

**THE INFLUENCE OF UNEMPLOYMENT ON PARENTING SKILLS IN THE
WATERBERG DISTRICT OF THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

BY

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ABSTRACT

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By

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DEGREE: MSW SOCIAL WORK MANAGEMENT**

Unemployment is a worldwide issue which is one of the toughest challenges that South Africa is facing. It has become a social problem because it has an impact on a large number of people. Unemployment has a serious impact on parents' dignity and affects his/her emotional and socio-economic status, as he/she cannot function effectively.

In the view of the above, the goal of the study was to investigate the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province. The research question that guided the study was: What is the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province?

A qualitative, explorative research study was conducted, with the following objectives:

- ❖ To theoretically conceptualize unemployment as a social problem and the

family as a social system.

- ❖ To empirically investigate the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province.
- ❖ To make recommendations, based on the results of the study, regarding strategies to help unemployed parents to enhance their parenting skills.

The population of this study was all the black parents who were at least three years unemployed, who were between the ages of 25 – 50 years, parents who had children of school going age, stayed in an informal settlement in the Waterberg District and who were registered clients of the Department of Health and Social Department (DHSD) during the period January 2003 – June 2006.

A sample of 10 respondents was selected by using a combination of stratified and simple random sampling to represent the population. The five sub-district offices in the Waterberg District were regarded as strata and from each stratum two respondents were selected randomly.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews guided by a schedule with a set of predetermined questions.

The main conclusions drawn from the research findings were that parents expressed negative feelings about their unemployed situation and that they experienced a lack of certain parenting skills namely: communication, decision making, problem solving and conflict management.

Based on the results of the study, recommendations were made regarding strategies to help unemployed parents to enhance their parenting skills.

KEY CONCEPTS:

Unemployment

Family

Parenthood

Skills

Parenting skills

OPSOMMING

DIE INVLOED VAN WERKLOOSHEID OP OUERSKAPVAARDIGHEDE IN DIE WATERBERG DISTRIK, LIMPOPO PROVINSIE

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Werkloosheid is wêreldwyd een van die grootste vraagstukke waarmee lande te kampe het en in Suid Afrika self een van die grootste uitdagings waarmee die land gekonfronteer word. Werkloosheid in sy geheel het ontaard in 'n maatskaplike vraagstuk vanweë die grote van die populasie groep wat direk hiermee gekonfronteer word. Werkloosheid het 'n groot impak op ouers se belewenis van hulself aangesien dit hul sosio- ekonomiese status posisie beïnvloed, wat weer 'n negatiewe impak op hul emosionele funksionering het. Hierdie situasie dra by tot 'n verlies aan sekuriteit en integriteit wat weer hul algemene funksionering negatief beïnvloed. Dit beïnvloed hul vermoë om in hul en hul kinders se basiese behoeftes aan behuising, voeding en onderrig te voldoen.

Met inagneming van bogenoemde aspekte is 'n studie geloods na die invloed van werkloosheid op ouerskapsvaardighede in die Waterberg Distrik, Limpopo Provinsie. Die navorsingsvraag wat vir die doeleindes van die studie geformuleer was, was die volgende: **Wat is die effek van werkloosheid op ouerskapsvaardighede in die Waterberg Distrik, Limpopo Provinsie?**

'n Kwalitatiewe, eksplorerende studie is uitgevoer met in agneming van die bereiking van die volgende doelwitte:

- Om werkloosheid as 'n maatskaplike problem en die gesin as 'n maatskaplike sisteem teoreties te konseptualiseer.
- Om empiries die invloed van werkloosheid op ouerskapsvaardighede in die Waterberg Distrik, Limpopo Provinsie na te vors.
- Om aanbevelings te maak, gebasseer op die bevindinge van die studie, in terme van strategieë wat toegepas kan word om die werklose ouer se ouerskapsvaardighede te bevorder.

Die teikengroep wat geïdentifiseer was, was swart ouers in die ouderdoms groep 25-50jr; ouers wat reeds drie jaar werkloos was; ouers met skoolgaande kindres; ouers wat in 'n informele nedersetting in Waterberg Distrik, Limpopo Provinsie woonagtig was en wat geregistreerde kliente van die Departement van Gesondheid en Maatskaplike Ontwikkeling gedurende die tydperk Januarie 2003 – Junie 2006 was.

Tien respondente was geselekteer deur van 'n kombinasie van gestratifiseerde en eenvoudige ewekansige steekproeftegnieke gebruik te maak. Die vyf sub-distrik kantore in Waterberg Distrik was as strata beskou en uit elke sub-distrik kantoor was twee gesinne ewekansig vir die studie geselekteer.

Data is ingesamel deur van semi-gestruktureerde onderhoud voering gebruik te maak.

Die studie het 'n definitiewe verband uitgewys met betrekking tot ouers se werkloosheidstatus en hul ouerskapsvaardighede. Die respondente het intense emosies en gevoelens met betrekking tot hul werkloosheid uitgespreek met spesifieke verwysing na hul gebrek aan ouerskapsvaardighede betreffende kommunikasie, besluitneming, probleem oplossing en konflikhantering.

Na aanleiding van die bevindinge was aanbevelings gemaak met betrekking tot strategieë wat gevolg kan maak om die problem die hoof te bied en werklose ouers te ondersteun in die bevordering van hul ouerskapsvaardighede.

Sleutelkonsepte / Woorde

Werkloosheid

Familie

Ouerskap

Vaardighede

Ouerskapsvaardighede.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Unemployment which is a worldwide issue is one of the toughest challenges which the South African government is facing today. Verhaar and Jasma (1992:13) indicate that “unemployment may be seen as the consequence of practical choice rather than as something that just arrived as a result of specific circumstances into which science may be given insight”.

Unemployment is a significant event. In sociological and psychological research, the experience of unemployment is usually described in terms of consequences for the individual. Numerous studies report a correlation between unemployment and such outcomes as deterioration in psychological well-being, physical health and the economic situation (Hakim, 2003:91).

Unemployment has a serious impact on a parent’s dignity and affects his/her emotional and socio-economic status, as he/she cannot function effectively. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs states that people have to satisfy their most basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter before they can satisfy other needs such as security and self-actualization (Voster, 1992:15). It is thus usually difficult for unemployed parents to satisfy their own basic needs and those of their children, and as a result, this has an impact upon their parenting skills.

According to Voster (1992:30) “poor parenting imposes stress upon families and communities because it continues to produce large numbers of future adults who are not socio-economically, psychologically, emotionally and culturally prepared to manage families of their own. Children reared in families headed by unemployed parents often experience a variety of social problems, such as teenage pregnancy,

back-street abortion, school drop out, violence, prostitution, drug and alcohol abuse”.

Social work practitioners who are working with unemployed families need to be equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills in order to guide those families effectively. It implies that they require a detailed understanding of how families are composed, how they function, and how unemployment impacts upon their normal functioning and more specifically how unemployment influence parenting skills.

This chapter will thus focus on the following: motivation for the choice of the study, problem formulation, goal and objectives of the study, the research question and approach, type of research, research design and research procedures, pilot study, a description of the population, sample and sampling methods, definition of main concepts as well as ethical aspects.

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE CHOICE OF THE STUDY

The researcher observed the seriousness of the influence of poor parenting skills by parents who were unemployed, from her daily social work caseload within the Waterberg District, Limpopo Province. She observed that there is an increase in the number of children who become delinquent, and that many of them were from families headed by unemployed parents. The researcher is of the opinion that social workers can assist these children and their parents through the development of programmes aimed at improving the parenting skills of unemployed parents. Before developing such programmes it is however important to investigate empirically what is the influence of unemployment on parenting skills.

1.3 PROBLEM FORMULATION

Unemployment and its negative effects on families is a worldwide problem. According to Statistics South Africa (SSA) (2001) there were 6 824 075 unemployed males and females throughout the country during 2000/2001. Of these unemployed

people 632 961 live in Limpopo Province and more specifically, 21 501 unemployed males and 41 120 unemployed females live in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province. According to the Labour Force Survey (2006) there is however a decrease of unemployment in South Africa from 29.4% in 2001 to 25.5% in 2006. The problem is however that little empirical information is available regarding the influence of unemployment on parenting.

Based on the researcher's professional experience, it seems as if there is a high unemployment rate in the Waterberg District and that unemployment has a serious impact on the functioning of family systems and specifically on parenting skills. The effects of unemployment on the families headed by unemployed parents result in high rates of child neglect, domestic violence, teenage pregnancy, underage alcohol and drug abuse, crime and other related youth problems. It has also been noted from the existing caseloads of social workers in the Waterberg District that the majority of juveniles were from families affected by unemployment. The problem is however that little empirical information is available regarding the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province.

In order to develop appropriate social work intervention strategies and programmes to assist these families, it is thus important to investigate empirically what is the real influence of unemployment on parenting skills.

1.4 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

A goal can be defined as "the object of a person's ambition or effort; an aim or desired result" (The Oxford American College Dictionary, 2002:572).

When social work researchers and practitioners attempt to measure a goal, they usually do so through a process of first dividing it into a number of items which are called objectives (compare Dunn, 1994:195; De Vos, Schurink & Strydom, 1998:7). Objectives are specific and measurable and when added together, they make the

whole which is a goal.

The goal of this study is to investigate the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province.

In order to obtain the goal, this study has the following three objectives:

- To theoretically conceptualize unemployment as a social problem and the family as a social system.
- To empirically investigate the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province.
- To make recommendations, based on the results of the study, regarding strategies to help unemployed parents to enhance their parenting skills.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION

The influence of unemployment on parenting skills was never empirically investigated in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province in the past and therefore this study is exploratory in nature.

According to Neuman (2000:21) exploratory research addresses the “what” question. The researcher asks creative questions and takes advantage of serendipity, those unexpected or chance factors that have serious implications.

The research question which was formulated for this study is thus the following:

What is the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province?

1.6 RESEARCH APPROACH

In this study, the researcher utilized the qualitative approach. According to Fouché and Delpont (2002:79) qualitative research aims mainly to understand social life and the meaning that people attach to everyday life. Neuman (2000:21) in turn states that “qualitative research tends to be more open to using a range of evidence and discovering new issues”.

The researcher interviewed unemployed parents themselves in order to discover/determine the meaning that they were attaching to their everyday lives with specific focus on their parenting skills.

Neuman (2000:144-145) argues that qualitative research adopts assumptions about social life, objectives for research and ways to deal with data that are often at odds with the quantitative approach.

Qualitative research seems to be the most appropriate approach for this study, because the researcher wanted to gain greater insight from a selection of unemployed parents regarding their perceptions and experiences on the influence of unemployment on their parenting skills.

1.7 TYPE OF RESEACH

Most social work research is applied by its nature. Applied research is different from basic research because it is concerned with the immediate consumption of the research recommendations and therefore, the improvement of services in practice.

Fouché (2002:108) notes that applied research “most often is the scientific planning of induced change in a troublesome situation”.

Masango (2003:16) contends that applied research is defined as “the type of research that addresses an immediate problem facing the professional in his/her practice. Its purpose is to answer practical and useful questions about policies, programmes, projects, procedures or organizations”.

In this study the researcher, therefore, made use of applied research to investigate and gain new insight regarding a problem in practice, namely, the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province.

1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN

Mouton (2001) in Fouché and De Vos (2002:137) defines a research design as “a plan or blueprint of how one intends conducting the research. A research design focuses on the end product, formulates a research problem as a point of departure and focuses on the logic of the research study”.

According to Balnaves and Capito (2001:27-28) “a research design can be regarded as a ‘checklist’ of the key elements of the research project, which provides the researchers with roadmaps to what is required, which includes the problem, its goal, review of literature, the population and sampling, the methods of data collection, data analysis and the concluding information”.

The most suitable research design for this study was the collective case study. Mark (1996) as quoted by Fouché (2002:140) notes that “the collective case study furthers the understanding of the researcher about a social issue or population being studied. The interest in the individual case is secondary to the researcher’s interest in a group of cases”. The collective case study is thus the most appropriate design because the researcher wanted to further her understanding about the influence of unemployment on parenting skills as a social issue, focusing on a specific population namely a group of unemployed parents (cases).

1.9 RESEARCH PROCEDURE

Research procedure is mainly composed of two elements, namely, data collection and data analysis.

1.9.1 Data collection

There are a number of methods that can be utilized to collect data for a research study (York, 1997:78). In the context of this study the researcher made use of semi-structured interviewing guided by a schedule with a set of predetermined questions. During the semi-structured interviews, the researcher asked the respondents questions in their indigenous language, namely Northern Sotho and recorded their responses on cassette. In this regard Berg (1998:61) mentions that:

These are questions typically asked of each interviewee in a systematic and consistent order, but the interviewers are allowed freedom to digress that is, they are permitted (expected) to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared and standardized questions.

The semi-structured interview was regarded as the most appropriate data collection method for this study because it gave the respondents the opportunity to express their feelings and experiences in their own words and as such it was possible to collect qualitative information.

The researcher conducted the interviews with ten unemployed parents in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province.

1.9.2 Data Analysis

De Vos (2002:339) notes that “data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. Data which is collected through the qualitative method is usually large in volume and unless it is arranged in a certain form, becomes very difficult to understand by both the researcher and the consumers

of the research report. The arrangement of data in an orderly and simplified manner is called data analysis”.

The process of data analysis that the researcher has implemented in this study was briefly as follows: ten unemployed parents who were selected in the Waterberg District were interviewed in their indigenous language; each interview was tape recorded; transcripts were made of each interview and then translated into English. The data analysis process was conducted by reading through the transcripts, organizing the data, generating categories, themes and patterns, linking the research question with the data, searching for alternative explanations of the data and then writing the report.

1.10 PILOT STUDY

Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:155) describe a pilot study as “a small study conducted prior to a larger piece of research to determine whether the methodology, samplings, instruments and analysis are adequately appropriate”. According to Haralambos and Holborn (1998:200) a pilot study is “ a small-scale preliminary study conducted before the main research in order to check the feasibility or to improve the design of the research”.

A pilot study is thus a pre-requisite for the successful execution and completion of any research project.

1.10.1 Feasibility of the study

The feasibility of this study was based primarily on the fact that the Department of Health and Social Development, Limpopo Province, gave permission and supported an investigation into the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Waterberg District. It was indicated that the study should benefit the Department of Health and the Social Development, especially social workers, as it would enable

them to render more effective service to the community.

The researcher did not experience problems concerning the collection of data from the respondents. The respondents were available because the researcher selected the respondents from the caseloads of social workers in various sub-offices in the Waterberg District. With the necessary permission, the interviews were conducted during office hours, without any costs.

1.10.2 Testing of semi-structured interview schedule

The researcher tested the nature of the questions in the interview schedule by interviewing two individual parents (from different families) who were not part of the main study. Every question was clear and no modifications were necessary.

1.11 DESCRIPTION OF THE POPULATION, SAMPLE AND SAMPLING METHOD

1.11.1 Population

Neuman (2000:210) defines the term population “as a specific pool of cases that need to be studied. In order to define population, a researcher specifies the unit being sampled, the geographical location and the temporal boundaries of a population”.

Population means all the people who share similar characteristics which are of interest to the researcher, such as for example, all the unemployed parents who live within the Waterberg District.

Mark (1996:105) too states that a population is “the collection of all individuals, families, groups or organizations, communities, events and so on, that we are interested in finding out about”.

