THE LIFE EXPERIENCE OF THE UNEMPLOYED SOUTH AFRICAN

by

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COMMENTS

The following observations on the methodology are important:

- The APA (American Psychological Association) referencing style is used in the Department of Human Resources Management at the University of Pretoria.

- The mini-dissertation is submitted in the form of a research article. The editorial style specified by the South African Journal of Industrial Psychology (which largely agrees with the APA style) is used. Further APA guidelines were followed throughout the rest of this mini-dissertation.

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Declaration Regarding Plagiarism

I, Linca Boshoff, declare that Disciplinary Enquiries in terms of Schedule 8 of the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 is my own unaided work both in contents and execution. All the resources I used in this study are cited and referred to in the reference list by means of a comprehensive referencing system. Apart from the normal guidance from my study leader, I have received no assistance, except as stated in the acknowledgements.

I declare that the contents of this thesis have never been used before for any qualification at any tertiary institution.

Linca Boshoff   Date: August 2015

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Signature

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Key Concepts

Unemployed:

People within the economically active population who: did not work during the seven days (in the case of this study, six months) prior to the interview; want to work and are available to start work within two weeks of the interview; and have taken active steps to look for work or to start some form of self-employment in the four weeks prior to the interview (Stats SA, 2012).

Unemployed persons are those (aged 15 to 64 years**) who:**

> a) Were not employed in the reference week.
>
> b) Actively looked for work or tried to start a business in the four weeks preceding the survey interview.
>
> c) Were available for work, i.e. would have been able to start work or a business in the reference week.
>
> d) Had not actively looked for work in the past.

(Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Quarter 4, 2013)

Retrenchment:

Forced lay off of an employee by a firm, usually to cut down on its payroll.

Employee becomes redundant due to, for example, an economic downturn and the employer terminating the employee's contract (Beaumont, 1991). Retrenchment is the process by which the staff complement is reduced by culling redundant employees and reducing the wage bill

Poverty:

Poverty is the state of one who lacks a certain amount of material possessions or money. It can be relative to, and is the antonym of, wealth.

Workforce:

Employees engaged in a specific activity or enterprise. Workers employed in a specific project or activity.

RESEARCH ARTICLE:

Title: THE LIFE EXPERIENCE OF THE UNEMPLOYED SOUTH AFRICAN

ABSTRACT

This research study examined the effect of unemployment, specifically caused by retrenchment on South African males. Specific focus was given on the emotional, psychological and social impact caused by retrenchment, the coping mechanisms used by victims of retrenchment and what lessons they have learned from this experience. Retrenchment has become increasingly prevalent in South Africa affecting many people and families. Research on the experiences of victims of retrenchment is limited in this country. This research followed a narrative approach and examined male, South African citizens who have recently been retrenched. Qualitative data was obtained through in-depth semi-structured interviews with three participants. Following thematic analysis, five key themes emerged: The experience of the retrenchment process, the psycho-social impact on the retrenched individuals, their coping behaviour, the effect of social support/lack thereof and the lessons that the victims learned. The research findings indicate that retrenchment can affect people's viewpoint of the South African law, the retrenchment process used and their psychological well-being. Unemployment can leave some individuals with feelings of worthlessness, a lack of identity, lack of motivation, feelings of embarrassment and increased stress levels. Unemployment can also have an impact on friendships and family relationships. Although all the participants experienced rough and negative times, they all seemed to have a positive attitude in going forward. All participants learned something from the retrenchment.

Key terms:

Unemployment; retrenchment; emotions, effect on family, social impact.

1. Introduction

Unemployment is considered to be the root cause of many other problems that South Africans are facing today, such as poverty, suicide and crime (Kingdon & Knight, 2004). Currently 24.3 per cent of the South African population aged between 15 and 64 years are unemployed (Statistics SA, 2013). Of all the unemployed South African citizens, 42 per cent were previously part of the working environment. Retrenchment is one cause of unemployment.

Retrenchment or dismissals for operational requirement has become an increasingly common occurrence in South Africa (Hlekiso, 2004; Morar, 2004; Nel, Binns & Gibb, 2014; Bendix, 2010). Companies appear to have no capital to retain their employees; neither do they have the capacity and money to support a new work force. Currently in South Africa the retrenchment levels are at a 10-year high owing to the current economy, while job-mobility rate is at a 10-year low (Adcorp, January and February 2014).

The current pattern of unemployment and retrenchment is not a South African phenomenon alone. The ever-growing international reality is that retrenchment as a global phenomenon has become a daily fact of life (Marks & De Meuse, 2002; Morar, 2004; Sloan, 1996; Stein, 1997). In 1993, Cameron, Freeman and Mishra stated that retrenchment has become the norm in modern organisations, and that only a few companies practiced successfully without the need for downsizing. Mariappanadar (2003) indicated that a study was done on six industrialised countries, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Japan and US. The study concluded that more than 90 per cent of companies had retrenched in 1993, and more than 66 per cent were planning to do so again. This indicates the reality of retrenchment worldwide and many retrenchments are caused by economic challenges.

Without adapting to relevant changes in the economic climate, an organisation would find it hard to survive in a competitive environment. The first step of organisational change would be cost savings. During economic downturns, organisations tend to restructure by downsizing the number of the employees in terms of cost saving, preferably the low-skilled local employees who demand higher wages compared to the foreign workers of a similar scale of relative work skills (Lee, Phan & Tan, 2003). Regardless of the legislation in the country which may prevent retrenchment of nationals in particular, the majority of the organisations will normally choose to either lay off their employees or reduce their salary, or otherwise retrench them during a recession and economic down-turn. Another viable option may be for organisations to merge to sustain its performance margins. In the case of mergers and acquisitions, retrenchment is also a threat (Naveed, Hanif & Ali, 2011).

It is evident thus far that one of the reasons for retrenchment is slow economic growth during which firms retrench in an attempt to cut cost (Cascio, 1993; Thompson & Benjamin, 2006). Technology

is another factor that influences retrenchment. Technological innovations and advancement result in heightened productivity, and are the causes of fewer workers being required (Appelbaum & Donia 2000; Thompson & Benjamin, 2006).

McKinley, Sanchez and Schick (1995) are of the opinion that there are some social factors that frequently provides a major drive for companies to downsize or retrench. They concluded these three factors to be constraining, cloning and learning. Constraining refers to the exertion of pressure on firms to conform to institutional rules in terms of legitimate structures and management activities (McKinley et al, 1995). Secondly, they define cloning as the pressure on firms to mimic those companies that provide a benchmark for the industry in terms of excellence and prestige. In order for them to become like these high performing organisations, they sometimes have to restructure their workforce, which leads to retrenchment. Finally they explain that learning experiences also contributes to the idea of retrenchments. People learn about restructuring at educational institutions such as universities and professional associations and people understand downsizing or restructuring as a normal act.

In South Africa specifically, Israelstam (2009) stated that retrenchment might be caused by a number of factors. It can firstly be caused by a decline in productivity caused by faulty or archaic equipment or technology, ineffective management systems or under-skilled or demotivated employees. Weakening in productivity increases financial losses and affect jobs. Secondly, employers may need fewer employees owing to labour-saving devices or technology. Istraelstam provided another reason, namely a desire to evade labour legislation that may result in contracting out work instead of giving it to employees. Furthermore, bankruptcy or losses caused by mismanagement or misappropriation of funds could contribute to retrenchment. Istraelstam added that strikes and lockouts that weaken company productivity chase away customers and prevent work, increase potential retrenchment. A reduction in sales owing to economic factors such as the strengthening of the Rand and lastly, rationalisation to shed "surplus" employees resulting from buy-outs or mergers are also causes of retrenchment. Increase in the above occurrences cause an incline in the retrenchment rate, which is the cause for more people to be unemployed. This contributes to the well-being of the population. The following figure provides a picture of the factors that influence retrenchment.

Figure 1 – Factors influencing Retrenchment
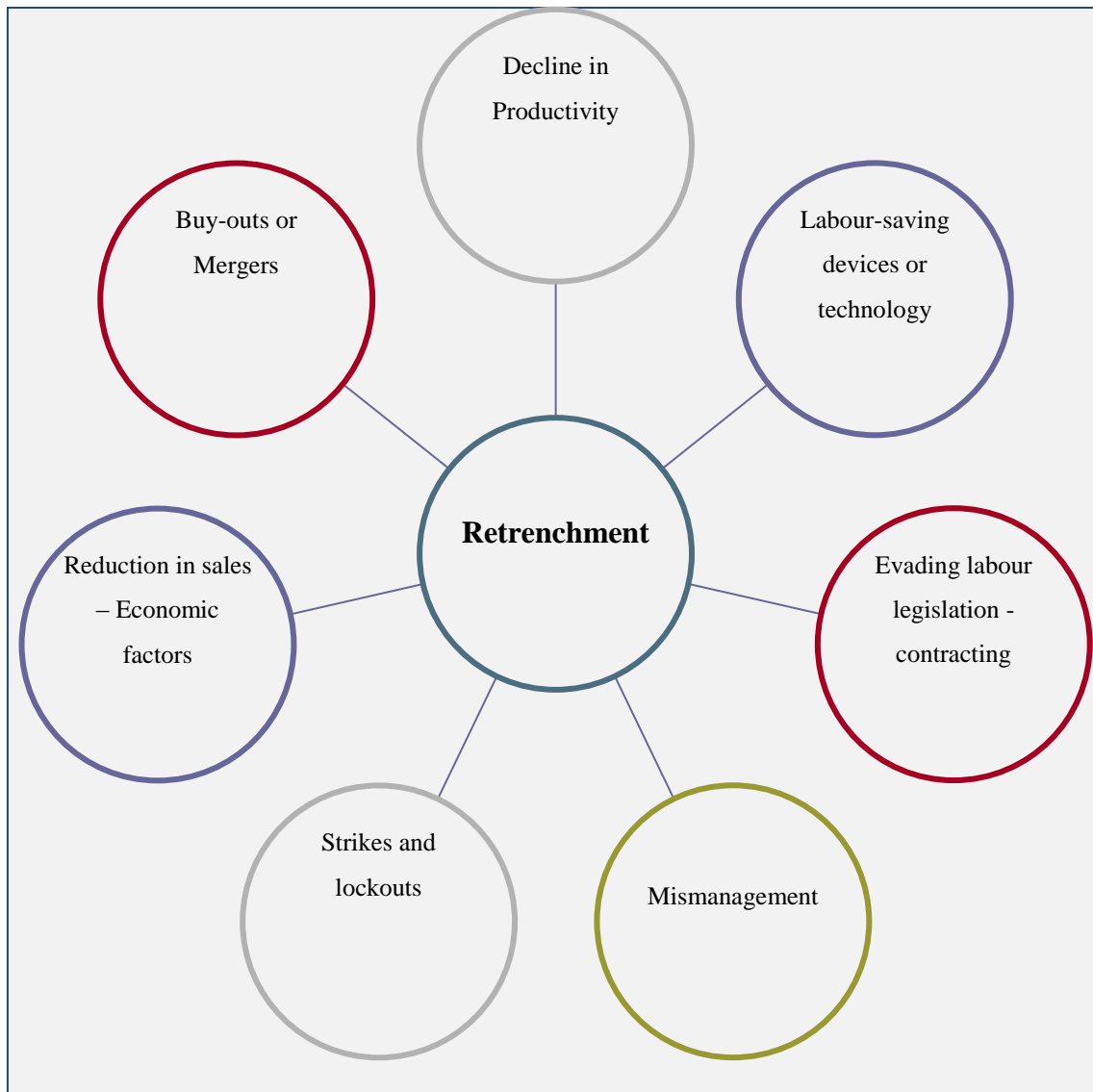
Looking at all the different factors which may influence retrenchment, it is clear that retrenchment can happen to anyone, regardless of sex, colour or educational level, but studies indicated that the risk of retrenchment may be higher for women, the less educated, the low-skilled, the middle-aged and those employed by local government or urban collectives (Appleton, Knight, Song & Xia, 2002; Bhorat, 2000; Solidarity Research institute, 2008).

Retrenchment has far reaching effects: the effect on the person who is being retrenched, as well as on those who remain in the organisation. In case of the latter job insecurity and dissatisfaction among employees may be the result. For the retrenched, consequences of retrenchment has a big impact on the "inner- person" (Hollenbach, 2014). For most employees and employers it remains an emotional process that may have a devastating effect on the individual's well-being (Winefield,

Montgomery, Gault, Muller, O'Gorman & Reser, 2002). This may include mental and physical health. The effects are of course greater in impact on the company than on a person alone. It also has a vast impact on the affected worker's family (Aubrey, Tefft & Kingsbury 1990), and causes a reduction in social participation.

1.1 Research purpose

Wright and Barling (1998) stated that victims of unemployment can experience social, psychological and medical problems. The aim of this study is to investigate the psychological and social factors experienced by retrenched South African citizens, and how they survived this particular phase in their lives. This study will be done with the assistance of three South African males.

1.2 Research objectives

The main objectives of this study are three folded.

- The first objective is to investigate what the unemployed experienced during the period of retrenchment, from the moment they realised they were unemployed till they found a new job. Specific attention was paid to the emotional, psychological and social impact caused by the retrenchment.

- The second objective was to investigate how the individual coped (if he did) and what strategies he used.

- The last objective was to explore what the individual learned from this retrenchment experience.

1.3 Trends from research literature

Many studies have been concluded on South African unemployment (Kingdon & Knight, 2004; Klasen & Woolard, 2009; Kehler, 2001; Magruder, 2012; Hunter 2007; Banerjee, Galiani,

Levinsohn, McLaren, Woolard, 2008). Over the last 20 years, more than one thousand articles, containing the word "unemployment" in their titles have been published (Card, 2011). Some studies focussed on exploring the problems regarding women and poverty in the South African context (Kehler, 2001) and others on the role of centralised bargaining (Magruder, 2012). Kingdon and Knight (2004) did a study to explore why unemployment did not enter the informal sector, as is common in other developing countries. Furthermore, a study was done on the incline in South African unemployment since the transition in 1994 (Banerjee, Galiani, Levinsohn, McLaren, Woolard, 2008). However, not many of these studies focussed on the retrenched male South African.

Research conducted at both collective and individual levels suggested that, on the average, unemployment has a negative impact on individuals' psychological and physical well-being (Karsten, & Moser, 2009). The studies have portrayed a positive relationship between unemployment rates and indices such as mortality, heart disease, mental health, heavy drinking and the use of mental health services (Jin, Shah, & Svoboda, 1995). Individual-level studies revealed a relationship between unemployment and reduced well-being. Two types of individual-level studies, namely cross-sectional and longitudinal, have been supportive of the negative impact of unemployment, (Kanfer, Wanberg & Kantrowitz, 2001). The effect of unemployment on mental health was examined with meta-analytic methods across 237 cross-sectional and 87 longitudinal studies (Kanfer et al., 2001). A significant difference was found for several indicator variables of mental health (mixed symptoms of distress, depression, anxiety, psychosomatic symptoms, subjective well-being and self-esteem). The average percentage of persons with psychological problems among the unemployed was 34 per cent, compared to 16 per cent among employed individuals. Moderator analyses demonstrated that people with blue-collar-jobs were more distressed by unemployment than those with white-collar jobs. Lastly, studies have also followed individuals over time from employment into unemployment, showing decreases in psychological and physical well-being among displaced workers.

The academic value of the current study will be a contribution to a better understanding of the feelings and emotions of the unemployed person. The researcher wishes to be informed about how the unemployed person felt during his retrenched period, what coping mechanisms he used, and what he learned from it. Further studies can be built on the current study by creating a model or guidelines to help people who are emotionally at a low point in their lives. Not only does

unemployment play an extremely important role in South Africa's economy, it also plays an important role in the social well-being of all South Africans.

