pointed out that it should not be regarded as comprehensive or universal (Purkey & Siegel, 2013).

Purkey and Siegel's (2013) view of the "efficient factory" resonates with Meyer et al.'s (2011) contention that the commercialisation of HE is overtaking the need for quality provision, the erosion of traditional values, intellectual character and critical thinking of university life (see Chapter 2, section 2.2). When the participant spoke about the incoming students, the participant made an indirect referral to the widespread perception and frustration with the failure of the secondary school system that leaves learners underprepared for HE. It is widely agreed though that the failure of the system has undesirable implications and outcomes for both HE and society at large (Webbstock & Fisher, 2016). These scholars offered support for the concern expressed by the HODs (Purkey & Siegel, 2013; Webbstock & Fisher, 2016). HE is value orientated (cf. Falk, 1967; Meyer et al., 2011) (see Chapter 2, section 2.4). The perceived loss of values and purpose in HE is apparent and suggests meaning frustration in Frankl's domain of creative values.

In addition, the association suggests disagreement and potential conflict between "the education" as perceived by the participants and what is regarded as the "Zuma education". In this regard, Webbstock and Fisher (2016, p. 41) asserted that

the output of [HE] is not meeting the country's needs ... the system has low internal efficiency in utilising human and material resources (and consequently does not provide a firm basis for growth) and ... the scale of the failure and dropout occurring within a small and selected student body points to substantial systemic problems that requires systemic responses.

Webbstock and Fisher's (2016) view supports the participants' awareness that the output of HE is not meeting the country's needs. It mirrors the participants' concern and dissatisfaction (NA) about the outcome of HE. Purkey and Siegel (2013) argued that the outcome of the "efficient factory" organisation is to typically produce masses of goods, much of it on standard and some of it substandard. Nevertheless, the HOD participants' dissatisfaction (NA) points to frustration of meaning in work in the domain of Frankl's creative values, not only on the individual and organisational levels, but also with respect

to the broader HE sector.

5.4.2.3 Students' unfulfilled basic needs

The analysis revealed students' unfulfilled basic needs as a key source of meaning frustration among all three groups of participants. Students' socio-economic challenges was a theme that emerged as a source of concern and frustration among NLAE and LAE participants, though much stronger among LAE participants. LAE participants consistently spoke about students' food insecurities and their physical hunger, and how it affects their ability to concentrate and learn. Poverty in SA is widespread and its negative impact well documented. It is also an inescapable reality for a significant number of contemporary students (Letseka & Breier, 2012).

The following are associations that describe a few of the challenges that students are facing:

... it is the sad side, sometimes you see students you know, they come to your class, they cannot concentrate and then I ask what is wrong and then some of them will tell you that the person has not eaten for two or three days and [that] they are drinking water in the morning just so that they can fill their stomachs, so that they can just not feel hungry ... So there is something that needs to be done about the hunger issue on this campus ... (Participant 4, DAG, 18 June 2014).

... the students do not have food to eat and they are supposed to read. So how are you able to read whilst you are hungry? Psychologically they have problems at home, or they were in an accident, they are traumatised, but they are supposed to read. 'How everything is going to get in if they are traumatised, if they are still thinking about the incident that happened earlier?' That incident is still affecting [their] well-being. [They] cannot concentrate on academic things ... (Participant 3, FGI, 14 May 2014).

We do not always realise the problems that our students have. For us [LAEs] that is a really big problem and we are all complaining about it, but the students really have problems, really. It affects them a lot and then we think they are lethargic and they do not want to be here and that they have an attitude, but it is really for them just to be here, almost, ja [yes], because they have transport and social issues (Participant 6, FGI, 18 June 2014).

The associations highlighted some of the challenges that students may experience in the area of basic needs. Research identified meeting basic needs like food, shelter and safety

as a major source of meaning (McDonald et al., 2012). Students' frustration in this area is clear. Since LAEs are the first line and, for many students, the only point of contact with the HE organisation, they may be the first to know of students' need for food, shelter, etc. which may explain their high level of awareness regarding the matter.

The participant in the third association suggested that the students' problems or meaning frustration in the area of basic needs affected their (LAEs') perceptions of students negatively that resulted in unhappiness and complaints among LAEs. This suggests the contact with needy students may be an unsettling experience for some LAEs.

Another theme emerged among some LAE participants with respect to students' unfulfilled basic needs. It was about the frustration they have experienced regarding certain colleagues who they perceived as unfeeling towards needy students, for example,

... something needs to be done about the hunger issue on this campus. I see the other people [colleagues], when students come to them they are like 'just buzz off' or 'ag, they are lying'. They [students] are really hungry (Participant 4, DAG, 18 June 2014).

What breaks my heart is that I cannot do something significant. You can help one [student] but it is still just one or two and that breaks my heart. And what breaks my heart even more and I am going to shock you, but there are some people [LAEs] here who have no sympathy with a student who cannot concentrate. They do not understand the background or the environment of that student. They only look at their own little world, where they come from and that is what breaks my heart and that is really sad for me (Participant 1, DAG, 18 June 2014).

Obvious meaning frustration was expressed by the second participant when he stated that he cannot do something of significance in the area of students' unfulfilled basic needs. This points to meaning frustration with respect to the participant's need to be able to better the lives of poor students and suggests a loss of personal value, esteem and significance. Self-esteem plays a significant role in helping individuals to believe that they are valuable and worthy individuals (Rosso et al., 2010). Reference to his broken heart implied the experience of sadness and pain. NA is linked with meaning frustration (Steger, 2012). It suggested that some LAE participants were prevented from actualising higher values (e.g. compassionate love for students, care, etc.). More specifically, it is about LAEs' concern about and care for poor students and wanting to help those in need (see section 5.4.1(c)). Meaning frustration in this area finds itself in the domain of Frankl's (1988, 2000, 2006) experiential values.

The students' hunger issue has implications for the function of teaching and learning, more specifically, student performance. This suggests that students' food insecurities posed a threat to LAEs' performance in the classroom, because hungry students would not be able to concentrate in and out of class. This is a factor beyond LAEs' control and escalated by the significant number of students who are underprepared for HE (see Chapter 2). Research has shown the need for career achievement as a major source of meaning for some (McDonald et al., 2012). Interaction with hungry students appeared to have impacted some LAE participants' emotional life negatively (e.g. emotional themes of sadness, frustration, helplessness and depression). Research supports a positive relationship between NA and frustration of meaning (cf. Martinez & Flórez, 2014; Steger, 2012). Meaning frustration in these areas falls within the domains of Frankl's (1988, 2000, 2006) creative and experiential values.

Paradoxically, what may appear to be some LAEs' unfeeling and uncaring stance towards needy students may, in actual fact, be a defensive response against high levels of anxiety and helplessness in relation to an overwhelming and unresolved poverty dilemma that is deeply engrained in the macro SA political and socio-economic context. On an organisational level, it may suggest that the demand for poverty alleviation (including food insecurities) among needy students may be much higher than anticipated. Concern about and wanting to help students without the backing of sustainable solutions to address high levels of poverty in the SA society, including HE, clearly generates frustration and a sense of helplessness in LAE participants. An explicit plea was uttered by LAE participants to address the hunger issue on campus. This signals meaning frustration in the domain of Frankl's (1988, 2000, 2006) experiential values.

5.4.2.4 LAEs as a container for the prevailing negativity in the HE organisation

LAE and some NLAE participants' negative connotations and feelings in relation to the architectural design of the HE organisation were a prominent theme that emerged. When they explained their experience in their work role, they did so in relation to the physical building. It thus created the impression that they have projected their negative feelings onto the building to contain or hold it for them.

Containment is a powerful, active and interactive process (Lanman, 1998; Miller-pietroni, 1999). It is about the capacity of one individual (or a group of individuals) to act as a container or holding zone for the emotions of another individual or groups of individuals (e.g. colleagues, students, HODs, or other individuals/groups within the HE organisation and even the broader HE sector), when bad feelings are evacuated and projected outside

the self onto someone (or something) else (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009). Essentially, it is about shedding and projecting what is felt to be damaged, uncomfortable, frightening or unwanted for psychosomatic containment inside others (Miller-pietroni, 1999). The process involves both conscious and unconscious aspects of relating to someone (Lanman, 1998).

LAEs used terms like negative, cold, hard, loveless, filthy, smelly, stinky, ugly, governmental, modernist, fascist, criminal and patriarchal in their descriptions of their experience in their work roles within the HE organisation. These terms suggest strong NA which is linked with meaning frustration (Steger, 2012).

The following are some examples of such descriptions:

The block with the windows, that is the [HE organisation]. I drew it last because I did not know whether I should include it in my drawing and I purposefully drew it black, because it symbolises the strong negative feelings that I attach to the institution (Participant 3, DAG, 14 May 2014).

... would you really come to a building every single day and it is grey, it is ugly, it is filthy, it is smelly, it is stinky ... and it is really an ugly environment for anyone to study, forget about teaching ... If the environment changes, the mentality and the attitude will change, but if that does not change it is like wearing a grubby old cloth every day, we do not want to work like that (Participant 2, FGI, 18 June 2014).

The architecture of the building is cold, it is... hard is eintlik die woord [hard is the actual word] ... it is hard. You know the word hard? Dit is nie liefdevol nie [It does not show love] (Participant 1, DAG, 18 June 2014).

... the second picture there on the top is the building. My feeling of this institution is that it is a cold, dark, hard and filthy place Sorry I am not allowed to say that. It is filthy and dark, the sun is trying to shine but it is battling. The sun is very unhappy, not like yours, it is now contradicting your picture. We have trees but it is still dull, I feel it is dull and filthy (Participant 3, 18 June 2014).

The participants clearly spoke about work experiences that were less than satisfactory and that triggered strong NA. French (2001) and Viljoen and Rothmann (2002) asserted that the generation of painful experiences and NA during organisational change was not uncommon (see Chapter 2, section 2.5). The above associations reflected descriptions that are reminiscent of the conditions of an existential vacuum, a barren experience

(Crumbaugh & Maholic, 1969) (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.3). Darkness in the work experience speaks of the absence of existential meaning (Meerwijk & Weiss, 2011).

Frankl explained that the loss of meaning was related to intense mental pain (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006) (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.4; also see Chapter 2, section 2.5). Common across definitions of mental pain is the experience of unpleasant feeling such as NA or suffering (Meerwijk & Weiss, 2011; Steger, 2012). Loss is a major cause for suffering (Graber, 2004; Meerwijk & Weiss, 2011) (see Chapter 1, section 1.2.4). The mere analysis of the abovementioned associations revealed various losses such as loss of an aesthetically appealing work environment, loss of a clean work environment, loss of dignity, loss of care (softness and warmth), loss of happiness and loss of a pain-free existence. The participants' loss experience is supported by the assertion that loss has become "constitutive of current academic identity" (Bundy, 2005, p. 89). This suggests that the participants' intense emotional experiences may be reminiscent of the processes of change, loss and mourning as described by Kübler-Ross (see Chapter 2, section 2.5). Kübler-Ross and Kessler (2005) delineated the stages of loss in terms of emotional descriptors that are: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. The LAEs' intense NA created the impression that they may have found themselves in the anger stage. Kübler-Ross and Kessler (2005) noted that anger is not necessary logic or valid, though a natural reaction to the unfairness of loss.

Consequently, the moderator made the following thematic association in relation to the LEA participants' associations, reflecting the intensity of their experiences:

When I am listening to the associations you are making on the drawing there is more. This reminds me of a sighting from a horror movie ... (Moderator, DAG, 18 June 2014).

The participants' descriptions and the moderator's reflection mirrored the literature on contemporary HE as a "powerful discourse of crisis, loss, damage, contamination and decay" (Bundy, 2005, p. 89) (see Chapter 2, section 2.5).

Both the FGIs and DAGs with the LAE participants created the impression of purging or "vomiting" sessions. This suggested that it was an opportunity for them to verbalise their strong negative feelings in relation to their work experiences. It implied that LAEs, as a group, may be containing or holding a lot of the prevailing negativity in the HE organisation. They may be inundated with negativity and therefore it was important for them to make use of the opportunity to get rid of what may be regarded as toxic and what has the potential to make them sick. Notably, prior to the study, the researcher had also

encountered this phenomenon in her role as a manager when she met with groups of LAEs and/or HODs in the HE organisational system. Her experience with working with academics in the HE organisation was the impetus for her to pursue the study.

The mechanisms and processes that facilitate the container/contained phenomenon are splitting, projection and projective identification. Since these mechanisms are not the focus of the study, they will not be discussed in detail (cf. Hinshelwood, 2009; McRae & Short, 2010). The aforementioned are known as the “primitive mechanisms of defence” and tend to have an interpersonal aim of influencing the “other” who will then tend to respond in role (Hinshelwood, 2009). Fundamentally, it is “to rid the self of anxiety related to shameful, negative aspects of the self [and/or collective self]” (adapted from McRae & Short, 2010, p. 60).

So, during the FGI and DAG sessions, the majority of LAEs rid themselves of the negativity. From a clinical perspective and drawing from the phenomenon of bulimia nervosa, it suggests that LAEs have experienced periods of rapid and uncontrollable consumption of large amounts of negativity (e.g. resulting from changes in HE and their HE organisation, an overload of new policies, policy implementation failure, etc.) (see Chapter 2) than most persons in similar circumstances and that they have become “excessively full” (Cutler & Marcus, 1999; Kaplan & Sadock, 2003; Sue, Sue & Sue, 1994). The negativity that prevailed in the LAEs’ FGI and DAG sessions may have been their attempt to rid themselves of it.

The compensatory behaviour of “vomiting out all the negativity, destructiveness, and/or badness” that they may hold on behalf of the HE organisation and HE sector (see Chapter 2), suggest that LAE participants, as a group, have been aware that their overconsumption of negativity is not healthy for them (Cutler & Marcus, 1999; Kaplan & Sadock, 2003; Sue et al., 1994). It was also noted in the FGI and DAG sessions and again during the data analysis process that LAE participants were frustrated and angry. From a clinical perspective, it implies that some LAEs may be at risk of suffering from feelings of being out of control, low self-esteem, feelings of inadequacy and low sense of personal effectiveness (self-efficacy) due to the changes in the HE organisation and landscape (Kaplan & Sadock, 2003; Sue et al., 1994). They may be at risk of developing psychological difficulties (e.g. guilt, depression symptoms, substance abuse and dependence, emotional lability, etc.) over time (Kaplan & Sadock, 2003; Sue et al., 1994).

From a family systems’ perspective, the family (e.g. members of the HE organisation system) of those LAEs who suffer from “HE – bulimia nervosa” may have increased

familial depression (e.g. departments and faculties suffering from symptoms or episodes of depression), are generally less close and more conflictual (e.g. increased conflict between members/groups within the HE organisation), with perceived neglectful and rejecting parents (e.g. HE organisation executive and/or senior management) (Kaplan & Sadock, 2003).

Notably, despite the concrete reality of the architectural design of the HE organisation, drawing as a data collection tool created an opportunity for the LAE participants to project (purge) their feelings onto the HE organisation as a physical entity. Such externalisations, in the form of projections onto the building, are an effective psychological mechanism in relocating bad feelings and toxic emotions (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009).

When comparing the LAE participants' drawings as a group with the NLAE participants' drawings as a group, it was apparent that the NLEA participants created drawings that resembled lifecycles as a means of working with their emotions, ranging and moving from the negative and feelings of hopelessness and despair, to more positive emotions like hope and new beginnings. The drawings that emerged among HODs/DRRs as a group were individualised and self-reflective, however, self-reflection took place in relation to the HE organisation, their headship, their history in the HE organisation, changes in the HE sector and in terms of exploring and considering opportunities outside the immediate boundaries of the HE organisation.

Analysis thus revealed that both the NLAE and HOD/DRR participant groups attempted to work with their emotions during the DAG sessions in order to come to some personal resolution in relation to their experience in their work role. In contrast, although LAE participants managed to get rid of their negative emotions, no apparent emotional work was done, except for excessive complaining (purging) in an overtly negative way. Sporadic and/or frequent episodes of purging may bring only temporary relieve from negative feelings for LAEs, especially when taking into consideration the ongoing and escalating pressures that the HE sector and HE organisation exert on them. Complaining is suggestive of burdens, grief and worries (Pattakos & Dundon, 2017). Frequency, duration and intensity with which negative emotions are experienced will affect the likelihood of exceeding their threshold (Meerwijk & Weiss, 2011). Paradoxically, if no sound emotional work takes place, some LAEs may be at risk of landing in a vicious and downward cycle of negativity. The dilemma of habitual complaining for real or perceived reasons is that it may offer moments of camaraderie, but it does not nurture meaning for anyone (Pattakos & Dundon, 2017). Following on the above, not only is the implication of the negativity clear for LAEs' struggle to create meaning in work and life, but also for the

negative impact on their psychological health with clear implications for the HE organisation (Pattakos & Dundon, 2017).

5.4.2.5 Silo functioning and impaired inter-personal and inter-disciplinary relationships

“Work gives people a feeling of being tied into the larger society, of having something to do, of having a purpose in life” (De Klerk, 2005, p. 70). The phenomenon of silo mentality/functioning in the HE organisation was a strong theme of meaning frustration that emerged among the NLAE and LAE participants. The existence of departmental silos is illustrated in the following quotation, with its impact felt on the individual level:

I feel like we have no connection between people ... I am saying the people that I work with, they all sit in their little blocks [offices] and nobody even cares ... it is the coldness, not only in the building, but between the people. I mean I work in a department where we do not even know everybody. I only see them when we have departmental meetings and it is very fragmented, and you can pass by somebody who say hallo and whatever, and that is very hard (Participant 2, DAG, 18 June 2014).

Departmental silo functioning, as depicted by the participant, frustrates work meaning in the domain of Frankl’s experiential value with respect to meaningful collegial relationships. As emphasised by the participant, this speaks about frustration due to loss of connection, significance and fulfilment.

Paradoxically, Diamond and Allcorn (2009) held silo mentality/functioning to be a cocoon like experience that offers the illusion of safety and security on the inside, as illustrated in the following quotation:

My cycle in [the HE organisation] is very simple. In my cycle, I have started as a little bean, as a little seed of [the HE organisation]. I have started very small and then I started growing [pause], I was exposed to a lot of positive people, that is why I was blooming. I never really got exposed to politics or anything that happened upfront. I was in my own yellow cocoon with my people around me, positive people around me and I was basically focused on my job, my little environment (Participant 2, DAG, 14 May 2014).

The sense of safety and security within the boundaries of the silo is clearly demonstrated in the quotation above.

A strong theme that emerged among NLAE participants was the negative effects of inter-discipline silo functioning. They specifically mentioned the frustration they experienced because of poor collaboration between academic departments and themselves. Diamond and Allcorn (2009, p. 60) provided support for the NLAEs' experience. "There often exists frustration and disappointment between organizational members around their inability to work effectively across divisions" (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009, p. 60). NLAEs' frustration was intensified by a feeling pertaining to their function and role in relation to the function of teaching and learning, of being misunderstood. In addition, they ascribed the struggle to get their programmes implemented to a bottom-up approach, suggesting that their programmes were not acknowledged by Deans and HODs. NLAEs also pointed out that it appeared as if their programmes were used as a crisis intervention by LAEs since assistance was only requested by LAEs at a very late stage. NLAEs felt that the aforementioned structural dynamic de-authorized them in their roles and hindered their tasks. Diamond and Allcorn (2009, p. 60) noted that the consequence of silo functioning allowed a vicious reinforcing cycle to emerge "in which workers, by their thoughts, feelings and actions, end up creating and reinforcing the incapacity to work collaboratively with each other, divisions and silos, horizontally and vertically". This may leave workers feeling helpless, hopeless, mistrusting and depressed which denotes obvious meaning frustration in the context of Frankl's creative and experiential values (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009; cf. Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).

In addition, NLAE participants also perceived that their function and roles were not respected by some LAEs. Nongxa (2016) offered support for this claim by maintaining that there is tension between academic and support staff, and that some people in the academic world look down on support staff. Subsequently, NLAEs were having feelings of resentment towards those LAEs. As a result, they perceived themselves to be the "underdogs" in relation to LAEs since they had to obtain their "approval" in order to get access to students to market and implement their programmes. Essentially, NLAE participants regarded LAEs as gatekeepers with respect to access to students, which made the implementation of their programmes difficult. The aforementioned suggests NLAEs to be outsiders to the academic project and points to an unequal partnership between NLAEs and LAEs. In effect, this also suggests that the broader HE organisation system did not acknowledge and adequately support NLAEs' work. Meaning frustration for NLAEs in the areas of creative work, career achievement and collegial relationships is clear (McDonald et al., 2012). The loss of value and a feeling of insignificance fall in the domains of Frankl's (1988, 2000, 2006) creative and experiential values.

NLAE participants also mentioned that their work was hampered by time limitations placed on them by LAEs. The time limitations (congested timetables and thus limited time available for support programmes) placed on them may also reflect systemic pressures, regulation and challenges in the function of teaching and learning. HE research supports the claims of the NLAE participants (McKenna, 2016). A recent study conducted by the CHE (McKenna, 2016, p. 175) confirmed that “there is often little liaison between the activities of this sector [NLAEs] and those of the formal curriculum [LAEs]”, resulting in “missed opportunities for the endeavours of all institutional departments to be better aligned to the university’s academic project”.

Some NLAE participants felt offended by certain LAEs regarding their academic competencies. Consequently, those LAEs were labelled as “academic snobs” by NLAE participants because they were perceived as having an attitude of superiority. “Academic snobbishness” was elaborated as some LAEs’ lack of requesting academic support for their students put them at risk of failure. The lack was ascribed to LAEs’ fear of being rendered incompetent. More specifically, not asking for assistance was regarded as a mechanism utilised by some LAEs to safeguard themselves against their HODs’ discovery that they may be, in actual fact, struggling in the classroom. Academic snobbishness was understood as an attempt by some LAEs to protect their professional images since they were struggling to cope with the changes effected in the function of teaching and learning. This suggests loss of esteem in LAEs. Bundy (2006) and Shanley (2007) offered support for this view (see Chapter 2, e.g. sections 1.2.1 and 1.2.4). The aforementioned suggests that NLAE participants, who represented academic development and student development and support services, may serve as a container for LAEs’ feelings of incompetence in relation to changes in the domain of teaching and learning and what it requires in the classroom. This implies a sense of loss of self or identity and esteem by LAEs however frustration for NLAEs with respect to creative work, career achievement and collegial relationships (Bundy, 2005) (see Chapter 2, section 2.5).

NLAEs expressed concern and frustration because certain LAEs were perceived as unwilling to try something new in the classroom, suggesting frustration in the domain of creative work. Webstock and Sehoole (2016) maintained that

[a]cademic staff are key agents needed to give effect to many policy goals. In the context of a rapidly growing student population, academics are needed to teach more, and in different ways, to take account of student diversity in terms of learning styles and levels of preparedness, to improve throughput rates, and to

develop curricula that are more relevant and appropriate to current realities than those they inherit or are familiar with (p. 305).

The unwillingness was ascribed to those LAEs who were clinging to what was familiar however they were also clinging to what was regarded as outdated and less effective teaching approaches. It was pointed out that the academic environment did not support trying out new approaches due to the perception that NLAEs could be “spies”. This links to the perceived fear of some LAEs that if they request assistance from NLAEs regarding their teaching practices, they would be considered to be “struggling” and “incompetent” in the classroom and may be at risk of being reported to their HODs. NLAE participants highlighted their perceptions of the academic environment as anxious, suspicious, paranoid, unstable, distrustful and fearful. NLAE participants identified LAEs’ perceived fear of losing their jobs (contracts) as a key contributor towards the negative climate in the academic environment. Mapesela and Hay (2005) offered support for NLAEs’ contention about LAEs’ fear of loss of their jobs (see Chapter 2, section 2.5). This points to frustration of meaning for LAE participants with respect to creative work, career achievement and collegial relationships that fall within the domain of Frankl’s creative and experiential values (McDonald et al., 2012). LAEs’ fear of losing their jobs suggests fear of failure with respect to career achievement and loss of benefits that are major sources of meaning for them (Flagello, 2014; McDonald et al., 2012; see Chapter 2, section 2.5; see section 5.4.1.5).

LAE participants perceived their work environment as fragmented. Work per se was associated with an isolating quality because it separated employees from each other. LAE participants perceived colleagues in different faculties as being at war since they did not understand each other. Moreover, colleagues were not perceived as reaching out to each other because they were protective about their work. This was ascribed to professional competition and jealousy (see section 5.5.3.2(g)). The aforementioned dynamic was equated to a safety box phenomenon since some LAEs were perceived to be fearful that others would know more. Knowledge needs to be “safe guarded” (protected) and “locked away” from others. A need was expressed by LAE participants to overcome the silo mentality through, for example, inter-departmental and inter-faculty social and sports activities. The moderator noted the discomfort when disciplines meet and pointed out that the inter-discipline interaction gave the impression that “discipline-specific cleanliness was polluted” (Moderator, DAG, 18 June 2014). Frustration in the area of interdepartmental and/or inter-faculty relationships denotes meaning frustration in the Franklian domain of experiential values (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.2.2).

All of the above dynamics pertaining to silo mentality and functioning are supported by organisational literature that illustrated that silo mentality or thinking was common in HE organisations, even if it hinders integration and collaboration between disciplines and professions, specialities and subspecialties (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009). Consequently, the HE organisation may not be conceptualised as a whole system that supports students in a holistic way, but rather as parts from the narrow perspective of own divisional silos which may foster narrow mindedness, prejudice and “us versus them” (“the enemy”) dynamics (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009). This may result in feelings of isolation and fragmentation, and other disturbing dynamics and emotions such as LAEs’ perceived fear and distrust in relation to NLAEs even though their responsibilities are related.

Fundamentally, silo mentality represents institutional dysfunction, fragmentation and disconnection (Cilliers & Greyvenstein, 2012). It alludes to, the one hand, not knowing what the other is doing, feeling trapped, isolation and powerlessness, and a lack of trust, respect, collaboration and collegiality (Cilliers & Greyvenstein, 2012). Ultimately, this phenomenon and the concurrent emotional experiences clearly suggest meaning frustration in the domains of Frankl’s creative and experiential values, not only on an individual level, but also on the group (e.g. departments, faculties) level.

5.4.2.6 High administration loads and poor delivery by service departments

High administration loads emerged as a strong theme and key source of frustration among LAE and HOD participants. The administration overload, as experienced by a LAE participant, is highlighted the next quotation:

I can see that you are very sad, small compared to the keyboard, so it is like the admin work is on top of your head and you are really sitting with this admin work. I agree that it is part of the job, but it takes so much time that sometimes you cannot really focus on what you are really here for and that is to lecture (Participant 2, DAG, 18 June 2014).

The quotation suggests that a high load of administrative work is interfering with the key performance area of LAEs’ work. This implies meaning frustration with respect to the participants’ love or passion for their work (teaching) (see section 5.4.1.4). Ironically, the pressure of the increased administration loads of LAEs and HODs is well documented in the HE literature (Altbach et al., 2009; Webbstock & Sehoole, 2016; see Chapter 2).

A HOD participant expressed the impact of a high administration load on her, as reflected in the quotation below:

The first thing is that about 80% of my work is admin and that is that lady sitting there, that is not a lady, that is my little stickman sitting there on the table with a paper in front of her. Admin, admin, admin ... (Participant 2, DAG, 19 June 2014).

It also appeared as if the HOD participant may have felt dehumanised by the high administration load since she said that she did not depict herself as a lady in her drawing, but rather as a stickman with a paper in front of her. Strikingly, a stickman is not a real person. A stickman can be defined as “someone who is basic like a stick figure drawing and too dumb to understand anything of complexity. A very one-dimensional person ... To be used as insult against their character or intellect” (*Urban Dictionary*, 2017). A stickman can also be defined as “a cartoon drawing you can do anything with. You can throw [stickmen] off buildings or kill them or put them in weird adventures” (*Urban Dictionary*, 2017).

This shows that some HODs may perceive themselves as reduced to “stickmen” in relation to their high administration loads and it suggests a loss of time for creative work, an unfulfilled need for doing work of more complexity, a loss of identity, a loss of esteem and a loss of personal value (see Chapter 2, section 2.5). D’Andrea and Gosling (as cited in Webstock & Sehoole, 2016, p. 306) noted that

[i]n the rush to adopt managerial methods, [HE organisations] can too easily lose sight of the distinctiveness of the culture of educational organisations. When individuals become simply ‘human resources’ and managers talk about ‘driving the agenda forward’ and ‘rolling out the programme’ the indications are present that the people affected by the change are being ignored.

In this regard, Purkey and Siegel (2013) suggested the return on investment for the “efficient factory” organisation may be human suffering, discontent and destruction.

HODs and DRR participants communicated a distinct relationship between their increased administration loads and poor delivery by service departments:

I have so much work on my table which is not my work. It is work which was neglected by service department like ... (Participant 3, FGI, 19 June 2014).

Another HOD participant expressed frustration since she does not have the time for her own career development and academic publishing due to spending most of her time doing administrative work that was neglected by the service departments:

We need to fight for everything. So there is so much work on my table that I do

not have time to do research or academic [work]. So I cannot see that I can better myself if I need to fight for my staff to get the venues cleaned out. (Participant 3, FGI, 19 June 2014).

Saunders (2016) stated that, once individuals become HODs, they are expected to downscale on personal research ambitions since the department, members of the department and students come first. This phenomenon may be explained in relation to the service orientation characteristic of HE organisations and its implicit expectation that HODs should put others (e.g. HE organisation, students and staff) first (see section 5.4.1.1(b)). This clearly suggests meaning frustration for the HOD participant with respect to personal career development and achievement (McDonald et al., 2012).

Some HOD participants felt frustrated and helpless because they perceived their repeated requests for improvement on service delivery as falling on deaf ears. This denotes a sense of no foreseeable change in the future and non-significance that are obvious conditions for meaning frustration. In addition, it became apparent that the perceived dysfunctionality of the service departments created feelings of incompetence, guilt, disillusionment and demoralisation in some of the HOD participants. NA is associated with meaning frustration (Steger, 2012) as reflected in the following quotation:

... staff keep on asking me what is happening. It seems like you are ignorant, you are stupid or you are just lying because you cannot give them any feedback ... You ask for something in a lecture room to be replaced or fixed, ag [oh], you wait and wait, and wait, and you also feel that it is you who did not follow up. I have always assumed 'in a perfect world' [participant signing quotation marks] you write a memo and you sign, you are the line manager and HOD, now it is out of your hands. And then it ends up on my desk again and I need to deal with it ... you have to follow up and up, and up, and that eats all your time (Participant 4, FGI, 19 June 2014).

The frustration that the participants were experiencing with respect to poor service delivery was tangible. Besides, it appeared that, as a group, HODs may have become a container for the NA associated with poor service delivery in the HE organisation. Research supports a positive association between NA and meaning frustration (Steger, 2010). Analysis revealed a fear of loss of integrity, reputation, competence and esteem. A clear sense of cynicism and exhaustion was also conveyed. Research supports a positive relationship between job demands, lack of job resources and cynicism (Rothmann & Essenko, 2007; Rothmann et al., 2008). Moreover, research also asserted the predictive value of job demands and lack of resources with respect to burnout (Rothmann &

Essenko, 2007) that leads to physical and psychological ill health (Rothmann & Essenko, 2007) (see Chapter 2, section 2.5).

In addition, a NLAE participant mentioned the perceived unproductive mentality in the HE organisation:

... the whole issue is that people are not working. So people are strictly on time and leave on time, they strictly take lunch, but the work is not done (Participant 2, FGI, 14 May 2014).

This recalls the “efficient factory” organisation as described by Purkey and Siegel (2013) who found that workers in the efficiency “factory [are] expected to be punctual, obedient, conforming, and above all busy” (Purkey & Siegel, 2013, p. 117). The moderator made an association in relation to the unproductive mentality theme that emerged in the LAEs’ DAG:

... it is almost as if the trees are imposing a presence into this dark building and trying so hard to make some law against unproductivity (Moderator, DAG, 18 June 2014).

It was noted that the majority of the LAE and HOD/DRR participants’ negativity, frustration and complaints were linked to the perceived unproductive mentality in the HE organisation and poor delivery by service departments. The unproductive mentality suggests meaning frustration in the domain of Frankl’s creative values, whereas poor service delivery suggests frustration with respect to job resources.

The following is a discussion on the phenomenon of poor service delivery from an organisational perspective.

a The functions of the boundary in the HE organisation

From an organisational perspective, poor delivery by service departments resonates with what Czander (1993) referred to as “boundary maintenance and regulation” or the functions of the boundary in the HE organisation. According to Czander (1993, p. 204),

the basic operational function of the boundary is to protect the technological core [e.g. the function of teaching and learning] of the [HE] organization. The technological core is where the conversion work occurs, where inputs are converted into outputs. Boundary management ideally serves to protect the

integrity of its core; to give the core the resources necessary to do its work so that it can maintain high standards of efficiency and effectiveness.

From the data analysis process, various boundary violations were detected in relation to the function of teaching and learning which necessarily caused high levels of frustration and unhappiness among LAE and HOD participants. One example is the maintenance subsystem's (e.g. maintenance and cleaning services) primary task which is to protect the work in the technological core, for instance, by maintaining and cleaning classrooms and lecture halls. The next quote illustrates boundary violations in this area:

The facilities, really, some of the venues that we must use are in a terrible condition... and they [security] did not lock the auditorium. That also plays a bad role because some of the students sleep in the venues, they overnight there because they do not have accommodation, or they stay far and they eat there. And you are really getting bad things in the auditoriums and the cleaning also is not done properly. I do not think it is managed properly (Participant 4, FGI, 18 June 2014).

Czander (1993, p. 204) explained such poor delivery as “a function of a set of dynamics within the [HE] organisation and the maintenance department where the personnel feel free to engage in their work without consideration of the core”. Such a violation may be taken as “an expression of hostility toward the technological core” and it may be regarded as “an expression of rage toward the administration” (Czander, 1993, p. 204). Therefore, “[a]ny effort by a support subsystem to violate the integrity of the technological core is an expression of acting out organizational conflicts” (Czander, 1993, p. 204).

The suggested conflict may, for example, be linked to HE organisations' practice of outsourcing services (e.g. cleaners, catering staff, garden services and security guards) to private companies. Pattakos and Dundon (2017, p. 170) explained that when “organizations, with the objective of lowering overhead costs and gaining more flexibility, are decreasing the number of full-time jobs and shifting the work to part-time or contract jobs, outsourcing jobs, or simply laying off workers and doing more with less”, loss of meaning occurs since the relationship between the HE organisation and employees becomes more tentative. Therefore, a practice like outsourcing may create unhappiness due to loss of benefits and significance among the affected. It speaks for itself that an organisation less committed to its workers will have less committed workers and, from a systems perspective, may have definite implications for other employees (e.g. HODs) in the HE organisation (Pattakos & Dundon, 2017).

Czander (1993) pointed out that simple boundary violations have the potential to escalate into major events which makes it difficult for many boundary managers (e.g. HODs) to engage in the vital work of protection of the boundaries (e.g. consistent follow-ups on non-delivery, requests for improved service delivery, etc.). “Typically, boundary managers who unconsciously experience violations as an expression of organizational conflicts will withdraw into apathy. They fear the consequences of entering the fray” (Czander, 1993, p. 205).

It was apparent from the analysis that the HOD/DRR participants did not hesitate to protect the boundaries of the function of teaching and learning, although it was clear that they were paying an emotional price. Fighting with service departments in combination with an increase in administration loads adds pressure and stress that frustrates LAEs and HOD participants’ meaning in the domains of Frankl’s creative and experiential values.

b A lack of a performance management

The unproductive mentality in sections of the HE organisation and poor service delivery triggered conversations about accountability among HOD/DRR participants:

... everybody needs to take accountability for their section. What you are responsible for you need to provide ... (Participant 4, FGI, 19 June 2014).

Accountability or responsibility is fundamental to Frankl’s (1988, 2000, 2006) theory (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.5.1). Individuals, departments and organisations may avoid accountability to avoid blame (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009). A Franklian interpretation denotes that, in such instances, individuals and departments are closing their ears to the voice of their conscience and, in fact, discarding their responsibility, or in other words, to do what is required (Shantall, 2003).

Negligence and mistakes may be ignored and/or concealed, making it hard for individuals, departments and organisations to learn from the experience (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009). This may result in interpersonal and inter-departmental mistrust, suspicion and polarisation in an organisation (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009). This has clear implications for frustration of meaning in the areas of work and collegial relationships.

A participant emphasised that if there are no consequences for unproductivity, the likelihood that service delivery may improve is low because

accountability will only be instilled eventually if we go over to a performance

based management system so that there are consequences if someone does not do what they are supposed to do ... It is so entrenched in the [HE organisation] that it is okay that 'I can do it tomorrow', or maybe 'I do not have to do it at all, it will go away if I keep quiet' and 'if I do not do anything, it will keep quiet'. And for me, it is like there is no pride in what people do at the [HE organisation] ... if there is a sort of performance management ... if it is a formal part of the [HE organisation] then a lot of these issues will go away over time, it is not going to happen overnight (Participant 1, FGI, 19 June 2014).

Gourley (2016, p. 66) observed that performance management has “a bad name in HE organisations, where it is far too seldom practiced and elsewhere mostly because it is so poorly executed”. Like the HOD participants, Gourley (2016, p. 66) argued for proper performance management to be in place in HE organisations since it “is not even remotely possible to get the strategic priorities of the university enacted throughout the organisation unless some way is found of aligning individual goals with that of the organisation”. It is clear that, without accountability for all, poor service delivery may continue with serious implications for an already frustrated and demoralised academic workforce. However, meaningful work not only includes an aspect like personal responsibility, but also working conditions of significance (De Klerk, 2005; Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).

The discussions in the section 5.4.2.7 is focused on the pressure of academic development, academic competition and professional envy/jealousy.

5.4.2.7 Pressure of improving qualifications, competition and professional envy/jealousy

The next theme includes a discussion on the sub-themes of added pressure to improve qualifications, academic competition and professional envy/jealousy.

a The pressure to improve qualifications

The pressure to improve academic qualifications emerged as a theme among all three groups of participants, though noticeably stronger among LAE and HOD participants, however, with varying motivations. A HOD participant mentioned that

... immediately when we changed to [the HE organisation], the new requirement was a master's degree, so all of them [LAEs] had to at least do their master's degree and pass and study further towards doctorates (Participant 1, FGI, 19 June 2014).

“From a knowledge production and policy perspective, it is clear that improving the qualifications among academics is a priority if SA is to be a knowledge producer rather than a knowledge consumer” (Webbstock & Sehoole, 2016, p. 311). Statistics indicate that “of the 17 451 permanently employed academics in SA universities in 2012, only 39% had doctoral qualifications and that the highest qualification of 4 753 (27%) of these academics was below a Master’s degree” (Webbstock & Sehoole, 2016, p. 311). The significant percentage of academics with qualifications below a Master’s degree may be ascribed to practices in the old technikon sector which did not necessarily require degrees to teach in those institutions (Webbstock & Sehoole, 2016).

The motivational differences among the three groups of participants for improving qualifications, was notable. A NLAE participant illuminated the difference as follows:

... considering the prestige of ‘doctor’ in the institution, I think I have to get my doctorate. In my experience, I will have more weight here (Participant 2, FGI, 14 May 2014).

It appeared as if some NLAEs wanted to improve their qualifications for the status attached to being called a “doctor” (a dominant discourse in the HE organisation) and to have more substance. Hence, the perception among NLAEs was that not much value is attached or respect given to the contributions of those without a doctoral degree. The drive for status (e.g. obtaining a master’s or doctoral degree purely for status) of some NLAEs is not in line with Frankl’s view on status as a by-product in the fulfilment of meaning (e.g. the joy in the pursuit of professional and personal growth) (Frankl, 1988, 2000).

Though cognisant of the meaning, role and significance of qualifications in the HE sector, this recalls Frankl’s cautionary words against the distorted image of human beings when the noëtic dimension gets lost. Ironically, respect purely based on the possession of a doctoral degree suggests the loss of human value and significance, since respect for the other has then become a two-dimensional distortion (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.1.2, Table 3.3). Diamond and Allcorn (2009) considered such an educational experience to be two-dimensional and concrete, with diminished satisfaction and joy.