The population of this study was all the black parents who were at least three years unemployed, who were between the ages of 25 – 50 years, parents who had children

of school going age, stayed in an informal settlement in the Waterberg District and who were registered clients of the Department of Health and Social Development (DHSD) during the period January 2003 – June 2006. In total the population of this study was 500 parents who met the above-mentioned criteria.

1.11.2 Sample and sampling methods

According to Arkava and Lane (1983) as cited in Strydom and Venter (2002:199) “a sample is an element of the population that is considered for inclusion in the study”. In this study a sample of ten respondents was selected by using a combination of sampling techniques.

The researcher made use of a combination of two methods, namely, stratified and simple random sampling. “Stratified sampling method is suitable for heterogeneous populations because the inclusion of small subgroups percentage-wise can be ensured. This kind of sample is mainly used to ensure that the different groups or segments of a population acquire sufficient representation in the sample” (Neuman, 2000:204). In this study the five sub-offices in the Waterberg District of the Department of Health and Social Development were regarded as strata as per definition of stratified sampling method.

According to Neuman (2000:203) “simple random sampling “is the easiest method of sampling on which other types are modeled. In simple random sampling, a researcher develops an accurate sampling frame, select elements from the sampling frame according to a mathematically random procedure, then locates the exact element that was selected for inclusion in the sample”.

According to Balnaves and Caputi (2001:91) in simple random sampling “you can number each household, if you wish and put them in a hat (a big hat in this case). Let us say that you drew ten households (a sample). You know that there was no bias in your choice”.

The researcher collected a list of subjects, who met the above mentioned criteria, from each of the five sub-district offices in the Waterberg District of the Department of Health and Social Development (strata). The total number of subjects from the five strata was 500. The researcher then selected two respondents randomly from each sub-office. The middle and last names on each list were chosen as the sample for this study, resulting in total a sample of ten respondents.

1.12. ETHICAL ASPECTS

Strydom (2002:63) defines ethics as “a set of moral principles that are suggested by an individual or group, are subsequently widely accepted, and that offer rules and behavioral expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students”.

The following ethical issues were relevant in this study:

➤ Informed Consent

According to Berg (1998:114), researchers need to develop a contractual agreement with interviewees because “enforcement of this agreement as with all confidential agreements in research largely is one of honour rather than law”.

The researcher compiled an informed consent letter in which the participants were informed about the purpose of the research, the time needed to conduct the interviews, the aspects of confidentiality, risks and important procedures required to carry out the study. The respondents gave written consent to participate in the research project.

➤ Confidentiality/Violation of privacy

The researcher assured the respondents of privacy and confidentiality by using a code system and no personal particulars. There was also an agreement between the researcher and the respondents that no information would be shared without the consent of the respondents.

In this study the researcher applied all possible means of protecting the privacy of the respondents. Interviews were conducted at social workers' offices where respondents and the researcher had a chance to communicate without interference from other people.

➤ **Harm to respondents**

“Subjects can be harmed in a physical and/or emotional manner” (Strydom, 2002:64). Based on the fact that unemployment is a sensitive issue, the respondents were thoroughly informed beforehand about the potential impact of the investigation and they were given the opportunity to withdraw at any time if they wished to do so.

The researcher also tried to handle the interviews professionally and in a sensitive manner in order to avoid harm.

➤ **Debriefing**

A debriefing session was held with respondents who were emotionally affected by questions asked during the interview. This was done immediately after the interview, as it was important for the good health of the respondents.

1.13 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Royce (1991:150) indicates that the word conceptualization refers to the definition of concepts. A concept is defined as “a mental idea or representation of a class of events or group of objects and they allow us to express complex notions or abstract

ideas clearly”. According to the topic and objectives of the study, the following were regarded as the key concepts in this study:

1.13.1 Unemployment

Unemployment is “a state of not being employed in paid work, or self-employed, even though the person is available for such activity” (Dictionary of Sociology, 1991:676).

Lange (1998:106) states that unemployment is a “state where a workseeker between 15 and 64 years of age is without work or income, but who is actively seeking employment”.

In the context of this study unemployment refers to the state where a person is without work or income due to a lack of opportunities, although he/she is capable and willing to work.

1.13.2 Parenting skills

It is important to define the two concepts namely “parenting” and “skill” separately in order to understand the concept parenting skills.

- **Parenting**

Hamel and Turner (1996:8) define parenting as “the process or the state of being a parent”.

Brook (1991) in Hamnel and Turner (1996:10) points out that parenting “is a process that includes nourishing, protecting and guiding the child through the course of development”.

- **Skill**

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary (1994:775) “skills is the ability to utilize one’s knowledge effectively and readily”. Skill can also be defined as “qualities which a person brings to a job” (Dictionary of Sociology, 1991:571).

The researcher views parenting skills as the ability of a parent to nourish, protect and effectively guide a child through the course of development.

1.13.3 Limpopo Province

The Limpopo Province is proclaimed as one of the nine provinces in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996, Section 103 (1) (g). Cameson and Stone (1995:8) mention that the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa has identified nine provinces, of which the Limpopo Province Northern Province) is one and that “the establishment of nine provinces has brought Government close to the people, created more space for regional diversity and has set up for the implementation of national policies” (Government Reports to the Nation, 2001:23).

1.13.4 Waterberg District

Waterberg is one of the six districts in the Limpopo Province as according to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996, Section 103 (1) (g).

1.14 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher has identified the following limitations of the study:

- Of the ten respondents interviewed only one family had both parents, the remaining nine families were headed by single and female parents. It would have been better if at least 5 (50%) of the families had both parents in order to collect information from both fathers and mothers.
- The major limitation to this study is that, from the 500 registered clients collected from the five sub-offices in the Waterberg District, only ten respondents were interviewed. Due to the small sample no generalizations can be made regarding the influence of unemployment on parenting skills. However the research findings gave valuable information about the respondents' experiences and feelings.

- Although the researcher tried her utmost best to translate the transcripts it was difficult, as some of the concepts were not easy to be translated into English, as interviews were conducted in the local indigenous language namely Northern Sotho.
- The other limitation is that Limpopo Province has five districts namely, Waterberg, Capricorn, Sekhukhune, Mopani and Vhembe, while the research study was only conducted in Waterberg District. Again generalization cannot be made regarding the whole Limpopo Province about the influence of unemployment on parenting skills.

1.15 CONTENTS OF RESEARCH REPORT

The research report for this study consists of five chapters that are arranged as follows:

Chapter one outlines the general introduction of the study. This chapter starts with a general introduction, followed by the motivation for the study; the problem formulation; the aims and objectives of the study; the research question and approach; the type of research and research design; pilot testing; a description of the population, the sample and sampling methods; the main concepts and ethical aspects relevant to the study.

Chapter two will present an overview of existing literature regarding unemployment as a social problem.

Chapter three will give a literature overview regarding the family as a social system and the effects of unemployment on parenting skills.

Chapter four will focus on the empirical findings of the study.

Chapter five contains the general summary as well as the conclusions and



recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

UNEMPLOYMENT AS A SOCIAL PROBLEM

2.1 INTRODUCTION

“When a condition affects a large number of people, families and or a community, that condition is viewed as a social problem. In this regard, social problems are a phenomenon which requires the intervention of government, nongovernmental organizations and other institutions rather than individuals and their own families, to redress for the improvement of the quality of lives of the people” (Holland, 2004:90).

Social problems are public issues which have an impact on a large number of people and are matters of public debate and collective solutions. A condition is classified as social problem if it is observed to be on the increase. For example, Lehana and van Rhyn (2003:27) have noted that “teenage pregnancy is increasing and qualifies to be regarded as a social problem”. Freeman and Rickels (1993:1) also stated that “an increase in the size of the phenomenon is a measuring device for determining its classification as a social problem”.

Social problems are conditions which are not wanted in communities, such as the prevalence of unemployment, teenage pregnancies, crime and substance abuse. In this regard Lancaster and Hamburg (1986:8) contend that “social problems are by definition behaviours that are viewed as violating social norms and are seen as negative.”

The level of unemployment in South Africa has increased considerably in the last two decades. Unemployment has become a social problem because it has an impact on a large number of people, it is a matter of public debate, it needs collective solutions and it can be a negative factor in both developed and developing countries. In South Africa, one of the most serious social problems is unemployment. As Erasmus

(1999:13) postulates, “without fear of contradiction it can be stated that unemployment has assumed catastrophic proportions in South Africa”.

In order to explore unemployment in the context of this study as a social problem and its effect on families and specifically on parents and parenting skills, this chapter will focus on the following selected topics:

- A definition of unemployment
- The extent of unemployment in South Africa.
- The nature of unemployment
- Types of unemployment
- The effects of unemployment

2.2 DEFINITION OF UNEMPLOYMENT

“Unemployment means the inavailability of employment opportunities to people who are physically fit and are looking for employment. Unemployment is the failure of the labour market to absorb active labour which is lying unused in society and in communities” (Jones, 1992:34).

Dictionary of Sociology (1991:676) define unemployment as “a state of not being employed, in paid work, or self-employed, even though the person is available for such activity”.

Thus, people who report to be unemployed are those who can actually perform the job if they are involved and cannot be prohibited to do so by physical According to Cawker and Whiteford (1993:3), unemployment means “a state whenever the demand for labour in an economy is unable to match the supply of labour in that economy”. According to these authors (Cawker & Whiteford, 1993:30) many difficulties arise from the fact that the concept of unemployment includes:

- a condition (being without employment);
- an attitude (a desire for employment); and
- an activity (searching for employment).

Cawker and Whiteford (1993:3) explain in this regard that people cannot be considered unemployed if they only satisfy the first criterion, namely being without employment, without satisfying one or the others. If people are without employment but do not desire employment or take reasonable steps to find employment, they should be considered to be voluntarily unemployed which means that they are unemployed by choice. People who are unemployed by choice cannot be included in the data base of the unemployed, as these comprise of the lazy, drug addicts, alcoholics, and so on.

Moller (1992:23) attempted to obtain definitions of unemployment from a sample of African unemployed people in three South African cities in what she terms the “self-defined” unemployed. The majority of the respondents in this study defined themselves as unemployed in terms of the conventional criteria such as “persons without income”, “without jobs”, “seeking work”, “willing and able to work in a job” as well as “retrenchment”, “dismissed”, “resigned” or “work seekers”.

Moller (1992:23) maintains that unemployment can be a “state in which a work seeker, particularly the work seeker whose efforts to find a job or employment are continually thwarted by the lack of job opportunities”. This definition fits well with the condition of unemployment in South Africa. That is, there are large numbers of job seekers who cannot be absorbed by the job market at present because of a lack of job opportunities. This condition exposes large numbers of people to the effects of poverty.

Therefore in the context of this study the researcher wants to conclude with the definition of Lange (1998:106), who states that unemployment is “a state where a work seeker between 15 and 64 years of age is without work or income, but is

actively seeking employment.

In the South African context unemployment is mostly found among the people in previously disadvantaged groups, such as blacks, women, and the disabled. In order to report the real prevalence of unemployment in South Africa, the researcher will discuss its extent and nature in the succeeding sections.

2.3 EXTENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT

2.3.1 Unemployment as a global problem

Unemployment must not be viewed as only a South African issue as it is a problem in other countries throughout the world as well. According to the International Labour Organization's Yearbook of Labour Statistics (1996) of the 30 countries with an unemployment definition similar to South Africa's, 17% have an employment rate higher than 24%. In Europe countries like Spain, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Germany all experienced increases in unemployment rates of 3% to 13% between 1986 and 1995.

According to Triegaardt (2007:24), at present, the United States has a very low unemployment rate in contrast to South Africa. The unemployment rate for June 2005, was in the single digit figures, that is, 5 percent, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2005. She further notes that these unemployment rates do not take into consideration the people who have given up seeking employment, and those who operate in the informal sector, or are under-employed.

Apparently the number of job opportunities is decreasing not only in specific countries but also globally. In this regard Voster (1992:27) states that "unemployment is a world-wide phenomenon experienced lately also by the newly converted previously socialist or communist countries. The developing world always had to contend with the problem".

2.3.2 Unemployment in South Africa

According to the findings of the population census of 2001 published by Statistics South Africa, there were 6 824 075 unemployed females and males in the country on that stage. It was further indicated by Statistics South Africa (2001) that from these unemployed people a total number of 1 180 402 were youth distributed as follows: between the ages of 20-24 years there were 164 542 (13.9%) unemployed youth, between the ages of 25-29 years there were 130 996 (11.1%) unemployed youth and between 30-34 years there were 884 862 (75.0%) unemployed people. The majority of unemployed youth during 2001 were thus between the ages of 30 – 34 years.

According to Triegaardt (2007:22) the March 2003 Labour Force (StatsSA, 2003) indicates that although the economy continues to create jobs at a modest pace, securing jobs for the rapidly increasing economically active population remains a policy challenge. Between February 2002 and March 2003, employment rose from 11.4 million to 11.6 million; at the same time the number of people seeking work rose from 16.1 million to 16.8 million. As a consequence, the unemployment rate (according to the strict definition of unemployment) reached 31.2 % in March 2003 which numbered over 5 million people (StatsSA, 2005). The strict definition of unemployment does not take discouraged work seekers into account. Using the expanded definition of unemployment [iii], the rate was 42.5 % which translated into 8.4 million people. The economy is not creating sufficient jobs for work seekers. In any job market, there is both the “supply” side and the “demand” side. The job market requires skilled jobs, and the figures suggest that unskilled jobs are being shed. Seventy percent of South Africa’s unemployed are unskilled (Triegaardt,2007:22).

According to the Labour Force Survey (2006) there is however a decrease of unemployment from 29.4% in 2001 to 25.5% in 2006 as per definition of unemployment within the labour force context. The rate of unemployment amongst the youth, especially those who are educated has been addressed through the

introduction of internship programmes within various government departments and young unemployed graduates are also given opportunities to gain more experience in their professions while also being given other incentives. Therefore their economic and social needs are indirectly addressed.

Jones (1992:21) regards unemployment as “a chronic economic phenomenon which has been encountered in South Africa especially in the rural areas with factors such as poor educational status, lack of facilities, infra-structure and skills. Rural marginalization has impacted negatively on many people who are living below the breadline”.

It seems thus as if the rate of unemployment is closely related to whether the population is situated either in, urban or rural areas. Perhaps this aspect can also be linked to the high rate of unemployment in the Limpopo Province and specifically the Waterberg District.

2.3.3 Unemployment in Limpopo Province

According to Statistics South Africa, (2001), there were 632 961 unemployed people in the Limpopo Province from which 256 860 were unemployed males and 376 101 females. This census presented the ages of those unemployed as falling between 15 and 65 years. Recently the unemployment rate has decreased, as per the definition of unemployment in the Labour Force Survey (2006), from 34% to 32% of the population.