1.3.1 Unemployment and retrenchment and their effects

Cameron and others such as Halley (1995) of the Meridian International Institute report that terms such as downsizing, restructuring, reduction in workforce, right-sizing and many others are used as synonyms for retrenchment. Each of these concepts may have some meaning in common with retrenchment, but they all have different connotations and criteria for assessment. They all suggest a deliberate decision to condense the workforce in order to improve organisational performance (Kozlowski, Chao, Smith & Hedlund, 1993; Makawatsakul & Kleiner, 2003).

Organisational retrenchment is a management philosophy that constitutes a set of activities undertaken on the part of management of an organisation, designed to improve organisational efficiency, productivity and/or competitiveness. Retrenchment represents a strategy implemented by managers that affects the size of the firm's workforce and its processes (Cameron et al. 1993; De Meuse 2004; Freeman, 1994).

In December 2008, the Solidarity Research Institute compiled a report titled, "Towards a labour recession: A Report on retrenchments in South Africa" and identified several reasons why employees were being retrenched:

1) As a result of the current financial crisis it is no longer possible to finance operations that currently contribute to losses, regardless of future profitability.

2) The drop in demand for commodities necessitates a review of cost-structures at underperforming operations.

3) Further development of start-up projects cannot be undertaken due to a lack of access to borrowed capital.

4) Labour unrest and unannounced strikes took place – lowering production volumes.

5) Production cycles of manufactured products are coming to an end. No new products are currently in demand from the international controlling companies.

6) As a result of a smaller-than-expected order-book for 2009, a comprehensive cost-cutting program has to be initiated.

Modise (2002) further stated the big influence of restructuring on retrenchment. Restructuring is caused by a preference for capital intensive production processes, introduction of new technology, the economic shift from primary to secondary sectors towards service sector and the right-sizing of the private sector (Modise, 2002). Globalisation, technological changes, denationalisation and deregulation are also factors contributing to high retrenchment rates (Marks & De Meuse, 2002). They added that merges and acquisitions, as well as the slowing economy and increasing costs also had an influence on retrenchment.

1.3.2 Retrenchment and economic conditions

Many companies are internally stressed, due to international economic problems (Klasen, Woolard, 2009). The reality is that retrenchment as a global phenomenon has become a day-to-day issue (Marks & De Meuse, 2002). According to Molinsky and Margolis (2006), employees' costs can exceed 40 per cent of an organisations' budget. The economic conditions force companies to retrench, to enable them to still be profitable (Sloan, 1996). According to Leung and Chang (2002), companies are motivated by being lean and mean and it is believed to increase competitiveness (Sloan, 1996).

Retrenchment has been an extensive problem since the late 1900s and employees have been affected internationally. In the 1990s companies such as McDonnel-Douglas, Boeing, Delta Airlines and General Motors have been affected. In the early 1990s McDonnel-Douglas and General Motors has retrenched 17 000 and 74 000 employees respectively. In 1993 IBM, Sears, Phillip Morris and Boeing downsized with 60 000, 50 000, 14 000 and 28 000 employees. A year later the figures for corporate retrenchment displayed Digital Equipment letting go of 20 000 employees, Delta Airlines retrenched 15 000 and GTE had to lay off 17 000 employees (Sloan, 1996; Wright & Barling, 1998). The South African statistics present no better figures. In 2002, Hooper-Box revealed that over 500 000 proficiencies have been lost in the period 1994 - 2002. The public sector contributed 145 000 employees who lost their jobs in that period (Bhorat, 2000).

Many employers believe that retrenchment can benefit the operational output of the company. The cut of overheads save direct costs and cause a decline in bureaucracy (Morar, 2004). Noronha and D'Cruz (2006) are of the opinion that fewer employees may cause quicker decision-making, improvement in communication, increase in profitability, increase in organisational competitiveness and greater opportunities for entrepreneurship. They also stated that most people have been in the

formal working environment and therefore it is necessary to investigate the effect of the increasing retrenchment occurrence on the operational sector.

1.3.3 Strategies for retrenchment

Cameron, et al (1993) mentioned three approaches typically used for downsizing. The first approach is the reduction of employees. This is intended to reduce headcount normally through redundancy. The next approach is the redesigning of roles, hours and organisational structures. This is called work redesigns. The last strategy is the systematic change approach. This approach involves the continuous improvement on the company's objectives, through the on-going process of downsizing. The typical factors found in work redesign strategy comprises of the elimination of specific functions, hierarchical levels, delimitation of certain divisions, or products. It may also involve the consolidation and merge of units and decreasing the operational hours. On the other side, systematic changes involve altering the business's systems (internal and external), including standards, communication and production chains in terms of suppliers and customers (Bleuel, 2001). All plans for retrenchment should be done according to the law. Specific requirements are involved when retrenchment takes place. The following section will provide insight on the legal requirements for retrenchment in South Africa.

1.3.4 Legal Requirements for retrenchment in South Africa

The following section will explain the typical procedure of retrenchment according to various South African legal requirements. The provisions of section 189A pertaining to discharges grounded on operational requirements by companies bigger than 50 personnel are discussed below.

Relevant legislation that was consulted for this section on the legal requirements pertaining to dismissals for operational requirements were obtained from the Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995 (as amended), section 189 and section 189A and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997, sections 35, 37 and 41 (Labour Protect, 2006; Thompson & Benjamin, 2006).

According to section 189, when an employer contemplates dismissing one or more employees based on operational requirements, consultation needs to be conducted by the employer. The parties recognised in the collective agreement, the registered trade union as well as the workplace forum or employee's representative(s) should participate in the consultation.

The consulting parties are advised to go in into a dual agreement looking for process and need to try and reach an agreement on suitable procedures to avoid the dismissals (for example adjust working hours, eliminating temporary labour, eliminating overtime and offering early retirement or voluntary retrenchment), lessening the number of dismissals. They also need to agree on the manner of choosing the employees who needs to be dismissed, as well as the severance pay for dismissed employees.

Consultation is an essential step, and when an employer considers retrenching employees because of operational requirements, he must disclose in writing to the other referring party any applicable info pertaining to the possible retrenchments. This may include the details for the recommended dismissals, the options that the employer may consider before recommending dismissals and the explanations why those alternatives were rejected (Labour Protect, 2006).

In terms of section 41 (2) of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997 (as amended), it is compulsory for a company to compensate a "severance pay" equivalent to a minimum of one week's salary for every completed year of service. The entitlement to severance pay falls away if the worker/employee "unreasonably refuses" the company's proposal of another job within the same company or any other employer.

When looking further at consulting, the employer is obliged to provide the other consulting party with the opportunity to represent any matters of the consultation and if the employer disagrees with the representation the employer must state the reasons for disputatious.

Selection criteria for dismissals should be in place and the criteria should be accepted by all the consulting parties and the criteria should be fair and objective. The "last-in-first-out" (LIFO) concept is frequently applied, but is not the only option and not required by law. There are instances that employers retain employees with significant recognised skills or who have explicit dedicated positions. Poor performance records can be taken into consideration (Labour Protect, 2006).

If there are any disputes over the fairness of the dismissal, the law requires that it should be referred to the CCMA (Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration) or a bargaining council

jurisdiction for conciliation. If the matter is still not resolved by any of these two forums the employee must state the case to the Labour Court for settlement.

The next section will discuss the true effects that a retrenchment can have on an individual.

1.3.5 Effect of retrenchment

In 2001, Cassidy stated the importance of work to the individual's identity and livelihood and the impact of the absence of work on the individual, families and friends.

Meaning of work

According to Maslow every human being strives towards recognition and self-actualisation (Maslow, 1970). Victor Frankl (2005) has done a study which concluded that 89 per cent of the population admitted that in order for them to truly live they required something to drive them. He wrote a book called, Man's search for meaning, in which he described through the use of true life examples that life held a possible connotation in any condition whatsoever, even the most despondent ones. He further explained that a person's will to have a meaning in life, ought to be frustrating. This implies that people who have lost their jobs may easily tend to get to the point of frustration and worthlessness. According to Frankl (1997) a man's apprehension or hopelessness over the unimportance of life is an existential distress. One way to resolve the problem is to find a way of meaning in one's life and for many people employment brings meaning to their lives.

Jahoda (1982) described *Employment* as labour under a specific contract arrangement where a reward in material value is involved. Hayes & Nutman, (1981) believes that employment or work can offer results that can fulfil a number of personal desires.

In a study done on individual- and work values, Ros, Schwartz and Surkiss (1999) described that individual primary standards, indicates four types of work values. The first value is intrinsic, the second extrinsic, third is social value and lastly prestige. Values can be defined as required, trans-situational goals, with different significance to individuals. Values can serve as a guidance of principles in a person's life (Kluckhohn, 1951; Rokeach, 1973). Ros, et al (1999) further stated that most research concluded in the same types of work values, being (1) self-actualisation (intrinsic), (2) security/material (extrinsic) and (3) social or relational values. In addition, these work values can be seen as very similar to basic human values. Intrinsic work values include the willingness to

adapt to specific situations. Intrinsic represents the search of independence, interest, growth, and creativity in the workplace. Extrinsic work values can be seen as those values that express conservation. Extrinsic values are typically values that require job security. Income provides people with the general security which offers some kind of order in their lives. Lastly Ros, et al (1999) explains social work values as the expression to search for self-transcendence. In this case employment is valued as a vessel for constructive social relations and influence to society.

Work or being employed contributes to the building of a social structure, through the different range of individuals who encounter each other; this contributes to the value of work (Wrzesniewski, Dutton and Debebe, 2003). Furthermore, work meanings are formed through interactive dynamics that unfold between people at work.

Unemployment is a position that is supposed to be a short-term phase in one's existence. It is unknown when someone will become employed again, this is the main reason for a lot of uncertainty and insecurity regarding one's life plans forward and this insecurity can be seen as the main centre of the jobless experience (Strandh, 2000).

Being employed offers a vital part in the building and maintenance of an individual's sense of identity. Back in the eighties already, Hayes and Nutman (1981) commented that because of the loss of various traditional forms of individuality, there is more of an emphasis on the reputation of employment and career as a foundation of identity. They said that in the past, in minor rural populations individuals were acknowledged by their family, interests and skills. However, they specify as societies expanded and developed into more complex societies, an individual's near sense of identity is absent, therefore interactions tend to be momentary and short-lived, consequently the occupation an individual has tends to undertake a better meaning in identifying the type of individual that he or she is. To be deprived of the chance to be employed can challenge the actual foundation upon which the identity has being constructed and this can cause psychological distress (Hayes & Nutman, 1981).

Psychological effects

Many people want to achieve some sort of level in their life. Each one of us has a specific independency inside of us that force us to develop out inner-self. According to Maslow (1970) we all want to reach the level of self-actualisation. In order to do that, an individual taps into this inborn potential that drives the development to being entirely effective. The so-called real self has

to perform to enable self-actualisation. When the actual self appears, the person is able to become completely efficient. The thought of an actualised or entirely effective individual is the ultimate, not a complete state that someone develops (Snyder & Lopez 2002). In experiencing life, people become totally effective in relative terms. Thus, self-actualisation is a development where a person develops to an ideal, creating one's identity.

Cassidy (2001) commented that being employed demonstrates an encouraging social identity which can be threatened by losing your job causing a loss of self-esteem and varying degrees of physical and psychological ill effects. Furthermore, Wanberg (2012) stated that the most common psychological effect of being unemployed is that it brings increased self-consciousness, sometimes to a level which becomes disabled. Leidner (2006) stated other factors that have an effect on identity development such as family impacts and cultural and gender impacts. He said that employment has become the compass in which people define their identities and that work remains a significant foundation for identity, through its ability to impact self-development, social ties, status and consciousness. According to Platt (1984) specific specialised roles can add in vital ways to a person's identity and perceptions of his- or herself. He also said that you can't get a correct understanding of who an individual is until you discover what kind of occupation they have. He argues that when a person has his or her job unwillingly taken away from them, they lose some feature of their own individual identity and this has a solid influence on their self-esteem. Hayes and Nutman (1981) argue that when a person loses their job it is not just a situation where the person who becomes unemployed, but more significantly he/she loses the means by which the integrity of the self-image is maintained. This absence of identity arises because when a person becomes unemployed, people see them differently, they are no longer part of the group they use to belong to. Unemployment can cause individuals to lose their mutual sense of values; they feel as if they no longer have a status (Mullen, 1985).

Although the 1930s is a long time ago, it is interesting to see that unemployment had a psychological impact on the individual even eighty years ago. In the 1930s unemployment showed a psychological consequence during the great depression. Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld (1938) found that unemployment caused a lower morale and emotional instability amongst people. The unemployment experience is described as a destructive process for psychological well-being, whereby the individual after layoff passes through different psychological phases. Unemployed individuals pass through initial shock after layoff, followed by a period of optimism and resilience

in connection with active job search activity, and when this effort fails, they become resigned and suffer from distress. According to Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld, these negative consequences of unemployment for psychological well-being are "....not surprising in the light of the structure of society where the job one holds is the prime indicator of a man's status and prestige" (Eisenberg & Lazarsfeld 1938:363). Losing one's job causes a number of emotions within the individual.

Bar-On, (2000) introduced the relation of emotional and mental intelligence on the wellbeing of a person. People who are in control of their emotions will be able to handle disappointments better and will also be able to handle what they have been allocated with (Bandura, 1994). According to Bar-On the essence of emotional intelligence (EQ) understands oneself and others, being able to relate to people and possessing the ability to adapt and cope with one's surroundings. Emotional intelligence can assist in the prediction of future success. This prediction is because emotional intelligence condenses the manner in which somebody applies his mind to specific situations (Bar-on, 2000). It is therefore important to deal with all the emotions that retrenched people experience in the correct manner in order to enhance the healing process.

Hollenbach (2014) stated that companies should provide pre- and post-dismissal counselling to affected employees in order to mitigate the impact of retrenchment on the individual. One way of making the matter better is to offer subject related training or workshops. This can typically include how to deal with one's finances, determining career objectives and choices, what one can do to re-enter the formal market and most importantly how to start one's own business. Such training has already been implemented into larger companies, to assist retrenched people to overcome their emotions and survive circumstances.

Strandh (2000) indicated that unemployment becomes social death and the unemployed are seen as depressed and without hope. Within this perspective, unemployment is presented as a huge social problem. Rantakeisu, Starrin and Hagquist (1999) indicated the moral effect of a salary it in the sense that having a salary endorses a sincere societal role. While the financial stress of being jobless certainly is hard for single people, those who have a family to look after, deals with added stress. People who have kids that still stay in the home experience more stress and apprehension about their capability to offer their loved ones the basic desires and schooling (Siemens, 2007). Families and individuals need to deal with very difficult times, now that monthly salaries are significantly lower than before. Hacker, Rehm and Schlesinger (2013) stated that many people are stressed and

worried due to financial uncertainty caused by unemployment. This has a big influence on people's living standards and enhances uncertainty about family budgeting. Being financially pressured due to unemployment is connected to a person's moral. People who are unemployed seem to view being paid as the main form of socially acceptable (Rantakeisu et al. 1999).

Piko (2011) define coping strategies as mental and behavioural efforts to overcome the inner and outside strains related to individual–condition connections that exceed a person's resources. After the mental and behavioural efforts, coping is normally categorized into two common groups: "problem/control focused coping" and "emotion/symptom-focused coping" (Latack & Havlovic, 1992). Problem/control-focused coping tries to resolve the origin of a traumatic condition, while emotion/ symptom-focused coping are focussed on dealing with the expressive reaction to a stressor (Piko, 2011).

