Understanding how hope manifests for South African youth during times of adversity

Megan Lynn Swart

August 2021

Understanding how hope manifests for South African youth during times of adversity

By

Megan Lynn Swart

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS

at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Department of Educational Psychology
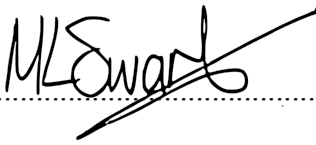
Supervisor:

Prof. Irma Eloff

PRETORIA

August 2021

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Megan Lynn Swart, student number, 14011558, hereby declare that this mini-dissertation, "Understanding how hope manifests for South African youth during times of adversity," submitted in accordance with the requirements for the Magister Educationis (Educational Psychology) degree at the University of Pretoria, is my own original work and has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher learning. All sources cited or quoted in this mini-dissertation are indicated and acknowledged with a comprehensive list of references.
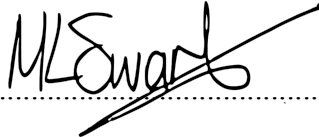
....

MEGAN LYNN SWART

25 August 2021

ETHICAL STATEMENT

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this dissertation, has obtained, for the research described in this work, the applicable research approval. The author declares that she has observed the ethical requirements in terms of the University of Pretoria's Code of Ethics for Researchers and the Policy guidelines for responsible research.

....

MEGAN LYNN SWART

25 August 2021

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	CLEARANCE NUMBER: **EDU088/20**
DEGREE AND PROJECT	MEd
	Understanding how hope manifests for South African youth during times of adversity
INVESTIGATOR	Ms Megan Lynn Swart
DEPARTMENT	Educational Psychology
APPROVAL TO COMMENCE STUDY	10 November 2020
DATE OF CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	25 August 2021

CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE: Prof Funke Omidire

CC

Ms Thandi Mngomezulu
Prof Irma Eloff

This Ethics Clearance Certificate should be read in conjunction with the Integrated Declaration Form (D08) which specifies details regarding:
- Compliance with approved research protocol,
- No significant changes,
- Informed consent/assent,
- Adverse experience or undue risk,
- Registered title, and
- Data storage requirements.

CERTIFICATE – LANGUAGE & TECHNICAL EDITOR

Exclamation Translations

To whom it may concern

The article entitled, "Understanding how hope manifests for South African youth during times of adversity" has been edited, proofread, technically formatted and reference control has been carried out as of 20 August 2021.

As a language practitioner, I have a Basic degree in Languages, an Honours degree in French and a Master's degree in Assessment and Quality Assurance. I have been translating, editing, proofreading, carrying out reference control, and technically formatting documents for the past 11 years. Furthermore, I am a member of the Professional Editors' Guild (PEG).

Please take note that Exclamation Translations takes no responsibility for any content changes made to the document after the issuing of this certificate. Furthermore, Exclamation Translations takes no responsibility for the reversal or rejection of the changes made to this document.

Kind regards

M Labuschagne

Melissa Labuschagne

_____

Melissa Labuschagne trading as Exclamation Translations
info@exclamationtranslations.co.za

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Reaching this significant milestone in my life would not have been possible without the on-going support I received from those closest to me. I would like to express my greatest gratitude to the following people who supported me through this process as well as the research participants who made this research possible:

❖ To my supervisor, Prof Eloff, thank you for your never-ending patience, kindness and care. Thank you for guiding me so graciously through this process and moulding me into the educational psychologist I aspire to be. Thank you for helping me believe in myself and offering nothing but encouragement and comfort. I am so grateful and privileged to have had you as my supervisor and mentor.

❖ To the research participants who participated in this study, thank you for your vulnerability, for opening up your lives to me and allowing me to get to know you so deeply. I am forever thankful for your contributions.

❖ To my parents, Jane and Chris, thank you for your support and love, always. Thank you for shaping me into the person I am today. Thank you for encouraging me to dream big and for always assisting me in reaching my goals.

❖ To my partner, Marco, thank you for being my number one fan. Thank you for walking this journey with me and cheering me on along the way. I appreciate all that you do for me and I love you very much.

❖ To my sweetest companion, Riley, thank you for sitting by my side each and every day. Thank you for being my guiding Ray of Light – you have made reaching this milestone so much easier, my Boeba!

ABSTRACT

This study forms part of a broader wellbeing project that analyses the factors supporting student wellbeing at the University of Pretoria. The purpose of this study was to explore the ways in which hope manifests for South African youth during times of adversity. The study purports to explore wellbeing in the African context by intentionally uncovering the concept of hope and how it enables students at the University of Pretoria to combat stressors, and to overcome adverse experiences. The study combined a qualitative phenomenological research design and exploratory case studies. The participants (n=3) were purposefully selected student leaders who fulfilled the Wellbeing Portfolio in their respective student residences. The data were generated and gathered via vignette-driven interviews, observations, and research journaling that captured the co-experiences of the research participants and the researcher. Data analysis was conducted in two phases. First, a set of individualised vignettes was crafted and member checked by the research participants. Subsequently, a qualitative content analysis was conducted on the full data set. The findings indicate multiple manifestations of hope, e.g. faith, spirituality, prayer, a positive outlook on life, determination, positive future expectations, internal locus of control, as well as the emotional nature of hope. The findings further indicate external manifestations of hope, e.g. background and upbringing, generational stories of hope, peer and family relationships, and community.

Key terms: Hope; wellbeing; South African youth; adversity; vignettes

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION, RATIONALE AND OVERVIEW

1.1. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

The study of hope during times of adversity has captured the attention of philosophers and social scientists for millennia (Frankl, 1984; Onwuegbuzie, 1999; Rand, 1964; Scioli, 2007; Snyder, 2002). In some of the earliest writing on hope, it was viewed as a "multidimensional resource that contributes to adaptive coping during illness, and positively influences wellness" (Herth, 1991, p. 39). More recently, 'hope barometers', 'hope scales' and 'stories of hope' have infused scientific studies in fields such as psychology, education, theology, health sciences, political science, and business studies (Krafft et al., 2018; Snyder et al., 1996). Studies on hope in children and youth have been particularly pertinent, and have emphasised the importance of facilitating hope in young people (Smith et al., 2018).

This study forms part of a broader wellbeing project that analyses the factors supporting student wellbeing at university. The broader study was carried out in two phases (Eloff & Guse, 2019). During Phase 1, which was titled 'Investigating factors that support Student wellbeing at UP', 2513 rapid interviews were conducted with students at the University of Pretoria, of which 2480 interviews were utilised. Throughout these interviews, the following question was asked to the each of the students to generate immediate and authentic answers: 'What are the factors that support your wellbeing as a student at the university?' Phase 2, which was titled 'Investigating the reasons WHY certain factors support student wellbeing at UP in-depth', consisted of focus group research. The findings from Phase 1 revealed two dominant themes regarding factors that supported the wellbeing of UP students. These themes were: 1) The quality of the learning environment, and 2) Supportive and well-prepared lecturers and staff (Eloff et al., 2021). Phase 2 gave insight into wellbeing from the students' perspective, where the findings reiterated the themes from Phase 1, but an additional third theme of 'taking responsibility for one's own wellbeing' emerged. Though implicit, the golden thread that brought these themes together was a sense of hopefulness that emanated from these students' descriptions when discussing their wellbeing.

Taking a deeper look into hope studies, a recent study conducted by Cherrington (2018) investigated the conceptualisation of Afrocentric hope from the perspective of South African children in rural communities. The findings of the study revealed that once basic needs are met, it is the responsibility of the individual to "maintain and foster his or her own hope on a personal level" (Cherrington, 2018, p. 6), which reiterates the notion of taking responsibility for

1

one's own wellbeing. Additionally, it was reported that children believe that hope stems from an individual's character, implying that the phenomenon of hope and the ability to hope is central to their self-concept. Furthermore, the children indicated that when all people work together as a cohesive unit within a community, hope can be fostered and shared (Cherrington, 2018). With this information in mind, one can begin to question whether the findings of this study are relevant in a community of people from diverse backgrounds, as found in university settings where students come from both rural and urban environments. Moreover, one can begin to question how adolescents conceptualise hope in the South African context at present. This gap in the research ignited an urge to understand how hope is fostered by South African youth in a university context.

There are several dimensions and dynamics at play when the phenomenon of hope is investigated in student populations. For instance, the utilisation of nature, the environment, and culture as tools to promote hope all need to be understood at deeper levels. Existing in an environment that supports an individual's holistic growth promotes success and life satisfaction. Such environments provide supportive relationships, and access to services, amenities, education, and nature. Research has uncovered a further connection between wellbeing and access to nature (Kamitsis & Francis, 2013). Such research demonstrates that people who are more connected to nature report more subjective wellbeing (cognitive and affective evaluations of their lives and life satisfaction). Psychological wellbeing and the positive effects of being connected to nature increase significantly for those who are committed to engaging with and are attuned to nature's beauty (i.e. they experience positive emotional responses when witnessing nature's beauty) (Zhang et al., 2014).

As stated by Ungar (2011), most research, however, still focuses on resilience outcomes at an individual level caused by the environment, which makes the environment secondary in the inquiry. According to Ungar (2011), as well as Hammen and Conrad (1993), there are many resource factors that predict positive outcomes. Most resources are ecologically based, such as good schools, academic performance, maternal social proficiency, and youths' interaction with other adults and peers. This shows that social ecologies are imperative to youths' functional outcomes in adverse circumstances (Theron, 2016; Ungar, 2011).

In the South African context, South Africa is described as the 'rainbow nation', with its citizens having cultural ties to several cultures. Bearing this in mind, it is of vital importance that the 'culture' of South African universities is open and accepting, embracing each and every one of its students and celebrating their ethnicity. Rigg (2019) reports that "culture plays a central role in determining how students perceive their surroundings, how they understand issues like sexual assault and mental illness, how they deal with authority and perceive power, how they

cope with challenges, and how they can develop hope and resilience" (p. 1). University staff need to be aware of intercultural competence so that they can develop an understanding of the role of culture in student wellbeing. This will allow them to recognise symptoms of distress in students and respond effectively by providing sustainable support (Rigg, 2019). As such, to promote hope in students, universities need to adopt a whole-university approach that creates a culture of care and an ecosystem in which both students and staff feel supported and uplifted, regardless of their background. The aim of this approach is to enhance rather than diminish people's lives whilst studying to obtain a tertiary degree, which can prove to be a challenging endeavour.

In support of the above, Rigg (2019) expresses that adopting this approach involves reviewing policies related to mental health and wellbeing, the use of digital services, equality, diversity, viewing how mental health and wellbeing is addressed, and observing how institutions respond to critical incidents such as suicide, as these can have a significant impact on the culture of an organisation. In acknowledgement of this need, George Mason University, for instance, has made it their key strategic goal to become the first wellbeing university in the USA (Center for the Advancement of Well-Being, 2020). In efforts to achieve this goal, they have implemented a 10 year initiative to promote student wellbeing in everyday interactions across all faculties. The initiative was guided and driven by the Center for the Advancement of Well-being, where each first-year student at the university received a book from author Tom Rath about wellbeing and how to 'fill one's bucket'. To promote wellbeing, mindfulness interventions and community bonding activities have been made available to the students. As a result, an atmosphere of openness and curiosity in the present moment has been fostered to assist students in identifying the joy in life. The Center for the Advancement of Well-being aims to have this model of wellbeing be potentially replicated in other universities around the world (Center for the Advancement of Well-Being, 2020).

To this end, Bok (1986, p. 52)[1] noted "the contemporary college or university does not concentrate only on formal education, it assumes the larger responsibility of promoting human development in all its forms". Universities therefore need to guarantee that their students are supported in a multitude of ways to ensure their growth and success, not only academically, but mentally too, safeguarding and promoting their wellbeing.

Due to the high volume and acuity of pressing mental health issues reported by undergraduate and graduate students locally as well as globally, this research intends to develop an

---

[1] *I am aware that I am making use of an older source. Older sources have been referenced throughout this study to give acknowledgement to the primary researchers in their respective fields.*

understanding of how hope manifests and carries the youth through challenging life experiences (Stecker, 2004). Furthermore, the concept of hope will be explored as a mechanism for coping and resilience in aiding the youth to succeed in life despite adversity. In addition to addressing the gaps in the research literature, the need to investigate the phenomenon of hope specifically is becoming increasingly apparent, as universities around the world are raising concerns regarding challenges regarding student mental health and wellbeing (Eloff, 2021; Eloff & Graham, 2020). With the suicide rate of adolescents on the rise, it is of the utmost importance that universities listen to the concerns of their students and implement interventions to support them (Bilsen, 2018; Farabaugh et al., 2012). This study, therefore, intended to explore wellbeing in the African context by uncovering the concept of hope and how it enabled students at the University of Pretoria to combat stressors, overcome adverse experiences, and succeed in their studies. This study employed a multi-disciplinary view on quality of life studies by embracing positive psychology and mobilising the metaphorical legs of positive experiences and positive states, traits, and emotions. The nature of hope could potentially serve to support students in their experiences, encouraging them to challenge their outlook on life and capitalise on their strengths.

The need for this study is further emphasised by growing mental health concerns that have arisen and/or been exacerbated due to the devastation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and strict lockdown laws and regulations (Pierce et al., 2020). Research has indicated an exponential increase in perceived fear, worry, and stress. This has had a profound knock-on effect on individuals' self-regulating abilities to restore rational emotional evaluations of their resultant circumstance(s), as well as thoughts, feelings and behaviours that are conducive to optimal functioning (Kumar & Nayar, 2020; Serafini et al., 2020). More specifically, there is a gap in the literature regarding the resultant impact of the pandemic on the youth, especially the population of adolescents at tertiary educational institutions in the South African context. This study thus aimed to dissect the phenomenon of hope to explore its ability to support the wellbeing of young people and student youth leaders living in residences at UP during the adversity caused by the pandemic.

A study carried out by Corn et al. (2020) suggests that the phenomenon of hope is an effective intervention to aid in the improvement of one's quality of life. Hope buffers an individual against adversity and enables them to set achievable goals that are guided by a positive mindset and grounded on the basis of hope. This entails compassionate action being taken to attain goals, which is facilitated by a future-orientated belief that good is yet to come. Mohebbi-Dehnavi et al. (2020, p. 2) state that hope predicts not only life satisfaction, but increased "psychological

4

health, better coping and less depression", which has a subsequent positive impact on a person's "productivity and performance."

These psychological outcomes are highly relevant developmental tasks within undergraduate student populations. Similarly, 'happiness', which can be understood as a positive feeling about oneself and one's life, is an appropriate measure of one's "cognitive and emotional evaluations of their lives" and a laudable goal during years of study, as well as throughout an individual's lifetime (Mohebbi-Dehnavi et al., 2020, p. 2). When hope is fostered and nurtured, an individual may be encouraged to experience the world as a caring and safe place, which is likely to increase their cooperation with nature and others. It further allows them to examine data in a positive light and respond to it constructively with optimism, leading to experiencing happier emotions (Amani, 2016).

This study was centred on research on the Hope Barometer, introduced by Krafft (Krafft & Walker, 2018), and guided by Snyder's Hope Theory (Snyder, 2000). Based on these, this study aimed to uncover the source of hope by encouraging the research participants in this study to reflect on their wellbeing, personal hopes, life satisfaction, and future expectations. Meaningful reflection on hope was utilised to assist the research participants in developing mental strategies to combat adverse experiences. Additionally, the findings of this study may contribute to the development of student support initiatives. It is hoped that the phenomenon of hope can be capitalised upon and utilised as a resource to combat adversity whilst simultaneously bolstering the experience of positive emotions, which in turn, will heighten wellbeing and strengthen strategies to maintain positive and stable mental states.

1.2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways in which hope manifests for South African youth during times of adversity. Wellbeing in the African context was explored by uncovering the concept of hope and how it enabled students at the University of Pretoria to combat stressors and overcome adverse experiences.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.3.1 Primary research question:

- How does hope manifest for South African youth during times of adversity?

1.3.2 Secondary research questions:

- How is hope perceived by South African youth?

- How does hope assist individuals in their journey towards wellbeing?

- How can hope positively affect the lives of South African youth?

1.4. WORKING ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions are essential to this study and are based on the literature discussed in Chapter 2:

- Hope is an active agent in moderating the perception of adverse experiences.

- Hope serves as a buffer to adverse experiences. When hope arises, it allows the youth to escape psychologically harmful exposure, allowing them to survive and thrive.

- There is a direct correlation between hope and wellbeing. The relationship between coping/bouncing back (being resilient) and wellbeing strengthens when a person becomes more hopeful about life circumstances and future opportunities.

- When hope is present, life satisfaction and wellbeing increases, allowing for agency to develop.

1.5. CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

1.5.1 Hope

Dufault and Martocchio (1985) define hope as "a multidimensional dynamic life force characterized by a confident yet uncertain expectation of achieving a future good which, to the hoping person, is realistically possible and personally significant" (p. 380). For the purpose of this study, the concept of hope will be intentionally fluidly defined as it remains open for interpretation – various definitions were developed based on the subjective interpretations of the research participants (see Section 2.4).

1.5.2 Wellbeing

Wellbeing refers to one's life satisfaction and development of personal agency. This study took a deeper look into the participants' experiences of hope in terms of their subjective wellbeing. This, in turn, can be defined as "an umbrella term for different valuations that people make regarding their lives, the events happening to them, their bodies and minds, and the circumstances in which they live" (Diener, 2006, p. 400).

1.5.3 South African youth

A global debate exists regarding the stage of life called 'youth' and who falls within this stage. South Africa's National Youth Commission Act (No. 19 of 1996) defines "a youth as an individual aged between 14 and 35" (p. 1) This stage is broad in the South African context for several reasons, the dominant reason being that the general age of the school leaver is, on average, higher than in more economically developed countries. Mokwena (1999) justifies that this higher age is a result of the disruption to young people's lives and future due to Apartheid. The participants in this study, the university students, formed the youth of South Africa in this context. University students were selected as participants in this study as they are believed to be citizens who will make a meaningful and significant contribution to the country's economy and governance. This added pressure to perform and succeed places the youth under additional stress (Guse & Vermaak, 2011).

1.5.4 Resilience

Although resilience (and wellbeing) are not the primary focus of this study, it is frequently conceptually related to the notion of hope – especially hope during times of adversity. For this study, resilience can therefore be understood as individuals (and groups) having the ability to adapt to risk factors successfully as a result of protective factors (Almedom & Glandon, 2007; Arnau, 2002) and actively deal with stress and adversity (Grotberg, 2003). This study explored the research participants' abilities to bounce back during times of adversity, specifically in terms of their experiences of hope.

1.5.5 Adversity

Riley and Masten (2005) refer to adversity as "experiences that have the potential to produce undesirable outcomes by disrupting normal functioning" (p. 13). This study aimed to uncover adverse experiences and analyse how these may have given rise to opportunities for hope to manifest, serving as a psychological buffer to such harmful experiences.

1.6. METHODOLOGICAL PARADIGM

The methodological approach employed in this study was qualitative in nature as subjective experience case studies were studied to identify certain characteristics and explore the nature of hope and how it manifests for different students during different life struggles (see Section 3.2.2). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), researchers who follow a qualitative approach are interested in not only understanding the lived experience(s) of their participants, but learning about the various interacting processes of how they interpret their experiences in

7

efforts to construct their world. In addition to this, such qualitative researchers seek to grasp the very essence of the meaning that the participants attribute to their experiences in an almost tangible way. In doing so, qualitative researchers are guided by qualitative inquiry, meaning that they focus on extracting the precise meaning from a context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). To do this, data collection methods that are sensitive to uncovering underlying meaning are closely adhered to in the delicate process of gathering and interpreting information (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Through employing an inquiry-based qualitative methodology that is guided by a phenomenological paradigm and grounded in Snyder's Hope Theory, the phenomenon of hope can be explored using a unique and genuine modus operandi. Furthermore, a relativist ontology was utilised, gaining data via "vignette-driven interviews and observations" as described by Schratz, Westfall-Greiter and Schwarz (2014, p. 132). Within the Innsbruck Vignette Research (IVR) school of thought, gathered knowledge is both collected and analysed based on the lived experiences of the research participants through the construction of vignettes.

1.7. Ethical considerations

As stipulated by the Ethics Department, and abiding by the UP ethical code of conduct for psychologists, an ethical clearance certificate was obtained in November 2020 for this study. The ethical considerations taken into account to safeguard the research participants, in line with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), included the use of pseudonyms to protect the identity of research participants, ethical permission obtained from authoritative bodies (Faculty of Educational Psychology) to undertake the study, letters of consent, permission to audio record vignette-driven interviews, and giving the participants the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The ethical procedures followed in this study are further outlined in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.5).

1.7.1 Overview of the study

❖ CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION, RATIONALE, AND OVERVIEW

Chapter 1 covered the background, purpose, and rationale for the study. The primary and secondary research questions were stated, followed by the working assumptions. An overview of the research process, as well as the clarification of the concepts of the study were further provided, as well as an outline of the quality criteria ensuring the validity and trustworthiness of the study. To set the ethical tone for this study, the ethical considerations were also stated.

❖ CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 2 explores extensive literature on the phenomenon of hope in light of its service in supporting individuals during times of adversity.

❖ CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3 covers the research methodology and design utilised in this study. Participant selection, data collection, documentation, data analysis, and interpretation are then discussed. Finally, the quality criteria and ethical considerations employed in this study are explored.

❖ CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study, including a thematic analysis of the themes that emerged from the various vignettes. In addition to this, a comprehensive case study analysis is provided for greater insight into the depths of the phenomenon of hope for each research participant.

❖ CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the final chapter, the questions presented in Chapter 1 are answered using the findings of the study. This is followed by a discussion of the contributions and challenges of the study, concluding with recommendations for future research.

1.8. SUMMARY

This chapter provided a succinct overview of the foundational methodological decisions of the study on understanding how hope manifests for South African youth during times of adversity. As indicated, the aspects of the study introduced here will be elaborated on in the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, a review of the relevant literature is provided to guide the study. Additionally, this chapter provides a basis upon which the research findings can be interpreted. The chapter commences with an introduction to adversity as it relates to youth in the South African context, thus framing the direction of the study. The chapter then progresses to exploring the phenomenon of hope, dissecting it into its various aspects in order to present its conceptualisation within the study. Such an exploration validates the potential and value of hope in the context of adverse experiences. The chapter concludes by addressing the gaps in the literature where the findings of this study may serve to reveal how hope manifests for South African youth during times of adversity.

2.2. SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH

Guse and Vermaak (2011) report that a large percentage of the South African population is younger than 24. According to South Africa's National Youth Commission Act (No. 19 of 1996), 'the youth' are those groups of individuals falling within the age range of 14 to 35. Recent research conducted by the Department of Statistics South Africa (2019) indicates that the youth of South Africa represent the majority of the population of the country. Specifically, children (0 – 14 years of age) represent 17 million, the youth (15 – 34 years of age) represent 20.6 million, adults (35 – 59 years of age) represent 15.9 million, and the elderly (60 years and older) represent 5.3 million of the population. An earlier report by the Department of Statistics South Africa (2017) reveals that 158 891 matriculants enrolled at public universities for the first time in 2016, which accounts for 0,77% of the youth population. The Department of Statistics South Africa (2017) further declares that the number of youths entering public universities for undergraduate degree programmes has declined since 2015, accompanied by a simultaneous decline in the number of youths obtaining Bachelor's degree passes. This information suggests that whilst entry requirements permitting admission to study at tertiary educational institutions proves to be difficult for South African youth, the pathway to succeeding in obtaining a Bachelor's degree is a secondary challenge.

2.3. YOUTH LEADERS

The Department of Division of Student Development at the University of Pretoria focuses on developing student leaders through a range of structured "student life programmes and activities" (University of Pretoria, 2021, p. 7). Within this department, the various day houses, faculty houses, Student Representative Council sub-committees (Student Culture Committee, Student Sport Committee and UP-RAG), and special programmes (Enactus, Golden Key and STARS Mentorship) are organised, managed, and coordinated. According to the Policy on Student Leadership Development and Training, "it is the mission of UP to deliver not only quality graduates with a sound academic base, but also well-rounded young people and leaders who can contribute positively to student life and to society as a whole" (University of Pretoria, n.d., p. 1).

For the purpose of this study, the subjects of this research were UP students who were also student leaders filling the position and upholding the responsibility of the Wellbeing Portfolio in their respective residences. The objectives of the policy include "empowering such student leaders to fulfil their tasks, developing positive role models, encouraging ethical leadership, reinforcing Tukkie pride, creating a network of well-trained student leaders at UP and identifying and nurturing leadership potential at all levels" (University of Pretoria, n.d., p. 1). As stipulated by the Student Development Department of Student Affairs, the Wellbeing House Committee members are considered to be Executive Committee members who are elected by their fellow peers in their respective residences; they thus undergo rigorous leadership training provided by TuksRes (University of Pretoria, n.d.). These student leaders serve to mentor and guide their peers through university life, with the specific purpose of supporting the wellbeing of their peers in their residence and communicating the overall wellbeing of their 'res mates' to TuksRes and the Student Representative Council. This allows these bodies to monitor the mental health of students at UP, and potentially intervene to create and provide support initiatives (University of Pretoria, n.d.).

2.4. ADVERSITY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

The transition from secondary to tertiary education can be overwhelming. Students require support structures to be in place to assist them in readjusting to the new demands of university life and 21st century society, which places pressure on the youth to succeed in a fast paced world that is concerned with success. Almost two decades ago, Stecker (2004) already pointed out that globally, "graduate and professional students have reported alarming symptoms of depression, stress and substance use" (p. 465). Increased symptoms of depression are associated with high levels of stress and low social support (Stecker, 2004). A

more recent study conducted on a sample of 4301 undergraduate students from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona indicated that a high proportion of students have above average clinical levels of anxiety, depression, and perceived stress in comparison to the general population of all age groups (Mirón et al., 2019). Research indicates that the youth are more vulnerable to stress perception, as well as anxiety and depression development. This may be due to life hardships and the neglect of mental illnesses. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) (2017), half of all mental health disorders appear to manifest by the age of 14, and three-quarters by the age of 22 – 25 (Mirón et al., 2019).