As this research study was conducted in the Waterberg District, the researcher felt that it would be relevant to also highlight the state of unemployment in the Waterberg District. Waterberg District is one of the five districts in the Limpopo Province and has six municipalities, namely, Modimolle, Mookgopong, Thabazimbi, Bela-Bela, Mogalakwena and Lephalale. The unemployment rate in these municipalities is

indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Unemployment Statistics for the Waterberg District, Limpopo Province

Municipalities	Number of the unemployed	%
Bela-Bela Municipality	5 955	9.7%
Lephalale Municipality	5 274	8.6%
Modimolle Municipality	6 992	11.3%
Mogalakwena Municipality	33 698	54.7%
Mookgopong Municipality	2 647	4.3%
Thabazimbi Municipality	7 045	11.4%
Total	61 611	100%

Source: Integrated Development Plan (2004- 2005)

Although the Lephalale Municipality is also predominately rural its unemployment rate is lower than that of the Mogalakwena municipality. This is due to the dominance of rural areas and lack of facilities in the area. This due to the fact that most of the inhabitants in the Lephalale municipality are migrant workers who tend to look for employment in Gauteng Province and other parts of the country. The low unemployment rate in the area is further determined by the availability of coal mining and the Eskom Matimba electrical generation plant in Ellisras.

From the statistics it is thus clear that there is a high prevalence of unemployment in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province.

2.4 NATURE OF UNEMPLOYMENT

In order to understand the nature of unemployment in the South African context it is important to critically discuss a number of different variables which are closely related to this phenomenon. The most relevant variables in the context of unemployment that will be discussed are age, race, gender, and urban/rural distribution.

2.4.1 Age and unemployment

Although unemployment is distributed over the whole age range, it seems as if “young people are more likely to be unemployed than older people” (Layard & Jackman, 1995:10). This statement is confirmed by the SSA census (2001), which also maintains that the youth are more likely to be affected by unemployment than any other age group in the country. The unemployment rate of youth in South Africa is reflected in Table 2.

Table 2: Unemployment rate of youth in South Africa

Years	No. of unemployed	Percentages
20-24 Years	164 542	13.9%
25-29 Years	130 998	11.1%
30-34 years	884 862	75.0%
Total	1 180 402	100%

Source: Statistics South Africa Census (2001)

According to the statistics from Table 2 the ages of 20-24 years, 25-29 year and 30-34 years have unemployment rates of 164 542, 130 998 and 884 862 respectively . The majority of unemployed youth during 2001 were thus between the ages of 30-34 years of age.

The effect of unemployment on the youth is clearly stated by Haralambus and Holborn (2000:190) who mention that “unemployment disrupts the normal transition to adulthood. The young unemployed are denied the opportunity to become independent from parents and often experience long periods of poverty. They are denied the opportunity to take on family responsibility and planning for marriage is postponed”.

According to Clark and Oswald (1994:40), unemployed youth are highly represented

in a number of categories which are reflected in Table 3.

Table 3: The proportion of the unemployed youth according to a number of categories in the South African context

Categories	Percentages
Rural youth unemployment as a percentage of the total rural unemployment	51.4%
Urban youth unemployment as a percentage of The total urban unemployment	51.4%
Male youth unemployment as a percentage of the total male unemployment	54.2%
Female youth unemployment as a percentage of the total female unemployment	49.4%
African youth unemployment as a percentage of the total African unemployment	50.6%
White youth unemployment as a percentage of the total white unemployment	46.7%

Source: Clark and Oswald, 1994:40

The statistics in Table 3 indicate that the youth constitute almost the highest percentage of the total populations in the categories of rural unemployment, urban unemployment and male unemployment. It is thus clear that unemployment is closely related to the youth in the South African context.

2.4.2 Race and unemployment

The census conducted by Statistics South Africa (2001) indicates that Africans are the racial group that was the most seriously affected by unemployment. According to Triegaardt (2007:22) most of the job losses are borne by African workers, and then by coloured workers. Bhorat (1999) as quoted by Triegaardt (2007:22) suggested

that Africans and coloured workers services are not in demand, but in contrast white and Asians workers are more likely to be in demand due to their skills profile. Erasmus (1999:25) has the same viewpoint by stating that the reason of overrepresentation of the Africans and the under representation of others groups in the unemployment rates is due to a lack of knowledge and skills because “the White community is dominated by skilled people who are marketable because of their literacy level”.

The other reason why Africans are the most severely affected by unemployment is because their population rate is higher than those of other racial groups.

2.4.3 Gender and unemployment

The unemployment rates among gender groups differ considerably. According to the census conducted by Statistics South Africa (2001), unemployment affects females more than males. Statistics showed that there were 3 703 933 (54.3%) unemployed females and 3 120 142 (45.7%) unemployed males. In South Africa in March 2005 the unemployment rate for women was 31.4 % in contrast to men, which was 22.4% (StatsSA, 2006).

If one looks at the unemployment rate in Limpopo Province, there were 376 101 (59.4%) unemployed females and 256 860 (40.6%) unemployed males during 2001 (Statistics South Africa, 2001). It is thus clear that there is an unequal distribution of unemployment between males and females in South Africa.

2.4.4 Education and unemployment

According to the Statistics South African census (2001) most people who are unskilled have a lower chance of being employed compared to skilled ones, while unemployed job seekers largely stay unemployed because the unfilled vacancies often require certain skills.

Klaasen and Wooland (1998:82) postulate that there are six categories of unemployment related to education, namely:

- Group A: Poorly educated rural unemployed (28%);
- Group B: Poorly educated unemployed (13%);
- Group C: Young unemployed with no labour market experience (36%);
- Group D: Long-term unemployed with no labour market experience (5%);
- Group E: Those with labour market experience and some education (15%); and
- Group F: Highly educated unemployed poor (1%).

The linkage between unemployment and poor education is thus clear. It is difficult for South Africa to overcome unemployment as opportunities are only available in scarce skills professions, like civil engineering, nurses, accountants, etc. It is therefore important for the Department of Education and parents to encourage learners to enroll in careers that will make them marketable after completion of their studies.

In conclusion, it is clear that the consequences of unemployment are often much more social than economic deprivation.

2.4.5 Urban/rural distribution of unemployment

According to Erasmus (1999:27) provinces which are predominately rural are more affected by unemployment than those which are urban ones. Provinces like Kwazulu Natal with 1 523 214 unemployed people, the Eastern Cape with 907 984 unemployed people, Limpopo with 632 961 unemployed people, Mpumalanga with 430 425 unemployed people and North West Province with 3583 035 unemployed people, are the worst affected by unemployment. This is confirmed by StatsSA (2007) which postulate that the highest rate of unemployment was found to be in Kwazulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Free State and Limpopo with the lowest rate in the Western Cape. In the provinces such as Gauteng and North West, there has been a steady decline in the unemployment rate since 2003 (Triegaardt, 2002:23).

The researcher contends that unemployment is a social problem which is closely related to the nature of the area where communities are situated. The rural areas are the most affected by unemployment and poverty because they are situated far away from infra-structure such as good roads, telecommunication facilities, buildings and others which make development more easily achievable.

In this regard Erasmus (1999:52) states that:

Rural unemployment rates are higher than urban rates, in contrast to the pattern in most developing countries. This is due to the segregation policies of the apartheid era which consigned millions of Africans to live in “homelands”, predominantly rural areas of poor land quality and little employment opportunity. These homelands effectively became labour reserves from which permanent and even temporary movement to non-homeland areas was impeded by legislative and administrative rules. Thus high unemployment in much of rural South Africa took the form of waiting in the homelands for a formal sector job opportunity to arise outside.

The types of unemployment will be discussed in the next section. This is important because types of unemployment guide social work practitioners when they engage in the development of programmes required to eliminate unemployment.

2.5 TYPES OF UNEMPLOYMENT

In order to categorize the different types of unemployment the researcher used Voster’s (1992:5-14) categorization of types of unemployment namely, structural unemployment, demand-deficient/ cyclical unemployment and seasonal unemployment. Each category will be briefly discussed.

2.5.1 Structural unemployment

Structural unemployment exists “when there is a mismatch between the skills demanded and supplied in a given area or imbalance between the supplies and

demands for workers across areas” (Voster, 1992:7). This refers to the fact that unemployment has a pattern or structure, arises due to lack of certain skills or and is distributed in certain areas, regions and/or localities.

According to Halambos and Holborn (2000:743) structural unemployment occurs when “jobs are available and there are workers seeking employment, but the workers do not match the jobs”. Unemployed job seekers thus stay unemployed because the unfilled vacancies require skills they do not have or are needed.

2.5.2 Demand-deficient/Cyclical unemployment

“Demand-deficient or cyclical unemployment exists because there is a deficiency i.e. there is no growth either in supply or demand” (Voster, 1992:8).

Haralambos and Holborn (2000:743) explain this type of unemployment by saying that it occurs when “the number of unemployed far exceeds the number of vacancies: the supply of labour exceeds the demand for workers by employers”. This is pertinent to South Africa where many people who are looking for jobs are shocked to experience that there are no vacancies. This may be ascribed to the fact that the products that are being produced are not in demand. This means that the industrial society cannot increase its supply due to a decline in growth. This indirectly affects the growth in supply as people are denied opportunities to be in the workplace as there is no demand from consumers. Voster (1992:13) concludes that this condition “reflects a particular rapid increase in the labour supply which cannot be absorbed in the short term by the market”.

2.5.3 Seasonal unemployment

Voster (1992:7) explains that seasonal unemployment is caused by a decline or deficiency of demand for labour. The deficiency is, however of relatively short duration and is predictable. It is also limited to work in certain industries. Agriculture

is the most familiar example. Farmers employing labour will often employ regular or permanent workers for the full year and casual or seasonal workers at times of the year when there is a peak in a certain activity.

Moller (1992:30) defines seasonal unemployment as “joblessness resulting from seasonal fluctuations in production and unemployment in fields such as recreation, tourism and construction”. The major cause of unemployment in South Africa has been the inability of the economy to grow at a rate required to absorb a burgeoning labour force.

In this regard Moller (1992:30) emphasizes that “seasonal stress” is an important dimension of poverty and inequality and has long been recognized as a feature of the livelihood of the rural poor in many contexts. For example, poor women who rely on agriculture in KwaZulu-Natal indicated that the months they struggled the most” were September, October, August and July.

Although seasonal workers would prefer to work for longer periods of the year, unfortunately work is not always available. As such they are seasonally unemployed and this causes seasonal stress.

2.5.4 Frictional unemployment

Moller (1992:30) defines frictional unemployment as “joblessness resulting from a time lag between the end of one job and the start of a new one”.

Voster (1992:5) states that frictional unemployment results from a “matching” process that takes place over time, as firms and would-be workers “search” for each other in labour markets where information is not easily available and in which individuals and firms are free to make their own best decision”.

People move as they wish and they quit their jobs for better wages. Firms, on the other hand hire and retrenched as they wish and in this process there will always be

unemployed people for a certain period.

The final section of this chapter discusses the effects of unemployment.

2.6 EFFECTS OF UNEMPLOYMENT

The impact of unemployment on the individual and family system is tremendous. In this regard the psychological, health, economical and social effects as well as the direct effects on the family and broader society will be briefly discussed.

2.6.1 Psychological effects

“Unemployment can be particularly stressful because it involves the loss of life in sustaining resources and losing a major social role which may affect the ability to carry out other social roles. The effects of unemployment manifest in a variety of psychological and physical symptoms such as worry, fatigue, lack of concentration, sleeplessness, feeling of loneliness and boredom amongst others” (Jones, 1992:42).

Individuals who are affected by unemployment are often characterized by anger, depression and nervousness. For instance, War as cited in Winefield (1991:90) indicates that people who are from families affected by unemployment have symptoms of a low self-esteem, a higher depressive mood and greater negative mood than satisfied employed families.

Jordaan and Jordaan (1998:715) also state that “work is not only physical and cognitive but there is also social, emotional, and motivational involvement in activities that produce. Employment provides an important base for the individual’s identity, self-esteem, and self-expression both in terms of family life and societal roles”. People work because work provides them with a sense of value and self worth as

well as a purpose and direction in life. Unemployment takes away all these aspects and an individual is left with negative feelings about oneself, his or her family and the world.

2.6.2 Health effects

Blackburn (1992:68) notes that “individuals/families affected by unemployment tend to live in unhealthy conditions and cannot afford to have the resources that are essential for good health, such as healthy food, transport, safe environment and warm clothing”.

Smith (1991) furthermore states that “people affected by unemployment tend to become less healthy in the body and mind and they are likely to die earlier through disease and suicide. There is an assumption that there is a close relationship between unemployment and physical and or mental health, which is associated with changes in blood pressure, depression, psychiatric illness and anxiety”.

Unemployment impacts seriously on health when the poor cannot access proper medical services due to a lack of money or because they cannot buy nutritious food and proper clothing. Typically, people living in poor conditions, such as informal settlements, tend to be affected by illness.

2.6.3 Social effects

Voster (1992:65) argues that:

Unemployment reduces social support. Social interaction, social compassion and rendering social services are often mentioned as motives for working, even if there is no financial need to work. The fact of being employed plays an important role in the individual society, the type of job, the status and lastly self-esteem. Lowered self-esteem, dependence on others and inability to provide for self and others are important negative experiences of unemployment.

Smith (1991:97) indicates that:

Income from work provides freedom and control outside work. In particular, it creates the possibility of engaging in social activities that cost money. Work gives people a sense of identity – of who they are and what their role in society is. It is a source of relationships outside the family. Unemployment tends to reduce social contacts.

Moller (1992:81) adds that there is evidence that unemployed people tend to withdraw from community activities. For the jobless there is no longer any need to participate in the regular round of activities and social relationships attached to the work role. Owing to financial constraints activities outside work are often curtailed as well. A vicious cycle occurs when the unemployed become depressed as a result of the shrinkage of their social world. Their low spirit prevents them from actively seeking to enlarge their circle of friends and re-engage in new activities to improve their morale.

Haralambos and Holborn (2000:751) note that the longer the person is out of work, the greater his/her financial hardship is likely to be, as savings are eaten up and financial problems mount so that the person often ends up withdrawing him/herself from the social mainstream of the society.

2.6.4 Economic effects

Regarding the economic effect of unemployment Voster (1992:64) mentions that:

Financial reward not only provides for physical needs but also helps to satisfy higher-order needs such as status, acceptance and promotion. A basic striving in people is to live meaningful lives and to realize their goals, especially the purpose of being part of the industrial society. Work is central to these aspirations and expectations.

Unemployment thus not only impacts negatively on the above-mentioned aspects but individuals who do not earn an income due to unemployment cannot provide for

their physical needs and necessities. It contributes to poverty as May (2000:5) confirms by stating that:

Lack of employment is a significant contributor to poverty. There is a strong link between unemployment and poverty. Living in poverty exposes individuals and families to high levels of stress. Poverty is viewed as one factor having a negative influence on the upbringing and education of children. Children from families affected by unemployment suffer from low self-esteem and self-actualization. The stress of poverty leads to physical and mental illness, as well as shaping negative behavioural choices.

2.6.5 Unemployment and family disorganization

Describing the effects of unemployment, Voster (1992:64) says:

Unemployment and poverty have been contributory factors in family disorganization. The head of the family due to unemployment leaves the family to seek a job far from his/her family. The children are left without supervision or care of an elderly person. As a result, school bunking, and ultimate desertion, child abuse and drug abuse are the consequences these families experience. Several studies have shown that unemployment and various hardships resulting from loss of income can affect the stress felt by individual family members”.

Additionally Blackburn (1992:101) notes that:

Majority of men, especially those with traditional values, view their roles as providers of the family. Loss of a job thus may mean the loss of a socially desirable role for that person. Children with fathers affected by unemployment are more likely to perceive their fathers as less powerful, less supportive and less attractive figures when compared to their mothers who provide for the family”.