Some methods of problem/control-focused coping throughout unemployment are to actively search or look for a new job. Meta-analytic studies have shown that the dynamic pursuit for a new employment shows to be a vital forecast of reemployment (Kanfer et al., 2001). At first glance, we might think that active job-seeking is a positive result to psychological wellbeing, due to the unemployed being proactive in looking for a new job and keeping him or herself busy, but research has indicated otherwise. Studies suggest that the active search for a job amongst the unemployed is associated with reduced psychological wellbeing (Wanberg, 2012). One can understand that actively looking for a new job can be quiet exhausting and discouraging when you are informed of rejections. Rothstein (2011) also stated the fact that searching for a job has an undesirable effect on the mental wellbeing of the person who lost his or her job who continues the journey of looking for a new job, but remains unsuccessful. The individuals who proactively look for an employment may also reach the point of feeling pressured and desperate to accept the first job offer they receive, even though the job may not always be the best of quality (Kinicki, Prussia & McKee-Ryan, 2000).

Other strategies of problem/control-oriented coping mechanisms is to work on one's finances, to review one's job abilities/skills, reconsider if one's qualifications are enough or good enough and to consider relocation. Other emotion/symptom-related strategies may include pursuing support from friends and family, while reminding them that employment is not the only value in one's life (Kinicki & Latack, 1990; Leanal & Feldman, 1990). It has been found that by doing this, stress and

anxiety has been reduced. The next section will provide information on the financial impact of unemployment on an individual.

1.3.7 The financial impact of unemployment on the individual

In 1986, Fryer established the agency restriction model to describe the effect of unemployment on the wellbeing of a person. Fryer found that the loss of income had the biggest negative effect on an individual. He stated that humans are mediators, who aggressively strive to find themselves as independent, who wants to make sense of life, who wants to inspire and manage any actions that align with their personal standards, objectives, and prospects of the future (Fryer, 1997). He points out that monetary values give individuals the opportunity to have a specific control over their lives. He further implies that money offers people chances to experience places, opportunities, specific roles and a manner of socialising, which are important for the development of a good self-esteem and identity. The loss of financial income limits an individual's autonomy which makes it very difficult to attain and plan for a satisfying lifestyle which is a prerequisite for the development and maintenance of a person's well-being. If an individual is only just making ends meet, there is no scope for long-term savings for future goals, the focus of planning shifts from buying a house or saving for retirement to paying next month's bills (Strandh, 2000).

To date a fundamental feature of the research on unemployment largely neglected to focus on the extent of financial constraints upon an individual and what this might imply to them. Strandh (2000) argues that the reason for this is possibly the assumption that the welfare state has reduced the impact of economic deprivation amongst the unemployed. Fryer (2013) believes that the financial tension of joblessness decreases the unemployed person's control over their life conditions making it harder to endorse the anticipated standard of living. This causes a reduction in control over long-term decisions because economic difficulties make forecasting difficult. A small salary has a reasonable harmful result on both contentment and life fulfilment (Böckerman, 2005). To receive a salary as an outcome of doing work is a main element in a person's complete well-being.

In the following pages the research approach and method used in the present research will be discussed.

2. Research design

The purpose of this study is to discover an individual's personal experience of unemployment from a social and psychological perspective. This study adopted a qualitative approach and in-depth interviews were used to collect data from three unemployed professionals. The sections to follow will describe the research approach, the strategy used, the research method which includes the research setting, and the sample which was selected, the method used to collect the data as well as the manner in which the data was recorder. The process of data analysis will also be described as well as the strategies used to ensure quality of data.

2.1 Research Approach

A qualitative research approach was followed in this study. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2000), explained that qualitative research is a method where non-numeric data or non-quantified data is used. Non-numeric data was collected from the unemployed people and their thoughts were then shared. Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) stated that qualitative research should be a generative study – it constructs new ways of understanding. In this study the aim was to gain an understanding of what unemployed male South Africans experienced when they are retrenched, how they coped with the situation and what they learned from being retrenched.

Qualitative research provides the reader with deeper information, such as characteristics, qualities, feelings and emotions which cannot be reduced to a tangible value (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The researcher investigated the realities faced when being laid off, more specifically, the change in their life or worlds, the emotional burdens and how they coped with these issues.

Maree, Cresswell, Ebersohn, Eloff, Ferreira & Ivankova (2010) talk about the gathering of rich, expressive information in respect of a specific phenomenon which in this case, the life experiences of unemployed South Africans where true experience can only be portrayed if the researcher connected with the participant on an individual level and gained their trust to enable them to share their stories. Meyers (2009, p. 5) said that "qualitative research methods are designed to help researchers understand people and what they say and do". Such a method was applicable for this

study as it permitted more capacity to gain in-depth meaning based on an individual's experience of unemployment along with their beliefs and feelings.

The benefit of using this approach for this study is that it permits the researcher to go into the world of the respondent (Zeller, 1995). The respondent can share his views and experiences and the researcher can elaborate on these in order to comprehend the full context. In this study the researcher wanted to be familiarised with the actual emotions and feelings the respondents felt when they started their journey in unemployment.

2.2 Research strategy

The aim of the study is to investigate the day-to-day feelings, emotions and behaviours people experienced after they discovered that they had been retrenched. A narrative approach was therefore followed. According to Zilbler, Tuval-Mashiach and Lieblich, (2008), narrative research refers to the study of narrative materials, they broaden it to say that when collecting the data for a narrative study, it can be in the manner of a story (a life story provided in an interview or a literary work) or in a different manner (field notes of the interviewee who writes up his observations as a narrative or in personal letters). They also stated that this method may be used to compare different groups, to study a societal phenomenon or ancient time-frame, or to study behaviour".

The word *narrative* is originated from "*narros*", the Greek word that means "to know" (Emihovich, 1995). A narrative approach is typically used when experiences are collected. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) commented that, people are story-telling creatures who, independently and communally, live the life of a story. This method researches the manner in which humans perceive the world. In easier terms, human's everyday lives involve stories and this research approach, is a *manner of knowing* (Zeller, 1995). Story-telling is such an important activity because narratives help people to organise their experiences into meaningful episodes that call upon cultural modes of reasoning and representation. Feminist researchers adopted this understanding to come up with a narrative way of inquiry (Sikes, 2000).

In principle, narrative inquiry is committed to representing the actions of the relatively unknown, perhaps oppressed and ignored social groups whose agendas and meanings have been

underrepresented in theoretical, practical and policy debates (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and in our case, retrenched people. Researchers are using narratives to enable people to give an authentic account of their own lives with the belief that telling a story may empower the teller (Goodley, 2004). Narrative understanding, which has the fluidity and wholeness of a story that brings together in a meaningful whole an experiential understanding, is in tune with the pain, aspirations, memories, joys and longings of the human journey. The path of scientific methods is that of necessity, exact and definite, the path of narrative is intuitive, experiential and imaginative. Somers (1994) reframes narrative concept in such a way that its epistemological and ontological significance is highlighted:

> These (new approaches to narratives) posit that it is through narratives that we come to know, understand and make sense of the world, and it is through narratives that we constitute our social identities. All of us came to be who we are (however ephemeral, multiple, and changing) by being located or locating ourselves (usually unconsciously) in social narratives rarely of our own making.

The following are fundamental questions posed by Patton (2002) in terms of narrative research:

1. What does this narrative or story reveal about the person and world from which it comes?
2. How can narrative be interpreted so that it provides an understanding of and illuminates the life and culture that created it?

In simple words, narrative research is used to respond to the question 'what happened?' (Zeller, 1995), and the reaction to that inquiry can provide an exclusive approach of commencing procedure debates.

In the social research frame, narrative is a manner of expressive knowledge. This transfers investigators further than outmoded approaches of inquiry and away from quantities, statistics, variables, tables and surveys. The data in narrative research is in the form of stories. These narrative stories are not linear, refined order of occasions, but a reflection of several authenticities. They are also not just a transcription of the occasions and views of the participant; but, they are a "means of making sense and showing the significance of them in the context of the denouement (conclusion)" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 19).

Narratives differ in the way that they are created. They differ in their use of tone, rhetorical devices and discursive structures (e.g. thematic narratives). Narratives encourage the concepts of multiple

realities and stories hold the concepts of reliability and truthfulness to the teller (Blumenfeld-Jones, 1995). It is these aspects that differentiate narrative inquiry from other methods of qualitative research.

2.3 Participants

Maree et al. (2010) refers to sampling as the process to be followed when one selects a portion of the relevant population for a study. When conducting a qualitative study, the focus on sampling should be to gather and improve the richness of information (Kuzel, 1999). For the study to be valid, focus should be on choosing the correct sample. The research sample should always be appropriate and adequate to the research purpose (Kuzel, 1999). In order to evaluate the experience of unemployed and, how people cope with unemployment, the researcher had to select participants who at some point were unemployed.

The population of unemployed people in South Africa is rather large. The struggle for the search for employment was tremendous and the current economic state of South Africa made it even more difficult. According to Statistician, General Pali Lehohla (April 9, 2014), employed South Africans are highly likely to stay in their jobs, while the people who do not have an occupation, will find it more and more harder to find a job. Presently, retaining rates in companies are considered to be high, but the unemployment picture in South Africa, does not look that good. Lehohla, (2014): "If you look at those who are unemployed, which is about 4.7 million people, only 13 per cent find jobs." Lehohla's statement is proof that it is difficult for the unemployed South African to enter the employed world. The movements over the previous few years proposed they could stay jobless for a long period of time. "Those who are not employed, that is the three million who are not searching for work, four per cent of those managed to get employment" (Lehohla, 2014).

In this study, the researcher wants to explore the life experience of retrenched people. This study does not just require insight on the life experience of unemployed people, but further stipulates unemployed people who were retrenched. Therefore, the sample was purposively chosen according to those criteria. These participants had to be recognised as South African citizens and workless due to retrenchment.

The following table gives a summary of the sample:

Table 1: Summary of Sample

Participant	Age	Marital Status	No. of child-ren	Job title	Duration of employment at company retrenched	Duration of Unemploy-ment
1	45	Married	2	Organisational Development Specialist	18	8 Months
2	60	Married	7	HR Manager	10	24 Months
3	42	Married	2	Factory Materials Manager	5	13 Months

Owing to the traumatic nature of retrenchment it is not easy to find a sample of willing respondents to share their story. Participants were sought through personal contacts of the researcher. As highlighted, the participants covered different occupations, including both white- and blue-collar workers and presented very different perspectives and feelings on the research topic.

2.4 Data collection

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants in order to investigate the concept of the life experience of the unemployed. In-depth interviews aim at eliciting the participant's views of their lives and how they portray their story, in order to gain knowledge on their experiences, feelings and social worlds (Peshkin, 2001). In this way the right interferences about the true feelings and motives of the sample group were gained. Peshkin (2001) also states that unstructured interviews are normaly lead in a daily conversational style, in which to a great extent, participants take the lead, to a greater level, in telling their stories, rather than the interviewer leading the dialogue. This is very important for this study, as the trust of the interviewee needs to be gained. Retrenchment is a sensitive topic and unstructured interviews allowed the interviewee to share his story in a way with which he was comfortable.

Bell and Brymanl, (2007) said that qualitative interviewing varies in several aspects when compared with interviewing for quantitative research, for example, qualitative interviewing is normally less structured. Qualitative interviewing can also be seen as being flexible, where the researcher can adjust and react to the person being interviewed, which is an advantage when gathering sensitive information. Futhermore, Bell and Bryman (2007) stated that rich and thorough responses are desired, the interviewer is allowed to head away from any schedule and new questions may come up following on the interviewee's replies and lastly, the order of questions may be revised.

Minister (1991) provides the following practical guide to researchers who use narrative interviewing as one of their methods:

- Prepare for the interviews by studying the socio-historical contexts of participants' lives.

- Respond to different communication styles.

- Avoid 'mining' interviewees for information or 'cross-examining' them.

- Demonstrate sensitivity to the time frames of participants as well as your own.

- Facilitate a climate of trust.

- Allow participants to ask questions of their own, as well as how we might respond to any questions they raise.

- Reveal your own investment in the research.

- Share some of the interpretations you make.

- Appreciate the politics involved in making knowledge.

The idea is to try to create interviews that are 'interviewee-based' rather than 'instrument-oriented' (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992) though we may refer to a topic-based interview schedule but not enslaved by it. Questions such as, 'how did it begin' and 'then what happened' may be used to invite participants to translate their personal experiences into stories. However, little energy is usually spent trying to create the right questions because it is more important to concentrate on the '… narrator's self-evaluative comments, meta-statements, and the overall logic of the narrative' (Gluck and Patai, 1991:9).

Data collection took place at three different occasions, 9 September 2013, 21 October 2013 and 20 January 2014. All three of the participants were recruited through third parties known to the researcher. They were contacted through e-mail containing details of the research and by telephone with the interview particulars. All the participants chose to have the interviews carried out at their offices, where they felt more at ease in their surroundings and thus allowed them to speak more freely and openly on the research topic. The researcher only had one face-to-face contact with the participants, as all necessary data was acquired, and therefore no there was no for follow-up interviews. The researcher did, however, e-mail the candidates after the interviews, in order to fill in some missing biographical information, for example, number of children, exact period of unemployment, etc.

With the in-depth interviews, the interviewer had the freedom to probe and explore additional questions in response to what were seen as significant replies, while at the same time allowing rapport and empathy to develop between the researcher and the participant. An interview schedule was prepared in advance to aid the researcher in the structure and flow of the interview. Each participant was presented with a similar set of questions relating to their overall experiences of unemployment and the impact which it had on their lives. The questions were mainly open-ended questions with a small number of closed-ended questions relating to information such as age, duration of unemployment and so on. The researcher sought to use language that was comprehensible and relevant to each of the participants who was interviewed (Bryman, 2001). Two of the interviews were in Afrikaans, as the participants' home language was Afrikaans, and one interview was conducted in English, the home language of that specific participant. The researcher felt that candidates would feel more confident, and would speak more openly about their retrenchment story when they used their mother tongue, and therefore the interviews were conducted in those languages.

The interview schedule was structured into the following sections:

- Participant's demographics and background
- Participant's story (retrenchment story)
- Influence of retrenchment on family and friend
- Participant's physical well-being
- What the participant learned from the retrenchment

A pilot interview was carried out prior to the commencement of the actual research. This process allowed the interviewee to express thoughts and feelings relating to the questions. This opportunity resolved difficulties with the wording of the questions and the structure, and also identified anything that might make a participant feel uncomfortable. The data collected in this interview was not included in the analysis.

2.5 Recording the data

Creswell (2013) states that hand-written notes, audio-taping and video-taping can be used to record data for the interview protocol, For the purpose of this research study, the researcher made use of audio-taping and hand-written notes that were captured while the interviews took place. Once the data was recorded the researcher stored it on a computer. Back-up compact discs (CDs) were made to avoid chances of losing the research information. The data collected in the interviews were recorded digitally in order to provide for verbatim transcriptions during the analysis phase.

2.6 Data analysis

After the interviews were concluded, all the transcribed data had to be analysed. The data analysis can be seen as the process of making sense out of text and/or image data (Creswell, 2013). It involves the preparation of the data, conducting different analysis, conceptualising the data, representing the data and interpreting the deeper meaning of the data.