Within the South African context, the leap from school to university appears to be exceedingly difficult due to the economic and historic standing of the country (Guse & Vermaak, 2011). South African youth are predisposed to growing up with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). As a result, South African youth are at risk due to the conditions of living in resource-constrained environments, HIV/AIDS, absent and/or abusive parents, child-headed households, exposure to violence, a lack of resources and support, and health problems stemming from psychological wellbeing (Anda et al., 2010). Despite these risk-inducing factors, the youth remain adaptive and flexible in the face of adversity. If a solution-focused frame of mind is applied to challenges, increasing hope in the lives of ACE youth builds pathways to resilience (Triantafillou, 1997). This frame of mind reinforces the expanding field of positive psychology, requiring the youth to set achievable goals, which can be made possible and attainable by creating mental pathways of hope. In doing so, the youth need to acknowledge and embrace their unique strengths that enable them to successfully overcome obstacles (Schmuck & Sheldon, 2001).

In the context of this study, 'youth', which is a stage of adolescence, is a period of life in which "rapid physical, biological, cognitive and psychosocial development" occurs and is marked by a "notoriously tumultuous and challenging decade of life" (Teodorczuk et al., 2018, p. 234). In this period, transitions from child/teenager to adult are influenced and supported by peer relations (Louw & Louw, 2014). Peer relations are therefore fundamental in assisting an individual to develop a strong sense of self, as well as guiding the individual in identifying their place in society (Brown et al., 1997). Moreover, peer relations influence behaviour, mechanisms of functioning, and attitudes towards utilising resources, enabling coping to ensure effective adaption (Dolcini & Adler, 1994). Promoting and strengthening positive peer relations is therefore essential to the success of promoting hope, which subsequently bolsters wellbeing (Teodorczuk et al., 2018).

2.5. Understanding hope

For the purpose of this study, the phenomenon of hope is intentionally fluidly defined. This is because it is regarded as a subjective feeling, belief or mindset that is acquired from the interpretation of various lived experiences, and influenced by social structures and peer relations. Hope therefore holds a variety of meanings for a diversity of people. In the following section, the diversity of hope will be unpacked to understand all that this phenomenon encompasses. Figure 2.1 below indicates the multiple interacting aspects of hope, which will be discussed in order to give body to the myriad of interpretations that exist.
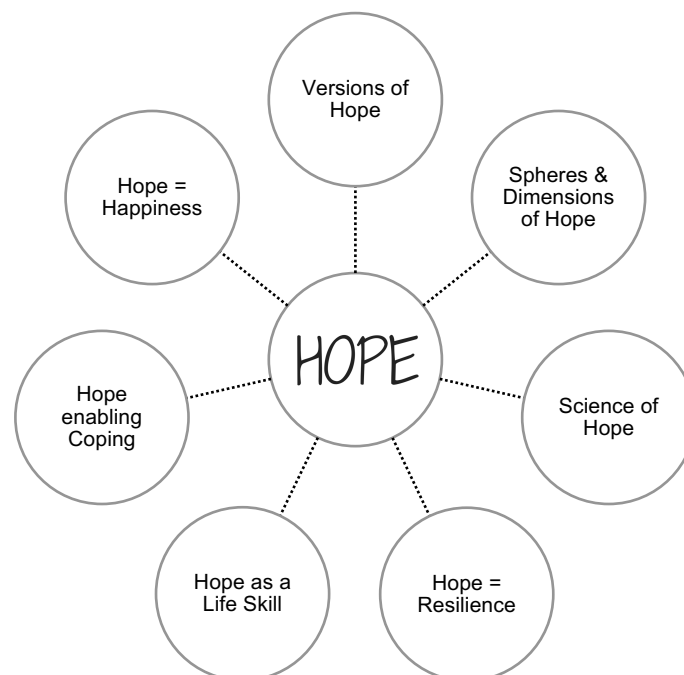
Figure 2.1: Interacting aspects of hope (Donald & Atkins, 2016; Dufault & Martocchio, 1985; Eliott & Olver, 2002; Fredrickson, 2004; Harris & Mattis, 2021; Harris & Mumford, 2021; Masten, 2004; Mohebbi-Dehnavi et al., 2020; Snyder & Lopez, 2003; Ungar, 2014)

2.5.1 Versions of hope

Hope can be understood as both a noun and a verb. With regard to hope as a noun in popular literature, hope is clarified as "a process of anticipation that involves the interaction of thinking, acting, feeling, and relating, and is directed toward a future fulfilment that is personally meaningful" (Stephenson, 1991, in Larsen et al., 2007, p. 402). This explanation of hope implies that the noun must have an object, whereby something is hoped for (Eliott & Olver, 2002). Moreover, this explanation infers that the phenomenon of hope can exist independently, where hope is an entity that can be either acquired or lost. In this way, when

13

hope exists freely in the universe, it cannot be created, however, it can be discovered, cultivated and passed on to others. This view of hope holds both positive and negative connotations. On the one hand, there is a positive expectation for enhancing hope and reaping its benefits. On the other hand, one can become fearful that hope is unavailable and therefore unattainable (Eliott & Olver, 2002).

When hope is viewed as an entity existing outside of an individual, there is a preconceived idea that hope can either be provided to an individual or taken away from them (Eliott & Olver, 2002). The latter implies that an individual is not capable of searching for and enhancing hope for themselves. Psychologically, this leads to a lack of self-efficacy, where an individual feels and believes that they are not in control of the event(s) happening in their life. This further leads them to feel incapable of adapting to adversity by employing a solution-focused mindset to change their circumstance(s), thereby deeming them helpless and, as a result, hopeless (Bandura, 1982). However, when hope is viewed as something that is pre-existing, a positive overtone of spirituality offers peace to individuals, allowing them to feel safe, protected, and optimistic. When hope is viewed in the sense that it is provided by a higher power, individuals may experience comfort in dealing with the unknown in a hopeful manner by putting their faith in their belief(s) (Meyer, 2011).

An individual who acknowledges that hope freely exists may employ strategies to actively attain hope. When hopeful motivation drives action, an individual may become empowered to discover, receive, and gain hope as both a spiritual and psychological asset. This promotes psychological self-efficacious thoughts, behaviour, manifestations for the future, and the experience of positive emotions (Ouweeneel et al., 2012). In this sense, hope is understood as a verb, where a subject is introduced to facilitate the initiative and measures taken to pursue and attain hope (Eliott & Olver, 2002). The Oxford dictionary clarifies the verb of hope as "wanting something to happen or be the case," where the act "to hope" is already a step in the active process of desiring a hoped for outcome (Simpson & Weiner, 1989). This understanding of hope develops an individual's sense of agency to better their life circumstances, both psychologically and physically, by assessing possibilities in an optimistic yet realistic fashion (Eliott & Olver, 2002; Krafft et al., 2017). Hope therefore brings an emotion in the anticipation of obtaining something desired. These emotions further drive motivation to attain the hoped for outcome. Figure 2.2 below visually displays the interacting relationship between the various versions of hope.
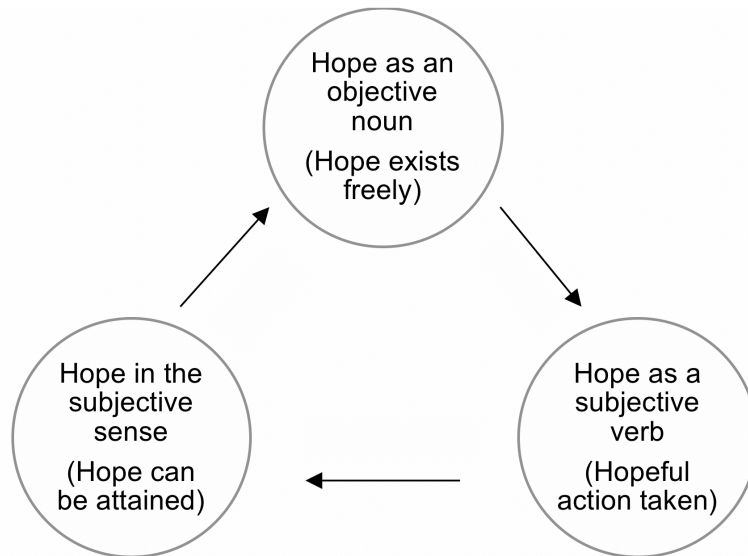
Figure 2.2: Interacting relationship between the versions of hope (Eliott & Olver, 2002)

2.5.2 Spheres and dimensions of hope

Dufault and Martocchio (1985) introduced a framework to aid in understanding the complexity of the phenomenon of hope by breaking it down into two spheres and six dimensions. Figure 2.3 provides a visual representation of hope in its various aspects (spheres and dimensions), which will be explored to gain a greater depth of understanding.
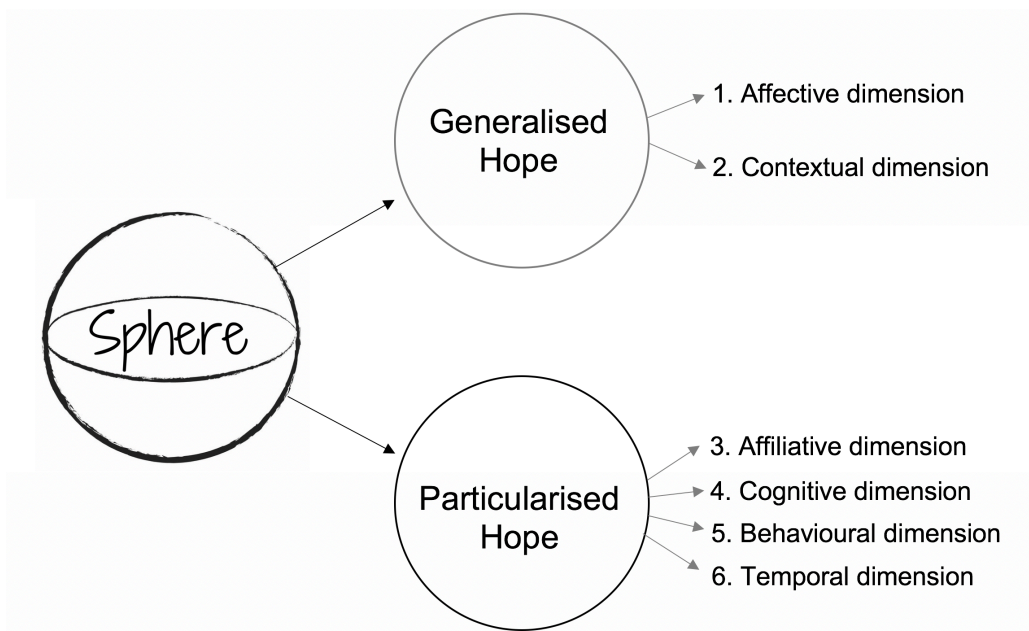
Figure 2.3: Spheres and their dimensions of hope (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985)

In the sphere of generalised hope, hope is understood as a state of mind or orientation with which to approach life (Soundy et al., 2014). In a study conducted by Dufault and Martocchio (1985), a terminally ill patient explained from her perspective how hope served to benefit her, stating: "hope keeps me going, it is an outlook that makes everything worthwhile", whilst another patient stated: "I don't hope for anything in particular, I just hope" (p. 380). Both of these statements refer to the various versions of hope (noun, verb and emotion), and indicate that hope is cultivated in the mind. This predisposes individuals towards a certain interpretation of their lived experience and resultant psychological, emotional evaluation, and feeling (Soleimani & Arman Panah, 2015).

The sphere of particularised hope places large emphasis on the outcome of attaining a hoped for outcome. According to Dufault and Martocchio (1985, pp. 380-381), particularised hope is based on

> [The] expectation that what exists at present can be improved, what a person does not have at this time can be attained or received, that the desired circumstances surrounding an event will occur, that what is valued in the present can be part of the hoping person's future and that unfavourable possibilities will not occur.

In this sphere, an individual is guided by the hope of prioritising life responsibilities and commitments, highlighting what is most important.

The two spheres depend on each other to empower an individual to embrace their adversity in order to overcome it systematically. Together, the spheres necessitate optimal hopeful functioning to ultimately give meaning to one's life. The process of doing so, however, is explained by the collective culmination of the six dimensions. The affective dimension deals with the feelings/emotions that accompany hope, taking a look at how the hoped for outcome can influence an individual's wellbeing. The feelings experienced can be associated with either confidence or uncertainty, and shaped by the parameters of behaviour, which is influenced by emotions (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985). Hope therefore motivates behaviour. Affectively, hope arises upon an individual's attraction to a hoped for outcome, as well as the significant value it holds in the eyes of the individual (Staats & Stassen, 1985). Since the act of hoping occurs in a period of waiting, feelings of certainty arising from confidence and anxiety/doubtfulness arising from uncertainty may be mediated by the contextual, affiliative, and cognitive dimensions (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985).

In the contextual dimension, the contextual aspects of hope are influenced by Maslow's hierarchy of needs in which hope is cultivated and activated within a certain context, and shaped by the circumstances existing in that context. In this dimension, hope serves as a

mechanism to meet and attain various needs in the physical, cognitive, psychosocial, and spiritual stages, ultimately striving for ego, self, and spiritual transcendence (Sumerlin. 1997). With regard to the affiliative dimension, hope is influenced by the sense of connectedness one experiences with others (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985). In essence, hope can therefore be gained, strengthened, or weakened and/or passed on through relationships with others and the substance of support provided. Hope in this dimension also takes a naturalistic approach in which an individual can receive hope from their environment or the nature surrounding them, as well as the level of connected intimacy and mutuality they experience with nature and animals. This enables an individual to connect with their environment on a spiritual level. In the cognitive dimension, hope is cultivated by utilising a realistic lens through which one analyses the expectations of one's hoped for outcome by developing mental strategies to mobilise the available resources (both internal and external) to attain a desired goal. Cognitively, hope can be maintained when one is able to adapt one's meaning-making process despite adversity. In this sense, hope is action-based and attuned to the reality of one's capability and circumstance (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985).

Similarly, in the behavioural dimension, hope is an action that motivates and determines behaviour (Wenzel, 2014). For example, an optimist is a hopeful person who believes that their desired outcome is attainable through implementing strategies in order to make their dreams or wishes a reality. In this instance, positive thoughts lead to motivational beliefs that drive intentional action. This dimension encompasses three different types of action: physical action, which refers to the strategic measures taken to achieve a goal systematically; social action, which refers to behaviours employed to enhance social connection for support that sustains hope, and lastly; spiritual action, which refers to actions that enable one to connect with a higher power, which ultimately allows one to maintain inner peace and a resultant hopeful mindset (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985).

Hope in the temporal dimension pertains to the process of waiting for a hoped for outcome to become reality. Hope, which is commonly associated with a future expectation, is influenced by past and present experiences. This subsequently gives meaning to future endeavours of expectation (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985). In the sphere of generalised hope, hope reasons with reality and predisposes an individual to face life with a certain and usually sturdy positive attitude. Alternatively, the sphere of particularised hope concentrates on attaining the desired object of hope within a set time frame (Eliott & Olver, 2002).

In response to research based on the Hope Theory, as proposed by Snyder, a third sphere of hope called 'transformational hope' has been introduced as a new potential theory to assess the function and beneficial impact of hope on future endeavours (Butler, 2001).

17

Transformational hope has developed from an anxiety that the world is becoming an increasingly hard place to live in as time goes. This is due to:

> Environmental changes, wealth differentials, increased levels of depression and suicide, instances of corporate misbehaviour and reduction in the strength of social contracts, to name but a few, leading to the extrapolation of either a dystopian future view in the tradition of Blade Runner or The Matrix, or an optimistic 'technology will save us', trans-humanist perspective (Morrow, 2006, p. 1).

This uncertainty results in anxiety regarding the future. To combat this, transformational hope, which is rooted in positive psychology, orientates an individual to embrace the unknown with a hope that a positive outcome will prevail. This, in turn, encourages a cooperative mindset and behaviour that enhances optimism (O'Hara, 2014).

2.5.3 Science of hope

Research regarding hope argues against the Conservation of Resources Theory, which posits that an individual who has access to resources that enable survival has a good reason to be optimistic and therefore hopeful (Hobfoll & Ford, 2007). Research findings indicate that individuals who do not have access to resources that enable survival can be just as hopeful as those who do (Pretorius, 2018). In the context of living in a resource constrained community, the tools for providing the discovery, attainment and growth of hope are founded in support provided by nature, spirituality, and community members, including friends and family (Mattis & Jagers, 2001). Hope is therefore a mechanism that can be discovered and gained in a variety of circumstances and in a multitude of ways. To optimise hope in such conditions, a resource conservation strategy is applied where an individual will capitalise on the resources available to them, albeit in small or larger quantities (Hobfoll & Ford, 2007). When an individual is successful in adapting to their environment and overcomes adversity through mobilising a resource conservation strategy, they enhance the psychological development of success through hope. This is when the phenomenon of hope becomes a pillar of strength to continue striving for improvement. Hope in this instance becomes an additional resource that encourages an individual to persevere. Hopeful optimism is thus created.

According to Mattis et al. (2004), hope is optimism with a plan. With this view of hope, one is called to examine the data with which one is presented, analysing routes that will lead one down a path of success, along with a strategy to combat adversity with a positive mindset and a useful set of tools. This all indicates attempts to achieve and attain the object of hope in an optimistic approach. Hope has a spiritual depth to it as it requires an individual to develop and

enhance their prophetic imagination, which refers to when one is encouraged see something that does not exist at the present, but imagine that object of hope in enough detail so that one can recognise the pieces of the object as one moves towards it by taking the necessary steps to achieve its possession (Mattis & Jagers, 2001). To be hopeful, an individual therefore needs to adopt an agency mindset to acknowledge that future expectations will only become a reality when one anticipates that there is a plan to obtain that reality. This further requires one to carry out the necessary actions to make that reality tangible (Krafft et al., 2017).

Research conducted by Larsen et al. (2007) suggests that hope can be viewed from a cognitive-behavioural perspective where hope can be acknowledged as the "sum of mental 'will power' (goal directed energies) and the 'way power' (perceived pathways to goals) that one has to achieve goals" (p. 402). As such, Harris and Mattis (2021) outlines five strategies that one must follow in order to become a hopeful individual. The first strategy involves taking steps to make hope practical via means of setting smart goals (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timeous) with positive outcomes; and incorporating daily affirmations to foster positive behaviour and experience (Harris & Mattis, 2021). A heightened experience of hope in tandem with positive emotions leads to flourishing, which promotes emotional wellbeing and allows one to interpret positive experiences that contribute to life satisfaction (Guse & Vermaak, 2011; Keys, 2007). When this occurs, an individual is more inclined to engage in overcoming adversity to achieve goals with an optimistic mindset and self-determination, which promotes harmony (self-acceptance and balance); learning (cognitive development and self-improvement); overall development (autonomy and relatedness); as well as accomplishment and success, allowing one to solidify one's life purpose and meaning.

The second strategy, harnessing the power of uncertainty, refers to acknowledging the possibilities of what could be by leaning into the uncertainty of what can be achieved when one views the range of possibility through an optimistic lens (Harris & Mattis, 2021). This strategy combats anxiety stemming from uncertainty by training the mind to believe in the goals that have been set in the first strategy by promoting a mindset of determination coated in autonomy. In line with the second strategy, the third strategy is to manage attention. This refers to the idea that an individual should focus on positive data as it will encourage them to endure the process of becoming hopeful (Harris & Mattis, 2021). Positive information, comments from others, and small tastes of success give an individual the motivation that entices them to put their goals into hopeful action. The fourth strategy of seeking community enables an individual to maintain their sense of hope by receiving support from those around them who will continue to encourage them when they are feeling low or overwhelmed by their adversity (Harris & Mattis, 2021). An individual's community can assist in building the

pathways towards achieving goals by offering resources, advisement, love, and a sense of togetherness so that the individual feels less alone and more supported to achieve their goal(s). In a sense, community further advocates for flourishing by bolstering one's sense of self-worth by offering support (Guse & Vermaak, 2011). Finally, the fifth strategy focuses on evaluating the evidence, which calls an individual to assess the success of another individual who achieved their goal through hopeful action and attitude (Harris & Mattis, 2021). The research suggests that an example of achievement can promote the hopeful action another individual takes as people, who tend to be social creatures of habit and history, find comfort in knowing that if someone else did it, they can too.

2.5.4 The nature of hope and resilience

Hope is crucial for children and young adults living under the constraints of poverty as it buffers stress and adversity, predicts important outcomes, and can be learned and sustained (Snyder, 2005). Through analysing resilient trajectory, the importance of being adaptive, having motivation, knowledge of oneself, being goal-orientated and optimistic uncovers how hope can strengthen and empower young people to believe that a better future is possible (Frank & Frank, 1991; Hanna, 2002). Being hopeful equips the youth to combat despair and overcome challenges whilst simultaneously producing desirable change. Hope affects cognition and reassures, making one feel safe and secure regardless of hardship and life circumstances. Furthermore, hope empowers one to believe that the future is better, therefore protecting one against feelings of helplessness and unfavourable behaviours. Investigating the nature of hope as a mechanism for building resilience in South African youth may contribute to the understanding of how it protects ACE youth against stress and assists them to cope with their difficult emotional and socio-economic environments. This will enable them to become hopeful, resilient, well-adjusted citizens who can contribute meaningfully to society whilst meeting and sustaining their wants and needs.

Hope is not only a quality that one possesses, but also a process that can be facilitated and developed through experience. According to Krafft et al. (2017) and Masten (2004), hope is defined as "a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy) and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)" (p. 300). How one chooses to interpret and evaluate one's adverse circumstance is pivotal in how one copes with and responds to stressors (Aldwin, 2011). In order to function optimally in an environment that is unsupportive due to risks, stress and trauma, one needs to adopt behaviours that enable one to cope with and combat stressors as part of one's ability to become and remain hopeful. Remaining hopeful can be achieved through building autonomy

and establishing a sense of control, which, in turn, aids one in adapting to and coping with adversity in a positive and effective way (Luthar et al., 2000).

In efforts to connect hope and resilience, Ungar (2014) points out that in extremely adverse contexts, the reason for individuals' resilience is often attributed to the quality of the environment rather than the person's temperament, personality, or psychosocial coping mechanisms, as well as their tendencies to remain hopeful. In support of this, Lerner (2006) proposes that researchers study the collaboration between individuals and their environment to determine the source of hope, which gives rise to resilience in the form of hopeful tenacity. The author further advises that such research should see hopeful tenacity as a person-context alteration, which benefits both the individual and the environment. Research suggests that resilient youth repeatedly portray characteristics such as good problem-solving skills, a high intellectual quotient (IQ), a high hope orientation, and adequate access to supportive environmental factors (Ryff & Singer, 2003). Ungar's (2008) findings reiterate the idea that resilience is comprised of individuals' ability to find their way to health-sustaining resources (opportunities to have an impression of well-being) and circumstances where the family, community and culture of the individuals provide healthy resources in a meaningful way.

The science of resilience ties in synonymously with Systems Theory and is underpinned by developmental psychopathology, as well as Relational Developmental Systems Theory (von Bertalanffy, 1968). Using an integrative approach, the amalgamation of these theories allows one to delve into the complexity of human adaptation in order to gain grounds for understanding how adaptability measures have developed over the course of human existence (Masten, 2013). Remaining hopeful therefore requires that an individual adopts a mindset centred around resilience thinking, which is comprised of three central aspects: resiliency, adaptability, and transformability (Folke et al., 2010). Adaptation, when viewed in the light of being the outcome of an individual's ability to employ behaviours enabling them to adjust adequately, is defined on the premise of an individual having an absence of psychopathology (McCormick et al., 2011). In efforts to further outline the construct, adaptability refers to the capacity of an individual to adjust their behaviour and emotional responses and/or attitudes towards both external and internal processes. This is done in order to promote personal development in line with the individual's current trajectory, thereby maintaining a sense of equilibrium and stability in development (Folke et al., 2010). Transformability, according to Folke et al. (2010, p. 1), "is the capacity to cross thresholds into new developmental trajectories." The author further notes that "transformational change at the smaller scales enables resilience at larger scales, which draws on resilience from multiple scales" (Ibid, p. 1).

Hopeful, resilient thinking therefore further highlights and acknowledges Systems Theory. This occurs through identifying multiple interacting systems as protective factors, providing resources that enable an individual to adapt (adjust) to his/her changing environment, and subsequently allowing individuals to develop optimally when resources are provided to assist the process of transformability. Ungar and Theron (2020, p. 44) explain resilience as the interaction between the various processes of "multiple biological, psychological, social and ecological systems," which enable individuals to "regain, sustain, or improve their mental wellbeing when challenged by one or more risk factors." As such, resilient thinking, which nurtures hope, focuses on the complex interaction between multiple systems, considering the dynamic interaction between psychological, biological, environmental, and contextual processes. Successful interaction creates an opportunity for the pathway for resilience to be developed, with the probability that multi-finality might eventuate (Cicchetti & Blender, 2006). This can only be achieved when available promotive and protective factors and processes are identified and mobilised to ensure that they optimally assist the individual to develop and/or strengthen their resilience.

Becoming and remaining both hopeful and resilient requires an individual to assess their situation and circumstance from a psychological perspective. It is important that an individual therefore becomes aware of their presenting challenge(s) as well as the emotions they feel in response to the stress their adversity causes. When one is able to systematically work through the feelings one experiences from the emotions that arise, i.e. managing one's emotions effectively, one can then begin to navigate through the challenge or set of challenges present in a logical manner with a solution-focused mindset. This allows for the identification of available resources to help combat adversity, and assists individuals to adopt a positive mindset, which is accompanied by a set of emotional reactions and attitudes, which are conducive to the actions (behaviours) they adopt to approach and overcome their challenge (Cefai, 2008).