LAE participants improved their qualifications since they regarded it as career development however also because it has become a job requirement for them. The next quotation reflects the challenges experienced by a LAE participant in relation to qualification improvement and completion:

... what was also very challenging for me and I am so glad that it is over – I have finished my master's degree this year. I really found it difficult, I really did not have time to work on it, especially if you are doing research for the first time and you do not know anything about it. It is something totally new that you have to learn to do and with teaching 15 to 18 periods a week, all the marking and the assessments, it is really very hectic. And the whole time, I had this sword hanging above my head – 'you have to finish your qualification or you are going out', they actually told me that. 'You are over your three-year limit, if you do not finish it now you are going to lose your job'. And I had to constantly ask my supervisor to write me a letter saying 'just tell them I am busy and that I am going to finish', and yes, I have eventually finished (Participant 6, FGI, 18 June 2014).

The participant indicated that her teaching load made it difficult for her to find time to work on her master's degree. Moreover, she mentioned that she was a novice in the field of research and that she first had to find her way which also suggests a time implication. In addition, she had to cope with the stresses caused by the threat of losing her job and benefits if she did not complete her qualification in the prescribed time. Work and benefits are regarded as major sources of meaning (McDonald et al., 2012; see section 5.4.1.5). Although LAE participants regarded qualification improvement as a development opportunity, it was clear that it has become a stressful and threatening undertaking for some. This suggests a fear of failure in the area of qualification improvement that may culminate in a job loss that has clear implications for the experience of meaning in life and work.

HOD participants communicated the same pressures and threats as LAE participants in terms of qualification improvement. This claim is reflected in the quotation below:

... admin, admin, admin. And then, at the same time, the whole thing about the stress around completing my PhD, my studies, because that can cause issues in the near future when my contract expires (Participant 2, DAG, 19 June 2014).

Once again, time limitations due to a high administration load in combination with the pending threat of potential job loss, caused additional stress for the participant. This has clear implications for the experience of meaningful work. Moreover, the analysis revealed the presence of a "pending threat" as a strong theme in the HE organisation. This may suggest that, as a collective, the HE organisation may feel anxious and out of control due to all the changes and pressures in the HE sector. A sporadic "threat" of job loss posed to LAEs may be a way of restoring a feeling of inner balance.

The next quotation elaborates on the pressures experienced by a LAE participant in relation to qualification improvement:

I have finished this year and yes, I had to work every night from eight until one o'clock in the morning and I became a mom last year. And I had the baby, and I just could not finish in time to hand in in November, so that was really very, very stressful for me to juggle everything, but now I feel like I can breathe until they pop up the next thing. So yes, I think the whole thing here is you have to develop, you have to study, but they do not give you any time. They give you money, they pay for your studies, but other types of support like enough reading time is lacking and I think everybody feels that way (Participant 6, FGI, 18 June 2014).

Analysis revealed the participant's feeling of pending threat, referring to her remark that she was waiting "until they pop up the next thing". Moreover, it appears as if financial support for research qualification improvement was perceived by the participant as adequate, however, time to work on the qualification was pointed out as problematic. Lack of time and lack of funding (for research) are identified in the literature as some of the most stressful aspects of academia (Carson, Bartneck, Voges, 2012). It is clear that lack of funding was not a factor per se that contributed to the participant's stress. This may be ascribed to the high priority given to qualification improvement for academics and support in the form of funding (Webbstock & Sehoole, 2016). However, it appears as if adequate time remains a challenge. Insufficient time suggests meaning frustration in the area of adequate job resources to support completion of tasks. The question to ask is that if the additional pressure exerted on LAEs and HODs to improve their qualifications just adds to already high workloads and high pressure conditions, will it not end in lower standards of work and/or even motivate academic misconduct? (Carson et al., 2012).

The next sub-theme includes a discussion on academic competition and professional envy/jealously.

b Academic competition and professional envy/jealousy

Competition among LAEs emerged as a strong theme. Altbach et al. (2009) maintained competition in HE organisation to be a growing trend. "The pressures of accountability and the desire of university leadership for excellence has in many cases pitted one department or faculty against another as they position themselves to acquire limited resources and academic staff" (Altbach et al., 2009, p. 15) as illustrated in the next quotation:

Just when you think you are going to get that carrot they take it away. Oh no, the rules have changed now, sorry now, [faculty X] gets to use [Y] building because they bring in lots of money. You guys do not bring in any money, sorry (Participant 3, DAG, 18 June 2014).

Analysis revealed inconsistency in the HE organisational system resulting in the dynamic of social comparison that generated feelings of not “being good enough” and that may give way to an emotion such as envy/jealousy. The feeling of not “being good enough” suggests loss of esteem and the concurrent experience of NA that is associated with frustration of meaning (Steger, 2012).

“Many current academics are also striving to improve their own qualifications, given changed expectations and requirements for career development” (Webbstock & Sehoole, 2016, p. 305-306). A participant emphasised the phenomenon of competition and envy/jealousy operating in the academe in relation to qualification improvement and career development:

There is some professional jealousy as well, because everyone is trying to study and trying to get their masters and doctorates, so they are very competitive in terms of the academic world (Participant 1, DAG, 18 June 2014).

Research claimed the perceived competition in the academe as a historical matter (Altbach et al., 2009). It is an established practice to obtain recognition, status and advancement (Altbach et al., 2009; Carson et al. 2012). Frankl (1988) regarded the drive (need) for status, success and power to be self-defeating. Nonetheless, although competition is regarded as a constructive force that can, in many ways, produce excellence and the best performance, it is suggested that academic competition is more ambitious in comparison to other fields of human endeavour (Altbach et al., 2009; Carson et al., 2012). This contention is capsulated in the often declared state of publish-or-perish however with a myriad of possible positive and negative outcomes (Carson et al., 2012).

The pressure of competition is not only felt in relation to qualification improvement and career development, but also in relation to research output. The next quotation highlights the competition between the teaching and research functions:

... you know the Rectors Award for Teaching Excellence (RATE), we have some lecturers here who are such dedicated lecturers, but who is not getting any recognition in the research world because they do not produce research because they lecture and the RATE awards ... (Participant 5, DAG, 18 June 2014).

The participant communicated her dissatisfaction since teaching was considered to be of less significance than research, suggesting that teaching has lesser status and perceived value in comparison with research publications. A feeling of unfairness was conveyed since the recognition in the fields of teaching and research were perceived as unequal. Career achievement is considered as a major source of meaning (McDonald et al., 2012). This suggested that loss of value in relation to the field of teaching and learning might have created unhappiness and meaning frustration for some LAE participants.

The literature affirmed the tension between teaching and research (Toews & Yazedjian, 2007; Webbstock & Sehoole, 2016) though contradicting views exist about the relationship between teaching and research as two core HE functions (Toews & Yazedjian, 2007). Some scholars regard the functions as conflicting, while others regard it as complementing (Toews & Yazedjian, 2007). Nonetheless, research is what brings prestige to the HE organisation (Toews & Yazedjian, 2007) so that “striking a balance to the value ascribed to more easily measurable or prestigious activities such as research remains a challenge, not only in SA, but also globally” (Webbstock & Sehoole, 2016, p. 309). In spite of the challenge, “[t]he incentive structures have changed: research output increasingly trumps teaching as a measure of achievement, with some institutions having put in many incentive schemes to reward research” (Webbstock & Sehoole, 2016, p. 309).

Webbstock and Sehoole (2016, p. 308) emphasised that

[g]iven the pressure placed on academic staff to perform in many areas, (from research to teaching and learning, to contributing to efforts to increase third-stream income, to engaging meaningfully with communities), reward systems that recognise performance in ways that do not skew activities towards one or other of these roles, are becoming increasingly important.

The RATE awards are an example of a reward system that recognises performance:

Yes, we had a departmental meeting last week and my boss said we are looking again for volunteers for the RATE awards and everybody just sat there. And then he [HOD] looks at me and he says ‘You have done this so many times you can do it in your sleep. Do you want to do it again?’ (Participant 3, DAG, 18 June 2014).

The participant then responded as follows to her HOD’s invitation to participate in the RATE awards “... and I am like ‘NO’ why should I do this thing? It is for personal growth, it is not a competition” (Participant 3, DAG, 18 June 2014).

From the above it is apparent that the participant perceived participation in the RATE as

competition that implied more work and additional pressure. Winning a prize suggests enhanced status however the participant suggested that personal growth may be compromised by competing for an additional monetary reward and status. Research affirmed personal growth as a major source of meaning (McDonald et al., 2012). This implied that competing for rewards was perceived as posing a risk to personal growth. This suggested that the participant might have had some experience with “competition” that may have generated NA for her and thus frustrated meaning in the domain of personal growth in the domains of Frankl’s creative and experiential values. Consequently, the participant declined the invitation to participate. As such, resistance in relation to the prospect of competition was expressed. Elaborating, Tai, Narayanan and McAllister (2012) maintained that there are always winners and losers in competitions and that competitive situations invariably trigger envy in those who are losers. To the contrary, the winner may be envied for winning a prize and may also be at the receiving end of colleagues’ envious behaviour.

Consequently, envy is considered to be a “nasty” and socially taboo emotion and is less visible than other organisational emotions since attempts are made to suppress, avoid or normalise feelings of hostility or inferiority associated with envy (Duffy, Shaw & Schaubroeck, 2008). Özkoç and Çalışkan (2015, p. 41) defined envy as “the state of willing to own what the others own, comparing the qualifications, possessions and financial opportunities of others with one’s own and in the end feeling great jealousy of others”. Envy occurs when a person lacks another’s superior quality, achievement or possessions and either desires it or wishes that the other person lacked it (Parrott & Smith, 1993, p. 906). Jealousy, by contrast, necessarily occurs in the context of relationships. It occurs when a person fears losing an important relationship with another person to a rival – in particular, losing a relationship that is formative to one’s sense of self (Parrott & Smith, 1993, p. 906).

So, at its core, envy entails frustration because of another’s perceived superiority (Tai et al., 2012). Therefore, merely noticing the superior work and/or work achievements of another may result in envy (Duffy & Shaw, 2000). Although envy is endemic to the human condition and is regarded as a common emotional experience because of the high level of competitiveness inherent to organisational life, it is a psychological state with negative individual, interpersonal and collective consequences (Khan, Peretti & Quratulain, 2009; Tai et al., 2012).

The analysis revealed that LAEs compete for additional income opportunities. Situational envy may be triggered by “competition for and allocation of scarce organizational rewards

in the form of merit raises, office space, promotions, grants, valued assignments, and promotions” (Duffy & Shaw, 2000, p. 4). The potential for mistrust and secrecy is apparent and morale may be compromised (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009). The competition among LAEs for additional income opportunities is reflected in the quotation below:

... another challenge in our department, we would like to have equal opportunities on being used for offering courses to other companies. There are students who have to pass our module to qualify in their specific jobs and usually one lecturer is used over and over and over throughout the years to offer it to the different companies ... (Participant 1, FGI, 18 June 2014).

The participant's reference to the unequal opportunities in her department triggered responses from other participants about perceived favouritism in their respective departments. This happened in the context of a FGI. In addition, sporadic episodes of envy among LAEs in the DAG were notable. Consequently, the moderator made the following thematic association in the context of the DAG:

... that reminds me of 'that the class and the building is almost jealous because my experience in one part of the system is quite different to the other' (Moderator, DAG 18 June 2014).

The thematic association implied that there was no consistency in LAE participants' experiences in their work roles (e.g. resource allocation, opportunities to generate additional incomes, etc.). The aforementioned caused feelings of unfairness and frustration that presented, at times, as envy. Although on a different level, HE literature highlighted the diverse, unequal and differentiated nature of HE systems that may contribute to the experience of envy (Altbach et al., 2009; Webbstock & Sehoole, 2016). The implication for meaning frustration in the domains of Frankl's creative and experiential values is clear.

A participant spoke about his perception that younger LAEs are threatened by older LAEs since they perceive older LAEs as opposition:

But what happens when you get older and you are higher up, right there where we are, you know the 'ou hout' [the old bark] the 'ou manne' [the old men], we talk about it. Some of the young guys see us as a threat, as opposition whatever ... (Participant 1, DAG, 18 June 2014).

The participant suggested that younger LAEs may envy older LAEs' superior qualities, skills and status (Tai et al., 2012). For their part, older LAEs may fear that their positions

may be taken and they may envy younger LAEs who display promise and the talent for potential leadership (Tai et al., 2012). Traditional envy scholarship suggested social undermining (threat orientation) as a likely behaviour response of envy, for example, avoidance or pretence to be disinterested in envied parties, greater hostility and reduced desire for relationship with them; reduced openness to sharing information with them; boosting one's own self-image; a stronger desire to harm them, that may result in attempts to degrade them and their accomplishments; attempts to prevent or sabotage their successful performance; and harassing or ostracising them (Duffy & Shaw, 2000; Tai et al., 2012). This has clear implications for frustration of meaning in the areas of creative work, collegial relationships and career achievement that finds itself in the domains of Frankl's (1988, 2000, 2006) creative and experiential values.

During the analysis process, it was noted that prosocial behaviour was demonstrated when a participant noticed that a willingness to assist younger colleagues and to share moments with them may be a way to build a different kind of respect between older and younger LAEs. The following quotation illustrates the participant's contention:

... but the older people you know, when you get to pension you are running out. You are not that competitive anymore and then you tend to share your moments and experience more with the younger ones. And then there is a different respect and people do not see you as a threat. If somebody has a problem we will say 'okay man kom ons help jou gou' [okay let us quickly help you]. That you do get, but I think in the youngsters' environment, where it is all about competition, you must get yourself to be promoted quickly (Participant 1, DAG, 18 June 2014).

The participant's contention was supported by an alternative view emerging in envy scholarship that suggested that envy may have dual action tendencies (Tai et al., 2012). This implied that envy may challenge individuals to prosocial behaviour and, in the process, enhance work performance (Tai et al., 2012). Individuals' tendency towards threat or action orientated behaviour is dependent on their personal traits (Tai et al., 2012). Research supported a positive relationship between destructive envy and anxiety; depression and poor mental health; lower job and group satisfaction; lower organisational-based self-esteem; feelings of group impotency; and greater withdrawal (absenteeism, turnover intentions and reduced commitment). This suggested serious and costly implication for organisations, as for meaning in work (Duffy & Shaw, 2000; Tai et al., 2012).

5.4.2.8 Positivity as a defence against negativity

The analysis revealed that HOD participants, like LAE participants, have a high level of awareness regarding the negativity that prevails in the HE organisation and that they feel responsible to protect their staff and students against it. This reflects on some HODs' need and ability to do the necessary for LAEs who they perceived as requiring "protection". It also became apparent that some HOD participants feared that their staff (LAEs) may leave the HE organisation because of their apparent unhappiness due to the negativity around them and possibly directed at them. It appeared as if some HOD participants felt responsible to contain and transform the prevailing negativity into something positive to ensure that their staff do not leave the HE organisation. At its core, it implied HODs' fear of abandonment by LAEs that may have involved some conflict between dependence and independence dynamics, with clear implications for the attachment dynamics between HODs and LAEs (Cutler & Marcus, 1999).

This phenomenon is illustrated in the next quotation:

... and also not to let the negative things that happened to you go down into the staff or the students. You must just gulp it away and go on and be positive and try more, because if you are negative, you give a negative feeling through to the department. So you must still try and keep on being positive. So, if they come to your office and be negative because of something, then you try and turn it into a positive for them so that they do not have a negative experience. So you try and turn all the negativity around in your office so that it is positive and the feeling is then good again and they feel happy to work here at [the HE organisation] because if they [LAEs] are not happy they are going to leave and will not try and stay. So we try and keep them happy. So they are happy staff members (Participant 1, FGI, 19 June 2014).

The analysis revealed that some HOD participants regarded it as important to function as a container for the negativity that prevailed in the HE organisation. Organisational theory emphasises that, when leaders cannot provide containment for followers, workers become distressed and anxious and may then resort to primitive and destructive psychological defences as a means of survival (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009) (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.5.2). It would also be important for LAEs to be able to cope with negative experiences in their work environment. The function of containment has clear implications for the emotional and psychological health of those HODs without sound emotional self-care strategies.

In contrast, some HODs' mere containment of LAEs' complaints and transforming it for them from negative to "positive" as a way of mitigating their own fears about LAEs' fantasised departure from the HE organisation, suggests that some of the LAEs may be at risk of developing habitual patterns of complaining, become dependent on the containment provided by HODs and, in the process, become helpless victims of the changed and changing HE organisation (Pattakos & Dundon, 2017).

Franklian perspective denotes that the responsibility of choosing attitude in challenging circumstances remains the responsibility of the individual. This implies that the cognitive work that is needed to be done in order to choose a positive attitude "cannot be transferred to someone else" (Pattakos & Dundon, 2017, p. 24). In this instance, containment and the mere transformation of negativity into "positivity" may deprive some LAEs of the opportunity to do the necessary cognitive work themselves with respect to reframing the negativity in a positive sense. Although a phase of dependence on HODs would be part of the process, emotional dependency on HODs should not be actively sought.

The data analysis process revealed that "positivity" was frequently used by the participants as a defence against the perceived "negativity" and "darkness" that prevailed in the HE organisation. This was noted in both the FGIs and the DAGs, and illustrated in the following quotation:

On my side, it is difficult because you must stay positive, you must put on the other face. I am not sure that the students do what they need to do, but to assist them, to stay positive ... but I am sure nothing will change in six months or a year from now. I am pretty sure that it will not (Participant 4, FGI, 18 June 2014).

Although the participant said that he needed to stay positive and put on "the other face", it was apparent that he doubted if the students contributed in the way they should and, ironically, he was confident that nothing would change in the next six to 12 months. So nothing of significance happened and no future perspective was communicated that clearly communicated a sense of hopelessness. This suggests frustration of meaning or even meaninglessness. Furthermore,

... very interesting, bright colours try to camouflage the darkness which are the circles, whatever the negativity you spoke about earlier, what you are trying to avoid (Participant 3, DAG, 14 May 2014).

So, the positive again defended (e.g. bright colours that try to camouflage the darkness,

avoidance) against the negative (“darkness”) in order to urge the “positive” to guarantee a harmonious and happy life without exploring the manifestation and experience of disharmony and unhappiness (e.g. emotional difficulties, frustrations, conflicts) in the HE organisation (Cilliers & May, 2010). Hence, positivity can operate as an individual psychological defence, but also as a social defence.

Social defences are regarded as the methods that organisations may develop to help people defend themselves against the anxieties, conflicts and painful feelings that are evoked through membership and confrontation with complex tasks like the changing HE environment and organisation (Cilliers & May, 2010; Hirschhorn, 1990; Krantz, 2001). The reason for the social defence is to support the capacity of its members to function effectively by helping them to contain and to put into useful perspective the more primitive fears and anxieties that were evoked (Krantz, 2001). Although “positivity”, in this form, may have a seductive character, referring to the tendency to state matters as “good” in order to prevent admitting flaws in the self, or system, which usually culminates into projecting the flaws on others or other parts of the system (Cilliers & May, 2010).

Consequently, it may then appear as if the participants took an attitudinal stance against that which was perceived as negative. However, it was apparent from the group processes during the data collection process, that the respective groups were, at times, seduced by “the positivity” when something negative was introduced. Instead of exploring the negativity and then working to reframe (cognitive work) it in an authentic, positive sense, the participants just made positive associations. Research (Association of Psychological Science, 2009) showed that unreasonable positive statements can provoke contradictory or negative thoughts in low-esteemed individuals and/or organisations which can overwhelm the positive statements. This suggested that, when people are coerced to focus exclusively on positive statements, they may find negative statements to be discouraging (Association of Psychological Science, 2009).

Reframing the negative in an authentic sense may then also allow for the discovery or rediscovery of meaning in a challenging situation (Frankl, 1988, 2000). The following comment from the moderator emphasised the positive defence at work:

And I am also very aware of how it is safe where we are defending against the badness, you do not want me to contaminate you or something (Moderator, DAG, 18 June 2014).

The participants’ reluctance to explore and/or engage with the “badness” was clear. Ironically, the participant in the next quotation encapsulated the dilemma of the reluctance

that gave way to a defence like “positivity”. The quotation also illustrates a social defence at work in the HE organisation:

I think they should not give us a doctorate in risk management, they should rather give us a doctorate in play acting because we have to keep this image and stay positive and portray that you are positive and talk to people in a positive way although there are certain things slumbering in the back of your mind which may be really debilitating to you as a person, but we are darn good actors, I can tell you that. I was working the whole morning with young academics and there I had to be as positive as positive could be and it drains you. It really drains you. This might not have been a good afternoon for me to be here, but you have to, you know, be positive, tell them the positive story about the institution and make them excited and motivate them and that sort of thing. Ja [yes], but it is a bit draining (Participant 1, DAG, 19 June 2014).

Risk management typically involves basic strategies to manage threats that may include avoiding the threat, reducing the negative effect or probability of the threat and transferring all or part of the threat to another party by projecting the threatening parts onto someone or something else (Wikipedia, 2017a). This is a reminder of the ambiguous character of a phenomenon like “positivity” that may also operate as a social defence in an organisational setting (Cilliers & May, 2010; Hirschhorn, 1990; Krantz, 2001).

The participant pointed out that the “pretence” facet of “positivity” has a demanding and strenuous character, especially when there is a lot of systemic challenges that cannot be wished away and that need innovative solutions in numerous areas and on various levels. This means that “changing one’s interpretation from negative to positive can be difficult if the cues extracted in work situations are of such quality that they are difficult to reinterpret as positive” (Vuori, San & Kira, 2012, p. 244). It suggests frustration of meaning, or even meaninglessness in the participants’ experience of work.

5.4.2.9 A seeming lack of support from leadership

Another theme that emerged among all three groups of participants was about a seeming lack of support from leadership. The theme was the strongest among LAEs and HOD/DRR participants.

Academic leadership in HE organisations “has become increasingly challenging in rapidly changing global realities and is all the more complex in [SA]” (Saunders, 2016, p. 2). Lange and Luescher-Mamamshela (2016) maintained that, due to the exponential growth

in the complexity of HE, transformational leadership has become essential for its development. It is “a leadership capable of proposing a vision that unifies purpose and galvanises different internal stakeholders into action for the development of [HE]” (Lange & Luescher-Mamamshela, 2016, p. 132). Transformational leadership at the top is insufficient since HE leadership also has to be participatory and distributed (Lange & Luescher-Mamamshela, 2016). This suggests that it is key that leadership exists in each of the academic, support and administrative functional units of the HE organisation, starting with the senior leadership team by making a deliberate effort (Lange & Luescher-Mamamshela, 2016). Leaders play a key role in shaping followers’ meaning experiences (Walumbwa et al., 2013).

So, at the time of data collection, the HOD/DRR participants perceived senior management as absent and/or only providing minimal support to them. This contention was illustrated in the quotations below

When the problem came about, the dark cloud, the thunder bolt, sitting in desolation, there was nothing to support and that is where this void comes from. There is nothing to support, there is no supporting structure that I experienced within the institution ... When there was need for the support from that side it just was not there, there were not even people there, never mind an institution. There were not even people there to support (Participant 1, DAG, 19 June 2014).

... we are now looking at the comical way the hands are portrayed and I find it interesting that the support which is supposed to be substantial, I would have drawn the hands [symbolising senior management] huge, are very small ... So, it was almost as if to say that you knew it [senior management] was there, but in a sense you did not really exist because the support was so minimal (Participant 4, DAG, 19 June 2014).

I am looking at the students and the graduates and I see that those that do not seem to know what has happened, they are outnumbered when they are actually graduating ... And the question marks on their heads is represented by this sign that leadership is absent (Moderator, DAG, 19 June 2014).

HOD/DRR participants were uncertain about and questioned (doubted) the senior management structures and their efficiency. The non-supportive hands of senior management were associated with matters in the HE organisation that were perceived to be moving in a negative direction. HODs were concerned about and experienced a sense of helplessness and sadness about the condition of teaching and learning and everything

else that should support the function. This clearly denotes dissatisfaction and non-significance that points to frustration of meaning or even meaninglessness in the Franklian domains of creative and experiential values (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).

In addition, LAE participants perceived senior management members to be trying, though with a lack of communication between them and as disconnected. Consequently, it was pointed out that everything had to start all over again when key senior management members left the HE organisation to pursue other opportunities. This resulted in a déjà vu experience for LAE participants. They had the feeling of having been in just this same kind of situation before that made them feel stuck. It was frustrating for them since no perceived positive movement has been taking place in the HE organisation, more specifically, in the function of teaching and learning. No satisfaction was expressed. This suggests meaning frustration in the area of job satisfaction and career achievement as main sources of meaning (McDonald et al., 2012).

The analysis revealed a perceived disconnect between senior management and LAEs. For example,

Something that I see is that the guys up there do not know what is going on down here, ja, it is so nice up there, it is so clean and neat. In fact, I wonder if they ever go and walk around on campus and see what it looks like when it is really dirty and noisy (Participant 6, FGI, 18 June 2014).

The participant expressed dissatisfaction since senior management was perceived to be ignorant about LAE participants' work conditions. It also suggested LAEs' perception that senior management does not care about them. Their experience is supported by Purkey and Siegel's (2013, p. 118) view on the "efficient factory" organisation and the worst aspects of hierarchical leadership "where the chairman or CEO is so far removed from the daily operations on the factory floor that he or she rarely, if ever, engages employees on a personal level". This may result in employees who feel that they do not really matter and ultimately they may become distrustful and resentful of the leadership (Purkey & Siegel, 2013). This suggests meaning frustration in the Franklian domains of creative and experiential values (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).

LAE participants mentioned disappointment because of the failure to implement new ideas. LAEs believed they were fighting a losing battle, indicative of meaning frustration in the Franklian domain of creative values. Senior management was understood as a dividing force in the HE organisation to exert control over them. Lange and Luescher-Mamamshela (2016) believed that academics were a fundamental casualty of

managerialism in HE decision making for two reasons, (1) their struggle to keep up with and interpret the plethora of new policy requirements; and (2) because they have found their role in the academic enterprise to become decentred and alienated from a management discourse that they felt did not belong in the HE organisation (see Chapter 2).

LAEs perceived those colleagues who moved into middle management positions (e.g. HOD) as being “sucked into the darkness”. This suggests that the “pressure of the darkness” may quickly get hold of new HODs. Consequently, LAE participants perceived HODs as people whose “souls have being sucked out easily” (DAG, 18 June 2014). Literature supports this view in relation to the HE organisational executive and senior management corps (Gevers, 2016). According to Gevers (2016, p. 18),

[t]he handful of apparently ‘outlier’ academics who aspire to, and occupy, posts which mainly carry executive or managerial responsibilities for systemic academic functions (vice-chancellor, rectors or their deputies, or executive deans) are widely regarded within academe with a mixture of pity and apprehension as fallen people who have sold their souls for the scholarly equivalent of a mess of pottage.

It appears as if this view on executive and senior management has been extended to include the middle management level, possibly because of the introduction of managerialism in HE organisations (see Chapter 2, section 2.2).

Concluding this section, Heifetz (as cited in Gourley, 2016, p. 69) explained that

[l]eadership oftentimes is a passionate and consuming activity. People need inspiration and drive to step into a void, which only later is recognized as a place of creativity and development. So strong are the emotions of leadership, they can overwhelm the person who has not developed sufficiently a broad sense of purpose ... the capacity to find the values that make risk-taking meaningful.

This has clear implications with respect to the role that Frankl’s theory and logotherapy principles can play in the domain of HE leadership.

5.5 INTEGRATED DISCUSSION

An understanding of the HE organisation or setting and its dynamic characteristics was regarded as key to the overall design of the intervention, the structure and content of the intervention programme, as well as the approach to be followed to implement the intervention (cf. Brijball Parumasur, 2012; Campbell, Murray, Darbyshire et al., 2007;

Contextual Factors of Implementation Planning Template, 2011; Diamond & Allcorn, 2009; Grimm & Lee, 2005; Higgins, 2007; Parmelli, Flodgren, Beyer et al., 2011). Some of the findings from this study were used to develop the preliminary design of the intervention and the structure and content of the intervention programme. The findings assisted with the development of a contextual model and an implementation approach to support the implementation of the programme. In addition, some of the findings were used to explain the phase three quantitative study results (see Chapter 7).

The following is an integrated discussion on the sources of meaning and meaning frustration for academic employees, with specific focus on the findings that supported the development and implementation of the intervention.

5.5.1. Exploring and describing the meaning and meaning frustration embedded in the academic employee experience

This section includes discussions on the ambivalence of HE and students as sources of meaning and/or meaning frustration; appreciation from students and the freedom of choice as sources of meaning and characteristics of the HE organisational setting (e.g. silo functioning, containment and incomplete emotional work, positivity as a defence against negativity) as sources of meaning frustration.

5.5.1.1 The ambivalence of HE and students as sources of meaning and/or meaning frustration

Students as the fundamental reason for HE organisations' existence, emerged as the major source of meaning for academic employees. As a result of globalisation, massification and SA's socio-economic and political transformation, the HE landscape and HE organisation have changed dramatically. This has resulted in a re-engineering of the academic profession, with diverse expectations and more work pressure for academic employees (see Chapter 2). An alarming outcome of the changed SAHE sector is that contemporary HE is not meeting the country's labour needs (Webbstock & Fisher, 2016). The changed HE organisation and the changed academic profession has an impact on the meaning in work experiences of academic employees.

HOD and DRR participants indicated that massification, in its current form, refuted the intended purpose of HE in SA. The mission of an organisation represents the basic goals, values and purposes of an organisation (Rosso et al., 2010). Implicitly, it was key to how the HOD and DRR participants interpreted the meaning in their work (Rosso et al., 2010). When employees perceive congruence between their core values and ideologies and that

of their organisation, the organisational mission serves as a source of meaning (Rosso et al., 2010). Consequently, the HOD and DRR participants expressed a loss of meaning in work pertaining to the freedom, value and purpose that was traditionally associated with HE. It suggested that the value and transcendental quality of traditional HE has been lost. The latter are spiritual values (Frankl, 2006). Meaning frustration for the HODs and DRR participants in the domain of Frankl's creative values was apparent and it may even have suggested an underlying existential vacuum for some of them (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006). This suggested that the psychological contract that these participants had with traditional HE has been violated (Rosso et al., 2010). When the psychological contract between an organisation and its employees has been formed based on the organisation's mission and ideologies, violations may evoke a stronger set of negative reactions (Rosso et al., 2010).

Despite the unsettling reality of the contemporary and changed HE sector and organisation, the academic employees who participated in the study appeared to be passionate about their work. This may be ascribed to a service orientation among these participants. Service to students was the most prominent source of meaning for all the participants, even more so for some HODs and DRRs. Despite that service is a natural part of a HE organisation's institutional mission (Purkey & Siegel, 2013), it was apparent that the participants derived satisfaction and pride from the services that they were rendering to students. Prosocial and altruistic values (e.g. compassionate love, care, appreciation, etc.) are fundamental to the service orientation and have a transcendental or spiritual quality. Transcendence represents the human ability to stretch beyond the self to fulfil meaning (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006). It is "transpersonal, intrinsically compassionate, altruistic, and serves the other" (Auger, 2014, p.12). These values enabled the participants to reach out to the students, to perform their duties and to make a difference in their lives. Service orientation illuminated meaning in work for the participants in the domains of Frankl's creative and experiential values (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006). "[W]hen employees perceive work in a spiritual light, their work is likely to take on a deeper sense of meaningfulness and purpose for them" (Rosso et al., 2010, p. 107). Paradoxically, service orientation was the foremost positive source of meaning for the majority of the participants, implying some congruence between their core values and ideologies and that of the contemporary HE organisation (Rosso et al., 2010). Research supports a positive relationship between service orientation and workers who seek positions that allow them to do good and help others (Pratt et al., 2013).

HOD participants also derived meaning from making a difference in their staff's lives. It included aspects like serving staff, satisfaction about their career development and the

capacity to be awed by their successes. Service to staff spoke about HODs' meaning in the domain of Frankl's creative and experiential values and, like service to students, has a transcendental or spiritual quality (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).

It became apparent that some LAE participants experienced meaning in work through teaching students for meaning, thus intuitively grasping that students' success may be supported by the hidden curriculum in the classroom (e.g. personal meaning and commitment). The logotherapy principles that were identified in LAEs' teaching for meaning endeavours were: an awareness of the tension and struggle between students past and future (healthy noöynamics); a belief in students' uniqueness and potential; an ability to help students to choose their own worthy goals; assistance with identity development; a willingness to offer support to students; encouragement to students to take responsibility to perform their duties (e.g. studies) (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006). Teaching for meaning falls in the domain of Frankl's creative and experiential values and has a transcendental quality. It was clear that some LAE participants have set an existential example for their students through teaching for meaning (Frankl, 2000).

LAEs are educational leaders in their classrooms. Setting an existential example for their students and teaching them towards meaning, resonates with what Mayfield and Mayfield (2012) have described as logo-leadership. At an organisational level, logo-leadership entails including logotherapeutic principles and techniques in work (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2012). Logo-leaders discover their own meaning and then assist employees to search for meaning or to actualise their meaning potentials (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2012). Logo-leaders are regarded as people who are "compassionate, highly emotionally intelligent, [have] an excellent grasp of the 'big picture' and possesses much self-efficacy" (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2012, p.12). Scholtz (2013, p.5) believed that logo-leaders

must first appreciate the importance and benefits of finding meaning in order to be motivated to search for their individual and specific meanings. And only when the [educational-logo-leader] has an appreciation for meaning, will [students] in turn be encouraged to find meaning".

It was considered as specifically important to create awareness about meaning in the second phase quantitative study to trigger the participants' will to meaning.

Compassionate love for students, as a source of meaning, appeared to be key to service to students and teaching them for meaning. Compassion and love for students was a fundamental source of meaning detected among all three groups of participants. Compassionate love for students was about an attitude (feelings, behaviours and

cognitions) of caring, concern and tenderness towards students; an understanding and appreciation of their uniqueness and potential; support and help for students in order for them to graduate; assistance with their identity development; and walking the extra mile for those who were perceived to be in need (Aron & Aron, 2012). It became apparent that compassionate love was independent from the other and connected to larger social networks. Meaning in this area found itself in the domain of Frankl's experiential values (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006). Compassionate love for students was thus a striking manifestation of self-transcendence (Frankl, 1988; Le, 2005).

5.5.1.2 Appreciation from students as a source of meaning

Appreciation received from students was a pertinent source of meaning for all three groups of participants, though with much more prominence among LAEs and HODs. Appreciation was also expressed in relation to students.

The literature asserted that appreciation was about acknowledging the value and meaning of something (significance) and the experience of PA in relation to it (Adler & Fagley, 2005). It was about the ability to envision the future, based on the present (Adler & Fagley, 2005). This contention reflected Frankl's healthy noödyamics and their motivational (pull) towards the future to actualise meaning potentials (Frankl, 2006). In essence, the aforementioned characteristics of appreciation mirrored the characteristics of meaningfulness as identified in the meaning experiences of NLAEs (see section 5.5.2.1 (a)).

Gratitude and appreciation as intrinsic rewards, played a significant role in LAEs and HODs' meaning experiences. Intrinsic rewards are key with respect to effort, motivation and job performance (Kahn & Fellows, 2013). As a benediction of life, the appreciation and gratitude received from students assisted the participants to experience meaning in the domain of Frankl's experiential values (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006). The capacity to appreciate and to show gratitude appeared to have helped some LAEs to focus away from the negativity inherent in their work environment to something that is more helpful. The ability mirrored the logotherapy technique of dereflection (see Chapter 6, section 6.8.2).

It was noted that not much appreciation was expressed between the participants and colleagues and that appreciation was absent in the context of the HE organisation in relation to its employees. This might have reflected something of the tensions inherent to the changed and changing HE organisation and their impact, not only on the function of

teaching and learning, but on the entire organisational system.

On another level, the absence of appreciation could have been ascribed to a phenomenon like competition and an emotion like envy that were indicated to be operating in the HE organisation. The aforementioned may have suggested a mentality of self-centeredness with respect to academic employees' perceived strive for status, power and success (Frankl, 1988, 2000). It may have reflected a career orientation towards work (Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin & Schwartz, 1997; Wrzesniewski, 2002).

Bellah et al. (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997; Wrzesniewski, 2002) stated that individuals relate to their work in three distinctive ways, or in any combination thereof, namely, that work is a job, work is a career or work is a calling. In work as a job, the focus is on financial rewards and necessity rather than pleasure or fulfilment; work is not considered as a positive part of life; and work is a means to make an income to enjoy time away from work. In work as a career, there is a deeper investment in work, than in work as a job; the focus is on advancement, monetarily and through career structures; it brings higher social standing and increased personal power within the occupation and higher self-esteem; the main goal is to maximise income, social status, power and prestige in the occupation. In work as a calling, work is not primarily for financial gain or career advancement; the focus is on enjoyment or deep fulfilment whilst doing the work; and it is socially valuable since it is an end in itself.

A sole job and/or career orientation to work, with "will to success, power, and advancement" as its primary focus, is not in line with Frankl's (1988, 2000) ideas about meaning. Frankl (1988, 2000) was not against success, but rather argued that success, happiness and power happen because of meaningful experiences. It suggested that a sole drive for success, status and power may prevent academic employees from expressing appreciation for the other.

The dynamics of a phenomenon like silo mentality may also be inhibiting the participants' ability to appreciate the other. Research emphasised a diverse array of relationships in the workplace that have a strong influence on the meaning of work, since they may provide opportunities for employees to express and reinforce valued identities at work (Rosso et al., 2010). The lack of appreciation suggested meaning frustration in the domains of Frankl's creative and experiential values for the academic employees who participated in the study (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).

5.5.1.3 The extrinsic and/or intrinsic value of the unique benefits of working in HE

It became apparent that HE organisations were offering unique benefits to LAE participants that played a significant role in their experiences of meaningfulness in relation to work. The benefits ranged from a flexible work environment and developmental opportunities, to good salaries, research incomes and paid holidays. Research supports an explicit relationship between meaning in work and rewards (extrinsic or intrinsic) (Kahn & Fellows, 2013).

Although benefits represented extrinsic value, it was clear that they provided the opportunity for LAE participants to experience intrinsic value adds (e.g. professional growth; work-life balance; going on holiday, or time with family, etc.). The unique benefits that the HE organisations offered helped LAE participants to actualise meaning potentials in the domains of Frankl's creative and experiential values (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).

5.5.1.4 The freedom of choice as a source of meaning

The freedom to choose how to view, react to and cope with challenges in the workplace played a significant role in the LAE and HOD participants' meaning experiences. The freedom of choice opened up options for some of the participants that ranged from working from their own value systems, performing their duties (taking responsibility) and serving the other (students, colleagues and staff) to achieve worthy goals inherent to their work. The aforementioned clearly reflected the participants' intuitive grasp of Frankl's (1988, 2000, 2006) principles and represented aspects that were intrinsically valuable to them. It provided work satisfaction and a sense of meaningfulness. Research emphasised intrinsic motivation as key to greater experience of meaningfulness in work, even in relation to work activities that were not inherently enjoyable (Rosso et al., 2010). The participants thus discovered meaning through the perceived congruence between the work activities and their autonomy, competence and self-concept (Rosso et al., 2010).

It was apparent that the participants' ability to choose how to react to challenging situations allowed them to focus their attention on the beautiful and/or positive things in their work environment rather than on the negative. The ability to choose where to focus their attention reflected the logotherapy technique of dereflection (see Chapter 6, section 6.8.2). The participants who managed to exercise their freedom of choice reported meaningfulness in the domain of Frankl's creative values (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006). It was obvious that it also provided them with guidelines (values) how to attitudinally deal with the challenges they encountered. This denoted a search for ultimate meaning (Das,

1998). Ultimately, the meaningfulness of work experiences was influenced by the participants' ability to enact their work congruently with their values (Rosso et al., 2010). Being able to exercise their freedom of choice also suggested that the participants may have been able to develop their capacity to cope with stress and change in the workplace (Pattakos & Dundon, 2017).

5.5.1.5 The calling in work as a source of meaning

The participants' love and passion for their work was another source of meaning for them. The awareness of their work's purpose and meaning helped some of them through difficult times. It was a source of inspiration and motivation and thus helped them to experience meaning in the domains of Frankl's creative and experiential values despite the difficulties encountered (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).

When work was regarded as a life's calling, it reflected deep connections between something of intrinsic value, service to others (e.g. teaching) and a sense of destiny and/or moral duty (e.g. do what you were appointed for) (Pratt et al., 2013). Research emphasises a life's calling as unique to each individual and that it is often seen as a path or connection to individuals' deepest selves (Rosso et al., 2010). However, not many instances were encountered where participants engaged with work as a life's calling.