Creswell (2013) presented a gradual model of data analysis in qualitative research. This model is very similar to the Thematic Analysis model, created and presented by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Table 2: Data-analysis model

Step	Creswell (2013)	Braun and Clarke (2006)	Phase
1	Data collection, organise and prepared		
2	Read through all the transcriptions (**Familiarise** yourself with data)	**Familiarising** yourself with your data	**1**
3	Presentation of quotations, the	Generating initial **codes**	2

	generation of **codes** as well as the identification of **themes**	Searching for **themes**	3
		Reviewing themes	4
		Defining and naming themes	5
4	Write up all the research result	Producing the report	6

In this study, a combination of the two models presented above was used. All the data collected was organised and prepared. This included the transcription of the interviews conducted. This is a verbatim transcription of the interview conversation between the participants and the researcher. Taken together, this transcript presented an inclusive record of the discussion that unfolded during the interview and assisted in the analysis of the data (Berg, 2006).

Secondly, the models indicate to read through all the transcriptions to gain a broad-spectrum sense of the information and to reflect its general significance. The researcher familiarised herself with the data, reconsidered every aspect of each interview, highlighted important aspects and re-read it.

The third step of this gradual model of data analysis was then undertaken. This involved the presentation of quotations, the generation of codes, as well as the identification of themes (Jasper, 1994). Bartholomew, Henderson and Marcia (2000) explained that coding focuses on internal psychological processes of interpretation and representation of life experiences. Coding in this research is not deductive – using a coding manual based on literature surveys – but rather inductive. This means that the codes are generated through a repetitive emerging process which starts initial thoughts in the interview process, and is revisited and polished through the re-listening of audio tapes and transcriptions (Smith, Jarman & Osborne, 1999). Open coding was utilised in the analysis of the material. Mertens (1998) classified open coding as the naming and categorising of the phenomena in the data through close examination. Data was broken down in discreet parts, differences and similarities examined, and the questions of retrenchment experience were considered. Although there are computer-aided programmes to assist with data analysis, the open coding of this study took place in the Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel workspace. As illustrated in Figure 1, the relevant quotes (Column A) were captured and themes were allocated (Column B) against each quote.

Figure 2: Quotes and Themes:

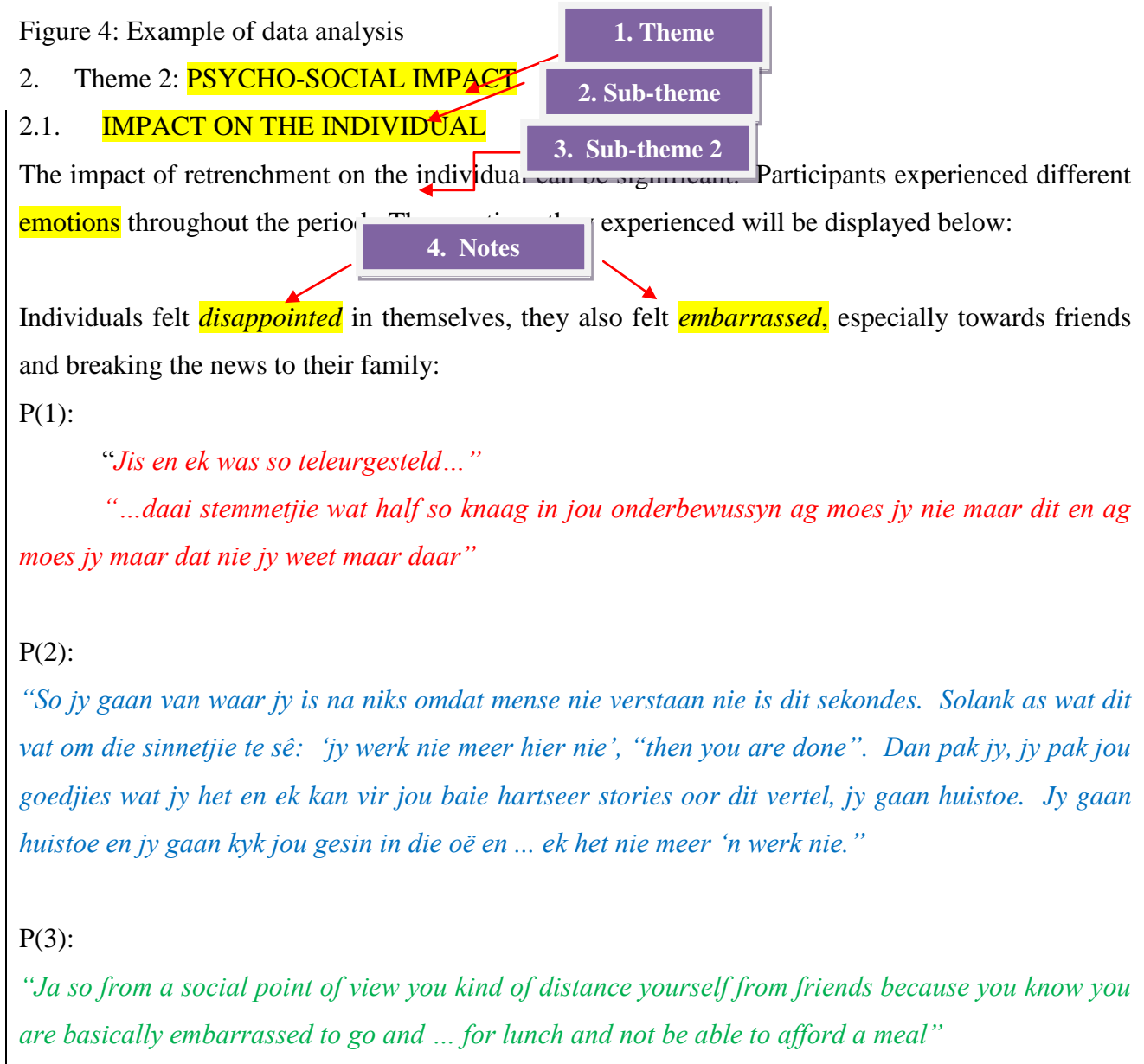| Quote	Theme	Sub-theme	Sub theme 2	Sub-theme 3	Participant
37	Ek dink dit was, ek was baie kwaad ook op die manier hoe ons hanteer was	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Emotional impact	Angry	Participant 1
38	Jy weet jy dink toe aan al die tye, die ure en die dae en die naweke en die oortyd wat jy ingesit het.	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Emotional impact	Angry	Participant 1
39	aan die einde van die dag het dit maar gegaan oor "self-preservation". Elke ou het maar gesorg dat hy sy eie pos beskerm	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Emotional impact	Angry	Participant 1
40	daai stemmetjie wat half so knaag in jou onderbewussyn ag moes jy nie maar dit en ag moes jy maar dat nie jy weet maar daar	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Emotional impact	Regret	Participant 1
41	self ook en met die "coaching"	Coping efforts	Self motivation			Participant 1
42	self begin om baie "journaling" te doen en ek het van die geleentheid gebruik gemaak jy weet om ook bietjie te "journal" oor my ervaring en ek het toe begin skryf	Coping efforts	Journaling			Participant 1
43	twee, drie keer 'n dag kon ek byvoorbeeld geskryf het oor my ervaring en dan droog dit op dan het ek byvoorbeeld een keer 'n week oor my ervaring geskryf en so aan en ek dink dit het ook baie gehelp. Jy weet om die emosies en jy weet wat in jou kop aangaan jy weet op 'n stuk papier te kry en die goed lyk anders as jy dit kan sien of iets en ek dink dit my ook baie gehelp	Coping efforts	Journaling			Participant 1
44	altyd myself definieer as jy weet dat jy weet as 'n pa as 'n vader is my primêre verantwoordlikhede is om my familie te beskerm en te sorg vir hulle.	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Psychological impact	Self worth	Participant 1
45	dit is amper 'n identiteitskrisis so as jy nie kan beskerm nie	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Psychological impact	Indentity	Participant 1
46	moes amper vir myself gesê het ag jy is meer as 'n broodwinner jy weet.	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Psychological impact	Indentity	Participant 1
47	Jy is meer as iemand wat brood op die tafel sit of wat jou familie beskerm jy weet daar is ander aspekte van jou identiteit ook en ek dink dit is van die goeters wat my half gedra het en wat vir my gesê het ag dit is 'n tydelike situasie	Coping efforts	Self motivation			Participant 1
48	as my seun byvoorbeeld vir my gevra het en ek kon gesien het hy verstaan nie 'n 100% waaroor dit gaan nie en dan sal hy byvoorbeeld vir my gevra het ag Daddy hoe gaan dit nou	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on the Family	supportive		Participant 1

Sheet1 / **Data** / Sheet2 / Sheet3

Sub-themes was allocated (figure 2), and key words to describe the specific quote.

Figure 3: Sub-themes (Unaltered)

Quote	Theme	Sub-theme	Sub theme 2	Sub-theme 3	Participant
37	Ek dink dit was, ek was baie kwaad ook op die manier hoe ons hanteer was	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Emotional impact	Angry	Participant 1
38	Jy weet jy dink toe aan al die tye, die ure en die dae en die naweke en die oortyd wat jy ingesit het.	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Emotional impact	Angry	Participant 1
39	aan die einde van die dag het dit maar gegaan oor "self-preservation". Elke ou het maar gesorg dat hy sy eie pos beskerm	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Emotional impact	Angry	Participant 1
40	daai stemmetjie wat half so knaag in jou onderbewussyn ag moes jy nie maar dit en ag moes jy maar dat nie jy weet maar daar	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Emotional impact	Regret	Participant 1
44	altyd myself definieer as jy weet dat jy weet as 'n pa as 'n vader is my primêre verantwoordlikhede is om my familie te beskerm en te sorg vir hulle.	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Psychological impact	Self worth	Participant 1
45	dit is amper 'n identiteitskrisis so as jy nie kan beskerm nie	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Psychological impact	Indentity	Participant 1
46	moes amper vir myself gesê het ag jy is meer as 'n broodwinner jy weet.	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Psychological impact	Indentity	Participant 1
63	Ek het in die hospitaal geëindig verlede jaar	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Physical impact		participant 1
64	ek dra my stres ag my kleinerige stresse dra ek hier in my nek rond jy weet, maar die groot outjies né dra ek in my lae rug	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Physical impact		participant 1
65	hier is 'n senuwee ek kan sien wat vasgeknyp word in jou lae rug	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Physical impact		participant 1
73	dan wil jy nie met ander mense praat nie. Jy wil nie tussen ander mense wees nie, weet jy het nie veel om oor te lag nie jy weet jy sien nie ander perspektiewe nie. Jy dink wat ander mense dink omtrent jou, daai tipe van goeters	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Psychological impact		participant 1
84	ek was nogal baie aggressief teenoor Absa	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Emotional impact	Angry	Participant 1
89	So you have got people chasing you after money and so on and so forth and the pressure is quite tremendous	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Emotional impact	Pressure	Participant 3
90	still having to pay your or send your kids to school and having to pay all the bills and having your lights cut and not having to put food on the table, enough food on the table	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Psychological impact	Self worth	Participant 3
91	We went through quite a difficult time ja	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	cognitive impact	financial plans	Participant 3
92	You know there is no luxuries and we can't afford that.	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	cognitive impact	financial plans	Participant 3

This method created the opportunity to filter on the relevant theme, and then filter on the specific Sub –Theme discussed and group all the sub-theme 2 quotes together for a structured discussion.

Figure 4: Example of data analysis

2.   Theme 2: PSYCHO-SOCIAL IMPACT

2.1.   IMPACT ON THE INDIVIDUAL

The impact of retrenchment on the individual can be significant. Participants experienced different emotions throughout the period. The emotions they experienced will be displayed below:

> 1. Theme
>
> 2. Sub-theme
>
> 3. Sub-theme 2
>
> 4. Notes

Individuals felt *disappointed* in themselves, they also felt *embarrassed,* especially towards friends and breaking the news to their family:

P(1):

> "*Jis en ek was so teleurgesteld…*"
>
> "*...daai stemmetjie wat half so knaag in jou onderbewussyn ag moes jy nie maar dit en ag moes jy maar dat nie jy weet maar daar*"

P(2):

"So jy gaan van waar jy is na niks omdat mense nie verstaan nie is dit sekondes. Solank as wat dit vat om die sinnetjie te sê: 'jy werk nie meer hier nie', "then you are done". Dan pak jy, jy pak jou goedjies wat jy het en ek kan vir jou baie hartseer stories oor dit vertel, jy gaan huistoe. Jy gaan huistoe en jy gaan kyk jou gesin in die oë en ... ek het nie meer 'n werk nie."

P(3):

"Ja so from a social point of view you kind of distance yourself from friends because you know you are basically embarrassed to go and ... for lunch and not be able to afford a meal"

|	Quote	Theme	Sub-theme	Sub theme 2	Notes	Participant
27	Jis en ek was so teleurgesteld	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Emotional impact	Disappointment	participant 1
94	Ja so from a social point of view you kind of distance yourself from friends because you know you are basically embarrassed to go and … for lunch and not be able to afford a meal	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Emotional impact	embarrassed	Participant 3
148	So jy gaan van waar jy is na niks omdat mense nie verstaan nie is dit sekondes. Solank as wat dit vat om die sinnetjie te sê: 'jy werk nie meer hier nie', "then you are done". Dan pak jy, jy pak jou goedjies wat jy het en ek kan vir jou baie hartseer stories oor dit vertel, jy gaan huistoe. Jy gaan huistoe en jy gaan kyk jou gesin in die oë en … ek het nie meer 'n werk nie.	Psycho-social Impact	Impact on Individual	Emotional impact	embarrassed	Participant 2

Maree et al. (2010, p. 117) provided the essence of why no computer-aided data analysis programmes were utilised in this study:

> *Computer-aided data analysis can, on face value, appear deceptively easy. When all is said and done, there are no short cuts to the demanding process of reading and rereading the data, and searching to unfold the meanings constructed by the participants to your study. Only the human mind can begin to see and understand the world through the eyes of the participants.*

After the transcriptions, the analysis of the data formed a vital part in this research, and all the responses were examined for underlying themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) stated that a theme captures something important about the data in terms of the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set.

Creswell (2013) stated that the last step in this gradual model of data analysis is to write up all the research results as a complete text that includes quotations from the material to support each statement made. Figure 4 illustrates this gradual model of data collection used in this research study.

Figure 5: Gradual model of data analysis
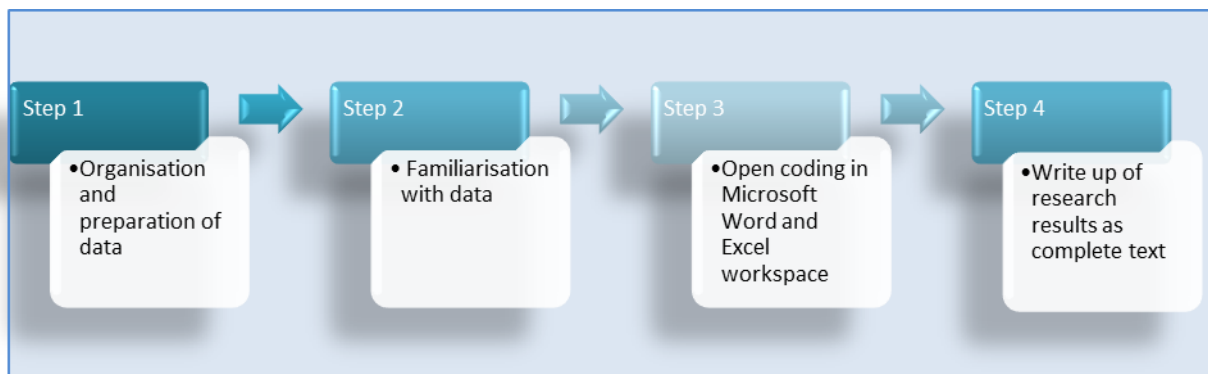
2.7 Strategies employed to ensure quality data

Literature has provided a wide range of criteria for good qualitative studies, concepts such as catalytic validity (Lather, 1986), empathetic validity (Dadds, 2008), crystallisation (Richardson, 2000b), tacit knowledge (Altheide & Johnson, 1994), transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and so on. Tracy (2010) provided eight criteria of qualitative quality, each that may be achieved

through a variety of craft skills that are flexible depending on the goals of the study and preferences/skills of the researcher. The criteria include the following:

1. Worthy topic
2. Rich rigor
3. Sincerity
4. Credibility
5. Resonance
6. Significant contribution
7. Ethics
8. Meaningful coherence

A good qualitative study should have a *worthy topic*. The topic should be "relevant, timely, significant, interesting, or evocative" (Tracy, 2010, p839). Worthy topics frequently develop from punitive priorities and, therefore, are theoretically or abstractly convincing. The researcher chose a topic that is currently relevant in the South African context. Unemployment and retrenchment are currently a big topic in South Africa.