To confirm the resource conservation strategies outlined previously by Hobfoll and Ford (2007), Zimmerman (2013) believes that "assets and resources provide youth with the individual and contextual attributes necessary for healthy development" (p. 381). In corroboration, the key to fostering hope through resilience is for individuals to become aware of their available resources, which serve as protective factors against adversity. Individuals are therefore encouraged to make use of their available resources so as to mobilise them to their optimal capability. This will enable the achievement and sustaining of healthy development and resilience, which, in turn, will give rise to hope. Fergus and Zimmerman (2005), as well as Zimmerman and Brenner (2010) outline that the Resiliency Theory provides

a "conceptual framework for considering a strengths-based approach to understanding child and adolescent development" (p. 381). This strength-based approach is formulated around Masten's shortlist, which identifies multiple stakeholders and role-players as protective and promotive resources when it comes to combating adversity and promoting resiliency. Masten's shortlist highlights attachment, whilst Ungar (2011) highlights the importance of relationships, both of which explain how social networks and a sense of community lend a hand towards resilience strengthening and the reinforcement of hope. Second on the list is that of self-regulation, where positive experiences of control and self-efficacy allow for not only resilience, but for hope to arise. This ties in closely with the third aspect of Masten's shortlist, which outlines how faith and meaning-making both nurture and bolster the phenomenon of hope. Hope is the essential, driving force that allows for all aspects of Masten's shortlist to become effective in building and sustaining resilience. Hope therefore stimulates problem-solving strategies and intelligence, which refers to when a powerful identity is formulated and developed, which is the fourth aspect of the shortlist. Lastly, the goal of mobilising resources in alignment with Masten's shortlist to becoming resilient is that of enabling collective efficacy in an individual. This refers to a sense of cohesion and cultural adherence is established and promoted (Ungar & Theron, 2020).

2.5.5 Hope as a life skill

Frankl (1984) spoke about finding hope through adversity, meaning that hope arises from suffering. When one finds meaning in suffering, "it ceases to be suffering," paving the way for hope to shine through (Frankle, 1984, p. 94). Hope is therefore the action taken to overcome suffering wherein psychological freedom lies in the power of choosing to act in hope. The skill of hope is generated from knowing and believing that one can exercise two muscles (Barilan, 2012). The first muscle is mindfulness, which allows one to be able to respond wisely in the face of unpredictable circumstances going forward instead of reacting blindly. The second muscle allows one to act out of warmth, kindness, and compassion instead of greed and aversion. Exercising these two muscles simultaneously fortifies an individual and equips them with the skills and resources to handle whatever adversity with which they are presented (Davis, 2020).

Supported by the Broaden and Build Theory, the skill of hope is developed through the four 'A's (awareness, acceptance, action and assessment). The Broaden and Build Theory describes how:

> Positive emotions broaden an individual's momentary thought–action repertoire: joy sparks the urge to play, interest sparks the urge to explore, contentment sparks the

urge to savour and integrate, and love sparks a recurring cycle of each of these urges within safe, close relationships (Fredrickson, 2004, p. 1367).

The broadening of such emotions safeguards an individual against the possible harmful experience of negative emotions and simultaneously advances the discovery of innovative ideas, compassionate actions, and the strengthening of social connections. These all play an integral role in building one's resource base for physical, social, and psychological success (Fredrickson, 2004). This theory takes a look at how hope can optimise wellbeing by seeking out the resources needed to fulfil biopsychosocial needs in systematic processes of skill development.

To develop hope as a skill, an individual first needs to adopt a mirror mind. This occurs when one becomes aware of one's circumstance, the adversity one is facing and the resources or tools available to assist one in combating one's adversity (Harris & Mumford, 2021). In the development of this initial skill of hope, an individual embraces and exercises mindfulness to both see and know clearly. Once this is accomplished, the individual can come to the second step in the process of enhancing the skill of hope, which is acceptance. The step of acceptance, which is the most challenging, calls an individual to accept their position in their circumstance and once this is done, they can gain wisdom for how to proceed. This intermittent step initiates the process of decision making, where one analyses the stimulus and the response. This leads to the third step of taking a compassionate action in which hope is mobilised to support an individual in taking the necessary measures to change their mindset or circumstance. The fourth step is a feedback loop of constantly assessing the processes of awareness, acceptance, and action in order to strengthen the development of the skill of hope so that it becomes a trusted mechanism to support mental health and promote wellbeing by alleviating suffering (Harris & Mumford, 2021).

2.5.6 Hope enabling coping

Coping, according to Carver and Connor-Smith (2010), has been defined as "efforts to prevent or diminish threat, harm, and loss, or to reduce associated distress following an adverse experience" (p. 685). Research on coping has introduced dozens of clarifications pertaining to the concept of coping, however, two main streams have taken the forefront, explaining coping in terms of two possible divisions, namely, approach coping and avoidance coping (Donald & Atkins, 2016). Approach coping, which is a cognitive activity, mobilises the skill of compassionate action. This is when an individual analyses their situation and takes meditated steps to reduce and potentially remove a stressor. Conversely, avoidance coping, which is

arises as a result of an emotional response, reduces the impact of a stressor by avoiding interaction or contact with it entirely (Penley et al., 2002).

Guse et al. (2015) and Valle et al. (2006) identify the phenomenon of hope as a psychological strength, which gives rise to the ability to cope. Guse et al. (2015) further explore coping as an essential tool that can be stimulated to protect against the development of mental illness or the suffering brought on by the experience of negative harmful or stressful events. As a result, hope is associated with "a positive mental health, lower levels of depression and the ability to cope with stress" (Guse et al., 2015, p. 758). Drawing upon previous literature regarding the spheres of hope, generalised hope creates an environment wherein one feels safe and protected as well as enabled to become and remain hopeful, even when hope may be hindered or compromised (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985). As a result, the act of hoping facilitates and supports the act of coping. When an individual adopts a hopeful mindset when facing adversity, they may feel enabled to cope. This notion further draws on the skill of hope, which, once enhanced, can be utilised to cope with a hopeful outlook on life. In addition to this, hope provides pathways that promote the setting and attainment of desired goals (Snyder, 1991). In light of coping, the psychological strength of hope can assist an individual in adapting to their circumstance or adversity, achieve their goals and, in doing so, support them in coping (Valle et al., 2006).

2.5.7 Hope giving rise to happiness

Due to the economic and social disruption brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the devastation of losing loved ones and adjusting to a new state of 'normal', research suggests that globally, people are "entering a post-materialistic world, in which they are concerned with issues of quality of life beyond economic prosperity" (Snyder & Lopez, 2003, p. 88). This holds true for the society in which we live today where subjective wellbeing, which lends itself to the interpretation and subjective experiences of happiness, contributes to one's quality of life. According to Snyder and Lopez (2003), a good life is characterised by the absence of suffering and an abundance of happiness. Rand (1964, p. 16) explained that "life is a process of self-sustaining and self-generated action," where the state of happiness can be achieved by means of coming to know oneself truly – one's needs in the physical, psychological, and philosophical sense, as well as one's desires and nature as a unique human being.

2.6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

By definition, a theoretical framework is a theory that the researcher uses as a guide through the research process as it provides a clear explanation of the phenomenon (Sefotho, 2018). Furthermore, a theoretical framework has the ability to support a theory by introducing and describing it, ultimately explaining why and how the study has occurred to give rise to the research problem. Theoretically, this study was guided by Snyder's Hope Theory, which focuses on a strength-based approach, and forms part of the field of positive psychology (Snyder & Lopez, 2002). In his theory, Snyder (2002, p. 250) states that his "guiding assumption is that human actions are goal directed, as such, the goal is the cognitive component that anchors hope theory." Snyder's Hope Theory accounts for how goals form the targets of mental action sequences (Snyder, 2002). These sequences form pathways of perceived capacity, known as thought agency, which enables goal attainment and forms the motivational component of the Hope Theory (Snyder, 2002). The Hope Theory "equally emphasises various positive psychology constructs of goal theory, optimism, self-efficacy and problem solving" (Snyder et al., 2003, p. 123). To this end, hope reflects an individual's ability to conceptualise goals, develop pathways to achieve those goals, and their motivation to sustain thought agency, which is essential in remaining resilient against hopelessness (Snyder et al., 2003).

Snyder's Hope Theory outlines two types of individuals: those who are high-hope orientated and those who are low-hope orientated. High-hope individuals are driven to achieve their goals, even if that drive requires them to develop alternative pathways to overcome obstacles. In doing so, an individual makes the psychological link of connecting themselves to the success they hope to achieve, instilling in them the determination to succeed (Snyder, 1994). Krafft et al. (2017) substantiate Snyder's belief regarding high-hope individuals, adding that the crucial qualities of such individuals include their tenacious endeavours to actively attain their ambitious goals in both meditated thought and behaviour. Contrarily, low-hope individuals suffer from anxiety and perceive failure as faults within themselves, which consequently hinders their ability to set smart, achievable, long-term goals, and it impedes the improvement of future performances (Onwuegbuzie, 1998; Onwuegbuzie & Snyder, 2000; Snyder et al., 1996). This theory is relevant to this study as it is adaptable to each and every person and is therefore all inclusive of the research participants and their individual conceptualisations of hope and their thought agency in attaining goals through hope.

Applying the Hope Theory to the manifestation of hope helped to uncover how the phenomenon of hope manifested in UP students during times of adversity. This theory created

the opportunity for reflection in analysing how the students utilised thought agency to develop mental pathways of goal attainment to consequently become and remain hopeful about their futures, despite adversity.

2.7. SUMMARY

This chapter provided a comprehensive exploration of the phenomenon of hope to provide a clear and concise understanding of all that it encompasses. A few theories were provided to contextualise hope, examine its existence, and highlight the significance of its value in the life experiences of individuals in the South African context, and globally. Hope was discussed as a skill that can be discovered, enhanced, and capitalised on in order to develop pathways to promote happiness, wellbeing, and as a result, safeguard mental health. Concluding this chapter, the theoretical framework used to guide the study was explored.

In the following chapter, the research approach as well as the methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation will be discussed. In addition to this, the quality criteria and ethical proceedings adhered to, in line with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), will be explained.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 provided a brief insight into the methodology undertaken to guide this study, whilst Chapter 2 shed light on the phenomenon of hope and its unequivocal value in shaping thoughts, feelings, and lived experiences. Chapter 3 therefore focuses on discussing the philosophical and methodological paradigms underpinning the study, as well as the research design, data collection techniques; including the data analysis and interpretation methods. Finally, the necessary steps taken to ensure the trustworthiness and ethical nature of the study are also explained.

3.2. PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVES

Bearing in mind the vast richness of the construct 'hope', a phenomenological epistemological paradigm has been applied with which to view, analyse and interpret such an expansive phenomenon. To ensure that the nature of hope is explored in detail, exploring a range of possible avenues pertaining to the subjective experiences of each research participant, a qualitative methodological paradigm has been utilised.

3.2.1 Epistemological paradigm

Philosophically, this study was guided by a phenomenological paradigm, which was introduced by German philosopher Edmund Husserl. His paradigm was adapted by Martin Heidegger, who narrowed the focus to "consciousness and essences of phenomena towards elaborating existential and interpretive dimensions" (Finlay, 2009, in Abakpa et al., 2017, p. 393).

As outlined by Groenewald (2004), in phenomenology, the researcher's aim is to describe, as accurately as possible, the phenomenon being researched, refraining from any possible influencing frameworks that may distort the exploration and explanation of phenomena. Central to this qualitative approach of inquiry is gaining an authentic understanding of phenomena from the perspectives of the research participants with the intent of returning "embodied, experiential meanings through fresh, complex, rich descriptions of a phenomenon as it is concretely lived" (Finlay, 2009, in Abakpa et al., 2017, p. 393).

The research participants in this study were students at the University of Pretoria. The research objective was to gain insight into their understanding of hope and how the phenomenon of hope served to benefit them during times of adversity. This paradigm allows for multiple realities and involves the intersubjective interpretation, symbolic interaction, and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of hope. With regard to this study, the main role of the researcher was to give insight into the phenomenon of hope from the research participants' perspective, taking into account the real-life situations of the research participants, their subjective interpretations of the complexity of hope, how hope made them feel, and how hope manifests in diverse contexts. The knowledge of how hope manifests emerged from the local context of the University of Pretoria. Furthermore, it represented the research participants' reflective understanding of hope as knowledge.

The findings gained and meaning extracted regarding the phenomenon of hope cannot be generalised. Therefore, multiple understandings and definitions of hope were expected. Bearing in mind that the students at UP represent the diversity of the rainbow nation that South Africa is, various cultural experiences of hope may have influenced the multiple interpretations of hope. This could be viewed as a potential challenge; however, it was conversely identified as an advantage in this study as it has contributed to research on hope in the field of positive psychology in the South African context, shedding light on the varying interpretations of hope due to the diversity of the population. This study aimed to dissect the unique experiences of individuals during times of adversity and how the participants' internal locus of control and perception of hope carried and still carries them through challenges, allowing them to succeed due to agency of thought and prosperous goal achievement.

3.2.2 Methodological paradigm

This study followed a qualitative methodological approach. A qualitative data analysis method was applied to establish the validity, trustworthiness, and reliability of the findings. Maree (2016, p. 109) explains that this approach "…tries to establish how participants make meaning of a specific phenomenon by analysing their perceptions, attitudes, understanding, knowledge, values, feelings and experiences in an attempt to approximate their constructions…". In this way, the multiple, subjective constructs of hope can be understood from the perspective of each research participant. Qualitative research focuses on the linguistic (spoken or written words) aspect rather than the numerical data (Athanasou et al., 2012). Lankshear and Knobel (2004, p. 103) indicate that when making use of qualitative research, a researcher can form many theories because qualitative research is described as a "multifaceted collection of perspectives and methods", which holds true for this study as it interprets multiple understandings of the phenomenon of hope. A small handful of descriptive

case studies were conducted to allow for the in-depth exploration and development of an honest understanding of individual cases. Descriptive case studies delve into the real-life context in which a phenomenon or intervention takes place (Maree, 2016).

Qualitative research relies on the natural environment where interaction takes place, thus it is naturalistic, and therefore the research participants were interviewed in their natural environment, the University of Pretoria and its surroundings (Maree, 2016). Interviewing and observing the participants regarding their personal stories of hope and adversity proposed the challenge of being emotionally stressful. However, conducting the research in an environment in which the participants feel safe, secure and comfortable enabled the researcher to connect more freely with the participants and conduct interviews that felt more natural in that an open conversation to obtain authentic, rich data was conducted. Case study research allows for a narrative and descriptive format for progression to take place, allowing the researcher to delve into the exploration of experience, thus giving rise to authentic data (Stake, 1995). During the case study interview sessions, the participants may become emotionally overwhelmed whilst sharing their stories of adversity. To overcome this challenge, debriefing sessions were made available to the participants, as well as the services of a psychologist for counselling.

With regard to the data collection methods, vignettes capture glimpses of the stories of a participant's experiences. In this study, the challenge for the researcher was capturing the true learning experience of the participants clearly and accurately, interpreting and creating meaning from their micro and macro facial expressions and cues, and body language, whilst simultaneously picking up on the tone of voice and how that revealed a deeper element of emotion in experience. Identifying the authentic qualities of a tangible moment can be difficult, however, to combat this, the researcher sought to be empathetic and fluidly in tune with the participants so that a complete 'picture' or 'thick description' could be created in the construction of a holistic and vivid vignette (Geertz, 1991).

3.3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.3.1 Research process
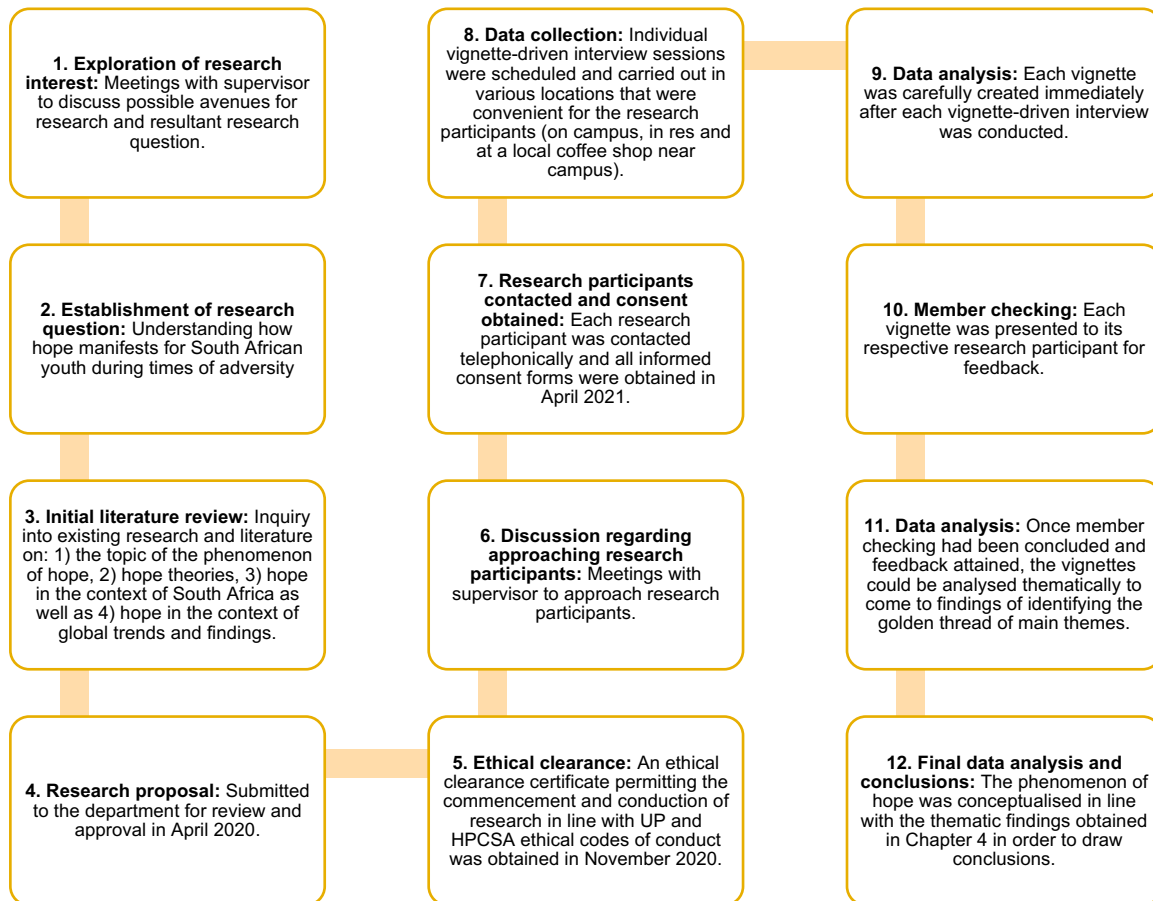
Figure 3.1: Research process of this study

3.3.2 Research design

This study followed a qualitative phenomenological research design, making use of vignette-driven interviews. The underlying theory guiding this study was that of phenomenology, which supports the qualitative design and vignette methodology. Central to this design is that individuals "construct reality in interaction with their social worlds" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 24). This design is built on how a person constructs meaning of their lives as it seeks to understand the meaning a phenomenon holds. Crotty (1998) explains that "meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting" (pp. 42-43). In the same vein, this means that this study was interested in "(1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their

31

experiences, with the overall purpose to understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 24).

In order to make sense of lived experiences, context is of vital importance in interpretive phenomenology. It was therefore essential that the researcher gathered phenomenological material that included the context in which the phenomenon was lived (Vagle, 2018). Through observing the participants in their natural environment and taking the context into account, the inseparable relationship between the participants and objects in their world could be understood and interpreted. This is referred to as "intentionality" and signifies the "invisible thread that connects people to their surroundings meaningfully, whether they are conscious of that connection or not" (Vagle, 2018, p. 59).

When presenting and writing up the vignettes of the participants' experiences, it was the researcher's responsibility to "provide a description that is as faithful as possible" (Giorgi, 2009, p. 96) to the participants' lived experiences. Raw vignette data were analysed from "within the phenomenological reduction" (Giorgi, 2009, p. 96), which is known as bracketing. This study went a step further than bracketing and adopted the approach of bridling, which involves the essence of bracketing in that pre-understandings are restrained so that they do not limit openness. Bridling draws heavily on the strings of intentionality, and continually seeks to understand phenomena as a whole throughout the study (Dahlberg, 2006a). Dahlberg et al. (2008) elaborate that "bridling is forward-looking and that bracketing looks backwards, focusing on pre-understandings and trying to limit their influence on the present" (p. 130). In bridling, the researcher actively awaits the meaning of phenomena to show itself whilst remaining open to receive it. Bridling is therefore a reflective practice as it requires being patient and attentive when exploring the relationship between the participant and the phenomenon, as well as the intersubjective relationship between the researcher and the participants (Vagle, 2018). Bridling within phenomenological research suited this study as it encouraged a receptive nature between the participants and the researcher as it created and facilitated an opportunity for conceptualising and exploring the hope phenomenon.

In addition to the above-mentioned phenomenological, vignette-driven research design, this study made further use of an exploratory case study design. According to Yin (2009), an exploratory case study design explores a phenomenon in its context, creating an awareness of the phenomenon within real-life experiences. Yin (2009) further explains that the exploration of a phenomenon cannot be done in isolation, meaning that context is required in order to give body to the real-life experience within which the phenomenon has revealed itself and established its importance. It is for this reason that an exploratory case study design has been

incorporated in this study. Case study design ties in well with the vignette-driven interview methods as it too is a qualitative research method.

Significantly, the case study design encompasses a research method that is holistic and thick, providing a "comprehensive examination of a phenomenon" (Gerring, 2012, p. 17). The appropriateness of a case study design is further highlighted in that it makes use of triangulation tactics so that the observations made during the vignette-driven interviews can be investigated in light of the phenomenon of hope under study. In doing so, the case study design focuses attention on the naturalistic method of gathering data. This resonates deeply with the intention of vignette-driven interviews as an atmosphere of acceptance is created and encouraged during the vignette-driven interviews. In this study, this supported the participants in exploring and sharing their experiences of hope openly, where they felt comfortable doing so in a naturalistic manner.

3.3.3 Selection of the research participants

This study made use of the purposive sampling method, which is understood as researchers thoughtfully or purposively recruiting participants to draw valid conclusions that thoroughly answer the research question (Maree, 2016). This strategic approach to sampling solicited "information-rich cases" (Patton, 2015, p. 264) in order to best address the research purpose and questions (Morse, 2019). Purposive sampling was selected because it allows the researcher to deliberately select the people, settings, and the activities in order to provide data that cannot be easily found elsewhere. In this study, the researcher selected a small sample of UP students (n=3), who, at the time of this study, were on the House Committee (HC) of some UP residences and had the responsibility of fostering wellbeing in residence life. Under the umbrella term of purposive sampling, these participants were selected using maximum variation sampling. The reason for selecting these participants was that they were information-rich participants who could assist in comprehending the status of the wellbeing of the UP students who lived in the student residences at that time and how the HC supported such wellbeing, as well as their ability to implement support structures for those in need. This was all looked at while the phenomenon of hope was being explored. With reference to the Section 2.3 on Youth Leaders, it was mentioned that these participants, according to the UP Policy on Student Leadership Development and Training, were to be "well-rounded young people and leaders who can contribute positively to student life and to society as a whole" (University of Pretoria, n.d., p. 1).

The purposive selected research participants (n=3) yielded data inclined to answer the research questions empirically. This formed the major advantage of this method of sampling.

Additionally, Patton (2015, p. 283) outlines that "any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared dimensions of a setting or phenomenon". The challenge of convenience purposive sampling concerns producing "information-poor rather than information-rich cases" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 98). In this instance though, the portfolio of responsibilities for the wellbeing HC members related closely to the focus of this study, thereby increasing the information levels of the study.

The participants (n=3) were contacted telephonically, via WhatsApp, where the reason for their input was explained along with providing the aim, background and purpose of the study. Upon agreement to participate, each participant was emailed a consent form to complete before the commencement of data-generation methods (vignette-driven interviews). This email provided additional information regarding the nature of the study and the vignette-driven interviews. Appropriate dates, times, and locations for conducting the vignette-driven interviews were discussed via WhatsApp.

3.3.4 Data collection and documentation

Data were generated and gathered in two ways: via the conduction of vignette-driven interviews, and through observations. Data collection was "guided by the principles of intropathic sensing and describing what is given rather than constructing or forming the real" (Busch & Därmann, 2007, p. 112). Vignettes offer a "slice of life," presenting "dense narratives of poignant experimental moments" (Westfall-Greiter & Schwarz, 2013, p. 123). They do not require the researcher to rely on recall from interviews, but rather from the co-experience of the experiences of the participants. By following this approach, the researcher was required to acknowledge and extract realities from the lived experiences of the participants *in medias res*[2] as they were happening to become aware of the effects of the experience (Westfall-Greiter & Schwarz, 2013). The researcher made every effort to capture empirical data, which are comprised of pathic elements that reveal the experience explicitly to the researcher in order to capture and describe the experience as accurately as possible. During the co-experiencing of the vignette-driven interview, the researcher noted details of the protocols and every observation made. These memos were later transcribed to create narratives, which are presented in the form of vignettes.

---

[2] *In medias res means to live and co-experience experiences as they are happening, within the narrative of the vignette-driven interview.*

During the vignette-driven interview, detailed questions were posed to the participants to explore in conversation. The researcher was required to refrain from being restrictive, allowing the participants to have free range to elaborate in their responses. Creating a flexible vignette-driven interview allowed for a natural progression of conversation to develop. This occurs when topics of discussion are explored in detail through elaborative probing. This probing, as done by the researcher, gained greater insight into the participants' experiences of hope, particularly during challenging life events. Vignettes necessitate aesthetic sensibility; as such, the researcher was called to sense poignant moments during the interview, which were facilitated by a heightened attention to:

> Corporeal expression of pathos, such as a flinch, a flow posture, a pained facial expression or conversely, a lack of corporeal expression of pathos; a sigh, a slouch, a head propped idly in hand, or an empty gaze signifying a sense of absence (Westfall-Greiter & Schwarz, 2013, p. 123).

Vignettes highlight single, experiential moments that divulge significant experiences. They are designed to show, not tell. In this way, vignettes not only paint a picture of the experience, but they draw the reader of the vignette in to co-experience the experience of the participant and researcher. Westfall-Greiter and Schwarz (2013) describe vignettes as "tight but loose, inchoative in that it discloses the world in an encapsulated moment, which stands alone and in reference to itself, allowing a context to emerge and open to multiple readers and to multiple readings" (p. 123). In this way, vignettes not only make meaning, but they also make sense; the reader gains a sense of the experience and, paradoxically, we always see more in a situation in comparison to that of which we are consciously aware.