It was apparent that a calling goes beyond a career because it is about the individual participants' responses to their lives as a whole. It was clear that their responses (attitudes) to the challenging work situations they encountered were key to their work satisfaction and fulfilment. It reflected the participants' search for ultimate meaning (Wong, 2012b) in the domains of Frankl's creative and attitudinal values (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006). Research showed that the enactment of a life's calling through work may be regarded as the highest form of subjective career success since it allows for the actualisation of personal beliefs through work (Rosso et al., 2010).

Although work as a calling was a transcendent summons for only a few participants, it gave way to a deep sense of purpose and meaning for those who had the orientation. Steger and Dik (2009, p. 316) stated that individuals who "approach their careers as a calling reported greater meaning in life, life satisfaction and career decision-making efficacy and fewer depressive symptoms than those who did not approach their career as a calling". Wrzesniewski (2002) suggested that good psychological health in various dimensions (e.g. optimism, mastery, conscientiousness) is associated with a calling orientation towards work. Therefore, it was important to give specific attention to work as

a transcendent call to enhance academic employees' meaning in life and work during the phase two quantitative study (see Chapter 6, section 6.3, Table 6.3).

5.5.1.6 Some of the characteristics of the HE organisational setting as a source of meaning frustration

Every HE organisation is an emotional place (Armstrong, 2007). Research asserted a negative relationship between meaning and NA, however, a positive relationship between NA and psychological distress (Steger, 2012). NA was regarded as a key indicator of the participants' experiences of meaning frustration in work even though the participants' NA was placed within the context of their experiences, observations and stories about the HE organisation (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009).

a Silo functioning

The phenomenon of silo functioning, a common experience in the HE organisation, was a strong theme of meaning frustration that emerged among NLAE and LAE participants (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009). It provided cocoon-like experiences for some, suggesting a sense of safety, security, love, warmth and positivity on the inside of the silo while on the outside, the experience was regarded as unsafe, filthy, stinky, insecure, cold and deprived of love. The aforementioned represented clear conditions for meaning frustration and/or existential vacuum (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).

LAE participants reported frustration with respect to meaningful collegial relationships due to loss of connection, significance and fulfilment. Research emphasised interaction or alignment between the self and the other as essential in the experience of meaning (Rosso et al., 2010). The work environment was perceived as fragmented and work was described as having an isolating quality since it separated employees from one another. Rosso et al., (2010) explained that the distance between co-workers deprives individuals from interpreting the meaning in their work through the social sense-making processes inherent to the organisation.

LAE participants indicated a perceived war between the various faculties due to differences expressed between them. The perceived competition among LAE participants also prevented them from sharing knowledge with each other. It was almost as if inter-discipline interaction "polluted" discipline-specific "cleanliness". LAE participants' meaning frustration in the domain of Frankl's experiential values was apparent in relation to their relationships with colleagues and inter-discipline/faculty interaction. A need was expressed by the LAE participants to cross the boundaries of the inter-departmental and

inter-faculty silos.

It was noted that NLAEs related most of their frustration in work to LAEs. The frustration was about the tension between academic (e.g. LAEs) and support staff based on NLAEs' perception that they were disregarded by some LAEs and that they were outsiders to the academic project (McKenna, 2016). It implied that the HE organisation did not acknowledge, authorise, appreciate and/or adequately support the work of NLAEs. This may have reflected the function of boundaries (e.g. silos as invisible barriers that contain collective sentiments in the fraternity of teaching and learning and that regulated and limited access and interaction with what is regarded as valuable resources (e.g. students), etc.) in the HE organisation (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009). The implications of silo mentality for the participants' meaning experiences in work were apparent. Meaning frustration for NLAEs entailed, for example, loss of authenticity, loss of esteem, diminished belongingness and loss of meaningful collegial relationships (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006; Rosso et al., 2010).

It was noted that HOD participants experienced high levels of frustration and unhappiness with respect to the poor delivery of service departments. From the boundary perspective, it was apparent that service departments operated in their own silos without much regard for and/or awareness about the impact of their poor delivery on the function of teaching and learning. This was suggestive of anxieties, conflicts and mental content (e.g. a narcissist group culture) in the HE organisation (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009; Czander, 1993). Since HOD participants were responsible for the management of certain boundaries in the HE, continuous poor delivery and lack of support led to less than satisfactory work experiences for them.

Silo mentality and functioning represented organisational dysfunction, fragmentation and disconnection, and frustrated the participants' sense of purpose and meaning in work in the domains of Frankl's creative and experiential values (Cilliers & Greyvenstein, 2012; Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).

b High administration loads and poor delivery by service departments

High administration loads were a major source of frustration for LAE and HOD participants. LAEs indicated that the high administration loads interfered and took away the focus from the core of their work (e.g. lecturing). It suggested a loss of time that culminated in frustration of meaning in the domain of Frankl's creative values (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).

It appeared as if some HOD participants felt dehumanised as a result of their high administration loads. It suggested a loss of time for creative work, unfulfilled need to work of more complexity, a loss of identity, a loss of esteem and a loss of personal value. This suggested that managerial methods may have been prioritised over people (Webbstock & Sehoole, 2016).

HOD participants communicated a distinct relationship between their increased administration loads, an unproductive mentality in the HE organisation and poor delivery by service departments. HOD participants perceived their numerous requests for improved service delivery to have fallen on deaf ears. This resulted in conflict with the service departments and a great deal of NA for some HOD participants. The unproductive mentality in the HE organisation was linked to a lack of accountability and a disregard for what was required in the HE organisation in order to support the function of teaching and learning. Responsibility and fulfilling one's duty is key to Frankl's (2006) ideas. This suggested meaning frustration in the domains of Frankl's creative and experiential values (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).

HOD participants emphasised a lack of consequences (e.g. performance management) in the HE organisation as a contributor to poor service delivery. Meaning frustration was indicated with respect to the domains of Frankl's (1988, 2000, 2006) creative and experiential values. The frustration was, for example, detailed as loss of integrity, loss of dignity, loss of competence, loss of esteem and a loss of collegial relationships giving way to feelings of disillusionment and cynicism. Research supports a positive relationship between job demands, lack of job resources and burnout (exhaustion and cynicism) for academic employees (cf. Rothmann & Essenko, 2007; Rothmann et al., 2008)

c The function of containment and incomplete emotional work as a source of meaning frustration

The relationship between the container and the contained is viewed as a dynamic, mutually influencing process to prevent unwanted feelings from spiralling out of control (Kets de Vries, 2010). It entailed psychosomatic containment of what was felt as to be damaged, uncomfortable, frightening or unwanted (Miller-pietroni, 1999). The function of the container was to tolerate (hold) what was felt as anxious and distressed and then to transform the content into something more workable and bearable (Kets de Vries, 2010).

It became apparent that LAEs, like the NLAEs, HODS and DRR participants, reflected a lot of the prevailing negativity in the HE organisation. The positive relationship between

NA and frustration of meaning is well established in the literature (Steger, 2012). It suggested that the participants may have had to contain the pain and suffering of change on behalf of the HE organisation and probably on behalf of the entire HE sector. What appeared as the LAEs' purging behaviour and projections onto the HE organisation's physical structure, were interpreted as the LAEs' struggle to tolerate and to work with the discomfort of the anxiety and distress of change that they may have experienced, hence their projection onto the building for containment.

Diamond and Allcorn (2009) explained that such a projection was an effective psychological mechanism to get rid of bad feelings and toxic emotions. In the context of the DAGs and in comparison with the other groups of participants, it was apparent that the building, as a container, was not sufficient for LAE participants to work with their emotions. It was also noted that, despite the moderator's attempts to help them in the form of detoxified projections, LAE participants, as a group, did not appear to be ready to do some of the emotional work that was needed. The emotional work, in relation to LAE participants, was interpreted as incomplete thus putting them at risk of landing in a vicious and downward negative cycle if left unattended. It not only suggested a negative impact on LAE participants' meaning experiences in the domain of Frankl's creative values, but ultimately also for their psychological health (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1969; Frankl, 1988, 2000).

Some HOD participants reported that they have frequently undertaken the task of containing LAEs' NA. Likewise, it became apparent that NLAEs were containing some LAEs' feelings of incompetence in relation to changes in the domain of teaching and learning, and what it requires in the classroom. If HODs and NLAEs cannot contain the NA for LAEs, they may become anxious and distressed (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009), and may not be able to assist in achieving the HE organisation's strategic objectives. It became apparent that some HOD participants feared that LAEs may leave the HE organisation and they were at risk of being abandoned by them. Some HODs had to transform LAEs' negative experience and NA into something positive for them.

Since it appeared as if the transformation process also served the function of curbing some HODs' fears about LAEs' perceived departure, a question emerged about the authenticity of the cognitive reframing process in the container. The question emerged since numerous references were made by LAE participants about the proverbial "golden carrot" that was presented to some but not to others. This suggested that the cognitive work that needed to be done in order to choose a positive attitude "cannot be transferred to someone else" (Pattakos & Dundon, 2017, p. 24). It was apparent that the function of

containment confronted HODs with their own fears, anxieties and distresses, with repercussions for their emotional and psychological health, if they lacked sound self-care strategies.

It also appeared as if HODs contained much of the negativity in the HE organisation with respect to the poor delivery by service departments. HOD participants' numerous requests for improved delivery that seemed to have fallen on deaf ears, left some of them with much NA, ranging from feelings of guilt and incompetence, to disillusionment and cynicism. Research illuminated the experience of competence and efficacy when individuals were able to overcome challenges successfully in their work (Rosso et al., 2010).

It appeared as if the HE organisation may have been a defective container for HODs, suggesting the inability of the organisation and its leaders to have contained the NA for HODs in an effective way (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009). This may be ascribed to LAEs and, more so, HODs' perception that the senior management corps were absent, or only provided minimal support to them. This has left some LAE and HOD participants with a feeling of being uncared for, sad and distressed that created the impression of a suffering experience and frustrated LAEs and HOD's' meaning in the domains of Frankl's creative and experiential values (Driver, 2007; Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).

d Positivity as a defence against negativity

The phenomenon of "positivity" was identified as a prominent defence mechanism that operated on both the individual and collective (social defences) levels. Defences are mental mechanisms that are used to help individual participants, or the collective, to function effectively in relation to anxieties, conflicts and painful feelings experienced when they are confronted with the realities of organisational life (Cilliers & May, 2010; Hirschhorn, 1990; Krantz, 2001). It was noted that the participants, as individuals and as groups, were reluctant to explore the perceived "badness" in the HE organisation and rather responded with "positivity" when something "negative" or "bad" was introduced. The dynamic underlying "positivity" was a wish for the "negativity" to go away by introducing something "positive" (Cilliers & May, 2010).

Defence mechanisms did not make the "negativity" dissolve the reality of the changed HE sector and organisation and the negative emotions, as part of the loss process, remained. A participant indicated that a mechanism like "positivity" has a demanding and strenuous character, implying that it requires hard work to maintain and that it depletes their energy.

This is supported by research that showed the paradoxical relationship between positive and negative statements/thinking (Association of Psychological Science, 2009).

This also suggested that less energy was available for the participant to focus on the actual work at hand and may explain the seemingly unproductive mentality in the HE organisation. Positivity, as a defence against negativity, has clear implications for meaning in work, suggesting that it may have blocked the participants' capacity for freedom of choice thus preventing them from actualising meaning potentials in challenging circumstances. Changing the "negativity" to "positivity" may be difficult if the cues inherent to a work situation are of a low quality and difficult to reinterpret (Vuori et al., 2012). This is suggestive of a need for awareness and authentic cognitive restructuring to aid the process of transforming negativity into something positive.

A summary of Chapter 5 is presented in section 5.6.

5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The aim of the chapter was to provide a discussion on the results of the phase one qualitative study. The results were discussed under the headings of meaning and meaning frustration. The sources of meaning that were identified and discussed were making a difference in students' development; appreciation received from students; the freedom of choice; work viewed as calling; working in HE offers unique benefits; meaning beyond the meaning in the moment; and making a difference in staff's lives. The sources of meaning frustration that were identified and discussed were NA as an indicator of meaning frustration; concern about HE change outcomes and purpose; students' unfulfilled basic needs; LAEs as a container for the prevailing negativity in the HE organisation; silo functioning and impaired inter-personal and inter-disciplinary relationships; high administration loads and poor service delivery; pressure of qualification improvement, academic competition and professional envy/jealously; positivity as a defence against negativity; and a seeming lack of support from leadership.

Thereafter, an integrated discussion on the sources of meaning and meaning frustration was presented with special focus on those themes and/or sub-themes that supported the development of the intervention. It will be indicated in Chapter 6 how the findings from the study were used and how they assisted with the development of the preliminary design for the intervention and the structure and content of the intervention programme. In addition, it may become apparent in Chapters 6 and 7 how it supported the programme implementation and how it illuminated the understanding of the findings in the third phase

quantitative study.

It was also apparent that Chapter 5 provided a wealth of information in its descriptions of the HE organisational setting and its dynamic characteristics or systems of meaning and meaning frustration. Recommendations based on these findings, in combination with the findings from the quantitative study in Chapter 7, will be made in Chapter 8 with respect to future HE organisational developmental interventions.

CHAPTER 6: THE LOGOTHERAPY BRIEF GROUP-BASED INTERVENTION

A painter tries to convey to us a picture of the world as he sees it; an ophthalmologist tries to enable us to see the world as it really is. The logotherapist's role consists of widening and broadening the visual field of the [client] so that the whole spectrum of potential meaning becomes conscious and visible to him (Viktor Frankl).

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 6 is about the development and implementation of the logotherapy brief group-based intervention. It includes a discussion on logotherapy as a meaning-centered approach; the “therapy” in logotherapy and its relevancy for intervention in an organisational context; and logotherapy as a brief group-based approach where after the intervention programme is presented. The intervention is supported by discussions on the following: the significance of context and then the presentation of the contextual model; the approach followed at the time of programme implementation; and the basic techniques of logotherapy as applied during the implementation of the programme. Ultimately, Chapter 6 is intended to provide an overview of the development of the logotherapy brief group-based intervention, its basic assumptions and supporting structures.

The following is a discussion on logotherapy as a meaning-centered approach.

6.2 LOGOTHERAPY AS A MEANING-CENTERED APPROACH

Logotherapy is established in the domains of individual and family psychotherapy and small sharing groups, with a growing application in the organisational sphere, specifically with respect to change, leadership and management (cf. Burger 2007, 2012; Lantz, 1998; Martínez & Flórez, 2014; Smallman, 2014). As an existential psychotherapy (see Chapter 3, section 3.2), the existential dynamics embedded in logotherapy “examines human existence in terms of a correlation between a person’s meaning orientation and their existential fulfilment” (Asagba & Marshall, 2016, p. 44). Therefore, “there is a correlation between obstacles to this meaning-orientation and existential frustration” (Asagba, & Marshall, 2016, p. 44).

Existential psychotherapy enhances individuals’ capacity for being reflective about and changing their perspective on the world in order to pursue their will to meaning

(Smallman, 2014). The ultimate goal of logotherapy, as a meaning-centered psychotherapy, is to help individuals to discover meaning in life (e.g. find answers on the nature and reasons for living) (Martínez & Flórez, 2014). Logotherapy, as a therapeutic tool, is thus useful in helping individuals change behaviour and attitudes (Hirsch, 1995). It is practical and action-orientated and allows individuals to take responsibility for their behaviour (Hirsch, 1995).

Logotherapy as a “reflexive, therapeutic and directive approach requires both philosophical reflection as well as the problematization of individuals’ assumptions about, interpretations of and interactions in their organizational world” (Smallman, 2014, p. 2). Although individuals can find meaning in all circumstances, emphasis was placed on five themes that were self-discovery (reflexivity); choice (assuming relative freedom from emancipation); uniqueness (the acceptance of polity within an organisation); responsibility (for one’s own reactions); and self-transcendence (to look after the best interest of others) (Smallman, 2014). As a meaning-centered approach, logotherapy thus drew from the inner spiritual resources of creativity, hope, the capacity for choice and the making of responsible, adaptive and proactive decisions in order to live a meaningful life (Armstrong, 2016; Schulenberg et al., 2010).

The “therapy” in logotherapy and its relevance for intervention in an organisational context is illuminated in the section below.

6.3 THE “THERAPY” IN LOGOTHERAPY AND ITS RELEVANCE FOR INTERVENTION IN AN ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

“The application of psychotherapeutic approaches in organization and management studies is well established” (Korotov, 2010; Smallman, 2014, p. 3). Smallman (2014) understood the term logotherapy to be ambiguous. He argued that, in Frankl’s definition of existential psychotherapy, “meaning is the governing principle of the universe, the principle for which we yearn. Given the uncertain etymology of logos and that therapy implies the curing of ills, which is only part of Frankl’s ambition, Logotherapy is arguably a misleading term” (Smallman, 2014, p. 6).

Smallman (2014) based his argument about the ambiguity of “logotherapy” on three assertions. First, logotherapy “is much more about the analysis of human existence and humans may self-transcend and find meaning through fulfilment and hope”. Second, “as such, it is more about the development of a humanist and meaningful *Weltanschauung* (view onto the world) in which creative and constructive energies are harnessed in pursuit

of growth”. Third, “the aim of therapy is to move individuals away from destructive or disruptive thoughts or behaviours leading to feelings or actions associated with futility, despair, apathy, or cynicism” (Smallman, 2014, p. 6).

Bugental (Leontiev, 2016) described two stages fundamental to any psychotherapeutic process. The first is the analytical stage and the second is what he referred to as “ontogogy”, which starts when the first stage is over (Leontiev, 2016). During the first stage, the focus of the therapist’s work is on the client’s complaints, like the academic employees’ meaning frustration embedded in their work experience within the HE organisation (e.g. see Chapter 5, section 5.5.3). Bugental (1999 as cited in Leontiev, 2016, p. 278) regarded the complaints as individuals’ (or academic employees’) “inner blocks that psychologically invalidate him or her, preventing them from achieving full awareness and hindering their living”.

Since psychological phenomena are discussed in the interpersonal context of therapy, psychological processes are mobilised and inextricably enacted in the therapeutic encounter itself (Mills, 2001). This implies that the therapeutic process takes place between two or more people and is inevitably under the influence of numerous

conscious and unconscious mental forces, cognitive states, affective conditions, subjective and intersubjective perceptions, persuasions, suggestibility, interpretations and distortions and the explicit and cryptic expectations, hopes, fears, apprehensions, disappointments, confusion and anxieties that saturate any helping dynamic (Mills, 2001, p. 4).

Intrinsically, the task of the therapist is to “unfold, elaborate and remove resistances existing in the client, namely, the ways he or she strives to get rid of existential anxiety” (Leontiev, 2016, p. 278). Bugental (Leontiev, 2016) argued that the methodology applied in this stage does not radically differ from the methodology applied in psychoanalysis and other in-depth approaches. Mills (2001) argued that, in the domain of logotherapy, the search for meaning, ontological security and philo-psychic holism remain the primary therapeutic aims despite the presence of these unconscious causal attributions and processes.

“Ontogogy”, the second stage of the psychotherapeutic process, is deduced from the terms “ontos”, “being” and “pedagogy” that suggests it is about “a leading out into being” (Bugental, 1999 as cited in Leontiev, 2016, p. 278). According to Bugental (Leontiev, 2016), the therapist’s work is thus focused on helping clients to get in touch with their lives to discover and fulfil the potential of living. Bugental (1999 as cited in Leontiev, 2016, p.

278) argued that the latter task seems to exceed the competence of psychotherapy since “ontology is not a therapeutic procedure as such”. His argument was based on the assertion that psychotherapy is just one of many tasks included in an intervention because an intervention is a composite of different tasks, of which psychotherapy is merely one. For example, psychotherapists sometimes inform clients, sometimes consult them and/or train, and/or teach, and/or enlighten them, and so forth (Leontiev, 2016).

In the context of existential psychotherapy that includes logotherapy, psychotherapists have an additional task, namely, “ontology”, or what Bugental (1999 as cited in Leontiev, 2016) also referred to as life guidance or life coaching. Leontiev (2016) concluded that, from a methodological standpoint, psychotherapy, as the entire professional activity fulfilled by therapists, appeared to be rather heterogeneous. This contention is reflected in Korotov, Florent-Treacy, Kets de Vries and Bernhardt’s (2012) views on leadership developmental coaching. These authors explained that the aforementioned domain is typically described as “occupying a theoretical space at the intersection of counseling, consulting, and teaching” (Korotov et al., 2012, p. xv). These authors argued that, although coaches have to be familiar with the organisation and its business structures and requirements, coaches are, in many ways, more like teachers or counsellors than consultants.

Smallman, (2014, p. 8) maintained that “in common with pragmatic approach with most existential psychotherapists, Frankl drew on a range of therapeutic interventions with his clients”. Leontiev (2016) also stated that existential therapists use flexibility and a broad spectrum of devices and approaches in their work. It was emphasised that “existential psychotherapy creates an additional layer or level of work, above the more traditional layers, and the tools of existential analysis are added to, rather than substitute, the methods elaborated in other schools and approaches” (Leontiev, 2016, p. 281).

It is thus clear that existential psychotherapy constitutes an alternative or complementary approach to contemporary forms of psychological treatments because it is steadfast in providing clients with a viable outlook toward living that promotes increased self-understanding, wellness and psychological development (Mills, 2001). Logotherapy and its supporting techniques, are in a good position to offer value to practice-based studies in organisations because of its “philosophical basis and view of development of the self in a process of becoming” (Smallman, 2014, p. 8).

It is also apparent that logotherapy is not dedicated to any specific approach and that it rather encourages therapists to be flexible in their approaches and to be nimble in thought

(Smallman, 2014). However, the focus stays on helping individuals to think about illuminating their lives and seeking wisdom through using mental practices which are much more ancient than psychotherapy (Leontiev, 2016; Smallman, 2014). Therefore, the logotherapy approach to intervention offers explicatory potential in the organisational context for three reasons. First, it may offer an alternative conceptualisation of organisational life; second, it offers investigative potential through implementing some of its tools or techniques; and third, it specifically offers learning potential, not only for individuals, but also for organisations (Smallman, 2014). The “therapy” in logotherapy, as a meaning-centered approach, is in a good position to undertake the phenomenon of academic employee meaning and/or meaning frustration experiences embedded in work in HE organisational settings.

Logotherapy as a brief group-based approach is discussed in the section below.

6.4 LOGOTHERAPY AS A BRIEF GROUP-BASED APPROACH

Berg and Landreth (1990) asserted that the trend towards the application of group intervention procedures in meeting the needs of individuals is growing. This is stimulated by greater acceptance of preventative approaches, by difficulties encountered and by increased recognition of the effectiveness of group intervention. Sufficient evidence (extensive research and group treatment experience) has established the worth of group intervention procedures as a part of the process to help individuals grow (Berg & Landreth, 1990). This means that group intervention may be more helpful to individuals than individual intervention (Berg & Landreth, 1990).

Group-based interventions offer many benefits. Generally, any group format acknowledges that human beings are social animals and that they live interpersonally and in groups (Berg & Landreth, 1990; Oei & Dingle, 2008). Logotherapy, in the format of a group-based intervention, is uniquely positioned to deal effectively with existential concerns since it may offer a normalising group process which is embedded in a matrix for immediate social reality (Berg & Landreth, 1990; Robotmili, Sohrabi, Shahrak, Talepasand, Nokani & Hasani, 2015).

Intrinsically, the group may afford indirect learning from other members; create awareness about the similarity of problems experienced; lessen inhibition by participating in the group format; hear others’ ideas about how they solve their problems; enhance understanding; provide feedback from other group members and peers (a potentially more valid source) rather than therapists that challenge certain thinking patterns (Graber, 2004; Oei & Dingle,

2008).

The group format provides members the opportunity to discover the value of giving and receiving emotional support and encouragement and better functioning members can serve to model more adaptive strategies (Berg & Landreth, 1990; Oei & Dingle, 2008). In addition, crucial interactive processes that are engendered by group cohesion also allow for unstructured discussions in the here-and-now, allowing for relevant topics to be included, for example, healthy coping, resiliency to stress, work-life balance and so forth (Jennings, 1987). These discussions thus happen within the parameters of the group objectives. But then again,

effective dialogue ... requires empathy, which facilitates the interconnectedness and interrelatedness from which genuine insight stems. Empathetic dialogue enables the creation of community through diffusing conflict and promoting mutual understanding, since it enables groups to uncover underlying orderliness and congruence in seemingly irreconcilable positions (Smallman, 2014, p. 4).

Research indicates that group members attribute much of their learning and change to group factors (Oei & Dingle, 2008). Nonetheless, groups have limitations and group factors and underlying processes may hinder the objectives and outcomes of a group (Berg & Landreth, 1990; Oei & Dingle, 2008). For example, factors that may interfere with group processes are: individuals who feel unsafe in the group and who are not ready to emotionally invest in the experience; individuals who are too angry and hostile and who may struggle to benefit from the beneficial factors in the group; and individuals who are not suited to groups such as those who undermine the energy of the group and interfere with relationship formation (Berg & Landreth, 1990).

Bion (1961) asserted that the term “group therapy” can have two meanings. “It can refer to the treatment of a number of individuals assembled for special therapeutic sessions, or it can refer to a planned endeavor to develop in a group the forces that lead to smoothly running co-operative activity” (Bion, 1961, p. 11). Bion (1961, p. 11) argued that the treatment of “individuals assembled in groups is usually in the nature of explanation of neurotic trouble, with reassurance; and sometimes it turns mainly on the catharsis of public confession”. Though, the treatment of “groups is likely to turn on the acquisition of knowledge and experience of the factors which make for a good group spirit” (Bion, 1961, p. 11).

Group intervention processes may be utilised in both short-term, time-limited groups, as well as in open-ended and longer-term groups (Lantz, 1998). Mills (2001) noted that,

depending on the needs and capacities of each client, existential therapists may choose from a range of approaches, from problem-focused approaches that address specific issues posed by the client which are end, goal, or solution-orientated, or they may structure the therapeutic environment as an on-going open-ended pursuit of philosophical insight, analysis and self-critique.

The existential therapist has to be flexible with respect to orientation and approach, with the client's specific needs and difficulties taking priority over the therapist's preferences (Mills, 2001).

Whether problem-focused or long-term oriented, philosophical strategies may conform to a variety of different theoretical positions including meaning or conceptually based orientations, cognitive-behavioral, rational-emotive, phenomenological-existential, psychodynamic, interpersonal or intersubjective and systemic perspectives (Mills, 2001, p. 19).

What is important though is the way in which the therapist endeavours to structure the relationship and brings the client's associated material under the scrutiny of philosophical rigour (Mills, 2001). This may, in all likelihood, entail addressing an issue on multiple levels of qualitative analysis including examining the phenomenology of the lived experience (Mills, 2001).

For this study, a brief and time limited intervention approach was followed. The literature provided evidence with respect to the effectiveness of a brief intervention that was intentionally designed to accomplish a meaningful set of objectives in a limited period of time (e.g. over a four to 12 week period) (cf. Bloom, 2001; Despland, Drapeau & De Roten, 2005). In its most extreme form, a self-contained psychotherapy session with a duration of 45 minutes is an example of an ultra-brief intervention (Bloom, 2001; Slive, McElheran & Lawson, 2008). This challenged and altered the perspective of the equal proven effect of longer and time-unlimited interventions (Bloom, 2001; Slive et al., 2008) though, little information was available on the practical value (effect sizes) of ultra-brief therapies (Despland et al., 2005). The initial decision for a brief and time limited approach was based on the literature reviews.

The literature illuminated the typical brief group intervention that addressed a variety of topics to be conducted over a three to eight-week period, with an average session duration of 90 minutes that took place on a weekly basis (cf. Bloom, 2001; Smock, Trepper, Wetchler, McCollum, Ray & Pierce, 2008). It was noted that the typical logotherapy group intervention that addressed a variety of topics with diverse populations

was conducted over a four to 15 week period, with session durations varying between 45 and 120 minutes and covering a range of activities (cf. Aghajani, 2015; Amirifard & Yahyayie, 2017; Armstrong, 2016; Ebrahimi, Bahari, Zare-Bahramabadi, 2014; Hosseinsadeh-Khezri, Rabarian, Sarichloo, Lankarani, Jahanihashemi, & Rezaee; 2014; Kang, Im, Kim, Kim, Song & Sim, 2009; Mason, 2014a). A session duration of 90 minutes was the most prevalent (cf. Aghajani, 2015; Amirifard & Yahyayie, 2017; Armstrong, 2016; Ebrahimi et al., 2014; Hosseinsadeh-Khezri et al.; 2014; Kang et al., 2009; Mason, 2014a). Usually, sessions were held once a week and, more often than not, followed a psycho-educational approach (cf. Aghajani, 2015; Amirifard & Yahyayie, 2017; Armstrong, 2016; Ebrahimi et al., 2014; Hosseinsadeh-Khezri et al.; 2014; Mason, 2014a). Although most of these studies reported a positive impact, effect sizes were not readily reported.

Information about logotherapy brief group-based intervention programmes with respect to academic employees was not available. The following are two examples from the literature to illuminate the application of logotherapy brief group-based intervention programmes.

The Aghajani (2015) study investigated the effect of group counselling with a logotherapeutic approach on happiness and quality of life of women heads of Iranian households. The study has been quasi-experimental with a pretest-posttest control group design. Participants of the experimental group attended 10 sessions of group logotherapy. The finding was that group logotherapy can be used as an independent method and/or along with other therapies for the enhancement of happiness and quality of life (Aghajani, 2015). An effect size of 0.534 was reported for the effect of group counselling on happiness, whereas an effect size of 0.579 was reported for the effect of group counselling on quality of life (Aghajani, 2015).

The Kang et al. (2009) study was another example of a brief group logotherapy intervention. In this study, the effects of a logotherapy education programme were evaluated. It followed a non-equivalent control group, non-synchronised design with adolescents with cancer in a Korean hospital. The programme consisted of five daily sessions of 20 to 30 minute in small groups of two to three participants over a one-week period. The finding was that logotherapy was effective in reducing suffering and improving the meaning in life. No effect sizes were reported for this study.

The discussion in section 6.5 focuses on the contextual model that supported the development and implementation of the intervention programme. It was informed by the literature study in Chapter 2, the findings from the phase one qualitative study, the generic

developmental tasks of adulthood in relation to meaning and purpose, and the characteristics and training of the researcher to support the implementation of the intervention programme.

6.5 CONTEXTUAL MODEL THAT SUPPORTED THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERVENTION

The following section first discusses the significance of context for intervention, whereafter the contextual model is presented and discussed.

6.5.1 The importance of context for an intervention

In general, interventions that are aimed at effecting some type of change are likely to be complex, programmatic and context specific (Campbell et al., 2007; Rychetnik, Frommer, Hawe & Shiell, 2002). Complex interventions are “build up from a number of components which may act both independently and interdependently” (Campbell et al., 2007, p. 455). However, the evidence for their effectiveness should be sufficiently comprehensive to embody their intricacy (Rychetnik et al., 2002). Wong (1997) noted the importance of taking context into consideration when working with a phenomenon like the meaning and/or meaning frustration experiences of academic employees (see Chapter 3, section 3.6). Therefore, context was regarded as a key factor for the development and implementation of the intervention (cf. Brijball Parumasur, 2012; Campbell et al., 2007; Higgins, 2007; *Contextual Factors of Implementation Planning Template*, 2011; Parmelli et al., 2011).

Context typically refers to the broader social, cultural, economic and political environments and/or a specific organisational environment or setting (Mbindyo, Gilson, Blaauw & English, 2009). In the organisational sphere, contextual factors that were considered for intervention design and implementation were characteristic aspects of the organisation and its employees, for example, culture, morale, employee experience, competing priorities, scope and intensity of the phenomenon studied; status of the intervention in the organisation; resources that were made available for the intervention; aspects of the organisational system, such as individual characteristics and structures among others (Jackson & Waters, 2005).

To understand the context (e.g. HE environment) in a more comprehensive way, it was also necessary to give attention to some of the dynamic characteristics embedded in the HE organisational setting, such as the presenting internal social dynamics (e.g. social relations and interactions such as behaviour of individuals, small groups, departments

and faculties); the intricate playing field between leaders and followers; emotional experiences of work and how it interacts with the nature and structure of the organisation; and various other unconscious and invisible processes and structures that influenced the behaviour of individuals and groups in the organisation (Franklin, 2003; Kets de Vries, 2004). The contextual factors were the time and space within which the intervention took place and the circumstances in which the programme was implemented (Dieleman, Gerretsen & Van der Wilt, 2009).

Campbell et al. (2007, p. 455) argued that

[h]ow a [problem and/or phenomenon] is caused and sustained, whether it is susceptible to intervention, and how any intervention could work may all depend on the context. This means that understanding context is crucial not only when designing interventions but also when assessing whether an intervention that was effective in one setting might work in others.

In support, Brijball Parumasur (2012, p. 3) claimed that “[o]rganisations do not accept or reject all interventions” and Grimm and Lee (2005) stressed that organisational context and its basic dynamics should be taken into consideration when interventions are designed and implemented because, when contextual factors are overlooked, this may have an adverse impact on decision making and on the implementation efforts and outcomes of intervention programmes. If the relationship between an intervention programme and context cannot be fully controlled, then it should at least be acknowledged and its likely impact reported (Wells, Williams, Treweek, Coyle & Taylor, 2012).

For this study, the context embodied some of the characteristics of the contemporary HE environment as described in Chapter 2 and, more specifically, aspects closely related to the HE organisational environment or setting, as described by the findings from the phase one qualitative study (see Chapter 5). In essence, the information on context helped the researcher to develop an understanding of the academic employees’ meaning and meaning frustration experiences in relation to the HE organisational setting. It also helped her to be more aware of the academic employees’ reality. It was also important to understand something of the HE organisation and its environmental challenges, opportunities and constraints before trying to intervene (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009; Johns, 2006).

The contextual model is presented in section 6.5.2.

6.5.2 The contextual model

Best practice is to develop an intervention systematically by using the best available evidence and appropriate theory and then to test it using a carefully phased approach (Craig, Dieppe, Macintyre, Michie, Nazareth & Petticrew, 2008). Table 6.1 provides a summary of the features of the intervention. The summary is based on the complexity spectrum of Wells et al. (2012).

Table 6.1
Features of the intervention
(Wells et al., 2012)

Characteristic	Simple	Complex
Number of components within intervention		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-intervention measure (pretest) • Readings on Frankl • Intervention programme • Post-intervention measure (posttest) • Assessment of participants' learnings and/or discoveries
Intensity of intervention		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependent on the HE organisation setting characteristics and dynamic processes • Dependent on the design and duration of the intervention • Dependent on the characteristics of individual group members • Dependent on group member participation and underlying group processes • Dependent on the characteristics of the logotherapist
Clarity regarding the components of the intervention		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less well defined components, • not delivered in a particular order
Degree of confidence in the 'active ingredient'		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown 'active ingredient', even if the components are known
Timing of intervention	Series of single events	
Number of people involved in the delivery	One	
Clarity of responsibility in intervention	Clearly defined	
Number of quasi-experimental groups involved		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four

Professional skill involved		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professionally skilled, intervention implementation dependent on logotherapist's skills
Human interaction required to deliver the intervention		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly dependent on human interaction
Setting	Single well defined setting, contained space away from normal business and possible interruption	
Level of active participation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High, individual and group-based intervention and activity
Sphere of impact	Narrow, influence on individual participants	
Clarity of main outcome		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ambiguous outcomes, for example, higher/lower sense of meaning and purpose, higher/lower search for meaning and purpose and reduction/increase in symptoms in relation to psychological distress

From Table 6.1, it was clear that the outcome of the intervention was dependent on a myriad of factors (e.g. HE organisation setting; design of the intervention; time available for the intervention programme, total duration of the intervention, characteristics of the participants; etc.). Pawson et al. (as cited in Wells et al., 2012) argued that interventions are messy since they are typically based on particular theories and given specific titles, hence their delivery is shaped by local circumstances (e.g. organisational setting characteristics and dynamic processes, participant characteristics, logotherapist characteristics, member participation, group processes, etc.). The messiness or organised chaos suggested the possibility of unintended intervention outcomes (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009; Wells et al., 2012). Nonetheless, this was of less importance since it could be anticipated for many interventions (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009; Wells et al., 2012). Though what was important, was the “messiness” to be acknowledged, understood and reported (Wells et al., 2012).

Delineating the numerous factors that impacted the outcome of the intervention, it was apparent that, to a certain extent, the individual characteristics of the participants were unknown. However, what was known about them was reported in Chapter 4 as their

overview characteristics (see section 4.3.4.4, Table 4.2). In addition to the information provided in Table 4.2, it was noted that the participants' ages ranged between 29 and 65 years, with a mean age of 48.14 years ($n = 21$; $SD = 10.85$). This suggested that they have found themselves in the stages of early, middle and late adulthood (Gerdes, Louw, Van Ede & Louw, 1998). This also applies to the participants who have participated in the phase one qualitative study (see Chapter 5, Table 5.1).

Early adulthood typically stretches from approximately the age of 20 to 39 years; middle adulthood from 40 to 59 years; and late adulthood begins at about 60 years (Gerdes et al., 1998). However, Gerdes et al., (1998) argued for the age limits not to be applied too rigidly since many people may say that they feel years younger than their chronological age, therefore the saying, "You are as old as you feel" (Gerdes et al., 1998, p. 472).

The following is Table 6.2 that provides an overview of the typical developmental tasks of early, middle and late adulthood (adapted from Gerdes et al., 1998; Raubenheimer, Louw, Van Ede & Louw, 1998).

Table 6.2
Developmental tasks of adulthood

Adulthood			
Tasks	Early (29 to 39 years)	Middle (40 to 59 years)	Late (60 years and above)
Relating to the self	To achieve independence and responsibility To stabilise one's identity To define one's values To develop intimacy and commitment	To adjust to physical changes, such as those relating to appearance, physical strength and health To redefine one's self-concept and identity To reassess one's values and philosophy of life To develop generativity (e.g. to produce goods and deliver services for the maintenance of society and to transmit culture and its values to the next generation)	To adjust to physical changes Maintaining intellectual vitality
Relating to interpersonal relationships	To choose a partner To establish a satisfying and meaningful relationship with one's partner To become a parent and to raise children	To learn to live with one's partner and physical changes To share common interests with one's partner To help children to become independent and be supportive to	To adjust to changes in the spouse and to his or her death To establish affiliation with peers

Adulthood			
		them in their new roles To adjust to and accept responsibility for aging parents	
Relating to work and leisure time activities	To become established in a career To develop a pattern of recreation	To find renewed job-satisfaction To become a mentor for younger colleagues To prepare for eventual retirement To expand social activities as a preparation for retirement	To adjust to retirement and changes in income To establish satisfactory housing and physical life circumstances To re-channel energy to new roles and activities
Relating to the community	To find a place in the community and to contribute towards it	To become more involved in the community and civic affairs To act as mediator and bridge between generations To act as conserving force and moral watchdog in the community	To fulfil social and community obligations

Table 6.2 emphasised the establishment of values during early adulthood and the reassessment of values and philosophy of life during middle adulthood. McDonald et al., (2012) asserted that, over a life span, values and sources of meaning shift. Hence, “the struggle to discover and realize meaning continues throughout life” (McDonald et al., 2012, p. 358) (also see Chapter 5; section 5.4.1.4).

Based on the key role that values play in Frankl’s theory (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.2), it was assumed that individuals during middle adulthood would somehow give more attention to purpose and meaning in life. In support, the participant characteristics showed that almost two thirds (66.67%) of them were 45 years of age and older, suggesting that the majority were in the stages of middle and late adulthood at the time of intervention implementation (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.4.4, Table 4.2).

Gerdes et al. (1998) argued that the development of adults was influenced by many factors. Some factors relate to particular characteristics of the individual (e.g. age, gender, personality, intelligence, health), whilst other factors relate to environmental influences such as poverty or affluence, urban or rural living and cultural prescriptions of socially acceptable behaviour (Gerdes et al., 1998). There is a constant interaction between the

individual's characteristics and the impact of the environment. Wong (1997) maintained that the social context that individuals were raised in played a key role in shaping their cognitions, perceptions and behaviours with respect to their sense of meaning and/or meaning frustration. In support, Levinson, Weber and Clark (1980 as cited in Gerdes et al., 1998, p. 476) noted that adult development was "the story of the evolving process of mutual interpenetration of self and the world". Wong (1997) also felt that individuals' meaning and/or meaning frustration systems are highly idiosyncratic since they are largely the product of their unique personal histories and mental makeup (e.g. cognitions, personality, etc.). Following on the above, it was apparent that taking into consideration and interpreting adult development resonated with the basic assumptions of the existential phenomenological perspective (see Chapter 3, section 3.2).