Unemployment also has a negative impact on marriage life. In this regard Voster (1992:64) notes that financial problems have been ranked as some of the highest contributors to conflict within a marriage. Unemployed individuals tend to be irritable, and when they experience difficulties within their poor relationships, they often select divorce, and/or separation as a solution. This however does not mean that individuals who are unemployed are more likely to separate than those who are employed.

There are individuals who were unemployed for periods of time who still lived happily with their loved ones.

However, Moller (1992:82) states that “certainly unemployment and economic deprivation put family relationships to the test”. The researcher wants to emphasize that family situations vary and the nature of family relationships prior to unemployment are often the decisive factor. Where domestic circumstances were positive from the onset, the family may continue to provide loving support for all its members regardless of economic problems. For unhealthy family relations the situation may be far worse.

2.6.6 Effects of unemployment on society

Mike (1995:251) mentions that a high rate of unemployment in a society leads to high rates of crime, alcohol and drug abuse and child abuse. It is possible that poverty rather than unemployment is responsible for increased delinquency. Individuals from families affected by unemployment experience a higher victimization rate than the employed in areas such as theft, breaking and entering, as well robbery with violence and assault. Unemployment is one indicator of generally negative economic conditions, since it increases in times of depression and decreases in times of prosperity.

Poor families often have a prevalence of domestic violence which includes spousal and children physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Belsky (1996:46) states that most abused children become abusive parents. Unemployment may be one of many conditions that increase the potential for abuse by increasing stress in risk families. That is, families suffering from a range of difficulties prior to job loss find that the changes caused by unemployment further reduce the parents’ ability to cope with their children.

In a nutshell it seems thus as if the effects of unemployment on individuals, families and societies are enormous. It is crippling the economy of South Africa, not to mention the stability of families, especially in the rural areas. Unemployment is

exacerbated by factors such as poor educational status, lack of facilities, infrastructure and skills. Unemployment also brings about deterioration in families. Unemployment can be considered particularly stressful because it involves the loss of life, sustaining resources and losing a major social role which may affect the ability to carry out other roles (Jones, 1992:98).

2.7 SUMMARY

Unemployment is one of the biggest challenges facing South Africa. Apart from the personal suffering caused by unemployment, it poses a serious threat to the political and social stability of the country. Individuals or families affected by unemployment experience high levels of depression, anxiety other psychological difficulties and suffering from low self-esteem. Individuals affected tend to become less healthy in their bodies and minds and are likely to die earlier through disease and suicide.

Unemployment is a complex phenomenon, which could be addressed through the involvement of different people and organizations. Unless support is given in terms of strategies on how to address this problem, the researcher is of the opinion that unemployment will not be reduced. There should also be appropriate programmes intended to employ the heads households, to help them to become competent parents who will provide their children with the necessary socio-economic requirements.

Based on the fact that the goal of this study is to investigate the influence of unemployment on parenting skills, the next chapter will focus on the family as a social system.

CHAPTER THREE

FAMILY AS A SOCIAL SYSTEM

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As the goal of this study is to investigate the influence of unemployment on parenting skills, it implies not only an in-depth knowledge of unemployment but also knowledge regarding the family as a social system.

Parents who do not work or earn an income are often socio-economically, psychologically and emotionally incapable to provide their families with the necessary requirements such as support, food, shelter, education, protection and parenting. A family is the most simple social system interacting closely with the individuals and the community. It could, therefore, be suggested, that if the family system is disturbed, the entire community can as well be affected. As a result, the researcher intends to present a detailed analysis of the family in relation to unemployment.

There are many notions relating to the importance of the family in society. In this regard Popenoe (1998:324) notes that:

Politicians, especially the conservative, have started to claim that the family is the members of their parties' believe. The religious leaders emphasize the worth of a "normal" environment and its importance to communal, national and even international harmony. In this view, it is believed that the harmony, which is experienced in the entire community or the society, is derived from the harmony which is embedded in the family.

This chapter will thus focus on the following aspects in order to understand the family as a system:

- Definition of a family
- Types of families
- Functions of families

- Roles within the family system
- Parenthood
- Parenting skills
- The effects of unemployment on the family

3.2 DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPT FAMILY

A family can be viewed as a social system which is composed of a man, his wife and own or adopted children” (Popenoe,1998:352). This definition does not undermine the existence of other family types such as, for example, a family which is composed of a single woman and her own or adopted children.

Munchie (1999:10) states that a family is:

A small unit derived from the relationship between a man and a woman legally bound together through marriage as husband and wife. The family shares a common goal and is united by ties of affection and common identity. The family has both in pre-modern and modern societies been viewed as the most basic social unit. It is a social organization, which carries the vital tasks of socializing the children.

This definition does not refer to the children being born from the relationship between a man and a woman. A family is not just a man and his wife; it also includes children although it does not mean that a childless couple cannot be regarded as a family. In this regard Haralambos and Holborn’s (2000:70) definition of a family is perhaps better. They define a family as a:

Social group characterized by common co-operation and reproduction. Sexual behaviour is a ritual which according to our social values and norms is permitted to occur between parties of opposite sex of origin, are not related by birth and may procreate children who are regarded as the legitimates.

A family is a social unit which affords the parents a legitimate responsibility of

engaging in sexual activities so that they can procreate children. That is, a family has the social function of increasing the number of individuals by means of giving birth to infants.

The researcher views a family as a small unit derived from the relationship between a man and a woman, legally bound together with their children.

Individuals who are cohabiting must however also be regarded as families because they are able to perform functions such as socialization of the children. The legality element which is used to define a family must, therefore, be put aside as most South African families have not satisfied this requirement.

The word “family” originated from the Latin word “familiar” which in English simply refers to a familiar institution. It is a familiar institution, which is recognizable, and a close unit, which plays a variety of roles such as educating the young, feeding them and offering them shelter and love (Schaefer, 1993:302). It is assumed that all families share these functions. Yet family organizations vary substantially from one society to another and also from one community to the next. Steel and Kidd (2001:5) observe that the American family characteristics vary according to social class, religion, ethnic background and historical experience. There are many beliefs that have evolved around the definition of a family for example:

The conservative have started to claim that the family is the members of their parties’ beliefs, meaning that if members of a particular unit do not believe they compose a family, that unit cannot be regarded as a family at all. Secondly, some of the religious leaders emphasize the worth of a “normal” family environment and its importance to communal, national and even international harmony. This means that if a unit does not contribute towards these requirements, it cannot be regarded as a family. In this view, it is believed that harmony, which is experienced in the entire community or the society, is derived from the harmony, which is embedded in the family household” (Popenoe, 1998:324).

The media constantly bombards the audience with positive images of a romantic, loving and “happy ever after” family (Steel & Kidd, 2001:6). It is true that there is currently no other institution in the society that can offer individuals the same love and care than the family.

The researcher is of the opinion that other social institutions may indeed imitate the family, but they will finally be regarded as providing only the extended functions of the original household because they will lack the intimate roles such as of father, mother and child, which are only available in the family.

The family is a unit important enough to provide people with an understanding of their lives. In terms of this view there is always harmony in the households, but this is not reality. This view does not mention, for instance, the prevalence of domestic violence, that is, spouse and children physical and sexual abuses.

In terms of the above, a family is a social system within which parents and their children interact with one another. The definitions do not mention the existence of a family outside that structure. In real life situations, people have started to live happily in “families” where their own parents are not available. This shows that there are other family types except the conjugal family which was defined and explained in the previous section.

In order to further understand the meaning of the concept family, it is thus important to realize that the concept implies different types of families.

3.3 TYPES OF FAMILIES

In this section, the researcher will discuss the following types of families, namely, the nuclear family, extended family, single parent family and the step-family.

Brooks (1999:8) argues that in a broad framework, the family includes the family of

origin which comprises of parents and children. It does not necessarily have to include only the two parents because many children grow up with one parent and one or more other family members or friends who fulfill a parental role and that the family can even continue to change in structure and form.

The following are some types of families:

3.3.1 The nuclear family

According to Brooks (1999:8) the nuclear family is a:

Two-generation family comprising of two parents and their children. Traditionally it was based on a husband-breadwinner and wife-homemaker division of roles. This nuclear group is found worldwide, but is most prevalent in the urban areas where it seems to epitomize the “modern” family. The nuclear family is also called the conjugal family which means that there is support, love and affection among its members.

The relationships shared among the members of the nuclear family are said to be associated with closeness to one another. The above-mentioned definition also suggests the division of roles played by the parent-adults and the children-minors. The children are not expected to work but to be supported by the parents (Schaefer, 1993:303). Children are reared by their parents instead of being cared for by their aunts or grandparents.

Popenoe (1998:311) states that a nuclear family is a “two generation family group that consists of a couple and their children, usually living apart from other relatives”. A nuclear family is thus a family unit which exists in isolation from other relatives especially when the parents are employed far away from their original kinship area.

3.3.2 The extended family

The second type of family, namely, the extended family is described by Brooks (1999:8) as:

Three or more generations of grandparents, aunts and uncles, as well as parents and children, who live together or near each other, and participate in family activities. Although less common now, extended families are prevalent in many parts of the world, especially in small rural and tight knit ethnic communities.

Boyden (1995:44) defines an extended family as:

Family household which contains more than two generations; parents, grandparents and children. It might also include uncles, aunts and other distant relatives. These families are vital in rural areas where people are often linked to each other by agricultural production activities. They are the useful means of pooling labour when it is needed. The notion that the extended family can comprise of more than one generation exposes it to poverty and other forms of social problems such as household violence or children and spousal physical and sexual abuse.

Popenoe (1998:276) in turn states that the extended families enjoy the close networks, as well the benefit of strong solidarity and mutual support. For instance, a grandmother will come to care for a sick mother or father; a brother will lend money to his sister until the next payday; a cousin will take the children to the clinic and all able-bodied members of the family will lend a hand on mowing and tilling the land. Large, extended families with strong ties can thus be an advantage and a necessity to the poor.

According to Boyden (1995:52) notes that “the existence of the extended family is socially and culturally encouraged. This family type is strongly encouraged within the African and Asian families of origin in South Africa. Young generational members become socialized into the previous generation’s knowledge and skills through their contact with members of the extended family”.

3.3.3 The one-parent family

The one-parent family is also called a single-parent family and is composed of a parent, either a woman or a man who is not married, who is divorced and or widowed, and his/her own children.

According to Kanyango and Onyango (1994:14), a single-parent family refers to a family unit which is composed of “only one parent and/one or more children. These children may be the natural children of the parent or fostered or adopted in some way”.

In this regard Mike (1995:15) emphasizes the fact that “the one-parent family is not a new phenomenon as one-parent families existed for a long time and will continue to be part of society, represented in all ethnic and age groups, classes and lifestyles. This might be caused by parents’ death or a mother who has never been married, but it most commonly results from divorce, separation or desertion of one parent. Children who live with their fathers tend to be of school-going age or older and are more often boys than girls. The fathers are generally better paid and better educated and have more prestigious occupations than the mothers who are generally often earning minimum wages (Papalia & Olds, 1992:293).

According to Health 24 (2004) there is currently an increase in the number of single parent families in South Africa due to the death of spouses caused by HIV/AIDS. Thus, husbands and/or wives die and leave behind their spouses with children to look after. Health 24 (2004) states that being a single parent has many joys as well as numerous difficulties, especially in the parent-child relationship. The researcher will discuss only the following general difficulties which may be experienced in a single-parent family according to Health 24 (2004):

- ❖ **Lack of time**, trying to balance the needs and interests of the children on one's own and the demands of work, a single parent may feel being torn apart and having little to give to anyone.
- ❖ **Being on your own** with the sole responsibility of child rearing may feel very frightening because there may be no one to tell you that you are getting it right, share your worries and concerns with, to bounce your ideas off, and help you make those important decisions about the children.
- ❖ **Loneliness** is a common feeling. Being the only adult in a family may mean that your emotional needs are not met. The children have their own friends who regularly meet their needs. They are not expected to meet the emotional needs of their parents.
- ❖ **Other feelings** experienced by many single parents are worries and anxiety over their financial situation. One may be the sole breadwinner of the family. Frustration may erupt when a single parent cannot meet the financial demands of his/her family.
- ❖ **Guilt** about your children is another common feeling for the single parent. You may be blaming yourself for your children's behaviour and feelings which may often be normal at the stage of their development.

The researcher views a one-parent family therefore, as a family with one parent and one or more children. Most of these families are headed by females and the children may be natural children of the parent, adopted or fostered.

3.3.4 The step-family

Giddens (1998:205) defines a stepfamily as a "family in which at least one of the adult couple is a step-parent". The terms step-mother and step-father merely imply the occupation of the mother's or father's position by virtue of marriage. Although step-families are often regarded as a product of modern society they are as old as the family structure itself.

According to Hammer and Turner (1996:215), a step-family is “one of which either or both parents bring with them children from a previous marriage. By definition, a blended family cannot exist without children”.

A step-family unit is a union of a man and his wife, who brings a child from a previous relationship to live with it as its own. Popenoe (1998:321) states that step-parents are “parents whose children are present from previous marriage and sometimes from the current marriage as well, with the adults being parents to some of the children.”

A remarriage is very different from a first marriage. There are different combinations in a remarriage. Each has its own unique difficulties and of course also positive elements. Most step-parents have high and unrealistic expectations of themselves and the children. They expect to recreate a nuclear family but by definition this is usually not possible, as one of the adults is not a biological parent. They also often expect that everyone will love one another instantaneously and that he/she as, the step-parent, can replace or make up for the loss of one parent through death or divorce. Step-parents often believe they will feel the same about their step-children as they do about their own and when they fail to do so they tend to feel guilty.

Health 24 (2004) mentions the following common difficulties experienced by children in step-families:

- ✓ They experience anger at the re-marriage as their fantasy of their biological parents getting back together is shattered.
- ✓ The children may still feel sad or angry at the loss of their original family.
- ✓ The children may fear that this marriage too will not last so they withhold too much investment in this family.
- ✓ They frequently feel guilty about causing the first divorce and fear a repetition.
- ✓ They feel ambivalent about the new step-parent, both wanting and/or not wanting the marriage. This often results in disruptive behaviour wanting the marriage.

- ✓ There is considerable role confusion from a single parent home to accommodating a new parent and possibly new step siblings. The children often experience divided loyalties and fear betraying the biological parent of the same sex as the step parent if they like the step parent.
- ✓ There is confusion about different styles of parenting.
- ✓ Money is often a problem in a remarriage.

The adults are frequently supporting another family or receiving maintenance for the children from the non-custodian parent. This can breed resentment and anger (Boyden, 1995:66).

The researcher is of the opinion that, step-families only exist where there is a marriage between a couple and where either or both parents bring along children from a previous relationship. It is important for step-parents to understand that every period of adjustment comes with its problems and to accept that, if needed, professional assistance should be requested.

3.3.5 Other types of families

The types of families which have been discussed are however not the only types. There is an increase in other family types, such as, for example, families headed by gay or lesbian couples, and the child-headed family. For the purpose of this study the researcher will not discuss these types of families. What is important in the context of this study is to emphasize the fact that whatever type of family, certain functions in the family are universal, as is discussed in the following section.

3.4 THE FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY

As society becomes more complex and challenging, the family too becomes more reliant on societal support. The family's functions must also be adjusted to social

changes to survive and to sustain it. The following functions are important and will be briefly discussed: economic, socialization, education and health functions.