A qualitative research with high quality is also noticeable by *rich rigor*, when compared to quantitative research which is that is more valued for the precision (Winter, 2000). Explanations and descriptions that are thorough, are abundantly delivered explains Weick (2007). Richness is formed through a requisite variety of hypothetical concepts, data bases, contexts, samples and data analysis (Weick, 2007). Using the idea of requisite variety to qualitative rigour proposes that an investigator with a mind full of concepts, and a case full of rich data, is best equipped to see variances and difficulties. An abundantly rigorous qualitative researcher is also usually well prepared to make clever decisions about samples and contexts that are suitable to the research study's specific concerns. Face validity can also be added to the richness concept as rigor offers face validity – does the study appear to be reasonable and appropriate (Golafshani, 2003). Researchers should justify their due diligence, exercising suitable time, effort, care, and thoroughness. For this study, enough data was gathered to support momentous claims, interesting data was gathered (difficult life stories), the sample was chosen purposively to support the research study (Unemployed, South African males) and appropriate procedures was used for interviewing the participant.

The third criterion is *sincerity*. This refers to the means in which the study is evaluated by trustworthiness and transparency about the researcher's biases, objectives and faults and how these aspects play a role in the procedures, strengths and weaknesses of this research. Transparency is a practice of sincerity. Transparency is the trustworthiness of the research procedure (Tracy, 2010). Seale (1999) defines this process "a methodologically self-critical account of how the research was done" (p. 468). A formal audit trail provides "clear documentation of all research decisions and activities" through the interpretation or in the addendums (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 128). For the purposes of this study, the researcher had a third researcher check the research analysis. *Credibility* refers to the honesty, truth, and believability of the study's results. Tracy (1995) clarifies that explanatory studies should be plausible and persuasive. The research study should express an actuality that appears to be accurate, as long as "a credible account of a cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of the 'real'" (Richardson 2000, p. 254). This can be done through providing thorough explanations or thick descriptions, triangulation and multivocality and partiality.

Thick description. The comprehensive illustration that clarifies socially sited connotations and thorough facts (Geertz, 1973, Bochner, 2000). To display the data's density, researchers are guided to offer sufficient facts and detail that readers may come to their own conclusion about the scene.

Crystallization (triangulation). Bloor (2001, p. 348) defines triangulation as, "findings may be judged valid when different and contrasting methods of data collection yield identical findings on the same research subjects; a case of replication within the same setting". The concept of triangulation developed inside realist models that aimed to clear studies of subjective bias.

Multivocality. Very close to the idea of crystallization and presenting rather than telling, is multivocality. Multivocal studies contain several and various opinions in the qualitative report and investigation. Not only does this provide for an empathic understanding, it also creates opportunity for a variety of opinions. This does not imply placing words in other people's mouths, but rather attends to perspectives that deviate from those of the majority or with the author. Multivocality also proposes that writers take cognisance of cultural dissimilarities amongst themselves and participants. Differences in race, class, gender, age, or sexuality can be the foundation for very diverse significances in the field, and credibility is improved when the study's results draw attention to these possibilities.

Resonance is the ability to meaningfully resound and move people (Tracy, 2010). Even the best written piece is incapable to offer direct understanding of the exposure that other people had (Schutz, 1967). However, researchers can participate in occurrences that will enhance compassion, empathy, and reverberation of the study so that readers, who did not receive any direct exposure with the topic, also feel those emotions (Dadds, 2008). He further named this occurrence, where a study transform the emotional outlooks of people and encourage greater mutual regard as "empathic validity".

Significant Contribution. When determining the importance of a study's impact, researchers measure the existing climate of knowledge, practice, and politics, and query the following "Does the study extend knowledge?" "Improve practice?" "Generate ongoing research?" "Liberate or empower?" The responses to these queries directs methods in which the study will "contribute to our understanding of social life" (Richardson, 2000a, p. 254), "bring clarity to confusion, make visible what is hidden or inappropriately ignored, and generate a sense of insight and deepened understanding" (Tracy, 1995, p. 209). This study extends knowledge of what people experience when they go through a retrenchment. Further research can include new models/steps on how to handle difficult times like retrenchments, how direct family are affected, how can companies facilitate retrenchment on a more subtle manner and many more.

Ethical. Ethical research includes a lot of these principles that was explained above, such as self-reflexivity and multivocality. But, ethics are not just a means. It creates an entire end goal of qualitative excellence itself, regardless of paradigm. In the next session, the researcher explains the ethical procedures followed for this study.

Meaningful Coherence. The final criterion for qualitative quality is meaningful coherence. To be meaningfully coherent includes the following:
- (a) Achieving the stated purpose.
- (b) Accomplishing what they espouse to be about.
- (c) Using methods and representation practices that partner well with espoused theories and paradigms.
- (d) Attentively interconnect literature reviewed with research emphases, methods and findings.

Studies that present meaningful coherence expressively connect their research design, data collection, and data analysis with the theoretical framework and situational goals (Tracy, 2010 p848).

2.8 Research ethics

As researcher, the main obligation is to refrain from harming anyone, even if the initial plans of the research has to change. Researchers also have particular moral accountabilities in terms of their choices and actions about the research. We should always consider, aren't we perhaps probing uncomfortable questions? What are the political complications to this question? Are we guaranteeing the anonymity and discretion of our participants? Bar-on (1996) encourages researchers to ask themselves these questions, before they undertake a research project that includes other people. Questions could also include whether we would be at ease to be exposed to related situations.

Cowles (1988) stated that conversation-like interviews actively intend to extract private information from respondents and questions may emphasise emotionally charged matters that influence an individual's private identity. Mostly the interviews are focussed on actions that were important to the participant (Riesman, 1993). In this study retrenchment is a very traumatic experience and there for the intentions of the study should not cause any damage to the participants. The researcher provided that by ensuring confidentiality, through letting the participants sign a consent form.

Respect to Ethical compliance affect the compilation of each step in the research process. If we compile the questions for our study, without considering the ethics involved, we may discover that we cannot practically conduct our research. Ethics in research relates both to our participants and to us, the researchers.

There are four main issues a qualitative researcher should take cognisance of. These include an evaluation of advantage opposed to damage, confidentiality, role conflict, and informed consent (Bar-on, 1996; Cowles, 1988, Josselson, 1996). Ethical concerns should always be measured when using narrative inquiry for your study. As the nature of qualitative observational research entails observation and personal contact with individuals, it is clear why specific ethical issues may increase.

Confidentiality

Privacy is a plain and simple human right, observed by many as vital for the defence and elevation of human dignity (Patton, 2003). That is why it is essential to keep any information that is disclosed during the study, confidential. A significant resource of safeguarding that privacy in a study is to monitor who has access to the information, and how private information will be controlled and distributed (Josselson, 1996). The researcher replaced all the candidate's names with "Participant 1", "Participant 2" and "Participant 3" in order to conceal anything that might lead to acknowledgment. In reaction to the statement that several meanings are likely to unfold in an analysis, a vital measure of the honesty derives from how good the interpretation is grounded in the data (Patton, 2003). This frequently requires significant detail of information and real quotations of participants or the entire narrative story so that the end user has the ability to assess the researcher's explanation of the data for themselves. This implies that occasionally there are sufficient elements in a report that a participant may be recognised regardless of the use of false names. In small societies this is a specific issue (Grafanaki, 1996, Lieblich, 1996). In acknowledgment of avoiding matters of confidentiality, Munhall (1988) proposed discouraging contributors from giving information not related to the research study. For this study, some biographical information (as part of describing the sample) could not have been removed as it contributed to the essence of the study. For example:

- Age: People perceive unemployment differently at different life stages.
- Marital status and number of children: Family played an important role in the supporting of the unemployed dad.
- Job title: As the participants reviewed there career history…it is interesting to see what position they held before they were retrenched.
- Duration of employment: The longer you work at a specific company, the more disappointed you are when being retrenched.
- Duration of unemployment: This illustrates the impact of the retrenchment on the participants.

Role conflict

Due to the regular interaction required between researcher and participant in narrative studies, there are more chances of researcher role conflict and obscuring of restrictions than in other types of studies. This is a bigger problem when the study is known to contributors in a different context. This can also happen throughout in-depth involvement in alternative culture when a researcher

becomes friends with the participants. There can be a big benefit to have inside information, when knowing the participants, but the risk to research integrity and ethics could offset the entire process (Morse, 2000). Since narrative research typically contains informal dialogues, which can be perceived by some participants as more fun and interactive than the more traditional approaches of research, it might be problematic when participants forget that they are participating in research.

Another common ethical issue is how the role of the researcher may change as the research study evolves. If there is any conflict of interest in the relationship, it is important to clearly address the matter as soon as possible. In studies where participants assist firmly as impersonal data sources, the part of the researcher is clearly known.

The researcher kept the interviews very professional, by making a formal appointment with the participants. All participants were contacts through a third party, therefore no friendships evolved before and/or during the study. The researcher also kept all conversations professional via email. Through this professional relationship with the participants, the researchers set the participant at their ease to tell their truthful story without worrying about what the researcher will think.

Informed consent is probably the most vital ethical principle. It can be described as a norm in which subjects base their voluntary participation in research projects on a full understanding of the possible risks involved (Babbie, 2005). Whitley (2001) entitled the parts of an informed consent as a declaration of the objective of a research study, an explanation of any predictable risks, a description of benefits to the participant, a discovery of suitable substitute processes, a declaration of privacy, any reward given, an description of whom to contact for answers and a statement that participation is voluntary. Langdridge (2007) specified that the standard is to offer the participants complete understanding about the nature of the study. Therefore the researcher delivered comprehensive information and guarantees on ethical practice, and clarified what would happen to the data once the report had been submitted. The researcher clarified who would have admittance to the research study (Parker & Tritter, 2006).

In this research study, the participants had to sign a consent form which stated that they were willing to contribute to the study, do the interview with the researcher. The consent form also confirmed to them that their information would be handled with confidentiality and anonymity throughout the process (See example of Informed Consent form in Appendix A). Unemployment

for numerous people can be a sensitive and tough subject and while preparing, investigating and studying the topic and facts, the researcher was sensitive of the questions being examined in relation to the research and the possible exposure of the participants involved. It is vital to remember that persons differ in their involvements of unemployment and thus the researcher was mindful, that for certain participants it could be upsetting or offensive to talk about being jobless, which is why specific attention was taken in the researcher's method to the topic.

3. Findings

The focus of this study is to explore what the retrenched person experienced (in terms of emotions, psychological, social), how did they coped (if they did) and what they learned throughout this experience.

The themes were selected according to the contents of the data that was collected from the three different interviews, also keeping in mind the focus of the research study. Five themes were selected. The themes were chosen to present a picture of the whole retrenchment experience. For instance, how people were asked to leave a company, the psycho-social impact on the individual, as well as the impact on the family, how to cope, the importance of social support and what they learned. The analyses remained loyal to the descriptive nature of the material in order to reveal its essential meaning directly. Themes were not predetermined, and were allowed to unfold as the researcher engaged with the transcripts.

For this chapter the themes will be described separately, and the results of all three participants will be presented together under the different themes. For the remainder of this chapter colour-coding is used to indicate themes, codes or verbatim quotes for the different participants. See Table 3 for the codes and abbreviations.

Table 3 - Coding system employed

P(1)	Coloured male, 45 years old.
	Employed for 18 years then retrenched
	Without work for 8 months, but 3 of 8 months were paid.
P(2)	White male, 60 years old.

	Employed for 10 years then retrenched
	Without work for 10 years
P(3)	Indian male, 40 years old.
	Employed for 5 years then retrenched
	Without work for 13 months

Five themes emerged during the study. In this chapter each theme will be discussed separately. A summary of the five themes appears in Table 4:

Table 4: Five emerging themes

	Theme
1	Retrenchment Process
2	Psycho-social Impact
3	Coping behaviours
4	Effect of social support/or lack of it
5	Lessons learned

3.1 Theme 1: RETRENCHMENT process

The retrenchment process seems to be an appropriate theme on which to embark when noting the results of the overall experience of being retrenched.

All three participants commented that they were informed of possible retrenchments in advance, although it did not make the situation any better.

P(1):

"Die feit dat jy dit weet maak nie die skok minder nie…"

 "...so amper so agt maande voor dit het ons ook maar so deur verskeie fases gegaan…"

("The fact that you are informed does not decrease the shock…"

 "...almost eight months prior, we all went through the different stages")

P(3):

"Look I knew because I was the factory manager, I was the site manager, uhm I was informed months before everyone else. Mentally it was a shock and you just wanted to leave immediately".

The overall comments regarding the retrenchment process was very negative. One participant commented that the culture and leadership of the company took a drastic negative turn when they realised that there might be retrenchments in the near future.

P (1):

"…en ek kon sien wow jy weet in terme van die kultuur; het leierskap eerstens verander; kon verder af in die organisasie kon jy mense hoor kla meer en meer kla oor die kultuur; ag jy weet mense is maar besig om so deur die "motions" te gaan".

("…and I could see, wow, in terms of the culture, leadership changed first, further on in the organidation, you could see how people complained more and more about the culture, you know, people was busy going through the motions…")

The major impact of retrenchment and the importance of employment to an individual caused some colleagues to try and impress management just to "save" their jobs

P(1):

"So jy het amper begin goeters doen om ander mense tevrede te stel jy weet so dit het nou nie meer gegaan oor weet wat is die regte ding om te doen onder die omstandighede nie"

("So you almost started doing things to satisfy other people, you know, so it was not about doing the right thing under the circumstances.").

The manner in which individuals were informed of retrenchment seemed to be a very bad process. One candidate referred to people receiving e-mails to be informed, and in that manner "killing people"

P (2):

"Die "auntie" van die "e-mail" gestuur is 'n swart jong dame. Sy is gevra deur die joernalis wat is jou storie, hoekom? Sy sê die wet vereis van my om die ou in kennis te stel of ek dit doen met 'n sms of 'n e-pos "fine"."

"Ons probeer vir mense 'n bietjie hoop gee en dan wanneer hulle dink hulle het 'n bietjie hoop dan skop jy hulle van die skuit af dat hulle swem. Jy skop hulle nie van die skuit af om te swem as hulle geen hoop het nie en dit is wat vandag gebeur en dis hoekom mense doodgaan. Dit is hoekom gesinne doodgaan, dis hoekom kinders doodgaan en niemand is bereid om op te staan en te sê maar die maatskappy is sosiaal onverantwoordelik nie".

("The "auntie" who sent the "e-mail" was a young black woman. She was asked by a journalist what is your story, why? She said the law requires me to inform the guy, whether I do it with a text message or an e-mail, it is "fine".