Figure 6.1 gives an overview of the factors that influenced the participants' development and the interaction between the factors (Gerdes et al., 1998, p. 476).

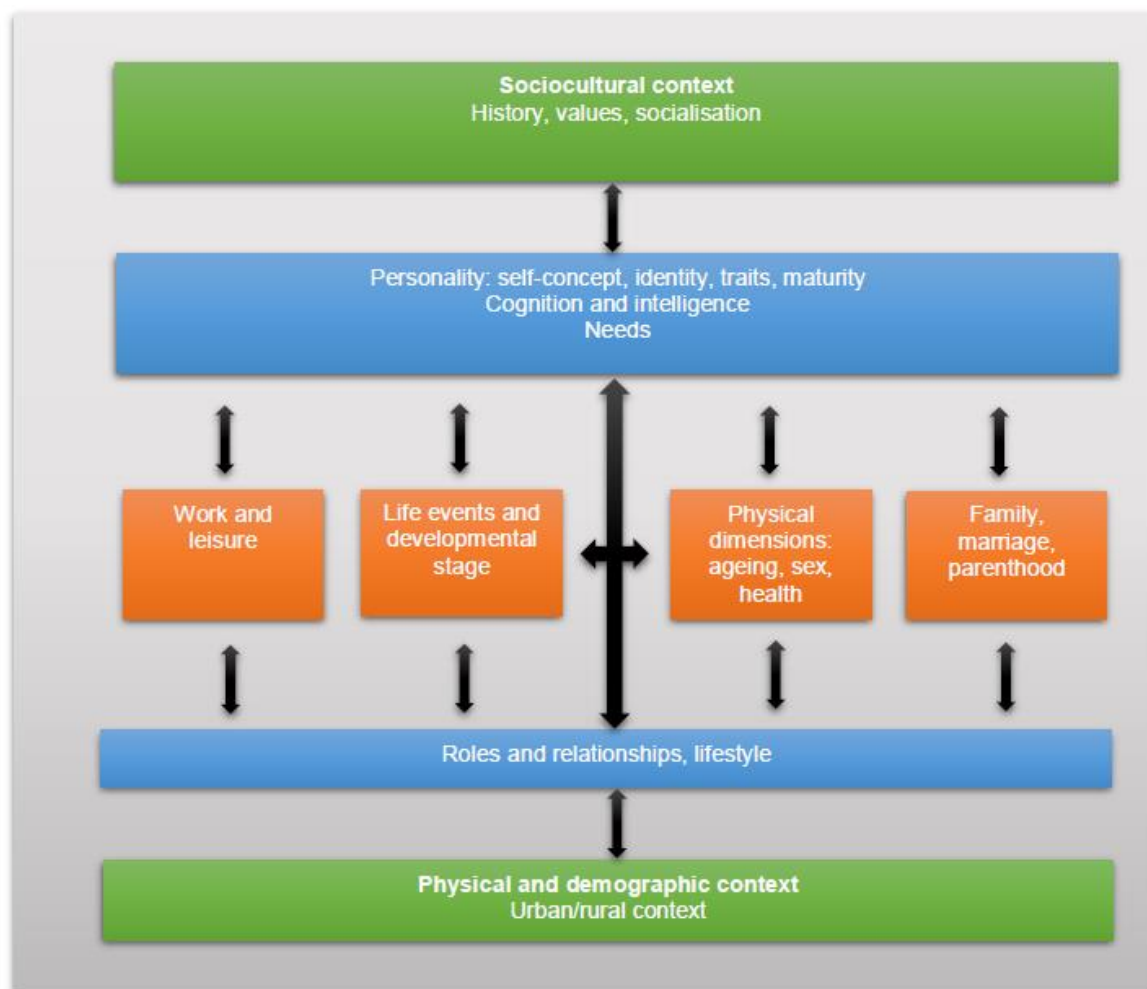


Figure 6.1. *Factors influencing adult development*

Figure 6.1 illuminated the various facets of adult development and the dynamic nature thereof. Adult development and maturity theories described the concept of maturity as “a clear comprehension of life’s purpose, directedness and intentionality, which contributes to the contention that life is meaningful” (Wikipedia, 2017b). Gerdes et al. (1998) maintained that increasing age is no guarantee of maturity and a sense of purpose and meaning, since some people attain maturity early and others, never. Some people slowly mature as they progress through life and meet its normative challenges (Gerdes et al. 1998). However, maturity and a sense of meaning and purpose come for others as a result of pain and suffering that culminate in a special kind of wisdom (Gerdes et al. 1998; Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).

Ultimately, “[a]dult development is a highly complex and a never-ending process. At no point is a stage reached, when there is no longer anything to learn or something new to cope with, thus constantly providing opportunities for psychological development and greater maturity” (Gerdes et al., 1998, p. 584). This suggested the task of rebuilding meaning subsystems to be never ending, because of the ever changing self (McDonald et al., 2012). Clearly, advancing age and ongoing compensation due to multiple losses that come with advancing age also play a role (McDonald et al., 2012). This supports Wong’s (2011) contention that individuals’ meaning and purpose in life may change over their life span (a life’s calling), depending on various factors (e.g. developmental stage, station in life, demands of each situation, etc.) (see Chapter 5, section 5.4.1.4).

The researcher’s characteristics and professional training were factors that influenced the choice of intervention and the design, implementation and outcomes thereof. It was noted that the researcher’s basic characteristics (e.g. citizenship, race, gender, home language) mirrored the majority of participant characteristics in the study (see Chapter 4, Table 4.2).

Prior to the development of the intervention programme, the researcher developed two areas of skills that were rational emotive (REBT) and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) (2009), and Logotherapy (2010-2012). The Albert Ellis Institute (New York, USA) offered a three-day Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) Primary Certificate Practicum and a four-day REBT Advanced Certificate Practicum. Both the primary and advanced certificate practicums were successfully completed on site (2009).

The Primary Certificate Practicum assisted with understanding and applying the REBT theory of emotional disturbance and change; applying the ABC framework (A: activating event, B: beliefs, C: emotional, behavioural and cognitive components about A) to a wide range of clinical issues; identifying and restructuring client’s dysfunctional beliefs; and

constructing and teaching clients how to have new adaptive thoughts, emotions and behaviours (Dryden, DiGiuseppe & Neenan, 2003). The practicum included individual supervision with a REBT certified supervisor in small groups.

The Advanced Certificate Practicum furthered knowledge of RE and CBT. It also assisted with the application of techniques for disputing irrational beliefs seen in various clinical disorders; designing strategies for working with clients who are resistant; and assessing when to use behavioural and emotional approaches with clients. The practicum included individual supervision with a REBT certified supervisor in small groups.

The Beck Institute for Cognitive Therapy and Research (Philadelphia, USA) offered an intensive on-site three day training programme. The training programme was successfully completed in 2009 at the Beck Institute. It assisted with understanding the cognitive model; conceptualising clients according to the cognitive model; applying techniques to engage clients in treatment; applying techniques to develop therapeutic alliance; applying techniques to elicit and evaluate automatic thoughts; applying cognitive behavioural therapy treatment techniques, specifically in the treatment of depression; and considering ethical matters in treatment.

The Unisa Centre for Applied Psychology offered a short course in Logotherapy that spanned over four levels, over a period of three years, that is, the introductory, intermediate, advanced and train-the-trainer courses. The train-the-trainer course (clinical track) in Logotherapy was successfully completed in 2012. Completion of the course in logotherapy assisted with understanding the principles of Viktor Frankl's theory and applying the counselling methods and techniques (e.g. Socratic dialogue, dereflection and paradoxical intention) of logotherapy. During the train-the-trainer course, supervision of students in the advanced course clinical track, under direction of the main supervisors, formed part of the practical component of the training. In addition, the training enhanced the researcher's ability to undertake research projects in the field of logotherapy. Ultimately, it improved her skills to design, implement and evaluate the logotherapy brief group-based intervention.

The sources of meaning and/or meaning frustration for academic employees were identified and described in the phase one qualitative study. It was interpreted as dynamic factors and systems of meaning and/or meaning frustration that freely operate in the HE organisational setting (see Chapter 5). The dynamic characteristics of the HE organisational setting that could potentially impact the intervention adversely were, for example, identified as a tight academic calendar (time limitations); high teaching loads;

high demand work environment; reluctance of employees to participate in research programmes; prevalence of high levels of negative emotions; purging behaviour; silo mentality and functioning; and the unavoidable reality of individual and social defences (see Chapter 5, e.g. sections 5.4.2.5, 5.4.2.7, 5.4.2.8, 5.5.1.6(d)).

The dynamic characteristics of the setting that could potentially enhance the intervention were identified as: a need for a safe space away from normal business to prevent disruptions of the groups; a need for participant containment; a service orientation; an awareness of group dynamics; an awareness of individual and social defences; enhanced understanding (empathy); and a need to explore the boundary between inter-departmental, inter-faculty and inter-disciplinary silos.

In its basic form, best practices entailed connecting the dots to get a picture and some understanding of the context and setting for intervention implementation and the factors that may enhance or hinder the outcome(s) of the intervention.

The contextual model for intervention implementation is outlined in Figure 6.2. It aided the researcher with the development of the intervention and with the development of an approach with respect to implementing the logotherapy brief group-based programme. On a practical level, it created awareness about the characteristics of the setting and its perceived relationships with meaning and/or meaning frustration embedded in the academic employee work experience. It also assisted with understanding the results of the quantitative study.

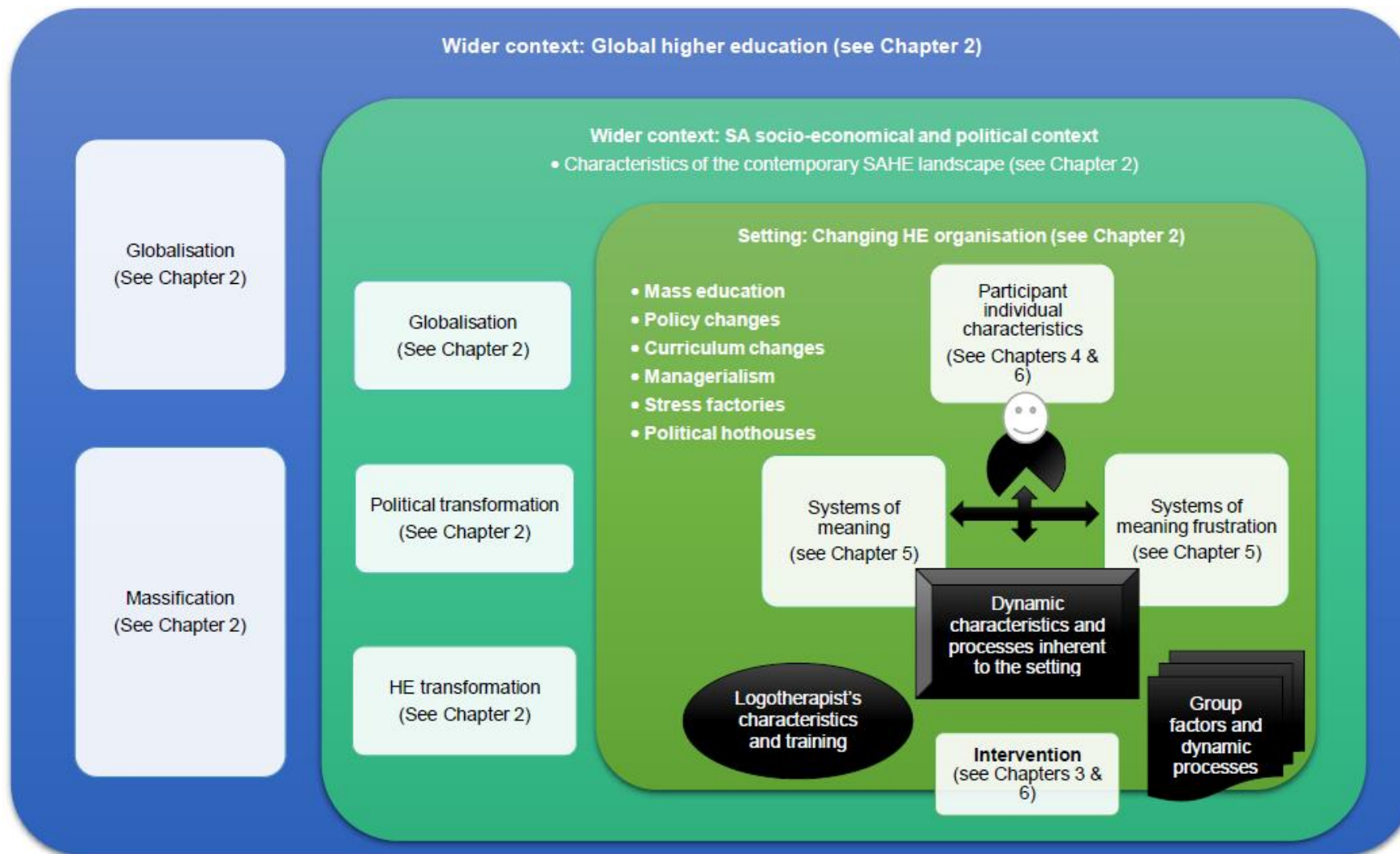


Figure 6.2. Contextual model for intervention implementation

Wells et al. (2012) asserted that the setting and wider context of an intervention not to be regarded as the inert backdrop for the delivery of the intervention, but rather as part of the intervention. Likewise, Johns (2006) asserted that the impact of the contextual factors on the intervention may be subtle but real. Senge (as cited in Visser, 2005, p. 4) described systems thinking as

a discipline for seeing wholes. It is a framework for seeing interrelatedness rather than things, for seeing patterns ... rather than static 'snapshots' ... And systems thinking is a sensibility, for the subtle interconnectedness that gives living systems their unique character, [like the HE organisation] ... Systems thinking is a discipline for seeing the structures that underlie complex situations and for discerning high from low leverage change. That is, by seeing wholes, we learn how to foster health. To do so, systems thinking offers a language that begins by restructuring the way we think.

In support, Johns (2006, p. 387) argued that context can be reinterpreted as “a set of situational opportunities for and countervailing constraints against, organizational behaviour”. This perspective had clear and widespread implications for the design and implementation of the intervention, as well as the interpretation of the results. Lewin (1951 as cited in Johns, 2006, p. 387) portrayed the context as “a tension system or force field comprising such opportunities and constraints”. The tension system concept had three key implications for the intervention design, implementation and outcome. First, constraints could be as important as opportunities in determining the outcome of the intervention, second, it allowed for a situation to be insecure and close to change (or not), given prevailing opportunities and constraints and third, apparently trivial contextual stimuli could have had substantial effects when small changes were made in an insecure balanced tension system. Likewise, apparently strong contextual stimuli could also have had weak effects when the opportunities they presume were counterveiled by opposing constraints (Johns, 2006).

The logotherapy brief group-based intervention programme is outlined and discussed in section 6.6.

6.6 THE LOGOTHERAPY BRIEF GROUP-BASED INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

The main objective of the intervention programme was to enhance academic employees' sense of meaning in work and life through Viktor Frankl's principles (Frankl, 1986, 1988, 2000, 2006). The ultimate goal was to assist them to uncover, discover, rediscover and to make use of the meaning potential of each situation (Armstrong 2016; Lantz, 1991; Martinez

& Flórez, 2014). Pattakos and Dundon (2017) indicated that, when participants understand the sources of meaning in their lives, it opens up pathways to unlimited opportunities for improving their resilience and engagement, advancing their health and well-being and increasing their performance and innovation in all aspects of living and work.

The phase one qualitative study revealed high levels of NA among the academic employees who participated in the study. The NA was related to their work experiences. Basically, it implied frustration of meaning in their work and seemingly psychological distress for some (Steger, 2010). The decision was taken to also assess and explore facets of the participants' psychological health (e.g. anxiety, depression, substance abuse/dependence, binge eating) in the quantitative study. On a practical level, it required an instrument like the PDSQ to be included in the pretest/posttest battery in the quantitative study (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.5.1(d)). In addition, it entailed assessing the impact of the logotherapy brief group-based intervention on their psychological health. Figure 6.3 below shows the design of the logotherapy brief group-based intervention.



Figure 6.3. Design of the logotherapy brief group-based Intervention

Key to the intervention programme were the works of Hutzell and Eggert (2009); Pattakos (2010); Shantall (2007); Wong (2012b, 2015); and the Logotherapy, meaning-centred living, counselling and research (2010) introduction workshop. The findings of the phase one qualitative study (see Chapter 5) played a significant role in shaping the preliminary structure and content of the intervention programme.

The findings of the phase one study validated the initial decision for the intervention programme in a group-based format. For example, the theme of silo mentality and

functioning as a source of meaning frustration supported the decision for the programme to be in a group format, with the groups consisting of members from different departments and in diverse roles (see Chapter 5, section 5.5.3.3 (d)).

Other findings challenged the concept of a “brief” programme. This referred to the pressures inherent to the setting (e.g. tight academic calendar and time limitations; high workloads; high demand environment, etc.) (see Chapter 5, e.g. sections 5.4.2.5 and 5.4.2.7) and the practical implications that they had for inviting individuals to commit to and participate in a research based intervention programme over, for example, a period of four to 15 weeks.

With respect to the time limitations inherent to the setting, the researcher collaborated with deans and HODs to determine the most feasible time to implement the intervention programme within the boundaries of their tight academic schedules. Based on the researcher’s lived experience within the setting, academic employees were generally reluctant to participate in these types of programmes out of normal business hours.

It became apparent that there was only a small window of opportunity to implement the programme during a week that was considered to be quieter than usual. The quietness was ascribed to students who would be writing their mid-year examinations and LAEs would thus be awaiting their students’ examination scripts to be marked.

The identified week included a public holiday. This implied that four days were available to implement the programme. This put a considerable time limitation on the actual duration of the programme since it was apparent that all four days had to be utilised with different groups in order to collect sufficient data to meet the statistical requirements for the phase three quasi-experimental study. Therefore, the decision was taken to limit the actual duration of the programme to one day per group.

Following on the above, the findings of the phase one study were also key to providing guidelines with respect to the themes to be included in such a brief programme. The themes that were included in the programme were regarded as those themes that had the best potential to benefit the participants in the shortest period of time. The themes, in combination with the group-based approach, were considered to have the potential to respond to aspects of the academic employees lived reality, as revealed in the phase one study.

The themes centered on the life and work of Frankl; the basic principles and concepts of logotherapy; calling forth the self; a meaningful work life; dealing with challenges in HE; the bigger picture; responsibility; and self-transcendence.

The programme included both theoretical (e.g. readings on Frankl) and practical components. It was implemented in four different groups during the course of the identified week, with one day per group. The actual time spent on the various themes included in the programme was 270 minutes (one 30-minute session and three 75-minute sessions) (see Table 6.3 for the programme and Table 6.4 for the time line). Ultimately, the various group compositions and sizes were determined by the individual participants' availability to attend any one of the four implementation groups during the course of the week.

The basic assumptions were that a longer term intervention was not readily feasible for the context based on its characteristics (e.g. high teaching loads; high demand work environment; competing priorities in the setting; a general reluctance of employees to participate in research projects; perceived anxious and distrustful academic climate, etc.) (see Chapter 5, section 5.4.2.5). The brief duration of the intervention programme would be more attractive to individuals who already felt pressurised; and that a one-day intervention programme had the potential to prevent and/or limit drop-out. Nevertheless, over the week, one participant dropped out from the intervention programme. In a less than ideal world, the brief intervention programme could be considered as a "crash course" in logotherapy in the midst of intricate and ongoing HE organisational processes and dynamics, in combination with the intricacies embedded in small group processes.

The intervention programme consisted of three parts. Part one covered theme one (Viktor Frank Institute Vienna, 2016a), theme two (the basic principles of logotherapy) and theme three (calling forth the self). Basically, it requested participants to read about Frankl's life; engage with the basic principles and concepts of logotherapy; and to involve themselves in two self-reflection exercises prior to their participation in the programme. The intention of part one was to start establishing a theoretical basis to support the implementation of the intervention programme and to foster participant engagement with the basic tenets and theoretical constructs in preparation for their application in the group in relation to the self and work.

Part two was the formal implementation of the intervention programme and covered theme four (a meaningful work life), theme five (managing with challenges in HE) and theme six (the call to existential responsibility).

Part three concluded the intervention programme and spoke about the way forward within the context of the research project while also inviting the participants to continue with their journey. Paradoxically, the intervention programme might also be regarded as an invitation to an on-going open-ended pursuit of philosophical insight, analysis and self-critique (Mills,

2001).

In Table 6.3 an outline of the fundamental structure and content of the logotherapy brief group-based intervention programme is given.

Table 6.3
Intervention programme

Part one: Intervention programme preparation (individual basis)

The participants were requested to read selected texts in preparation for the discussion to follow during the implementation phase. The readings were aimed at providing a background to the lifework and legacy of Viktor Frankl and to attune the participants to the basic principles and concepts of logotherapy.

The readings addressed the following questions:

Theme 1: Viktor Frankl's lifework and legacy

- Who was Viktor Frankl?
- What is logotherapy?
- How does logotherapy relate to a meaningful life and work?

Theme 2: The basic principles and concepts of logotherapy

The readings addressed the following basic principles and concepts of Frankl's logotherapy:

- Exploration of the basic principles of Logotherapy:
 - Freedom of the will, will to meaning and the meaning in life.
 - The concepts of conscience, existential frustration, existential vacuum, the unconditional meaning of life and responsibility.
- The creative, experiential and attitudinal values as the three pathways to discovering meaning.
- Meaning in suffering.
- Ultimate meaning.

Theme 3: Calling forth the self

"Life challenges individuals with demands to which they have to respond if they are to live a fulfilled life" (Fabry, 1994 as cited in Wong, 2012b, p. 623). Fabry (Wong, 2012b) highlighted the call to meaning as the fourth tenet implicit to the three basic tenets (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.1). Individuals' primary concern is to discover and surrender to the call to meaning (Wong, 2012b). Therefore, living is to fulfill the call to meaning (Graber, 2004; Shantall, 2003).

Individuals are capable of finding meaning through frequent self-reflection (Hall, Feldman and Kim, 2013). It is important to help individuals to develop their self-reflection skills and self-awareness since they may become better at gaining clarity on their path and that may help them to pursue it with a heart, thereby finding more meaning in their work (Hall et al., 2013):

- Participants were guided in two self-reflection exercises about their personal calling and they were requested to record their reflections.

Part two: Brief group-based logotherapy intervention programme

The ultimate purpose of life is meaning rather than happiness and success (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006; Wong, 2012b). "This meaning mindset makes all the difference how one lives and makes

decisions” (Wong, 2012b, p. 623). A true meaningful life includes three elements, namely, (1) awareness of special purpose or mission in life; (2) development of inner strengths, talents and gifts in order to fulfil special missions; and (3) to set life goals and make decisions in congruence with calling (Wong, 2012b).

The three elements are elaborated as follows (Wong, 2012b):

- (1) Setting life goals to fulfil this special mission depends on self-knowledge, that is, awareness of one’s interests, talents and limitations. It depends on a variety of external sources, such as cultural values, societal norms and religion.
- (2) All people are given the necessary gifts, talents and opportunities to fulfil their special mission. However, they need to develop the innate strengths and gifts that are required to be developed.
- (3) Individuals must follow their conscience and their sense of responsibility to set life goals and make decisions congruent with their calling.

The self was called forth through themes three to six.

Theme 4: A meaningful work life

The participants were guided in a group discussion on the following questions after some time for self-reflection:

- What are your strong points? Talents? What is it you are contributing that is meaningful to others? (What are you really good at which is of value to other people?)
 - What are the things in your work that make you feel that your work is worthwhile, that it has significance and meaning? (e.g. in the work itself? the people you come in contact with? the service you provide? the prestige it gives you? the money you make?)
 - What gives you great satisfaction in doing/encountering those things?
 - What do you need to do to be successful in your work? What are the crucial steps you have to take in order to be successful in your work? What support do you need to assure success?
-

Theme 5: Dealing with challenges in HE

The participants were guided in a group discussion on the following questions after some time for self-reflection:

- What are the challenges that you are experiencing in your work environment and job?
 - What do you need to do to deal with the challenges?
 - What are the crucial steps that you have to take in order to cope with and/or overcome the challenges?
-

Theme 6: Bigger picture, responsibility and self-transcendence

The participants were guided in a group discussion on the following questions after some time for self-reflection:

- How is your work contributing to our students, the institution and the SA society?
 - What are your main roles and responsibilities in helping the institution to render a meaningful service in its pursuit to produce employable graduates who can make an impact on society?
-

Part three: Participant debriefing and closing the programme

See Chapter 1, section 1.7 for ethical research procedures with respect to the welfare and rights of the research participants.

Theme 7: Concluding the intervention programme

In conclusion, the participants were debriefed after their participation in the programme to contain and minimise unpleasant emotional reactions. They were thanked for their participation and information was provided on the way forward (e.g. where to from here?).

In Table 6.4 an indication of the time line of the intervention programme is given.

Table 6.4
Time line of the intervention programme

Item	Theme	Time
1	Programme registration	08:30 – 09:00
2	Welcome, introductions and ground rules	09:00 – 09:30
3	Group reflection on part one's readings	09:30 – 10:00
	Tea/coffee break	10:00 – 10:15
4	A meaningful work life	
4.1	Individual reflection	10:15 – 10:30
4.2	Group reflection	10:30 – 11:30
	Tea/coffee break	11:30 – 11:45
5	Dealing with challenges in HE	
5.1	Individual reflection	11:45 – 12:00
5.2	Group reflection	12:00 – 13:00
	Lunch	13:00 – 14:00
6	Bigger picture, responsibility and self-transcendence	
6.1	Individual reflection	14:00 – 14:15
6.2	Group reflection	14:15 – 15:15
	Tea/coffee break	15:15 – 15:30
7	Debriefing	15:30 – 15:45
8	Where to from here?	15:45 – 16:00

Mills (2001) claimed that the minute a therapist agrees to a consultation or takes on a client, he/she is already engaged in the therapeutic relationship. This suggests that the process has started and that various psychological (both individual and group) processes were mobilised (Mills, 2001). On an individual level, the intervention implementation formally started when the participants self-administered the pre-intervention questionnaires (Mills, 2001) (see Figure 6.3). The process was impacted by the fact that the intervention took place within the confined and time-limited space of a research project, within a setting where much emphasis is placed on research.

The following is a discussion on the approach that was followed towards the implementation of the intervention programme.

6.7 AN INTEGRATED INTERACTIONAL APPROACH TOWARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

Frankl (Graber, 2004) addressed the question about the approach to be used in logotherapy interventions. He (Graber, 2004) believed that the treatment or psychotherapeutic process

consists of a continuous chain of improvisations and that the infinite diversity of individuals prevents the possibility of extrapolating from one individual to another. This is also true for groups, though more intricate, since group process improvisations should be able to respond to the members present, whilst taking numerous other factors into consideration.

For that reason, Frankl (Graber, 2004) acknowledged that the appropriate intervention implementation approach to be applied is determined by considering the task at hand, the character of the client (e.g. groups of academic employees) and the personality of the therapist. Since the groups were more than a human machine that could be manipulated, the task of the therapist was more than that of a mere technician applying a structure and/or technique like a good tool. Ultimately, the participants and/or group members “need to be motivated to make decisions, to free [their] noetic dimension from all obstacles so [they] can use its content – the creativity, the human relationships, the will to meaning – to the fullest” (Fabry, 1974, p. 130).

In addition, Frankl did not intend logotherapy to be a comprehensive framework of psychotherapy (Wong, 2012b). Although logotherapy offers several logotherapeutic techniques to psychological problems related to the existential vacuum, he rather intended it to be an adjunct to whatever treatment approach a therapist adheres to (Wong, 2012b). “Since no single therapeutic approach is effective for all cases, it seems logical to adopt such a flexible, tailor made approach” (Wong, 2015, p. 156). Although a tailor made flexible approach resonated with the notions of pragmatism, it was important not to lose sight of the central theme of meaning and the aims of the group-based intervention (Wong, 2015).

From a pragmatic perspective, an integrated interactional group-based approach was followed to implement the programme. The decision was informed by the results from the phase one qualitative study (see section 6.5) and the researcher’s professional practice. Since too little time was available to implement a comprehensive programme, the emphasis was on what was perceived to be academic employees’ most prevalent need and what had the most likelihood to benefit the participants in the shortest period of time. It should also have had the potential to benefit them in the future (e.g. a safe, contained space to talk about their perceived experiences in the workplace, with the intention to enhance their sense of meaning and purpose). This decision was made to ensure ethical practice and to uphold the integrity of the project (see section 6.6).

The integrated element of the group implementation approach made use of “hands-on” (here-and-now) logotherapy education, the basic techniques of logotherapy (phenomenological methods, see section 6.4.1), psycho-education (e.g. introducing topics

such as healthy coping, work-life balance, resiliency to stress, etc.) and basic cognitive behavioural therapy techniques as demanded by the unfolding group processes (see section 6.6 for the researcher's professional training). The interactional element of the group intervention approach made use of two of the three basic treatment dynamics¹³ of Frankl's existential-treatment approach that were: noticing and honouring. (Lantz, 1998). The dynamics were inherent to the group's dynamic and existential reflections (Lantz, 1998) (see section 6.5.1 for the basic logotherapy techniques and/or group treatment dynamics).

The challenge of such a time-limited logotherapy group-based intervention programme was to translate its concepts into practice in the most effective way (Fabry, 1974). Leslie's (Fabry, 1974) view on the function of the logotherapy group therapist offered assistance with respect to the translation. The role of the group logotherapist was regarded as someone

not to solve problems, nor understand their origins, but simply to acknowledge them, encourage full expression of them and relate them to observed patterns of behavior; to provide support where needed, pursue tentative expression until the real emotion is revealed, and protect members from attack; to challenge the group and its members toward growth, point out learning as it is experienced, help self-understanding and understanding of others; and help people feel accepted as they are, without hiding the darker side (Leslie, 1970 as cited in Fabry, 1974, p. 130).

This perspective resonated with Mills' (2001) contention that, in the domain of logotherapy, the search for meaning, ontological security and philo-psychic holism must be taken care of as the primary therapeutic aims, despite the presence of various unconscious causal attributions and processes at play. Cognisance was taken that the reality of these unconscious casual attributions and processes could not be ignored.

Wong (2012a) emphasised that awareness is about recognising the inevitable presence of negative thoughts and negative emotions. He (2012a, p. 16) affirmed that

mental preparedness to accept and confront negativity reduces unnecessary suffering and makes it more likely for [individuals] to devote [their] energy towards productive work. Without acceptance, [they] would have to spend a great deal of time and energy defending [themselves] against inevitable negative emotions, thoughts, and experiences. In fact, the wisdom of acceptance is one of the main ingredients of tragic optimism.

Tragic optimism is about individuals' capacity to deal attitudinally with human suffering (the

¹³ The third treatment dynamic is actualising (Lantz, 1998).

tragic triad of pain, guilt and death) (Frankl, 2006) (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.4). “This is based on the principle that life is meaningful under any circumstance and the human capacity to make the best of any given situation by creatively turning negative aspects into positive and constructive ones” (Ameli, 2016). In the context of logotherapy, the key ingredients of optimism were identified as acceptance, affirmation, courage, love, faith, hope and self-transcendence (Ameli, 2016; Wong, 2012a). “Frankl insists that optimism cannot be commanded”, as such individuals needed “to discover a reason for optimism, a meaning” (Ameli, 2016, p. 201).

The basic techniques of logotherapy as applied during the intervention programme implementation is discussed in section 6.8.

6.8 THE BASIC TECHNIQUES OF LOGOTHERAPY AS APPLIED DURING THE INTERVENTION PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

Logotherapy has a variety of tools (techniques and exercises, e.g. Socratic dialogue, dereflection, attitude modulation, paradoxical intention, value awareness techniques, social skills training, network intervention, etc.) that group therapists may find useful (cf. Frankl, 2006; Graber, 2004; Lukas, 1998; Lantz, 1991, 1992, 1998). The two main tools that supported the implementation of the intervention programme were the Socratic dialogue and dereflection. The following discussion focuses on the two main tools as they were applied in the study. The discussion will be an applied discussion, meaning that extracts from the second phase study will be used to illustrate some of the facets of the tools.

6.8.1 Socratic dialogue

The Socratic dialogue is regarded as a key tool of logotherapy and is used to help individuals to discover and access their noëtic unconscious (cf. Das, 1998; Lantz, 1986, 1991, 1992). It is also known as Socratic questioning or reflection and may also be referred to as existential reflection (Lantz, 1991, 1992).

“Socrates believed that it was the task of the teacher not to pour information into the students, but to elicit from the students what they know intuitively” (Graber, 2004, p. 113). Socrates led his students in a process of self-discovery through narrative questioning in order for students to discover themselves through discourse (Asagba & Marshall, 2016). In other words, the Socratic dialogue involved a variety of questions designed to stimulate critical thinking and to encourage individuals to reflect and find answers inside themselves (Armstrong, 2016; Wong, 2015) (see Table 6.3 for examples of Socratic questions).

Meaning gets lost and/or repressed due to stresses that frequently occur during times of change (Burger, 2007; Lantz, 1992). It is most helpful when the logotherapist “is aware of the importance of meaning perception and also the seriousness of a disruption in meaning awareness” (Lantz, 1992, p. 132) (see e.g. Chapter 5, section, 5.5.3). Like Socrates,

Frankl believes it is the task of the logotherapist not to tell clients what the meaning in their life is, but to elicit the wisdom that is hidden within the spirit of each person. One of the basic assumptions of logotherapy is that, in the depth of [individuals’] spiritual dimension, [they] know what kind of person [they] are, what [their] potentials are, and what is important and meaningful to [them] (Graber, 2004, p. 113-114).

This inherent knowledge is reflected in the following two extracts

I have a lot to share/teach. I have a lot of patience/listening skills. I am very blessed! I am talented! (Participant 17, Intervention programme (IP), 17 June 2015).

I can use my strong points to the department’s advantage and I can use the strong points of staff members to the department’s advantage (Participant 16, IP, 17 June 2015).

The logotherapeutic technique enhanced four treatment goals which were: self-distancing from the symptoms; modification of attitudes; reduction of symptoms; and orientation towards meaningful activities and experiences (Asagba & Marshall, 2016). In support of these treatment goals, the Socratic dialogue was aimed at bringing participants in touch with their healthy core, the spirit, so that they can use its resources (Graber, 2004) (see Chapter 3, Table 3.1). Therefore, the Socratic dialogue enabled participants to uncover many potentials and challenges when their self-detachment allowed them to see themselves from the outside (Asagba & Marshall, 2016) (see section 6.7.2). In the self-detached position, there was space for participants to allow for the realisation that they could make their own choices and that they were responsible for these (Asagba & Marshall, 2016). This was illustrated in the following quotations

I have a choice! I can choose to be swallowed up in negativity, or I can take on each day with grace from God and a good attitude! (Participant 11, IP, 17 June 2015).

... the freedom to choose my attitude, I can be negative and be unhappy or positive and feel happy although I am aware that there are certain things that I cannot change. I have realised that I am not my job and my job is not me, there is more to life than a job (Participant 16, IP, 17 June 2015).

These participants may have finally become detached from their perceived egocentric state since they were able to transcend away from the negative circumstances or problem situation (Asagba & Marshall, 2016; Ras, 2000) (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.5).

The Socratic dialogue operated within the ambit of individuals' worldviews, cultural beliefs and core values and allowed for exploration and the creation of awareness. It also enabled participants to review their past experiences, brought up forgotten peak experiences that were once meaningful and allowed them to envision the future; provided opportunities to re-assess their present, power and capability to deal with the challenges that they were faced with; and directed them towards finding meaning in life and work (Ras, 2000; Wong, 2015). The aforementioned was reflected in the quotation below

God is the ultimate source of hope and He will help to get me through difficult times as He has done before (Participant 25, IP, 18 June 2015)

Practices that were typically used in the Socratic dialogue to discover meaning included self-introspection; self-discovery; choice; uniqueness; responsibility; accountability; and self-transcendence (Ras, 2000) (See Chapter 3). Reflections, comments, clarification, empathy and sincere interest to make new meaning connections that enhanced meaning awareness were also used (Lantz, 1991, 1992).

In the logotherapy group, the Socratic dialogue was inseparable from the dynamic and existential group processes which were interwoven with Frankl's dynamic treatment aspects that were noticing and honouring. This suggested that will to meaning may have become frustrated or disrupted because individuals had difficulty "noticing" the meaning potentials or opportunities in their lives (Lantz, 1998). It was thus the task of the logotherapist and the collective, to help group members notice and expand awareness of the meaning-potentials in their lives (Lantz, 1998). Essentially, it might have helped to reduce the "symptoms" that may have reflected diminished meaning or meaninglessness (Lantz, 1998).

Honouring or re-collection was the second dynamic treatment aspect. The logotherapist and the collective helped members to remember, recover, re-collect and honour buried and blurred meanings previously actualised and deposited in the past (Lantz, 1998). Frankl (Lantz, 1998) claimed that honouring also reduced the "symptoms" that may reflect diminished meaning or meaninglessness because it helped members to remember accomplishments and meaning potentials that have been actualised.

The two dynamic aspects were inherent to and facilitated by the dynamic and existential group processes. Lantz (1998, p. 100) explained that "dynamic group reflection is used to

gain problem clarity through verification and objectification; and existential group reflection is used to gain a deeper, richer and wider discovery and understanding of the meanings and meaning-potentials in life". This is illustrated in the next quotation from a participant:

I shy away from confronting emotional issues. I tend to focus on tasks and not people around me. There is meaning in everything we do – you, however, must make time to reflect in order to understand and/or appreciate what happens in your life (Participant 28, IP, 19 June 2015).

Lantz (1998) specifically singled out two aspects of existential group reflection, though emphasised that the mechanics thereof are difficult to present in an exact and systematic way. With regards to the first aspect of existential group reflection, Frankl (Lantz, 1998) claimed the abstract and experimental nature of it to be reductionist and thus clouding the meanings of existence. Paradoxically, Frankl (1969, 1975 as cited in Lantz, 1998, p. 100) argued that

whenever dynamic group reflection reduces life, friendship, love, fidelity, courage, encounter, joy, despair and meaning to experiences that can be understood 'clearly' and 'exactly', existential group reflection must and will rise up to correct the blindness of dynamic group reflection.

Frankl (Lantz, 1998) identified an attitudinal component as the second aspect of existential group reflection. It was about its capacity to help group members to discover and participate in the meanings of life in a serious, sensitive and rigorous fashion through encounter, participation and concrete involvement rather than distant and disengaged abstraction.

Ultimately, existential group reflection

helps [participants] to notice and re-collect meanings and meaning potentials; and dynamic group reflection helps [participants] to find more effective interactional methods of actualising meaning-potentials discovered during existential group reflection (Lantz, 1998, p. 101).

6.8.2 Dereflection

Many people are focussed on their problems and those problems represent a kind of comfort zone. They revert to that core at every opportunity (Participant 12, IP, 17 June 2015)

The technique of dereflection is established and well described in the literature (cf. Frankl, 1988, 2000; Graber, 2004, Lukas, 1998). It is about redirecting participants' attention away

from their immediate problem, symptoms and/or complaints to something positive, engaging, or valued, such as a meaningful person or cause, through matters that were goal-directed (Armstrong, 2016; Das, 1998; Graber, 2004; Ras, 2000; Wong, 2015).

Fundamental to dereflection were the human qualities to self-distance/detach and self-transcendence (cf. Frankl, 1988, 2000; Graber, 2004, Lukas, 1998). Self-distance was the capacity of the spiritual self to detach from a situation and/or a symptom through stepping away from the physical and emotional selves to get an objective view (Frankl, 1988, 2000; Graber, 2004, Lukas, 1998). Self-transcendence was the human capacity to “intentionally direct attention and efforts to reach something or someone significant other than themselves” (Martinez & Flórez, 2014, p. 2).

Dereflection has three characteristics that are: differentiation, affection and commitment (Martinez & Flórez, 2014, p. 2). Differentiation was about the ability to interact with the environment while maintaining individuality and recognising that others may hold different viewpoints and emotionality (Martinez & Flórez, 2014). Affection is the ability to be emotionally and motivationally moved by the presence of values and meaning, whilst commitment is about the ability to give oneself to a cause or higher power that brought a sense of meaning (Martinez & Flórez, 2014) (also see e.g. Chapter 3, section 3.7.5).