3.4.1 The economic function of the family

According to Hamner and Turner (1996:130):

The main aim of the family is to provide economically (the best) life for its members. Normally parents are working either in a formal or informal workforce. Previously families or societies were depending on farming i.e. on what was produced. This has changed, as everybody is striving to work in situations that are more attractive in terms of incentives.

Haralambos and Holborn (2000:512) also note that the economic function of the family thus ensures that food, shelter, health care services and other amenities are available for all its members. In this regard, the authors refer to previous eras when farming was the main source of income and the fact that there was a division of labour. Men and their sons were for example expected to till the land whilst women rendered the supportive functions, such as cooking food for their men.

In developing societies family members fulfill different occupational roles such as being teachers, nurses, doctors or social workers. These tasks ensure regular income for family households. In this regard, people are talking about owning shares or companies and being managing directors of certain institutions. This ensures continued income for the households and also determines the economic status of a family.

In contrast, the lack of income due to unemployment in the family often causes dysfunction within the family system. As a result children are often forced to drop out of school because their parents cannot afford to pay their fees and uniforms. Some children leave their homes to beg on the streets. Parents are often reluctant to discipline their children as there is nothing to eat at their home. Some even steal

from their neighbours or local shops and are later arrested. They often then become habitual criminals (Haralambos & Holborn, 2000:512).

In the context of this study the economical function or lack thereof is thus of the utmost importance.

3.4.2 Socialization and the education function of the family

The second function of the family is the socialization and education of the children. Learning begins as soon as a child is born. Children also learn indirectly through daily interaction with parents and others around them. Through socialization, a child learns the necessary language, customs and skills. The child learns from adults, usually by observing and listening to socialization process succeeds, a child is more likely to develop a positive orientation towards others and towards self. The success of every child depends on the values of its family (Steel & Kidd, 2001:120).

Parents are their children's first and most influential teachers. Successful socialization determines the future academic success of children, as well as work prospects, educational achievement, moral support and family cohesiveness. The children learn as they go about their normal lives. Mindpower (1995:70) mentions that:

A subcategory of socialization is the educational function of the family. As society became more complex, formal education seemed to take over that function from the family. Though education has taken most of the roles of socialization the child's identity still remains in the family.

The education process is taking over socialization earlier than was expected. Babies as old as one week are being enrolled in nursery institutions where they are cared for by individuals other than their biological parents. Indeed, when a society becomes more developed and complex, the role of the family to socialize and educate children becomes diffused and taken over by other social institutions such as for example, crèches, pre-schools, schools and the church. Very often babies are frequently

transferred to public institutions when they are only three months old in order to be cared for by surrogate parents. The biological parents fetch these babies at the close of the day. It is then evident that these babies spend more time with surrogate parents than with their biological parents so that the children may identify more with the former than their own parents (Boyden, 1995:66).

Socialization is the process whereby the infant gradually becomes a self-aware and knowledgeable person skilled in the ways of the culture into which it is born. The most important function of the family is socialization, which in terms of the above explanation is taken over by institutions other than the family. A child taught through this process will be able to communicate well with others. Through interaction with his/her peer group, he/she learns to respect other people's ideas. This symbolizes that the distinction between socialization and education is no longer visible.

3.4.3 The health function of the family

Steel and Kidd (2001:70) mention that in recent years much has been learned about the importance of family cohesiveness in maintaining good health and recovering from illness. A strong nurturing family seems to be good for both mental and physical health. Even a traumatic injury may be easier to overcome when there is a family at home.

A person is a social being who cannot live in isolation. A complete and healthy person has to balance the physical and mental states. True members of the family emotionally support one another during illness and traumatic events.

Family members have become the most important support system for the most seriously ill patients. In the absence of a family, governmental institutions introduce substitutes such as community home based care systems. The community home based care system has a role, such as that of the family, to meet people's biological and psychological needs (Boyden, 1995:78).

The researcher is of the opinion that the three functions of the family, as discussed, are overlapping and that unemployment as a traumatic situation can have a negative effect on all these functions of the family. People work because they have basic needs of physical survival, accommodation, food and clothing. In order to meet these needs, money is essential. Therefore family members work because they are expected to provide for and protect their families – not only children but each other as well.

From an emotional and social perspective people work because employment provides them with a sense of value, self-worth, purpose and direction in life. Unemployment takes away all these aspects so that people are left with negative feelings about themselves, their family and community. The effect of unemployment on a family is thus tremendous and it influences all the mentioned functions of a family as well as the roles of family members as discussed in the next section.

3.5 ROLES WITHIN THE FAMILY SYSTEM

Another important aspect that influences the family as a system is the different roles which family members play in order to sustain the existence of the family. In this section the focus will be on the roles which the father, mother and children play within a family system.

3.5.1 Role of a father

A father is the male adult who heads the family and is culturally expected to be the breadwinner of that family. Under normal circumstances a father can be defined as a:

Male adult, who is married to his female partner, occupies the role of the father within a family household and both have procreated the offspring. The role of a father is to see to it that he maintains his wife and children. To see that they are protected from criminals, they are fed, their health is maintained and that children attend school. The traditional African father is not expected to look after the health matters of the children as the task of rearing children has been

allocated to the mothers (Popenoe, 1998:273).

However things have changed and most men have adapted to their roles and seem to enjoy involvement in their children's lives, as Steel and Kidd (2001:90) appropriately state:

Fathers are sharing more of their chores and pleasures regarding parenthood with their wives. They attend antenatal clinics with their partners and the delivery of their babies, change their diapers and help at playgroups. Most fathers find this intimacy with their children rewarding and children benefit from fathers who are caring and attentive.

The father role in the family is that of stimulating the identification process through which the father like the children, especially the boys, look like themselves in the physical, psychological and even the mannerism aspects. In this regard Jarema (1994:15) indicates that:

Fathers are the primary transmission of the basic roles of the society to their sons because they are more likely than mothers to be involved with the larger society. Boys tend to be heavily involved emotionally with their fathers as role models even though they spend more time with mothers, sisters and specifically their future roles as fathers.

Thus if the father's role is distorted, the child's adult role will as well be spoiled, as Halarambos and Holborn (2000:509) state:

The father-son interaction allows the son to adopt a male identity and explore the male's world. The father is the first stranger and representative of the outside world and can be viewed as a persecuting intruder or a strong and friendly supportive hand.

There is an idiom which is mostly used by proud fathers when their sons are succeeding in life, namely: "like father like son".

Many males, especially those with traditional values, view their main role as being provides for the family. The loss of a job may thus mean the loss of a socially

desirable role for fathers. In addition to potential disruption of the marital relationship itself, such a role loss can result in shock, lowered self-esteem, anxiety and depression (Steel & Kidd, 2001:90).

3.5.2 Role of a mother

The role of a mother in the family is provided by a female adult who is married, single, divorced, separated and/or widowed who provides feminine support to members of the family. Mindpower (1995:40) notes that motherhood requires an enormous range of skills for which there is little training. Mothers acquire skills through experience and learning from role models like their own mothers. In this regard Steel and Kidd (2001:107) appropriately note the following:

The most important factor in good parenting is the quality of mothering which a woman herself has received. A woman's mother is more than a role model. She is the source of a woman's most important resource for the demanding task of giving birth and parenting, confidence and self-esteem.

A successful mother's role can be traced back to the woman's mother, that is, how she herself was socialized when she was growing up. If a woman has received been nurtured to see herself as worth loving, she will have more confidence in herself. Thus, the process of identification also affects women in their role as mothers. "Women who were emotionally, physically and sexually abused when growing up have a high probability of abusing their own children and running a bad life, especially if the problem is not given attention" (Steel & Kidd, 2001:108).

As it has been mentioned, society has become more complex so that mothers are no longer expected to play only the mother and wife role in the family. Nowadays women are also working outside the family unit and fulfill different roles. "Mothers often feel obliged to play different roles at times; namely teacher, friend, cook, nurse, counselor, breadwinner and frequently they must also be loving and affectionate to their partners" (Mindpower, 1995:50).

This produces a situation wherein mothers often perform more family tasks than fathers. The problem is that their roles are not always recognized. When mothers are faced with all these demands, they may become emotionally taut and tend to develop anger towards their children and significant others (Wolferndale & Einzig, 1999:130). A successful mother role is that which always receives socio-economic, physical and emotional support from the significant others.

3.5.3 The role of a child

A child is born from the sexual relation between spouses and continues to be cared for by the same spouses as his/her own parents until he/she reaches the age of an adult.

The child is born into a family which becomes the most important place for its learning and socialization. As Plumber (1992:7) points out:

The child who has been consistently fed, diapered and made comfortable as an infant, who later was given time to experiment and learn at his/her pace and who in the learning process, had his/her efforts recognized and validated, tends to see the world as generally benign, predictable and supportive.

These experiences form the basis of later perceptions so that a child acquires a tendency to interpret the world in a generally positive way. He /she is free from any lingering fear or apprehension, which would divert his/her energy and attention from his/her basic task of growing and learning. On the other hand, if a baby cries and gets no response, is handled harshly or not handled at all, or if the response is delayed, the baby concludes that this new world is a hostile and dangerous place and he/she will react accordingly.

Mindpower (1995:63) states that children need to grow up in a predictable environment, that is, if the child learns early in life that others cannot be depended upon, if there is no permanent environment where he/she is accepted and loved, if he/she learns that he/she can be frequently let down and is too often disappointed,

he/she may choose never again to invest his/her feelings fully in others. Intimate relationships may be difficult for him/her and loyalty and dependability to friends and family unlikely to develop. The relationship between parents and children should be based on trust, honesty and loyalty.

If a family is incapable of providing children with the necessary social, economic, religious and/or cultural resources, the children usually find it difficult to adjust as adults. Many children from unemployed families leave school at an early stage to seek jobs due to poverty. In addition, they are not provided with the appropriate stimuli and environment for learning at home to achieve at school. They often experience poor mental health, suffer from a loss of confidence, personal neglect and a degree of social dysfunction. Finally, children who come from unemployed families are more likely to be exposed to alcohol and drug abuse as well as to crime (Blackburn,1992:58).

3.6 PARENTHOOD

Parents have the responsibility to physically, emotionally and financially support their children, who are dependent upon them for their well being.

This responsibility of parents towards their children is called parenthood. Parenthood can be defined as a process through which parents take care of the physical aspects and socialize children into the society accepted behaviour. Parenthood is uniquely rewarding and challenging. It is a life changing adjustment which is achieved by committed and trustworthy parents (Boyden, 1995:78).

In this regard Hammer and Turner (1996:80) stated:

Parenthood can enhance the quality of a couple's relationship and it can lead to close ties with other family members. Parenthood is physically exhausting, requiring patience, endurance and commitment. It is also uniquely rewarding and challenging, it changes the way adults live and think.

Parenthood is a concept which requires both the father and mother to combine their roles and skills in a commitment towards supporting each other for the sole purpose of their children's future. Parenthood although often desired, brings great change in the couple's lives. It involves numerous responsibilities such as giving the children love, respect, security, and an opportunity to explore their surrounding environment (Boyden, 1995:78).

Successful parenthood however, requires certain parenting skills. The link between parenthood and parenting skills will be reflected in the next section.

3.7 PARENTING SKILLS

The term skill is defined in the Chamber 21st Century Dictionary (1996:359) as "expertness, dexterity or talent, craft or accomplishment naturally acquired or development through training, while Dictionary of Sociology (1991:571) defines the concept skills as "qualities which a person brings to a job".

The concept parenting skills therefore, refers to those competencies, talent, craft, or qualities that parents acquire naturally or through training on how they can best raise their children. The concept needs to be defined and discussed in terms of the specific skills parents need to acquire to be effective in their parenting roles (Bornstein, 1998:93).

Parents vary in their parenting styles because parenting combines shared cultural constructions with direct experiences parents have with regard to rearing children. Parenting is the principal reason why individuals are who they are and are often so different from one another. Parenting is central to childhood, to child development and to society's long-term investment in children (Bornstein, 1998:93).

In order to guide children effectively through all their development phases, parents have certain responsibilities and need certain parenting knowledge and skills. In this regard Kay (2001:120) identified the following knowledge base, responsibilities and

skills needed by parents:

- ❖ Feel and show love and affection.
- ❖ Set limits and apply firm and consistent boundaries.
- ❖ Know or find out the stages a child goes through and be sensitive to their changing needs. The parent who has learned to speak and read to a child and to present the child with appealing solvable problems will enrich the actions a child carries out and the feelings a child expresses.
- ❖ Know how to take advantage of settings, routines and activities at hand to create learning and problem-solving opportunities as well as turning household objects into learning materials for children's exploration.
- ❖ Show respect and regard for the child.
- ❖ Develop self-awareness and self-confidence. Parents need insight to manage their children's behaviour. Knowledge and skills regarding alternative methods of discipline and problem avoidance are basic.
- ❖ Know how to implement a variety of positive rewards in order to help a child to fully enjoy and appreciate the exploration and struggles required for mastering new skills.
- ❖ Be empathetic and see the world as the child might. Parents need to know observable behavioural patterns in young children. Watching children can help one understand a child's level of development in relation to what one would like the child to learn or accomplish. Parents need information and observation skills to be able to discover the match between their child's ability or readiness and the ways and means to help their child achieve set developmental goals.
- ❖ Be patient, tolerant and kind.
- ❖ Know and be able to identify children's normative patterns and stages of physical, verbal, cognitive, emotional, and social development, as well as their nutritional and health needs at different stages.
- ❖ Know and understand the patterns and processes of early cognitive development in order to develop more realistic expectations during the stages of child development.
- ❖ Give time, energy and commitment to children.

- ❖ Support the child in his/her chosen activities. Parents need to be patient and flexible, goal-oriented, and be able to extract pleasure from encounters with children.
- ❖ Parents need to understand the tremendous impact they have upon their children's lives through their attention, expressed pleasure, listening and interest. These activities nourish a child's growing sense of self, just as food nourishes a child's growing body.
- ❖ Share successes and problems with the child.
- ❖ Be imaginative, funny or silly at times.

Munford and Sanders (2005:169) add the following parenting skills in the context of a family;

- ❖ The ability to respond to a wide range of requests from the family and to address these in a style that is appropriate for the family.
- ❖ Being able to understand the importance of practical assistance for families and to find ways to provide this as part of helping relationships
- ❖ Parents need to develop and enhance family networks. Families need to be supported in using their own networks where appropriate and where these are contributing to the issue, to be assisted to develop other networks that will provide ongoing support.

Holland (2004:89) postulates that the following responsibilities of parents towards children form an integral part of parenthood: basic physical care for the children; affection and security; guidance and control; stimulation of innate responsibility, independence, self-awareness, a sense of identity, social acceptance and personal history.

The following parenting skills will be discussed more briefly namely discipline, communication, conflict management, problem solving and decision making:

3.7.1 Discipline

According to Myers (1996:164) discipline means:

Corrective action designed to help teach children more appropriate behaviour. Discipline is not a single act or statement; it is a process. The goal of discipline is to teach children self-discipline. It is to guide children to be responsible and to cooperate. When children misbehave, discipline is used to help them choose a better way to behave.