"We try to give people a little bit of hope and when they think they have the hope, you kick them of the boat for them to swim. You do not kick someone of the boat when they do not have any hope left and that is what is happening today and that is why people die. That is why families and children die and no one is willing to stand up and say that companies are socially irresponsible.")

Another negative factor that participants touched on was the South African regulations. They felt that the retrenchment process is "unfair" towards specific races and ages:

P(2):

"So die probleem is dat as jy in wat eintlik 'n derde wêreld land sit met 'n derde wêreld bevolking met eerste wêreld Arbeidswetgewing dan veroorsaak jy verskriklike stres in jou werksomgewing."

Vyf minute later toe rapporteer ek in 'n raadsaal. "Plug" my rekenaartjie in, mooiste plasma skerm wat jy aan kan dink en daar sit almal se naampies en daar sit twee senior uitvoerende amptenare en hulle sê merk vir my, daai een merk jy met rooi, hy gaan. Daai een merk jy met geel hy is 'n "possible", daai twee kan jy "skip", daai een merk jy met rooi."

"Die 17 individue wat geïdentifiseer is is bloot toevallig, was almal blank en almal bo 50."

"En binne twee maande is al 17 uit die maatskappy"

"So dit is die realiteite van die korporatiewe wêreld op hierdie stadium. Hulle "retrench" nie baie wit werknemers onder die ouderdom van 30 nie, mans nie "mostly". Daar is nie meer nie. Die Indiër groep, die Kleurling groep val binne die definisie van BBBEE so hulle karring nie met hulle nie en dan die balans tussen mans en dames is daar meëdoenloos gedreig om swart dames in senior poste in te kry"

("So the problem is that you who sit in a third world country, with a third world population with a first world Labour law, then you cause a lot of stress in the workplace."

 "Five minutes later I reported in the conference room. Plugged in my computer, most beautiful plasma screen that you have ever seen and all the people's names was there on the screen and two of the senior executives sat there and they told me…"mark that red, that one, mark him with yellow, he is a "possible" next two you can skip, that one mark him red".

 "The 17 individuals identified was all, by chance, white and older thatn 50"

 "And within two months all 17 left the company")

"So, it is the reality of the corporate world at this moment. They do not   retrench many male white employees under the age of 30. There aren't any more. The Indian group, Coloured group, falls within the BBBEE definition, so they do not fiddle with them and then, the balance between men and women, there is relentless threatening to appoint black ladies in senior jobs.

P(3):

"Although we are in a democratic society currently, the apartheid system was so structured that even 20 years in the world of democracy in South Africa, we have not kill the apartheid system in the private sector. So it is that much difficult or more difficult to get a job. I am an Indian male, you are not a black man, you know it is a very distinct, you don't get the same brownie points to qualify for BEEE status and stuff like that. Actually a white woman made more points, so it was difficult to find another job."

All three participants had a negative connotation with the retrenchment process. This may be due to the fact that losing one's job, mostly have a negative outcome. They felt angry, frustrated and very negative towards the South African laws and regulations. The next theme will give us an indication of the psycho-social impact of retrenchment on the participants.

3.2 Theme 2: PSYCHO-SOCIAL IMPACT

A second emerging theme that appeared from the interviews was the psycho-social impact. The impact on the individual and the impact on the family will be discussed as separate sub-themes.

- Impact on the Individual
- Impact on the Family

3.2.1 IMPACT ON THE INDIVIDUAL

The impact of retrenchment on the individual can be significant. Participants experienced different emotions throughout the period. The emotions they experienced will be displayed below:

Uncertainty:

P (1):

"Jy weet gaan dit 2 maande, gaan dit 3 maande, gaan dit 5 maande wees"

("You know, is it going to be 2 months, 3 months…5 months.")

A lot of *anger* towards the company was presented during the interviews.

P(1):

"Ek dink dit was, ek was baie kwaad ook op die manier hoe ons hanteer was…"

"Jy weet jy dink toe aan al die tye, die ure en die dae en die naweke en die oortyd wat jy ingesit het."

("I think it was, I was very angry about how they treated us.."

"You know, you think about all the hours and days and weekends and the overtime that you worked")

P(2):

"…maar die maatskappy is sosiaal onverantwoordelik. Hulle behoort aanspreeklik gehou te word hiervoor, niemand is bereid om dit te doen nie, want die totale verantwoordelikheid word teruggeskuif na die individu toe en gesê dis 'n "tough life, cowboys don't cry…""

"Ek word geskroef grensloos as individu…"

("...but the company is socially irresponsible. They should be held accountable for this, no one is prepared to do that, the total responsibility gets shifted to the individual and they say, "cowboys don't cry…"

"I am boundlessly screwed as an individual…")

Anger and hate were also noted towards country-specific issues such as apartheid and the law.
P(2):
"En dit is "overdue", dit is "seriously overdue". Daai Wette is gepromulgeer in 1995."

"Hulle moes in 2005 moes hulle oorgedoen gewees het. Dis nooit gedoen nie. Okay, liewer laat as nooit. Dit word nou gedoen, maar die hele, hierdie storie van ouens "retrench" om jou "targets" te maak in terme van jou balansstaat…"

"…oor die 60% wit Afrikaner mans wat as hy die geleentheid kry is hy die land uit"

("And it is overdue, seriously overdue. Those laws were promulgated in 1995"

 "They should have redone them in 2005. It was never done. Okay, rather late than never. They are busy rewriting them now, but retrenching people in order to reach targets on your balance sheet…"

 "...over 60% of white male Afrikaners leave South Africa as soon as they get the opportunity")

P(3):

"…you kind of hate the whole apartheid system, you start to hate the white you know because of what they do or what they did and you start hating yourself for not being more pro-active…"

Individuals felt *disappointed* in themselves, they also felt *embarrassed*, especially towards friends and breaking the news to their family:

P(1):

"Jis en ek was so teleurgesteld…"

"…daai stemmetjie wat half so knaag in jou onderbewussyn ag moes jy nie maar dit en ag moes jy maar dat nie"

("I was so disappointed…"

"…that voice in your unconscious mind, shouldn't you just do this or that..?")

P(2):

"So jy gaan van waar jy is na niks omdat mense nie verstaan nie is dis sekondes. Solank as wat dit vat om die sinnetjie te sê: 'jy werk nie meer hier nie', "then you are done". Dan pak jy, jy pak jou goedjies wat jy het en ek kan vir jou baie hartseer stories oor dit vertel, jy gaan huistoe. Jy gaan huistoe en jy gaan kyk jou gesin in die oë en sê ek het nie meer 'n werk nie."

("So you go from where you are to nothing because people do not understand it takes seconds. The time it takes to say "you do not work here anymore" and "then you are done". Then you pack all your stuff, and I can share very sad stories on that, then you go home. You go home and look your family the eye and say, I do not have a job anymore")

P(3):

"Ja so from a social point of view you kind of distance yourself from friends because you know you are basically embarrassed to go and … for lunch and not be able to afford a meal"

One of the participants commented that he was feeling immense *pressure* regarding a lack of money, and another participant commented how *traumatic* the whole experience was.

P(3):

"So you have got people chasing you after money and so on and so forth and the pressure is quite tremendous"

P(2):

"…en dit is traumaties, jy weet dit is traumaties en as jy dan nie jou emosies en jouself onder 'n redelike kontrole in beheer het nie dan gebeur .... en dit gebeur met baie mense, dit gebur vir baie mense."

("...and it is traumatic and if you do noty have your emotions in some sort of control, it (bad things) can happen and it happens to many people".)

The retrenchment also had a cognitive impact (thinking processes) on the individuals.

P(1):

"Gaan ons jy weet al die rekeninge kan betaal"

"Sjoe en jis nou moet ek nou in hierdie tydperk belangrike besluite neem…"

"…sê ek vir myself jis jy weet wat 'n wonderlike geleentheid vir jou nou in terme van waar jy jouself bevind in jou lewe, jy het soveel aantal jare jy weet om in terme van jou loopbaan, maar is dit eintlik wat jy nou met jou lewe wil doen. Jy weet ek het gedink jy kan nou so positief daarna kyk of jy weet jy kan nou vir jouself sê okay aanvaar die pos en dan probeer jy dan kry jy verseker daai posisie en dan probeer jy dan om vir jou 'n ander pos te kry"

("Will we be able to pay all the bills"

"Now I have to make very important decisions in this time…")

"...I said to myself, what great opportunity you have, you have so many years left in your career, but is this exactly what you want to do with your life? I thought, you can look at this so positively an accept this job and then you can look for another job")

P(3):

"…you become suicidal…"

"You just hit a brick wall and you are phoning friends and family for favours and you are trying to throw every ego that you have you know out the window and just take anything that comes your way and you don't even want to go anywhere because it is petrol, its money and you don't want to waste money."

P(2):

"…maar dit is 'n baie groot rede, hoekom mense "retrench" word. Uhm, dit gaan oor jou aanvaarbaarheid binne 'n groep en dit gaan oor jou selfbeeld."

("…but there is a big reason why people get retrenched. It is about your acceptance within a group and your self-esteem")

The participants also indicated physical strain owing to the stress they were experiencing.

P(1):

"Ek het in die hospitaal geëindig verlede jaar…"

"…hier is 'n senuwee ek kan sien wat vasgeknyp word in jou lae rug…"

("I ended up in hospital last year…"

"…there is a pinched nerve in my lower back…")

P(3):

"…body takes a significant you lose weight and you don't want to eat or your habits change and ja you develop symptoms of headaches and stuff because you are stressing"

It was also noted that retrenchment had some sort of psychological impact on the participants:

P(1):

"Jissie ek kan amper myself op die skouer klop en sê ek is trots op jou…"

"…wanneer kollegas op kantoor vir jou bel en sê ag hoe gaan dit het jy al 'n werk gekry? Dan moet jy elke keer vir die persoon sê nee ek het nog niks gekry nie."

"…maar dit was vir my baie moeilik en ander het vir jou genooi ag kom loer in kom drink 'n koppie koffie, maar ek kon net nie my gesig op kantoor gaan wys nie. Dit was moeilik gewees om daar in te stap en om mense in die oë te kyk en as mense vir jou kyk."

"…altyd myself definieer as jy weet dat jy weet as 'n pa as 'n vader is my primêre verantwoordlikhede is om my familie te beskerm en te sorg vir hulle".

"…dit is amper 'n identiteitskrisis so as jy nie kan beskerm nie…"

"…moes amper vir myself gesê het ag jy is meer as 'n broodwinner jy weet".

"…dan wil jy nie met ander mense praat nie. Jy wil nie tussen ander mense wees nie, weet jy het nie veel om oor te lag nie jy weet jy sien nie ander perspektiewe nie. Jy dink wat ander mense dink omtrent jou, daai tipe van goeters…"

("I can almost pat myself on the back and say I am proud of you."

"when colleagues at the office call you and ask if you found a job yet? Then you have to tell them, no not yet."

"...but it was very difficult and people invited me for coffee, but I could not show my face at the office. It was difficult to be there and look people in the eye and have people looking at you."

"...always have to define myself as primarily a father figure, to protect my family and provide for them."

"...it is almost an identity crises, if you cannot provide…"

"...almost had to convince myself, you know you are more than a breadwinner"

"…you do not want to talk to other people. You do not want to be around other people, you do not really have anything to laugh at and you do not see other's perspectives. You think about what does other people say about you.")

P(2)

"Dis vir my 'n "issue" en ouens wat my minag op die pad omdat ek 'n Mazda 1600 bakkie ry…"

("It is an issue for me and guys who despise you in the road because of your Mazda 1600 bakkie…")

P(3)

"…you don't feel like a man anymore. It's kind of takes away your manhood."

"….then your kids come early from school, they come from school and then you are at home which is, they are not use to that and on top of all the counselling that you have to do for yourself you have to put up a brave front for them…"

From the above it is clear that the retrenchment process had a significant impact on the individual. The impact was on an *emotional* level, anger and hate were experienced. Uncertainty, frustration, disappointment and embarrassment were also felt. The retrenchment process also had a cognitive impact on the individuals. They had to think differently about every sent that they spent, they had to motivate and encourage themselves regularly. They also had to control their thoughts, when thinking about putting an end to it all. People had different thoughts on the reason why workers were retrenched. The process also had a physical impact on the individuals, and lastly a psychological impact was also experienced. Participants experienced a feeling of losing their identity, self-esteem and "manhood".

3.2.2   IMPACT ON THE FAMILY

Retrenchment does not affect the individual alone, family members are also deeply affected.

P (1):

"…dit het nogal baie aan my dogter ook geknaag.."

("…it had a n impact on my daughter…")

P (2):

"Die impak op hulle (family) hierdie laaste "retrenchment" die ander nie soseer nie, want hulle was nooit in die huis nie, maar die impak op hulle is geweldig."

"Waar jy sonder om twee keer te dink gesê het jy kan op 'n skool toer gaan moet daar nou eers somme gemaak word of jy kan en of jy nie kan gaan nie. Uhm die kinders het dit baie goed gevat, hulle sê vir maats ek kan nie gaan skaats nie want daar is nie geld nie.

("This last retrenchment had an impact on my family, not so much the other ones, they weren't home that much, but the impact on them are tremendous."

"Where you did not even think twice sending your children on school tours, but now you had to do calculations first. The children handled it very well, they told their friends they could not go ice-skating, because there is no money.")

P (3):

"She (wife) was in shock she also goes through the same emotional what are we going to do how are we going to do it and a lot of overreaction."

Despite of all the emotions the family were experiencing, they still tried to be supportive.

P(1):

"…jy is die enigste broodwinner in die familie so jy maak nou maar die besluit en ek ondersteun jou in die besluit wat jy gaan neem en ek kon ook gesien het sy verstaan ook nou nie alles weet in al sy "detail" "

"…en ek kon gesien het hy verstaan nie 'n 100% waaroor dit gaan nie en dan sal hy byvoorbeeld vir my gevra het ag Daddy hoe gaan dit nou"

("…you are the only bread winner in the family, so you can make the decision and I will support you in your decision and I could see that she did not really understand all the detail"

"...and I could see he did not really understand everything 100% and then he would ask me "Daddy how is things now")

A positive reaction was that the retrenchment brought the family closer together.

(P1):

"…die ander positiewe was dat ek nog nooit soveel gesprekke met my vrou gehad het nie"

"…sal ek ook help om skoon te maak. Dan vee ons saam die kamers en ons mop saam die huis en ons gesels oor die en daai jy weet en ek dink ons was nog nooit so na aan mekaar as gedurende hierdie tyd nie"

("...the other positive thing was that my wife and I never had so many discussions before…)

("...should I also help with the cleaning? We would sweep the bedroom floors together and mop the house and chat about this and that and I believe we have never been this close before")

P(2):

"Ons het nie DSTV nie want daar is nie geld nie, "but" daar is ander kompensasies. Dit bring jou nader aanmekaar as 'n gesin as jy dit reg bestuur."

("We do not have DSTV, because there is no money, but there is other rewards. It brings you closer to each other as a family if you manage it correctly.")

For one participant, it really tough time and he and his wife were almost divorced.

P(3):

"…know we really fought and almost divorced."

The participants did not want their children to regard them as being less than before the retrenchment.

P(1):

"…as hulle(kinders) iets nodig het, ek wou amper die hele situasie genormaliseer het dat hulle nie voel wow dinge is regtig besig om te verander nie"

("...when they (children) needed something, I tried to normalise the whole situation so that they would not feel that things changed drastically")

P(2):

"So ja daar is heel waarskynlik aan die sosiale kant is daar probleme tussen jou en die gesin. Beide in terme van jou lewensmaat en in terme van jou kinders wat jou nooit sien nie en in die tienerjare het "contrary to popular belief" het kinders 'n redelike sterk vaderfiguur nodig."

