

**Parents' perceptions of family resilience in a
low socio-economic environment**

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Parents' perceptions of family resilience in a low socio-economic environment

by

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(Educational Psychology)

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---oOo---

¹ The O is left out of the name of the Creator in order to show respect as it is seen as holy (Crispe, n.d.).

Declaration of Originality

I, Lee-Anne Lewis (student number 10240102), declare that the dissertation, which I hereby submit for the degree Magister Educationis in Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

Lee-Anne Lewis

July 2018

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Ethical Clearance Certificate



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Ethics Statement

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

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July 2018

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Abstract

Parents' perceptions of family resilience in a low socio-economic environment

by

Lee-Anne Lewis

Supervisor: Prof. Dr MR Mampane

Degree: M. Ed. (Educational Psychology)

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into how parents from a low socio-economic environment perceive family resilience. The study aims to fill a current gap in family resilience literature using the perceptions of South African parents. It forms part of a wider research project that predominantly focuses on the determinants of family resilience. The research study followed a qualitative approach as it enabled the researcher to explore the parents' deeper understanding of family resilience in a contextualised manner. Walsh's Family Resilience Framework (FRF) (Walsh, 2012) was used as the theoretical framework and guided the study in exploring the three key processes that foster healing in families, namely family belief systems, organisational patterns and communication/problem solving. The sample consisted of four mothers from Mamelodi Township who were selected by the researcher, supervisor and the management team that worked with families from Mamelodi at the Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Centre. Data was collected through a focus group discussion and member checking session, both of which were audio-recorded and transcribed. Transcripts were analysed using inductive thematic analysis. Four themes emerged from the data, three of which related to family resilience and one of which related to risk that reduces resilience. The three family resilience themes were collectivist culture, individual beliefs and family values. The risk-related theme accounted for the risks experienced by families that reduce resilience. Further research could explore the ways in which culture and diversity inform South African family resilience, and the implications these may have for policy development and implementation.

Key words

- Family resilience
- Family
- Resilience
- Parents
- Low socio-economic status
- Mamelodi
- Resilience processes
- Risk factors

List of Abbreviations

| | |
|----------|---|
| AET | - Adult Education and Training |
| FRF | - Family Resilience Framework |
| HIV/AIDS | - Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome |
| IDC | - Industrial Development Corporation |
| MCRE | - Ministerial Committee on Rural Education |
| NFET | - Adult non-formal education and training |
| NNSSF | - National Norms and Standards for School Funding |
| OVC | - Orphaned and Vulnerable Children |
| RSA | - Republic of South Africa |
| UNFPA | - United Nations Population Fund |
| USD | - United States Dollar |
| ZAR | - South African Rand |

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Declaration – Language Editor

**I HATE
MISTEAKS**

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25 June 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the master's dissertation titled **Parents' Perceptions of Family Resilience in a Low Socio-economic Environment** [excluding the reference list and appendices C to H] by **Lee-Anne Lewis** has been edited for grammar errors. It remains the responsibility of the candidate to effect the recommended changes.



Prof. Tinus Kühn

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PROOF OF TECHNICAL EDITING

This serves to confirm that the following dissertation:

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has been edited on behalf of the author

Lee-Anne Lewis

according to UP's guidelines.



Estelle Botha

July 2018

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Chapter 1

Background and Overview of the Research

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

This research forms part of a wider research project that predominantly focuses on the determinants of family resilience and the role of community care workers in contributing to family resilience and mitigating risk factors. It aims at exploring parents' perceptions of family resilience in the context of a low socio-economic environment. The study was conducted at a community centre in Mamelodi, East of Pretoria, with parents whose children benefit from the services of the centre.

I felt connected to the research topic as I have experienced many challenges growing up in a single-parent household with my family facing many financial constraints. The appraisal of my religion and my faith in G-d as a tool for coping have assisted me in experiencing comfort, support and courage to face obstacles and hurdles that I encountered in my family. I believe myself to be a persevering and positively-minded individual who strives not only to overcome my own life's challenges but to uplift and elevate those around me who are disadvantaged. Therefore, I regard myself and my siblings who motivated themselves to aim high and achieve their goals despite our financial difficulties as resilient. Based on the positive outcome of my family, I am interested in seeing how other families from a low socio-economic environment perceive family resilience.

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR UNDERTAKING THE RESEARCH

Research conducted in the United States has found that the family structure in which children are raised can affect their development (Craigie, Brooks-Gunn, & Waldfogel, 2012). Children born to married parents have less instability later in life than single-parented households or where parents who are not married live together (Fomby & Cherlin, 2007). Generally, when change occurs in the family structure, stress on the family increases and therefore there may be less parental support, less time spent with the family and a lack of economic resources (Craigie et al., 2012). Many studies have focused on the challenges that families experience but do not identify the possible family resilience perceived by the families that can assist them in coping with their adversities.