Prior to the commencement of the vignette-driven interview, the researcher arrived early to submerse herself in the environment in which the vignette session took place, jotting down the smells, sights and environmental/situational observations made on her iPad. To capture the essence of the experience of the vignette-driven interview, notes regarding the behaviour of the research participant, as well as significant statements mentioned by them were jotted down in a notebook. To ensure that all information was captured during the conduction of the vignette-driven interviews, audio-recordings were made use of, which were replayed during the transcription of details noted during the vignette-driven interviews. This aided in the smooth process of creatively crafting the vignettes, stringing together important elements of pathos in order to develop a vivid picture of the experience in an almost tangible way for the reader to co-experience.

In monitoring the progress of the study, the researcher made use of a journal in order to document the development of feelings and understandings regarding the phenomenon of hope. In journaling, recurring, emergent themes became noticeable and were noted. Journaling the progression of the study allowed for an audit trail to surface, indicating the path that developed from the raw data collection to data interpretation and data analysis (Nieuwenhuis, 2014).

3.3.5 Data analysis and interpretation

The process of crafting vignettes in research may entail a simultaneous process of data collection and data analysis. As data is collected during the process of vignette research, preliminary vignettes may start to emerge in the mind of the researcher. It may also start after the vignette-driven interviews have concluded. A process of vignette development follows in which a raw vignette is crafted. In this study, a raw vignette was crafted for each of the participants shortly after the interviews were conducted. To craft the vignettes, the researcher stayed close to the observation notes, the research journal, and the audio-recordings. The raw vignettes were then refined through dual iterative processes of feedback, i.e. by each participant and the researcher's supervisor. This resulted in a final vignette within each case study, which is presented in Chapter 4.

Subsequently, a qualitative content analysis was utilised to analyse the textual data obtained from the narrative responses and observations made during the vignette-driven interviews, as well as the final vignettes. This data analysis technique of interpretation concentrated on specific characteristics of language as communication, whilst paying close attention to the content and contextual meaning of the vignette texts (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Through qualitative content analysis, the researcher went beyond the examination and categorisation of language into themes that represent comparable meanings. The goal was to highlight the phenomenon under study, imparting rich and authentic knowledge about it and eliciting a coherent understanding thereof. Qualitative content analysis therefore facilitated the "subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278).

To interpret the vignette data, the researcher was required to submerge herself in the data and adopt an attitude of openness to allow for new insights to emerge and be revealed (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Data analysis began with reading the vignettes repeatedly so that a total immersion in the data could be achieved and a 'sense of the whole' be obtained. The vignettes were then read word for word, highlighting trends so that critical thoughts and concepts could be captured. In line with remaining open and receptive to the nature of the data, the researcher

was required to refrain from using preconceived categories to theme the hope-related phenomenological data in order to allow for inductive category development. This is when the "categories and names for the categories flow" from the vignette data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279). A coding scheme was generated after the categories of data processing were established so that the codes could be "grouped into meaningful clusters" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Patton, 2002, p. 1279). These meaningful clusters then gave rise to the identification of common golden threads, known as themes, which allowed for the researcher to begin interpreting the findings through a process of inductive reasoning and thematic analysis (Creswell, 2009).

The advantage of this approach was acquiring untainted and authentic information from the participants without being obtrusive by avoiding "imposing preconceived categories or theoretical perspectives" of hope on the responses of the participants (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279). Considering that the aim was to understand the phenomenon of hope, failing to develop a complete understanding of the content and inadequate identification of key categories formed the challenge of using qualitative content analysis, meaning that the credibility and trustworthiness of the data could not be reliable. To combat this, triangulation and persistent observation was required to ensure the credibility of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Manning, 1997). The following section on quality criteria outlines how the data were analysed to ensure the dependability, validity, and trustworthiness of the study.

3.4. QUALITY CRITERIA

According to Maree (2016), quality validity is confirmed on the basis of the "credibility, dependability and transferability of the trustworthiness of the obtained data" (p. 68). Quality validity speaks to the nature of vignette-driven interviews as it confirms the accuracy of the findings obtained from not only the perspective of the participants, but the researcher and the reader too (Creswell, 2009). In this way, quality validity ensures the reliability and trustworthiness of the study. In qualitative research, reliability can only be achieved if research is conducted in an ethical manner (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In the same breath, Creswell (2015) states that:

> The quantitative study must convince the reader that procedures have been followed faithfully because very little concrete description of what anyone does is provided. The qualitative study provides the reader with a depiction in enough detail to show that the author's conclusion 'makes sense' (p. 19).

3.4.1 Credibility

The notion of credibility links to internal validity, which critiques whether research findings are congruent with reality (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). It poses the question of whether the data presented in a study is credible against real-life experiences. According to Ratcliffe (1983), when assessing validity to ensure credibility, an interpreter is needed when analysing data as "data do not speak for themselves" (p. 220). He further suggests that a phenomenon cannot be measured or observed without interacting with it in order to come to understand it.

In this way, Ratcliffe suggests that reality is not single-faceted, but rather a complexity of various interacting understandings of the world in which we live. Moreover, he posits that words as well as numbers "are all abstract, symbolic representations of reality, but not reality itself" (Ratcliffe, 1983, p. 150).

For the purpose of this study, internal validity is relative in the sense that it was acknowledged in relationship to the research participants' subjective experiences of the phenomenon of hope under study. This is based on the qualitative research assumption that reality is "holistic, multidimensional, and ever-changing; it is not a single, fixed, objective phenomenon waiting to be discovered, observed, and measured as in quantitative research" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 242).

To promote the credibility of this study, the following was employed:

i.   Member checking – member checking, also known as respondent validation, refers to the act of soliciting feedback from the participants regarding the conclusions made during data collection (Maxwell, 2013). In doing this, the researcher presents their findings to the participants, who can then critique the research findings, either confirming, denying, or offering further insight into what they shared. Member checking therefore ensures that the researcher did not misinterpret the data presented by the participants, which therefore ensures the internal validity of the findings through the respondents' validation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this study, the vignettes were presented back to the participants and they were given the opportunity to reflect on their vignette-driven interview. They were also able to ascertain whether the presented vignettes to confirm that these accurately portrayed their experience of the phenomenon of hope. They could furthermore give critique on the vignette regarding how to better represent their experience of the phenomenon of hope.

ii. Adequate engagement in data collection – this refers to the saturation of emerging themes occurring in the research findings. Patton (1999, p. 654) explains that

researchers should search for data that provides the "best fit" in relation to the research question(s) pertaining to the phenomenon under study in order to yield data that validates the study, thereby ensuring its credibility. The findings of this study, as outlined and discussed in Chapter 4, indicate the pattern of various emerging themes from all three participants, thereby validating the research questions posed in Chapter 1, as well as the rationale for undertaking this study.

iii. Peer review – peer review, also known as peer examination, was made use of in this study as the vignettes were presented to not only the researcher's supervisor, but to a number of her peers who were also making use of the methodology of vignette-driven research. These peers were psychology Master's and PhD students who were also under the supervision of Professor Eloff. They offered critique on the vignettes, which enabled the researcher to fine-tune these in an effort to enhance the perceptions of the participants' experiences of the phenomenon of hope. Moreover, the researcher was invited to present her research findings in the form of vignettes at the inaugural meeting of the Vignette Research in Southern Africa group. She was also the first individual to present their findings on this platform. The feedback that she received confirmed that she had followed the appropriate protocol in obtaining data during the vignette-driven interviews as she had subsequently presented the data appropriately in the vignettes themselves.

3.4.2 Transferability

Unlike credibility, transferability links to external validity. This is the extent to which the research findings can be generalised for their applicability to other studies and/or the greater public, which is essential. However, to assess the transferability of a study, it needs to first be internally valid as Guba and Lincoln (1981) argue that there is "no point in asking whether meaning-less information has any general applicability" (p. 115). The transferability of this study has been enabled through:

i. The use of 'thick description', which, according to Ryle (1949), provides a detailed setting wherein the research takes place whilst simultaneously highlighting the uniqueness of a study's findings.

ii. The purposive sampling method employed, where the experiences of hope link closely to adversity among university students. This has further enhanced the transferability of this study.

iii. The methodology of vignette-driven research, which paints a picture of the lived experiences of the participants. In this way, the research gives a vivid description of

the context in which the research takes place. This allows the reader to co-experience the experiences of the participants, thereby permitting them to assess the contextual similarly between their experiences and that of the research participant (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The aim of transferability in qualitative research in this study was therefore to provide thick descriptions of the phenomenon of hope contextually in a way that is relatable and subsequently reliable.

3.4.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the consistency of the process utilised to obtain raw data, as well as the findings produced by the data (Hopefl, 1997). Consistency is measured against whether the steps undertaken by the researcher to obtain the data can be verified (Campbell, 1996). To ensure the quality validity and reliability of this study, it was of paramount importance that the researcher utilised various procedures in order to assesses the accuracy of the findings obtained during qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 2009).

In an effort to verify the above-mentioned, the following steps were taken to strengthen the trustworthiness of this study:

i. Audit trail – to ensure the reliability of the study, an "inquiry audit" in the form of a research journal served to enhance the dependability of this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 317).

ii. Supervision – my supervisor played an integral role in guiding each step of the data collection process, offering advice and opportunities for vignette and data theme discussion. This ensured that the data were collected appropriately and analysed accordingly.

iii. Member checking – member checking, which was mentioned as a step to promote the credibility of the study, is also valid in promoting the dependability of the data by interpreting data that holds true to the information provided by the participants, thereby increasing the external verification of the findings (Creswell, 2003).

3.4.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the research findings represent the true experiences, view-points, and narratives of the participants, whilst avoiding researcher bias (Polit & Beck, 2012). The credibility of a study is enhanced when the participants can confirm that the findings obtained reflect the data that they provided. Furthermore, Sandelowski (1986)

states that a study is considered credible when individuals are able to recognise and identify with the experiences shared by the participants in a given study. In this way, the trustworthiness of the study is enhanced by the degree to which the findings are relatable for other individuals and studies in a similar field. The confirmability of the study was enhanced by member checking, peer review, supervision, and research journaling.

3.5. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Creswell (2014) proposes that before the commencement of a study, the researcher needs to consider the realm of ethical guidelines in order to maintain and promote the ethical standards necessary to safeguard the rights and wellbeing of the research participants. The ethical norms outlined by the Ethics Department at the University of Pretoria, as well as the Health Professions Counsel of South Africa (HPCSA), were closely adhered to in order to guarantee the ethical nature of this study.

This study was conducted as a subset of the 'Student Wellbeing at UP' project, which is currently underway. Ethical clearance was obtained (GW0180232HS) from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities for the leading project. For this specific study, further ethical clearance was sought from the Faculty of Educational Psychology for the purpose of this Master's degree (ethics clearance number: EDU088/20).

There are various ethical principles that apply to research involving human participation; for the purpose of this study, the few discussed below were key:

i.   Voluntary participation – upon giving the participants the relevant information regarding the research project (background, rationale, research aim, research questions, and methodology), the participants were given the opportunity to decide for themselves if they wished to participate in the research project without any pressure to do so (Allan, 2016). The participants were made aware that they could terminate their participation anytime they felt that they no longer wanted to participate until such time as the study was submitted (Creswell, 2014).

ii.   Informed consent – this can be defined as the competent and legally free decision to participate in a study after all of the pertinent information is given to the participant (Christensen et al., 2015). In this study, all of the participants consented to take part in the study.

iii. Privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity – these principles in research are closely related to privacy. Abiding by the gazetted Protection of Personal Information Act (Act No. 4 of 2013), the privacy of the participants was of the utmost importance. Privacy is

defined as controlling other people's access to information about a person or participant. Anonymity is a tool used to protect the participants' privacy as it refers to keeping their identity secret, while confidentiality refers to an agreement with the researcher about what might be done with the information obtained about a participant (Christensen et al., 2015). Permission to be interviewed was solicited from the participants prior to the interviews. In this study, the privacy of the participants was and will remain protected. They are known to the researcher and her supervisor, but outside of that their identification will not be divulged. The participants' names will also not be used when reporting on the findings of this study.

iv. Beneficiation – this refers to doing good for others. The Ethics Policy of the institution underwriting the research was obtained. The policy advocates that researchers must be compelled to always be intellectually honest, and to conduct themselves professionally at all times. This study adhered to this principle.

v. Harm or risk mitigation – debriefing is a post experimental interview or discussion that is purposed to unpack the details of the study. This includes explaining the use of any deception that might have crept into the study (Christensen et al., 2015). In this study, no deception was used, but there was a debriefing session with every participant regardless. This was done primarily because this is a topic of potential adversity, and one of sensitivity. Therefore, to mitigate any harm that may have occurred unintentionally, debriefing was required.

vi. Deception and Trust – according to Mauthner (2012), 'doing rapport' is significant for eliminating deception and establishing trust. Trust is reinforced when a researcher is adaptive in his/her interviewing skills, empathising with the participants and showing a shared understanding of the concepts or matters in question. This minimises social distance, making trusting relationships easier to form (Mauthner, 2012). In this study, a foundation of trust was fostered by creating a caring atmosphere, as well as aligning with the nature of the research project – to improve and implement wellbeing initiatives that are well-received and sustainable.

vii. Authenticity – the data from the vignette-driven interviews were created about the authentic understandings of the concept of hope through adversity. This was done through in-person, contextually relevant interactions and sustained relationships with the participants.

The procedures undertaken to ensure ethical adhesion were as follows:

i. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Educational Psychology in November 2020 (EDU088/20).

ii. In March 2021, the researcher had a meeting with her supervisor to discuss the selection of research participants, as well as how to go about approaching them for voluntary participation in the study.

iii. The participants were then contacted telephonically in March 2021 (adhering to COVID-19 lockdown regulations). Specifically, each participant was provided with dense information pertaining to the research project, including the background information, value of the study, and the methodology of conducting vignette-driven interviews. Upon verbal agreement to participate in the study, an informed consent letter was sent to the participants via email. The participants were encouraged to ask any questions they had pertaining to the study in order to clarify the research intent and promote their comfort in participating. Upon request, additional information was provided to one of the three participants.

iv. Before engaging in the methods used to obtain data, informed consent was obtained from the participants. The consent forms were signed, scanned, and emailed back to the researcher. The informed consent form outlined the participants' voluntary participation and right to withdraw from the study at any stage, should they wish to, without judgement. In addition to this, permission to request the audio recordings of the vignette-driven interviews was highlighted. Thereafter, appointments were scheduled to conduct the vignette-driven interviews.

v. Upon arrival at the scheduled face-to-face vignette-driven interviews, the researcher reminded the participants of a few things outlined in the informed consent form. This included:

- Their voluntary participation;

- The right to withdraw at any stage;

- The confidentiality of the research, ensuring the protection of their identify via the use of pseudonyms; and

- The provision of debriefing services from a psychologist, should the vignette-driven interview cause emotionally distressing experiences.

vi. To promote the ethical nature of the study, the researcher remained ethical in practice during all encounters and interactions with each participant. She did this by revisiting the ethical guidelines for research at the University of Pretoria from time to time.

vii.   The researcher provided the participants with truthful and detailed information pertaining to the research project. She also kept them informed with regard to the progress of their vignettes and once completed, these vignettes were presented back to the participants to ensure member checking in order to validate the trustworthiness of the research findings.

viii.   Each participant was treated as an equal stakeholder in the research findings. Therefore, their human rights, autonomy, and dignity were respected and upheld with integrity through a professional and ethical demeanour.

3.6. SUMMARY

This chapter outlined and explained the methods guiding the ethical data collection strategies employed, and the descriptive means for displaying and thematically interpreting the data. The uniqueness and significant value of vignette-driven research was discussed, as well as the delicacy in creatively constructing vignettes in a way that they offer a glimpse into the world of the participants. This allows the reader to 'walk a mile in their shoes'. In the following chapter, the vivid vignettes will be provided, including a case study review of member checking, as well as a discussion regarding the findings yielded from the thematic analysis.

CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 presents the findings obtained in the form of vignettes, which are each accompanied by a case study discussion regarding the research process. Finally, the emergent themes extracted from the vignettes are presented visually and explored in detail in order to answer the research questions of this study.

4.2. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The data collection procedure required the researcher to make observation notes, as well as note poignant expressions of pathos evident during the vignette-driven interviews. These memos were later transcribed to form vignettes that captured the essence of the experience shared between the researcher and participants whilst discussing the phenomenon of hope and life experiences in which hope was present. All information shared during the vignette-driven interviews was audio recorded. Before proceeding with a qualitative content analysis, each vignette was presented back to the participants to ensure member checking. Thereafter, an inductive thematic analysis was conducted to extract the golden thread that highlighted common, recurring themes in all of the vignettes. The themes have been explored by means of analysing them against the relevant literature (Bernado, 2010; Markus & Kitayama, 2003; Miller, 2003; Snyder, 1991, 1994), and by information provided by the participants during the vignette-driven interviews.

4.2.1 The vignette case studies

In this study, a case study design was incorporated in order to encapsulate the research participants in their entirety, giving a background as to who they are as unique individuals. Succeeding that, the vignette crafted in line with their experience will be presented. Thereafter, an analysis of the feedback session in which the member checking procedures that took place will be discussed. This will include double hermeneutic insights into how the researcher experienced the participants' descriptions of their experiences of hope. Pseudonyms have been used in each vignette case study. This is in line with the strict ethical guidelines for psychologists, as stipulated by the University of Pretoria (University of Pretoria, 2021), as well as the Health Professions Counsel South Africa (Professional Board for Psychology, 2006). This protects the identity of the participants, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity.

4.2.1.1 Research participant 1 – Matthew

Matthew is a young man with a keen interest in the business economics and financial world. In pursuit of a career aligned with the aforementioned, at the time of this study he was completing an Honours postgraduate degree in the related field of study. Matthew comes from a family of five, with an older and younger brother, mother, and father. Matthew settled into residence life easily, embracing all that it offered as well as taking every opportunity to engage in university sport, specifically soccer and basketball. Matthew has had a rich schooling history of sport and leadership achievement, a role he naturally fitted into as a student at the University of Pretoria. According to Matthew, the sports field resembles his place of hope and comfort. With the desire of being elected as a member of his residence's respective House Committee, Matthew fills the portfolio of a Wellbeing HC. Matthew recounted a conversation he had with the chairman of his residence (res), who said to him, "wellbeing wasn't meant for you, you were meant for wellbeing."

In speaking about the phenomenon of hope during the vignette-driven interview, Matthew shared a very private experience of hope, ultimately stating that his older brother gave him hope. Matthew explained that his older brother had suffered through his own self-inflicted turmoil, but despite his struggles, he had managed to succeed in obtaining his degree with honours and was moving forward with his life in a positive manner. As a result of his brother's troubled past, Matthew expressed a pressure he felt from his parents to be perfect and succeed to the best of his ability, which was tough for him. In many of these times, Matthew said that he would turn to God and ask, "God, are you trying to test me?"

Matthew made many references to bible verses, which he held close. He expressed that the Book of Matthew resonated with him and it was for this reason that that specific book was one he turned to in times when he needed hope and guidance. In addition to this, he quoted Hebrews 11:11, explaining that to have faith is to have hope and, through this, one can receive the strength to continue.

A particular moment is highlighted in the following vignette when Matthew was posed the question: "Why is hope important to you?" and simultaneously, religious hymns echoed through the grounds where we were sitting on campus. In that moment, Matthew paused and replied, "You are more than just the combination of your life events." He further shared that, "no matter how much I have messed up or how much my family has been through, there's a way out and that way out is through hope provided by our Saviour." Matthew shared that he was strengthened through prayer.

Vignette 1:

"Finding hope through faith"

With a cool and gentle breeze blowing through the air, sounds of leaves rustling and birds chirping, the open space with few people around created a sense of vulnerability in the vastness of the vacant university grounds surrounding us. Joined by a one-legged bird, interested in the conversation, Matthew shared his experiences of hope whilst looking deep into the distance in meta-reflective thought. With his arms crossed, his voice drops and he clenches his jaw, causing the muscles in his cheeks to tremble ever so slightly. An awareness of seriousness is conveyed. In a synchronistic moment of silence, a group of students from the UP Theology Choir approach us whilst singing religious hymns out in the open. This seems almost surreal since just a moment earlier Matthew shared his testimony of hope in relation to his journey with God. Wrapped in a blanket of the holy presence surrounding us, an atmosphere of comfort is created. He shares that there is more to life and that hope can get you there, with the guidance of our Saviour. Turning towards the choir, he starts swaying in unity with the songs of hymns being sung. His posture changes as he starts to relax, almost as if he is at peace in the serenity of the moment. His face lights up, his smile beaming and his eyes glistening. He reminisces about a fond memory with his father and brothers, leading him to warm and happy laughter. Infectious and contagious, hope embraces him.

Substantiation: extracts from the raw data

- "…vastness of the vacant university grounds" [Observation notes on 8 April 2021, Hatfield campus, lines 2 & 3, 'the campus is empty, no-one around'].

- "…whilst looking deep into the distance" [Observation notes on 8 April 2021, Hatfield campus, line 4, 'he seems to stare into the distance']

- "An awareness of seriousness is conveyed" [Observation notes on 8 April 2021, Hatfield campus, line 6, 'his demeanour changes as he clears his throat, it is clear to

see that this is an emotional moment as he shares that he has never told anyone these things before']

- "Wrapped in a blanket of the holy presence surrounding us" [Observation notes on 8 April 2021, Hatfield campus, lines 9 & 10, 'Just as Matthew shares his spiritual journey, quoting versus from the bible, a group of students begin singing religious hymns, which echo through the amphitheatre were we are sitting – it is almost symbolic, and I can see Matthew's body language change as he starts to relax']

- "…serenity of the moment" [Observation notes on 8 April 2021, Hatfield campus, line 13, 'Matthew shares that his greatest form of hope is provided through prayer']

- "Infectious and contagious, hope embraces him" [Observation notes on 8 April 2021, Hatfield campus, line 15, 'Matthew appears to be happy and content. In the beginning of the session he was reserved, but as he eased into the process, he made himself vulnerable to the experience as he shared his journey in relation to hope. I can sense that he now feels truly hopeful about his life going forward, he seems confident.']

Member checking, feedback session:

In presenting the vignette back to Matthew, it was first read aloud to him by the researcher and then handed over to him to read for himself as many times as he pleased. Matthew appeared almost surprised after hearing and reading his vignette, then shared that he could not believe how accurate it was. He further stated that he was not aware of the happenings surrounding him on the day when the vignette-driven interview took place.

Researcher's experience of the research participant:

Matthew can be understood as an individual who is grounded in his faith. He exuded determination to succeed in every aspect of his life through hard work and dedication. It appeared that Matthew had multiple sources of hope, which included but were not limited to prayer, his relationship with God, his older brother, and his family.

4.2.1.2 Research participant 2 – Rose

Rose is a bright and bubbly young woman with a warm and engaging personality, which made it very easy to connect with her. At the time of this study, Rose was an LLB student pursuing a career in medical law. Like Matthew, she also filled the role of the Wellbeing HC portfolio in her residence. Due to her down-to-earth, caring and accepting demeanour, it is obvious to understand why she would be perfect for the role of Wellbeing HC. During the vignette-driven interview, Rose shared the demands that this portfolio had on her, explaining the diversity of

the wellbeing needs of her fellow peers in her residence. She shared one story regarding a student in need, where Rose and a fellow HC member came together to support the student.

In the vignette-driven interview, Rose shared that she found it easy to "be there" for others, and that this is how others perceived her; the girl to go to for help, also known as "everyone's mommy". However, Rose further shared that at times, she was not always "there" for herself. In exploring this statement, Rose uncovered that she was very hard on herself; she did not believe in failure as she did not want to let anyone down, instead, she wanted to make her family proud.

Making herself vulnerable to the process and discussion that took place in the vignette-driven interview, Rose detailed a dark time in her life where she felt she had to detach from her life emotionally in order to carry on, which scared her. She explained that she was scared at her ability to do this, avoiding her emotions, cutting them off like limbs so that she did not have to deal with them. This occurred as a result of the accumulation of two traumatic events; firstly, when her friend committed suicide, and then when she lost her grandmother to motor neuron disease years prior. The death of her grandmother was particularly difficult for Rose as she explained that they were very close. Moreover, her grandmother was not only Rose's pillar of strength, but the family's pillar of strength, so losing her was a tragedy. Rose described the agony of witnessing her grandmother suffer, and believed that if she had just prayed hard enough, God would have saved her. When her grandmother lost her battle and passed away, Rose explained that she experienced an identity crisis, questioning who she was as she had built her identity around her faith and, when she felt that God had failed her, she felt that she did not know herself anymore.

In reflection of the past year, Rose shed light on her lockdown experience, expressing that in this time, she was forced to come to know herself better and, in doing so, she faced her emotions, coming to terms with them. She explained that she came to question her faith, which took her down a path of spiritual awakening. Rose stated that as a result of introspection during the COVID-19 enforced lockdown, she became able to acknowledge her experiences and feelings. She valued the power of acknowledging hurt, and used that to become stronger in order to live happily.

When asked the question, 'where does your hope stem from?', Rose spoke about her grandmother, explaining that her grandmother grew up in a harsh South Africa, where succeeding and aspiring to live a happy life under the constraints of the Apartheid regime posed great difficulty. However, according to Rose, her grandmother rose above her hardship and, despite her circumstances, she was able to remain kind to everyone she encountered.

Rose described her grandmother as "one of the kindest and most considerate and selfless people [she] has ever met", further sharing that she believed that it takes a lot for someone not to let a bad life make them bitter. In this way, her grandmother encapsulated the phenomenon of hope for her. In addition to this, Rose described that her grandmother was a very spiritual woman who believed without fault and question that God has a purpose for everything.

Another example of hope that Rose spoke about took the form of her mother, who, as a single mom had raised both Rose and her younger sister to the best of her ability. In speaking about the hardship and abusive relationships her mother escaped, Rose expressed that much of her strength of character came from the woman in her life, and she had come to realise that in the past, she had become her own source of not only strength, but hope too. Rose explained that "life gets hard, but life is not hard," and that through having a spiritual belief in knowing that there is value in the hurt and pain that she had gone through, she knew that through hope, there is good to come and that with God, anyone can come out of the storm unscathed. Rose noted that it is fundamental that one chooses to view the world through rose-tinted glasses, searching for hope.