("Yes, on the social side problems raised between you and your family. Both in terms of your partner and your children whom you never see and in the teenage years, contrary to popular belief, children need a strong father figure")

P(3):

"…then your kids come early from school, they come from school and then you are at home which is, they are not use to that and on top of all the counselling that you have to do for yourself you have to put up a brave front for them…"

"Yes, ja it has a huge impact on them because you had to sit down and discuss and tell them you are not going to get this, you are not going to get that, I can't afford this and I mean as a parent you never want to tell your kids that"

Retrenchment does not impact the individual alone. From the above quotes we can see that retrenchment also impacts the family. They also react radically to what happened. Through the rough times, the families of the retrenched participants seemed to be supportive. Some participants felt that the rough times brought the family closer together, but for one participant times were very difficult and his marriage almost ended up in a divorce. It is clear that as parents, the participants did not want their children to think any less of them. The participants' families also experienced very difficult times.

3.3 THEME 3: COPING EFFORTS

The third theme is the coping efforts that the participants made. Each participant indicated his own way in which he preferred to manage this phase of his life. They motivated their actions.

P (1):

"Jy het goeie ervaring, jy behoort nie te sukkel om weer 'n werk te kry nie"

"Jy is meer as iemand wat brood op die tafel sit of wat jou familie beskerm jy weet daar is ander aspekte van jou identiteit ook en ek dink dit is van die goeters wat my half gedra het en wat vir my gesê het ag dit is 'n tydelike situasie"

"…jy gaan nie lê tot 10 uur in die oggend omdat jy nie 'n werk het nie. So ek het opgestaan soos gewoonlik dan het ek aangetrek en ek het die kinders skooltoe gevat"

"…probeer om nugter te besin. Ek het probeer terugstaan van my, ek het probeer om ruimte te skep van my situasie af"

"…ek 'n bietjie op my "laptop" gewerk jy weet, ek het my dag goed gestruktureer dat ek ook voel jy weet my dae is sinvol."

 ("You have good experience; you shouldn't struggle to find a new job)

 ("You are more than just someone who put bread on the table or protect the family, you know, there is aspects of your identity and I think that is what carried me through this and what said to me that this is temporary"

 ("...you are not going to lay in bed till 10h in the morning because you do not have a job. So I got up as normal and I got dressed and took the children to school.")

 ("...tried to think clearly. I tried to stand back, get a clear view of my situation").

 ("...I worked on my laptop and structured my day effectively so that I also feel that my days are reasonable.")

P (3):

"…fortunately for me I have a very positive mental attitude and I believed in myself and my capability it is just for someone to trust that they are hiring the right person…"

The participants found it worthwhile to write down their thoughts. Some preferred to exercise, while some relied on religion in order to cope with the circumstances.

P (1):
"…ek het van die geleentheid gebruik gemaak jy weet om ook bietjie te "journal" oor my ervaring…"

"…twee, drie keer 'n dag kon ek byvoorbeeld geskryf het oor my ervaring en dan droog dit op dan het ek byvoorbeeld een keer 'n week oor my ervaring geskryf en so aan en ek dink dit het ook baie gehelp. Jy weet om die emosies en jy weet wat in jou kop aangaan jy weet op 'n stuk papier te kry en die goed lyk anders as jy dit kan sien of iets en ek dink dit my ook baie gehelp."

"Ek het begin oefen "

"…ek gaan stap saam met my vrou"

("...I took the opportunity to do some journaling about my situation…")

("...two, three times a day I could write about my experience and then it would clear and then I would write once a week and so on and I think that helped a lot. You know to put your emotions and thoughts on paper and those things look different when you can see them and I think that helped me a lot.")

("I started exercising.")

("...I walked with my wife")

P(3):
"Ek is baie baie aktief en jy moet. "If you don't, dis "simple", "if you don't use it, you lose it"."
("*I am very active and you should be. If you don't, it is simple, if you don't use it you lose it")*

P(3):

"…you pray for a job interview…"

The participants found planning to be a good method of coping. They had to think ahead and plan on what to do:

P (1):

"Ek het dit so uitgewerk. So ek het nou al gekyk tot in die volgende jaar kon ek sien okay wow so oor hierdie tydperk is ek "fine". Ek het tot 'n gedeelte van my pensioenfonds so half weet vloeibaar gehou net ingeval net om daai ekstra kussingtjie vir my half in te bou so en ek het geweet as dit finansieel reg gaan met my en my familie dan ek emosioneel en sielkundig reg wees"

"…jy kyk van buitekant af. Jy weet en ek het 'n plan op die tafel gesit vir myself, jy weet en ek het vir myself 'n struktuur gevestig om my deur hierdie doolhof amper te lei."

("I calculated it. Till next year I will be fine. I even used a part of my pension and made half of it available just for in case, just for that extra support and I knew, if we are financially fine, then I would be emotionally and psychologically fine.")

("...you take a look from the outside. You know, and I put a plan on the table for myself and I created a structure for myself in order to guide me through this maze".)

P (2):

"So daar is kompensasies. So dit is "not all bad" en ons voordeel is dat ek het redelike goeie beleggings gedoen, my beleggings doen goed. So dis 'n keuse wat ons maak om konserwatief te lewe. Dis nie 'n absolute moet nie."

("So there is compensation. So it is not all bad and our advantage is that I made good investments. My investments are doing well. So it is a choice for us to live conservative.")

From the above quotes, we can see that the participants used different methods as coping mechanisms. Some of the candidates had to motivate themselves, and some preferred writing down their thoughts. The participants also believed that exercise helped, and some turned to religion and

prayed for an interview. Keeping a structured plan and viewing options ahead also seemed to bring some relief to them.

3.4 Theme 4: EFFECT OF SOCIAL SUPPORT OR THE LACK OF IT

The fourth theme reflects the impact that social support or the lack of it had on the participants.

Some participants experienced effective support from friends, and especially from previous colleagues who had gone through the same process of retrenchment.

P (1):

"…wat my ook gehelp het die ondersteuning wat ek gehad het sosiaal van my Odi span want hulle was ook toe afgelê"

"…ons gereeld by mekaar gekom het…"

"…jis my onmiddellike kollegas en/of ex-kollegas ek dink ons het baie baie vir mekaar beteken"

("…*what also helped me, was the support from my ODI team who was aslo retrenched."*)

 ("*...we regularly got together…"*)

 ("…my immediate colleagues or ex-colleagues meant a lot for each other")

This participant explained that they could share their feelings as they had gone through the same motions.

P (1):

"…tye wanneer kollegas gehuil het in ons teenwoordigheid jy weet en dit was "fine"…"

"…maar tussen hulle kon ek weerloos wees…"

"…wat weet waardeur ek gaan wat my verstaan…"

("...times when colleagues cried in our presence, you know and it was fine...")

("...but with them I could be defenceless...")

("...who knows what I'm going through and who understand...")

Other participants did not experience the same social support:

P (2):

"Daai vriende wat jy in die werksomgewing gehad het vir 10, 15, 20, 25 jaar as jy twee weke later jou verjaardag het sal nie een jou bel nie…"

"Wanneer die melaatsheid en die kanker op jou kom wanneer jy by die hek uitgaan dan het jy geen van daai vriende meer nie. Dan is jy baie baie alleen."

("Those friends who you have has for 10, 15, 20, 25 years, if it was your birthday two weeks later, they would not even call you…")

("When the leprosy and cancer over fall you loose those friend when you leave exit the gates. Then you are very alone.")

P(3):

"I think as much as people want to help you they also have their own fair share of financial issues and you are either rich or you are middle class or you are very poor"

"Some people say ja I know … …. call me I will help you, but reality is that you will call them and they don't have enough to share. So ja you beg, you borrow from Tom to pay Harry and from Harry to pay Peter and it is a vicious circle"

For the participants, social support had a twofold effect. One of the participants experienced positive care from friends. Support from previous colleagues helped a lot, especially in expressing his feelings. The other candidates thought friends disappeared during bad times.

3.5 Theme 5: LESSONS LEARNED

The fifth and final theme is about the learning process that the participants had gone through.

This experience taught participants the importance of a support structure and communication especially with friends and family:

P(1):

"…ag jou familie verstaan nie jy weet, praat …"

"…familie en vriende moenie daai mense vergeet nie. Hulle het 'n groot rol in my lewe gespeel, rerig waar…."

("...your family do not really understand what you are talking about")

("…*family and friends do not forget those people. They played a big role in my life."*)

P(2):

"As jy wil jy praat moet jy praat …"
(*"If you want to talk, you should…"*)

P(3):

*"*You need a support system with your Christian or whatever religion you are, if that is your support system and don't be afraid to receive help."

They also learned that one should always be proactive, and that nothing was guaranteed.

P1):

"…ek sal dalk vroeër begin werk het aan 'n plan vir myself. Ja ek sal beslis baie pro-aktief te werk…"

"Jy moet seker maak dat jy alyd groei en dat jy ontwikkel…"

("...*I would have started earlier on a plan for myself")*

(*"make sure that you always grow and that you always develop…")*

P(3):

"…but lesson learned. I have decided that you can't just have one job you have to have two jobs. So I have decided to further my study, I did my MBA, did my CACP, uhm and I lecture in the evenings those subjects…"

"…be pro-active and go out and find a job and don't be scared…

P(1):

"…moenie te gemaklik word nie en besin altyd oor die aannames wat jy maak…"

"…moenie dink jy weet jy het al die ervaring jy weet en jy het al hierdie wonderlike kwalifikasies…"

("...do not get to comfortable and reflect on the assumptions that you make.")

("...do not think that you have all the exposure and you have all these great qualifications...")

P(2):

"Die tye is nie goed nie, so en "there is no guarantees". Dit is nou goete wat jy moet "manage"."
("Time is not good and there are no guarantees. It is things that you have to manage.")

Another lesson learned was that counselling was a good thing, and that people should swallow their pride.

P(2):

"…counselling process …"

"…pay your debts, go for debt counselling, consolidate your debt, you do all those financial things…"

"…manage your accounts better and easier and you know your stress would reduce significantly…"

"…people are too proud to receive help but that is very unfortunate…"

The participants learned that one has to motivate oneself and try not to have negative thoughts. They realised the impact of perspective and the way in which you look at situations:

P(1):

"…'n mens se perspektief is geneig om klein te word jy weet as jy jouself in so 'n situasie bevind, want dit was net ek en hierdie onmiddellike situasie wat my opgevreet het hoor. Jy kry so half tonnelvisie.

"…goed wat jy vir jouself sê ook, ons praat met onsself deurentyd en ek moes vir myself sê ek moes met praat en vir sê jy weet dis waar jy jou bevind…"
"Weet kyk wat het jy bereik in jou lewe, kyk dit is die kwalifikasies wat jy het, dit is jou ervaring, kyk na die mark weet as jy gaan kyk op soveel "sites" daar is werk daar buite jy weet dit is net 'n kwessie van tyd, jy weet"

"...daai gesprekke kan baie negatief ook raak en jouself dieper in daai moeras intrek…"

("...one's perspective is likely to narrow when you are in such a situation, because it is just me and this immediate situation that is disturbing me. You get tunnel-vision.")

("...things that you say to yourself, we talk to ourselves regularly and I had to say to myself where I am at the moment…
Look at what you achieved in your life, look at your qualifications, your experience, look at the market if you look on the sites you will see that there is work out there it is just a matter of time.")

("...those conversations can also be negative and you can get yourself more depressed…")

There were four important lessons that the candidates learned. Firstly they realised the importance of communication, especially with your support structure. They learned that family and friends do not always understand, and therefore it is important to communicate with them. Secondly, they learned that one should be proactive, and always try to have a plan ready. The third lesson they learned was that people who go through difficult times, should swallow their pride and seek assistance from outsiders. They must go for counselling. The fourth and final lesson they learned was to motivate them and change the way they see situations (their perspective).

4. Discussion

The main objectives of this research study were to discover the personal experience of individuals in terms of unemployment from a social and psychological perspective, and to explore their coping efforts and to learn what they took from this experience. In the previous section the findings were represented, and this section will summarise the findings of the study. As mentioned before, the themes that emerged during this study were *Retrenchment Process, Psycho-social impact, Coping behaviours, Effect of social support/lack thereof* and *Lessons learned.* This section will provide a discussion of the themes obtained from the findings (See Figure 6).

Retrenchment Process

Overall the candidates had a very negative reference to the retrenchment process (from the moment they were informed, till the day they left the company). As soon as the employees were informed of the possibility of their retrenchment, colleagues started to act differently in order to gain a chance of "saving" their employment, leadership also changed and that had a big impact on the company culture. According to Hellriegel, Jacson and Slocum (1999), managers should take responsibility for ensuring readiness for such a big change. They further state that the way in which managers handle or drive a big change, like restructuring or downsizing, results in the success of the change in an organisation. With this being said, we should keep in mind that the affected employees are faced with a very sudden and traumatic situation and that managers cannot be held responsible for their negativism. The affected retrenched participants also complained about South Africa's legislation. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) commented that in stressful situations an appraisal process is triggered, where the individual evaluates the implications thereof as a cue for responding. Therefore

the response tends to be negative. In my opinion, managers should, however, revise the manner in which they inform the affected employees and be more sensitive.

Psycho-social impact

Retrenchment or being unemployed seems to have the biggest impact on the psycho-social aspect. From the study it is clear that retrenchment not only has an influence on the retrenched individual, but also on his family. Therefore the results were divided into "Impact on individual" and "Impact on family". The individual experiences a feeling of loss of identity. Platt (1984) argues that when an individual loses his or her job, they inevitably lose some aspect of their own personal identity. This declaration can be accredited to the participants of this study, who all experienced a sense of loss when they became unemployed. They all associated work with feeling good about themselves and to contributing to society. Retrenchment consequently acted negatively on their sense of self-worth and their sense of identity. They all experienced different emotions, such as uncertainty, anger, hate, disappointment, pressure and stress. Hayes and Nutman (1981) explained that being involved in a workforce brings some kind of fulfilment. The participants had to redefine themselves and revisit their cognitive manner of thinking. As the findings of this study highlight, the psychological effects of unemployment on the participants resulted not only in feeling as though they had lost their identity, but also in feelings of worthlessness, embarrassment, depression, and a sense of powerlessness and thus having no purpose or structure to their day. In the case of some participants their physical health depreciated. The impact of unemployment upon an individual's psychological health and the resultant adverse effects on them should not be underestimated. It is clear from the findings that work has a central and significant role in a person's life.

Retrenchment also had a big impact on the family. The negative impact was that family members did not always understand what the retrenched individual was going through. They also did not always know what to say or do. Although, trying to be supportive, family members also shared the pressure and anxiety. Loss of control and stress almost caused one of the participants and his wife to become divorced. Broman, Hamilton and Hoffman (1996) stated that unemployment roots financial hardship which, in turn, causes a decline in family relationships. A positive thing is that some families grew closer to each other. They had more time to sit together and do things together. Dad could pick the children up form school.

Coping behaviour

Coping can be defined as a change in a cognitive and behavioural manner, to manage certain internal and external demands that exceed the resources of a person (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This can be done by being proactive, self-managing and having a resilient and optimistic character. Some candidates found that they had to motivate themselves, reminding themselves of their good qualifications and work experience. Others felt that by writing down their thoughts, would let them see more clearly what was going on in their minds. By journaling, participants could take a step back and see themselves from the outside. All the participants felt that exercising helped them clear their minds.