Post-Apartheid South Africa is still suffering from immense poverty (Chipkin & Ngqulunga, 2008). Statistics South Africa (2013b) found that in the living condition survey, from 2008 to 2009, the percentage of the population below the poverty line was 56.8%. The number of South Africans employed in the third quarter of 2016 was 15,833 million (Statistics South Africa, 2013b). This number may appear to be very high but in comparison to the total population of South Africans, 51,770,560 million, there are many South Africans who are unemployed (Statistics South Africa, 2013b). The vice-chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand, Adam Habib, stated that black professionals have benefited from South Africa being a democratic state; however, the low socio-economic income groups in South Africa are still struggling immensely (Chipkin & Ngqulunga, 2008). One of the major issues that South Africa experiences is unemployment (Industrial Development Corporation [IDC], 2013). Many families exposed to unemployment and poverty have been found to experience dysfunctional family lives (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). This research intends to explore such parents' perceptions of family resilience.

Many South Africans have limited access to adequate electricity, transportation, education and health (Ebersöhn, Loots, Mampane, Omidire, & Malan-Van Rooyen, 2017). Furthermore, South African families from low socio-economic residential areas report several adversities in their communities, such as poor housing, hunger, insecurity, a high crime rate and a lack of law enforcement agencies like adequate police and municipal services (Prinsloo, 2016). Communities in townships strive to reduce criminal activity; however, police corruption has had an impact on preventing the community from achieving their goals (Seedat, Van Niekerk, Jewkes, Suffla, & Ratele, 2009). In addition, the high occurrence of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) in South Africa significantly affects family structures, health and welfare as well as employment opportunities (Cheru, 2001). Research has shown that South Africa has the highest number of individuals living with HIV/AIDS estimating up to 6 million individuals (Gavaza, Rascati, Oladapo, & Khoza, 2012). Strümpfer (2013) states that a recent review on resilience shows that resilience is a process of managing adversity. Therefore, this research explores how families perceive resilience despite the adversity they encounter.

Research has shown that socio-economic status and satisfaction in families, especially in the quality of the parent-child relationship, has an extreme influence on the family (Conger, Conger, & Martin, 2010). Economic improvement in a family has shown to have valuable effects on the entire family (Conger et al., 2010). The Family

Stress Model that was applied to single-parented households found that families who experienced economic pressures were more susceptible to their children being at risk of behavioural and/or emotional issues (Conger et al., 2010). In contrast, a research study conducted in impoverished villages in Cameroon found that with strong family support, the family's low socio-economic challenges became less threatening (Tchombe et al., 2012).

Resilience has many meanings, such as facing adversity, possessing characteristics of toughness as well as well-being instead of pathology (Cameron, Ungar, & Liebenberg, 2007; Hawley, 2000; Walsh, 2003b). Furthermore, *resilience* refers to a system that has the ability to adapt to challenges that threaten the functioning of that system (Masten, 2013, 2014b). Resilience in families may be seen as maintaining healthy functioning in challenging circumstances (MacPhee, Lunkenheimer, & Riggs, 2015). Prior research on resilience has primarily focused on the individual (Bhana & Bachoo, 2011; Walsh, 2012). However, resilience is not viewed in isolation of an individual's traits but is rather the outcome of the individual's relationships with other people and the context from which the individual develops (Bhana & Bachoo, 2011; Walsh, 2012; Werner & Smith, 2001). Therefore, resilience is understood as a process of positive adaptation in the presence of difficulty (Masten, 2001; Masten & Wright, 2010). P. N. Smith (2006) states that little research has been conducted on black African families in South Africa. This research explores how parents perceive their families' resilience and how they are able to identify their resilience processes as well as their risk factors.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of this research was to gain insight into the perceptions of family resilience from parents who live in a low socio-economic environment. The reasons for conducting this research were the following: Firstly, little research has been conducted on the resilience processes that families implement and that assist them in coping with adverse circumstances; secondly, minimal research has been conducted on family resilience in black South African families who live in a semi-urban township and are from a low socio-economic environment. This research did not dismiss risk factors that may threaten the resilience of families and their general well-being. It is understood that resilience refers to the ability of a system to adapt positively to challenges that threaten the development or functioning of that system (Masten, 2014a, 2014b). Therefore, this research also explores the risk factors as well as protective factors experienced by parents.