Dereflection is singled out as a specific technique in logotherapy in cases of excessive hyperreflection and hyperintention (cf. Frankl, 1988, 2000; Lukas, 1998; Shantall, 2003). Sometimes, when a problem exists, a person may focus on it to the extent that anticipatory anxiety is created which is counterproductive (Schulenberg et al. 2010). “The hyper-reflect, give the problem undue attention (obsessiveness) and hyper-intend, try too hard to get rid of the problem (compulsiveness)” (Shantall, 2003, p. 107). In this case, the dereflection entailed a three-step process (Ras, 2000). First, the logotherapist will reduce an individual’s hyper-reflection on him/herself, second, an “alternative list” will be drawn up and finally, one of the alternatives will then be selected (Ras, 2000). The creation of the choice will help the individual to be more goal-directed and to overcome the negative symptom and/or problem, and/or feeling (Ras, 2000). However, Shantall (2003, p. 107) warns that “every move away from being caught up in a problem to a focus on meaning involves dereflection”. The following quotation from a participant captured something of Shantall’s (2003) contention:

It was more an overall awareness that developed during the course of the day. The more I relaxed and distanced myself from the “rat race” the more I was able to uncover what adds meaning to my existence (Participant 28, IP, 19 June 2015)

Humour sometimes played a role in dereflection (Das, 1998; Graber, 2004). A sense of

humour was considered to be a practical means of self-distancing because it helped individuals to realise how ridiculous their fears, behaviours and resentments sometimes were (Das, 1998; Graber, 2004). Frankl (1959 as cited in Graber, 2004, p. 109) illuminated humour as one of the spirit's "weapons in the fight for self-preservation". It is a critical element in the healing process and it opened up new areas for development (Das, 1998). The contention was reflected in the following statement from a participant:

That being depressed by stuff you cannot change is a waste of time. In every situation there is something positive or at least humorous (Participant 12, IP, 17 June 2017).

Dereflection was not meant to be avoidance since the former is known to escalate problems (Armstrong, 2016). It was rather about stepping back from an emotionally overwhelming situation or problem (Armstrong, 2016). The distance freed space to face the important issue or thought-pattern embedded in the situation head on (Armstrong, 2016). Dereflection was one way of facilitating attitude modulation and was considered to be similar to the cognitive restructuring and perceptual shifting techniques often used by CBT practitioners (Schulenberg et al., 2010).

"In logotherapy, there is a similar focus on rectifying maladaptive cognitions, from thoughts or attitudes that are negative, limiting and destructive, to those that are empowering, positive, and proactive" (Schulenberg et al., 2010, p. 97). Attitude modulation in logotherapy meant the logotherapist used knowledge, experience and even intuition to detect unhealthy and harmful attitudes (Ras, 2000). It was not about value judgements, about good or bad attitudes, but rather to weigh an attitude as healthy or unhealthy (Ras, 2000). When an attitude was "found" to be negative, unhealthy and damaging, the logotherapist would not hesitate to discuss it openly (Lukas, 1998; Ras, 2000). It might have helped participants to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy attitudes and influenced their thinking, feelings and behaviour towards constructive, life-enhancing endeavours (Ras, 2000).

The following quotation from a participant reflected her "becoming aware" of negative thought patterns and the realisation that she had a choice of not being controlled by them. At its core, it demonstrated the possibility for change with respect to the participant's attitude that had potential to give way to a new approach to life:

I have experienced a lot of negative thoughts and realised that ... you can change negative thoughts into positive thoughts. That you sometimes have to accept the things you cannot change and change the ones that you can (Participant 10, Intervention programme, 17 June 2015).

Lukas (1998, p. 116) claimed that “every attitude modulation, has at its aim, a stronger, improved, ethically more valuable more hopeful ... attitude”. She also argued that positive attitudes will be in harmony with individuals’ personal conscience (Lukas, 1998) (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.5.1).

Ultimately, the ability to dereflect discouraged participants from over identifying with past mistakes and failures and rather encouraged them to look away from suffering and unhappiness (Das, 1998; Frankl, 1988, 2000). It capacitated them to look at the future (Das, 1998; Frankl, 1988, 2000). Individuals were then free to choose their attitudes toward themselves and their situations (Das 1998; Graber, 2004). This freedom may have assisted some of the participants to overcome emotional states such as fear, anxiety, anger and depression (Das 1998; Graber, 2004). “This new direction gradually creates a positive, meaning-orientated (rather than ego-centred) view of the world” (Fabry, 1988 as cited in Shantall, 2003, p. 107).

6.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 6 was about the development and implementation of the logotherapy brief group-based intervention. It included discussions on logotherapy as a meaning-centered approach; the “therapy” in logotherapy and its relevancy for intervention in an organisational context; and logotherapy as a brief group-based approach. The contextual model that supported the implementation of the programme was discussed, followed by the presentation of the programme, as well as the approach that was followed at the time of implementing the programme. Chapter 6 was concluded with a discussion on the basic techniques of logotherapy as they were applied during the implementation of the intervention programme.

CHAPTER 7: RESEARCH RESULTS OF THE PHASE THREE QUANTITATIVE STUDY

Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom (Viktor Frankl).

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 7 includes discussions on the results of the phase three quantitative study, as well as on the role that resistance played in the intervention. Finally, an integrated discussion is presented with respect to the results and the impact of the intervention. The chapter then concludes with a summary.

The central purpose of the phase three study was to determine the impact of the logotherapy brief group-based intervention on the sense of meaning and psychological health of academic employees (see Chapter 1, section 1.61; see Chapter 4). Data was collected by means of a questionnaire pack that included four questionnaires, namely, The Purpose in Life test (PIL) (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1969); Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) (Steger et al., 2006); the depression, anxiety, bulimia/binge eating and substance abuse/dependency subscales of the Psychiatric Diagnostic Screening Questionnaire (PDSQ) (Zimmerman, 2002); and a brief qualitative questionnaire that assessed the participants' learning and/or discoveries (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.5). The results obtained from each of the questionnaires are discussed in sections 7.2 to 7.5. Section 7.2 presents the results of the PIL and a discussion thereof.

7.2 PURPOSE IN LIFE TEST

The results obtained from the PIL are summarised in Tables 7.1 and 7.2. They served as an empirical measure of Frankl's basic concept, will to meaning or the degree to which individuals experience a sense of meaning in life. Below is Table 7.1 that shows the pre- and post-intervention mean group scores (pretest/posttest) for the participants.

Table 7.1
PIL pretest/posttest mean group scores (N = 22)

Pretest/Posttest	M (SD)	Skewness (SE)	Kurtosis (SE)
Pre-intervention	113.05 (21.49)	-1.55 (.49)	2.54 (.95)
Post-intervention	114.59 (18.04)	-1.97 (.49)	5.60 (.95)

The pre-intervention mean group measure reported a sense of definite purpose and

meaning among the participants prior to their participation in the programme as well as after their participation in the programme.

The above results suggested that the participants felt that there was meaning to their lives, both in the present and in the past and that they had meaningful goals and objectives for living (Robatmili et al., 2015). Meaning in life and meaning in work are closely related and influence each other (Driver, 2007). The literature review revealed that employees who consider their work as meaningful and as serving a higher purpose (e.g. service orientation, compassionate love for students), place higher value on their work and may ultimately experience greater job satisfaction and subjective well-being (Steger et al., 2012).

The results may be representative of the 81.82% of the participants who indicated that they were satisfied with their jobs (see Chapter 4, Table 4.2). It was noted that 75.90% of the participants who participated in the phase one qualitative study also indicated that they were satisfied with their jobs (see Chapter 5, Table 5.1). These results suggested that a significant percentage of the academic employees who participated in the overall study were satisfied with their jobs, despite the changed and changing HE organisation and landscape.

Meaning in life is regarded as a positive variable and indicator of psychological health (cf. Pezirkianidis, Galanakis, Karakasidou & Stalikas, 2016; Steger & Dik, 2009; Wong, 2012a). Based on the participants' sense of definite purpose and meaning, this finding was suggestive, at the group level, of the participants' adaptive coping and psychological health (cf. Pezirkianidis et al., 2016; Steger & Dik, 2009; Wong, 2012a) (see section 7.4).

Inspection of the pre- and post-intervention scores showed an increase in the participants' sense of meaning and purpose following their participation in the intervention programme (see Table 7.1). However, the statistical analysis did not reveal the difference between the pre- and post-intervention mean group scores as significant ($z = -.47$, $p = .64$).

This finding may be explained by the significant percentage of participants (68.2%) (see Table 7.2) who reported that they had a sense of definite purpose and meaning prior to their participation in the intervention programme. It also takes into consideration the time limited nature of the programme. The limited time available for the intervention implied that the programme did not allow sufficient maturation or breeding time (e.g. one week) between the various programme components or themes for them to take full effect (e.g. sufficient time for the triggered will to meaning to actualise meaning potentials and for deep change to take place). The aforementioned had clear implications for the practical value of the intervention. This clearly demonstrated the significance of the role that the characteristics of a setting

(context) may play in the outcome of an intervention.

Participants in one of the implementation groups (IP, 19 June 2015) expressed frustration in relation to the time limitation placed on the group reflections on the themes of calling forth the self and meaning in work (see Chapter 6, Table 6.3, Themes three and four). These themes required a deeper level of engagement and existential reflection to facilitate self-awareness in this area and were a fundamental building block of the programme. This suggested the participants' need for more engagement (time) with and a deeper reflection on complex phenomena like a life's calling and meaning in work. It also suggested some participants' need for development in this area, since work as a calling may culminate into meaningfulness in work beyond mere financial benefits and rewards (Steger et al., 2006; Steger & Dik, 2009). The capacity to self-transcend, as well as professional and personal development and growth are regarded as key sources of meaning (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006; McDonald et al., 2012). This need was clearly not met for some participants and this suggested frustration with the need to actualise meaning potentials in the domains of Frankl's creative and attitudinal values (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).

In addition, it was noted that the participants' need for development in the area of work as a calling was expressed in the implementation group with the smallest number of participants ($n = 4$). The time-limited nature of the intervention programme suggested that the therapeutic factors (e.g. openness, trust, etc.) inherent to the various groups may not have had sufficient time to develop to full effect. The frustration expressed by the participants in relation to the need for more reflection on these themes implied that the smaller group may have allowed for the therapeutic factors inherent to the group processes to develop to a higher level during the same time period in comparison with the other implementation groups that had more participants (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.4.4).

By nature of the group setting, participants had to overcome their fears of criticism and rejection to be able to share more openly and deeply (Despland et al., 2005). It appeared as if the participants felt less anxious (threatened) in the smaller group and that it was easier for them to reach a state of openness and trust and to share more openly and deeply. In this regard, cognisance needs to be taken of the mediating factor of individual participants' trait characteristics and the role that they may play with respect to developing openness and trust (see section 6.5.2, Figure 6.1). It was clear that the smaller implementation groups (four to six participants) were more conducive for a sensitive and complex topic like meaning in life and work (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.4.3).

It was apparent from both the pre- and post-intervention results in Table 7.1 that there was a

considerable variance in spread around the average group scores. Therefore, Table 7.2 gives an indication of the number (and percentage) of participants for both the pre- and post-intervention mean scores in each score range. The scores on the PIL were categorised into three ranges, namely, a lack of clear purpose and meaning (score range: 20-91); somewhat uncertain purpose and meaning (score range: 92-112); and presence of definite purpose and meaning (score range: 113-140).

Table 7.2
PIL frequencies (N = 22)

Score descriptors	Pretest n (%)	Posttest n (%)
Lack of clear purpose and meaning (Score range: 20-91)	3 (13.64)	1 (4.55)
Somewhat uncertain purpose and meaning (Score range: 92-112)	4 (18.18)	7 (31.82)
Presence of definite purpose and meaning (Score range: 113-140)	15 (68.18)	14 (63.63)

Table 7.2 shows that 13.64% of the participants indicated that they had a lack of clear purpose and meaning prior to their participation in the programme, whereas 4.55% of the participants indicated that they had a lack of clear sense of purpose and meaning after their participation in the programme. The finding suggested that the participants in this range may have had few goals; lack or low sense of direction; not much purpose in their past and less meaningful outlooks on life (Robatmili et al., 2015). A logotherapy interpretation would suggest that these individuals might have been more prone to the experience of existential vacuum that happens when individuals fail to find a meaning and purpose which give their lives a unique sense of identity (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1969; Pezirkianidis et al., 2016). “This state of emptiness, manifested chiefly by [a sense of meaninglessness], boredom, [apathy, or indifference], will, if not relieved, result in existential ‘frustration’” (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1969; McDonald et al., 2012).

An experience like existential vacuum may have negative implications for the participants’ work experiences and psychological health. Research shows a positive relationship between a sense of meaninglessness and unhappiness, less work enjoyment and less adaptive coping (cf. Kleftaras & Psarra, 2012; Schulenberg & Melton, 2010; Steger et al., 2006, Steger, 2012). Likewise, research shows a positive relationship between a sense of meaninglessness and increased levels of anxiety, depression and alcohol use (cf. Asagba & Marshall, 2016; Kleftaras & Psarra, 2012; Schulenberg et al., 2008; Schulenberg & Melton, 2010; Steger et al., 2006, Steger, 2012). A logotherapy interpretation would suggest that

participants in this score range may be more at risk of experiencing psychological distress (cf. Pezirkianidis et al., 2016; Steger & Dik, 2009) (see section 7.4).

The above interpretation may have been representative of the 18.18% of participants who indicated that they were not satisfied with their jobs (see Chapter 4, Table 4.2). It was noted that 24.10% of the participants who participated in the phase one qualitative study also indicated that they were not satisfied with their jobs (see Chapter 5, Table 5.1). These results implied that approximately 21% of the academic employees who participated in the study were dissatisfied with their jobs.

Steger (2012) held a lower sense of purpose and meaning as a diagnostic marker for indicators of psychological distress and potentially more psychopathological syndromes. Steger (2012) reported that research indicated that individuals who experience a deficit in meaning in life were prone to express a higher need for psychotherapy. This phenomenon was illustrated in one of the implementation groups (IP, 17 June 2015) as a need that was expressed by a few participants for more psychological support in the workplace. It was noted though that the participants were hesitant to make use of the wellness service since they were concerned about a possible breach of personal information. This concern may be related to the perceived anxious and distrustful (academic) climate in the HE organisation (see Chapter 5, section 5.4.2.5).

Frankl (2006; Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1969) maintained that existential frustration or a low sense of meaning should not necessarily be translated into psychological problems since it may have been part of life experience when individuals experienced loss of initiative (see Chapter 3, section 3.7.3). Nicholson, Higgins, Turner, James, Stickle and Pruitt (1994) believed that the existential vacuum was often a consequence of a complex and impersonal world rather than specific pathology within an individual.

The results in Table 7.2 showed that the percentage of participants who reported somewhat uncertain purpose and meaning increased from 18.18% ($n = 4$) prior to participation in the programme to 31.82 % ($n = 7$) after participation in the programme. In addition, the percentage of participants who reported a presence of definite purpose and meaning before and after their participation in the programme, decreased from 68.18% ($n = 15$) to 63.63% ($n = 14$).

This implied that at least two participants from the lack of clear purpose and meaning category and at least one participant from the presence of definite purpose and meaning category moved to the somewhat uncertain purpose and meaning category. It suggested

that the programme may have introduced interventions (e.g. pre- and post-intervention questionnaires; readings on Frankl; programme) for some participants that may have interrupted, destabilised and challenged some of their old patterns and comfort zones (Hayes, Laurencaeu, Feldman, Strauss & Cardaciotto, 2007).

It suggested that the intervention may have created an awareness in those participants about a “less than definite purpose and meaning” in life and therefore a potential need for the re-evaluation of meaning potentials (Hayes et al., 2007). Frankl would explain awareness as healthy tension between what is and what ought to be that was created for those participants to enhance their motivation for a search for meaning. It implied potential space for the re-evaluation of the participants’ purpose and goals or the activation of their will to meaning (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006) (see Chapter 3).

Following on the above, it became apparent that there was some underlying trajectory that described the way change took place between the two time points (pre and post-intervention scores) however subtle it might have been (Laurencaeu, Hayes & Feldman, 2007). Hayes et al. (2007) emphasised that a common assumption in psychotherapy research is that change is gradual and linear, and that research designs and statistical procedures to study change often reflect this assumption. Therefore, most research that tends to focus on group measure averages does not reflect the valuable information available in individual time course data. Such data has the potential to determine if the trajectory of group and/or individual changes were supported by the underlying theory of change for an intervention programme that the average group scores may have failed to reveal (Laurencaeu et al., 2007).

Since the differences between the individual participants’ pre- and post-intervention scores were not an objective for the study, individual trajectories of change were not investigated. The decision to exclude the investigation of individual pre- and post-intervention scores was taken to protect the participants’ personal information, to enhance their psychological safety and to uphold the integrity of the research project. It suggested a gap in the design of the intervention and also demonstrated the impact of the setting on the research outcomes.

A discussion on the results of the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) is provided in section 7.3.

7.3 MEANING IN LIFE QUESTIONNAIRE

The results obtained from the MLQ is summarised in Tables 7.3 and 7.4. In Table 7.3, the mean group scores (pretest/posttest) for the MLQ Presence and Search subscales is shown.

Table 7.3
MLQ Pretest/posttest subscale mean group scores (N = 22)

Subscales	Pretest/Posttest	M (SD)	Skewness (SE)	Kurtosis (SE)
Presence	Pre-intervention	28.82 (6.59)	-2.18 (.49)	6.20 (.95)
	Post-intervention	29.23 (6.60)	-2.57 (.49)	8.42 (.95)
Search	Pre-intervention	25.91 (7.59)	-.29 (.49)	-1.34 (.95)
	Post-intervention	26.23 (7.70)	-.27 (.49)	-1.28 (.95)

The composite pre-intervention Presence and Search mean group scores reported a valued meaning and purpose among the participants, yet an open and ongoing exploration of that meaning and purpose. Likewise, the composite post-intervention Presence and Search mean group scores reported a valued meaning and purpose among the participants, yet an open and ongoing exploration of that meaning and purpose. This suggested an orientation and drive among the participants towards life's meaning as an ever-unfolding and ever-deepening process, rather than any single answer (Steger, 2010).

According to Steger (2010), the Search orientation may have been a positive indicator of the participants' life satisfaction, optimism, frequent feelings of love and rare feelings of depression and anxiety. This finding suggested the participants have better psychological adjustment and that they may have qualities that are desirable for the HE organisation (Steger et al., 2012).

The orientation may have been a positive indicator of the participants' involvement in religious activities, however, with greater emphasis on their need for spirituality (Steger, 2010). This finding may be supported by the perceived need for spirituality in the workplace expressed by the academic employees who participated in the phase one study (see Chapter 5, section 5.5.1.1(f)).

Inspection of the Presence scale pre- and post-intervention mean group scores (see Table 7.3) showed an increase in the participants' sense that their lives had a valued meaning and purpose, following participation in the programme. Inspection of the Search scale pre- and post-intervention mean group scores (see Table 7.3) showed an increase in the participants' orientation and motivation with respect to their efforts to finding meaning or deepen their understanding of meaning in their lives following their participation in the programme. The statistical analysis did not reveal a significant difference between the pre- and post-intervention mean group scores for any of these scales.

Steger et al. (2008) reported a complex relationship between Presence of meaning and Search for meaning. This implied that, although the participants may have experienced

meaningfulness in their lives, they may have simultaneously searched for additional or new sources of meaning in their lives (Pezirkianidis et al., 2016; Steger et al., 2008). The score on the Search subscale could also be related to a crisis in meaning (McDonald et al., 2012). The crisis refers to the human tendency to continue to make sense of life and seek deeper meaning even though life is already meaningful (McDonald et al., 2012).

It was difficult to interpret the score on the Search scale since it was undetermined in which Search phase the participants were (McDonald et al., 2012). Research suggested that Search of meaning among older adults may be indicative of difficulty or failure to integrate their lives into a coherent experience (Steger et al., 2008). Nevertheless, Steger et al. (2008, p. 221) indicated that, although empirical investigation of Search for meaning is neglected, the “search for meaning is important for human functioning, as it was related to lower psychological well-being”.

In Table 7.4, the participants’ scores on the Presence and Search scales is contextualised within the framework of the MLQ score descriptors.

Table 7.4
MLQ frequencies

Score descriptors	Pretest <i>n</i> (%)	Posttest <i>n</i> (%)
Life did not have a valued meaning and purpose, no active exploration or meaning seeking in life (Score range: Presence < 24 and Search < 24)		
Life did not have a valued meaning and purpose, though individuals were actively seeking for something or someone that would give life meaning and purpose (Score range: Presence < 24 and Search > 24)	4 (18.20)	3 (13.60)
Life had a valued meaning and purpose, though no active exploration of that meaning or meaning seeking in life (Score range: Presence > 24 and Search < 24)	7 (31.80)	9 (40.90)
Life had a valued meaning and purpose, though individuals were still actively exploring that meaning and purpose (Score range: Presence > 24 and Search > 24)	11 (50)	10 (45.50)

Table 7.4 showed that, prior to the intervention, 18.20% ($n = 4$) of the participants indicated that, although they did not have a valued meaning and purpose in life, they were actively seeking for something or someone that would give them meaning and purpose (Steger, 2010). It suggested that the participants may have felt mislaid in life which may have caused them distress (Steger, 2010).

There was a probability that the participants may not always have been satisfied with life and that they may have experienced emotions like love and joy less frequently than the other participants (Steger, 2010). In addition, there was a possibility that they frequently may have felt anxious and depressed and that they may not have been particularly socially active (Steger, 2010). The participants in this category decreased to 13.60% ($n = 3$) following their participation in the intervention programme. Research has shown the highest levels of anxiety and worse health among individuals who indicated that they lacked a sense of meaning and that they were searching for meaning (Pezirkianidis et al., 2016).

Table 7.4 also showed that prior to participation in the programme, 31.80% ($n = 7$) of the participants indicated that, although life had a valued meaning and purpose, they did not actively explore that meaning, or sought meaning in their lives. This suggested that the participants may have been satisfied since they have grasped what made their lives meaningful, the reason for their existence and what they wanted to do with their lives (Steger, 2010).

There was a probability that they may have been highly satisfied with their lives, optimistic and that they may have had a healthy self-esteem (Steger, 2010). There was also a possibility that they may frequently have experienced feelings of love and joy and that they may not often feel afraid, angry, ashamed, or sad (Steger, 2010). It was suggested that the participants may have held traditional values, that they may have been active in and committed to religious pursuits and that they may have been socially outgoing (Steger, 2010). The percentage of participants in this category increased to 40.90% ($n = 9$) following the intervention.

Table 7.4 showed that, prior to participation in the programme, 50% ($n = 11$) of the participants indicated that, although life had a valued meaning and purpose, they were openly exploring that meaning and purpose. This suggested that they were drawn to the question “what can my life mean?” more than to any single answer (Steger, 2010). Steger (2012, p. 165) held meaning to be “the web of connections, understandings and interpretations to help [individuals] to comprehend [their] experience and formulating plans directing [their] energies to the achievement of [their] desired future”. The finding suggested that the participants may have been satisfied with their lives, that they may have been generally optimistic, that they may have frequently experienced feelings of love and that they may not have often felt depressed or anxious (Steger, 2010). The aforementioned are qualities that are desirable for organisations (Steger et al., 2012).

The participants may have been active in religious activities therefore they may have been

likely to regard their spirituality as important to them (Steger, 2010). Although these participants may have preferred a stable structure in society and life, they may have been aware of many areas for improvements to their situation at the time (Steger, 2010). The participants in this category decreased to 45.50% ($n = 10$) following their participation in the programme.

The following is a discussion on the results of the PDSQ.

7.4 PSYCHIATRIC DIAGNOSTIC SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

The results obtained from the PDSQ are summarised in Tables 7.5 and 7.6. In Table 7.5, the pre- and post-intervention mean group scores (pretest/posttest) for the various subscales is shown.

Table 7.5
PDSQ: Pre/posttest subscale mean group scores ($N = 22$)

Subscales	Subscale cutoff score	<i>M</i> (SD)	Skewness (SE)	Kurtosis (SE)
Major depression				
Pretest	9	4.59 (5.13)	1.02 (.49)	-.06 (.95)
Posttest		2.46 (4.44)	2.38 (.49)	4.84 (.95)
Post-traumatic stress				
Pretest	5	3.64 (3.30)	.53 (.49)	-1.08 (.95)
Posttest		1.77 (1.90)	1.50 (.49)	2.14 (.95)
Bulimia/binge eating				
Pretest	7	1.18 (2.09)	1.92 (.49)	2.68 (.95)
Posttest		.455 (1.18)	2.77 (.49)	6.74 (.95)
Obsessive compulsion				
Pretest	1	.50 (.96)	2.63 (.49)	8.02 (.95)
Posttest		.27 (.77)	2.95 (.49)	8.34 (.95)
Panic				
Pretest	4	.82 (1.18)	1.34 (.49)	1.05 (.95)
Posttest		0.32 (.78)	2.66 (.49)	6.86 (.95)
Social anxiety				
Pretest	4	1.64 (3.24)	2.64 (.49)	7.38 (.95)
Posttest		1.32 (2.40)	2.09 (.49)	4.33 (.95)
Alcohol abuse/dependence				
Pretest	1	.27 (.88)	3.06 (.49)	8.09 (.95)
Posttest		.18 (.50)	2.91 (.49)	8.43 (.95)
Drug				

abuse/dependence				
Pretest	1	.09 (.43)	4.69 (.49)	22 (.95)
Posttest		.00 (.00)		
Generalised anxiety				
Pretest	7	3.00 (3.64)	.93 (.49)	-.65 (.95)
Posttest		2.64 (3.50)	1.05 (.49)	-.45 (.95)

Table 7.5 showed that both the pre- and post-intervention mean group scores on the subscales for depression, post-traumatic stress, bulimia/binge-eating, obsessive-compulsions, panic, social anxiety, alcohol abuse/dependence, drug abuse/dependence and generalised anxiety were subclinical. The positive relationship between meaning and purpose in life and psychological health is well established in the literature (Steger, 2012). It appeared as if this finding may have been supported by the results on the PIL and MLQ that indicated that a significant percentage of participants (varying between 68.20% (PIL) and 50% (MLQ)) may have had a definite and valued sense of meaning and purpose. At a group level, it suggested better psychological health and adaptive coping (cf. Pezirkianidis et al., 2016; Steger & Dik, 2009; Wong, 2012a).

However, the analysis revealed that a few of the participants' pre- and post-intervention scores were equal to or exceeded the recommended cutoff values of the subscales for depression, post-traumatic stress, bulimia/binge eating, obsessive compulsion, panic, social anxiety, substance abuse/dependency and generalised anxiety.

Research indicate that one in six (16.67%) SAs suffer from anxiety, depression and substance use problems (Herman, Stein, Seedat, Heeringa, Moomal & Williams, 2009). The psychological distress was explained as contemporary SAs challenges in dealing with political uncertainty, social transition, crime and economic stress (Health24, 2017). It was suggested that many of the country's citizen's may be experiencing high levels of stress (Health24, 2017).

The above is suggestive of an underlying existential vacuum at the SA societal level. At the root of the experience of existential vacuum may be individuals' frustrations with their present life circumstances (e.g. employment, economic and social stress, etc.) (Smallman, 2014). This may be suggestive of their struggle to find meaning in their existence and psychosocial and socioeconomic situations (Lantz, 1986). Wong (2012b, p. 625) explained the perceived existential vacuum as a consequence of "industrialization, the loss of traditional values, and the dehumanization of individuals in the modern world" (Wong, 2012b,

p. 625). Others also regard it as a reflection of troubled times (Lantz, 1986).

Zimmerman (2002) maintained that the recommended PDSQ cut-off values are more sensitive than specific and should be interpreted in a flexible way. The cut-off values may thus not be used to assign a diagnosis or treatment, but rather to inform decisions about whether a more comprehensive clinical screening has to be undertaken (Zimmerman, 2002). Since there were no specific cut-off values available for SA populations¹⁴, these results were interpreted with caution while being cognisant of the emerging trends of psychological distress among academics (see Chapter 1, section 1.2.5; Chapter 2, section 2.5).

In Table 7.6 below, the number of participants on each subscale who were indicated for follow up prior to and after participation in the programme is shown.

Table 7.6
PDSQ frequencies for follow-up

Subscale	Participants recommended for follow up <i>n</i> (%) ¹		<i>n</i> (%) Reduction/ increase in symptoms
	Pre-intervention	Post-intervention	
Depression	6 (27.30)	2 (9.10)	4 (18.20)
Post-traumatic stress	7 (31.80)	2 (9.10)	5 (22.70)
Bulimia/binge eating	1 (4.50)		1 (4.50)
Obsessive compulsion	7 (31.80)	3 (13.60)	4 (18.20)
Panic	1 (4.50)		1 (4.50)
Social anxiety	3 (13.60)	3 (13.60)	0 (0)
Alcohol abuse/dependence	1 (4.50)	3 (13.60)	-2 (-9.10)
Drug abuse/dependence	1 (4.50)		1 (4.50)
Generalised anxiety	5 (22.70)	5 (22.70)	0 (0)

Note: Participant subscale score \geq recommended subscale cutoff score

Table 7.6 showed that, prior to their participation in the programme, a few participants were indicated for follow up for symptoms of depression, post-traumatic stress, bulimia/binge eating, obsessive compulsion, panic, social anxiety, alcohol abuse/dependency, drug

¹⁴ Cut-off values were available for American populations, based on the data of 1726 psychiatric outpatients who completed the PDSQ. Most of the respondents were White females with some college education. The mean age of the group was 40.4 years (Zimmerman, 2002).

abuse/dependency and generalised anxiety.

Table 7.6 showed that, after their participation in the programme, a few participants were still indicated for follow up for symptoms of depression, post-traumatic stress, obsessive compulsion, social anxiety, alcohol abuse/dependency and generalised anxiety.

Table 7.6 showed that, prior to participation in the programme, 27.30% of the participants were indicated for follow up for symptoms of depression, whereas 9.10% of the participants were indicated after participation in the programme. As indicated by the change in symptoms, fewer participants suffered from symptomatic impairment following the logotherapy brief group-based programme.

Prior to their participation in the programme, 31.80% of the participants were indicated for follow up on symptoms of post-traumatic stress, whereas 9.10% of the participants were indicated after their participation in the programme.

In addition, prior to their participation in the programme, 4.50% of the participants were indicated for follow up on symptoms of bulimia/binge eating, though none of the participants were indicated after their participation in the programme. As indicated by the change in symptoms, none of the participants suffered from symptomatic impairment following the logotherapy brief group-based programme. The same reduction in symptoms was seen for panic and drug abuse/dependency.

Prior to their participation in the programme, 31.80% of the participants were indicated for follow up on symptoms for obsessive compulsion, whereas 13.60% of the participants were indicated after their participation in the programme. As indicated by the change in symptoms, fewer participants suffered from symptomatic impairment following the logotherapy brief group-based programme.

It was noted that, prior to the programme, 4.50% of the participants were indicated for follow up for indicators of alcohol abuse/dependence, whereas 13.60% participants were indicated after participation in the programme. The relationship between meaninglessness and alcohol and other drug use is substantiated in the literature (Asagba & Marshall, 2016; Schulenberg et al., 2008). Crumbaugh (1980 as cited in Asagba & Marshall, 2016, p. 41) revealed that many individuals had adopted the habit as an escape from the realities of a life that lacks purpose and meaning. Martin, McKinnon, Johnson and Rosenhow (2011) reported a low sense of meaning in life seen as both the cause and effect of dependent drinking. It suggested a need for further research to ascertain the prevalence of alcohol use/abuse/dependency among academic employees as a means to cope with work/personal

stressors and/or a lack or low sense of purpose and meaning.

Since a reduction in symptoms on most of the PDSQ subscales were detected, a Wilcoxon matched pairs signed rank test was conducted to determine whether the pre- and post-intervention measure differences were significant on the various subscales (see Table 7.7).

Table 7.7
Differences between PDSQ pre/posttest scores

	Z	P
Depression	-2.60	.01**
Post-traumatic stress	-2.17	.03*
Bulimia/binge eating	-2.32	.02*
Obsessive compulsion	-1.67	.10
Panic	-2.23	.03*
Social anxiety	-.36	.72
Alcohol abuse/dependence	-.82	.42
Drug abuse/dependence	-1.00	.32
Generalised anxiety	-.74	.46

*p < .05, two tailed.

**p < .01, two tailed

The differences were revealed as statistically non-significant for obsessive compulsion; social anxiety; alcohol abuse/dependence; drug abuse/dependence; and generalised anxiety. However, the differences were revealed as statistically significant for depression, post-traumatic stress, bulimia/binge eating and panic (see Table 7.5 for the pretest/posttest mean scores on the subscales).

The mean score on the major depressive disorder subscale decreased from pre-intervention ($M = 4.59$, $SD = 5.13$) to post-intervention ($M = 2.46$, $SD = 4.44$) (see Table 7.5). The analysis revealed that there was a significant reduction in symptoms of depression following participation in the intervention programme, $Z = -2.60$, $p < .01$, with a small effect size ($r = -.39$). This suggested that about 39% of the reduction in symptoms of depression may have been ascribed to the logotherapy brief group-based intervention.

This finding implied that logotherapy, with a strong cognitive restructuring component, may have been effective in reducing symptoms of depression in a short period of time.

No previous research could be found that explored the impact of a logotherapy brief group programme on the symptoms of depression for academic employees. The finding of the potential of logotherapy to reduce symptoms of depression was consistent with other studies that have shown the effectiveness of brief group logotherapy in reducing the symptoms of depression in diverse populations (cf. Delavari, Nasirian, Baezegar bafrooie, 2014; Haghighi, Khodaei & Sharifzadeh, 2013; Kang, Kim, Song & Kim, 2013; Mohammadi, Fard & Heidari, 2014; Rezaei, Refahi & Ahmadikhah, 2012; Robotmili et al., 2015; Sima, Mostafa & Masomeh, 2010; Sunhee, 2008). These studies mostly took place in medical settings and Iranian students were the target group in the Robotmili et al. (2012) study.

No previous research could be found that explored the impact of a logotherapy brief group programme on the symptoms of post-traumatic stress for academic employees. The mean score on the post-traumatic stress disorder subscale decreased from pre-intervention ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 3.30$) to post-intervention ($M = 1.77$, $SD = 1.90$) (see Table 7.5). The analysis revealed that there was a significant reduction in symptoms of post-traumatic stress following their participation in the programme, $Z = -2.165$, $p < .05$, with a small effect size ($r = -.33$). This suggested that about 33% of the decrease in the symptoms of post-traumatic stress could have been ascribed to the brief logotherapy group intervention. Although the perceived critical incidents related to the trauma symptoms for academic employees was not determined, this finding implied that logotherapy, with a strong cognitive restructuring component, may have been effective in reducing symptoms of post-traumatic stress in a short period of time.

This finding was consistent with other studies that have shown the effectiveness of logotherapy group intervention in reducing the symptoms for post-traumatic stress. However, the academic literature regarding the use of logotherapy in relation to trauma is sparse (Smith, 2012). The majority of literature and/or case studies focused on treating military related post-traumatic stress disorder (Lantz, 1992; Southwick & Gilmartin, 2004; Southwick, Gilmartin, McDonough & Morrissey, 2006). A study by DeMoklebust (2016) outlined a successful treatment outcome using logotherapy in treating a victim of kidnapping in Guatemala with PTSD related symptoms. A study by Shoaakazemi, Javid, Tazekand and Khalili (2012) outlined a successful treatment outcome using logotherapy in treating earthquake-affected adolescent girls in Iran. In addition, Southwick, Lowthert and Graber (2016) provided evidence that suggested that logotherapy can strengthen resilience and facilitate personal growth in the face of adversity and trauma.

No previous research could be found that explored the impact of a logotherapy brief group programme on the symptoms of panic for academic employees. The mean score on the

panic disorder subscale decreased from pre-intervention ($M = .82$, $SD = 1.18$) to post-intervention ($M = .32$, $SD = .78$) (see Table 7.5). The analysis revealed that there was a significant reduction in symptoms of panic following participation in the programme, $Z = -2.23$, $p < .05$, with a small effect size ($r = -.34$). This suggested that about 34% of the decrease in the symptoms of panic may have been ascribed to the brief logotherapy group intervention. Like post-traumatic stress, panic falls within the anxiety spectrum. This finding is consistent with other studies that have shown the effectiveness of group logotherapy in reducing the symptoms of anxiety in diverse populations (cf. Delavari et al., 2014; Ghorbani, Kafaki & Saadatmand, 2015; Rasoli & Borjali, 2011; Sunhee, 2008). This finding implied that logotherapy, with a strong cognitive restructuring component, may have been effective in reducing symptoms of anxiety in a short period of time.

No previous research could be found that explored the impact of a logotherapy brief group programme on the symptoms of bulimia/binge eating for academic employees. In this study, symptoms of bulimia/binge eating were considered as a mechanism to cope with stress. The mean score on the bulimia/binge eating subscale decreased from pre-intervention ($M = 1.18$, $SD = 2.09$) to post-intervention ($M = .46$, $SD = 1.18$) (see Table 7.5). The analysis revealed that there was a significant reduction in symptoms of binge eating symptoms following participation in the programme, $Z = -2.32$, $p < .05$, with a medium effect size ($r = -.35$). This suggested that about 35% of the decrease in the symptoms of binge eating may have been ascribed to the brief logotherapy group intervention. This finding implied that logotherapy, with a strong cognitive restructuring component, may have been effective in reducing symptoms of bulimia/binge eating in a short period of time.

This result was consistent with a study that has shown the effectiveness of group logotherapy in reducing the symptoms of clinical and subclinical eating disorders (Kirsten & Du Plessis, 2013; Strenge, 2015). The Kirsten and Du Plessis (2013) study focused on subclinical¹⁵ pre-graduate white female students in SA. This study utilised logotherapy principles in combination with other treatment modalities (e.g. cognitive restructuring) (Kirsten & Du Plessis, 2013; Strenge, 2015).

It was noted that no symptom reduction took place for social and generalised anxiety. This may be reminiscent of high levels of anxiety triggered merely by the participants' partaking in the programme. Anxiety in social situations is fairly common (Sue et al., 1994). Though, with respect to the intervention, it may have also reflected participants' concern and/or fear that

¹⁵ Subclinical eating disorders are regarded as an intermediate point on an eating disorder continuum, where asymptomatic, unrestrained eating lies at one end, milder forms of disturbed eating at an intermediate point, and clinical disorders at the extreme (Kirsten & Du Plessis, 2013).

they may be analysed and scrutinised (Sue et al., 1994). In this context, such a concern was regarded as normal.

The findings on the participants' learning and/or discoveries is included in the net section.

7.5 THE PARTICIPANTS' LEARNING AND/OR DISCOVERIES

The three-stage constant comparison method (CCM) of data analysis provided the framework for analysing the transcribed verbatim data (see Chapter 4, section 4.2.6). Although the information obtained from the questionnaire was limited, three themes emerged from the data that were the normalisation of the participant work experiences; an awareness about the role of cognition in meaningful work; and self-awareness, awareness about the diverse nature and uniqueness of human beings and hope.

A discussion on the themes is included in section 7.5.1.

7.5.1 The normalisation of participant work experiences

The normalisation of the participants work experiences was a prominent theme that emerged. A number of participants indicated that the group-based intervention helped them to put their work experiences into context. For example, a participant stated that she realised that

...we all experience the same problems at work (Participant 1, IP, 15 June 2015).

Another participant indicated that

I am not alone in what I am experiencing (Participant 5, IP, 15 June 2015).

The participants' realisation that others had the same experience in their work roles conveyed a sense of groundedness.

Likewise, another participant discovered that

... we, staff from different departments, face similar challenges that affect our service delivery to our target market in different ways and also negatively (Participant 20, IP, 18 June 2015).

It appeared as if beneficial group processes may have been behind some of the participants' realisations and discoveries with respect to the similarity in experience. The analysis revealed a realisation about the mutuality in their tasks that posed similar challenges to all participants, though there were variations since the participants' roles and focus differed.

Universality is a curative factor that operates in every type of therapy group (Berg & Landreth, 1990). According to Yalom, (1985 as cited in Berg & Landreth, 1990, p. 30) “the participation in group experience often teaches people that they are not alone with the ‘uniqueness’ of their problems which are shared by others. This knowledge frequently produces a sense of relief”.