Vignette 2:

"Hope is like a hurricane"

The room itself is dull, shaded with yellow walls and yellow lights. However, Rose's energy fills the space with an overwhelming yet all-embracing and encompassing sense of warmth, love and acceptance. Her smile is comforting, and her aura is uplifting, you can't help but feel at home in her presence. She speaks about her experiences of hope metaphorically, likening the phenomenon to a hurricane. She explains that hope is the eye of a hurricane and coming to a place of peace requires one to undergo the turbulence of life's many storms. Whilst twirling her foot around in a circular motion, she notes that how you choose to face the trials and tribulations of the storms ahead and what you do with your pain and hurt, decides your life trajectory. She has a unique and intriguing way of communicating through emotive body language. Without saying a word, her deep and enticing eye contact explains all that she is feeling and wishes to convey, signalling her deep desire to connect with others empathetically.

She explains that she is hard on herself and, in the same breath, she laughs it off as if it doesn't matter. She remembers a time in her life when she experienced emotional detachment to her traumas with a sense of discomfort as she scratches her knee. Shrugging her shoulders and exhaling, she smiles; sharing that through COVID-forced self-isolation and subsequent spiritual reflection, she has come to know and love herself in faith.

There is a moment when a ray of light shines through the window behind me, casting a light on Rose. Poised in stature and soft in tone, she speaks about searching for the light at the end of the tunnel. She speaks about finding herself through her struggles. Whilst calmly and confidently stating positive self-affirmations, she comes to value herself as she realises that she is her own source of hope and strength. She is her own light at the end of the tunnel, she is the sunshine that lights up the room.

51

Substantiation: extracts from raw data

- "Rose's energy fills the space with an overwhelming, yet all-embracing and encompassing sense of warmth, love and acceptance" [Observation notes on 15 April 2021, Common room in Rose's residence, lines 1- 3, 'Rose has a bubbly personality and exudes positivity. She is incredibly easy to connect with'].

- "Whilst twirling her foot around in circular motion" [Observation notes on 15 April 2021, Common room in Rose's residence, lines 6 & 7, 'Rose is sitting cross legged. Whilst talking about hope, likening the phenomenon to hope, she mimics the behaviour of a turbulent storm, in other words, a hurricane, by twirling her left foot around'].

- "…unique and intriguing way of communicating through emotive body language" [Observation notes on 15 April 2021, Common room in Rose's residence, lines 8 & 9, 'Rose makes use of gesturing whilst talking (grabs face, movement of hands, movement of legs and kicking her foot), thus communicating in various forms. Additionally, she smiles frequently and expresses emotion through obvious facial expressions'].

- "…she laughs it off as if it doesn't matter" [Observation notes on 15 April 2021, Common room in Rose's residence, line 12,' laughs, voice changes, shrugs shoulders and tilts head'].

- "…sense of discomfort" [Observation notes on 15 April 2021, Common room in Rose's residence, line 14, 'Rose seems to be uneasy when talking about past struggles – indicative in her body language as she leans down to scratch her leg, protecting her body as she curls down'].

- "She is her own light at the end of the tunnel, she is the sunshine that lights up the room" [Observation notes on 15 April 2021, Common room in Rose's residence, line 21, 'It seems as though Rose has realised how strong she is and how her hopeful attitude has served in guiding her in her past – her smile is big and warm. She seems relieved and happy'].

Member checking, feedback session:

In presenting the vignette back to Rose, it was first read aloud to her by the researcher and then handed over to her to read for herself as many times as she pleased. Rose appeared be very quiet in the first part of the member checking session as she attentively listened to her vignette, absorbing all the descriptors pertaining to her lived experiences wherein hope was experienced. When asked for her thoughts pertaining to what she had heard, she smiled and asked if she could keep a physical copy. Rose stated that she never really saw herself in the

light in which she was portrayed in the vignette. After some time for reflection, Rose stated that she had come to understand how she had been interpreted, stating that since the vignette session, as well as over the past year, she had really been trying to be kinder to herself.

Researcher's experience of the research participant:

Rose can be understood as an individual who is diligently motivated to succeed, with a deeply ingrained desire to help and support those around her. Rose carries herself with grace and approaches life, with all of its adversity, with a cheerful skip of optimism in each step she takes. She therefore appeared to be hopeful about her future, and hopeful in her thoughts pertaining to each and every situation in which she found herself, despite any possible inner turmoil.

4.2.1.3 Research participant 3 – Joe

Joe is a third year medical student, devoted to his faith and desire to serve his community in spreading kindness and making a difference in the world. During the vignette-driven interview, Joe shed light on his past experiences of adversity, providing in-depth insight into the mechanisms he used to combat a negative state of mind in order to promote his optimal functioning and perseverance in order to maintain his mental health.

Joe believed in the power of psychosocial support as he expressed that he received support from his community. Joe therefore had close relationships with his family, friends and church community. Through these relationships, Joe shared that he felt loved and cared for as a result of the network of individuals he had surrounding him, which he could lean on in times of need. Joe explained that after contracting COVID-19, self-isolation left him feeling more alone than he ever imagined he could. This led to increased experienced levels of isolation as he was not allowed to see those he was closest to. Joe explained that trying to receive support through virtual platforms of communication was not the same as actually being in contact with those who give you comfort. Joe reported that his connections to those around him and the love and support he received from them gave him hope. In addition to this, Joe shared that during times of loneliness, he turned to God and over the 18 months prior to this study, his relationship with God had grown as he came to question the current state of the world and how to carry on in life. These questions, along with the strengthening of his spiritual relationship with God, gave him hope that the future will be better.

Vignette 3

"Hope is kindness, founded in faith"

The fresh smell of coffee and the colourful walls painted with flowers, birds and insects sets the scene for a natural flow of a sensory experience. The soft music in the background, accompanied by light chatter and the clashing of crockery creates a familiar and welcomed orchestra of noise. He carries himself with confidence and sits comfortably in the cosy seat opposite me. Embracing the situation, he eases into conversation, fluidly in tune and aware of his emotions and feelings, he opens up about his life experiences. The raw emotion revealed in his piercing blue eyes draw me into his world, allowing me to witness his vulnerabilities.

Grabbing his arm, he explores his recent journey of self-isolation after contracting COVID-19 from the hospital in which he works. He becomes uneasy as he paints a picture of the darkness this caused as he was forced to face his biggest fear of being alone. He shares that through this experience, he has learned to not lean on others so much, even though he considers his friends, family and community as his greatest support structure. Pinches, leaving red marks on his arm, uncover the realness of his resultant emotional turmoil.

Looking over my shoulder, he searches the room as he ponders the phenomenon of hope. As he clears his throat and rubs his eyes, he tells me that whilst doing his morning rounds in the oncology ward not so long ago, he came across Jesus in the form of a 70 year old woman. This patient was concerned about him and apologised that he had to come check on her at 3:30am. With red, glossy eyes he explains that this encounter brought him to tears. He shares that in a world where we are all so focused on ourselves, here was a woman not knowing if she would survive the next week showing compassion and kindness towards him and concern for his wellbeing. In reflection, he realises the value of this moment in his life, appreciating what he learnt from it and her. He says to me that no matter the situation, there is always a reason to be kind and although hope may be hard to see at times, it is always there, just like God is.

54

Substantiation: extracts from raw data

- "…natural flow of a sensory experience" [Observation notes on 20 April 2021, 23 on Hazelwood Coffee Shop, line 2, 'there are a few other customers sitting around us, chatting, drinking fresh coffee and eating food that smells divine – the senses of taste, smell, hearing and sight are tapped into during this conversation'].

- "Embracing the situation" [Observation notes on 20 April 2021, 23 on Hazelwood Coffee Shop, line 4, 'Joe seems eager to engage in conversation, asking questions, listening attentively and sharing openly'].

- "…he opens up about his life experiences" [Observation notes on 20 April 2021, 23 on Hazelwood Coffee Shop, lines 5 & 6, 'Joe shares how through prayer, he receives peace, motivation and excitement about the future'].

- "…piercing blue eyes draw me into his world, allowing me to witness his vulnerabilities" [Observation notes on 20 April 2021, 23 on Hazelwood Coffee Shop, lines 6 & 7, 'Joe seems emotional, his eyes are tearing up – he is allowing me to feel his vulnerability as he expresses his emotions freely'].

- "He becomes uneasy" [Observation notes on 20 April 2021, 23 on Hazelwood Coffee Shop, line 9, 'Joe crosses his left arm over his torso to grip his right bicep, which he later pinches as he shares stories of struggle – Joe's closed off body language in this instance signals the pain he experienced'].

- "…paints a picture of the darkness" [Observation notes on 20 April 2021, 23 on Hazelwood Coffee Shop, line 9, 'Joe expresses that this was a "dark" time in his life'].

- "…emotional turmoil" [Observation notes on 20 April 2021, 23 on Hazelwood Coffee Shop, line 13, 'Joe explains that being emotionally dead is not far from being physically dead. He shares that he is working on reconnecting with himself emotionally so that he is able to grow, especially in the spiritual sense'].

- "…he searches the room as he ponders the phenomenon of hope" [Observation notes on 20 April 2021, 23 on Hazelwood Coffee Shop, line 14, 'he takes a moment to pause to think about what hope means to him'].

- "…he realises the value of this moment" [Observation notes on 20 April 2021, 23 on Hazelwood Coffee Shop, lines 20 & 21, 'Joe speaks about experiencing a sense of fulfilment in helping others and giving back, he receives so much more. Joe explains that he provides hope for others, not by giving it to them, but in helping them direct

their focus to move away from the things that clog their mind with stress in order for them to see hope'].

- "…just like God is" [Observation notes on 20 April 2021, 23 on Hazelwood Coffee Shop, line 23, 'Joe explains the phrase "nood leer bid" (necessity teaches prayer) to me, further sharing that through prayer, he knows God is with him and God provides him with hope to continue'].

Member checking, feedback session:

In presenting the vignette back to Joe, it was first read aloud to him by the researcher and then handed over to him to read for himself as many times as he pleased. Upon hearing his vignette for the first time, Joe teared up, sharing that the way in which the vignette encapsulated him, and the experience of the moment of the vignette session, offered a glimpse into his memory. Joe furthermore shared his agreement and approval of the vignette.

Researcher's experience of the research participant:

Joe is an individual who is aware of his emotions and resultant emotional experiences. He has a great understanding of how hope changed his attitude and subsequent outlook on life, and how this influenced the way in which he responded to the circumstances around him. Joe appeared to be a solution-focused individual who, despite adversity, sought to find alternative avenues for happiness and success, which were governed by his hopeful mindset. Joe therefore actively welcomed the phenomenon of hope in his life in his attempt to walk in the light and develop into the man he is destined to become.

4.3. DATA ANALYSIS OF THE THEMES DERIVED FROM THE VIGNETTES

From the data obtained during the vignette-driven interviews, a thematic analysis revealed that the phenomenon of hope presented itself as either an internal or external source of hope. Guided by Snyder's Hope Theory, four themes and 12 sub-themes were identified. These have been summarised in the flow chart below (Figure 4.1) where they have been categorised based on their source/influence: either internal or external.
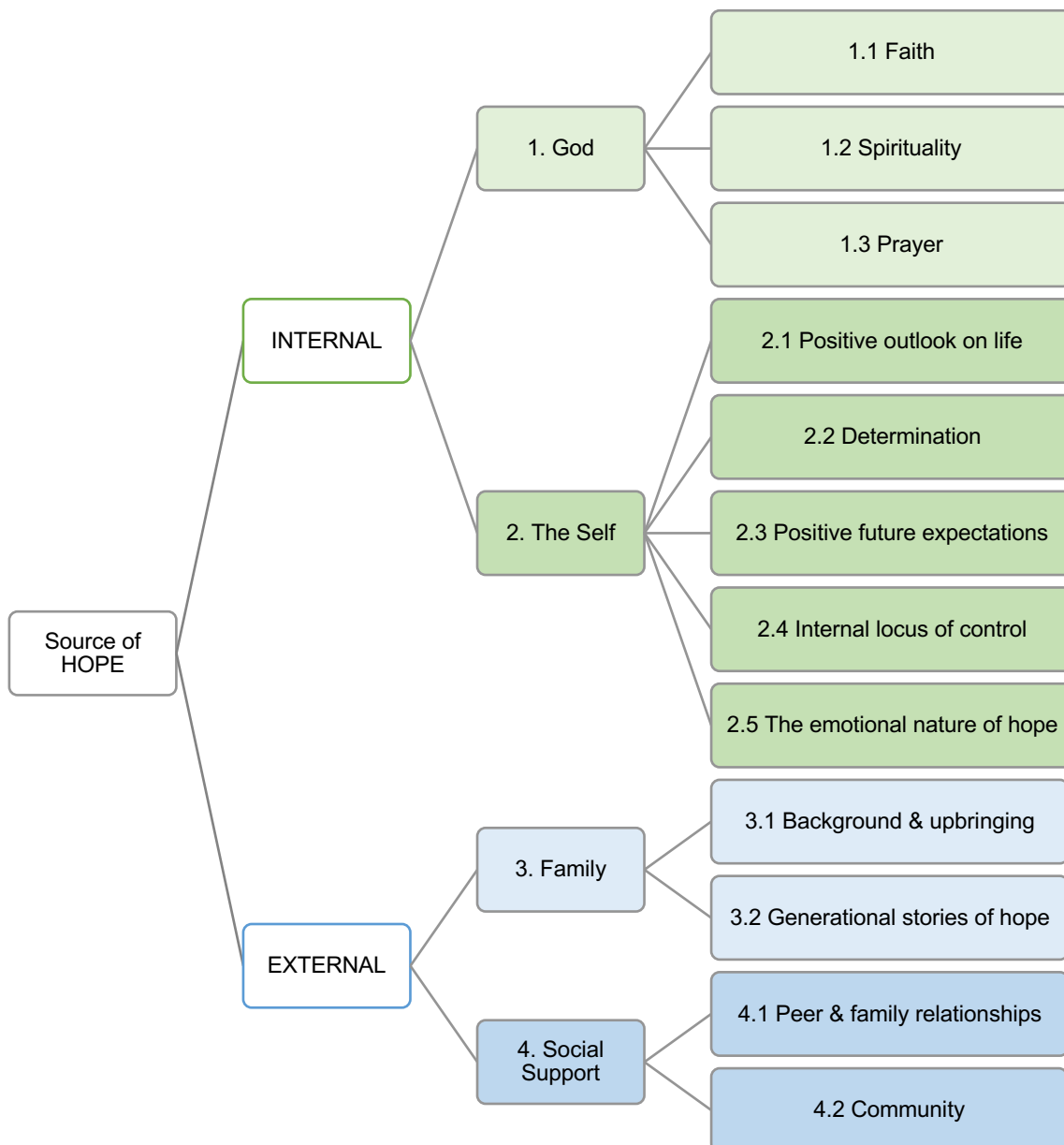
Figure 4.1: Summary of the main themes and sub-themes in their respective categories

Snyder's Hope Theory defines hope as "a cognitive set that is based on a reciprocally-derived sense of successful agency and pathways" (Snyder et al., 1991, p. 571). To understand this definition fully, it is broken down into two components, namely, agency and pathways. Agency refers to the internal mechanism that enables an individual's cognition of motivation, leading to determination and the subsequent attainment of goals. Pathways refer to an individual's recognition of strategies that can be mobilised to attain such goals. Agency and pathways therefore go hand-in-hand and represent trait-like characteristics of hope. According to Snyder (1994), these characteristics inherently exist in an individual and act enduringly across the life-span. In this case, hope can therefore be viewed as an internal resource.

Markus and Kitayama (2003) discuss the agent mentioned in Snyder's Hope Theory as the individual themselves, where an individual is in pursuit of their goals in a hopeful manner. They therefore propose the disjoint model of agency, explaining that an individual's positive attitude regarding striving to attain goals is independent of the influence of other people. This model therefore dismisses the role that external factors play, thereby obscuring the effect of support provided externally to the individual. However, other research argues against the disjoint model of agency, instead proposing the conjoint model of agency to explain that an individual's attitude and behaviour employed to obtain a goal is influenced by the societal context within which they live (Markus et al., 2006). In support of this, Miller (2003) proposed his endogenous social agency model, which was born from the conjoint model of agency. Miller's model explains that the actions that an individual takes to attain a goal in hope is as a result of their social influence, thereby acknowledging the external source of hope by implying that the individual's culture and community play a significant role in supporting them. In review of Snyder's Hope Theory, Bernardo (2010) proposes an extension of hope theory, explaining that the locus of hope is a dimension of the trait of hope, however, it can be internally or externally driven.

The findings of this study confirm Bernardo's (2010) above-mentioned proposal as the derived themes obtained from the various vignettes explore the phenomenon of hope in terms of its internal versus external influence. Furthermore, hope is identified as a trait of The Self, inferring that an individual can exercise their internal locus of control to deploy the locus of hope as a mechanism for defence and determination to proceed and succeed. The following section offers an in-depth exploration of the findings yielded from this study. This is done under the umbrella of Snyder's (1991) Hope Theory and Bernardo's (2010) extension thereof, in line with the conjoint model of agency (Markus & Kitayama, 2003), as well as Miller's (2003) endogenous social agency model.

4.3.1 Internal sources of hope

The first category, internal sources of hope, refers to all factors that were identified by the participants as inherent enablers of hope. These hope enablers are described as personally ingrained mechanisms that allow an individual to experience hope. In this category, the themes of God and The Self will be explored to understand how hope is viewed as an internal resource. In addition to the theme discussion, the sub-themes under each theme will be dissected.

4.3.1.1 Theme 1: God

For the purpose of this study, God will not be exclusively defined in order to promote inclusion and provide the acceptance of each religion. To provide a general guide, God is an omnipotent and omnipresent supreme being who embodies eternal existence. In addition to this, God is a religious-based figure or higher power who is the central object of faith (Morris, 2002). In theism, God is acknowledged as the creator of the universe who is responsible for creating, sustaining, and governing all things living and not. However, in deism, God is acknowledged as the creator of the universe who devised natural laws to determine its functioning, thereby excluding the intervention of God in the functioning of the universe (Buber, 2015).

Psychologically, Freud (1933) gave account for the belief in God, defining God as a father figure who created each individual and therefore offers protection of wellbeing in a state of mind in which an individual feels helpless in the face of the adversity posed by the dangers of the world. According to Jung (2020), God is a positive psychological construct that reflects the image of one's Self, where the true exploration of the depths of one's mind allows for self-acceptance, which is an experience of being in relation to God. Three sub-themes emerged from the theme of 'God', including faith, spirituality, and prayer. These three sub-themes are discussed below, giving body to the overarching theme of 'God'.

     i.   Sub-theme 1.1: Faith

Faith is defined as the confidence in the things hoped for and the assurance that the desired outcome will become a reality. Hick (1988, p. 200) defines hope as "the interpretative element within religious experience and as having the function of preserving our cognitive freedom in relation to God." This is substantiated by the popular definition of faith in the Oxford Dictionary, which states that faith is based on the "strong belief in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual conviction rather than proof" (Hornby et al., 2020, p. 167). In explaining the psychological foundation of faith, an excerpt from Freud (1933), which is regarded as his best-known conceptualisation of faith, is provided below:

> It gives them information about the origin and coming into existence of the universe, it assures them of its protection and of ultimate happiness in the ups and downs of life and it directs their thoughts and actions by precepts which it lays down with its whole authority. Thus it fulfils three functions; it satisfies the human thirst for knowledge; it soothes the fear that men feel of the dangers and vicissitudes of life, when it assures them of a happy ending and offers them comfort in unhappiness and lastly, it issues precepts and lays down prohibitions and restrictions (p. 161).

59

During their vignette-driven interviews, each participant alluded to their faith taking a knock due to the devastation caused and experienced as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic. During lockdown-enforced self-isolation, the participants spoke about coming to know themselves in a deeper way through questioning and exploring their faith. In relation to the above-mentioned psychological explanation of God provided by Jung, these participants experienced increased levels of hope when they felt more connected to God and themselves, which was achievable through growing their faith.

Substantiation from Vignette 1 - *Finding hope through faith*:

- "…with the guidance of our Saviour" - line 12.

Substantiation from Vignette 2 - *Hope is like a hurricane*:

- "…sharing that through COVID-forced self-isolation and subsequent spiritual reflection, she has come to know and love herself in faith" - lines 16 and 17.

Substantiation from Vignette 3 - *Hope is kindness founded in faith*:

- "…although hope may be hard to see at times, it is always there, just like God is" - lines 24 and 25.

    ii.   Sub-theme 1.2: Spirituality

According to Spencer (2012), spirituality refers to the conscious belief that a higher power, one that is greater than oneself, exists. It encapsulates the ideology that divine intervention has created a universe wherein one can explore the "enlightening universal themes of love, wisdom, truth, altruism, compassion and life after death" (Spencer, 2012, p. 1). Furthermore, spirituality ensures the believer that they are living a life of purpose, providing significant meaning for their life and existence, ultimately promoting life fulfilment. As such, King (1997, p. 668) defines spirituality as "the search for direction, meaning, inner wholeness, and connectedness to others, to non-human creation and to a transcendent."

In a study conducted on the phenomenon of spirituality, Okpalaenwe (2016) revealed a link between wellbeing and spirituality as the results indicated that spirituality aids people in living happy lives with which they are satisfied. Psychologically, spirituality involves either the healing or the affirmation of the human ego, which allows for positive mental states to be experienced. In this way, an individual's self-esteem and subsequent sense of self-worth is bolstered, freeing them from the negative constraints guarded by the ego defences (Spencer, 2012). Spirituality can therefore be understood as the human motivation to seek a higher state

of awareness and the attainment of inner peace, which then provides a platform for happiness to prevail, promoting mental health and wellbeing (Culiford, 2010).

The findings obtained from the vignettes indicated the link between positive mental states promoting wellbeing and spirituality. As a result of the COVID-19 lockdown regulations enforcing self-isolation, this was a time in which the participants reported that their faith was "put to the test" and that through connecting with their God spirituality, they were enabled to feel not only at ease with their situation, but at peace, which instilled hope in them. The findings of this study indicated that spiritual connections were strengthened during this global crisis. Where some would feel despair due to being "cut-off" from the outside world, growing their spiritual connections allowed for the participants in this study to find comfort during their isolation. This gave them certainty that hope will ensure a better outcome.

Substantiation from Vignette 2 - *Hope is like a hurricane*:

- "…searching for the light at the end of the tunnel" - lines 19 and 20.

Substantiation from Vignette 3 - *Hope is kindness founded in faith*:

- "…he came across Jesus in the form of a 70 year old woman" - lines 24 and 25.

    iii.   Sub-theme 1.3: Prayer

Prayer refers to the spiritual conversation that an individual has with (their) God. It is considered a two-way conversation in which the believer is called to listen to the answers God provides in response to the questions asked (Mazza, 1995). Payer is multidimensional as it is not only an act of seeking answers or guidance, but an offering of gratitude or worship to a higher power. In this light, prayer can take the form of singing praise, a silent conversation, or a ritualistic act (Takakuwa et al., 2004).

Prayer, like meditation, can have positive psychological benefits, such as the calming of the nervous system, as well as the calming of negative reactive and possibly psychologically distressing states. Prayer offers a way to systematically calm reactions to the experience of emotions, allowing an individual to come to a rational state of being where thoughts, feelings, and behaviours can be considered and evaluated effectively (Spilka et al., 2014). In the intrapersonal context, prayer allows an individual to connect with themselves, whilst connecting with God on a spiritual level. This leads to reduced levels of loneliness, anxiety and stress, and fear. Furthermore, prayer can promote a positive state of mind, which has subsequent positive biopsychosocial and physiological benefits (Francis & Astley, 2001).

The findings of this study indicated that prayer was the driving mechanism used to ensure spiritual connection, allowing for faith to develop and strengthen. As a result of this process, the participants explained that their mental health and wellbeing were safeguarded against adversity due to putting their faith in God through prayer, which promoted hopeful tendencies in persevering each day.

Substantiation from Vignette 1 - *Finding hope through faith*:

- "…serenity of the moment" - line 14.

Substantiation from Vignette 3 - *Hope is kindness, founded in faith*:

- "…just like God is" – line 25.

4.3.1.2 Theme 2: The Self

The Self[3], an archetype of the personality as proposed by Jung, forms the "cognitive basis of one's identity" whereby an individual can come to understand who they are and their place and functioning in society (Damon & Hart, 1982, p. 843). Self-perceptions, which are influenced by neurocognitive development and shaped by psychosocial constructs, provide the psychological narratives that individuals use to express their self-descriptions, including personality, performance and characteristic traits, as well as the social role(s) they fulfil (McAdams, 2013).

According to McAdams (2013, p. 272), the self is developed as "a reflexive arrangement of the subjective 'I' and the constructed 'Me' evolving and expanding over the human life course." Here, 'I' consists of four dimensions and the 'Me' is comprised of four constituents. The dimensions of 'I' include self-awareness, also known as self-distinctiveness, which infers: 1. The ability to differentiate oneself from others as a unique individual; 2. Self-continuity, which implies that an individual is aware of their ability to evolve and grow over the course of their life; 3. Self-agency, which refers to an individual's self-awareness in making their own decisions and acting independently, and 4. Self-reflectivity, where individuals have the ability to reflect on the awareness of the afore-mentioned aspects of the 'I'. The constituents of 'Me' include the self in the "active, physical, psychological and social" forms (Białecka-Pikul et al., 2020, p. 86).

---

[3] *The Self represents one of Jung's archetypes where the conscious and unconscious states of an individual are integrated through aspects of one's personality to represent the optimal, fully functioning psyche (Jung, 1966).*

In the theme of The Self, four sub-themes emerged, including: a positive outlook on life; determination; positive future expectations; and an internal locus of control. All of these will be discussed in the section to follow, thereby giving body to the theme of The Self.

i.   Sub-theme 2.1: Positive outlook on life

This sub-theme highlighted the value of acquiring and sustaining a positive attitude or mindset with which to approach life, with all the adversity it presents, in an optimistic manner. In developing such a positive mindset, the notion of subjectivity, wellbeing must be exercised in order to promote optimism, which is necessary when facing adversity with the determination to overcome it and believe that good is to come. According to Diener et al. (as cited in Snyder & Lopez, 2002), subjective wellbeing refers to an individual's ability to evaluate their life both affectively and cognitively. Subjective wellbeing therefore forms the foundation of positive psychology as it calls an individual to experience enjoyable emotions, coupled with minimal moods that are negative in nature, and subsequently high levels of interpreted life satisfaction (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 2006).