Ultimately, I aimed to build on family resilience literature in the South African context on families who live in a low socio-economic environment. Walsh's (2012, 2016) Family Resilience Framework (FRF) implements three key processes to identify family resilience; these are family belief systems, organisational patterns and communication/problem solving (Consult Chapter 2, Section 2.7 for an in-depth discussion of the FRF). The findings of this research could assist professionals in identifying, if any, the FRF processes applicable to South African families living in a low socio-economic environment. In addition, professionals can assess from this research whether any of the other processes that the families utilise in identifying family resilience can be implemented in suitable interventions that can assist these families in strengthening their resilience.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Research indicates that families in low socio-economic environments are exposed to multiple risk factors and have limited resources to buffer the impact of risk and become resilient (Holborn & Eddy, 2011; Prinsloo, 2016). Furthermore, individuals from low socio-economic environments are exposed to multiple instances of adversity, such as HIV/AIDS, lack of housing and a lack of employment, to name but a few that may result in the individual finding it difficult to be resilient (Department of Social Development, Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2012; Holborn & Eddy, 2011; Prinsloo, 2016). This research was conducted in the Mamelodi East area. The Mamelodi East area is known to lack sufficient and accessible public formal amenities such as health facilities, educational institutions, shopping centres, and effective policing as well as possessing high rates of unemployment and HIV/AIDS, resulting in numerous child-headed households (Steyn, 2011).

1.5 CONTEXTUALISING THIS RESEARCH

I conducted this research at the Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC²) Centre in Mamelodi East, Pretoria, South Africa. The OVC Centre employs community care workers who assist families in the Mamelodi community with social resources, for example food parcels, blankets, children's uniforms and access to social workers. The centre also provides children with an aftercare facility where they are given lunch and are assisted with homework.

² The name of the centre has been modified to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of the research participants.

Developing countries, such as South Africa, possess informal housing areas where poverty, insecurity of its residents as well as a lack of access to basic services are rife (Gottzman & Osman, 2012). Mamelodi was founded as a township for black African workers at Eerste Fabrieken in 1940 (Gottzman & Osman, 2012). It has since expanded and is divided by the Pienaars River into Mamelodi East and West (Gottzman & Osman, 2012).

Mamelodi is a low socio-economic semi-urban township where community members live in the surrounding area of Pretoria in South Africa (Eskell-Blokland, 2014; Ruane, 2010). It is one of the largest townships in South Africa; its population is estimated to be near one million (Eskell-Blokland, 2014). The community comprises diverse language groups, including mainly Zulu, Sepedi and Tswana languages (Eskell-Blokland, 2014; Ruane, 2010). In general, access to health services in townships is meagre (Eskell-Blokland, 2014). In the severely poor areas of Mamelodi, such as in Phumolong and Lusaka, there is a high fire risk due to the informal dwellings that the residents live in being very close to one another, as well as poor sanitation (Gottzman & Osman, 2012).

Census 2011 found that 15.5% of households in South Africa produced no financial income where 29.7% of these households were situated in Gauteng (Statistics South Africa, 2015). The proportion of female-headed households surpassed the proportion of male-headed households in households where financial income was absent (Statistics South Africa, 2015). This research purposively selected four parents living in the Mamelodi area. All the households selected were female-headed where most of the mothers had living-in partners with them. These partners did not co-parent the children. All the mothers involved in this research were unemployed and occasionally found part-time work positions.

Figures 1.1–1.2 below were all taken on the way to the first meeting at the OVC Centre in Mamelodi East on May 5, 2017. Figures 1.1 and 1.2 display what is available on the pavements of Mamelodi East, which offer a variety of items for sale to its residents.



Figure 1.1: Shopper looking at fresh produce



Figure 1.2: Furniture for sale on a street in Mamelodi East

1.6 WORKING ASSUMPTIONS

The following research assumptions that are based on the initial literature review guided this study:

- Families who live in low socio-economic environments are more likely to be exposed to adversity (Holborn & Eddy, 2011).
- Single-parents in low socio-economic environments experience a range of difficulties related to poverty, health and well-being (Mersky, Berger, Reynolds, & Gromoske, 2009; Mkhize & Msomi, 2016).
- Some families do cope with adversity and are therefore regarded as more resilient while families that do not manage are regarded as less resilient (Luthar & Ciciolla, 2015; Masten, 2014b).

- Risk factors that seem to threaten the resilience of families from low socio-economic environments in South Africa include HIV/AIDS, crime and unemployment (Lethale & Pillay, 2013; Prinsloo, 2016).

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on these assumptions, the following research questions and sub-questions were formulated to guide the current research:

The following primary research question is addressed in this research:

- *How do families from a low socio-economic environment perceive resilience?*

The following secondary research questions are discussed:

- *Which resilience processes are key to families from a low socio-economic environment?*
- *Which risk factors are perceived to threaten the resilience of families from a low socio-economic environment?*

1.8 CENTRAL CONCEPTS

In the following section, the research addresses the key concepts stated in the dissertation title.