The group processes may not only have facilitated a sense of identification with others, but may also have facilitated empathy for the other with respect to the participants’ universal striving towards delivering service to students. Empathy helps individuals to be emotionally and relationally attuned to people they interact with on a daily basis (Wong, 2012a). Without empathy, it is not possible to bridge the gap between people (see e.g. Chapter 5, section 5.5.1.1 i) (Wong, 2012a). Normalising work experience and enhanced understanding (empathy) were some of the implicit aims of the group-based intervention (see section 6.4).

Hence, for another participant, participation in the intervention was a validating experience. He indicated that

*I have been employing a similar approach for a number of years with success
(Participant 8, IP, 17 June 2015).*

In support of the participant’s experience, Yalom (1985 as cited in in Berg & Landreth, 1990) believed that, through interaction with others, group members may get validated and may become aware of their cognitive schemas and behaviour. In addition, the participant’s self-validation in effect validated logotherapy as brief group-based intervention. It also validated the practical applicability of logotherapy principles, though fleeting, in a HE setting.

It appeared as if the sense of identification with others and mutuality in the group managed to lessen some participants’ inhibitions with respect to a greater sense of openness towards sharing more with colleagues. This contention is reflected in the quotation below:

*I am feeling more comfortable to share with others and to encourage my colleagues
(Participant 5, IP, 15 June 2015).*

Openness suggested an adaptive response since it opened up more opportunities for the participant with respect to learning and personal growth (Wong, 2012a). It also appeared as if the group setting may have enhanced the participant’s confidence to encourage and support her colleagues. It made her aware of things that she avoided in the past (Wong, 2012a). Frankl found that openness helped individuals to discern their responsibility to the situation (Wong, 2012a). This was another of the inherent aims of the logotherapy brief

group-based intervention programme (see section 6.4).

It seemed as if the sharing of perceptions and experiences in the group, though from diverse perspectives, brought about an awareness for some participants regarding the importance of positive working relationships with colleagues to foster a more positive work environment. This shift is reflected in the quotation below

I discovered that collaboration with different staff members develops into a positive working environment, instead of working in silos (Participant 20, IP, 18 June 2015).

Such an awareness is key to a willingness to foster positive work relationships.

The theme on awareness about the role of cognition in meaningful work and life experiences is discussed in the section below.

7.5.2 Awareness about the role of cognition in meaningful work and life experiences

Awareness about the role of cognition in meaningful work and life experiences was another strong theme that emerged. Steger (2012) noted that the cognitive component of meaning in life is about the understandings that individuals develop about who they are, what the world is like and how they fit into and relate with the grand scheme of things.

The theme of awareness was supported by the logotherapy technique of dereflection that works with the participants' cognitions to bring about an awareness in order to open up the possibility for change and ultimately a change in attitudes where deemed necessary (see section 6.4.1.2). To illustrate this contention, a participant indicated her awareness about the importance of her mind-set and how it may determine the outcome of situations at work and in life, or the outcome of an experience:

My mind-set and how I think about a situation can determine the outcome. Listen carefully, do not make assumptions and think through your actions (Participant 7, IP, 15 June 2015).

Mind-set is about the attitude or approach that participants may have in various situations. The participant managed to encapsulate the basic steps of the cognitive restructuring process (Beck, 1995; Dryden et al., 2003). This indicated an awareness about the possibility of underlying beliefs that may generate the same cycle of problems if left unchanged (Pattakos & Dundon, 2017).

In addition, another participant also indirectly referred to the logotherapy technique of dereflection, suggesting that it would be helpful to have the capacity to look at difficulties

from a different perspective:

To perceive problems in a positive way will help to solve or find a positive solution more easily. If a problem occurs, try to change it into something positive, find the positive in it. Attitude can change your life, perceptions, the way you function, etc. (Participant 10, IP, 17 June 2015).

From the quotation, it was apparent that the participant recognised that attitude plays a key role in the way individuals perceive and experience work and life and that it may facilitate different outcomes (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).

In addition, the following two quotations emphasised the key role of attitude, an awareness of the possibility to discover meaning in any situation and the potential ripple effect of meaningful work and living:

... life has meaning and reason, in good and bad situations! Your attitude can influence a negative event to be seen in a more positive way. Readings on Viktor Frankl very interesting! (Participant 27, IP, 19 June 2015).

That one can find true meaning, no matter which circumstances you find yourself in. The power of positive thoughts is immense, if you can change your thinking and attitude about life and your work, it could have tremendous impact on yourself and the people around you (Participant 11, IP, 17 June 2015).

This awareness suggested meaning potential in the domain of Frankl's attitudinal values (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006). One of the participants communicated empathy with colleagues who were perceived to be unhappy, though, she emphasised that it would be important to deflect away from the negativity expressed by them and to focus rather on what is possible and what may be helpful:

Why be unhappy and unsatisfied with work? Be positive, listen to others who are dissatisfied and empathise with them, but make use of the opportunity to focus on the positive matter and advantages/opportunities you have! Face your challenges with a smile and pull through (Participant 27, IP, 19 June 2015).

The quotation illuminated the participant's realisation that she was free to choose her attitude; exercise her will to meaning; shift her focus of attention; not work against herself; practice humour; and extend beyond herself. If the participant manages to actualise the realisations, her path to self-transcendence is clear (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).

In Section 7.5.3, the discussion focuses on the participants' self-awareness; awareness

about the diverse nature and uniqueness of human beings and hope.

7.5.3 Self-awareness, awareness about the diverse nature and uniqueness of human beings and hope

Awareness was another theme that emerged. It referred to self-awareness; awareness about the diverse nature and uniqueness of human-beings; and hope. However, this theme was not as strong as the themes about the normalisation of work experiences and awareness about the role of cognition in meaningful work and life experiences.

With respect to self-awareness, a participant indicated that:

I have learnt that I am a positive person who knows my purpose and goals and that being positive will make your environment and colleagues being more positive. Making a mistake is a learning curve. If you do not make mistakes you are not doing anything at all (Participant 4, IP, 15 June 2015).

The participant communicated that she regarded herself as someone who knew her purpose and goals. Though, she was aware that making mistakes was human. It appeared as if a sense of empathy towards the self may have been facilitated. Pattakos and Dundon (2017) asserted that empathy towards the self takes self-detachment to own up to a mistake.

Moreover, in the context of self-awareness, another participant indicated that:

I can think differently about my work by focusing on the value I may add to students' learning experience. I can use attributes which I perceive to be negative, e.g. being a very responsibly driven person to the advantage of my workplace. This may result in me having a sense of worth and appreciation for my own abilities (Participant 19, IP, 17 June 2015).

It appeared as if the participant has managed to gain self-distance and that she was more open to reconsider values and attitudes that she held towards herself. It seemed as if she was considering exchanging a negative attitude towards herself for a healthier attitude in the hope of leading a more fulfilling life (Marshall, 2011). Pattakos and Dundon (2017) argued that to be aware is more important than to be smart.

Another theme that emerged was the participants' awareness of the diverse nature and uniqueness of human beings. The awareness is reflected in the next quotation:

... that people are not the same – each person has his/her own life story and that the things that have happened to us in the past and are happening to us in the present

influence how we react towards others – this can help me to treat people with more understanding and compassion (Participant 11, IP, 17 June, 2015).

It appeared as if participation in the intervention could have illuminated the fact of diversity in human experience. It also appeared as if this awareness may have contributed towards a potential shift in perspective towards diverse others, since the participant communicated a more empathetic stance towards the other. This claim was captured in a perceived willingness to have more understanding and compassion towards other people. Compassion is key to meaning (Wong, 2012a). Enhanced understanding (empathy) was one of the implicit aims of the logotherapy group-based intervention (see section 6.4).

The following two participants made a link between the uniqueness of human beings and the diverse paths to meaning (e.g. see Chapter 3, section 3.7.2):

Different people find meaning in their life from different sources (Participant 24, IP, 18 June 2015).

Without hope, life is futile without hope. There is nothing to dream of, work towards, believe in, or hold onto in difficult times. Hope can take different forms for different people – religion, sport, health, work, studies, etc. (Participant 25, IP, 18 June 2015).

Pattakos and Dundon (2017) asserted that there are as many shades of meaning as there are colours. The participant in the second quotation communicated awareness about the importance of hope. Generally, the notion of hope was scarce in the overall context of the study. Hope is associated with the presence of meaning in most areas of life (Wong & Wong, 2012). Frankl maintained that, like meaning, hope can be found regardless of the circumstances (Frankl, 2006). Nevertheless, in the context of the group, Yalom (1985 as cited in Berg & Landreth, 1990) showed that participants' expectations and hope for interventions to be successful have been demonstrated to be related to positive outcomes in groups.

Concluding this section, not all participants felt that they learnt and/or discovered something through their participation in the intervention. A participant indicated that she did not learn anything because the participants in her group mostly complained.

Another participant indicated that she could not recall the intervention because, in her mind, it was too far away. This participant also communicated disappointment with respect to the implementation approach towards the programme, since it did not follow a more traditional psycho-educational and workshop approach.

It was hypothesised that the “non-traditional” approach towards the implementation of the intervention may have evoked anxiety in the participant and may have interfered with her concentration and memory. The perceived loss of memory may also be considered as a form of resistance (e.g. avoidance). Fabry (1974) revealed that disappointment in relation to logotherapy groups was not unusual since some participants appear to expect something more spectacular to happen than mere exchanges of words.

The above clearly demonstrated something about the uniqueness of humans, their diverse expectations and experiences, psychological phenomena like defence mechanisms and the impact of an intervention like the logotherapy (ultra) brief group-based intervention.

Based on the feedback from the majority of participants, it appeared as if their participation in the logotherapy brief group-based intervention may have had some benefits (e.g. normalised work experiences, identification with others, enhanced understanding, empathy towards the self, etc.) and that learning and/or discovery may have taken place for some. It was noted though that the learning and/or discoveries as reported by the participants did not reflect deep meaning. This impression supported the results from the quantitative study that showed statistically non-significant changes in the participants’ sense of meaning and purpose.

The feedback from the majority of the participants about their learnings and/or discoveries created the impression that they were giving a lecture (intellectualisation) rather than speaking about a lived experience that may have had roots at a deeper level. The impression was based on the emotional distance that was detected in the feedback and the simplification of quite complex constructs and processes. It suggested that the participants may have used defences like intellectualisation and simplification to protect themselves against the anxiety evoked by the questions to perform with respect to reflecting what they have learned and/or discovered.

It was suggested that the participants’ learnings/discoveries may have been reminiscent of an increased awareness about a phenomenon like meaning in work and life; hope; awareness about the role of their thinking in meaningful work, self-awareness; and awareness of the diverse nature and uniqueness of people.

Fundamentally, a healthy level of self-awareness may assist the participants to some degree to manage better with their day-to-day responsibilities, meet their goals, reorganise when they find themselves at crossroads and, most importantly, discover meaning in work and life in order to live a fulfilled life (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006; Kets de Vries & Cheak, 2010).

Pattakos and Dundon (2017) maintained that to be aware is to know meaning. It is apparent that it takes time and effort to become aware and that it may take more than a single event (Pattakos & Dundon, 2017).

Following on the above, section 7.6 puts the role of resistance in the intervention within the context of meaning, meaning potential and existential responsibility taking under the spotlight.

7.6 THE ROLE OF RESISTANCE IN THE INTERVENTION

Steger (2012) asserted that there is evidence for the benefits of psychotherapy with respect to enhancing the meaning in life of people. Following on the findings and discussions on the assessment outcomes of the impact of the intervention (see sections 7.2 to 7.5), it was apparent that meaning in life is a multifaceted phenomenon and construct (Steger, 2012).

Although the post-intervention mean group measure on the PIL was interpreted as a sense of definite purpose and meaning, it was apparent that it was in close proximity to the somewhat uncertain sense of meaning and purpose score range (see section 7.2). It was noted that the percentage of participants who reported a lack of and/or uncertain purpose and meaning on the PIL after participation in the intervention increased from 31.80% ($n = 7$) to 36.40% ($n = 8$) following their participation in the intervention. In addition, the pre- and post-intervention mean group scores on the MLQ revealed that the percentage of participants who reported that, although they had valued purpose and meaning, they were not actively exploring that meaning, increased from 31.80% ($n = 7$) to 40.90% ($n = 9$) after their participation in the intervention.

Following on the above perceived loss of meaning, Ventegod and Merrick (2012, p. 573) argued that the partial loss in meaning and purpose in life is

really much more tricky than a total loss because people set up mental defences [e.g. resistance/avoidance] that hinder them from noticing the loss. After a while, the lack of meaning [in] life [may] be materialized in poor quality of life, mental and somatic symptoms, including depression or pain, and reduce ability to function sexually, socially, and in work.

The foregoing argument about mental defences was captured in the following observation from a participant in one of the implementation groups:

I was interested to see how you asked the questions and I saw how skilfully people avoided the point ... (Participant 14, IP, 17 June 2015).

The participant noticed the mental defence of avoidance at work in the group. She thus recognised that interactional logotherapy coincided with anxiety provoking experiences, of which the impact may not always have been effectively contained. This may have left some participants closed to new learning and rather focused on self-protection.

Like the participant, Lantz (1998) emphasised the phenomenon of resistance in a logotherapy approach to interactional group therapy. He asserted that:

group member's enhanced ability and/or willingness to notice, actualize, and honor the meanings and meaning potentials in life will always provoke considerable personal anxiety. Such anxiety is reactive to the group member's awareness of the two side effects of meaning awareness and actualization, which are the awareness of vulnerability and personal responsibility (Lantz, 1998, p. 101).

Lantz (1998, p. 101) understood that "[s]uch anxiety is frequently managed by group members by their resisting the noticing, actualization and honoring of meanings and meaning-potentials". It was apparent during the implementation process that the participants sporadically resorted to defence mechanisms to alleviate the discomfort of anxiety provoked by their participation in the group. Ultimately, "this helps [participants] to cover up or repress the side effects of meaning awareness and actualization. In this situation, [they] often utilise resistance to sacrifice meaning awareness in order to repress the responsibilities and vulnerabilities of a meaning-filled life" (Lantz, 1998, p. 101).

Contextualising the above, it would be important to look at some of the dynamic characteristics of the setting and how it may have impacted the results. Therefore, it was taken into consideration that some participants may have been prone to using a mental defence like "positivity" as described in the phase one study (see Chapter 5, section 5.4.3.8) to protect themselves, for example, against the anxiety provoked by the mere nature of the questions in the pre-intervention questionnaires. This suggested that mental defences to cope with anxiety may have played a significant role in how individuals responded to the questions in, for example, the pre- and post-intervention questionnaires, more so, because the researcher was an employee at the same HE organisation. This may have triggered some of the participants' fears about a potential bridge of personal information and potential judgement. It thus implied that some participants may have been "motivated" to respond to the questionnaires in an overly positive way.

It would be important to take into consideration that, at the time of the implementation of the programme, a defence like positivity may not only have operated on an individual level, but also possibly at the group level in the form of a social defence. Moreover, resistance (or

avoidance) in the form of “distraction” was noticed from some of the participants in one of the implementation groups. Their resistance was understood as their discomfort with sharing their strengths, talents and what they were really good at, including what they had that was of value to other people (see Table 6.3, Theme 4). Sharing in relation to this theme required vulnerability and existential responsibility taking, on the part of the participants (Lantz, 1998).

Whilst the participants were reflecting in the group, the reflection developed into a lively though somewhat technical (intellectual) debate among the participants about the differences between strengths, talents and spiritual gifts, and, in doing so, they avoided sharing in the group about themselves (IP, 17 June 2015). It clearly demonstrated that some participants evaded answering the question about their talents because of the anxiety that it provoked. It suggested that, at the time, the therapeutic factors inherent to the group had not yet developed enough to provide a sense of safety to facilitate trust and openness. Again, cognisance should be taken of the role the individual trait characteristics may have played. It may also have suggested that the participants responded defensively to the two side effects of meaning awareness which were vulnerability and personal responsibility (Lantz, 1998).

The avoidance defence was specifically noted in the group with the highest number of participants ($n = 12$), again suggesting that the therapeutic factors may not have taken effect due to the participants’ familiarity with each other, the size of the group, the group composition and limited time for trust and openness to develop. The importance of group size and composition, and sufficient time to allow for therapeutic group factors and processes to develop when working with sensitive topics like meaning in life, was emphasised.

In Lantz’s (1998) view, “the group Logotherapist has considerable responsibility to ‘empathetically’ disrupt the manifestations of resistance by group members”. The resistance related to the abovementioned instance was so apparent that one of the younger group members took the initiative to make the avoiding group members aware of their reluctance to share something of value about themselves (IP, 17 June 2015). Throughout the implementation phase, the sporadic manifestation of defences (in various forms) was noted. Consequently, group members had to be helped from time to time to become aware of their defences, in order for them to choose to relinquish such resistance (Lantz, 1998). The following quotation from a participant reflected the help given to participants in order for them to be able to risk relinquishing their defences:

I realised that people are prepared to help as long as you approach the matter sensitively. I liked the way you asked and worded your questions and encouraged

people to answer to the point ... (Participant 14, IP, 17 June 2015).

However, there is no doubt that the logotherapist may have failed to notice some of the manifested defence mechanisms and to address them appropriately (e.g. creating awareness).

Although the effect of the intervention (differences between the pre- and post-intervention scores on both the PIL and MLQ) was shown to be statistically non-significant, there were indicators that the brief intervention may have mobilised the search or will to meaning for some participants and/or made them aware of the meaning potentials in life for them. This claim is reflected in the following quotation:

It was liberating to realise that meaning in my life does not necessary have to be linked to status, money or fame to actually be linked to success. Meaning in my life can be as simple as being an excellent mother to my children ... (Participant 15, IP, 17 June 2015).

For other participants, it culminated into an awareness of their lack of purpose and meaning, as reflected in the following quotation:

... that there are people who are able to find meaning in their lives even in very difficult circumstances. However, despite reading the prescribed literature as well as the book on meaning in life, I have been unable to find meaning in my own life. I have discovered that our thoughts are the most important factor in trying to find meaning in life (Participant 19, IP, 17 June 2015).

An integrated discussion on the results and findings is presented in sections 7.2 to 7.6.

7.7 AN INTEGRATED DISCUSSION ON THE RESULTS

Section 7.7.1 includes a discussion on the outcomes of and impact of the intervention, on the participants' sense of meaning and purpose, and psychological health while taking cognisance of the context, the perceived meaning and/or meaning frustration embedded in the academic employee experience, including the role of resistance in the intervention.

7.7.1. The outcomes and impact of the logotherapy brief group-based intervention on the participants' sense of meaning and purpose, and psychological health

Although the differences between the participants pre- and post-intervention mean group scores on both the PIL and MLQ were shown to be statistically non-significant, the results have shown that, prior to their participation in the intervention, a significant percentage (50%

(MLQ) to 68.20% (PIL)) of them reported a definite and valued meaning, including an active exploration of that meaning and purpose. In addition, the results suggested that, after their participation in the intervention, a significant percentage (45.50% (MLQ) to 63.60% (PIL)) of the participants reported a definite meaning and purpose, including an active exploration of that meaning and purpose.

These results implied meaning and purpose in the lives of a significant number of the participants' lives and work, both in the past and present, and that they may have meaningful goals and objectives; that they may experience life and work satisfaction, optimism and love; and that they have adaptive coping and experience psychological health (Steger, 2010). Research has shown a positive association between meaning and positive functioning (Steger, 2012). The latter appeared to be supported by the PDSQ findings that indicated at the group level that the majority of the participants' pre- and post-intervention scores were subclinical for depression, post-traumatic stress, bulimia/binge eating, obsessive compulsion, panic, social anxiety, alcohol abuse/dependency; drug abuse/dependency; and generalised anxiety (see Table 7.5).

The PIL and MLQ results were general and thus not specifically related to meaning in work. "Empirical research has shown that work frequently is an important source of meaning in life as a whole" (Steger et al., 2012). There seems to be a common overlap between individuals' work and their life work, therefore, meaning in life and meaning in work are closely related and the one influences the other (Driver, 2007; Steger et al., 2012).

It was noted that the majority of participants indicated that they were satisfied with their jobs (see Chapter 4, Table 4.2). Their job satisfaction and meaning and purpose in work may be related to the sources of meaning that were identified and described in Chapter 5 that were: making a difference in students' development; the appreciation received from students; compassionate love for students; the freedom of choice in their work circumstances; love for their work; work viewed as a life's calling for some; the unique benefits that academic work in HE offers; meaning beyond the meaning in the moment; and HODs' experiences of making a difference in their staff's lives.

In contrast, the results showed that, prior to participation in the intervention, approximately 16% of the participants (e.g. 18.20% (MLQ) to 13.60% (PIL)) reported no valued meaning and purpose, or a lack of clear meaning and purpose in life. However, the results showed that, after participation in the intervention programme, on average 1 out of 15 participants (e.g. 13.60% (MLQ) to 4.50% (PIL)) reported no valued meaning and purpose, or a lack of clear meaning and purpose. It also became apparent that participants in this category may

have been actively exploring that meaning and purpose. This may offer a tentative explanation for the 18.18% of participants that did not report satisfaction or unhappiness with their jobs (see Tables 7.1 and 7.3). However, the relationship between the participants' lack of valued and/or clear meaning and purpose and job dissatisfaction was not investigated.

The participants' job dissatisfaction may be related to the sources of meaning that were identified and described in Chapter 5. Their meaning frustration and job dissatisfaction may be related to concern about HE change outcomes and purpose; students' unfulfilled basic needs; HODs, LAEs and NLAEs having to contain the prevailing negativity in the HE organisation; silo mentality and functioning and impaired inter-personal and inter-disciplinary relationships in the HE organisation; high administration loads; poor delivery by service departments; pressure of qualification improvement; academic competition; professional envy/jealously; the demanding characteristic of positivity as a defence against negativity; and a seeming lack of support from leadership.

The results showed that, prior to their participation in the intervention, approximately 22% of the participants (e.g. 31.80% (MLQ) to 18.20% (PIL)) reported valued meaning and purpose, or somewhat uncertain meaning and purpose (see Tables 7.1 and 7.3). The results showed that, after participation in the intervention, on average 1 out of 3 participants (e.g. 40.90% (MLQ) to 31.80% (PIL)) reported valued meaning and purpose, or somewhat uncertain meaning and purpose in life (see Tables 7.1 and 7.3). It also became apparent that participants in this category may not have been actively exploring meaning and purpose in their work and personal lives.

The above results may have been suggestive of the participants' lack or low sense of direction, not much purpose in the past and less meaningful outlooks on life. Steger (2012) considered a lower sense of purpose and meaning as a diagnostic marker for indicators (symptoms) of psychological distress. This suggested that the participants may have been at risk for less adaptive coping and for developing psychological distress.

The above suggestion appeared to be supported by the PDSQ findings since a fair percentage of the participants pre- and post-intervention scores exceeded the cutoff values for a subclinical interpretation of the subscales for depression, post-traumatic stress, bulimia/binge eating, obsessive compulsion, panic, social anxiety, alcohol abuse/dependency, drug abuse/dependency and generalised anxiety (see Table 7.6). These participants were indicated for a follow-up diagnostic interview so that they may benefit from psychological assistance. Cognisance should be taken that specific cutoff scores for SA populations were not available. These results should therefore be interpreted with caution.

It was apparent that the results from the PIL triangulated with the results of the MLQ. Since there was no other research available on the meaning in life of academic employees, the set of supportive data provided by the MLQ was key. The scores on the MLQ subscale complemented the scores on the PIL and enriched the description with respect to the participants' meaning in life and its underlying dynamics (e.g. individuals had a valued purpose and meaning in life, however, some were still exploring that purpose and meaning whilst others were not) and typical characteristics. Steger (2010) cautioned that the descriptions of the participants' Presence of and Search for meaning should not be regarded as indicative (diagnostic) of any psychological condition.

Following on the above, the key outcomes and impact of the logotherapy brief group-based intervention can be summarised as follows:

- The participants' pre- and post-intervention mean group scores on the PIL showed an increase in their sense of purpose and meaning (see Table 7.1). The difference between the pre- and post-intervention group average scores was found to be statistically non-significant ($z = -.47$, $p = .64$) This suggests that the impact should be interpreted with caution.
- The participants pre- and post-intervention mean group scores on the MLQ Presence and Search scales showed an increase with respect to the participants' valued sense of meaning and purpose and their orientation and motivation regarding their effort to find meaning, or deepen their understanding of meaning in their lives (see Table 7.3). The differences between the pre- and post-intervention group average scores on both scales were found to be statistically non-significant (Presence: $z = -.17$, $p = .86$; Search: $z = -.23$; $p = .82$). This suggests that the impact should be interpreted with caution.
- These results are supported by the brief nature of the logotherapy intervention that would not be expected to bring about significant changes with respect to an intricate phenomenon like academic employees' sense of meaning and purpose in life and work in such a limited period of time.
- The PDSQ showed a significant reduction in symptoms of depression, post-traumatic stress, bulimia/binge eating and panic (see Table 7.6). These results suggested that the logotherapy brief group-based intervention, that could be considered as having a strong cognitive restructuring component, was effective in reducing the participants' symptomatic impairment for depression, post-traumatic stress, bulimia/binge eating and panic. It also suggested that results could be achieved with respect to symptom reduction in a short period of time.

- There were subtle indications that the intervention may have served as a positive trigger for the participants' awareness about less than definite meaning and purpose in their lives and that it may have enhanced their motivation for a search for meaning and purpose. It did provide valuable information on the levels of academic employees' sense of purpose and meaning and their psychological health. It also provided some understanding about the impact of a cognitive restructuring enhanced logotherapy brief group-based intervention on the sense of purpose and meaning of academic employees and their psychological health.
- The participants' feedback on their learnings and/or discoveries through their participation in the intervention suggested that they did benefit from their participation (see section 7.5). The benefits referred to normalised work experiences; identification with others, enhanced understanding; validation of their own approaches towards life and work, empathy towards the self; self-awareness; awareness of the role that their thinking plays in their experiences of meaning in work and life; awareness of silo mentality and functioning, etc.
- It is hypothesised that the interaction between certain dynamic characteristics inherent to the HE organisation or setting may have played (and is playing) a key role in mediating the academic employees who participated in the study meaning in work experiences:
 - Service orientation (at the core of service orientation is prosocial and higher values like altruism, care, concern, tenderness, appreciation, gratitude and compassionate love for students) can be described as transcendental and spiritual. It motivated the participants to reach out to students, to perform their duties and to make a difference in their lives. Work with a spiritual "character" is likely to be perceived as having more purpose and meaning. Service orientation is also a core component of what is referred to as a calling orientation towards work and is regarded as the highest form of perceived work success and represents a search for ultimate meaning.
 - Appreciation from students (intrinsic reward, motivational pull towards the future, healthy noöynamics).
 - Love and passion for work (source of inspiration and motivation, also in difficult times).
 - Unique benefits (development opportunities, flexible work hours and arrangements, work-life balance, paid holidays, good salaries, good research incomes, extrinsic awards with intrinsic value).

- Freedom of choice (authentic values, responsibility, serving the other, dereflection, represents a search for ultimate meaning).
- Work as a life's calling (attitudinal, optimistic, actualisation of personal beliefs through work, represents a search for ultimate meaning).
- Ultimate meaning (protection, a reason for working at the HE organisation, source of nourishment, common will to common meaning, hope for survival, spiritual, the search for ultimate meaning).
- It was apparent that the interactional approach to intervention implementation evoked anxiety among some of the participants which evoked resistance and defence mechanisms (see section 7.6). The aforementioned had clear implications for the participants' meaning potentials and existential responsibility.
- From a different perspective, it is also possible that dynamic characteristics inherent to the HE organisational setting, like silo functioning, HODs as containers for NA affect, NLAEs as containers for NA and social defence mechanisms like positivity as a defence against negativity, may also have played a key role in mediating some of the academic employees who participated in the study's meaning in work experiences.

These results have to be understood with an appreciation for the complexity of enhancing a phenomenon like the sense of meaning and purpose of academic employees. It was unlikely to effect significant change with respect to such a complex and multifaceted phenomenon like academic employees' sense of purpose and meaning in work and life with a single intervention in such a limited period of time. The level of the scores and the majority of the results from both the MLQ and PIL suggested potential space for the academic employees who participated in the study to uncover, discover, rediscover and to make use of the meaning potentials of each situation (cf. Armstrong 2016; Lantz, 1991).

7.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 7 presented and gave a discussion on the results from the PIL, MLQ, PDSQ and the participants' learning and/or discoveries. It also illuminated the role of resistance in the intervention within the context of meaning. This was followed by an integrated discussion on the outcomes and impact of the logotherapy brief group-based intervention. The chapter was concluded with a summary.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Work is about a search for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather than torpor, in short, for a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying (Terkel, 1995).

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study was to develop, implement and assess the impact of a logotherapy brief group-based intervention in a HE setting. To achieve the mentioned research objective, an intervention mixed methods research design was followed that consisted of four interdependent phases (see Chapter 4). In Chapter 5 and Chapter 7, the findings and results that emanated from the qualitative and quantitative studies were discussed. Chapter 6 gave an account of the development of the logotherapy brief group-based programme, the contextual model and the approach followed that supported the implementation of the programme.

In Chapter 8 reflections on the findings that emanated from Chapters 5 and 7, as interpreted through the literature and methodological perspectives provided in Chapters 1 to 4 is offered. This will be done in order to present formulated conclusions about the research results that will be contextualised in terms of the specific aims related to the literature review and the empirical study, as specified in Chapter 1.

The contributions and limitations of the study will be discussed, whereafter the central research question will be answered. The chapter concludes with a summary.

8.2 CONCLUSIONS

In this section conclusions are drawn in terms of the specific research aims that were listed in Chapter 1.

The specific aims related to the literature review were:

- To describe the changed and changing HE landscape and the consequences for and impact thereof on academic employees (specific aim one).
- To conceptualise Viktor E. Frankl's theory and logotherapy (specific aim two).

The empirical aims related to the study were:

- To explore and describe the meaning and/or meaning frustration embedded in the academic employees' work experience (specific aim three).

- To develop and implement a logotherapy brief group-based intervention for academic employees, based on their work experiences (specific aim four).
- To determine the impact of a logotherapy brief group-based intervention on the sense of meaning and psychological health of academic employees (specific aim five).
- To identify and discuss the implications of the results for the logotherapy brief group-based intervention and to make recommendations for future research (specific aim six).

8.2.1 Specific research aim one: To describe the changed and changing HE landscape and the consequences for and impact thereof on academic employees.

This specific research aim was met in Chapter 2 by exploring literature on the global and local HE contexts, with the focus on the crisis of the academic profession. The main points can be summarised as follows:

8.2.1.1 Globalisation

Globalisation was defined as the “economic, political and societal forces pushing 21st century [HE] toward greater international involvement” and was encapsulated as “the context of economic and academic trends that are part of the reality of the 21st century” (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p. 290). In an adaptive response, HE organisations have undergone considerable functional and structural changes to meet the needs of a global and knowledge-based economy (Meyer et al., 2011; Popescu, 2015). Consequently, GHE has withstood revolutionary changes in the past century, characterised by transformations unprecedented in scope and diversity (cf. Altbach et al., 2009; Altbach, 2013).

Altbach et al., (2009) identified the key trends and drivers of change in GHE as globalisation and internationalisation; access and equity; quality assurance, accountability and qualification frameworks; financing HE; private HE and privatisation; the centrality and crisis of the academic profession; the student experience; teaching, learning and assessment; information and communications technologies, and distance education; research; and university-industry linkages. In 2013, Altbach singled out massification and the global knowledge economy as the two main drivers of HE transformation worldwide (Altbach, 2013). The numerous benefits, dilemmas, challenges and pressures of globalisation were outlined in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 (Meyer et al., 2011). It was ascertained that the focus of the study was on the academic profession, within the frames of globalisation and massification.

8.2.1.2 Massification

Massification is a consequence of globalisation. It is about the rapid increase in student enrolment in HE organisations, with economic success as a driving force behind the growing demand to widened access to HE and the need to change the elitist nature of universities (Altbach et al., 2009; Guri-Rosenblit et al., 2007; Mohamedbhai, 2008). It is regarded as a process that is progressing and moving through diverse phases. During the first phase, HE systems struggled to cope with the demand, the need for expanded infrastructure and a larger teaching corps, whereas during the second phase (1998 to 2000), it begun to wrestle with the implication of student diversity and was required to think about which subgroups were still not included and appropriately served (Altbach et al., 2009; Beerkens-Soo & Vossensteyn, 2009).

The trends of massification were identified and the positive and negative implications thereof were discussed (e.g. education opportunities for more; more diverse educational experiences; overall deterioration in quality; downward movement in quality of academic profession, etc.) (Altbach, 2013) (see Chapter 2, Table 2.1). Another consequence of massification is the changed social and financial status of HE organisations (Altbach et al., 2009; McGregor, 2009). In the past, HE was seen as a public good, whereas it has gradually become seen as a private good (Altbach et al., 2009; McGregor, 2009). Consequently, specific trends developed in the area of financing (Altbach et al., 2009). This has resulted in parents and/or students having to assume more responsibility for tuition and fees and HE systems and institutions were also increasingly expected to generate larger percentages of their own revenue (Altbach et al., 2009; McGregor, 2009).

8.2.1.3 The SA national and HE contexts

After a period of isolation, SAHE was confronted with the reality of globalisation that compelled the SA society to become more competitive and to re-evaluate the skills needed for socio-economic development (Crosser, 2010). This happened in combination with local political, social and economic transition processes (Maassen & Cloete, 2002; NCHE Report, 1996; Reddy, 2004; Scott et al., 2007). The NCHE was appointed by late president Mandela to oversee two fundamental tasks, first, to rid HE of the irregularities of apartheid and second, to reform it by infusing it with international experiences and best practices (Maassen & Cloete, 2002).

The new democratic government drove a radical restructuring of HE in order to make it more accessible, diversified, stronger, more focused and efficient (IEASA, 2011; White Paper,

2013). The restructuring plan is captured as five key policy objectives in the White Paper (2013) (IEASA, 2011; White Paper, 2013).

Responding to the expectations, HEIs have merged and some technikons became universities of technology (Du Pré, 2006; IEASA, 2011; Reddy, 2006; Scott, 2006). Consequently, these “new born” HEIs opened their doors to students of all races and curricula were transformed to be aligned with a knowledge-driven world while also becoming more locally relevant (Du Pré, 2006; IEASA, 2011; Reddy, 2006).

Since the restructuring plan was implemented, the student population has diversified and HE organisations have to accommodate and address the varied needs of students coming from a range of backgrounds (De Jager & Van Lingen, 2012; Reddy, 2006; Scott et al., 2007). This has become a challenging task because a significant percentage of students entering HE are academically and socially underprepared for it (Scott et al., 2007).

Consequently, as student enrolment increased and student participation became more diversified, so student performance, success and throughput came increasingly under pressure. Improving student access, success and throughput rate has not only become a very serious challenge and an ongoing battle for the SAHE sector, but also a priority for national policy and the institutions themselves (De Jager & Van Lingen, 2012; Green Paper, 2012; Scott et al., 2007; White Paper, 2013).

For that reason, various policies were implemented after the 1994 transition to overcome unfair discrimination in HE, expand access to education and training opportunities and to improve the quality of education, training and research (White Paper, 2013). However, it became apparent that there was a gap between the actual and intended implications of the various policies. The pressures of the policies on SAHE employees were outlined in Table 2.2 (Gibbon & Kabaki, 2002). For example, a major consequence of the policy implementation process for the academic profession was that the traditional academic authority was undermined (Gibbon & Kabaki, 2002).

The HE restructuring process did not go without serious growing pains and criticism about implementing the new education policies and curricula without careful consideration (Cloete, 2002; McDonald & Van der Horst, 2007). Despite the strong enrolment growth, institutions were not generating enough graduates and many of them lacked the skills needed to support national economic development in the 21st century (Pillay, 2011). Varying perspectives emerged regarding the differences between policy intention and policy implementation outcomes, ranging from disputations about reform ideas, to the unintended

effects of human intervention rather than an implementation failure (cf. Maassen & Cloete, 2002; McDonald & Van der Horst, 2007; Van Louw & Beets, 2008).

There were indicators that the major HE organisational change efforts created substantial mental and emotional challenges for some academic employees (cf. Barkhuizen, 2005; Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010; Coetzee & Rothmann, 2005; Field & Buitendach, 2011; Rothmann et al., 2008; Rothmann & Essenko, 2007; Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006; Viljoen & Rothman, 2009; Viljoen, 2006). It was suggested that, in response, it may require distinctive conditions to contain the heightened levels of anxieties evoked and to manage the painful experiences created by the transformations (Krantz, 2001). At its most basic level, the consequences of the changed and changing SAHE landscape remain and continue to put academic employees under tremendous pressure.

8.2.1.4 The changed and changing HE organisation

The SAHE landscape has changed enormously during the post-apartheid era to ensure sustainable economic, social and political reconstruction and development. It is still in a process of rapid changes that include HEIs (Odendaal & Roodt, 2001; Rothmann et al., 2008; Viljoen, 2006; Viljoen & Rothmann, 2002). The major interests at stake in national and global HE systems are social justice, competence, efficiency, academic freedom, autonomy or accountability, decentralisation or centralisation and transparency (Rhoades, 1983; DoE Report, 2001). Within each national system, “trade-offs are effected between these interests” (Rhoades, 1983, p. 283).

To contextualise the changed and changing HE organisation, the history and development of universities as organisations was described, starting from the 1960s, with the focus on organisational specificity (Musselin, 2006). Two prominent trends were highlighted concerning the character of the HE organisation, namely, its uniqueness suggesting that it is not like other organisations and its tendency to follow national patterns (Musselin, 2006). It was pointed out that contesting international trends emerged in the 1980s to deal with the “specificity” characteristic of universities (Musselin, 2006). This was done by introducing managerial tools borrowed from industry and was interpreted as a means to ensure that universities could become like any other organisation. Universities were requested to go through “economic rationalisation” and an “organisational shift” interpreted as a means to deal with its “sacred” characteristic, in effect, reducing variety among universities (Musselin, 2006). The contesting international trends were noticed in Habib’s (2013) assertions regarding the significant negative impact of SA’s economic transition on HEIs.

The reluctance of university personnel to accept changes in the operation of the university itself was pointed out, as well as the slowness of HE systems to respond to change (Barnett, 2011; Rourke & Brooks, 1964; Van Daalen & Odendaal, 2001). The reluctance to change was delineated and different understandings were offered (Maassen & Cloete, 2002; Rourke & Brooks, 1964). The resistance to reform involves matters like deeply felt assumptions about the value based purpose of HE, shifts in power and autonomy, and antagonism about the new policies and its consequences (Maassen & Cloete, 2002; Mapesela & Hay, 2005; Rourke & Brooks, 1964).

Maassen and Cloete (2002) identified four traditional features that give HEIs their unique characteristics that make it difficult to initiate and steer organisational changes from the outside, resulting in less control and prediction power over the intended changes. These characteristics include knowledge as organisational building blocks that leads to a high level of organisational fragmentation with loosely articulated decision-making structures and change that takes place in an incrementally grassroots way.

Kulati and Moja (2002) identified diverse, contested and contradictory goals; the fragmented nature of HE organisation; and the de-centralised nature of decision-making as three organisational characteristics that make HEIs (especially universities) unique and that pose a challenge to effective leadership in HE.

The four fundamental models (collegial, political, bureaucratic and organised anarchy) developed by US organisational sociologists were employed to contextualise the characteristic perspective of the academic profession (Musselin, 2006). In the SA context, some of these characteristics were illustrated by Kulati and Moja's (2002) reflections on the manner in which HEIs were governed and managed in the past.

It was contended that the new SAHE policy framework redefined the relationship between HEIs and the state (Kulati & Moja, 2002). The main tension identified in the newfound relationship was more about HEIs finding their place in its new market situation, as reflected in challenges that leadership faced from tensions within their institutions, rather than between the HEIs and the state (Kulati & Moja, 2002). Ultimately, this has culminated in a HE organisation with a changed nature and structure (e.g. managerial approach), underpinned by a value framework that causes discomfort in relation to the more traditional view of HE organisations (Kulati & Moja, 2002).

8.2.1.5 Consequences and effects of the changed and changing HE landscape for academic employees

It was noted that there is a growing body of evidence that academia has become a highly stressful occupation (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010; Bundy, 2005; Gibbon & Kabaki, 2002; Mostert et al., 2008; Viljoen & Rothmann, 2009). The traditional academic profession was conceived as a relatively stress-free job but this picture has changed dramatically (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008). Low-stress HE environments have been replaced by an overload of demands, with an undersupply of response capabilities and, in addition, academics who suffer because of a loss of status due to their diminished autonomy and fewer promotional opportunities (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008, p. 321; Bundy, 2005; Rothmann & Essenko, 2007).