The findings of this study indicated that when adversity is faced with optimism, individuals are inclined to feel hopeful about overcoming the experienced (current) challenge with determination, thereby causing them to become excited at the prospects of the future. Acquiring and nurturing a positive outlook on life therefore aids an individual in developing hopeful tendencies that allow them to view life through 'rose-tinted glasses'.

Substantiation from Vignette 1 - *Finding hope through faith*:

- "…he shares that there is more to life and that hope can get you there" - lines 11 and 12.
- "His face lights up, his smile beaming and his eyes glistening" – lines 14 and 15.

Substantiation from Vignette 2 - *Hope is like a hurricane*:

- "…searching for the light at the end of the tunnel" - lines 19 and 20.

Substantiation from Vignette 3 - *Hope is kindness founded in faith*:

- "…he came across Jesus in the form of a 70 year old woman" - lines 24 and 25.

ii.   Sub-theme 2.2: Determination

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT), proposed by Deci and Ryan (1985), distinguishes between two types of motivation, which give rise to determination. These are intrinsic

motivation and extrinsic motivation, which have developed due to various actions being carried out to achieve specific goals. Intrinsic motivation pertains to the desire to do or achieve something based on its inherent interest or level of enjoyment in the eyes of an individual. This satisfies psychological needs, leading to aspired personal development and the growth of autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2008). On the contrary, extrinsic motivation is based on the desire to achieve based on the instrumental value of the achievement, reflecting the extrinsic aspirations of image, wealth, fame, and other related materialistic status attainment. These are shaped by the influence of the social norms governed by society (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The findings of this study indicated that the intrinsic motivation goals used to promote wellbeing were achieved when hope allowed for the autonomy of the participants to be strengthened. With an increased sense of autonomy, the participants explained that hope paved the way for owning their subjective thoughts and feelings pertaining to positive experiences, and the hope for a better future. In this way, the phenomenon of hope was central to the participants remaining determined to experience increased life satisfaction despite the personal struggles, adversity, and depression faced.

Substantiation from Vignette 1 - *Finding hope through faith*:

- "…he shares that there is more to life and that hope can get you there" - lines 11 and 12.

Substantiation from Vignette 2 - *Hope is like a hurricane*:

- "…searching for the light at the end of the tunnel" - lines 19 and 20.

- "…finding herself through her struggles" - line 20.

Substantiation from Vignette 3 - *Hope is kindness founded in faith*:

- "He says to me that no matter the situation, there is always a reason to be kind" - lines 23 and 24.

    iii.   Sub-theme 2.3: Positive future expectations

Positive future expectation refers to the inherent belief that favourable outcomes will prevail despite the uncertainty of what is yet to come (Scioli, 2007). This belief is built on the premise of optimism, which, in this study, advocates for optimal development and in doing so, encourages healthy outcomes that elevate wellbeing (Stoddard & Pierce, 2015). Adopting a mindset that embraces positive future expectations serves as a positive form of self-propelled psychological intervention.

In this sub-theme, hope emerged as a facilitator of a positive psychological intervention where positive thoughts, feelings, and behaviours could be cultivated through a positive interpretation of life experiences (Parks et al., 2012). Hope therefore served as a tool to alleviate suffering, thereby protecting and promoting wellbeing. This aligned with reports from the participants stating that they believed that through hope, they knew their suffering was temporary and that good was yet to come.

Substantiation from Vignette 1 - *Finding hope through faith*:

- "…he shares that there is more to life and that hope can get you there" - lines 11 and 12.

Substantiation from Vignette 2 - *Hope is like a hurricane*:

- "…searching for the light at the end of the tunnel" - lines 19 and 20.

Substantiation from Vignette 3 - *Hope is kindness founded in faith*:

- "…he opens up about his life experiences" - line 6.

iv.   Sub-theme 2.4: Internal locus of control

Locus of control refers to the causal relationship between an individual's attitude and the resultant consequences of the behaviour that is exhibited through their attitude towards an event. An internal locus of control refers to the belief that "what happens in one's life is the result of one's own actions", whilst an external locus of control refers to the belief that what happens in one's life occurs haphazardly by external events and factors (Buddelmeyer et al., 2016, p. 1). An internal locus of control aids the belief that an individual is in control of their life. This therefore acts as a psychological buffer against potentially harmful negative events and experiences to which an individual may be exposed, thereby developing psychological resilience and promoting wellbeing. This is achieved when an individual makes the conscious decision to adapt their mindset so as to overcome adversity by combating negative resultant experiences with optimism. This mindset leads to constructive and favourable thoughts, feelings, and resulting behaviour (actions) (Rotter, 1966).

Substantiation from Vignette 2 - *Hope is like a hurricane*:

- "…she notes that how you choose to face the trials and tribulations of the storms ahead and what you do with your pain and hurt, decides your life trajectory" - lines 7-9.

- "…she realises that she is her own source of hope and strength" - lines 21 and 22.

Substantiation from Vignette 3 - *Hope is kindness founded in faith*:

- "He carries himself with confidence" - line 4.

- "He shares that through this experience he has learned to not lean on others so much" - lines 11 and 12.

    v.   Sub-theme 2.5: The emotional nature of hope

Throughout human existence, the phenomenon of hope has been a topic of interest in its enduring ability to manifest in all aspects of life and functioning, thereby occupying space in human nature. Hope has been endorsed by both the "spatially minded and most atheist philosophers and scientists" (Scioli et al., 2011, p. 78). In their study, Scioli et al. (2011) set out to define hope so as to explain its nature, role, and value in human experience. The following excerpt defines the nature of hope according to Scioli et al. (2011):

> We define hope as a future-directed, four-channel emotion network, constructed from biological, psychological, and social resources. The four constituent channels are the mastery, attachment, survival, and spiritual systems (or subnetworks). The hope network is designed to regulate these systems via both feed-forward (expansion) and feedback processes (maintenance) that generate a greater perceived probability of power and presence as well as protection and liberation (p. 79).

The findings from the vignette-driven interviews indicated a strong association between the phenomenon of hope and positive emotions, which were used to explain their expectation of a better future. This correlates formidably with research on hope conducted by Richman et al. (2005), which indicated that hope is an emotion that "encompasses optimism and other positive points of view" (p. 423). Averill et al. (1990) liken the phenomenon of hope to an experienced emotion, explaining that like any emotion that elicits feelings and guides behaviour, controlling it may be hard. The emotion of hope, as well as the emotions that arise from hope as a result of the four-channel emotion network, allows for an individual to regulate their responses to their environment so as to attain a desired goal or outcome that will benefit them psychologically, thereby aiding the control of hope through the utilisation of an internal locus of control.

The findings of this study revealed the importance of being in tune with one's emotions, listening to the guidance of hope provided through the experience of emotions. The research participants recollected past experiences of being emotionally cut off from the reality they had to endure, and how such a dissociation depleted internal sources of motivation to carry on. One participant expressed that being emotionally dead is not far off from being physically

dead, and although the path to becoming aware of one's emotional experiences is a process of tenacity, it provides hope for becoming self-aware and emotionally complete.

Substantiation from Vignette 1 - *Finding hope through faith*:

- "…his voice drops and he clenches his jaw, causing the muscles in his cheeks to tremble ever so slightly" - lines 5 and 6.

- "…warm and happy laughter" - line 16.

Substantiation from Vignette 2 *Hope is like a hurricane*:

- "…she smiles" - line 16. Rose indicated that she no longer felt emotionally detached, that she has come to a stage in her life where she felt more aware of her emotions and that this awareness was guided through hope.

Substantiation from Vignette 3 - *Hope is kindness founded in faith*:

- "…emotional turmoil" – line 14. Joe shared that he feared being emotionally dead as it is the closest thing to being physically dead. He expressed that through hope for the future, he was reconnecting with himself on an emotional level, allowing himself to experience a range of emotions, which, in turn, assisted him in his personal growth.

- "…raw emotion revealed in his piercing blue eyes" - lines 6 and 7. When sharing his experiences of hope, Joe teared up as he reflected on his past and how far he had come with the guidance of God through hope.

- "As he clears his throat and rubs his eyes" - line 16. Joe became overwhelmed with emotion as he spoke about hope and how hope encouraged him to survive.

4.3.2 External sources of hope

The second category, external sources of hope, refers to all of the factors that were identified by the participants as external aspects influencing the existence, development, and role of hope as a tool to combat adversity and promote wellbeing. In this category, hope was instilled in the participants via external influences that promoted the subjective experience of hope.

The two themes of family and support, each having two sub-themes, outline how the phenomenon of hope was passed on and taught via unobtrusive accounts.

4.3.2.1 Theme 3: Family

Family forms a basic unit of society wherein individual physical and mental growth takes place and is promoted. A family is made up of multiple members, with each member having significant influence on the others, therefore impacting the growth of every member. Family functioning is influenced by not only each member, but the operational processes of the social system and relational context within which the family finds themselves living (Carr, 2012). Furthermore, the functioning of the family is impacted by the characteristics of the family as a system. Seeing that the family is essentially a system, it is therefore comprised of interacting sub-systems; individual members of a family coexist within such systems. The sub-themes in the section to follow discuss how family members can influence an individual's hope concept through 1) The development of hope in the family, and 2) How hope is passed on from one generation to another.

i.   Sub-theme 3.1: Background and upbringing

The findings of this study indicated that the extent to which hope was present in the lives of influential family members during the development of the participants in their childhood and adolescent years impacted their experiences of hope, both then and currently. The participants all explained how at least one family member embodied hope for them. In this way, hope was revealed to them and presented in the form of an individual. This sub-theme was discovered when the participants were posed the question, "Who gives you hope?", to which each participant responded by explaining how a family member succeeded in overcoming adversity by having hope. These family members further conducted themselves in a manner in which hope guided favourable mindsets to aid in overcoming devastation. The participants further explained how by witnessing this, their outlook on the phenomenon of hope was developed to adopt the coping mechanisms that were modelled by influential family members. In this way, each participant was influenced by hope.

Substantiation from the interview giving rise to Vignette 1 - *Finding hope through faith*:

- Matthew opened up about his older brother's past and that, through witnessing him struggle but then succeed in overcoming his adversity, this instilled in Matthew the hope he needed in order to believe that he could conquer and achieve all that he set his mind to accomplish.

Substantiation from the interview giving rise to Vignette 2 - *Hope is like a hurricane*:

- Rose spoke about how her grandmother practised kindness towards all people, even though she experienced struggles living through the trying times of the Apartheid

regime. Rose explained that her grandmother believed in being hopeful no matter the situation, and this had helped shape the way in which she conducted herself.

Substantiation from the interview giving rise to Vignette 3 - *Hope is kindness founded in faith*:

- Joe spoke about his parents' journey in life thus far – how they had undergone career changes to support his family. Joe shared that his parents had faced their challenges with a hopeful attitude, which inspired him to do the same.

ii.   Sub-theme 3.2: Generational stories of hope

In exploring the phenomenon of hope, the participants reflected on how hope acted in assisting them to maintain and sustain their mental health, promoting their wellbeing. They referenced how hope served to support their elders and/or ancestors, and how these stories of hope influenced them today in using hope to persevere. The phenomenon of hope has therefore been transferred from one generation to the next, empowering the current generation (the participants) to utilise hope in facing and overcoming adversity.

Substantiation from Vignette 1 - *Finding hope through faith* for both sub-themes:

- "He reminisces about a fond memory with his father and brothers" - line 15. During the vignette-driven interview, Matthew spoke about his brother's turbulent past. He explained that through watching his brother succeed despite his adversity, Matthew had been instilled with hope for the future. He expressed that if his brother could overcome his challenges, he felt hopeful that he could too.

Substantiation from Vignette 2 - *Hope is like a hurricane* for both sub-themes:

- "She remembers a time in her life when she experienced emotional detachment to her traumas" – lines 14 and 15. During the vignette-driven interview, Rose spoke about her grandmother's illness and her death, and how memories of her grandmother gave her hope for the future. Moreover, Rose reminisced about the stories of hope her grandmother shared and stories that her mother still shared. She explained how these stories regarding how the elders in her family triumphed and succeeded despite their great adversity gave her hope to persevere to perform to the best of her ability.

Substantiation from Vignette 3 - *Hope is kindness founded in faith* for both sub-themes:

- "…he opens up about this life experiences" – line 6. In the vignette-driven interview, Joe shared that his parents gave him hope, explaining how they had raised him and his brother, the paths they had taken to provide for their family, and getting them to where they are today. In addition to this, Joe described his grandparents, sharing that

they worked in psychiatric hospitals, and how their care for others not only inspires him, but instilled hope in him for his future career as a doctor, as well as hope in general for the future.

4.3.2.2 Theme 4: Social Support

For the purpose of this study, support is defined by the extent to which an individual is provided with encouragement and uplifting mental structures that enable their psychological success (Tol et al., 2011). This definition embodies psychosocial support, which refers to the synonymous relationship that exists between an individual and the collective aspects of the community in which they live and function. Support in this regard promotes self-efficacy through social connectedness, promoting both calming and hopeful experiences that ultimately lead to feelings of safety, which safeguards one's mental health and wellbeing (Stroebe & Stroebe, 1996). The sub-themes of peer and family relationships, as well as community give body to how support is provided and perceived. This will be discussed among the research findings in the section to follow.

    iii.   Sub-theme 4.1: Peer and family relationships

In this theme, support was explored in relation to the quality of the relationships an individual has with their peers and family. The findings indicated that relationships in which support was provided to the individual made them feel hopeful about their current circumstance, as well as future expectations. Considering that this research was conducted during the global pandemic of COVID-19, the participants spoke about COVID-enforced self-isolation where they were physically distanced from those closest to them. This created the opportunity for support to either be severed or continued through different channels of communication. The findings yielded from this study revealed the significance of support from loved ones during times of adversity. When emotional support is provided, in any form, individuals feel connected. This connection stimulates mental health, allowing for wellbeing to be heightened through feeling cared for and loved. Humans have a deep desire to belong and, through emotionally sustaining relationships, an individual feels that they are an active stakeholder in the society within which they exist, thereby giving meaning to their life (Frank et al., 1988).

    iv.   Sub-theme 4.2: Community

In terms of support, the community forms an individual's social network, which refers to the "web of social relationships surrounding an individual, in particular, structural features, such as the type and strength of each social relationship" (Umberson & Karas Montez, 2010, p. 54-55). The findings indicated that in times of struggle, individuals not only turn to their peers and

70

family for support, but their community too. A community serves as a collective tool to aid in the adaptive functioning of the units of a society, enabling such units to unite and work as a coherent system. With regard to the specific findings of this study, hope was provided through the community of 1) The church, 2) Elders, 3) Peers/friends at the University of Pretoria, and 4) Team mates within an individual's sports team.

Substantiation from Vignette 1 - *Finding hope through faith* for both sub-themes:

- "…with his father and brothers" - line 15.

Substantiation from Vignette 2 - *Hope is like a hurricane* for both sub-themes:

- "…desire to connect with others" - line 11.

Substantiation from Vignette 3 - *Hope is kindness founded in faith* for both sub-themes:

- "…he considers his friends, family and community as his greatest support structure" - lines 12 and 13.

4.4. INTEGRATION OF THE FINDINGS THAT EMERGED FROM THE FIVE OVERARCHING THEMES

Based on the findings presented in each theme, this study contends that hope exists on a spectrum or timeline where hope can be explored in the past, present, and future. The diagram below (Figure 4.2) indicates the development, transference, and subsequent pathway of influence of hope over time.
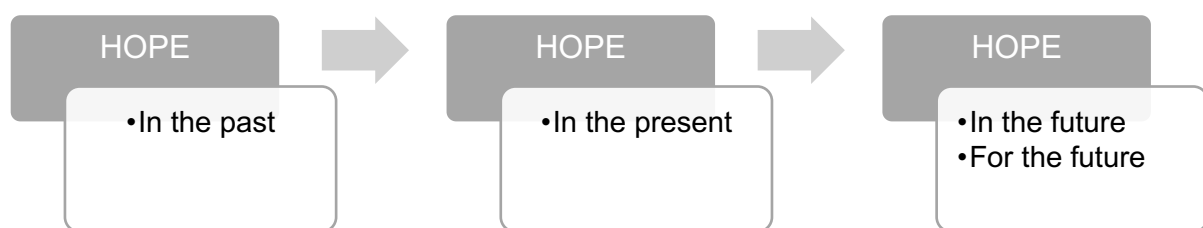

Figure 4.2: Hope on a spectrum

Hope, as it presented in the experiences of the young student leaders in this study, escapes the confines of the contemporary. It is simultaneously future-focused and deeply rooted in personal histories. It embraces the current moment, but it does so by liberating the individual from the self in order to welcome the broader community (both past and present) into personal and spiritual experiences. An analysis of the research findings indicated that the phenomenon of hope, for these participants, was present in all spheres of life, having roots in ancestral

71

beliefs and ways of life. The way in which the phenomenon was transferred through family members pertains to the intergenerational transcendence of hope. Hope can therefore be understood as an integral part of culture that is relevant and applicable across all cultures. The stories shared by the participants pertained to the struggles endured by grandparents, parents and siblings. The phenomenon of hope was clearly present in each case, mobilising perseverance to overcome adversity, which gives evidence to the applicability of the influence of hope in safeguarding and sustaining wellbeing across generations.

Hope serves to support individuals in the present when they rely on stories of hope passed down to them from previous generations. The participants explained that hearing how their loved ones utilised hope to succeed provided them with the motivation and determination to do the same. Hope therefore serves as an influential driving factor that encourages success and the promotion of mental health and wellbeing, thereby protecting individuals from the harmful consequences of undesirable events and circumstances.

As a result of the intergenerational stories of hope, the participants reported that no matter the uncertainty the future may behold, they felt confident in adopting positive attitudes and executing the positive resultant behaviours in line with the guidance of hope. Intergenerational stories of hope, which carried their loved ones through adversity gave them the ability to adequately adapt to their situational contexts in a manner that was conducive to overcoming any and every challenging obstacle that could arise.

The research findings of this study correlated with findings from a study conducted by Wallace et al. (2014) titled 'Stories for Hope - Rwanda: a psychological–archival collaboration to promote healing and cultural continuity through intergenerational dialogue'. A golden link has been found between both studies, highlighting how the phenomenon of hope, when passed from one generation to another through story-telling, aids in supporting mental health by promoting wellbeing. South Africa is a rainbow nation, home to a multitude of people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Here, the influence of culture contributes to individual functioning in daily life. The phenomenon of hope is thus central and common across cultures. It can therefore be concluded that hope plays an influential function psychosocially and psychologically for young student leaders during times of adversity.

4.5. CONCLUSION

A final vignette has been crafted to epitomise the findings of the study.

> "Hope is potential. Hope is power."

In a world plagued with devastation and uncertainty, which is felt in all "corners" of the globe, in all sections of society and across age groups, the cloak enclosing fear has been lifted through the powers of hope. Hope, a silent saviour, serves to safeguard those who enable it through permitting its presence, which promotes its everlasting potential to protect and persevere in promoting positive mental states.

Like God, faith and spirituality, the phenomenon of hope cannot be seen, but it can be tangibly felt in the emotions it wraps around an individual. This leads to determined motivation to guide a life that is supported by its benefits. Hope has stood the test of time, with its roots established and evident in ancestral stories, which are relevant today in the modern world. At times, the light shed on hope may be dim, but it is always there, trying to muster the fuel to burn bright. This fuel is provided when its ability is uncovered and acknowledged. As such, hope is ubiquitous, despite the level or type of adversity that exists through the years.

To have hope is to be inspired to leap with great expectation for all future endeavours.

In the following, final chapter, the answers to the research question posed in Chapter 1 will be answered in light of the research findings covered in Chapter 4. In addition to this, the limitations, contributions, and opportunities for future research are discussed.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to explore the multitude of ways in which the phenomenon of hope exists and manifests to support South African youth in combating adversity so as to overcome it. As indicated in Chapter 2, hope can be interpreted in a variety of ways, and its resultant power lies in the subjective experience of the individual undergoing life transitions, trying times of adversity, or awaiting the uncertainty of the future. In each circumstance, hope was perceived to be an active agent of positive anticipation, which was reflected in the research findings explored in Chapter 4. Bearing the research finding's themes and sub-themes in mind, Chapter 5 provides a conspectus of the research findings by addressing the research questions posed in Chapter 1 of this study. Thereafter, the contributions and challenges of the study will be discussed, concluding with recommendations for future research.

5.2. REFLECTING ON THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to address the primary research question, it is essential that the secondary questions be addressed first as they shaped the direction of the study. These were guided by the theoretical framework based on by Snyder's Hope Theory (Snyder, 2002). The secondary research questions were answered from data obtained during the vignette-driven interviews, which subsequently provided rich data with which to address the primary research question.

5.2.1 Secondary research questions

5.2.1.1 How is hope perceived by South African youth?

The participants in this study collectively perceived hope as being a driving force promising a better future. The participants' expectations for the future were thus grounded in a sense of optimism in the present, yet simultaneously deeply rooted in the past. The participants adopted a malleable mental state that is rooted in a sense of hopefulness. This allowed them to execute daily functioning and future orientated thought in a self-efficacious manner where emotions that benefited a positive sense of wellbeing were welcomed and fostered. In this way, hope was perceived as being an 'emotion' as well as both a 'noun' and a 'verb', as discussed in Chapter 2.

These findings reiterate those of Smith et al. (2018) in their study, 'AYA Hope: the impact of hope in adolescents and young adults with cancer in the North American context'. In terms of the COVID-19 pandemic, a positive psychology study by Waters et al. (2021) highlights the significance of hope and its power to support mental health during times of devastation and uncertainty. Similar to Smith et al. (2018) and Waters et al.'s (2021) studies, the current study confirms the importance of having hope, which fosters positive emotions so that optimism for the future can be perceived and prevail as a driving force towards enabling wellbeing.

In terms of youth leadership at the University of Pretoria, being hope-orientated whilst dealing with the uncertainty of the future or diverse stressors that arise in the student body, proves to be a prevailing pillar in providing structure and subsequent support to peers in need of mechanisms to safeguard their mental health.

5.2.1.2 How does hope assist individuals in their journey towards wellbeing?

The findings from this study indicate that hope assists in the promotion of wellbeing. This is the case as the phenomenon of hope often forms psychological capital. This enables engagement in multiple methods of solution-focused thought to strategically plan, set, and achieve desired goals in a flexible, productive and successful manner – as indicated by the participants in this study. In addition to this, hope acts as a psychological force that buffers against negative and potentially harmful or stressful events and/or circumstances. It does this by equipping individuals with the essential tools or skills to effectively deal with adversity proactively. In this instance, hope seemed to have increased self-efficacy, which in turn, builds autonomy. This refers to when an individual feels that they are in control of their life and can therefore respond proactively to the events occurring therein.

The multidimensional, interacting concepts of hope and wellbeing, which are comprised of "cognition (expectation and satisfaction) and emotion (anticipation and affect)" have been indicated to directly influence motivation in other studies too (Pleeging et al., 2021, p. 2019). In accordance with Snyder's Hope Theory, the findings in this study indicate that when an individual is more hopeful, they are more attuned to seeking out possibilities. They are also more likely to attain multiple methods of achievement by exploring various opportunities that support their endeavours, allowing them to accomplish that which they aim to achieve. Furthermore, the findings reiterated Snyder's Hope Theory in that when hope is mobilised, it enables individuals to become determined to persevere in pursuing their personal goals. When such goals are achieved, an experience of success driven and accomplished by self-fulfilling valuations increases perceived happiness (Bailey et al., 2007; Snyder, 2000).

In this regard, the findings of this study resonate with the Broaden and Build Theory, which aligns with Snyder's Hope Theory (Fredrickson 2001; Snyder & Lopez, 2002). The Broaden and Build Theory explains how hope encourages the exploration of positive emotions, which, sequentially, promotes the experience of broader subjective wellbeing (Frederickson, 2004). This is due to such individuals feeling more self-aware and confident to maximise personal growth through approaching new situations as opportunities to learn. Individuals are further inspired to gain not only new life experiences, but a plethora of new insights, skills and tools with which to approach life and progress, despite uncertainty (Frederickson, 2001). The experience of positive emotions ensures that an individual responds to situations with flexibility, thereby experiencing reduced negative ramifications. The participants explained that when hope was present, the experience of positive emotions was promoted as they felt at ease and satisfied with their life experiences, and experienced enjoyment in life. In this way, hope brings about life satisfaction, which brings about happiness, bolstering subjective wellbeing. This cognitive assessment of life satisfaction links to the psychological ideation of a desired life weighed against the emotional affect balance, which advocates for heightened wellbeing.

5.2.1.3 How can hope positively affect the lives of South African youth?

The findings of this study indicate that hope positively affects the lives of these South African youths in a multitude of ways. When the psychological trait of hope is acknowledged, it can be activated to protect against the harmful consequences of adversity. In the same vein, hope instils the confidence and conviction in an individual to believe in themselves, and to achieve the dreams to which they aspire. Furthermore, hope assists in creating pathways to achieve personal goals through capitalising on thought agency to develop the skill of hope, as indicated by Snyder et al. (1991) and Harris and Mumford (2021). As a result, hope promotes increased wellbeing and general health by reducing depressive symptoms and the negative impact of stress (Duggal et al., 2016). Moreover, hope enables an individual to regulate their emotions, operate in a resilient mental state, and subsequently face adversity with a mirror mind and vigour to succeed. This was indicated by research participant, Matthew, when he spoke about his drive to become successful with the support of his Saviour. This was further shown by research participant, Joe, when he shared that being vulnerable to experience his emotions allowed him to have hope for being alive. Research participant, Rose, also alluded to developing a resilient mind, which had been shaped by the women in her family who had instilled in her a hope for the present and future. The participants in this study believed that the biggest benefit of hope lies in its ability to influence perceived quality of life in a positive manner. This is when positive emotions arise from adopting a hopeful mindset, which

simultaneously makes the uncertainty of the future less daunting. This, in turn, leads to a reduced experience of anxiety, depression, fear, and stress. The findings of this study indicated that the phenomenon of hope inspires the youth to 'dream big', and empowers them to function optimally in an environment by conducting themselves using a resource conservation approach.