1.8.1 FAMILIES

Family is defined as “a system of interacting individuals as well as a system involving a number of other systems” (Ryan, Epstein, Keitner, Miller & Bishop, 2005, p. 23). These other systems may include social, biological, cultural and economic influences (Ryan et al., 2005). However, there are many variables to consider and therefore defining a family becomes an arduous task (Ryan et al., 2005). McGoldrick and Shibusawa (2012) describe families as those sharing a past and a future. Families experience an entire emotional system that can include from three up to five generations, which are held together by historical, legal and blood bonds (McGoldrick & Shibusawa, 2012). Patterson (2002) defines a family system as a structure that includes two or more individuals where family functioning is evident. An immediate family is known as individuals who share a home and who are related to one another (Thompson, 2012). However, family membership includes only members through birth, adoption, marriage or commitment (McGoldrick & Shibusawa, 2012). In South Africa, due to the high rate of HIV/AIDS, there are countless grandmothers who look

after their grandchildren due to their parents being deceased (Casale, 2011). This is known as “skip-generation households” (Department of Social Development, RSA, 2012, p. 12). In this study *family* is those who live in a shared home environment where care is given despite the difficulties that the family faces.

1.8.2 FAMILY RESILIENCE

Interestingly, there are two contrasting perspectives when defining family resilience. The first perspective defines resilience as an outcomes-based approach. This implies that family resilience occurs when the family is facing adversity and overcomes difficulties despite their predicament (Bhana & Bachoo, 2011). However, the second perspective views family resilience as a process. Families are considered resilient when they function optimally in their daily activities or life (Walsh, 1998). Walsh (1998) defines family resilience as an integration of both the outcome and the process-based approaches. In the present research, family resilience is regarded as both an outcome and a process.

1.8.3 LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Economic status is defined as one’s economic level, educational attainment and occupation (Conger et al., 2010). Education is one of the most useful indicators of socio-economic status as it has a large influence on future occupational positions and potential income generated (Conger et al., 2010). The socio-economic status of families in South Africa has been substantially affected by the country’s political history (Rawatlal, Pillay, & Kliewer, 2015). Inequality, poverty and unemployment have been identified as some of the prevailing challenges that are affecting child development and family functioning (Department of Social Development, RSA, 2012). In this study the participants were selected from the low socio-economic environment of Mamelodi East. Mamelodi is a semi-urban township where community members live on the border of Pretoria in South Africa (Ruane, 2010). Therefore, Mamelodi Township represents a low socio-economic environment where individuals may experience unemployment, have no formal housing structure, minimal municipal services and may be surviving on social grants. Figure 1.3 displays the map of Mamelodi from which the sample of participants was obtained.

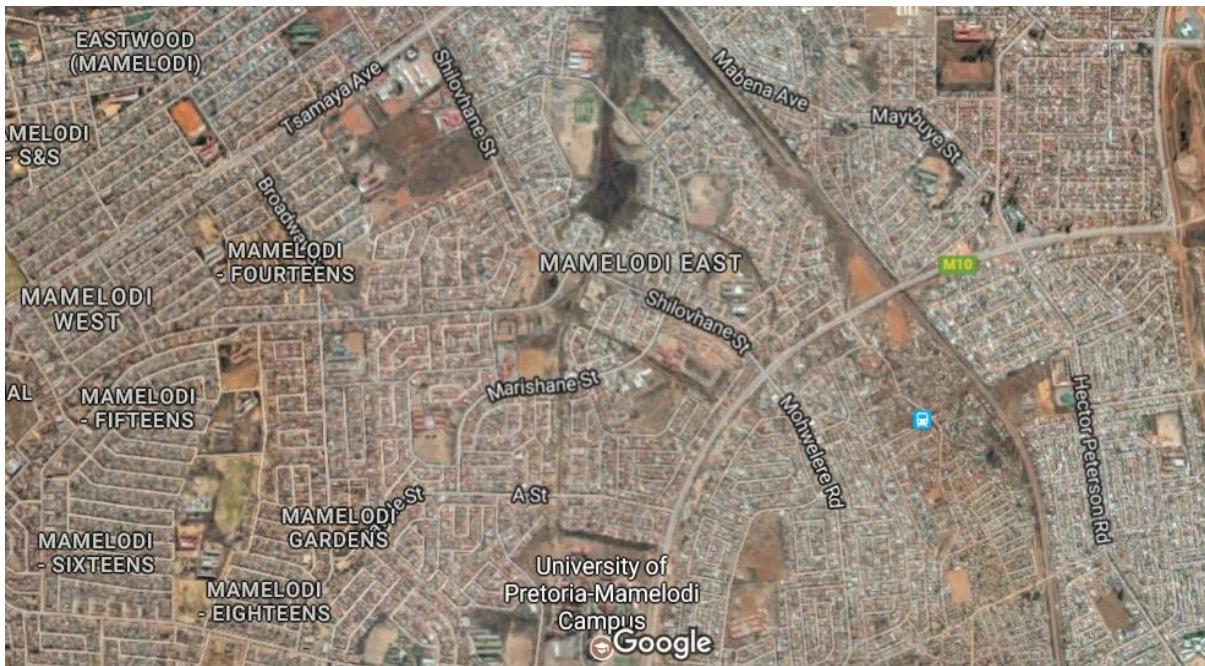


Figure 1.3: Google map of Mamelodi (Google, n.d.)