Dinkmeyer (1997:93-94) mentions the fact that some people think that discipline means punishment. Discipline and punishment are not the same. Many of us grew up with parents who used **rewards and punishment** to control our behaviour. **Rewards** teach children to get something – not to cooperate. **Punishment** teaches children to resent and fear us. This can lower self-esteem. It can hurt the relationship we want to have. **Punishment** includes many things: **(a) threats, yelling and put-down;** **(b) taking things away** from children as a punishment. The child doesn't learn; **(c) spanking and hitting.** Spanking shows children that hitting is a way to solve a problem. It hurts. Children may become afraid. Often a parent hits a child out of anger. Later on, the parent may feel guilty. Spanking children also teaches them that if you are bigger, you can get your way by hitting.

According to Myers (1996:164) discipline is “a teaching method that fosters pleasant relationships through encouraging self-esteem, consistency and mutual respect for caring. Seeing discipline as teaching means that your child will make mistakes, and at times she/he may not try as hard as you like. Discipline as teaching is instilling the concept that the outcomes of her/his learning are based upon the effort she/he puts into the task”.

Parents must never underestimate the value of discipline. In this regard Dinkmeyer (1997:95) mentions that discipline as teaching is something valuable to be passed on to the next generation. A respectful, loving relationship will enhance the child's self-esteem and encourage her/him to want to learn as a way of growth. These qualities of teaching allow the child to be responsible and to understand that when she/he

responds incorrectly difficulties may follow. Disciplining does not mean harsh methods for correcting children's conduct such as beating because these are classified as physical and emotional abuse and are illegal in terms of the laws of the country.

The importance of discipline is also emphasized by Hammer and Turner (1995:130) who note that discipline is important for children. It teaches children what is acceptable and unacceptable, sets boundaries and makes them feel secure. Inconsistent disciplining is ineffective because parents let things go unnoticed and then become extra harsh the next time.

3.7.2 Communication

Positive and constructive parenting skills also influence communication between parents and children is a very important parenting skill. Communication is the expression of your thoughts and feelings. Communication is a common and mostly unnoticed parenting skill. Dinkmeyer (1997:61) elaborates by stating that communication is the process through which one party informs the other party about something and that communication takes place through a variety of forms such as speech, non-verbal body movements and cues as well as other communication strategies.

From the researcher's point of view these interactions are maintained in their purest form when the communication is direct and clearly reflects the message to be delivered. Communication provides your child with a vehicle for learning, a way of relating to the family and a model for communicating outside the family.

It is important for parents to maintain a good relationship with their children. This means that parents should respect their children and respectful communication is the key to harmonious relationships.

Van Heerden (2005:82) states that "communication can be described as a process by

which a message is conveyed from one person to another”. The author further emphasizes that communication is a tool that enables people to get to know and understand one another. Listening is a key component of communication and it leads to the understanding of acts and ideas. Listening is built on three basic skills: attitude, attention and adjustment. According to van Heerden (2005:82) parents should teach their children how to communicate at an early age. You should help your child to learn ways to deal with feelings and problems and show your child how to become a good listener. This can be successfully done if they give themselves time and show interest in their children’s interests.”

Myers (1996:59) highlights the following four major qualities of positive communication:

- Your outward words (the words that others hear) reflect the truth of what you are saying to yourself with inner words (the words that no one else can hear);
- Your inner words reflect your own personal truth to the best of your ability;
- You have some sense of your listener so you can choose words appropriate to the occasion; and
- Your words are respectful of the other person as a human being.

Families affected by unemployment communicate less with each other as the parents usually feel guilty and ashamed that they are unable to provide for the basic needs of their children. To avoid communication with their children they often spend much time either abusing alcohol or with friends who are usually also unemployed (Blackburn, 1992:68). These lack of communication may have the effect that children never learn how to communicate effectively with other people or how to listen and understand people; it also may lead to a negative parent-child relationship,

3.73 Conflict management

Parents need very specific parenting skills regarding effective conflict management. In this regard Myers (1996:71) notes that:

Most interpersonal relationships are characterized by conflicts. In order to maintain your integrity and dignity, there are times when one has to face conflict or fight. This is not the kind of conflict that has the intent to destroy someone, but the kind of conflict in which you and your children stand your ground for what you believe. It is important that your children learn the difference. They can develop the personal strength, self-esteem and self-confidence to stand up for their rights, defend their position and give a clear “NO” to destructive forces.

In order to understand conflict management, it is however important to first define the concept conflict. Van Heerden (2005:46) states’ that conflict “is when two or more values, perspectives and opinions are contradictory in nature and haven’t been aligned or agreed about yet”.

Conflict is not necessarily a bad thing. It is when people cannot properly manage conflict that it creates problems. The reason why conflict has got such a bad name is because of the emotional aspects that come along with it. Conflict is usually in relation to interests or ideas that are personally meaningful to either one or both of the parties involved. Parents should by all means try to manage conflict between themselves and their children.

Van Heerden (2005:56) indicates that “management is a process whereby people utilize potential, experience and expertise to achieve certain goals of the set expectations”.

Wallensteen (2002:53) suggests that conflict management often works on implicit, even secret, understandings or simply ways of handling a problem. Conflict management typically focuses on aspects of the conflict towards bringing the fighting to an end, limiting the spread of the conflict and thus containing it. In this instance, conflict management must be viewed as a process which is aimed at creating consensus between the conflicting parties.

Parents need thus knowledge and skills to manage conflict effectively. Parents need to create an open communication environment when there is a disagreement

between them and their children. They must realize that there are two factors which must be considered when conflict is being resolved, namely, willingness to cooperate and assertiveness. If there is an improvement in the behaviour of their children, parents must praise them for the effort, while conversely negative behaviour must be disciplined.

3.7.4 Problem solving

In the fourth instance parents need certain skills to guide children regarding problem solving. In this regard Dinkmeyer (1997:83) indicates that:

Problem solving is a parenting skill which parents utilize when they resolve the differences between themselves and their children and/or differences between the children themselves. The goal of problem solving is when both parents and children handle a problem on the grounds that both trust and respect each others' view. Children learn more about cooperation when they feel that you value their wishes. All parents want their children to begin learning at a certain stage to count on them to solve some of their problems.

Problem solving is a skill that can be learned by anybody. Parents must learn to trust and lead their children towards independence. The researcher is of the opinion that another strategy to simplify problem solving is to translate the concept problem into an opportunity.

Unemployment has a serious impact on parents' skill of problem solving. In this regard Blackburn (1992:102) mentions that children from families affected by unemployment usually do not have good relationships with their parents. Children learn through observation and if they see and feel that the situation at their homes is not safe as compared to that of their neighbours they tend to lose trust in their parents. This automatically affects the child's confidence which leaves her/him lacking behind, compared to other children of his/her age group. She/he often turns to be a follower instead of a leader amongst her/his peers when solving problems. The fact that children also realize that their parents are not able to solve their unemployment

situation, leads sometimes to a loss of trust in their parents' skills regarding problem solving.

3.7.5 Decision making

There are many decisions which are made on a daily basis in every family household, such as the date a child must be weaned from suckling, the type of cereal the family buys for breakfast, the amount of pocket money children must carry to school, and others. Decision making is a process through which people select the most effective and best alternatives necessary to solve their problems.

According to Van der Walt and du Toit (1998:222), decision-making is “the identification and selection of a plan of action to solve a specific problem.” Parents should involve their children from an early stage of their development when making decisions about them. They should establish a partnership in which each could give his/her view or give a clarification before making a final decision.

Unemployment is a stressful life event for families and it influences parents' and children's decision making skills. Blackburn (1992:104).adds that children from the families affected by unemployment experience stress in that their material resources are reduced and parental effectiveness may be weakened. In addition, children from poor families cannot adapt to the wider society and they isolate themselves from others due to their inferiority complex. They are not assertive, cannot make decisions or choices because of their low self-esteem.

Based on the discussion regarding parenthood and parenting skills it is thus clear that parents have the responsibility to guide and support their children with the necessary knowledge and skills to become empowered adults. It seems however that unemployment has a negative effect on this guiding process and more specifically on the whole family system.

In the next section, the researcher will briefly discuss the effects of unemployment on

families.

3.8 THE EFFECT OF UNEMPLOYMENT ON FAMILIES

In the context of this study an effect is an outcome, an impact and or a consequence brought about by the condition of unemployment on the family system.

According to Health 24 (2004) the following effects of unemployment on the family and more specifically on the parent/s in such a family can be categorized according to their feelings:

- A parent may feel threatened and insecure, because they may not have enough money for basic physical needs namely, food and shelter. The children may be hungry or feel deprived of material things.
- A parent feels worthless and loses his/her self-esteem. He/she wants to and /or is expected to provide for their own family but cannot do so.
- Such person may feel worthless and of no value and he/she may question whether he/she can be loved.
- A parent may feel guilty and takes the responsibility for the situations thus blame him/her unreasonably.
- A parent may feel rejected by the society as well as her/his own partner.
- Feelings of anger and resentment are also common. A parent is angry for being unfair towards his/her own family and he/she may also be resentful and envious of those who have jobs, and even of his/her own spouse.
- Parents may be anxious and afraid – fearful of the future.
- Parents may feel despondent and despairing.
- Parents may feel helpless and view her/himself as a victim of circumstances.

The way in which family members react and respond to those around them, the situation and their feelings about the unemployment will vary greatly.

According to Holland (2004:95) parents become withdrawn form society. They may

be unable to talk about it, to express their feelings. When they are provided with love and support, they usually move away and withdraw themselves from interacting with others. They prefer to live in isolation. Adding to these responses Myers (1997:84) mentions that they may also pretend that everything is fine, that it is not a problem and deny their feelings. This may create a distance between themselves and their spouses and children as they cannot or will not allow the unemployment to be discussed openly with their support system. They may also react with aggression and anger. They may blame themselves, turn to alcohol or drugs and become deeply depressed. They may dump their anger on their spouse or their children, becoming verbally abusive or physically violent or they may be aggressive to others.

Unemployment has thus a serious effect on families as well as on the society at large. According to Haralambos and Holborn (2000:749), numerous claims have been made about the effects of mass unemployment on society. Usually the effects have been seen as detrimental to society. Unemployment devalues or debases the standard or quality of life in society. Unemployment makes people feel insecure and their standard of life is threatened because they are subject to earning no income at all.

3.9 SUMMARY

This chapter defined the concept family as an institution which comprised of a man and a woman who lives in a household with own, foster or adopted children.

Parenthood is a process which is achieved by both parents who assist each other in caring for, supporting and socializing the children. Parents vary in their parenting methods depending on their parenting skills which were acquired through formal and or informal training. The most observable parenting skills include disciplining, communicating, conflict managing, problem solving, and decision making in the family unit.

The chapter closed with a discussion on the effect that unemployment has upon the

individual members of the family and society at large. People react and/or respond to the stresses coupled with unemployment in a number of different ways such as, for instance, withdrawal, aggression, anger, and alcohol abuse.

In the next chapter, the researcher will discuss the research findings of the study, focusing on the empirical data regarding the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Waterberg District.

CHAPTER FOUR

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will focus on the empirical results and process that has been followed in order to reach the goal and objectives of this study.

The goal of this study was to investigate the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province.

To achieve the goal, this study has the following three objectives:

- To theoretically conceptualize unemployment as a social problem and the family as a social system.
- To empirically investigate the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province.
- To make recommendations, based on the results of the study, regarding strategies to help unemployed parents to enhance their parenting skills.

The research question which was formulated for this study is thus the following:

What is the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province?

4.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this study the qualitative approach was used to collect information about the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Waterberg District. This approach was appropriate for the study because the researcher wanted to have

a better understanding of the meaning that unemployed parents attach to their everyday life.

Applied research, which according to De Vos (2002:69) is directed toward shedding light or providing a possible solution to practical problems, was used. Also an exploratory research design was used to explore the influence of unemployment on parenting skills, because there is little information regarding the topic in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province.

The data collection method used in this study was semi-structured interviewing guided by a schedule with a set of predetermined questions. It gave respondents the opportunity to express their feelings and experiences in their own words and as such it was possible to collect relevant data. During the semi-structured interviews, the researcher asked the respondents questions in their indigenous language (namely Northern Sotho) and recorded their responses on cassette.

The population of this study was all the black parents who were at least three years unemployed, who were between the ages of 25 – 50 years, who had children of school going age, stayed in an informal settlement in the Waterberg District and who were registered clients of the Department of Health and Social Development (DHSD) during the period January 2003 – June 2006. In total the population of this study was 500 parents who met the above-mentioned criteria.

The researcher made use of a combination of two methods, namely, stratified and simple random sampling. “Stratified sampling method is suitable for heterogeneous populations because the inclusion of small subgroups percentage-wise can be ensured. This kind of sample is mainly used to ensure that the different groups or segments of a population acquire sufficient representation in the sample” (Neuman, 2000:204). In this study the five sub-offices in the Waterberg District of the Department of Health and Social Development were regarded as strata as per definition of stratified sampling method.

According to Neuman (2000:203) “simple random sampling “is the easiest method of sampling on which other types are modeled. In simple random sampling, a researcher develops an accurate sampling frame, select elements from the sampling frame according to a mathematically random procedure, then locates the exact element that was selected for inclusion in the sample”.

According to Balnaves and Caputi (2001:91) in simple random sampling “you can number each household, if you wish and put them in a hat (a big hat in this case). Let us say that you drew ten households (a sample). You know that there was no bias in your choice”.

The researcher collected a list of subjects, who met the above mentioned criteria, from each of the five sub-district offices in the Waterberg District of the Department of Health and Social Development (strata). The total number of subjects from the five strata was 500. The researcher then selected two respondents randomly from each sub-office. The middle and last names on each list were chosen as the sample for this study, resulting in total a sample of ten respondents.

4.3 EMPIRICAL RESULTS

The primary aim of this chapter is to present, analyze and interpret the qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with unemployed parents. Data analysis, according to De Vos (2002:339), is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. Neuman (2000:103) describes qualitative analysis as proceeding by extracting themes or generalization from evidence and organization of data to present a coherent and consistent picture.

To analyze the qualitative data in this study the researcher made use of the following procedure: ten unemployed parents who were selected in the Waterberg District were interviewed in their indigenous language; each interview was tape recorded; transcripts were made of each interview and then translated into English. The data

analysis process was conducted by reading through the transcripts, organizing the data, generating categories, themes and patterns, linking the research question with the data, searching for alternative explanations of the data and then writing a report.

The empirical results are divided into two sections namely section A and B. Section A covers the profile of the respondents (unemployed parents) and Section B covers information gathered from the respondents. Hereunder, section A is discussed.

4.3.1 Section A: Profile of respondents

In this regard section the researcher will focus on the age, home language, religion, highest qualification level of education, marital status, type of dwelling, number of rooms in the dwelling and the duration of unemployment, of respondents who were interviewed.

4.3.1.1 Age of the respondents

The aim of the question was to identify the ages of respondents (unemployed parents) who took part in the study.

Table 4: Age of respondents

Age Distribution	Frequency	%
25 – 35	5	50%
36 – 45	3	30%
46 – 55	1	10%
56	1	10%
TOTAL	10	100%

Table 4 shows that the majority of the respondents (50%) were between the ages of 25 - 35 years, three (30%) were in the age group of 36 – 45 years, one (10%) was

between 46 – 55 years and another one (10%) older than 56 years. It seems thus as if the majority of the respondents were relatively young.

4.3.1.2 Home language

The home language information was aimed at obtaining information on the language used by respondents at their homes.