5.2.2 Primary research question

In this section, I provide the answer to the primary research question stated in Chapter 1:

How does hope manifest for South African youth during times of adversity?

The findings of this study indicate that the phenomenon of hope manifests as a characteristic trait where thoughts, feelings and behaviours arising from hope are either internally or externally driven, i.e. locus of hope. Internal sources of hope, which relate to generalised, particularised, and transformational spheres of hope support an individual. Moreover, all six dimensions of hope include personally-ingrained mechanisms to self-support an individual in their journey towards positive mental states and increased wellbeing. Internal sources of hope therefore exist within the individual and can be utilised at any point, and can be evaluated and developed for future benefit. This type of hope arose as a resource of the mind, personal agency, attitudes, beliefs, thoughts, and mental strategies to systematically acquire and cultivate hope. Conversely, external sources of hope exist outside of the individual and need to be acknowledged and accessed for use. In this study, this type of hope served as a resource provided by family, friends and community members where the importance of relationships and storytelling was highlighted. Moreover, external sources of hope were focused on the support structures in place that enable an individual to combat adversity in a hopeful manner.

These findings were indicated in the stories of hope shared by the participants. Matthew indicated that for him, hope stemmed largely from his belief structure, which provided him comfort through payer during challenging times. In this instance, hope can be viewed as a solely internal source, however, Matthew shared additional stories where hope emanated from the experiences through which his brother battled. In that case, hope stemmed from an additional external source where it was cultivated and passed on to Matthew. With regard to Rose's life journey, hope had been a shining light directing her path towards happiness and success as a result of the hopeful stories told to her by her grandmother and mother. In this context, hope is viewed as an external source that was adopted, which then influenced Rose's beliefs and attitudes. This subsequently shaped her internal locus of hope, and locus of control, thereby metamorphosing to become an internal source of hope too. When considering Joe's experience of hope, Joe expressed that he tended to lean on others for support,

however, just prior to the study, he had made the conscious shift to make himself vulnerable to the process of experiencing his emotions so that he could come to own them and, as a result, come to know himself truly and deeply. In exploring his experiences of hope, it was discovered that although hope was provided through the support of others (external), Joe's primary source of hope originated as an internal source. This was evident in that Joe fostered hope for the future by reinforcing his faith, internal locus of control, and cultivating positive emotions from his experiences of hope.

5.3. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

This study contributes to existing knowledge on the benefits of hope and how hope is utilised to support wellbeing in students. In this study, hope was explored as an abundant resource to assist South African youth in combating and overcoming their adversity. With specific regard to student leaders at the University of Pretoria fulfilling the Wellbeing Portfolio in their respective residences, hope was found to be a central force enabling coping, reducing stress and negative mental states, providing certainty for the future, and promoting resultant wellbeing. Considering the circumstance of not only South African youth, but people globally, hope has become a pillar of strength, supporting people in overcoming their personal adversity and, collectively, the adversity brought about as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This study therefore sheds light on the significance of hope and how it can pave the way to a brighter future that promises increased wellbeing.

As a pioneering vignette-driven methodological study in South Africa, this study also provides insight into vignette research in the South African context. The ethical parameters of conducting such research, as well as the methods undertaken to deliver authentic, raw and rich data has been provided to create an awareness of vignette research and the benefits of the life co-experiences shared in an authentic manner.

5.4. CHALLENGES OF THE STUDY

Considering that the field of vignette research is a new domain of research discovery, conducting research using this methodology was overwhelming at first as it opens up endless possibilities for the conduction, conceptualisation, and interpretation of data. Vignette research requires the researcher to submerge themselves in the process fully. It further requires the researcher to become intuitively aware of every happening occurring around them and the participant whilst in a vignette-driven interview session. The ability to zone in and out to capture elements of pathos pertaining to the authenticity of the moments shared in vignette-driven interview sessions served as a challenge at first. However, once familiarity with the

process was established, the conduction and extraction of data became a fluid experience of co-experience. A second challenge arose from the denseness of the data extrapolated from the vignette-driven interviews as deciphering how to mould the vignettes during the crafting process proved to be a delicate process of creation. Nonetheless, it was discovered that letting thoughts and experiences flow naturally allowed for the most genuine interpretations and representations of data to reveal themselves within the vignettes.

5.5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- This study was conducted at only one South African university. Expanding to conduct research with students at other universities may enrich the findings.

- The study created in-depth understandings of experiences of hope in youth during times of adversity. However, broader representation in terms of student demographics in future studies may yield further insights into the experiences of hope in this population.

- This was the first Master's degree dissertation in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria that utilised the Innsbruck Vignette research method. The researcher, therefore, did not have the benefit of consulting previous studies.

5.6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations regarding future research, practice, and teaching can be considered.

5.6.1 Recommendations for future research

Based on the findings of this study, the following measures are recommended for future research:

- Exploring the internal and external sources of hope in student leaders during *and after* their leadership positions.

- Expanding the conceptual interrogations of intergenerational vignettes of hope by engaging intergenerational participants (where possible).

- Exploring youth experiences of hope via purely quantitative methods such as hope-themed questionnaires in order to capture and analyse the (potential) correlations between social support and the family.

79

- In-depth case studies on the role of faith, spirituality, and prayer in the youth's experiences of hope.

- Vignette research on each of the sub-themes on the Self that emerged from this study, i.e. 'positive outlook on life', 'determination', 'positive future expectations', 'internal locus of control' and 'the emotional nature of hope' in youth during adversity.

- With mental health concerns rising both locally and globally, this study also suggests that the Wellbeing portfolio fulfilled by student leaders at the University of Pretoria is one of critical importance. Future research could consider the ongoing support that is provided to such student leaders, who may need additional support and coping structures in place when assisting peers who are in need of support. Bearing in mind the phrase 'one cannot pour from an empty cup', future research could therefore focus on the possibility of implementing hope and wellbeing support sessions for student leaders. This could be conducted by the helping professions and student educational psychologists.

- An intervention study where hope is developed as a tool to provide support to individuals in need.

- A follow-up study to measure the prevalence of hope over time, and to examine its success in promoting strategies to overcome adversity and achieve increased wellbeing.

- A follow-up study to identify whether new themes of hope have emerged as enablers to assist youth in overcoming adversity.

5.6.2 Recommendations for future practice

- The provision of hope interventions with student leaders to combat adverse experiences during the leadership term.

- The use of vignettes to deepen shared experiences of hope through submersion in the process of co-experience.

- Actively pursuing deeper understandings of intergenerational experiences of hope, as well as its influence on modern day life.

5.6.3 Recommendations for teaching in Educational Psychology

- Inserting hope interventions in the curricula of counsellors and educational psychologists.

- Acknowledging the transcendent potential of hope interventions in an emerging democracy.

- Utilising vignettes in the clinical training of psychologists in order to deepen the 'co-experiences' and the development of empathetic skills, which will advocate for even greater practical and compassionate training.

5.7. CLOSING REMARKS

Hope serves as a pillar of strength to those seeking to overcome personal challenges with determination and optimism for the future. Hope is therefore an essential puzzle piece in the steps taken to strive for success. The trials and tribulations that individuals are exposed to on the emotional rollercoaster that is life can feel daunting and difficult to emerge from successfully. However, in the words of South African leader, Desmond Tutu, "Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness." This study uncovers how hope serves as a mechanism to combat adversity and assist South African youth in developing agency pathways that make hope a sustainable source of psychological strength.

Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul and sings the tune without the words and never stops at all – Emily Dickinson

---ooOoo---

REFERENCE LIST

Abakpa, B., Agbo-Egwu, A., & Abah, J. (2017). Emphasizing phenomenology as a research paradigm for interpreting growth and development in mathematics education. *Mathematics Education Series, 42*(1), 391-405.

Aldwin, C. (2011). Stress and coping across the lifespan. In S. Folkman (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of stress, health, and coping* (pp. 15–34). Oxford University Press.

Almedom, A. M., & Glandon, D. (2007). Resilience is not the absence of PTSD any more than health is the absence of disease. *Journal of Loss and Trauma, 12*, 127-143. https://doi.org/10.1080/15325020600945962.

Amani, R. (2016). Happiness in the Elderly: The role of self-esteem. *Aging Psychology, 2*(1), 80-73.

Anda, R., Butchart, A., Felitti, V., & Brown, D. (2010). Building a Framework for Global Surveillance of the Public Health Implications of Adverse Childhood Experiences. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 39*(1), 93-98. http://doi/10.1016/j.amepre.2010.03.015.

Athanasou, J. A., Di Fabio, A., Elias, M. J., Ferreira, R., Gitchel, W. D., Jansen, J. D., & Mpofu, E. (2012). *Complete your thesis or dissertation successfully: practical guidelines*. Juta.

Bailey, T. C., Eng, W., Frishch, M. B., & Snyder, C. R. (2007). Hope and optimism as related to life satisfaction. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 2*(3), 168–175. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760701409546.

Barilan, Y. M. (2012). From hope in palliative care to hope as a virtue and a life skill. *Philosophy, Psychiatry & Psychology, 19*(3), 165-181. https://doi.org/10.1353/ppp.2012.0040.

Bernardo, A. B. I. (2010). Extending hope theory: internal and external locus of trait hope. *Personality and Individual Differences, 49*(8), 944–949. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2010.07.036.

Bok, D. (1986). *Higher Learning*. Harvard University Press.

Białecka-Pikul, M., Szpak, M., Zubek, J., Bosacki, S., & Kołodziejczyk, A. (2020). The psychological self and advanced theory of mind in adolescence. *Self and Identity, 19*(1), 85–104. https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2018.1538900.

Bilsen, J. (2018). Suicide and Youth: Risk Factors. *Frontiers In Psychiatry*, *9*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2018.00540.

Buber, M. (2015). *Eclipse of God*. Princeton University Press.

Buddelmeyer, H., & Powdthavee, N. (2016). Can having internal locus of control insure against negative shocks? Psychological evidence from panel data. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization, 122*, 88-109. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jebo.2015.11.014.

Butler, M. A. (2001). Chapter 11: Transformative Hope: A Pedagogical Vision. *Counterpoints, 94*, 265-285.

Busch, K., & Därmann, I. (Eds.) (2007). *Kultur-und Medientheorie. Pathos: Kon turen eines Kulturwissenschaftlichen Grundbegriffs*. Transcript Verlag.

Carr, A. (2012). *Family therapy* (2nd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.

Carver, C. S., & Connor-Smith, J. (2010). Personality and coping. *Annual Review of Psychology, 61*, 679–704. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.093008.100352.

Campbell, T. (1996). Technology, multimedia, and qualitative research in education. *Journal of Research on Computing in Education, 30*(9), 122-133. https://doi.org/10.1080/08886504.1997.10782219.

Cherrington, A. (2018). A framework of Afrocentric hope: Rural South African children's conceptualizations of hope. *Journal Of Community Psychology, 46*(4), 502-514. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.21956.

Christensen, L., Johnson, R., & Turner, L. (2015). *Research Methods, Design, and Analysis* (12th ed., p. 68). Pearson.

Coffey, A., & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making sense of qualitative data: Complementary research strategies*. Sage Publications.

Corn, B. W., Feldman, D. B., & Wexler, I. (2020). The science of hope. *The Lancet Oncology, 21*(9), e452-e459. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1470-2045(20)30210-2.

Creswell, J. W. (2015). *A concise introduction to mixed methods research*. Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches*. (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W., Plano Clark, V. L., Gutmann, M. L., & Hanson, W. E. (2003). Advanced mixed methods research designs. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research* (pp. 209-240). Sage.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research*. Sage Publications.

Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Csikszentmihalyi, I. S. (2006). *A life worth living: contributions to positive psychology (Ser. Series in positive psychology)*. Oxford University Press

Davis, E. (2020). Hope is a Survival Skill. *ADCES in Practice, 8*(5), 38-40. https://doi.org/10.1177/2633559X20939090.

Dahlberg, K., Dahlberg, H., & Nystrom, M. (2008). *Reflective lifeworld research*, 2nd ed. Studentlitteratur.

Dahlberg, K. (2006a). The essence of essence: The search for meaning structures in phenomenological analysis of lifeworld phenomena. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being, 1*, 11-19.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior (Ser. Perspectives in social psychology)*. Plenum.

Deci, E., & Ryan, R. (2008). Self-determination theory: A macrotheory of human motivation, development, and health. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne, 49*(3), 182-185. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012801.

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2005). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.

Department of Statistics South Africa. (2017). *Education Series Volume V: Higher Education and Skills in South Africa*. Report No. 92-01-05. Statistics South Africa.

Department of Statistics South Africa. (2019). *Mid-year population estimates*. Statistics South Africa.

Diener, E. (2006). Guidelines for national indicators of subjective well-being and ill-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 7*, 397–404. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-006-9000-y.

Donald, J., & Atkins, P. (2016). Mindfulness and Coping with Stress: Do Levels of Perceived Stress Matter? *Mindfulness, 7*(6), 1423-1436. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-016-0584-y.

Dufault, K., & Martocchio, B. C. (1985). Hope: Its spheres and dimensions. *Nursing Clinics of North America, 21,* 379–391.

Duggal, D., Sacks-Zimmerman, A., & Liberta, T. (2016). *The Impact of Hope and Resilience on Multiple Factors in Neurosurgical Patients*. Cureus. https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.849.

Eliott, J., & Olver, I. (2002). The Discursive Properties of "Hope": A Qualitative Analysis of Cancer Patients' Speech. *Qualitative Health Research, 12*(2), 173-193. https://doi.org/10.1177/104973230201200204.

Eloff, I. (2021). College students' well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic: An exploratory study. *Journal Of Psychology in Africa, 31*(3), 254-260. https://doi.org/10.1080/14330237.2021.1939055.

Eloff, I., & Graham, M. (2020). Measuring mental health and well-being of South African undergraduate students. *Global Mental Health, 7,* E34. https://doi.org/10.1017/gmh.2020.26.

Eloff, I., & Guse, T. (2019, November, 11). Which factors support student wellbeing at university? [Webinar]. In ISQOLS Member Research Webinar. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5ci_NbN3cg&feature=youtu.be).

Eloff, I., O'Neil, S., & Kanengoni, H. (2021). Students' well-being in tertiary environments: insights into the (unrecognised) role of lecturers. *Teaching In Higher Education*, 1-21. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2021.1931836.

Farabaugh, A., Bitran, S., Nyer, M., Holt, D., Pedrelli, P., & Shyu, I. et al. (2012). *Depression and Suicidal Ideation in College Students. Psychopathology, 45*(4), 228-234. https://doi.org/10.1159/000331598.

Francis, L. J., & Astley, J. (Eds.). (2001). *Psychological perspectives on prayer: A reader*. Gracewing Publishing.

Frank, J. D., & Frank, J. B. (1991). *Persuasion and healing: A comparative study of psychotherapy* (3rd ed.). Johns Hopkins University Press.

Frank, S. J., Avery, C. B., & Laman, M. S. (1988). Young adults' perceptions of their relationships with their parents: Individual differences in connectedness, competence, and emotional autonomy. *Developmental Psychology, 24*(5), 729. https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.24.5.729.

Frankl, V. E. (1984). *The Unheard Cry for Meaning: Psychotherapy and Humanism*. Square Press.

Frankl, V. E. (1984). *Man's search for meaning: An introduction to logotherapy*. Simon & Schuster.

Fredrickson, B. (2004). The broaden–and–build theory of positive emotions. Philosophical Transactions of The Royal Society of London. *Series B: Biological Sciences, 359*(1449), 1367-1377. https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2004.1512.

Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *American Psychologist, 56*(3), 218–226. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.56.3.218.

Freud, S. (1933). The question of a Weltanschauung. *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis. Standard Edition, 22*, 158-82.

Geertz, C. (1991). *Dichte Beschreibung. Beiträge zum Verstehen kultureller Systeme*. Suhrkamp.

Gerring, J. (2012). *Case study research*. Cambridge University Press.

Giorgi, A. (2009). *The descriptive phenomenological method in psychology: A modified Husserlian approach.* Duquesne University Press.

Groenewald, T. (2004). A phenomenological research design illustrated. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 3*(1), http://www.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/3_1/pdf/groenewald.pdf.

Grotberg, E. H. (2003). Introduction: Resilience for today. In E. H. Grotberg (Ed.), *Resilience for today: Gaining strength from adversity* (pp. ix-xiii). Praeger Publishers.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. (1981). *Effective evaluation*. Jossey-Bass.

Guse, T., de Bruin, G., & Kok, M. (2015). Validation of the Children's Hope Scale in a Sample of South African Adolescents. *Child Indicators Research, 9*(3), 757-770. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-015-9345-z.

Guse, T., & Vermaak, Y. (2011). Hope, Psychosocial Well-Being and Socioeconomic Status Among a Group of South African Adolescents. *Journal Of Psychology in Africa, 21*(4), 527-533. https://doi.org/10.1080/14330237.2011.10820493.

Harris, D., & Mattis, J. (2021). *Number 340* [Podcast]. https://open.spotify.com/episode/5AaPXNPH75QX2FpKLikTkD.

Harris, D., & Mumford, G. (2021). Number 337 [Podcast].

https://open.spotify.com/episode/3egxBnvWQ9K45HnGdc051M

Herth, K. (1991). Development and refinement of an instrument to measure hope. *Research and Theory for Nursing Practice, 5*(1), 39. https://doi.org/10.1891/106137407780851769.

Hobfoll, S., & Ford, J. (2007). Conservation of Resources Theory. *Encyclopedia of Stress*, 562-567. https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-012373947-6.00093-3.

Hoepfl, M. C. (1997). Choosing qualitative research: A primer for technology education researchers. *Journal of Technology Education, 9*(1), 47-63. http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JTE/v9n1/pdf/hoepfl.pdf.

Hornby, A., Lea, D., & Bradbery, J. (2020). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. Oxford University Press.

Hsieh, H., & Shannon, S. (2005). Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis. *Qualitative Health Research, 15*(9), 1277-1288. Https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305276687.

Jung, C. G. (1966). *Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Volume 16: Practice of Psychotherapy.* Princeton University Press, ProQuest Ebook Central. https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.uplib.idm.oclc.org/lib/pretoria-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1573469.

Jung, C. G. (2020). *On the nature of the psyche*. Princeton University Press.

Kamitsis, I., & Francis, A. J. (2013). Spirituality mediates the relationship between engagement with nature and psychological wellbeing. *Journal of environmental psychology, 36*, 136-143. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2013.07.013.

Keyes, C. L. M. (2007). Promoting and protecting mental health as flourishing. A complementary strategy for improving mental health. *American Psychologist, 62*, 95–108. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.62.2.95.

King, U. (1997). Spirituality. In J. Hinnells (ed.), *A New Handbook of Living Religions*. Penguin.

Krafft, A., Martin-Krumm, C., & Fenouillet, F. (2017). Adaptation, Further Elaboration, and Validation of a Scale to Measure Hope as Perceived by People: Discriminant Value and Predictive Utility Vis-à-Vis Dispositional Hope. Assessment, 26(8), 1594-1609. https://doi.org/10.1177/1073191117700724.

Krafft, A. M., Perrig-Chiello, P., & Walker, A. M. (Eds.). (2018). Hope for a Good Life: Results of the Hope-Barometer International Research Program, Vol. 72. Springer.

Krafft, A., & Walker, A. (2018). Exploring the Concept and Experience of Hope – Theoretical and Methodological Foundations. *Hope For a Good Life*, 3-19. Http://doi/10.1007/978-3-319-78470-0_1.

Kumar, A., & Nayar, K. (2020). COVID 19 and its mental health consequences. *Journal Of Mental Health, 30*(1), 1-2. https://doi.org/10.1080/09638237.2020.1757052.

Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M. (2004). *A handbook for Teacher Research from design to implementation*. McGraw-Hill.

Larsen, D., Edey, W., & Lemay, L. (2007). Understanding the role of hope in counselling: Exploring the intentional uses of hope. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly, 20*(4), 401-416. https://doi.org/10.1080/09515070701690036.

Lerner, R. M. (2006). Resilience as an attribute of the developmental system: Comments on the papers of Professors Masten & Wachs. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 1094*(1), 40-51. https://doi.org/10.1196/annals.1376.005.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications.

Luthar, S. S., Cicchetti, D., & Becker, B. (2000). The construct of resilience: A critical evaluation and guidelines for future work. *Child development, 71*(3), 543-562. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00164.

Manning, K. (1997). Authenticity in constructivist inquiry: Methodological considerations without prescription. *Qualitative Inquiry, 3*, 93-115. https://doi.org/10.1177/107780049700300105.

Maree, K. (2016). *First steps in research*. 2nd ed. Van Schaik Publishers.

Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (2003). Models of agency: Sociocultural diversity in the construction of action. In V. Murphy-Berman & J. J. Berman (Eds.), *Cross-cultural differences in perspectives on the self*, 1–57. University of Nebraska Press.

Markus, H., Uchida, Y., Omoregie, H., Townsend, S., & Kitayama, S. (2006). Going for the Gold: Models of Agency in Japanese and American Contexts. Psychological Science, 17(2), 103-112.

Mattis, J. S., Fontenot, D. L., Hatcher-Kay, C. A., Grayman, N. A., & Beale, R. L. (2004). Religiosity, optimism, and pessimism among African Americans. *Journal of Black Psychology, 30*(2), 187-207. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798403260730.

Mattis, J. S., & Jagers, R. J. (2001). A relational framework for the study of religiosity and spirituality in the lives of African Americans. *Journal of Community Psychology, 29*(5), 519-539. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.1034.

Mazza, E. (1995). *The origins of the eucharistic prayer*. Liturgical Press.

Mauthner, M. (2012). *Ethics in qualitative research*. Sage Publications.

Masten, S. A. (2004). Regulatory processes, risk and resilience in adolescent development. *Annals of The New York Academy of Sciences, 1021*, 310-319. https://doi.org/10.1196/annals.1308.036.

Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

McAdams, D. (2013). The Psychological Self as Actor, Agent, and Author. *Perspectives On Psychological Science, 8*(3), 272-295. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691612464657.

Merriam, S. & Tisdell, E. (2016). *Qualitative research*. 4th ed. Jossey-Bass.

Meyer, E. (2011). Hope in the Age of Anxiety. *JAMA, 305*(22), 2353. https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2011.797.

Miller, J. G. (2003). Culture and agency: Implications for psychological theories of motivation and social development. In V. Murphy-Berman & J. J. Berman (Eds.), *Cross-cultural differences in perspectives on the self* (pp. 59–99). University of Nebraska Press.

Mirón, J., Porta Casteràs, D., Vicent Gil, M., Navarra Ventura, G., Cardoner Álvarez, N., & Goldberg, X. (2019). Perceived stress, anxiety and depression among undergraduate students. *European Neuropsychopharmacology, 29*, S589. Http://doi/10.1016/j.euroneuro.2018.11.87.

Mohebbi-Dehnavi, Z., Hoseini, E., Rahmati, R., Shaghaghi, F., & Beigi, M. (2020). The relationship between hope and happiness with prenatal care. *Journal Of Education and Health Promotion, 9*(1), 206. https://doi.org/10.4103/jehp.jehp_141_20.

Mokwena S (1999) A perspective on youth and social justice in South Africa. *New Designs for Youth Development 15*(3). http://www.cydjournal.org/NewDesigns/ND_99Sum/index.html.

Morris, T. V. (2002). *Our idea of God: An introduction to philosophical theology*. Regent College Publishing.

Morrow, R. (2006). *Transformative Hope and Collective Images of the Future*. Swinburne University.

Nieuwenhuis, J. (2014). Qualitative research designs and data-gathering techniques. In K. Maree (Ed), *First steps in research*. Van Schaik Publishers.

O'Hara, D. J. (2014). Three Spheres of Hope: Generalised, Particularised and Transformative. *In Phoenix Rising from Contemporary Global Society,* 1-14. Brill.

Okpalaenwe, E. N. (2016). *Spirituality of Psychology*. Psycho-spiritual Institute the Catholic University of Eastern Africa. https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.1720.0881.

Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (1998). Role of hope in predicting anxiety about statistics. *Psychological Reports, 82*, 1315–1320. https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.1998.82.3c.1315.

Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (1999). *Relation of hope to self-perception. Perceptual and Motor Skills, 88*, 535–540. https://doi.org/10.2466/PMS.88.2.535-540.

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Snyder, C. R. (2000). Relations between hope and graduate students' studying and test-taking strategies. *Psychological Reports, 86*, 803–806. https://doi.org/10.2466/PR0.86.3.803-806.

Ouweneel, E., Le Blanc, P. M., Schaufeli, W. B., & van Wijhe, C. I. (2012). Good morning, good day: A diary study on positive emotions, hope, and work engagement. *Human relations, 65*(9), 1129-1154. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726711429382.

Parks, A. C., Della Porta, M. D., Pierce, R. S., Zilca, R., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2012). Pursuing happiness in everyday life: The characteristics and behaviors of online happiness seekers. *Emotion, 12*(6), 1222–1234. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0028587.

Ratcliffe, J. W. (1983). Notions of validity in qualitative research methodology. Knowledge: Creation, Diffusion. *Utilization, 5*(2), 147–167.

Patton, M. Q. (1999). Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *Health Sciences Research, 34*, 1189–1208.

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

Penley, J. A., Tomaka, J., & Wiebe, J. S. (2002). The association of coping to physical and psychological health outcomes: a meta-analytic review. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 25*(6), 551–603. https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1020641400589.

Pierce, M., Hope, H., Ford, T., Hatch, S., Hotopf, M., John, A., Kontopantelis, E., Webb, R., Wessley, S., McManus, S., & Abel, K. M. (2020). Mental health before and during the COVID-19 pandemic: a longitudinal probability sample survey of the UK population. *The Lancet Psychiatry, 7*(10), 883-892. https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(20)30308-4.

Pleeging, E., Burger, M., & van Exel, J. (2019). The Relations between Hope and Subjective Well-Being: a Literature Overview and Empirical Analysis. *Applied Research in Quality of Life, 16*(3), 1019-1041.

Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T. (2012). *Nursing research: Generating and assessing evidence for nursing practice.* Lippincott Williams and Wilkins.