1.9 LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of Table 1.1 is to provide a brief overview of the themes discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2.

Table 1.1: Brief overview of the literature review

| Themes | |
|---|---|
| South Africa's background of discrimination | The Apartheid era existed from 1948 to 1990 where the South African Government segregated the black majority (Bundy, 2016). Political control was with the white people (Bundy, 2016). The Apartheid regime controlled housing, education and movement of black people where racial discrimination was rampant (Bundy, 2016). The Apartheid migrant labour system affected family life as families were split between rural and urban areas for work purposes (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). |
| Family Structures: | Carr (2011) states that the family structure is not only the nuclear family but includes many other diverse family structures that may have emotional, legal, historical, geographic and possibly biological connections. Holborn and Eddy (2011) state that there are three types of family structures that are prevalent in South Africa and that are discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2. The following family structures are relevant: |
| Single-parented households | Single-parented households (only mothers in this study) Single-mothers experience financial challenges, daily struggles of raising their children as single-parents as well as feeling socially isolated from others (Z. E. Taylor & Conger, 2017). As a result of the |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Grandparent-headed households</p> <p>Child-headed households</p> | <p>challenges of single-parenting, children may be left feeling emotionally insecure (Z. E. Taylor & Conger, 2017). Many mothers have to give up their career goals in order to fulfil the multiple roles of caregiving for their children as single-parents (Mkhize & Msome, 2016). Many of these single-parents have severe financial constraints and are mostly in continuous debt to keep their households running (Mkhize & Msome, 2016). Even though single-parents may be mothers or fathers, for the sake of this research <i>parents</i> refers to mothers only.</p> <p>Grandparent-headed households</p> <p>Research has found that living with grandparents is better than placing children in foster care (Strom & Strom, 2011). African grandmothers are well-known in South Africa to care for their orphaned grandchildren (Casale, 2011). Schatz (2007) states that the role of the elderly individuals in South Africa is reversed. The role reversal shows the elderly caring for their orphaned grandchildren as a result of HIV/AIDS instead of being cared for in their more delicate senior years (Schatz, 2007).</p> <p>Child-headed households</p> <p>In a child-headed household an individual, under the age of 18 years, is responsible for the welfare of others in the same household (Mturi, 2012). Many children who have been left orphaned are often forced to work as domestic workers or even as prostitutes in order to survive (Meintjes, Hall, Marera, & Boulle, 2010). Pappin et al. (2015) state that 18 million children in South Africa have been left parentless as a result of HIV/AIDS.</p> |
| <p>Resilience</p> | <p>Resilience refers to the ability of a system to adapt positively to challenges that threaten the development or functioning of that system (Masten, 2014a, 2014b). Resilience is therefore known to be a collaborative process that includes presenting challenge as well as the ability to adapt positively to that challenge (M. O. Wright & Masten, 2015).</p> |
| <p>Family Resilience</p> | <p>Family resilience refers to a family that acts in a functional manner and possesses the potential to grow through adversity (Edwards, 2015; Walsh, 2012).</p> |
| <p>Factors that affect or have an impact on resilience:</p> <p>Socio-economic factors</p> <p>Education</p> | <p>Socio-economic factors</p> <p>Living in low socio-economic environments often include difficulty in accessing resources, such as quality education, opportunities for employment as well as access to land ownership (Tchombe et al., 2012). Low socio-economic status in South Africa can be manifested through undergoing health problems, living in informal settlements, experiencing language and communication difficulties, undernourishment and deprivation of privileges as well as possibly possessing educational delays (Prinsloo, 2016).</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Educational disadvantage may be one of the main causes of poverty that begins in the child's early years of life (Haskins, 2016). Hlalele (2012) states that South Africa possesses laws and policies on education; however, they have not been operationalised in their full</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| Employment | <p>entirety in many South African rural communities.</p> <p>Employment</p> <p>Diraditsile and Ontetse (2017) indicate that unemployment occurs in all areas in the world. In South Africa the main cause of unemployment is inadequate training and education (B. Anderson, 2012).</p> |
| Theoretical Framework: Family Resilience Framework | |
| <p>The Family Resilience Framework (FRF) focuses on the family's strengths in challenging and adverse circumstances (Walsh, 2016). The framework accepts that no specific model of healthy functioning is appropriate for all families (Walsh, 2016). Therefore, family functioning is holistic as it incorporates the family's context, the family's adversities and the family's resources and values (Walsh, 2016).</p> <p>This research used Walsh's FRF as a theoretical framework to guide the research in exploring whether the three key processes that promote wellness in families can be identified in the participants who represented four families from a low socio-economic environment.</p> <p>The three key processes for resilience are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Family Belief Systems 2) Organisational Patterns 3) Communication/Problem Solving (Black & Lobo, 2008; Walsh, 2002a, 2012, 2016). <p>The FRF was selected for this study for its ability to focus on the strengths that the families possess in times of hardship instead of focusing on the families' limitations only. This research intends to determine how the participants from a low socio-economic environment perceive family resilience. Once the participants' perceptions of family resilience had been determined, I explored whether their resilience processes were aligned with the key processes of the FRF.</p> | |