Table 5: Home language of respondents

Home Language	Frequency	%
Northern Sotho	6	60%
Setswana	1	10%
Ndebele	2	20%
Tsonga	1	10%
TOTAL	10	100%

Table 5 reveals that the majority of the respondents, namely six (60%) were using Northern Sotho as their home language, one (10%) was speaking Setswana while two (20%) were using Ndebele and one (10%) respondent was speaking Tsonga. The respondents represented thus a variety of languages.

4.3.1.3 Religion of respondents

The question is aimed at identifying the religion of the respondents.

Table 6: Religion of respondents

Religion	Frequency	%
Ancestral	4	40%
Christian	4	40%
Ancestral & Christian	2	20%
Total	10	100%

Table 6 indicates that there was a balance between those who were Christians four (40%) and those who believed in their ancestors, namely four (40%), while only two (20%) believed in both.

4.3.1.4 Highest level of education

The aim of the question is to get information from the respondents about their educational level.

Table 7: Educational level of respondents

Grades	Frequency	%
Grade 0 – 5	4	40%
Grade 6 – 8	5	50%
Grade 9 - 12	1	10%
Total	10	100%

Table 7 reflects that four (40%) of the respondents, went to school up to grade five, five (50%) ranged between grade six and grade eight and only one (10%) ranged between grade nine and twelve. It is clear that the majority of the respondents namely 90%, only achieved primary level education.

4.3.1.5 Marital status

The question is aimed at identifying the religion of the respondents

Table 8: Marital status of respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	%
Married	1	10
Single	9	90%
Total	10	100%

Table 8 indicates that 9 (90%) of the respondents were headed by single females and only one (10%) of respondent was married and unemployed. It seems that the majority of the respondents were females and single.

4.3.1.6 Type of dwelling of respondents

This question is aimed at identifying the type of dwellings respondents were staying in, which is relevant for this study.

Table 9: Dwelling of respondents

House	Frequency	%
Formal	2	20%
Shack	8	80%
Total	10	100%

Table 9 indicates that eight (80%) of the respondents were staying in shacks while only two (20%) were staying in RDP (Reconstruction Development Programme) houses which are meant for those who cannot afford to buy houses for themselves. All the respondents were thus exposed to poor housing.

4.3.1.7 The number of rooms in dwelling

The aim of the question is aimed at obtaining information regarding the number of rooms respondents own.

Table 10: Number of rooms

Number of rooms	Frequency	%
1 – 2 rooms	8	80%
3 – 4 rooms	2	20%
TOTAL	10	100%

Table 10 indicates that respondents who had RDP houses had three to four rooms while those who lived in shack houses had one or two rooms demarcated by a curtain. It is clear that there is no privacy in those houses since parents and children share the same rooms.

4.3.1.8 Duration of unemployment

The question is aimed at identifying the number of years respondents were unemployed.

Table 11: Years being unemployed

Years being unemployed	Frequency	%
3 – 5 years	8	80%
6 – 8 years	1	10%
9 and more years	1	10%
TOTAL	10	100%

Table 11 shows that the majority of respondents were unemployed for a period of 3 to 5 years, namely eight (80%). One respondent (10%) was unemployed for a period of 6 to 8 years and one (10%) was unemployed for more than 9 years.

The above section concludes the biographical information of the respondents.

The following section will focus on the qualitative information regarding the influence of unemployment on parenting skills. The information will be discussed according to the identified themes and sub-themes.

4.3.2 Section B: Empirical Findings as According to Themes and Sub-themes

Based on the analysis of the transcripts, the researcher has identified the following

themes and sub-themes regarding the influence of unemployment on parenting skills:

Table 12: Themes and Sub-themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
1. Feelings regarding the effect of unemployment.	
2. Role of the parents.	
3. Relationship with children.	
4. Effects of unemployment on children	4.1 Education
	4.2 Behaviour
	4.3 Health and physical development
	4.4 Emotional support
5. Parenting skills	5.1 Communication
	5.2 Conflict management
	5.3 Problem solving
	5.4 Decision-making
6. Reaction of unemployed parents towards their children	
7. Advice of unemployed parents	

Each theme and sub-themes will be discussed according to the following structure:

- Summary of the theme
- Quotations to verify information
- Literature control

4.3.2.1 Theme 1: Feelings regarding the effect of unemployment on parenthood

From the interviews it was clear that all the respondents experienced intense feelings of stress, worthlessness as parents, frustration, hopelessness, humiliation, failure, degraded as well as feelings of anger and irritation. These feelings can be verified with the following quotations:

- *“It is humiliating for a man not to be able to provide for his family”.*
- *“I feel bad, ashamed and stressful. I feel worthless as a parent”.*
- *“People look at you as a failure because you are unable to do anything for your children”.*
- *“You become hopeless, I feel speechless, you can’t say anything to your children because you have failed as a parent to provide for their basic needs”.*
- *“They call us names, it is really humiliating. My dignity as a person is lowered”.*

The feelings expressed by the respondents were confirmed by Jones (1992:42), who mentions that “unemployment can be stressful because it involves the loss of life in sustaining resources and losing a major social role which may affect the ability to carry out other social roles. The effect of unemployment manifests itself in a variety of psychological and physical symptoms such as worry, fatigue, lack of concentration, sleeplessness, loneliness and boredom amongst others”.

It is thus clear that work provides people with a sense of value and self worth as well as purpose and direction in life. Unemployment takes away all these aspects and an individual is left with negative feelings about oneself, his or her family and the world.

4.3.2.2 Theme 2: Role of the parents

From the interviews, the respondents indicated that they failed in their roles as

breadwinners to provide the basic needs of their children. Based on the fact that nine of the respondents were involved in female headed households, the respondents felt strongly that they had failed in the role of a mother and a supporter for their children. This is illustrated by the following quotations:

- *“My children are a laughing stock in my street I have failed as a parent”.*
- *“I am not feeling like being called dad. A father has to support his family that is the key role, if not you have failed as a man”.*
- *“It is bad especially if you are the breadwinner. Children don’t pay school fees on time”.*
- *“I am a bad mother, I do not feel like being called a mother because a parent has to provide for her children”.*
- *“What kind of a parent am I? I have failed in life”.*

The respondents’ responses regarding their role as a parent correlate with what Blackburn (1992:101) mentions namely “the majority of men, especially those with traditional values, view their roles as providers of the family. Loss of a job thus may mean the loss of a socially desirable role for that person”. Adding to this Jordaan and Jordaan (1998:715) emphasize that employment provides an important base for the individual’s identity self-esteem, and self-expression both in terms of family life and societal roles.

The female parents’ feeling of failure in their role as mothers can be linked to what Mindpower (1995:50) states, namely, that “mothers often feel obliged to play different roles at times; namely, teacher, friend, cook, nurse, counselor, breadwinner and frequently they must also be loving and affectionate to their partners”. Respondents felt thus strongly that their unemployment situation affects their role as father or mother in a serious way.

4.3.2.3 Theme 3: Relationship with children

From the responses it was clear that the relationship between unemployed parents and their children was bad, especially those with older children. Parents did not have a clear idea of parenting skills and communicate less with their children. Children were thus not stimulated to manage conflict and were not considered when decisions were made even if they affected them directly. Parents felt it was not important as they regarded them as too young to be involved in family matters. The following quotations confirmed the information:

- *“My children spend less time at home”.*
- *“What can I say to my children?”.*
- *“The situation is not impressive as the children are old and always blame me for not making more effort to secure a job”.*
- *“It is not the same when I was still working. My eldest child is 15 years and he only communicates with me when he asks the where about of his cap or shoes”.*

It seems thus as if respondents experienced negative relationship with their children. It correlates with what Voster (1992:64) said in this regard namely, that “financial problems have been ranked as some of the highest contributors to conflict within a family. Unemployed individuals tend to loose interest in interacting with people inside or outside his/her family, get irritated and they experience difficulties in maintaining relationships”.

4.3.2.4 Theme 4: Effects of unemployment on children

Regarding the effects of unemployment on the children, the researcher has identified the following sub-themes: educational progress; behaviour; health and physical development and emotional support. Each sub-theme will be briefly discussed.

Sub-theme 4.1: Educational progress

Regarding the educational progress of their children all respondents indicated that the educational progress of their children was negatively affected by their unemployment. They admitted that they did not have the educational knowledge or skills to stimulate their children's educational progress. The effect is that some children have dropped out of school and the parents cannot provide for their children's basic educational needs. The following quotations illustrate the problems regarding the children's educational progress:

-“My eldest son failed his examination last year”.

-“My second child is repeating his grade”.

-“My children are drop outs due to the circumstances at home”.

-“My daughter dropped out of school because I could not afford to pay her school fees”.

-“All my children are not performing well in school”.

-“My children go to my school with worn out clothes as I cannot afford to buy new ones”.

-“I have a problem as I am unable to encourage my children to go to school as we communicate little”.

Family circumstances are a very important determining factor of educational achievement. This concurred with Blackburn (1992:94) who states that “children from the families affected by unemployment are not provided with the appropriate stimulus and environment for learning in the home in order to achieve at school”. Respondents' responses correlate thus with statements made in literature.

Sub-theme 4.2: Behaviour

It seems as if the respondents' unemployment has a negative effect on their children's behaviour and that they do not have the necessary skills to change the situation. All

the respondents indicated that their children lack discipline, guidance and control. This was confirmed by the following quotations:

-“My children are uncontrollable”

-“My children are stubborn”.

-“I can’t say anything to my children, they undermine everything that I say”.

-“My neighbours are complaining about my children’s behaviour as they sometimes steal from their home. What can I say, I try to talk to them but they do not listen”.

The respondents’ responses correlate with Voster (1992:620), who indicates that children who were from families affected by unemployed were “bunking school, lack discipline and abuse drugs and are expose to sexual abuse”. Additionally Blackburn (1992:101) notes that children with fathers affected by unemployment are more likely to perceive their fathers as less powerful, less supportive and less attractive figures when compared to their mothers who provide for the family.

Sub-theme 4.3: Health and physical development

Respondents mentioned that their unemployment situation has a negative impact on the health and physical development of their children. From their responses it seems as if they do not have the resources to provide for their children’s basic health and physical needs. This was verified by the following quotations:

-“I can’t afford medical fees for my children. I only rely on the state mobile clinic which comes once a month”.

-“I know what nutritional food is, but I can’t afford it as I am unemployed”.

-“I do not have money to take my child to the clinic she has a bad cough and I have to pay a taxi and I cannot afford.”

-“I know I have to go for regular check up but I cannot manage as during the day I take of the children because my wife is working. It is not a healthy life but what can I do?”.

The negative influence of unemployment on the health and physical development of the respondents' children correlates with what Blackburn (1992:68), said namely "people affected by unemployment tend to become less healthy in the body, mind and they are likely to die through disease and suicide. They are unable to afford to have the resources that are essential for healthy food, transport, safe environment and warm clothing".

Sub-theme 4.4: Emotional support

Respondents indicated that their unemployment situation impacted negatively on the way they gave emotional support. They mentioned that they spent less time with their children, they were impatient and were not committed to their children. They were frustrated, withdrawn, irritated and they were not available for them. Their children did not receive the necessary emotional support due to their situation. This was confirmed by the following quotations:

-“I spend less time at home, I do not think my kids need me”.

-“What can I say to my children, there nothing to them. I feel humiliated. I lack words”.

-“A good parent should be there when her children needs her, I can't”.

-“It is difficult, I cannot avail myself for my children”.

The information confirmed thus the parents' lack of skills to support their children efficiently. It can possibly be linked with what Jordaan and Jordaan (1998:715) said namely: “individuals affected by unemployment are often characterized by anger, depression and nervousness. Unemployment takes away individual's identity, self-esteem and self-expression both in terms of family life and societal roles”.

4.3.2.5 Theme 5: Parenting skills

The researcher identified the following skills as sub-themes regarding the theme

parenting skills: communication, conflict management, problem solving and decision making.

Sub-theme 5.1: Communication

Regarding communication as a parenting skill the majority of respondents have the perception that either it was not important for them to communicate with their children or that they experience that the children do not want to communicate with them. It was confirmed by the following quotations:

- “My children do not want to talk to me. They indicate that I am not trying enough to secure a job”.*
- “We communicate when it is necessary as I feel less interested in their topics”.*
- “I avoid talking to my children”.*
- “It is difficult to communicate with my children as we always end up fighting”.*
- “My children are always out, they prefer to talk and laugh with friends rather than with me”*

It seems thus as if the respondents do not have the skills to communicate effectively with their children. The respondents' responses correlate with Myers (1997:59) who mentions that “families affected by unemployment communicate less with each other as the parents usually feel guilty and ashamed that they are unable to provide for the basic needs of their children. To avoid communication with their children they often spend much time either abusing alcohol or with friends who are usually also unemployed”.

Sub-theme 5.2: Conflict management

It seems as if the majority of the respondents did not have knowledge nor skills regarding conflict management. The following responses confirm this limitation:

- "I do not know what conflict management is".*
- "For now it is difficult for me to discuss the issue of conflict management as it is a new concept for me".*
- *"I have discussed with my children how to manage conflicts when they are with friends".*

The importance of knowledge and skills regarding conflict management is emphasized by Myer (1996:71) who notes that:

Most interpersonal relationships are characterized by conflicts. In order to maintain your integrity and dignity, there are times when one has to face conflict or fight. This is not the kind of conflict that has the intent to destroy someone, but the kind of conflict in which you and your children stand your ground for what you believe. It is important that your children learn the difference. They can develop the personal strength, self-esteem and self-confidence to stand up for their rights, defend their position and give a clear "NO" to destructive forces.

Sub-theme 5.3: Problem solving

Respondents indicated that they were not giving their children opportunities to solve problems for themselves as they believe that they were still too young. They mentioned that they could only involve them when they started working or had families. The following quotations illustrate this:

- "I have never tried to ask my children to solve their problems I think I will be shifting my responsibility".*
- "My children always rely on me to solve their problems and I feel good after doing that".*
- "It is the responsibility of us as adults to solve our children's problems".*
- "It is against my culture for a child to solve his/her problems. They should involve me in everything that affects them so that they get the right solutions".*

From the quotations it is clear that the respondents' perceptions regard problem solving are wrong and that they lacked skills. These perceptions may be linked with literature which refers to the fact that unemployed parents feel guilty and therefore take responsibility for problem situations (Health 24, 2004).

Sub-theme 5.4: Decision making

It seems as if all the respondents felt that their children were too young to be involved in family matters. They thought that by involving them in the family decisions might be a signal to their children that they were incompetent. This is illustrated by the following quotations:

-“I will never involve my children in deciding issues affecting the family. They will undermine my competency”.

-“My children are still too young to be involved in decision making , I am the head in my family”.

-“It will be unfair to my children as they do not have experience in making the right decisions”.

-“I prefer to keep my children out of adult issues”.

The above-mentioned quotations indicate clearly that the respondents felt it is not necessary to include their children in decision making at home. This is in contrast with what Van der Walt and du Toit (1998:222) said namely “parents should involve their children from an early stage of their development when making decisions. They should establish a partnership in which the views of children also contribute to decision making”. It seems thus as if the respondents do not have the necessary skills to guide their children regarding the correct way of decision making.