Pretorius, W. (2018). *Hope as pathway for resilience in South African youth*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Pretoria]. UP Space Institutional Repository

Professional Board for Psychology (2006). *Rules of conduct pertaining specifically to the profession of psychology (No. 29079).* https://www.hpcsa.co.za/Uploads/PSB_2019/Ethical_Rules_ANNEXURE_12.pdf.

Rand, A. (1964). *Atlas shrugged*. Random House.

Richman, L., Kubzansky, L., Maselko, J., Kawachi, I., Choo, P., & Bauer, M. (2005). Positive Emotion and Health: Going Beyond the Negative. *Health Psychology, 24*(4), 422-429. https://doi.org/10.1037/0278-6133.24.4.422.

Rigg, K. (2019). *Student mental health and well-being: Supporting students in transition from school to university* [Blog]. https://www.cois.org/about-cis/perspectives-blog/blog-post/~board/perspectives-blog/post/student-mental-health-and-well-being-supporting-students-in-transition-from-school-to-university.

Riley, J. R., & Masten, A. S. (2005). Resilience in context. In R. D. Peters, B. Leadbeater & R. J. McMahon (Eds.), *Resilience in children, families, and communities: Linking context to practice and policy* (pp. 13–25). Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers. https://doi.org/10.1007/0-387-23824-7_2.

Rotter, J.B. (1966). Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement. *Psychological Monographs: General and Applied, 80*(1), 1-28. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0092976.

Ryan, R., & Deci, E. (2000). Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 25*(1), 54-67.

https://doi.org/10.1006/ceps.1999.1020.

Ryff, C. D., & Singer, B. (2003). Flourishing under fire: Resilience as a prototype of challenged thriving. In C. L. M. Keyes & J. Haidt (Eds.), *Flourishing: Positive psychology and the life well-lived* (pp. 15-36). APA.

Sandelowski, M. (1986). The problem of rigor in qualitative research. *Advances in Nursing Science, 8*(3), 27–37. https://doi.org/10.1097/00012272-198604000-00005.

Schmuck, P. E., & Sheldon, K. M. (2001). *Life goals and well-being: Towards a positive psychology of human striving.* Hogrefe & Huber Publishers.

Schratz, M., Schwarz, J., & Westfall-Greiter, T. (2014). Beyond the Reach of Teaching and Measurement: Methodology and Initial Findings of the Innsbruck Vignette Research. *Revista De Investigación Educacional Latinoamericana, 51*(1), 1-5. https://doi.org/10.7764/pel.51.1.2014.10.

Scioli, A. (2007). Hope and spirituality in the age of anxiety. In R. J. Estes (Ed.), *Advancing quality of life in a turbulent world* (pp. 135–150). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-5110-4_9.

Scioli, A., Ricci, M., Nyugen, T., & Scioli, E. (2011). Hope: Its nature and measurement. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, 3*(2), 78-97. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0020903.

Sefotho, M. M. (2018). *Philosophy in education and research: African perspectives*. Van Schaik Publishers.

Serafini, G., Parmigiani, B., Amerio, A., Aguglia, A., Sher, L., & Amore, M. (2020). The psychological impact of COVID-19 on the mental health in the general population. *QJM: An International Journal of Medicine, 113*(8), 531-537. https://doi.org/10.1093/qjmed/hcaa201.

Smith, A., Keegan, T., Hamilton, A., Lynch, C., Wu, X., & Schwartz, S. et al. (2018). Understanding care and outcomes in adolescents and young adults with cancer: A review of the AYA HOPE study. *Pediatric Blood & Cancer, 66*(1), e27486. https://doi.org/10.1002/pbc.27486.

Snyder, C. R. (1994). *The psychology of hope*. Free Press.

Snyder, C. R. (2000). The past and possible futures of hope. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 19*(1),11–28. https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.2000.19.1.11.

Snyder, C. (2002). Hope Theory: Rainbows in the Mind. *Psychological Inquiry, 13*(4), 249-275. http://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli1304_01.

Snyder, C. R., Harris, C., Anderson, J. R., Holleran, S. A., Irving, L. M., Sigmon, S. T., Yoshinobu, L., Gibb, J., Langelle, C., & Harney, P. (1991). The will and the ways: Development and validation of an individual differences measure of hope. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 60*, 570–585. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.60.4.570.

Snyder, C. R., & Lopez, S. J. (2002). *Handbook of positive psychology*. Oxford University Press.

Snyder, C., Lopez, S., Shorey, H., Rand, K., & Feldman, D. (2003). Hope theory, measurements, and applications to school psychology. *School Psychology Quarterly, 18*(2), 122-139. http://doi.org/10.1521/scpq.18.2.122.21854.

Snyder, C. R., Sympson, S. C., Ybasco, F. C., Borders, T. F., Babyak, M. A., & Higgins, R. L. (1996). Development and validation of the State Hope Scale. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 70*(2), 321. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.70.2.321.

Soleimani, M., & Arman Panah, A. (2015). Examining the effect of hope therapy on the improvement of life quality, hope and psychological well-being in mothers of mentally retarded children. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing, 1*(3), 34-47.

Soundy, A., Liles, C., Stubbs, B., & Roskell, C. (2014). Identifying a framework for hope in order to establish the importance of generalised hopes for individuals who have suffered a stroke. *Advances in Medicine, 2014*. https://doi.org/10.1155/2014/471874.

Spencer, M. (2012). *What is spirituality? A personal exploration.* https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/members/sigs/spirituality-spsig/what-is-spirituality-maya-spencer-x.pdf?sfvrsn=f28df052_2.

Spilka, B. & Ladd, K. L., & Myers, D. G. (2014). *The psychology of prayer: A scientific approach*. Guilford Press.

Staats, S. R., & Stassen, M. A. (1985). Hope: An affective cognition. *Social Indicators Research, 17*(3), 235-242. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00319312.

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage Publications.

Stecker, T. (2004). Well-being in an academic environment. *Medical Education, 38*(5), 465-478. http://doi/10.1046/j.1365-2929.2004.01812.x.

Stephenson, C. (1991). The concept of hope revisited for nursing. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 16*, 1456–1461. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.1991.tb01593.x.

Stoddard, S. A., & Pierce, J. (2015). Promoting positive future expectations during adolescence: The role of assets. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 56*(3), 332-341. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-015-9754-7.

Stroebe, W., & Stroebe, M. (1996). The social psychology of social support. In E. T. Higgins & A. W. Kruglanski (Eds.), *Social psychology: Handbook of basic principles* (pp. 597–621). The Guilford Press.

Sumerlin, J. R. (1997). Self-actualization and hope. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality, 12*(4), 1101.

Takakuwa, K. M., Rubashkin, N., & Herzig, K. E. (2004). *What I learned in medical school: personal stories of young doctors*. University of California Press.

Teodorczuk, K., Guse, T., & du Plessis, G. (2018). The effect of positive psychology interventions on hope and well-being of adolescents living in a child and youth care centre. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling, 47*(2), 234-245. https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2018.1504880.

Theron, L. C. (2016). Researching resilience: Lessons learned from working with rural, Sesotho-speaking South African young people. *Qualitative Research*, ahead of print. http://doi:/10.1177/1468794116652451.

Tol, W. A., Barbui, C., Galappatti, A., Silove, D., Betancourt, T. S., Souza, R., Golaz, A., & Van Ommeren, M. (2011). Mental health and psychosocial support in humanitarian settings: linking practice and research. *The Lancet, 378*(9802), 1581-1591. http://doi:/10.1016/S0140-6736(11)61094-5.

Triantafillou, N. (1997). A solution-focused approach to mental health supervision. *Journal of Systemic Therapies, 16*(4), 305-328. https://doi.org/10.1521/jsyt.1997.16.4.305.

Umberson, D., & Karas Montez, J. (2010). Social Relationships and Health: A Flashpoint for Health Policy. *Journal Of Health and Social Behavior, 51*(1_suppl), S54-S66. http://doi:/10.1177/0022146510383501.

Ungar, M. (2008). Resilience across cultures. *British Journal of Social Work, 38*, 218–235. http://doi:/10.1093/bjsw/bcl343.

Ungar, M. (2011). Community resilience for youth and families: Facilitative physical and social capital in contexts of adversity. *Children and Youth Services Review, 33,* 1742–1748. http://doi/10.1016/j.childyouth.2011.04.027.

Ungar, M. (2011). The social ecology of resilience: Addressing contextual and cultural ambiguity of a nascent construct. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 81*, 1-17. http://doi/10.1111/j.1939-0025.2010.01067.x.

Ungar. M. (2014). Practitioner review: Diagnosing childhood resilience – a systemic approach to the diagnosis of adaptation in adverse social and physical ecologies. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 56*(1), 4-17. http://doi/10.1111/jcpp.12306.

University of Pretoria. (2021). *Code of ethics for research* [Ebook]. https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/6/files/rt-429-99-university-of-pretoria-code-of-ethics-for-research.zp158366.pdf

University of Pretoria. (n.d.). *Department of Student Affairs (DSA): Policy on Student Leadership Development and Training. Document number: Rt 461/10* [Ebook]. https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/Legacy/sitefiles/file/3086/policyonstudentleadership development_rt46110_amended_final.pdf

University of Pretoria. (n.d.) *Student Development Department of Student Affairs* [Ebook]. https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/385/ZP_Resources/student-development-model.zp168944.pdf.

University of Pretoria. (2021). *Student Development*. https://www.up.ac.za/student-development.

Vagle, M. (2018). *Crafting phenomenological research* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Valle, M. F., Huebner, E. S., & Suldo, S. M. (2006). An analysis of hope as a psychological strength. *Journal of School Psychology, 44*, 393–406. http://doi/10.1016/j.jsp.2006.03.005.

Wallace, D., Pasick, P., Berman, Z., & Weber, E. (2014). Stories for Hope–Rwanda: a psychological–archival collaboration to promote healing and cultural continuity through intergenerational dialogue. *Archival Science, 14*(3-4), 275-306. http://doi/10.1007/s10502-014-9232-2.

Waters, L., Algoe, S., Dutton, J., Emmons, R., Fredrickson, B., Heaphy, E., Moskowitz, J. T., Neff, K., Niemiec, R., Pury, C., Steger, M. (2021). Positive psychology in a pandemic:

buffering, bolstering, and building mental health. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 1-21. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2021.1871945.

Center for the Advancement of Well-Being. (2020). *Well-Being: An Overview*. https://wellbeing.gmu.edu/about/well-being-overview.

Wenzel, R. (2014). Pathways to training transfer: Proactive transfer behaviour and hope at work. *Academy of Management Proceedings, 2014*(1), p. 17546. https://doi.org/10.5465/ambpp.2014.17546abstract.

Westfall-Greiter, T., & Schwarz, J. (2013). Planning for the unplannable: Responding to (un)articulated calls in the classroom. *Phenomenology & Practice, 6*(2), 121-135. https://doi.org/10.29173/pandpr19866.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

Zhang, J. W., Howell, R. T., & Iyer, R. (2014). Engagement with natural beauty moderates the positive relation between connectedness with nature and psychological well-being. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 38*, 55–63. http://doi/10.1016/j.jenvp.2013.12.013.

APPENDICES

101

APPENDIX A: Copy of Letter of Consent

Understanding how hope manifests for South African youth during times of adversity

Dear UP Student

I am Megan Lynn Swart, a M.Ed Psychology Masters student at the University of Pretoria, registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa as a student psychologist in training. The title of my study towards my Master's degree is **"Understanding how hope manifests for South African youth during times of adversity".** The purpose of this study is to explore the ways in which hope manifests for South African youth during times of adversity; to do so, the study purports to explore wellbeing in the African context by uncovering the concept of hope and how it enables students at the University of Pretoria to combat stressors and to overcome adverse experiences. This study is conducted in Phase 3 of the wider UP Wellbeing project. Phase 3 aims to support the holistic wellbeing of UP students, whilst simultaneously providing sustainable support to reinforce the development of wellbeing interventions.

I am working under the supervision of Prof. Irma Eloff, from the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria.

As one of the participants, I kindly invite you to participate in this study. Data will be generated and gathered in two ways; via the conduction of a vignette-driven interview and through observations made by the researcher during the vignette-driven interview. Vignettes offer a "slice of life", presenting "dense narratives of poignant experimental moments" (Westfall-Greiter & Schwarz, 2013, p. 123). During the vignette-driven interview, detailed questions will be posed to the research participants to explore in conversation. In this way the researcher is required to acknowledge and extract realities from the lived experience of the participant *in medias res* (as they are happening), to become aware of the effects of the experience (Westfall-Greiter & Schwarz, 2013, p. 123)[1]. The researcher will make every effort to capture empirical data, which is comprised of pathic elements

---

[1] Westfall-Greiter, T., & Schwarz, J. (2013). Planning for the unplannable: Responding to (un)articulated calls in the classroom. *Phenomenology & Practice*, 6(2), 121-135. https://doi.org/10.29173/pandpr19866.

that reveal the experience explicitly to the researcher in order to capture and describe the experience as accurately as possible. During the co-experiencing of the vignette-driven interview, the researcher notes details of their protocols and every observation made. These memos are later transcribed to create narratives, presented in the form of vignettes.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and confidential. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the research study without any consequences or explanations. You can be assured that your decision will be respected. Confidentiality and anonymity will be guaranteed always by using pseudonyms to the participants during the transcription phase. **No participant names or personal information will be reported in the findings.**

In participating in this research study, you will be asked for permission by the researcher to make audio recordings of the vignette-driven interview. The purpose thereof is to make transcription of data valid and authentic. The recording will be safely kept at the University of Pretoria. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the audio recordings. All data collected will only be used for academic purposes.

You may ask questions before or during the time of participation. If you have any concerns regarding the data collection procedures, please notify me or my supervisor. As a participant, you will have the opportunity to access and verify the recorded views and the transcriptions of vignette-driven interviews made in case there is a need to do so.

We would also like to request your permission to use your data, confidentially and anonymously, for further research purposes, as the data sets are the intellectual property of the University of Pretoria. Further research may include secondary data analysis. The confidentiality and privacy applicable to this study will be binding on future research studies.

Please indicate by signing your understanding of information shared above, the purpose being to give your consent to participate.

Kind regards

_____
Megan Lynn Swart

E-mail address: megz.swart@gmail.com
Contact number: 0839919271

Supervisor: Prof. Irma Eloff

Signature: _____

E-mail address: Irma.eloff@up.ac.za

PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH

I, _____, hereby give permission to Megan Lynn Swart to include me as a participant in her research on **"Understanding how hope manifests for South African youth during times of adversity".**

Signature: _____

Date: _____

RESEARCH JOURNAL

Research topic:

Understanding how hope manifests for South African youth during times of adversity

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Date: 30 March 20201

Today's focus: Meeting with Prof Eloff

Notes:

- Discussion regarding research participants - in contact with TuksRes - permission to contact Wellbeing HC granted.

- Wellbeing HC contact details obtained - must make contact with potential research participants ASAP.

- Discussion regarding how to go about conducting vignette-driven interviews - training session to take place next week.

- Must look up potential language & techinal editors.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Date: 31 March 20201

Today's focus: Getting started - initiating the research process

Notes:

- Research participants have been contacted via WhatsApp - information regarding the study has been provided as well as the reason for selecting the research participants. Additional information has been provided for further insight into the purpose of the study.

- Several language and technical editors have been contacted for quotes.

105

Date: 1 April 20201

Today's focus: Training with Prof Eloff + setting up of vignette-driven interview session

Notes:

- Vignette-driven interview session arranged with research participant, Rose - site: Sitting room of her residence @13:00 on Thursday, 15 April 2021.

- Training for conducting vignette-driven interviews - how to successfully conduct an interview to yield a vignette. Important to note:

  1. the setting - time of day and place?

  2. what is the research participant wearing?

  3. certain smells?

  4. distractions?

  5. what stands out?

- Pathos = the effective + emotional dimension to research

- Keep HOPE in mind - search for hope during the vignette-driven interview sessions - how does hope reveal itself during the interview?

- Remember that the vignette must be presented back to research participant at a later stage for member checking.

- -

Date: 2 April 20201

Today's focus: Send out consent forms to research participants

Notes:

- One research participant requested additional information.

- Research participants have recieved their consent forms (2 sent via WhatsApp, 1 sent via email)

- Any additional information provided on request to ensure that prospective research participants are well informed and comfortable firstly giving their consent and secondly, participating in this research study.

Date: 5 April 20201

Today's focus: Set up vignette session

Notes:

- Consent forms received from 2 research participants.

- Vignette-driven interview session arranged with research participant, Matthew - site: on

  Hatfield campus (meeting outside Merensky Library) @13:00 on Tuesday, 8 April 2021.

- -
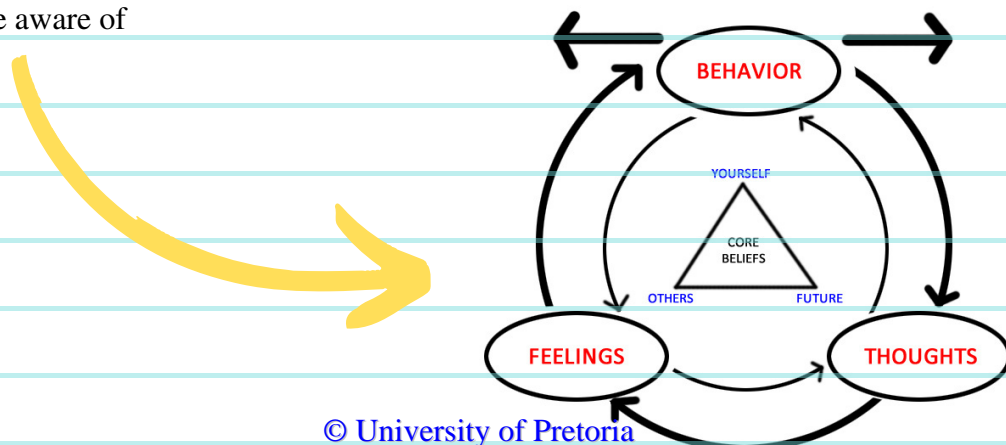
Date: 7 April 20201

Today's focus: Planning session for tomorrow

Notes:

Outline of guiding questions to help shine the light on hope/create room for it to be exposed:

- What does hope mean to you?

- What gives you hope?

- Who gives you hope?

- When do you feel hopeful?

- Where do you experience hope? Do you have a place of comfort?

- Why is hope important to you?

- How has the phenomenon of hope guided you through your life thus far?

- How have you used hope to overcome hardship in your life?

- Be aware of

Date: 8 April 20201

Today's focus: Vignette-driven interview with Matthew @13:00 on Hatfield Campus

REFLECTIVE NOTES

- Early arrival allowed for me to find a comfy spot (library off limits due to COVID-19 regulations so I found a relatively quiet spot at the Piazza) and take note of the surroundings, which were documented before meeting Matthew and commencing with the session.

- Pleasant meeting - Matthew is warm, engaging and very willing to engage with the process.

- An initial "obstacle" of the session = UP Theology Choir students practicing near us, however, this turned into a welcomed benefit of the session, giving rise to depth in symbolic spiritual meaning and reflection.

- Crafting of Vignette 1 - I remained at the site of the interview to mull over my thoughts and submerse myself deeper into the process. The writing of the vignette flowed naturally and relatively easily - a pleasant surprise!

Date: 14 April 20201

Today's focus: Set up vignette session

Notes:

- Final consent form was received.

- Vignette-driven interview session arranged with research participant, Joe - site: 23 on Hazelwood @12:00 on Tuesday, 20 April 2021.

Date: 15 April 20201

Today's focus: Vignette-driven interview with Rose in the Sitting Room at her residence @13:00

REFLECTIVE NOTES

- Rose was incredibly warm and welcoming. I found it very easy to connect with her, genuinely.

- The vignette-driven interview session left me with an abundance of information to work with, as did Matthew's, however, the crafting of this vignette did not come to me as easily as Matthew's did. I moved to Aroma Cafe for an iced coffee to help me sooth my thoughts and allow the crafting of the vignette to present itself to me. I left the cafe once I was happy with my first draft. Upon arriving back home I sat down to relook the vignette and edit it.

Date: 20 April 20201

Today's focus: Vignette-driven interview with Joe, site: 23 on Hazelwood @12:00

REFLECTIVE NOTES

- As with my vignette-driven interview session with Matthew, I arrived early at 23 on Hazelwood to allow myself the opportunity to settle into the space and mentally prepare for meeting Joe and conducting our session. Not having this opportunity for Rose's session made me feel a little overwhelmed at first - maybe this is why I took a longer amount of time to draft her vignette.

- Joe arrived on time and immediately dove into sharing his various life experiences - I appreciate his openness to engage with the purpose of this study.

- Joe revealed a raw emotional side to him, sharing his experiences openly, which really allowed me to understand him on a deep level.

- I approached drafting Joe's vignette in a different manner in comparison to Matthew and Rose's vignettes- immediately after our session I drove home and voice recorded myself voicing my thoughts aloud. Upon arriving home, I played back my recording and began drafting the vignette.

Date: 5 May 20201

Today's focus: INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE VIGNETTE RESEARCH OF SOUTHERN

AFRICA GROUP

REFLECTIVE NOTES

- Today I had the privelledge of sharing my vignettes at the INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE VIGNETTE RESEARCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA GROUP on a virtual platform. My vignettes were presented to ensure member-checking.

- Since my research employs a new methodological approaching the South African context, this meeting created the opportunity for in-depth questioning and answering, as well as education, which allowed me to reflect on my vignettes in explaining how gathered my data and how I crafted the vignettes in such a way so as to provide elements of pathos, which were accurate to the information provided to me by the research participants.

- My vignettes were discussed at length and well-received.

- See attached a screenshot of the meeting, taken by Prof Eloff.
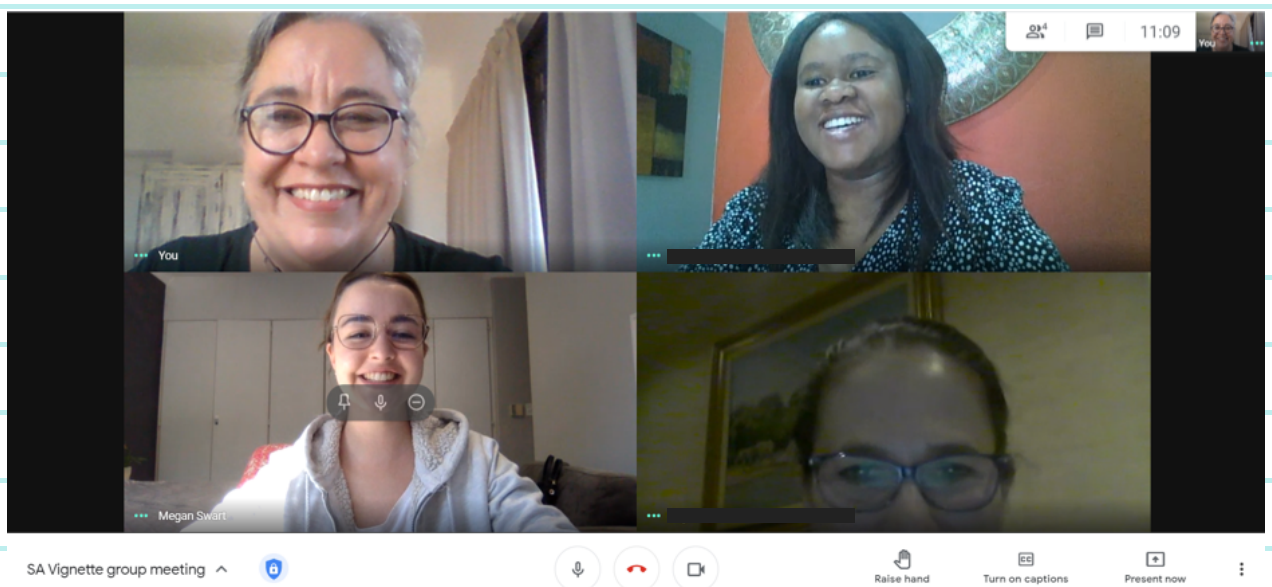
Date: 8 May 20201

Today's focus: Feedback (member checking) session arranged

Notes:

- Rose was contacted to arrange the feedback (member checking) session, whereby it was explained to her that her vignette would be presented back to her. Date agreed upon: Thursday, 20 May @13:00, site: 23 on Hazelwood.

- -

Date: 12 May 20201

Today's focus: Feedback (member checking) session arranged

Notes:

- Both Matthew and Joe were contacted to arrange the feedback (member checking) sessions, whereby it was explained to each of them that their vignette would be presented back to them.
- Date agreed upon (Matthew): Tuesday, 25 May @13:00, site: 23 on Hazelwood.
- Date agreed upon (Joe): Sunday, 4 July @10:00, site: Lunnon Crest Building.

- -

Date: 20 May 20201

Today's focus: Feedback (member checking) session with Rose @ 23 on Hazelwood

REFLECTIVE NOTES

- Rose accepted her vignette, agreeing with the information it portrayed. She appeared to really enjoy hearing about how she was encapsulated in terms of hope. She asked if she could keep her vignette, to which I explained that upon member checking, the vignette would be emailed to her.

- Rose read and re-read her vignette, each time highlighting something new, stating that she just "loved" what had been created, which instilled in me a sense of relief as well as delight. 111

Date: 25 May 20201

Today's focus: Feedback (member checking) session with Matthew @ 23 on Hazelwood

REFLECTIVE NOTES

- Similarly to Rose's member checking session, Matthew approved of his vignette, agreeing with the information it portrayed. He reflected on the spiritual aspect of the vignette as we discussed the beautiful synchronicity of the hymns that were sung by the UP Theology Choir as he shared his personal journey with God.

- Matthew was thankful for the experience and was told that he would receive the vignette later that day via email.

Date: 20 June 20201

Today's focus: Feedback (member checking) session with Joe @ Lunnon Crest Building

REFLECTIVE NOTES

- Like both Rose and Matthew, Joe accepted the vignette portraying his personal journey of hope and experiences of hope. As with the other two research participants, I was very happy to present all three vignettes back to the research participants. I was especially happy to see the value of the vignettes when receiving acceptance and approval from the research participants. Joe seemed to be quite moved by the vignette representing his experiences of hope, which for me, highlighted not only the value of the study, but the significance of hope in the lives of my research participants as well as in those around us.