1.10 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this section I introduce an instrumental case study research design. Table 1.2 provides a summary of the research design and methodology. An in-depth discussion of the research process is presented in Chapter 3 (Sections 3.2 to 3.6).

Table 1.2: Overview of research design and methodology

| | |
|---|-------------------------|
| Paradigmatic assumptions | |
| Methodological paradigm | Qualitative methodology |
| Epistemological paradigm | Interpretivism |
| Research design | |
| Instrumental case study | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instrumental case study approach was selected as it contributes to new knowledge of | |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>particular social issues (Fouché & Schurink, 2011).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The insights gained from the parents' experiences were instrumental in obtaining a clearer understanding of family resilience from families who lived in the low socio-economic environment of Mamelodi. (Consult Appendix G for the Interview Schedule.) • The single case study provided rich information about a single research participant or a small group of participants on their behaviours and specific practices that they performed in their lives (Fouché & Schurink, 2011; Nieuwenhuis, 2013b). Therefore, this study selected the single case study for its ability to provide specific and detailed information about the four participants selected. | |
| <p>Defining the instrumental case</p> <p>The case is defined as the perspectives of four parents from the Mamelodi area. This research is part of a longitudinal research project between the OVC Centre and the University of Pretoria, Department of Educational Psychology.</p> | <p>Non-probability sampling of single case study design</p> <p>Non-probability sampling allowed me to select participants not randomly; therefore I was careful not to draw generalised conclusions about my research sample (Maree & Pietersen, 2011).</p> |
| <p>Selection of participants</p> | |
| <p>Sampling method: Purposive sampling of participants from the instrumental case study above; ($n = 4$; all research participants were female).</p> <p>Sampling criteria: Four mothers from four different families, who mostly had living-in partners with them but who did not co-parent their children, were purposefully selected. All the participants lived in the low socio-economic environment of Mamelodi and were affiliated to the Mamelodi OVC Centre. These participants had children who used the services at the OVC Centre.</p> | |
| <p>Contextualising the case</p> | |
| <p>The research site was the OVC Centre in Mamelodi East in South Africa. Mamelodi is a semi-urban township where many families that live there experience high levels of poverty, have little access to basic resources such as electricity and water (Gottsmann & Osman, 2012). Twenty-five per cent of the individuals living in Mamelodi are HIV positive, where thousands of AIDS orphans are cared for by their relatives (SOS Children's Villages, n.d.).</p> | |
| <p>Data collection and documentation</p> | |
| <p>Data generation techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus group members ($n = 4$) gave informed consent; demographic questions were asked prior to data collection. • Qualitative observations. | <p>Data documentation techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbatim transcriptions of the audio-recorded focus group interviews were completed. • Member checking. • Reflective journal. |
| <p>Data analysis and interpretation</p> | |
| <p>Thematic data analysis was used to analyse the data collected. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that thematic analysis is used to analyse the data collected by means of inductive, interpretive analysis.</p> | |

1.11 QUALITY CRITERIA

Methodological rigour and trustworthiness were achieved in this research by using the four quality criteria strategies, namely credibility, transferability, dependability and

confirmability (Kumar, 2014; Schurink, Fouché, & De Vos, 2011). (Consult Chapter 3, Section 3.7 for an in-depth discussion of quality criteria strategies.)

1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I applied for ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria via the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee. When the research proposal was approved, I went out into the field to obtain the data. There are two main types of ethical consideration that I upheld: Responsibility to the discipline of science to be honest while conducting research as well as showing responsibility to the research participants in the study (Gravetter & Forzano, 2003).

Regarding the research problem, an ethical issue that may occur is when the researcher portrays the research participants in a negative manner (Creswell, 2009). The researcher must identify an issue to be researched that will benefit the research participants and not marginalise them further (Creswell, 2009). This research was of a very sensitive nature as I conducted research on families from a low socio-economic environment. I needed to show respect and sensitivity to the research participants in order to portray them with dignity.

Informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, avoiding the research participants harm and deception and accuracy of report writing were maintained at all times (Kumar, 2014; Flick, 2011; Strydom, 2011a). (Consult Chapter 3 (Section 3.8 for an in-depth discussion of ethical considerations.)

1.13 CONCLUSION

This chapter introduces the research; includes an exploration of the South African context and acts as an introductory guide to this research. I provide the rationale for the research that includes my personal experiences with regard to my own family resilience. I discuss my working assumptions and clarify concepts that are pivotal to the research, namely families, family resilience and low socio-economic status. I briefly discuss the paradigmatic lens that guided my study as well as the methodology and research design used. Quality criteria and ethical considerations that relate to this study are briefly outlined. The chapter concludes with an outline of all the chapters.

In the following chapter, I explore existing literature on challenges faced by families in low socio-economic contexts, resilience, family resilience, socio-economic factors,

Mamelodi, education and employment. I further introduce and explain the selected theoretical framework in detail. The information discussed in Chapter 2 serves as background to the research analysis that is presented in Chapter 3.

1.14 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

❖ CHAPTER 1: SETTING THE STAGE

In Chapter 1 I provide a general overview of my research; it includes the motivation for undertaking the research and an introduction as well as a personal rationale for conducting research on this particular topic. Furthermore, I explain the research purpose, discuss central concepts and provide a brief overview of the selected paradigm, research design and methodological stance. Data generation and documentation procedures are outlined while ethical considerations and quality criteria are introduced.

❖ CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In Chapter 2 I explore literature that is relevant to the research topic; it focuses on challenges faced by families from a low socio-economic environment, resilience, family resilience, socio-economic factors, Mamelodi, education and employment. I conclude this chapter with the theoretical framework that is relevant to the literature review and the selected research topic.

❖ CHAPTER 3: DESIGNING AND CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN THE FIELD

In Chapter 3 the research process is outlined in depth, including the methodology, the selected paradigm and the research design. Furthermore, I discuss the selection of research participants, data generation, data documentation, analysis and interpretation of data. Reasons are given for selecting specific options in the research process as well as for stressing the importance of the strengths and potential challenges of these choices. In addition, I discuss ethical considerations and quality criteria that are related to this study.

❖ CHAPTER 4: REPORTING ON THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY

In Chapter 4 the thematic data analysis that generated the research findings in which themes and sub-themes emerged from the research findings is explicated. I support the research themes and sub-themes with verbatim quotations from the participants.

❖ **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In Chapter 5 I consolidate the main findings of the research and relate the research questions to the findings. Furthermore, I reflect on the strengths and the limitations of the research and contemplate its possible contribution. Recommendations for future research are made.

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Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this literature review, I aim to explore the parents' perceptions of family resilience who live in a low socio-economic environment. I then discuss what resilience means and elaborate on the concept. The selected theoretical approach of the Family Resilience Framework by Walsh is described in order to examine the key processes of family resilience.

The South African Apartheid era lasted for over 40 years, from 1948 to 1990. The last four years of Apartheid, in the early 1990s, were transitional years leading up to democracy (Bundy, 2016). Apartheid divided individuals through strict racial boundaries. The South African Government provided different levels of education, depending on the race of the learner (Bundy, 2016). The Apartheid state denied Africans free access to cities and controlled their movement; they needed to obtain permission to move within the cities (Bundy, 2016). South African families still experience the long-term effects of the Apartheid migrant labour system where fathers had to leave their families that were forced to stay in the homeland or townships in order to go and seek work in the cities (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). Although the migrant system has been removed, African families still experience limited employment opportunities in rural and semi-urban townships and therefore parents sometimes have to be separated from their children and families to secure employment (Holborn & Eddy, 2011).

The South African Institute of Race Relations (2011) states that five million work positions need to become available in order to halve the current unemployment issue. Møller (2013) states that South Africa does not provide the training skills necessary to obtain work due to backlogs in education. Furthermore, South Africa's emerging economy is one-third of that of Russia and Brazil and is minute compared to the economies of India and China (Andreasson, 2011). A reason for this may be South Africa's inability to influence global economies as it struggles to unite state strength due to divisions of race and socio-economic class (Andreasson, 2011).

The White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, RSA, 2012) states that one of the regional commitments of South Africa and other African countries in

2004 was the creation of the Plan of Action on the Family. The Plan aimed to strengthen family structures through creating, executing and assessing programmes and national policies suited to the needs of families (Department of Social Development, RSA, 2012). The next part of the literature review will discuss the challenges faced by families as well as particular family structures that have formed due to challenges in the environment.