4.3.2.6 Theme 6: Reaction of unemployed parents towards their Children

From the interviews it was clear that the majority of the respondents reacted negatively towards their children. Due to their feelings of frustration, hopelessness, failure and anger they responded destructively. Some pretended as if nothing was wrong, some abuse alcohol, used unacceptable words or even physically abused their children. The following quotations verified these facts:

- *“I sometimes turn to alcohol if my friends are able to buy me one”.*
- *“I am impatient and aggressive towards my children”.*
- *“I pretend as if everything is fine and become irritated easily”.*
- *“I do use unacceptable words towards my children”.*
- *“Sometimes I turn to alcohol and become aggressive towards my children”.*
- *“I do drink to relieve my stress”.*
- *“I abuse my children physically though I stopped recently”.*

The responses correlate with what Besky (1996:46) mentions, that “poor families have a prevalence of domestic violence which includes spousal and children physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Unemployment may be one of many conditions that increase the potential for abuse”. Myers (1996:84) also notes that unemployed parents may react with aggression and anger. They may blame themselves, turn to alcohol or drugs and become deeply depressed. They may dump their anger on their spouses or their children, becoming verbally abusive or physically violent.

4.3.2.7 Theme 7: Advice of unemployed parents

Respondents gave positive advice to other unemployed parents in order to enhance their family situation and relate well with their children. The following quotations illustrate this:

- *“They should not do something that they will regret”.*
- *“They must not think of doing anything that is illegal”.*
- *“Parents should try to help and support other people”.*
- *“They should be hopeful and create a welcoming home for their children”.*
- *“They should be involved in projects to generate family income”.*
- *“They should love their children”.*

4.5 SUMMARY

The general finding of the study is that unemployment does have an influence on parenting skills. The fact that parents cannot afford to meet the basic needs of their children, especially those of school going age, remains a concern as this has an impact on their educational progress. Parents felt bad about their children's lifestyle as some dropped out of school due to lack of material support from their parents. Some children became pregnant while some ended up in prison due to their unemployment. Relationships were also seen as being not good. More children were spending less time at their homes and preferred to be with their friends.

It was also evident that there was little communication between parents and their children, discipline was not firmly practiced and children were not involved when decisions were made as parents believed that it was not necessary for them to be involved.

Most parents have low self-esteem and no confidence in themselves because they associate employment with good parenting. They conceal their problems and have withdrawn from social activities. Some of them use alcohol because they believe that it makes them feel better.

The majority of unemployed parents feel that other unemployed parents should not be involved in unacceptable behaviour such as stealing because they might end up in

prison which will be an embarrassment to their children. They encourage other parents to be involved in income generating projects and also seek help from professionals or other people.

The summary, conclusions, and recommendation will be discussed in the following section.

CHAPTER FIVE

GENERAL SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Unemployment has a serious impact on a parent's dignity and affects his/her emotional and socio-economic status, as he/she cannot function effectively. Maslow's hierarchy of needs states that people have to satisfy their most basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter before they can satisfy other needs such as security and self-actualization (Voster, 1992:15). It is thus usually difficult for unemployed parents to satisfy their own needs and those of their children, and as a result, this has an impact upon their parenting skills.

Unemployment is a significant event. In sociological and psychological research, the experience of unemployment is usually described in terms of consequences for the individual. Numerous studies report a correlation between unemployment and such outcomes as deterioration in psychological well-being, physical health and the economic situation" (Hakim, 2003:91).

The study was designed to investigate the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province, while the objectives of the study were indicated as follows:

- To theoretically conceptualize unemployment as a social problem as well as the family as a social system.
- To empirically investigate the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province.
- To make recommendations, based on the results of the study, regarding strategies to help unemployed parents to enhance their parenting skills.

Against this background, the following research question was formulated:

What is the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province?

The research study brought certain insights that are now discussed in the form of a general summary, conclusions and recommendations. The latter is presented according to the following focus areas:

- ❖ Research methodology;
- ❖ Detailed literature review focusing on two important aspects, namely, unemployment and family;
- ❖ Empirical research findings.

5.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

❖ Summary

Chapter one provides a general introduction to the study, motivation for the choice of the research topic, formulation of the problem, the goals and objectives of the study, and the formulation of a research question. Furthermore a description of the research approach, the type of research, research design, research procedure and strategy follow. Aspects concerning the pilot study are also explained and a description of the research population is given. Ethical aspects and limitations of the study are briefly outlined and key concepts of the study are defined. The chapter ends by highlighting topics covered in subsequent chapters of the dissertation.

❖ Conclusions

The following conclusions are based on the methodology of the study:

- The qualitative research used in this study was effective as it enabled the researcher to focus on the feelings and experiences of unemployed parents regarding their parenting skills.
- The type of research, i.e. applied research, selected for this study was suitable as the study was in essence problem-oriented in the sense that the research was carried out to identify specific problems that unemployed parents experience in the Waterberg District.
- The collective case study was appropriate as the aim of the study was to investigate the social issues regarding the influence of unemployment on parenting skills.
- A major limitation of the study is that the findings cannot be generalized to the larger population, given the fact that the target population was comprised of only ten respondents (unemployed parents).
- However the study can make a valuable contribution to the Department of Health and Social Development (DHSD) in the Limpopo Province especially to social workers in order to guide and empower unemployed parents with parenting skills.

❖ **Recommendation**

More in-depth research regarding the empowerment of unemployed parents and the enhancement of parenting skills is needed. The researcher did her investigation in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province. There is a need for further research in the other four districts namely, Mopani, Vhembe, Capricorn and Sekhukhune in order to make generalizations regarding the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Limpopo Province.

5.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

❖ **Summary**

Rubin and Babbie (2007:73) note that “until literature is reviewed, there is no way of knowing whether the research question has already been adequately answered, of identifying the conceptual and practical obstacles that others have already encountered in the line of research, of learning how those obstacles have been overcome, and of deciding what lines of research can best build on the work that has already been done in a particular problem area”. The researcher’s literature review was described in chapters 2 and 3 focusing, on unemployment as a social problem and the family as a social system.

Viewing unemployment as a social problem, the focus was primarily on the following aspects: definition of unemployment; extent and nature of unemployment; types of unemployment as well as the effects of unemployment.

Chapter three focuses on the family as a social system, delineated in terms of following: definition of the concept family; types of families; functions of and roles within the family system; parenthood and different parenting skills as well as the effects of unemployment on families.

❖ **Conclusion**

Based on the literature review the researcher concludes that:

Unemployment is a worldwide social problem and has a negative effect on society at large as well as the family as a social system.

❖ **Recommendations**

The researcher recommends that professionals must publish more extensively on successful intervention programmes and strategies regarding the enhancement of parenting skills.

5.4 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

❖ Summary

The empirical process was followed in order to explore the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province.

❖ Conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn from the empirical research findings:

- All parents (respondents) experienced intense feelings concerning the effect of unemployment on their parenthood. They felt frustrated, worthless, hopeless and degraded.
- Respondents mentioned that they had failed in their roles as parents and did not provide in the basic needs of their children.
- From the empirical findings, it was clear that parents lack the necessary information regarding the following parenting skills: communication, decision-making, problem solving and conflict management.
- Respondents indicated that their unemployment had affected their children's performance at school negatively; children drop out of school and some repeated grades due to circumstances at their home.
- Respondents did not have the skills to guide their children successfully in the process of socialization. It seems as if the respondents' children lack a positive orientation towards others and towards themselves and as a result, they isolate themselves and have no sense of value or self-worth.
- The respondents indicated that the behaviour of their children were unacceptable as they lacked discipline, proper guidance and control. Parents did not have determination to discipline their children when they misbehave.

- Respondents also mentioned that they did not have the resources to provide for their children's health and nutritional needs, due to their unemployment.
- The respondents indicated that their time, energy, patience and commitment to their children was not satisfactory. Children were getting little support from their parents as they were not available when they needed them most. Parents were avoiding contact with their children is health and nutritional needs, as they felt guilty at not being able to provide in the basic needs like food.
- From the interviews, it was emerged that the respondents reacted negatively towards their children. Due to their feelings of frustration, hopelessness, failure and anger they responded destructively.
- Respondents gave positive advice to other unemployed parents to enhance their family situation by being involved in self-help projects, give love and creating a welcoming home for their children.

▪ **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The researcher's recommendations are community and government oriented in order to enhance the alleviation of unemployment and the negative impact thereof on parenting skills. They are:

- Social workers as experts in group work should establish educational and task oriented groups for unemployed parents, whereby members can be empowered with parenting skills such as, communication; discipline; decision-making and conflict management.
- Government and non-government organizations must initiate income generating projects. In this regard social workers should link unemployed

parents with community development officers within the Department of Health and Social Development to involve them in such income generating projects.

- The Department of Public Works, (DHSD) as the leading department of the Expanded Public Work Programme (EPWP), which is a specific job creation and poverty alleviation programme of government, should target primarily the unemployed people in rural areas. The department should ensure that the programme is effectively implemented by partner departments such as, Department of Labour, the Department of Local Government and the Department of Health and Social Development. This programme involves creating temporary work opportunities for the unemployed while ensuring that workers gain skills and training on the job, and so increase their capacity to earn an income. This will address the problem of unemployment faced by the nation.
- Based on the fact that unemployment affects so many young people, it is recommended that the Youth Commission must market its services aggressively in communities and also link young unemployed people with relevant stakeholders like Msobomvu Youth Fund, so that they can be capacitated with various skills like entrepreneurship, life skills and parenting skills.
- It is recommended that this type of study must be conducted on a bigger population sample, in both rural and urban areas in order to generalize the findings regarding the influence of unemployment on parenting skills.

5.5 SUMMARY

This chapter attempts to provide a summary, conclusions and recommendations of the investigation regarding the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the

Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province. The intention of the study was to achieve the three goals that were identified and to give a clear answer to the research question that was formulated.

For economic growth in this country, it is important for the government and non-governmental organizations to assess current programmes in terms of whether they are addressing unemployment or not and if not other strategies have to be established.

It is important that further comparative studies be done, as nine provinces in South Africa are different and unique in terms of the effects of unemployment namely, its economic aspects, availability of opportunities and resources such as infrastructure.

Social workers should be pro-active in terms of addressing social problems experienced by their clients, by initiating outreach programmes focusing specifically on empowering affected communities with parenting skills.

5. 6 ACCOMPLISHMENT OF GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Goal of the study: To explore the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province

Table 13 focuses on how the above goal and related objectives of the study were accomplished:

Table 13: Accomplishment of the study objectives

NR.	OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVE ACHIEVEMENT
1.	To theoretically conceptualize unemployment as a social problem as well as the family as a social system.	This objective was achieved as reflected in the discussion presented in chapter 2 and 3.
2.	To empirically investigate the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province	This objective was accomplished successfully through a detailed discussion in chapter 4 on the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Waterberg District of the Limpopo Province.
3.	To make recommendations, based on the results of the study, regarding strategies to help unemployed parents to enhance their parenting skills	This objective was achieved through a detailed presentation of strategies and recommendations in chapter 5

5.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Unemployment is a social problem which is a concern to government and non governmental organizations. Its effects on the family and more specifically parenting skills, are so severe that they are felt by both the parents and their children. Unemployment predisposes individuals to psychological and emotional changes which are accompanied by states of withdrawal, anger, worthlessness, shyness, sleeplessness and helplessness. The biological or physical aspects of individuals who are affected by unemployment are usually observable and can be exemplified by a lack of food, clothing, shelter and money.

The researcher has observed that it is the psychological and emotional aspects of an individual's life which social work practitioners must seek to address rather than the physical aspects. The reason for this is that the psychological and emotional aspects are more critical in the development of individuals as they empower them to maintain a positive life situation.

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APPENDIX 1



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
014 - 718 1700 (TEL) 014 – 717 1742 (FAX)

10.02.2003

To Whom It May Concern

Re: Research within the Department of Health and Social Development

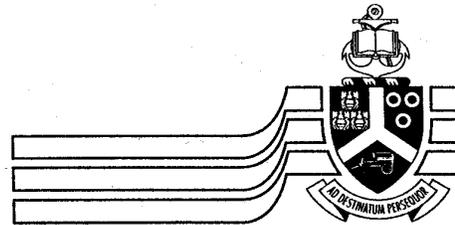
This is to confirm that I have agreed Charlotte Raesetsa Mukhovha to do some research within the Department of Health and Social Development as part of her Master's Degree in Management.

If there are any further queries, please do not hesitate to call me on the above number.

Thank you

Motlanti, E. Monyamane

APPENDIX 2



University of Pretoria
Faculty of Humanities

INFORMED CONCERN LETTER FOR PARTICIPANTS

(full names) do hereby give a consent to participate in a research study as a respondent after I have satisfied myself with the following (please tick).

1. The title of the study is: The influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Waterberg District, of the Limpopo Province in South Africa. ()
2. I fully understand the purpose of the study, namely the influence of unemployment on parenting skills in Waterberg District, Limpopo Province. ()
3. I will be asked to respond to questions regarding the influence of unemployment on parenting skills. ()
4. This study will somehow expose me to emotional harm. ()
5. There are no financial benefits that I will receive after participating in the study. ()
6. I have freedom to withdraw from participating in the study. ()
7. A tape recorder will be used to record my responses and that this material will in no way be utilized to cause harm to myself and all information will be treated in a confidential way. ()

Should I have questions and concerns regarding this research project, I can contact the researcher, Mrs C.R. Mukhovha at her home No. 3 First Avenue Street, Bela-Bela or telephone her at the following numbers:

Office Hours: 014-7181700

Cell No: 073380 4409

I understand my rights as a research subject, and I voluntarily consent to participate in this study. I understand what the study is about and why it is being done. I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

Subject's Signature Date
Signature of Investigator Date

APPENDIX 3

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Feelings regarding the effects of unemployment on parenthood.

Role of the parents

Relationship with children

Effects of unemployment on children. The theme has the following sub-themes:

- Educational progress
- Behaviour
- Health and physical development
- Emotional support

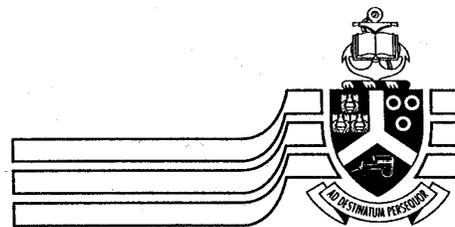
Parenting skills has the following sub-themes:

- Communication
- Conflict management
- Problem solving
- Decision - making

Reaction of unemployed parents towards their children

Advice of unemployed parents

APPENDIX 4



University of Pretoria

Research Proposal and Ethics Committee
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

13 May 2005

Dear Professor Delport

Project: The influence of unemployment on parenting skills in the Waterberg District, of the Limpopo Province
Researcher: C. R. Mukhovha
Supervisor: Prof C S L Delport
Department: Social Work and Criminology
Reference number: 99-216851

Thank you for correspondence dated 11 May 2005.

The resubmission was reviewed by an ad hoc on 13 May 2005. It is noted that the data collection technique has been changed from questionnaire to an interview schedule. The semi-structured interview schedule was found to be acceptable.

I have pleasure in informing you that the Research Proposal and Ethics Committee formally approved the above study on 13 May 2005. The approval is subjected to the candidate abiding by the principles and parameters set out in her application and research proposal in the actual execution of the research.

The Committee requests you to convey this approval to Mrs Mukhovha.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely

Prof Brenda Louw
Chair: Research Proposal and Ethics Committee
Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA



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