Much academic critique details the negative impact of the policies on the HE system (Habib, 2013). The policy overload was often interpreted by academics as a violation of their academic roles and freedom. Mapesela and Hay (2005) hypothesised about the potential emotional consequences of the policies for academic employees and their job satisfaction.

It was emphasised that negative emotions are difficult to deal with and may be regarded as a personal weakness (Flagello, 2014; Franklin, 2003). Therefore, these emotional experiences, stemming from the loss inherent to change, may not be recognised as a result of organisational changes and pressures (Flagello, 2014; Franklin, 2003).

HE research started to emerge approximately a decade after the beginning of democratisation in 1994 predominantly in the field of IOP. It suggested an emergent need to identify factors that play a role in the well-being, health and morale of academic employees whilst in the midst of major and ongoing institutional changes. Tables 2.3 and 2.4 outlined the results and recommendations of these studies (cf. Barkhuizen, 2005; Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010; Coetzee & Rothmann, 2005; Field & Buitendach, 2011; Rothmann et al., 2008; Rothmann & Essenko, 2007; Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006; Viljoen & Rothman, 2009; Viljoen, 2006).

The key occupational stressors that were reported in these studies were job overload and control, lack of resources, communication, work relationships and pay and benefits. Overall, the main recommendation was that HEIs should intervene to reduce the occupational stress of staff (cf. Barkhuizen, 2005; Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008; Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010; Coetzee & Rothmann, 2005; Field & Buitendach, 2011; Rothmann et al., 2008; Rothmann & Essenko, 2007; Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006; Viljoen & Rothman, 2009; Viljoen, 2006).

8.2.1.6 The SAHE paradox intensifies the pressure on the academe

Since students are fundamental to HE organisations, attention was also given to the most recent events in the SAHE landscape. The trend of student unrest and protests became prominent in 2015. Students protested against high institutional fees, structural inequalities, symbols of colonialism and language policies or a lack of HE transformation (Chetty & Knaus, 2016; Schlebusch, 2015). As a consequence, various campuses across the country were struck with boycotts and strikes (Cloete, 2016a). This has put the academe under additional pressure due to the loss of academic time, the ripple effects thereof and the expectation to deliver the same output.

Despite the extensive transformation efforts in the HE sector, these protests were considered by some to be class actions against SAs existing exclusive HE system that is based on race and class, rather than a mere demand for free education (Chetty & Knaus, 2016; Cloete, 2016a). There were contentions that the government and the HE system did not recognise the student actions as a class struggle by the black youth (Chetty & Knaus (2016).

Chetty and Knaus (2016) and Cloete, (2016a) specifically called upon academics since they were perceived to be a silent, discouraged and suppressed voice in this conflict. Their silence was interpreted as giving consent to the growing crisis in inequalities. Moreover, Cloete (2016a) suggested ways to create opportunities for academics to participate, to break their perceived silence about pertinent and intertwined issues in the HE and SA contexts. It was clear that more pressure was exerted on the HE system and the academics, specifically referring to being called upon to play their role in effecting social change in SA and to get them to reflect on their silence. As the thinkers in the academe, they are expected to generate ideas that may assist in addressing these challenges (Chetty & Knaus, 2016).

It was contended that universities may have become a well-located hub for a number of SA's past political and socio-economic transgressions and pain, but is also a container for students' (and possibly others from the broader SA context) growing disillusionment and anger pertaining to its "failure" to be "the miracle cure" for a number of SA political and socio-economic challenges. It appeared as if academics got caught in the middle of the conflicts and, as a consequence, they are expected to be miracle workers. It was noted though that, despite the challenging conditions and SAHE conundrum, academics were continuing to do their work.

8.2.2 Specific research aim two: To conceptualise Viktor E. Frankl's theory and logotherapy

This specific research aim was met in Chapter 3 by exploring literature on Frankl's theory and logotherapy. The main points can be summarised as follows:

8.2.2.1 Existential phenomenology

It is clear that Frankl played a central role in developing existential psychotherapy and that he is regarded as one of the foremost representatives of existential psychology and the existential phenomenology movement (Graber, 2004; Kimble & Ellor, 2000; Lantz, 2000; Ponsaran, 2007; Shantall, 1997). The existential conditions fundamental to human existence were conceptualised as four themes that are: death; freedom; existential isolation; and meaninglessness. It was asserted that much of individuals' conflicts and concerns stem from these conditions.

Existentialism aims at guiding individuals in discovering for themselves who they are and what they want to be (Crumbaugh, 1971). Stemming from existentialism, Frankl identified five general areas in which all experiences arising from human existence can be placed. They are the meaning in life, work, love, suffering and death (Graber, 2004). The five areas of experience are filled with meaning potential that provides individuals with opportunities for development and growth (Graber, 2004).

Existentialism draws from phenomenology as a philosophical method (Boeree, 2006; Cooper, 2003). For Frankl (1988, p. 7) phenomenology is "an attempt to describe the way in which man understands himself, in which he interprets his own existence, far from preconceived patterns of interpretations". The life world is one of phenomenology's basic concepts (Gallagher, 2012). It suggests that individuals and their life worlds (e.g. family, work, social) constitute an interdependent unity that cannot be compartmentalised. Therefore, an experience like meaning in work and life cannot be studied without taking into consideration how the experience was influenced by its lifeworld or context.

8.2.2.2 Frankl's dimensional ontology

Frankl asserted the strongest motivation in human beings to be their "will to meaning" and thus the primary reason for most of their behaviour (Crumbaugh, 1971; Lantz & Ahern, 1994). His thinking contradicted those of Freud and Adler who regarded "will to pleasure" and "will to power" as the strongest motivation in human beings (cf. Crumbaugh, 1971; Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006; Graber, 2004; Shantall, 1997, 2003). Frankl (Marseille, 1997)

considered pleasure, happiness, success and power as the by-products of a person's will to meaning and striving to answer to life's questioning. Similarly, self-actualisation "is the unintentional effect of life's intentionality" (Frankl, 1988, p. 38).

Frankl utilised the phenomenological approach to develop his view of human beings (Ponsaran, 2007). In his view, human beings have a three dimensional nature that is physical, psychological and spiritual or noölogical that represents human existence (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006; Graber, 2004). The dimensions are a complex and dynamic integrated whole that simultaneously exists at any specific moment in time (Graber, 2004, Frankl, 2000). Therefore, an individual exists as "diversity in unity" (Graber, 2004, p. 70). Frankl (2000) argued that any of the dimensions may occur on any level of awareness (e.g. conscious preconscious or unconscious). Frankl (1988, 2000) and Graber (2004) contended that, although there is an intricate interplay between the different dimensions in their varied states of awareness, the spiritual dimension remains the highest level (conscious or unconscious) and the core of human existence.

Individuals are regarded as truly human when they go beyond (transcend) the physical and psychological dimensions in utilising the virtues of the spiritual dimension (Das, 1998; Frankl, 1988, 2000; Lukas, 1998). The virtues of the spiritual dimension, for example include intentionality (decisions of the will); creative and artistic interests; goals and purpose in life; capacity to be awed by experiences; conscience; understanding of values; love; hope; compassion; courage; humour; ability to forgive; religious encounters; awareness of mortality; ethical sensitivity; inspiration; intuition; dignity; strive for meaning (will to meaning); freedom of and capacity to make choices; responsibility; and self-transcendence (see Chapter 3, Table 3.1). The spiritual dimension is referred to as the essence of life; the voice of meaning and the healthy core that is immune against sickness (Fabry, 1974; Graber, 2004; Lantz & Ahern, 1994; Lukas, 1998; Morrison et al., 2007; Palma, 1976; Wong, 2012b). Unsurprisingly, Fabry (1974) referred to the spiritual dimension as the medicine chest of logotherapy.

8.2.2.3 Logotherapy

Logotherapy is Frankl's holistic treatment approach "directed toward helping individuals finding meaning in their existence as human beings" (Lantz, 1986, p. 124). It is a "value based, meaning-centred philosophy and psychotherapy, with applications across a variety of disciplines (Wong, 2012b).

Frankl developed his basic ideas prior to WWII, though his ideas intensified and expanded

because of his experiences in the Nazi death camps (Frankl, 1986, 1988, 2000, 2006; Lantz, 1986). Logotherapy rests on three basic beliefs that are freedom of will; will to meaning; and meaning in life (Frankl, 1986, 1988, 2000, 2006). The beliefs operate in an interconnected mode (Wong, 2012b). In its basic form, logotherapy is about individuals' intrinsic and unique motivation to search for meaning, to make sense of and experience their lives as worthwhile (will to meaning). This suggests that human life has purpose and that meaning can be found in all circumstances (meaning in life). For this reason, individuals are free to choose and take responsibility for their choices in order to live a meaningful life (freedom of will) (Schulenberg et al., 2010; Shantall, 2003; Wong, 2012b).

Frankl asserted that the search for meaning gives life a task quality (Shantall, 2003). He maintained that individuals should not ask what they expect from life, but should rather understand that they have a responsibility to answer to life. Individuals are assisted by their conscience as "the intuitive capacity" to find out "the meaning of a situation" Frankl (1988, p. 63). Therefore, an individual's "awareness can best be described as a consciousness of responsibility, the awareness of life as a given task" (Shantall, 2003, p.18).

Frankl did not provide a definition for the concept of meaning (Morrow, 1990). He believed that meaning cannot be created, it can only be discovered; it is personal and varies among individuals (Frankl, 2006). Meaning is unique, context specific, a value-based choice and unrepeatable (Morrow, 1990; Shantall, 2003). It entrusts individuals with the task and responsibility of "listening carefully" to what each situation is asking of them, or what it is they are called upon to do or to be (Frankl, 2006). When individuals are closing their ears to the voice of their conscience, they are ignoring their responsibility and what is required of them (Shantall, 2003).

Frankl (1988, 2000, 2006; Shantall, 2003; Wong, 2012b) suggested three ways to discover meaning in the moment, which is the meaning that individuals may discover in daily situations. This refers to what individuals give or contribute to the world through their work, tasks, duties and creations (creative values); what they take or receive from the world in terms of their encounters and experiences with people, nature, or art (experiential values); and in the attitude they choose in their difficulties and unavoidable suffering (attitudinal values). It is thus possible that the most ordinary activities that are of significance and importance to individuals may contribute to their meaning under the right circumstances (DeWitz, 2004).

When individuals discover meaning through rising above themselves regarding outward conditions, they are in the realm of the uniquely human capacity of self-transcendence

(Frankl, 1988; Graber, 2004). It is about forgetting of the self, rather than being centred on the self and it is actualised either toward another individual (by means of love, or other causes) or toward meaning (Das, 1998; Frankl, 1988; Lukas, 1998; Smallman, 2014). By means of self-transcendence, individuals experience areas of life where meaning is available and it even allows them to find meaning in areas where they feel defeated (Graber, 2004).

Furthermore, Frankl (2000) explained ultimate or suprameaning as a dimension or reality beyond human comprehension. It is to be found in the spiritual dimension of human life and asks questions about individuals' identity, purpose, direction, goals and place in the human order (Graber, 2004; Wong, 2012b). It thus relates to a sense of calling, no matter how vague and requires existential commitment rather than intellectual cognition (Graber, 2004; Wong, 2012b). Fundamentally, ultimate meaning is related to meaning in the moment (Das, 1998). It provides a framework and a set of guidelines (values) for decision making and meeting day-to-day situations, continued pursuit and incremental understanding of the meaning in life (Das, 1998; Wong, 2012b).

When the will to meaning is hindered in any way, it becomes frustrated. Existential frustration or distress is regarded as a common human experience and may culminate in an existential vacuum (Frankl, 2006; Wong, 2012b). An existential vacuum is "a general sense of meaninglessness and emptiness, an 'inner void', an 'abyss-experience'" (Graber, 2004, p. 204). Smallman (2014) explained that at the root of the existential vacuum may be frustrations with present life circumstances, for example, employment, interpersonal relationships, economic and social affairs. When individuals make decisions without giving attention to their values, their lives may be characterised by a feeling of emptiness and meaninglessness (Schulenberg et al., 2010).

Whenever individuals are experiencing an existential vacuum, they would like to fill it (Boeree, 2006; Schulenberg et al., 2010). As a result, "stuff" may be rushing in that may manifest as social norm violations, distress symptoms, material goods, superficial things and/or addictive behaviours (Boeree, 2006; Schulenberg et al., 2010; Wong, 2012b). Individuals' misguided efforts to fill the gap may give way to feelings of frustration and despair, and may be characterised by existential symptoms such as anxiety, depression, hopelessness, confusion and the experience of anomie (meaninglessness) (Boeree, 2006; Lantz, 1986; Wong, 2012b).

Though, Frankl (2006, pp. 104-105) considered mental health to be "a certain degree of tension, the tension between what one has already achieved and what one still ought to accomplish, or the gap between what one is and what one should become". Mental health is

attained or regained through self-chosen worthy goals that create tension, or what Frankl referred to as healthy noö-dynamics (Frankl, 2006). Logotherapy activates the spiritual dimension through assisting individuals to gain awareness of meanings and meaning potentials, as well as better understanding of coping patterns that could be used to more effectively actualise the meaning potentials (Lantz, 2000). It creates a certain sensible amount of tension to reorientate individuals towards the meaning in their lives that need to be fulfilled and to retain or regain their mental health (Fabry, 1974; Frankl, 2006). “A strong meaning orientation is a health-promoting and a life-prolonging, if not life-preserving, agent” (Kotchen as cited in Frankl, 1988, p.48).

8.2.3 Specific research aim three: To explore and describe the meaning and/or meaning frustration embedded in the academic employees’ experience

The specific research aim was fulfilled by the qualitative study as described in Chapter 5. The following is a summary of the key sources of meaning and/or meaning frustration for academic employees. The sources of meaning and/or meaning frustration also reflected some of the dynamic characteristics of the HE organisation.

The following were key to the discussions on the sources of meaning and/or meaning frustration with respect to contemporary HE and HE students:

- Academic employees who participated in the study’s work experiences were ambivalent, suggesting that it included both occurrences of meaning and meaning frustration in work. At the core of the ambivalent experience was the changed and changing HE landscape as a result of globalisation, massification and SA’s socio-economic and political transformation. Fundamental to the ambivalence was the changed HE organisation and the re-engineered academic profession that resulted in diverse expectations and more work pressure for academic employees.
- The meaning in work experience of the HODs and DRRs who participated in the study were frustrated since contemporary HE was not meeting the country’s labour force needs. Their frustration was related to massification that refuted the freedom, value and purpose of traditional HE. The literature asserted deeply felt assumptions in relation to the purpose of traditional HE (Maassen & Cloete, 2002). Moreover, it was apparent that the spiritual value or transcendental quality of HE with respect to contributing to the greater good (e.g. pride about preparing entry workers for the labour market) was lost. It suggested the possibility of the experience of an underlying existential vacuum for the HOD and DRR participants. In addition, it appeared as if some HOD and DRR participants did not adjust the psychological

contracts that they had with traditional HE to meet the requirements and needs of contemporary HE. This contention is supported by the view that HE systems are slow to respond to change and slow in accomplishing real change (Barnett, 2011; Diamond, 2012; Van Daalen & Odendaal, 2001).

- Students' unfulfilled basic needs (e.g. poverty, hunger) evoked concern among the academic employees who participated in the study. Frustration of meaning in work was specifically related to LAEs' inability to better the lives of the majority of needy students. This has resulted in a feeling of loss of personal value and NA that culminated in a feeling of insignificance for some of them.
- Despite the changed and changing HE organisation and increased work expectations, the majority of academic employees who participated in the study retained their love and passion for their work and were able to actualise a diverse range of meaning potentials in the Franklian domains of creative, experiential and attitudinal values. This conclusion was drawn based on the prominence of service orientation as a key source of meaning and motivational factor among the various groups of academic employees who participated in the study. The literature asserted that a service orientation is fundamental to the mission of traditional HE (Altbach, 2009, 2015). Steger et al. (2012) found that employees who experience their work as meaningful and serving a higher purpose view their work as more central and important, place higher value on their work and may ultimately report greater job satisfaction, work unit cohesion and well-being. It was clear that service orientation is significant for meaning in work in HE organisations.
- Prosocial and altruistic values were identified as being at the core of service orientation and are regarded as higher values. Service to students and staff had a distinct transcendental quality. Wong's (2012b) view on service as having transcendental acceptance to rise above what was perceived to be unsolvable problems supported the view of service orientation as a motivating factor or key source of meaning for the academic employees who participated in the study.
- Compassionate love for students was also identified as key sources of meaning for the academic employees who participated in the study. Compassionate love was fundamental to service to students. It was considered as a multifaceted attitude, comprising care, concern and tenderness towards students; an understanding and appreciation of their uniqueness and potential; support and help to students in their journey towards graduation; assistance with the development of their identities; and walking the extra mile for those in need. Compassionate love was regarded as a striking manifestation of self-transcendence (Frankl, 1988; Le, 2005).

- The appreciation and gratitude received from students played a significant role in the meaning in work experiences of the LAEs and HODs who participated in the study. It not only helped them to appreciate their students and their own privilege, but also to deflect away from the negativity inherent to their work and the HE organisational environment. The literature reported appreciation as an intrinsic reward and key to employees work effort, motivation and performance (Kahn & Fellows, 2013).
- NLAEs provided a range of services to students, LAEs and/or HODs. Meaning in work for them was related to doing good (e.g. bettering the lives of students and/or colleagues and advancing the cause of teaching and learning); when they valued work as worth doing; interaction with diverse students; a range of tasks; feedback on the impact of their work; and when they could develop students holistically. The aforementioned helped them to actualise a range of meaning potentials in the Franklian domains of creative and experiential values (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).
- The following aspects were identified in relation to NLAEs' meaning in work experiences: cognitive stimulating work (cognitive experience of significance); work that elicits PA (emotional experience of significance); making a contribution; and an ability to see the bigger picture that may have triggered a search for ultimate meaning for some of them (Pattakos & Dundon, 2017).
- The range of benefits (e.g. flexible work environment, developmental opportunities, good salaries, research incomes and paid holidays) that HE organisations offer played a significant role in LAEs' meaning experiences in work. Paradoxically, the extrinsic value of the benefits provided LAEs with intrinsic value (e.g. time with family, going on holiday, etc.). The literature asserted an explicit relationship between meaning in work and rewards (Kahn & Fellows, 2013).
- The freedom to take an attitudinal stance in relation to the challenges encountered in the work environment was prominent in the meaning in work experiences of the LAEs, HODs and DRRs who participated in the study. It enabled them to work from their own value systems, taking responsibility to perform their duties and to serve the students thereby achieving the worthy goals inherent to their work. It not only provided them with guidelines (values) of how to attitudinally deal with difficult situations, but also motivated them to shift their focus to the positive things in their work environment. Freedom of choice was inherent to the search for ultimate meaning of the academic employees who participated in the study.
- The love and passion for their work helped the academic employees who participated in the study to get through difficult times in the workplace. The motivational and inspirational power fundamental to love and passion for work helped them to

actualise meaning potentials in the Franklian domains of creative and experiential values in the midst of challenging circumstances. This also reflected the attitudinal quality inherent to love and passion for work.

- Only a few academic employees who participated in the study engaged with work as a calling. For those who viewed work as a calling, deep connections were noted between something of intrinsic value, service to students (e.g. teaching) and sense of destiny and moral duty (e.g. do what you were appointed for). Inherent to work as a calling was the stance that they took in relation to challenging work situations. Work as a calling denoted a search for ultimate meaning (Wong, 2012b).
- The experience of meaning beyond the meaning in the moment suggested a need among the academic employees who participated in the study to balance the nourishment of their various selves in a less-than-ideal-and-free workplace. They therefore had a need for spirituality in the workplace and a search for ultimate meaning (Chalofsky, 2010; e.g. Frankl, 2006).

Research established a negative relationship between meaning and NA (Steger, 2012). NA was thus regarded as a key indicator of frustration of meaning with respect to meaning in work for the academic employees who participated in the study.

- Silo mentality and functioning was identified as a key source of meaning frustration among the academic employees who participated in the study and was emphasised as a common experience in the HE organisation.
- The NLAEs and LAEs who participated in the study perceived the inside of the silo as safe, secure, loving, warm and positive. It was provided by their “own people”. The outside of the silo though was experienced as unsafe, filthy, stinky, insecure, cold and deprived of love.
- The academic employees who participated in the study expressed clear meaning frustration with respect to silo mentality and functioning in the Franklian domains of creative and experiential values, with indicators of a likely underlying existential vacuum for some.

The following were key to the discussions on the consequences of silo mentality and functioning inherent to the academic employee work experience:

- Silo mentality and functioning had different consequences for the NLAEs, LAEs and HODs who participated in the study.
- The LAEs who participated in the study reported frustration in the area of meaningful collegial relationships. The frustration of meaning in the Franklian domain of

experiential values was apparent due to their feelings of disconnection, dissatisfaction and insignificance. Basically, silo functioning was perceived by the LAEs as having an isolating quality.

- The LAEs who participated in the study perceived the faculties to be at war due to their differences. They also expressed dissatisfaction about the seeming competition between colleagues that prevented them from sharing knowledge with the others, almost as if it was necessary to protect “discipline-specific” cleanliness. Their frustration with respect to actualising meaning potentials in the Franklian domain of creative and experiential values on the inter-departmental and inter-faculty levels was tangible.
- The NLAEs who participated in the study related most of their meaning frustration in work to LAEs. Fundamental to their frustration was the notion that they have found themselves on the outside of the academic project. Consequently, their work was not acknowledged, authorised, appreciated and/or adequately supported by the HE organisation. This denoted the function and dynamics of the boundaries (e.g. silos as invisible barriers that contained collective sentiments and that regulated and limited access and interaction with what was regarded as valuable resources, etc.) in the HE organisation (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009). The consequence of silo functioning for the NLAEs’ meaning experiences in work was real. Meaning frustration for them in the Franklian domains of creative values (creative work) and experiential values (e.g. collegial relationships) came to the fore, with unmistakable implications for their esteem and job satisfaction.
- The HOD participants who participated in the study experienced high levels of frustration and discontent in relation to the poor delivery of service departments. It became apparent that the service departments operated from their own silos with a seeming disregard for the impact of poor delivery on the function of teaching and learning. This dynamic was suggestive of anxieties, conflicts and mental content (e.g. a narcissist group culture) in the HE organisation (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009; Czander, 1993). Since the HOD participants were responsible for the management of the function of teaching and learning in the HE organisation, continuous poor delivery and lack of support culminated in high levels of frustration, unhappiness and cynicism for some of them.
- The literature asserted silo functioning as representative of organisational dysfunction, fragmentation and disconnection (cf. Diamond & Allcorn, 2009; Cilliers & Greyvenstein, 2012). A direct link was identified between the increasing amount of

differentiation and fragmentation in modern organisations and the disappearance or loss of meaning in work (Chalofsky, 2010).

- With respect to the HE organisation, the literature review on contemporary HE gave some insight into the phenomenon of silo mentality and functioning in the HE organisation. The four specific traditional HE organisational characteristics that were highlighted by Maassen and Cloete (2002) may have played a significant role in silo formation and maintenance in the HE organisation, namely, that knowledge provides the organisational building blocks; that the knowledge-based structures lead to a high level of organisational fragmentation (silos); the reality of loosely articulated decision-making structures; and that change generally takes place in an incremental and grassroots way. The aforementioned characteristics also denote the challenge of changing a “seasoned” phenomenon like silo mentality and functioning.

The following discussions on the high administration loads of academic employees as a key source of meaning frustration took place:

- High administration loads were identified as a major source of frustration with respect to the LAEs and HODs who participated in the study.
- The LAEs indicated that the high administration loads interfered with and took away the focus from their work. The loss of preparation time for lecturing frustrated the actualisation of meaning potentials in the domain of Frankl’s creative values.
- Managerialism denotes that managerial methods may be prioritised over people (Webbstock & Sehoole, 2016). The HOD participants who participated in the study appeared to be dehumanised as a result of their high administration loads. A loss of time for creative work, an unfulfilled need to do work of more complexity, a loss of identity, a loss of esteem and a loss of personal value were at the core of their meaning frustration in the Franklian domain of creative values. Their experience was supported by the literature review on the changed and changing HE landscape and organisation.
- The HODs who participated in the study identified an unproductive mentality in the HE organisation and service departments’ poor delivery as key to their high administration loads. The HODs’ numerous requests for improved service delivery has fallen on deaf ears and has escalated to a level of conflict with the service departments ending in much NA for them.
- The HODs who participated in the study ascribed the unproductive mentality in the HE organisation to a lack of accountability and a disregard for what was required to support the function of teaching and learning. A lack of performance management in the HE organisation was singled out as a contributor to poor delivery of service.

- The frustration of HODs who participated in the study was detailed as: loss of integrity, loss of dignity, loss of competence, loss of esteem and a loss of collegial relationships that gave way to feelings of disillusionment and cynicism. The aforementioned was regarded as indicative of meaninglessness and even an underlying existential vacuum. Meaning frustration for HODs in the Franklian domains of creative and experiential values was apparent. The HODs' experiences could be linked to the literature on academic employees' morale and health that indicated a positive relationship between a lack of work resources, burnout and cynicism (Rothmann & Essenko, 2007).

The following were key to the discussions on the incomplete work of containment as a source of meaning frustration

- The academic employees who participated in the study harboured a lot of the prevailing negativity in the HE organisation. All the data collection sessions became purging sessions where the academic employees rid themselves of some of the NA. The NA was related to the pain and suffering that was inherent to the changed and changing HE organisation, which they contained on behalf of the HE organisation and perhaps also on behalf of the HE sector. The literature review asserted that major organisational change efforts may create substantial mental and emotional challenges for employees if change is only managed from a technical point of view without recognising or understanding how it may impact or influence the human factor (Bovey & Hede, 2001; Krantz, 2001). A positive relationship between NA and frustration and/or a lack of meaning is established in the literature (cf. Steger, 2010). It is clear that it may require, in response, distinctive conditions to contain the heightened levels of anxieties evoked adequately and manage the painful experiences created by such transformations (Krantz, 2001).
- During the DAGs, it was noted that the LAEs who participated in the study projected the NA that they held onto the physical structure of the HE organisation. It was apparent that they were struggling to tolerate and work with the discomfort of the anxiety and distress in relation to the changed HE organisation, hence they have projected it onto the building for containment. Although such a psychological projection is regarded as a healthy mechanism to get rid of the NA, the LAEs were not ready to work with their emotions despite the moderator's attempts to assist them. The emotional work that was required remained incomplete for the LAEs, puts them at risk of ending in a vicious and downward negative cycle if left incomplete. This has clear implications for LAEs' meaning in work in the Franklian domains of

creative and experiential values and has put them at risk of developing psychological distress with clear implications for the HE organisation.

- HODs who participated in the study indicated that they were containing a lot of the NA in the HE organisation on behalf of the LAEs. If HODs do not manage to contain the LAEs' NA, they may become anxious and distressed to such an extent that they may not be able to assist in achieving the HE organisation's strategic objectives, or they may even leave the HE organisation (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009). Likewise, it became apparent that NLAEs were containing some LAEs' feelings of incompetence in relation to changes in the domain of teaching and learning and what it requires in the classroom. The literature review revealed that, due to the mental and emotional challenges inherent to the changed and changing HE organisation, distinctive conditions may be needed to adequately contain the heightened levels of anxieties and to manage the painful experiences (Krantz, 2001). This clearly suggested a higher need for effective containment from HODs and leadership.
- HODs who participated in the study expressed a fear that LAEs may leave the HE organisation due to the high level of negativity. Consequently, they have to undertake containment work on behalf of LAEs. In order for the function of containment to be conducive, that which is threatening or evoking anxiety needs to be given back to LAEs in a form that they can work with it so that effective processing and cognitive restructuring can take place in relation to their unsettling experiences. Although the status quo of the containment was put under the spotlight, since the LAEs made numerous references to the "golden carrot" that was promised to them, this never materialised. Promising the "golden carrot" may be a way of "preventing" LAEs from leaving the HE organisation. Cognitive work that needs to be done by LAEs in order to choose a positive attitude cannot be done by HODs (Pattakos & Dundon, 2017). Although HODs have a definite role to play in the function of containment, LAEs need to be assisted to become skilled in working with their emotions to be able to transform the prevailing negativity in the HE organisation into something positive.

The following were key to the discussion on leadership as a defective container for HODs as a source of meaning frustration

- HODs who participated in the study contained much of the NA in the HE organisation with respect to the poor delivery by service departments. Containing the NA with no effect has left them with feelings that ranged from guilt and incompetence, to disillusionment and cynicism. This clearly denoted absence of meaning. This created the impression that the senior leadership was not providing effective containment for the HODs' disturbing emotions (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009), hence the HODs' distress,

disillusionment and cynicism. This contention was supported by LAEs' and HODs' perception that senior leadership was absent or only provided minimal support for them. This culminated into feelings of not being cared for, sadness and distress, in essence, a suffering experience. HODs' frustration of meaning in the Franklian domains of creative and experiential values were tangible.

The following were key to the discussion on positivity as a defence against negativity as a key source of meaning frustration:

- "Positivity" was identified as an individual and social defence mechanism that helped the academic employees who participated in the study to cope with the anxieties, conflicts and painful feelings they experienced when they were confronted with the complex task of talking about their work experiences in relation to the changed and changing HE organisation (Cilliers & May, 2010). The academic employees were reluctant to explore the negativity inherent to their work experience and rather responded with "positivity" when they were confronted with something "negative" or "bad". The aforementioned denoted the participants' unconscious wish that the "negativity" would merely go away. It became apparent that the defence of positivity required hard work and that it depleted some of the participants' energy to keep the status quo. This suggested a loss of freedom of expression, a loss of personal value and a loss of the authentic self, since they seemingly had to "pretend" that they were "positive". It made it harder for them to perform their duties since there was not much hope that matters would get resolved soon. It was hypothesised that the demanding character of "positivity" may have had something to do with the unproductive mentality in the HE organisation.

The following were key to the discussions on academic competition and professional jealousy/envy as a key source of meaning frustration for LAEs:

- The literature revealed competition, as a historical matter in HE organisations, and more ambition in the academe than in any other field of human enterprise (Altbach et al., 2009; Carson et al., 2012). The competition was associated with a need or drive for recognition, power, status and advancement (Altbach et al., 2009; Carson et al., 2012). Frankl (1988, 2000) argued that the will to pleasure and power are replacements for or derivatives for the will to meaning or a frustrated will to meaning.
- The LAEs who participated in the study spoke about competition in terms of improving their qualifications for career advancement. According to them, the competition was strong among academics. The competition between the core functions of teaching and learning and research made them unhappy. Teaching was

considered as having less status than research and thus of lesser value and significance. LAEs expressed their frustration and unhappiness since those with higher teaching loads did not have an equal opportunity to produce research. This was indicative that meaning potential in the Franklian domain of creative values was not actualised which culminated into meaning frustration for the LAEs (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).

- Some LAEs who participated in the study were reluctant to compete for additional awards due to the added pressure with respect to their workloads and since competition was regarded as having the potential to compromise their personal growth.
- Some LAEs who participated in the study competed for additional income opportunities and resources like classroom space. They expressed their frustration and unhappiness regarding colleagues who were favoured with respect to resource allocations. Episodes of envy manifested in relation to not having what others have, inconsistency in the HE organisational system and feelings of inferiority. The literature review depicted envy as a socially taboo emotion and as less visible than other organisational emotions (Duffy et al., 2008). It was indicative of meaning potentials not realised in the Franklian domains of creative and experiential values (e.g. loss of esteem, loss of collegial relationships, loss of career achievement) that presented as a feeling of discontentment (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).

The following are hypotheses in relation to what emerged in the study as the predominant sources of meaning and meaning frustration in the academic employee work experience. In addition, a general hypothesis is formulated.

- *Meaning hypothesis one*

A service orientation that is fundamental to the mission of traditional HE seems to be key in academic employees' meaning in work experiences in contemporary HE. The higher values of altruism and prosocial behaviour and the multifaceted attitude of compassionate love for students inherent to service orientation, appear to play a pivotal role in facilitating transcendental acceptance in academic employees to rise above what may be perceived by them as unsolvable problems in HE. It also appears to help them to realise meaning potential in Frankl's domains of creative, experiential and attitudinal values.

- *Meaning hypothesis two*

The range of benefits that HE organisations offer seems to play a key role in LAEs, meaning

experiences in work. Flexible work environments, developmental opportunities, good salaries, research incomes and paid holidays assist LAEs to realise meaning potential in the Franklian domains of creative and experiential values. There appears to be a direct relationship between the extrinsic value provided by benefits and the intrinsic value that LAEs may derive from such benefits.

- *Meaning frustration hypothesis one*

Silo mentality and functioning seems to be a common experience in the HE organisation and a key source of meaning frustration for academic employees. It may lead to a work experience of fragmentation, disconnection and dysfunction. The traditional HE organisational characteristics appear to play a fundamental role in silo formation and maintenance. There seems to be a direct relationship between academic employees' specific work roles (e.g. NLAE, LAE, HOD/DRR) and the consequences (e.g. loss of meaning in work and NA) that silo mentality and functioning may have for them. Silo functioning and mentality appear to frustrate meaning potential in the domains of Frankl's creative and experiential values.

- *Meaning frustration hypothesis two*

High administration loads seem to be a major source of meaning frustration for HODs and LAEs. It is associated with managerialism where managerial methods take value over people. It appears to limit the time that LAEs can spend on their primary task (e.g. lecture preparation). Moreover, it appears to dehumanise HODs, culminating in a loss of personal value, esteem and identity for them. Poor delivery by service departments seems to play a significant role in HODs' high administration loads.

- *General hypothesis*

It appears as if more effective containment needs to be provided by leadership to HODs and LAEs since mental and emotional challenges intensified in the HE organisation as a result of the changed and changing HE environment. Distinctive conditions may be needed to contain the heightened levels of anxieties adequately and to manage the painful experiences of academic employees (e.g. loss of meaning and/or meaning frustration) in relation to the changed and changing HE landscape.

8.2.4 Specific research aim four: To develop and implement a logotherapy brief group-based intervention for academic employees, based on their work experiences

The specific research aim was reached in Chapter 6. Chapter 4 contains the qualitative and quantitative research with specific reference to the research design requirements for both research studies and descriptions thereof. Chapter 5 contains the findings of the qualitative study (e.g. see specific research aim 8.2.3). In Chapter 6 it is described how the qualitative study's results were used to develop the design of the intervention and the structure and content of the programme, as well as to develop a contextual model and an approach to support the implementation of the programme.

8.2.4.1 Phase one: Preliminary design of the intervention and the qualitative study

During phase one of the study, a preliminary intervention (quasi-experimental, single case, pretest/posttest) to be implemented in the phase three quantitative study was designed, based on the literature review. It was though difficult to specify all the procedures in the intervention (e.g. pre/post test batteries) and the structure and content of the programme since it was dependent on the outcomes of the qualitative study (see specific research aim 8.2.3).

After the preliminary development of the intervention, the sources of meaning and/or meaning frustration for academic employees were identified and described, which also resulted in descriptions of some of the dynamic characteristics of the HE organisational setting (see Chapter 5, section 8.2.3, specifically research aim three).

Frankl (cf. 1988, 2000, 2006) assumed his theory and logotherapy to be non-specific and compatible with and complementary to other approaches (e.g. psychoanalysis, systems, etc.). This suggested that one type of analysis could not replace or surpass another type of analysis, since each approach was excellent in uncovering particular dimensions or levels of the phenomenon being studied (Palma, 1976). One type of analysis in one area or level may complement analysis in another area or level (Palma, 1976). This integrative perspective and approach suggested valuable results not directly intended or specified (Palma, 1976).

The researcher also drew from the clinical, family systems and psychoanalytical perspectives in order to understand the academic employees' meaning and/or meaning frustration embedded in their work experiences. These perspectives not only assisted with providing enriched descriptions, but also helped to describe some of the characteristic dynamics of the HE organisational setting. In addition, it emphasised the multidimensional nature of a phenomenon like meaning in work for academic employees, which is necessarily

embedded in a complex HE organisational system.

8.2.4.2 Phase two: The development of the design of the intervention and the logotherapy programme and the development of an approach towards the implementation of the intervention

Phase two was about the development of the preliminary design of the intervention and the structure and content of the programme, and the development of the contextual model and integrated interactional approach to support the implementation of the programme.

a Logotherapy as a meaning-centred approach in an organisational context

It was established that logotherapy, as a meaning-centred approach, has a wide range of applications in diverse contexts (e.g. individual and family psychotherapy; small sharing groups; change, leadership and management studies in organisations) (cf. Burger 2007, 2012; Lantz, 1998; Martinez & Flórez, 2014; Smallman, 2014) and that the application of psychotherapeutic approaches in organisation and management studies is customary (cf. Korotov, 2010; Smallman, 2014).

As a meaning-centered psychotherapy, logotherapy aimed to activate the participants' will to meaning through enhancing their reflective capacity about and changing their perspectives of the world (Smallman, 2014). Therefore, it was an action-orientated therapeutic tool that allowed for attitude and behaviour changes, as well as for participants to take responsibility for their behaviour (Hirsch, 1995). In order to effect changes and to help participants to make responsible, adaptive and proactive decisions in their pursuit of living a meaningful life, logotherapy drew from their spiritual resources (e.g. creativity, hope, choice, love, etc.) (Armstrong, 2016; Hirsch, 1995; Schulenberg et al., 2010).

Bugental (Leontiev, 2016) described two stages fundamental to any psychotherapeutic process. The first was the analytical stage and the second was what he referred to as "ontogogy", which started when the analytical stage was over (Leontiev, 2016).

During the analytical stage, the researcher focused on the complaints or inner blocks of academic employees, who participated in the qualitative study, that hindered them from achieving full awareness of their potential for living. The methodology applied in this stage did not radically differ from the methodology applied in psychoanalysis and other in-depth approaches (Leontiev, 2016).

The "ontogogy" stage was deduced from the terms "ontos", "being" and "pedagogy", and suggested "a leading out into being" (Bugental, 1999 as cited in Leontiev, 2016, p. 278). The

psychotherapist work in this stage was aimed at helping the participants in the quantitative study to get in touch with their lives in order to discover and fulfil their potential of living (Leontiev, 2016). However, the latter task seemed to exceed the competence of psychotherapy, since “ontogogy” was not a therapeutic procedure. This implied that the psychotherapist (or logotherapist) sometimes informed the participants, sometimes consulted them and/or trained, and/or taught, and/or enlightened them, which made psychotherapy only one of many tasks in the intervention (Leontiev, 2016).

In the context of logotherapy, “ontogogy” became inherent to the psychotherapist’s work, suggesting a theoretical space where counselling, consulting and teaching intersected and thus made the work of the logotherapist heterogeneous (Korotov et al., 2012; Leontiev, 2016). Like Frankl, the logotherapist (researcher) drew on a range of therapeutic interventions that had much in common with the pragmatic approach with most existential psychotherapists (e.g. flexibility, broad spectrum of devices and approaches in their work) (Smallman, 2014).

It was concluded that logotherapy and its supporting techniques, have the potential to offer value to practice-base studies in organisations because of its alternative conceptualisation of organisational life; its investigative potential through implementing some of its tools or techniques; and its learning potential, not only for individuals, but also for organisations (Smallman, 2014).

b Logotherapy as a brief group-based approach

Berg and Landreth (1990) revealed the growing trend towards the application of group intervention procedures in meeting the needs of individuals (Berg & Landreth, 1990). The growth was stimulated by a greater acceptance of preventative approaches; the increased recognition of the effectiveness of group intervention; and the realisation that group intervention may be more helpful to individuals than individual intervention (Berg & Landreth, 1990).

It was established that group-based interventions offered many benefits. These included acknowledging the social nature of humans; indirect learning; the creation of awareness about the similarity of problems experienced; lessened inhibition; more options for problem solving; enhanced understanding; feedback from other group members; emotional support; role-modelling; and interactive processes that allowed for relevant discussions (Berg & Landreth, 1990; Graber, 2004; Oei & Dingle, 2008).

Group factors and underlying processes were also identified that may have hindered the

outcome of group-based interventions (e.g. individuals who feel unsafe in the group and who were not ready to emotionally invest in the experience; individuals who were too angry and hostile and who struggled to benefit from the beneficial factors in the group; and individuals who were not suited for groups like those and undermined the energy of the group and its processes) (Berg & Landreth, 1990; Oei & Dingle, 2008).