In 1997, Frankl explained the positive outcome of adopting a spiritual or philosophical approach during such a dynamic stage of searching for meaning. Some participants relied on religion during their time of "searching for meaning". Flach (1988) reinforces this view by suggesting that the most vital ingredient of resilience in the midst of adversity is faith and the belief that some higher force is guiding people (Appelbaum & Donia, 2001). Keeping a structured plan and viewing options ahead also seemed to bring some relief for them. Jahoda (1982) and Warr (1987), considered the social and psychological functions of work. They noted that to structure time and provide regular activities contributed to the survival of the unemployed.
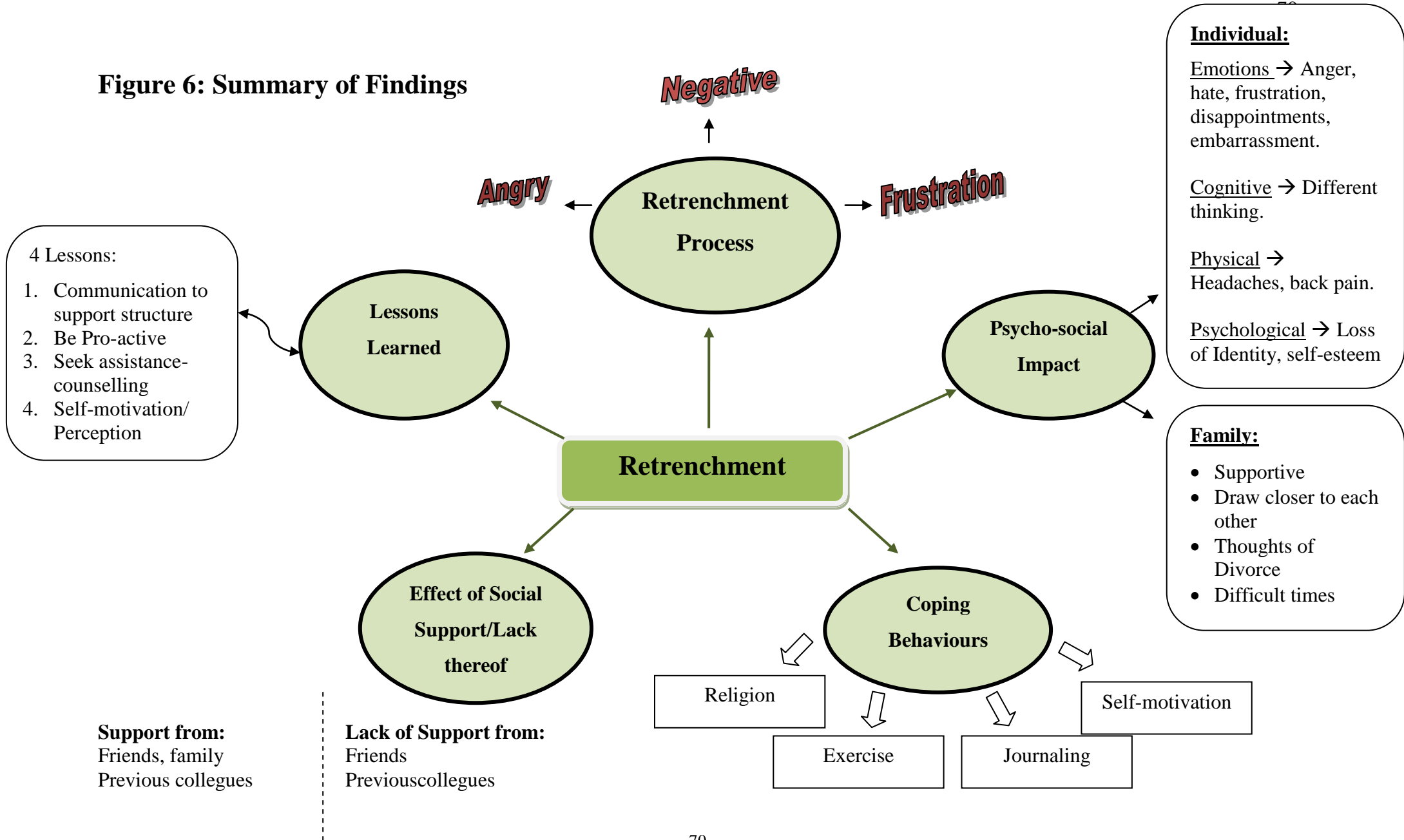
Effect of social support and the lack thereof

Obtaining social and family support was found not only to provide a pillar of emotional strength for retrenched employees during this difficult period, but was also a source of social identity with those who have had similar prior experiences (Thornhill & Gibbons, 1995). Some participants had regular appointments, like breakfast once a week in order to support each other and share frustrations and feelings. Other participants felt left alone and felt that family and friends disappeared when they lost their jobs. The importance of social support was found to be significant, and participants valued such support and the inspiration they gained from it. By sharing experiences and having social contact, promoting social goals, granting status and identity contributed to a feeling of belonging (Johaba, 1981). Others felt the lack of social support. Two participants felt as though all their friends had disappeared, and they did not want to bother anyone from their side, as they felt ashamed and could not bear any pity.

Lessons Learned

All participants felt that they had learned and benefited from this experience. Some participants learned the importance of communication, and especially the need of a supporting structure. An important lesson that they learned was that nothing in life was guaranteed, and therefore you needed to be proactive, obtain as much experience and exposure as possible and also be qualified in a various range of subjects. That will provide for an easier search for a new job. Participants also admit that people are too ashamed to seek professional help. Counselling can be a good way of venting stress and frustration onto a "stranger", willing to help, than a family member or friends. Lastly the participants felt that your perception could save you. Having a positive outlook and taking "unemployment" as a challenge and chance to start a new can save one from falling into a ditch of depression.

The figure below provides a graphical presentation of the summary of the findings.

Figure 6: Summary of Findings

Negative

Angry ← **Retrenchment Process** → Frustration

Individual:

Emotions → Anger, hate, frustration, disappointments, embarrassment.

Cognitive → Different thinking.

Physical → Headaches, back pain.

Psychological → Loss of Identity, self-esteem

4 Lessons:

1. Communication to support structure
2. Be Pro-active
3. Seek assistance-counselling
4. Self-motivation/ Perception

Lessons Learned

Retrenchment

Psycho-social Impact

Family:

- Supportive
- Draw closer to each other
- Thoughts of Divorce
- Difficult times

Effect of Social Support/Lack thereof

Coping Behaviours

Religion

Exercise

Journaling

Self-motivation

Support from:
Friends, family
Previous collegues

Lack of Support from:
Friends
Previouscollegues

5. Limitations, recommendations and conclusion

5.1 Limitations

While the method of interviewing is a time-consuming process it proved to be an extremely efficient means of extracting information from individuals in an open and honest way. It therefore, allowed the researcher to gain an invaluable insight into the participants' personal experiences of unemployment and its effect on their overall well-being.

Another limitation is the lack of follow-up meetings or conversations with the participants. The researcher only had one meeting or conversation with the participants and follow-up meetings would have secured more in-depth facts and increased the "validity and reliability" of the study as well as the credibility and accuracy of the findings.

5.2 Recommendations

The results of this study have provided valuable insights into experience of the unemployed South African, due to retrenchments. It is recommended that the sample may be enlarged. For the purpose of this study, enough data was gathered, other people who went through retrenchments, might have had different experience. A second recommendation is to conduct follow-up meetings with participants. Although for the purpose of this study sufficient saturation of the material was achieved, follow-up interviews could provide more in-depth, richer information on the unemployed person's perspective of retrenchment.

The researcher noticed that most participants experienced retrenchment as a traumatic event. It is recommended that companies can provide a more sensitive caring facilitation, such as counselling, topic related training, (such as debt training, how to find a new job, interview tips etc.). It will also be beneficial to involve family members in these caring facilities.

Most participants also commented that the manner in which they were informed was very unprofessional and insensitive. It is therefore recommended that companies revise their process in which they inform employees of their retrenchments. They can for example, first explain the position of the company to the employees and explain in a sensitive manner what options they had and why they decided on the retrenchment route.

Another recommendation is for companies to implement special "job hunting" training or assistance. Companies can provide tips and training on how to go about searching for a new job. They can also refer the retrenched employees to their clients or contacts. This will ensure that retrenched employees still feel that the company is loyal towards them and that they want

Companies do not realise the impact that the news-carriers have on the whole experience. If people can be encouraged and provided with options, the effected parties will walk out that office with hope, instead of dismay.

5.3 Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to investigate what the unemployed South African male experienced during the period of retrenchment, from the moment they realised they were unemployed till they found a new job. Specific notice was taken to the emotional, psychological and social impact caused by the retrenchment. The second objective was to investigate how the individual coped (if he did) and what strategies he used. The last objective was to explore what the individuals learned from this retrenchment experience. The findings provide a deeper understanding of the retrenchment process and its impact on the individual and his family. Coping with such a stressful situation is crucial, and the findings provide lessons that one can follow when faced with retrenchment.

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APPENDIX A

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 20px;">

- Informed consent form -

<div align="center">
UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
</div>

<div align="right">Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences</div>

Informed consent for participation in an academic research study

Dept. of Human Resource Management

THE LIFE EXPERIENCE OF THE UNEMPLOYED SOUTH AFRICAN

<div align="right">
<u>Research conducted by</u>:
Mrs. Linca Boshoff (27044476)
Cell: 071 353 9910
</div>

Dear Respondent

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Linca Boshoff, a Masters student from the Department Human Resource Management, at the University of Pretoria.

The purpose of the study is to explore the life experience of South African men who lost their job duo to retrenchment.

Please note the following:

- This study involves an <u>anonymous</u> interview. Your name will not appear on the transcriptions and the answers you give will be treated as strictly <u>confidential</u>. You cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.

- Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.

- Please be as honest as possible. This should not take more than an hour of your time.

- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. We will provide you with a summary of our findings on request.

- Please contact my supervisor, Ms S. O'Neil (sumari.oneil@up.ac.za) if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Please sign the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.

- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

_____   _____

Respondent's signature   **Date**

</div>

APPENDIX B

CD WITH ALL THE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS AND ANALYSIS PROCESS

APPENDIX C

Extraction of Transcription

All the interviews in the current research were tape-recorded and transcribe verbatim. The following is an example of the transcriptions of an interview conducted in Pretoria at the office of the participant.

LP: So I started at Iscor as a fitter. It was a three year apprenticeship, qualified, great job in Grintek Electronics, unfortunately not as a fitter but as a progress chaser. Spend 14 years at Grintek Electronics, work my way up from a progress chaser to the buyer to a planner to a planning manager and then continued with studies. I did my CPIM started from Grintek Electronics and then I went over to Multitek as the production planner. Ja went over to Multitek as a production planner, finish my CPIM then spend two years at Multitek from Multitek I was head down to Z Affrox as a production planner as well and then in two years I became factory manager there. I was a materials manager and then the factory manager but there were two sites. There is one in Spartan and one at Brits. So I got the Spartan factory, went there, spend a year and unfortunately the business in the electrode in the welding industry was cheaper to import from China and due to our labour the content which is very, very costly it was not viable to produce in South Africa and be as competitive internationally. So it forced, I would guess the organisation to then streamline and rationalize his products which then let to the Spartan factory closure. Therefore a lot of jobs became redundant, there was a lot of the motor factors we faced due to the fact that at that point in time the job market was not very conducive for employment. Ja it effected like in any person in having a family at that point in time. Financially it becomes a burden when there is well luckily for me my wife was employed at that time and then you had a single income but it did not pay all the bills. So you have got people chasing you after money and so on and so forth and the pressure is quite tremendous. Ja and then you think being faced with still having to pay your or send your kids to school and having to pay all the bills and having your lights cut and not having to put food on the table, enough food on the table.

L: So that happened, they had to put of your lights and cut the electricity and so you went through a quite difficult time.

LP: We went through quite a difficult time ja. So obviously we had to consolidate accounts and ja and everything that goes with it. You know there is no luxuries and we can't afford that. Ja so from a social point of view you kind of distance yourself from friends because you know you are basically embarrassed to go and … for lunch and not be able to afford a meal.

L: Ja I can just imagine.

LP: So your social life is affected as well as family life and ja you use …

L: And you would say it is from your side, you kind of distant yourself from the family and friends uhm are the support still there from their side that you decided to step back a bit?

LP: I think as much as people want to help you they also have their own fair share of financial issues and you are either rich or you are middle class or you are very poor. It depends on what type of social interaction you have and no one …. you. Some people say ja I know … …. call me I will help you, but reality is that you will call them and they don't have enough to share. So ja you beg, you borrow from Tom to pay Harry and from Harry to pay Peter and it is a vicious circle. So ja, it was difficult and the other thing is you know you have to put things in context. Although we are in a democratic society currently, the apartheid system was so structured that even 20 years in the world of democracy in South Africa, we have not kill the apartheid system in the private sector. So it is that much difficult or more difficult to get a job. I am an Indian male, you are not a black man, you know it is a very distinct, you don't get the same brownie points to qualify for BEEE status and stuff like that. Actually a white woman made more points, so it was difficult to find another job.

L: Okay Lazarus if I can ask you, how long before the retrenchment were you informed. If you can maybe go back to that, how did they break the news to you, what happened in that time?

LP: Look they normally do it two or three months before the time and then they give you, you know they have to work through the Unions to negotiate packages and stuff like that and you get one week per every year and I was only there for two years and two weeks so it means nothing. So ja there was not much money to work with, you know you are still working a month or two knowing that you are going to be retrenched and then you send out your CV's and hope for the best.

L: And I can just believe your motivation went down …

LP: Ja like everything else they still want you to produce and meet demands and stuff like that.

L: What was your first reaction when you heard that …

LP: Well you go through that psychological curve you know where you are shock and then reality strikes in then you start to prepare yourself and everybody is trying to comfort you, but you don't want to be pitied you know you want to be strong and ja but uhm I suppose in every country job opportunities are far …. between and it just takes time. It took us a good six months to find another job.

L: …. I believe that you sent your CV everywhere and difficult job.

LP: Ja anything and everything you know the thing is at that point in time you can't be fussy and picky and choosy and so I started at the bottom again and work my way up. You know, but lesson learned. I have decided that you can't just have one job you have to have two jobs. So I have decided to further my study, I did my MBA, did my CACP, uhm and I lecture in the evenings those subjects. So I have got two jobs.

L: Okay, kind of like a back-up plan.

LP: Ja ja you got to.

L: Unfortunately.

LP: Ja so you have to learn from that.

L: Ja, ja. Uhm I just quickly want to see here, would you say you just said that uhm you kind of learned from it, the fact that you know have two jobs, would you say that was a positive thing that came out of the retrenchment.

LP: Ja look some people low life and covered in gardener rock.

L: Exactly, exactly.

LP: Some people are brave and bold and you know eager to get out there and you know fortunately for me I have a very positive mental attitude and I believed in myself and my capability it is just for someone to trust that they are hiring the right person and unfortunately you know if you pray for a job interview you, it requires a lot of skills and guidance and I have never had that opportunity to do that and ja so after a few interviews you start to kind of learn what to say and what not to say and skill yourself to handle any interview situation and lie. Lie to secure a job it's ugh.

L: Sjoe that is actually …

LP: It's unfortunate but it is a reality today.

L: Is it.

LP: I mean even currently I went for a job interview and they ask why do you want to leave us you say for more money and that was not good enough for them you know.

L: Ja so you have to … a lie.

LP: They wanted me to say that I did not like my manager. They wanted me to say that it is a bad company, but it is not the truth you know. So ja unfortunately you have to …

L: Unfortunately you have to break your own rules and your own moral ja.

LP: Moral ja.

L: And Lazarus how long ago did the retrenchment happen? How many years ago?

LP: I suppose now two years.

APPENDIX D

Data Analysis