Bion (1961) asserted group therapy to be “a planned endeavor to develop in a group the forces that lead to smoothly running co-operative activity” (Bion, 1961, p. 11). He noted that the treatment of “groups is likely to turn on the acquisition of knowledge and experience of the factors which make for a good group spirit” (Bion, 1961, p. 11). It was contended that logotherapy, in the format of a group-based intervention, was uniquely positioned to deal effectively with existential concerns since it offered a normalising group process which was embedded in a matrix for immediate social reality (Berg & Landreth, 1990; Robotmili et al., 2015).

Depending on the needs and capacities of each client, group intervention processes may be utilised in both short-term, time-limited groups, as well as in open-ended and longer-term groups (Lantz, 1998; Mills, 2001). It was emphasised that existential therapists have to be flexible with respect to orientation and approach, since the client’s specific needs and difficulties have to take priority (Mills, 2001).

The initial decision for a brief and time limited intervention approach was based on the literature reviews that provided evidence with respect to the effectiveness of brief interventions that were intentionally designed to accomplish a meaningful set of objectives in a limited period of time (e.g. over a four to 12 week period) (cf. Bloom, 2001; Despland et al., 2005).

The literature review revealed the typical logotherapy group intervention to address a variety of topics with diverse populations to be conducted over a four to 15 week period, with session durations varying between 45 and 120 minutes. It became apparent that a session duration of 90 minutes was the most prevalent and thus covered a range of activities over a period of time. Sessions were usually held once a week and, more often than not, followed a psycho-educational approach. Although most of these studies reported a positive impact, effect sizes were not readily reported (cf. Aghajani, 2015; Amirifard & Yahyayie, 2017; Armstrong, 2016; Ebrahimi et al., 2014; Hosseinsadeh-Khezri et al., 2014; Kang et al., 2009; Mason, 2014a).

c The conceptual contextual model that supported the implementation of the intervention programme

Neglecting to take into consideration the HE context, the organisational setting and its basic characteristics and dynamics during the design and implementation of the intervention may have had an adverse impact on its outcome (e.g. no or limited participation due to time constraints and too much work pressure) (Grimm & Lee, 2005). Johns (2006) felt that the context has subtle or powerful effects on research.

The context of the study was interpreted as the circumstance in which the intervention was implemented. Therefore, the wider context for the study was conceptualised as some of the characteristics of the contemporary HE environment (see Chapter 2) and the dynamic characteristics of the HE organisation or setting where the intervention was implemented. The dynamic characteristics of the setting were described in Chapter 5 (also see specific research aim 8.2.3).

The analysis of the data to identify the sources of meaning and meaning frustration, as described in Chapter 5, was regarded as a type of organisational analysis or diagnosis. Fundamental to the concept of diagnosis, is the notion that researchers (psychotherapists and/or consultants) cannot intervene in any organisational system before its challenges and difficulties are understood well or, at least, to some extent (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009).

Drawing from Frankl's concept of existential analysis, the qualitative study was thus reinterpreted as an organisational existential analysis since it aided in the identification, analysis and descriptions of the systems of meaning and/or meaning frustration and some of the dynamic characteristics embedded in the HE organisation. Wong (2012b) considered the term "existential analysis" to be a form of depth psychotherapy informed by Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis.

Frankl (Wong, 2012b, p. 620), however, focused on "clients' cries for meaning and purpose both of which may lie latent at a subconscious level". The qualitative study illuminated the purpose and meaning that was embedded in the work experience of academic employees at the organisation who participated in the study. It also brought to awareness their cries for meaning and purpose that had lain dormant and that was described as their frustration of meaning in work.

Following on the findings of the qualitative study, it was clear that the outcome of the intervention would be dependent on a myriad of factors, which suggested organised chaos and unintended outcomes (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009; Wells et al., 2012). Therefore, a

contextual model was formulated to aid the implementation of the intervention programme, to acknowledge unforeseen and uncontrollable factors and to help with understanding the quantitative study results (see Chapter 6, Figure 6.3).

The basic elements of the model consisted of the wider context that embodied the GHE and the SA socio-economic and political reality that shaped the characteristics of the contemporary SAHE landscape and the HE organisation; the setting (HE organisation) and its basic characteristics (mass education; policy changes; curriculum changes; managerialism; stress factory; political hothouse); the dynamic characteristics of the setting (e.g. systems of meaning and meaning frustration); participant characteristics; researchers' (and/or logotherapists') characteristics; and the various group characteristics and processes.

The contextual model provided a system's view on the setting and its wider context within which the intervention was implemented. The systems view helped the researcher to see the whole rather than static snapshots; created awareness about the interrelatedness that gives the HE organisation its unique character as a living system; created awareness about the interrelatedness of the sources of meaning and/or meaning frustration; created awareness about some of the structures that underlie a complex HE organisational situation; and helped the researcher to distinguish between high and low leverage change (Visser, 2005).

The context and setting was reinterpreted as a set of situational opportunities and/or constraints that created a tension system or force field within which the intervention found itself. The opportunities and/or constraints were key to the outcome of the intervention (Johns, 2006).

d The logotherapy brief group-based programme

The main objective of the logotherapy programme was to enhance academic employees' sense of meaning in work and life through use of Viktor Frankl's principles (Frankl, 1986, 1988, 2000, 2006). The ultimate goal was to assist them to uncover, discover, rediscover and to make use of the meaning potential of each situation (Armstrong 2016; Lantz, 1991; Martínez & Flórez, 2014).

The phase one study findings validated the decision for the programme as a group-based approach and assisted with the development of the programme. This referred to the time pressures inherent to the setting and thus rendering a typical logotherapy brief group-based programme running over a four to 15 week period as impractical.

Key to the final structure and content of the programme, was the reality of the time

limitations inherent to the HE organisational setting. This refers to the challenge of first, finding time and then second, finding the “right” time, to implement such a programme. It was apparent that this characteristic of the setting has posed a time limitation, which necessitated the programme structure and content to be reduced from a brief group-based programme to an “ultra” brief group-based programme. The time factor also had an implication for the various group compositions and sizes, since composition and size were dependent on the individual participants’ availability to attend any one of the four implementation groups during the week that was identified for the implementation of the programme.

The basic assumptions underlying the “ultra” brief programme were that a longer term programme was not readily feasible for the context based on its time characteristic; the brief duration of the programme would be more attractive to individuals who already felt under pressure; and that a one-day programme had the potential to prevent and/or limit drop-out. In a less than ideal world, the “very” brief intervention programme had to be reinterpreted as a “crash course” in logotherapy.

The findings of the qualitative study were also key to providing guidelines with respect to the themes to be included in such a brief programme. The themes that were included were considered as the themes that had the best potential to benefit the participants in the shortest period of time. The themes, in combination with the group-based approach, were considered as having the potential to be accessible and implementable, given the lived reality of the academic employees as revealed in the qualitative study.

The programme included both theoretical (e.g. readings on Frankl) and practical components. It was implemented in four different groups, during the course of the identified week. The duration of the programme was one day per group, with 270 minutes actively spent on the various themes included in the programme.

The programme consisted of three parts (see Chapter 6, Table 6.3): part one was theoretical and covered theme one (Frankl’s lifework and legacy), theme two (the basic principles and concepts of logotherapy), and theme three (calling forth the self). It requested the participants to do reading prior to their participation in the programme and to involve themselves in two self-reflective exercises. The intention of part one of the programme was to establish a theoretical base to support the implementation of the programme and to foster participant engagement with the basic tenets and theoretical constructs of Frankl’s theory in preparation for its application in the group in relation to the self and work.

Part two was the formal implementation of the programme and covered theme four (a meaningful work life), theme five (managing with challenges in HE) and theme six (the call to existential responsibility). The programme was presented in Chapter 6 (see Table 6.3) and the themes centered on the life and work of Frankl; the basic principles and concepts of logotherapy; calling forth the self; a meaningful work life; dealing with challenges in HE; and the bigger picture, responsibility; and self-transcendence.

The programme was concluded in part three and indicated the way forward within the context of the research project, though also inviting the participants to continue with their journey. Paradoxically, the programme could be regarded as an invitation to an on-going open-ended pursuit of philosophical insight, analysis and self-critique (Mills, 2001).

e The integrated interactional approach towards the implementation of the programme and the basic techniques of logotherapy as applied during the programme implementation

Frankl (Graber, 2004) addressed the question about what approach to follow in logotherapy interventions. Graber (2004) regarded the psychotherapeutic process to consist of a continuous chain of improvisations and argued that the infinite diversity of individuals prevents the possibility of extrapolating from one individual (or group) to another.

The ultimate task of the group logotherapist was to motivate the participants to make decisions in order to free their spiritual dimension from all obstacles so that they could use its content to the fullest (Fabry, 1974). In order to achieve this goal, Frankl (Graber, 2004) maintained that the appropriate approach to follow was determined by the task at hand, the character of the group and the personality of the therapist. The approach was important since the groups were more than a human machine that could be manipulated and the task of the psychotherapist was thus more than that of a mere technician applying a structure and/or technique like a good tool (Fabry, 1974).

Frankl did not intend logotherapy to be a comprehensive framework for psychotherapy, but rather an adjunct to whatever treatment approach a therapist adheres to (Wong, 2012b). Frankl rather advocated for a flexible tailor-made approach to be followed in logotherapy intervention (Wong, 2015).

From a pragmatic position, an integrated interactional approach was followed to implement the programme. The integrated element of the approach entailed here-and-now logotherapy education; applying the basic techniques of logotherapy (e.g. Socratic dialogue and dereflection); psycho-education; and applying basic cognitive restructuring techniques as demanded by the unfolding group processes. The interactional element of the approach

made use of two basic treatment dynamics of Frankl's existential-treatment approach, namely noticing and honouring. The two basic treatment dynamics were inherent to the group dynamics and existential reflections (Lantz, 1998).

The role of the group logotherapist was seen as acknowledging problems, though not to solve them; to provide support where needed; engage with emotions expressed; protect participants from attack; challenge the participants and the group towards growth; point out learning as experienced; provide self-understanding and the understanding of others; help participants to feel accepted as they were, while acknowledging the darker side (Fabry, 1974).

Although logotherapy has a variety of tools that group therapists may find useful, the two tools that supported the implementation of the programme were the Socratic dialogue and dereflection. The Socratic dialogue (or existential reflection) helped the participants to discover and access their noëtic unconscious (cf. Das, 1998; Lantz, 1986, 1991, 1992). It involved a variety of questions designed to stimulate critical thinking and to encourage participants to reflect and find answers inside themselves (Armstrong, 2016; Wong, 2015).

Dereflection was about redirecting participants' attention away from their immediate problem, symptoms and/or complaints to something positive, engaging, or valued, such as a meaningful person or cause, through matters that were goal-directed (Armstrong, 2016; Das, 1998; Graber, 2004; Ras, 2000; Wong, 2015). Fundamental to dereflection were the human qualities to self-distance/detach and self-transcendence (cf. Frankl, 1988, 2000; Graber, 2004, Lukas, 1998). Self-distance was about the capacity of the spiritual self to detach from a situation and/or a symptom through stepping away from the physical and emotional selves to get an objective view (Frankl, 1988, 2000; Graber, 2004, Lukas, 1998). Self-transcendence was the human capacity to "intentionally direct attention and efforts to reach something or someone significant other than themselves" (Martinez & Flórez, 2014, p. 2).

On a practical level, all of the above (contextual model and implementation approach) were integrated in order to support the implementation of the programme, data analysis and drawing conclusions.

8.2.5 Specific research aim five: To determine the impact of a logotherapy brief group-based intervention on the sense of meaning and psychological health of academic employees

The specific aim was reached in Chapter 7. Chapter 4 contains the quantitative research with specific reference to the research design requirements and a description thereof.

Chapter 7 presents the results and also illuminates how the findings of the qualitative study assisted the researcher to understand the results of the quantitative study.

8.2.5.1 The quantitative results infused with findings from the qualitative study

The posttest results on the PIL (see Chapter 7, Table 7.1) indicated, at the group level, that the participants had a sense of definite purpose. It suggested meaning in their lives; meaningful goals and objectives; the experience of job satisfaction; adaptive coping; psychological health; and positive functioning (see Chapter 7, Table 7.1) (cf. Pezirkianidis et al., 2016; Robotmili et al., 2015; Steger & Dik, 2009; Steger et al., 2012; Wong, 2012a).

The posttest results on the MLQ (see Chapter 7, Table 7.3) indicated, at the group level, that the participants had a valued meaning and purpose, yet an open and ongoing exploration of that meaning and purpose. It suggested an orientation and drive among the participants towards life's meaning as an ever-unfolding and ever-deepening process, rather than any single answer (Steger, 2010). It showed the participants' satisfaction with their lives; optimism; feelings of love; and fewer incidences of anxiety and depression (Steger, 2010). The aforementioned are qualities that are advantageous to the HE organisation (Steger et al., 2012). The participants' need for spirituality in the workplace was illuminated (Steger, 2010). Although the participants may have preferred a stable structure in society and life, they were aware of many areas for improvement to the situation at the time (e.g. see Chapter 5) (Steger, 2010).

It is apparent that the results from the PIL triangulated with the results from the MLQ.

Generally, the supportive data provided by the MLQ was key since no empirical data was available on academic employees' sense of purpose and meaning in work and life. In addition, the scores on the MLQ complemented the scores on the PIL and enriched the descriptions with respect to the sense of purpose and meaning of the academic employees who participated in the study.

The results showed the increase in the PIL's average group scores on the participants' sense of purpose and meaning from pre- to post-intervention as statistically non-significant ($M_{pre-ave} = 113.05$, $SD_{pre-ave} = 21.49$ / $M_{post-ave} = 114.591$, $SD_{post-ave} = 18.04$). The results also showed the increase in the MLQ's average group scores on the Presence and Search subscales from pre- to post-intervention as statistically non-significant ($M_{P-pre-ave} = 28.82$, $SD_{P-pre-ave} = 6.59$; $M_{S-pre-ave} = 25.91$, $SD_{S-pre-ave} = 7.59$ / $M_{P-post-ave} = 29.23$, $SD_{P-post-ave} = 6.60$; $M_{S-post-ave} = 26.23$, $SD_{S-post-ave} = 7.70$). These results are in line with the brief nature of the logotherapy group-based programme that would not be expected to bring about significant

change in a complex phenomenon like academic employees' sense of meaning and purpose in such a limited period of time with a single event (PIL: $z = -.47$, $p = .64$; Presence: $z = -.17$, $p = .86$; Search: $z = -.23$, $p = .82$). The aforementioned also suggests that the results on the PIL and MLQ should be interpreted with caution.

In addition, the results from the PIL and MLQ were generic and not context specific. They did not specifically ask about the participants' work experiences. It is established in the literature that there is a common overlap between work and life work; that work is an important source of meaning; that meaning in life and meaning in work are closely related; and that the one influences the other (Driver, 2007; Steger et al., 2012).

The results from the biographical questionnaire about the participants' job satisfaction (see Chapter 4, Table 4.2) triangulated with the PIL's finding on the participants' perceived satisfaction with their jobs. The results indicated that the majority (81.82%; $n = 22$) of academic employees who participated in the quantitative study reported job satisfaction. The majority (75.90%; $n = 29$) of the academic employees who participated in the qualitative study reported job satisfaction (see Chapter 5, Table 5.1). Overall, these results suggested that the majority of the academic employees who participated in the study was satisfied with their jobs, despite the changed and changing HE organisation and landscape.

At the group level, the results of the PIL and MLQ which reflected on the participants' good psychological health appeared to be supported by the results on the PDSQ. The post-intervention mean group scores on the PDSQ subscales for depression; post-traumatic stress; binge-eating; obsessive-compulsion; panic; social anxiety; alcohol abuse/dependence; drug abuse/dependence; and generalised anxiety were all subclinical (see Chapter 7, Table 7.5). At the group level, it thus suggested the participants' adaptive psychological functioning and coping (cf. Pezirkianidis et al., 2016; Steger & Dik, 2009; Wong, 2012a). These results were supported by the literature with respect to the established positive relationship between meaning and purpose in life and psychological health (Steger, 2012).

Looking at the results from the PIL and MLQ in context, it was noted that the participants in the qualitative study contained and projected high levels of negative affect (NA). The same phenomenon was noted among the participants in the quantitative study.

It is hypothesised that some of the factors and/or dynamic characteristics inherent to the HE organisation and psychological mechanisms intrinsic to the sources of meaning may have mediated the participants in the quantitative study's experience of meaning in work (Rosso

et al., 2010). In addition, the painful experience of loss in response to the reality of the changed and changing HE organisation may have been mediated (see Chapter 2, e.g. Franklin, 2003; Kübler-Ross, 1969; Shanley, 2007; Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005). The mitigating factors and/or dynamic characteristics may have served to help the academic employees who have participated in the quantitative study to actualise diverse meaning potentials in the Franklian domains of creative, experiential and attitudinal values despite ongoing and challenging work circumstances.

In contrast, the results on the PIL showed that 36.37% ($n = 8$) of the participants reported a lack of clear and/or somewhat uncertain sense of purpose and meaning after their participation in the intervention (see Chapter 7, Table 7.1). It suggested that those participants may have had fewer goals; lower sense of direction; less meaningful outlooks on life; less work enjoyment; less adaptive coping; and were at risk for psychological distress (cf. Klefтарas & Psarra, 2012; Schulenberg & Melton, 2010; Steger et al., 2006, Steger, 2012).

The results on the PIL triangulated with the results on the MLQ. The results on the MLQ showed that, after their participation in the intervention, 13.60% ($n = 3$) of the participants reported that they did not have a valued meaning and purpose in life, however, they were actively seeking for something or someone that would give them meaning and purpose (Steger, 2010). There was thus a probability that they may not always have been satisfied with life and that they may have experienced emotions like love and joy less frequently in comparison with the other participants (Steger, 2010).

It suggested that the participants may have felt misled in life which may have caused them distress (Steger, 2010). In addition, there was a possibility that they frequently may have felt anxious and depressed and that they may not have been particularly socially active (Steger, 2010). Although, Steger (2010) cautioned that the descriptors on the MLQ should not be used as a diagnostic indicator of any psychological condition, research showed the highest levels of anxiety and worse health among individuals who indicated that they lacked a sense of meaning and that they were searching for that meaning (Pezirkianidis et al., 2016).

Steger et al. (2008) reported a complex relationship between the simultaneous presence and search for meaning. The complexity represents an unknown area between enjoying meaningfulness and a continuous deepening and/search for additional or new sources of meaning. On the contrary, it may represent a crisis in meaning, especially with respect to older adults (McDonald et al., 2012; Pezirkianidis et al., 2016; Steger et al., 2008).

At the group level, the perceived results of the PIL and MLQ about the abovementioned participants' poorer psychological health appeared to be supported by the results on the PDSQ. The post-intervention results on the PDSQ subscales showed that a few participants were indicated for follow up for symptoms of depression; post-traumatic stress; obsessive compulsion; social anxiety; alcohol abuse/dependency; and generalised anxiety after their participation in the intervention (see Chapter 7, Table 7.5). The positive relationship between a lack of or low meaning and purpose in life and psychological distress is established in the literature (Steger, 2012).

The above finding indicated that there may be a subsection of academic employees who participated in the study who may benefit from psychological assistance to address challenges (Frankl, 1988, 2000; Zimmerman, 2002). The aforementioned appeared to be in line with the results in Chapter 2 (see Table 2.6) with respect to the presence of symptoms of psychological distress among academic employees whilst in the midst of major and ongoing changes in the HE sector and the organisation. In addition, the high level of NA encountered among the academic employees who participated in the study and the perceived psychological distress of some, also appeared to be supported by the positive relationship in the literature between NA and psychological distress (Steger, 2012).

The intensity of the negative emotions expressed by the academic employees, who participated in both the qualitative and quantitative studies, may have indeed reflected the emotional responses that were presented in Chapter 2 in response to the changed and changing HE organisation (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005). Frankl (2006) would have said that, instead of interpreting the responses as psychological problems, they should rather be translated as life experiences when people have experienced loss.

The PDSQ results showed a statistically significant reduction in symptoms of depression; symptoms of post-traumatic stress; symptoms of binge eating; and symptoms of panic from pre- to post-intervention (see Chapter 7, Tables 7.6 and 7.7). These findings suggested that a logotherapy brief group-based intervention with a strong cognitive restructuring component was effective in reducing symptoms of depression, post-traumatic stress, binge eating and panic in a short period of time.

Notwithstanding these results, the post-intervention average group measure ($M_{\text{post-ave}} = 114.59$), specifically on the PIL, was in close proximity to the somewhat uncertain purpose and meaning score range (92-112). This suggested that, although a significant percentage of the academic employees who participated in the quantitative study may have had a sense of definite purpose and meaning, the result was indicative of potential space to uncover,

discover, rediscover and to make use of the meaning potentials of each situation in life and work in the Franklian domains of creative, experiential and attitudinal values (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).

8.2.5.2 The qualitative results from the learning and/or discovery assessment questionnaire

The qualitative findings from the questionnaire that assessed the participants in the quantitative study's learnings and/or discoveries indicated that they have benefitted from their participation in the logotherapy brief intervention.

The benefits were related to their experience in the group and were delineated as identification with colleagues; normalised work experiences; enhanced understanding in relation to the other; validation of their own approaches towards life and work; self-awareness; empathy towards the self, awareness of the role of cognition in the experience of meaning in work and life; awareness of the uniqueness of human beings and the diversity in meaning experiences.

The findings from the questionnaire that assessed the participants learnings and/or discoveries in the quantitative study supported the results from the empirical study. The learning and/or discoveries as reported by the participants did not reflect deep meaning. This observation supported the results from the quantitative study that showed non-significant changes in the participants' sense of meaning and purpose from the pre- to post-intervention scores. The aforementioned is in line with the brief nature of the logotherapy group-based intervention that would not be expected to bring about significant changes in meaning and a complex phenomenon like academic employees' sense of meaning and purpose in such a limited period of time.

8.2.5.3 Conclusions on the the impact of the logotherapy brief group-based intervention on the sense of meaning and psychological health of academic employees

The differences between the PIL and MLQ pre-and post-intervention mean group scores were shown as non-significant. However, these results were supported by the brief nature of the logotherapy intervention that would not be expected to bring about significant changes with respect to an intricate phenomenon like academic employees' sense of meaning and purpose in life and work in such a limited period of time. It suggests that these results should be interpreted with caution.

The results on the PDSQ have shown significant reduction in symptoms of depression; post-traumatic stress, bulimia/binge eating; and panic. These results suggested that the

logotherapy brief group-based intervention that could be considered as having a strong cognitive restructuring component was effective in reducing the participants' symptomatic impairment for depression, post-traumatic stress, bulimia/binge eating and panic. It also suggested that results could be achieved with respect to symptom reduction in a short period of time.

The participants' feedback on their learnings and/or discoveries through their participation in the intervention suggested that they did benefit from their participation. The benefits referred to normalised work experiences, identification with others, enhanced understanding, validation of their own approaches towards life and work; empathy towards the self, self-awareness; awareness of the role that their thinking plays in their experiences of meaning in work and life, awareness of silo mentality and functioning; among others.

Overall, an integration of the quantitative and qualitative data revealed that the life and work of Viktor Frankl, applied in the form of a logotherapy brief group-based intervention, created awareness about the importance of meaning in work and life among the academic employees who participated in the study.

It therefore served as a positive trigger for awareness about less than definite and valued purpose and meaning in their work and lives that holds the potential for enhancing their motivation for a search for purpose and meaning, or to actualise meaning potentials in all areas of their lives (Frankl, 1988, 2000, 2006).

It provided valuable information about the levels of sense of purpose and meaning and the psychological health of academic employees. It also provided an initial understanding about the impact of a logotherapy brief group-based intervention, with a strong cognitive restructuring component, on the sense of purpose and meaning of academic employees and their psychological health.

Utilising a non-specific approach like Viktor Frankl's theory and logotherapy that is compatible and complementary to other approaches (cf. Frankl, 1988, 2000; Palma, 1976) allowed for drawing from the systems, clinical, family systems and psychoanalytic perspectives to illuminate the meaning and/or meaning frustration of the academic employees who participated in the study. It not only helped to provide enriched descriptions with respect to the sources of meaning frustration, but also to illuminate and describe the dynamic characteristics of the HE organisation. The aforementioned not only assisted to contextualise the results from the quantitative study, but also enhanced the understanding thereof. In addition, it emphasised the multidimensional nature of a phenomenon like

meaning in work for academic employees, which is necessarily embedded in a complex HE organisational system.

It appeared as if the interaction between certain dynamic characteristics inherent to the HE organisation or setting (e.g. service orientation; appreciation from students; love and passion for work; unique freedom of choice; work as a life's calling; ultimate meaning) may have played a key role in mediating the meaning in work experiences of academic employees who participated in the study. It seemed possible that dynamic characteristics inherent to the HE organisational setting, like silo functioning; HODs as containers for NA; NLAEs as containers for NA; and social defence mechanisms like positivity as a defence against negativity; may also have played a key role in mediating some of the meaning in work experiences of the academic employees who participated in the study.

It was apparent that the interactional approach to intervention implementation evoked anxiety among some of the participants which evoked resistance and defence. The aforementioned had clear implications for the participants' meaning potentials and existential responsibility.

Ultimately, these results have to be understood with an appreciation for the complexity of enhancing a phenomenon like the sense of meaning and purpose of academic employees. It was unlikely to effect significant change with respect to such a complex and multifaceted phenomenon like academic employees' sense of purpose and meaning in work and life with a single intervention in such a limited period of time.

8.2.6 Specific research aim six: To identify and discuss the implications of the results for the logotherapy brief group-based intervention and to make recommendations for future research

Emanating from the results that suggest that the life and work of Frankl has triggered academic employees' search for meaning in work and life and to actualise meaning potentials in diverse areas in their lives (see specific research aim 8.2.5), this study served as a starting point with the following implications:

8.2.6.1 Implications for implementing a logotherapy brief group-based intervention

- The timeline and structure of the logotherapy brief group-based programme described in this study needs to be adapted to the timeline of a typical brief group-based intervention. It may be implemented over a period of eight to twelve weeks, with 60 to 90 minute sessions taking place on a weekly basis. Such an intervention programme may then start with a traditional educational presentation on the work and

life of Viktor Frankl and the basic principles and concepts of logotherapy and may, over time, include more activities (e.g. value based activities) to assist with triggering and facilitating a search for meaning. A theme on the basic principles of cognitive restructuring may be built into such a programme. More attention should be given to the themes of calling forth the self and meaning in work. Since a calling orientation towards work goes beyond work (job orientation) and success (career orientation) and is rather about how individuals respond to life (calling orientation) it may inspire academic employees to go beyond mere financial rewards and job success (Wong, 2011).

- The design of the intervention may also be upgraded to a longitudinal design that may provide data on individual and group changes over a longer period of time (e.g. six to 12 months) to study the impact of such an intervention more effectively. In addition, the design may also include the means to assess cognitive shifts and behaviour changes, as well as assess, over time, the permanency of such behaviour changes.
- The study of a larger and more diverse sample in terms of race, gender and faculty may yield different results.
- Future interventions should not be limited to one HE organisation, but could be conducted across multiple HE organisational settings.

With respect to time, the challenge remains to find the necessary time for developmental interventions in the HE organisational system. Cognisance is taken that any developmental and change effort needs the buy-in and active support of senior management.

8.2.6.2 Implications for the HE organisation

The research has uncovered some important challenges pertaining to the HE organisational setting. Organisational learning, change and development can take place on many levels and can draw from multiple perspectives and practices (cf. Kets de Vries, 2010; McLean, 2005).

- The results should be shared with the relevant stakeholders in the organisation. Awareness needs to be created with respect to how the findings may hinder or enhance stakeholders' work-based practices and relationships; impact employees sense of meaning in work and the negative consequences that it may have for the academic and/or HE organisation's climate.
- In their own right, academic employees are educational leaders in the classroom and/or in their daily work-based practices (e.g. academic development and support

and/or student development and support). Educational-logo-leaders are compassionate, emotionally intelligent, have an excellent grasp of the bigger picture and possess much self-efficacy (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2012). Therefore, academic employees could benefit from engaging with Frankl's ideas about meaning and his logotherapeutic principles. As educational-logo-leaders, they can be supported and trained by developing their skills in these areas through, for example, educational-logo-leadership peer support and debriefing groups. In addition, such training of support programmes can, for example, also include sessions on cognitive restructuring, appreciation of meaningfulness in work and healthy mechanisms as ways to cope with the stresses inherent to work.

- HODs are the backbone of the HE organisation. They need to be supported in ways that will assist them to deal with everything they do in their numerous roles that, for example, range from containing the negativity in the HE organisation for academic employees, managing with poor service delivery, appreciating their staff and students' achievements, to ensuring that the HE organisation's triple mission of teaching and learning, research and community engagement is implemented. The high level of cynicism and disillusion noted among HODs may put some of them at risk for burnout. Therefore, support to HODs can take the form of a leadership developmental intervention that can include formal debriefing sessions on both the team and individual levels; sessions that focus on their meaning in work and life, sessions that illuminate their own under-the-surface behaviour (e.g. defences; the function of containment, etc.) and how it influences their work behaviour and how to manage it; sessions on self-care and development (e.g. healthy mechanisms to cope with stress and change, work-life balance, cognitive restructuring, etc.). Overall, these sessions can be informed by diverse theories and practices, for example, Frankl's theory on meaning, systems psychodynamics, appreciative inquiry, etc.
- In order to build relationships and shared meaning and to enhance collaboration across the HE organisation, it is recommended that faculties, departments and teams invest time in raising self-awareness through conversations about their own roles, tasks, identities, authorities, boundaries and conflicts and how it plays out in the wider system and what it implies for their own and other stakeholders' work-based practices.
- HE is going through 'seismic' change (Gourley, 2016). Consequently, "[s]teering the organisation in the next decades will not be easy, but it will be a very important task, even a privilege" (Gourley, 2016, p. 68). Leaders in HE organisations are central in academic employees' work experiences. "Logo-leadership has the potential to

cultivate the landscape of employee work experiences” (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2012, p. 14). Moreover, it links well to transformational and/or servant leadership (Walumbwa et al., 2013). Exposing senior leaders to HE leadership programmes with Frankl’s work as a developmental tool could be beneficial. One of the aims of logo-leadership is to enhance how employees see a job’s meaningfulness and to foster intrinsic employee motivation. At its core, logo-leadership is “altruistic in the sense of its rejuvenation of joy at work” (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2012, p. 13). Coaching leaders is also potentially a rich way to foster meaningful work because “leadership is intimately an intuitively connected to promoting meaning in the workplace” (Stober, Putter & Garrison, 2013, p. 217).

8.2.6.3 Recommendations for future research

- Existential analysis, within the framework of Frankl’s theory, can be formalised as a research method of meaning informed organisational assessment, which can include various levels and forms of data collection and which can describe an existential analysis process for engaging the organisation and its leaders. In this form, the organisational assessment would be concerned with bringing to awareness the employees’ “cries for meaning and purpose that lie dormant” and also brings the organisation to an awareness of its responsibility towards what is spiritual or existential (Frankl, 2000; Graber, 2004; Wong, 2012b, p. 620). The spiritual reality will provide the organisation with a way of becoming aware of sources of meaning and/or meaning frustration, meaning potentials and a better understanding of coping patterns (Lantz, 2000). Fundamentally, it will illuminate the meaning potential of the organisation’s existence to be fulfilled as *will to collective meaning* (Frankl, 2006).
- Rosso et al. (2010, p. 116) maintained that “[i]ndividuals are likely to draw from multiple sources of meaning in their work and the potential for these sources to combine or interact in determining meaning or meaningfulness is largely unexplored”. Organisational existential analysis as a research method can identify, analyse and describe networks of meaning in work and some of its intrinsic psychological mechanisms. It can investigate the interplay between the sources of meaning for academic employees and their inherent psychological mechanisms. This will allow for developing models of the systems or networks of meaning that will include multiple sources of meaning and its psychological mechanisms.

Herewith the specific research aim has been reached.

8.3 CONTRIBUTIONS

The study made the following contributions

- To the researcher's best knowledge, this is the first study that focused on the development, implementation and subsequent empirical evaluation of a logotherapy brief group-based intervention to enhance the sense of purpose and meaning of academic employees working at a contemporary SAHE organisation. Therefore, the study addresses an apparent gap in the existing body of research.
- The study incorporated an integrative approach that acknowledged complexity and chaos (messiness) as its local reality (Diamond & Allcorn, 2009; Wells et al., 2012). Whilst Frankl's theory and logotherapy remained at the core of the study, the researcher thoughtfully drew from other theories and practices (e.g. systems, clinical, family systems, psychoanalysis, CBT) to strengthen research and best practices.
- In congruence with the integrative research approach, the application of an intervention mixed methods research design to develop and to evaluate a logotherapy brief group-based intervention empirically moved beyond the forced-choice dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative research in favour of a pragmatist approach (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Although it was "particularly complex, dynamic and unsettled – that is, messy – because it purposefully brings together multiple perspectives and approaches", the research findings display a simplification "of the actual dynamic and interactive systems that they represent" (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016, p. 294). Rosso et al., (2010) found that the body of literature about meaning in relation to work is unintentionally, though discreetly, divided into research silos that are built around single sources of work meaning. This has portrayed a rather simplistic view of how people construct meaning and meaningfulness in their work (Rosso et al., 2010). Although this research only gives a glimpse of a complex though intriguing phenomenon like academic employees' meaning in work in a HE organisational setting, it is hoped that this research could pave the way for more mixed methods research studies in the SA context, more so in the discipline of IOP and the sub-discipline of organisational psychology.
- The study provided the researcher with a better understanding and enhanced empathy towards contemporary academic employees and their lived realities in the changed and changing HE organisation. She also became aware of her own difficulties in her role as a manager with respect to containing projections from academic employees in relation to the ongoing changes in a dynamic and complex HE organisational setting. She further became aware of the importance of being able to provide containment to different groups of academic employees in the workplace,

though mindful that academic employees should be given the opportunity to do the necessary cognitive work in order to make authentic shifts with respect to making sense of the negativity and to transform it into something positive.

- The outcome of the intervention showed a significant reduction in the presence of symptoms of depression; post-traumatic stress, binge eating; and panic in the participants. These results suggested that the logotherapy brief group-based intervention that could be considered as CBT enhanced, was effective in reducing the participants' symptomatic impairment for depression, post-traumatic stress, binge eating and panic in a short period of time.

8.4 LIMITATIONS

The research limitations are addressed in the following section.

8.4.1 Limitations of the literature studies

- Although considerable amounts of literature are available on global and national HE, literature on the crisis of the academic profession both internationally and nationally is limited.
- Although considerable amounts of literature are available on the diverse application of Frankl's theory and logotherapy in a variety of contexts, literature exploring logotherapeutic principles in organisational settings is limited. Literature on the purpose and meaning of academic employees working at contemporary HE organisations in the SA context could not be found.

8.4.2 Limitations of an integrated approach with respect to Frankl's theory and logotherapy

- The face validity of Frankl's theory and logotherapeutic principles with respect to an integrated approach is dependent on the user's understanding and experience of logotherapy and, for example, cognitive behavioural restructuring, therefore it limits the number of psychotherapists who will be able to use it to enhance academic employees' sense of purpose and meaning and mental health.

These limitations do not necessarily reduce the face value of Frankl's theory and logotherapy, but put some limits on the application possibilities.

8.4.3 Limitations of the empirical studies

The research was experimental and pragmatic since no previous research study has investigated the impact of a logotherapy brief group-based intervention on academic

employees' sense of meaning and purpose, and the concomitant effects on their psychological health. The following are the limitations of the empirical studies:

- The key limitation regarding the logotherapy intervention was the amount of time available to implement the programme. Insufficient time was spent on various programme components (e.g. Theme 3: Calling forth the self and Theme 4: A meaningful work life). Sufficient maturation or breeding time (e.g. one week) between the various programme components of the intervention was also not allowed. In addition, the group factors and processes (e.g. trust and openness) inherent to the group could not develop to full effect in some of the groups. This was specifically noticed in the implementation group with the highest number of participants and where the participants were most familiar with each other. The aforementioned could have contributed to heightened levels of anxiety and thus contributed to the counterproductive effect of the participants' triggered mental defences (Lantz, 1998).
- A quasi-experimental design was used to evaluate the efficacy of the intervention on the participants' sense of purpose and meaning and psychological health, which did not allow for comparison with a control group. In addition, only one posttest measure was conducted. The design did thus not allow for follow-up scores (e.g. over a six to 12-month period) to determine the longer term impact of the intervention and possible changes over time.
- Other factors that could have subtly impacted the outcome of the intervention were the characteristics of the academic employees who participated in the study and the researcher's characteristics and skills. Since the participants and the researcher's characteristics could not be controlled, most important was to acknowledge and report it (see Chapter 6, section 6.5) (Wells et al., 2012).
- It was apparent that the integrated interactional approach towards intervention implementation evoked anxiety among some of the academic employees who participated in the study. This suggested that they had varying levels of readiness to participate in an intervention with what was perceived as a non-traditional implementation approach. This has practical implications for the design and structure of future developmental interventions, more so in a traditional educational setting. This suggested that an optimised intervention may, for example, allow for a mix of traditional (e.g. formal presentations) and non-traditional approaches. It would be important to consider the timing of the non-traditional components.
- It was also apparent that the pre- and post-intervention mean group scores did not adequately succeed in reflecting the subtleties of changes in the academic employees who participated in the study in relation to the meaning in their work and

lives. This suggested a need for an optimised intervention design that will allow for the systematic study of the processes of change, on both the group and individual levels.

- The representativeness of the sample posed a limitation on the study. This study reports on results that emanated from relatively small samples with respect to both the phase one and three studies. Both samples were predominantly white Afrikaans speaking females, between the ages of 25 and 65 and representative of participants mostly from the Faculty of Human Sciences. Thus the experiences of other races and language groups, males and academic employees from other faculties, could not be adequately explored.
- Both the phase one and three studies were conducted with participants from the same HE organisation and the researcher was an employee of this HE organisation. This made it possible for the researcher's own bias and issues to be transferred onto the analysis and the interpretation of the findings. This was, to some extent, countered by the presence of the moderator who led the phase one study.
- The timing and setting of the logotherapy intervention may have had an impact on the results obtained. Although the participants volunteered to take part in the study, the intervention took place during a week that was considered as "down time" for them. Moreover, the intervention took place in an organisational setting where much emphasis is placed on research and some of the participants were in the process of their own doctoral studies. Owing to the service orientation inherent to the HE organisation, some participants may have participated in the study to assist a colleague in the role of a student and to serve the function of research however others may have participated out of curiosity.
- Due to the time limited nature of the intervention, it was not intended to evaluate a typical logotherapy brief group-based intervention, but rather to act as a positive trigger (once-off event) and to explore the sense of purpose and meaning and the psychological health, of academic employees. The study was limited to an account of creating awareness about the importance of meaning in work and to effect small changes, if any.

8.5 FINALE – ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTION

At a group level, the results of the study suggested the majority of the academic employees who participated in the study had a sense of definite purpose and meaning despite the changed and changing HE landscape and organisation. Their experience of meaning in work was related to diverse sources of meaning (e.g. service orientation, appreciation from

students, unique benefits, freedom of choice, love and passion for work, etc.). Service orientation and the benefits inherent to working in a HE organisation were singled out as the key factors playing a role in academic employees' sense of purpose and meaning in work.

Although it was unlikely that such a brief single logotherapy intervention would effect significant change in academic employees' sense of purpose and meaning in work and life, the main finding of the study suggests that a logotherapy brief group-based intervention, with a strong cognitive restructuring component, may have an impact on the sense of purpose and meaning of academic employees, whilst reducing symptoms of depression, post-traumatic stress, binge eating, and panic. The findings of the study suggested benefits for them in terms of their experience in the brief group-based programme (e.g. normalised work experiences, self-awareness, cognitive awareness, etc.). Therefore, the findings suggest that, through utilising an intervention mixed method research design approach, a brief group-based intervention, utilising the principles of Frankl's theory and logotherapy, could be developed and successfully applied in a HE setting.

8.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In the final chapter, specific conclusions were formulated that demonstrated how the specific research aims have been fulfilled for this study. The contributions of the study were emphasised, and the limitations of the literature, the integrated approach utilising Frankl's theory and logotherapy to support the implementation of the intervention and the empirical studies were pointed out. The chapter was concluded by integrating the overall research project through answering the central research question.

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