2.2 CHALLENGES FACED BY FAMILIES

The family unit is the basis of stability and positive support for all family members involved (Prinsloo, 2016). When the family unit disintegrates, the stability of the family and the community may become threatened (Prinsloo, 2016). Children who do not live with one or either of their parents may experience painful emotions and encounter additional life issues (Bjarnason et al., 2012). There has been a decrease in the number of children who live with both their parents and this has resulted in the family dynamic becoming complicated (Raley & Wildsmith, 2004).

Many young families that suffer from poverty experience homelessness (Swick, Williams, & Fields, 2014). Poverty does not only cause homelessness but intensifies the challenges associated with being homeless (Swick et al., 2014). Duffield and Lovell (2008) point out that homelessness is often caused by illiteracy, unemployment and family instability. Many single-parents from low socio-economic circumstances are vulnerable to disrespect from landlords and from schools due to extremely low financial resources (C. M. Anderson, 2012). Some single-parents tolerate romantic relationships that include abuse or neglect because they are not financially independent. These relationships often affect their mental health, childrearing practices and family functioning (C. M. Anderson, 2012).

South Africa and many other countries have experienced disregard for the value of marriage and family life (Prinsloo, 2016). Poverty, HIV/AIDS and disintegrated families are the reality for many South African families (Holborn & Eddy, 2011; Lethale & Pillay, 2013). Prinsloo (2016) therefore states that the dynamics in the South African society have created an anti-child climate. Some children currently have difficulty achieving self-actualisation as they possess very few support structures in their lives and may be at risk of psychosocial dysfunction (Parritz & Troy, 2011; Prinsloo, 2016). South African research has shown that 39% of female children have reported being victims of sexual abuse (Seedat et al., 2009). The percentage of South African children whose basic needs of shelter, food and clothing

are not met, is growing daily (Prinsloo, 2016). When family life disintegrates, children become traumatised since they lack care, love and belonging, which negatively influence their cognitive, social and physical development (Holborn & Eddy, 2011; Prinsloo, 2016). Resilience and focus are necessary for the child to combat the many challenges that he/she may be facing, such as physical assault, emotional/physical neglect, and sexual or psychological abuse (Baumgardner & Crothers, 2010; Prinsloo, 2016). Multiple family structures have been formed in South Africa as a result of increased adversity and decreased resources in the family; these are discussed next.

2.3 DIVERSE FAMILY STRUCTURES

The family structure has transitioned from being characterised as only a nuclear family to many other diverse family structures where all families include unique social systems that possess geographic, historical, legal, emotional and possible biological connections (Carr, 2011). The family structure is conceptualised as the configuration of roles, power and status, and relationships within the family (Parihar, Dahiya, Billaiya, & Jain, 2017).

Research has found that children who live in single-parented households in a low socio-economic environment are expected to have less satisfaction in their lives (Bjarnason et al., 2012). Such children are more likely to experience financial strain and less parental support (Breivik & Olweus, 2006; Magnuson & Berger, 2009). Children living with both biological parents have been found to experience fewer challenges than other children from other family structures (Jablonska & Lindberg, 2007). However, other research has found that households in which both parents are married to each other may not necessarily improve a child's upbringing (Carroll, Hattie, Durkin, & Houghton, 2001; Roman, 2011; Wu, Hou, & Schimmele, 2008). Behavioural challenges across different types of family structure are mostly associated with financial instability, reduced financial support and family dysfunction (Wu et al., 2008).

In many non-Western countries, extended family structures have increased over time (Allendorf, 2013). When traumatic events such as the death of a parent or separation within the family impact on the nuclear family, aunts, uncles as well as grandparents take responsibility in many cultures (Hamilton, 2017). In Australia, grandparents have been found to have a positive influence on their grandchildren, especially when separation occurs within the nuclear family (Hamilton, 2017). A nuclear family is

understood as a husband, wife and their children (Parihar et al., 2017). Nuclear families have been found to be more resilient than other family structures because they are known to support one another emotionally, attend to the physical needs of the family and have the ability to solve problems as a unit (Parihar et al., 2017).

South Africa has many types of diverse family structures – from nuclear family structures that include both parents and children, to single-parented families, extended families, non-biological-headed families, grandparent-headed families and child-headed families (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). South African families often experience the absence of biological fathers, a low rate of marriage especially found among black South Africans and a low fertility rate specifically among Indian and White South Africans (Morison & Macloed, 2015). Families are also regarded as multi-dimensional, as they affect and are affected by cultural, political, economic and social establishments that form part of the influences in societies (Amoateng & Richter, 2007). One of the unique attributes of South Africa is that it possesses families that speak various languages and that are from diverse cultures (Koen, Van Eeden, & Rothmann, 2012). Holborn and Eddy (2011) state that 35% of South African children live in a family structure with both of their parents, 40% live in a single-parented family structure headed predominantly by mothers, while 2.8% of children live with only their fathers. Many children will live in a single-parent family structure at some point in their childhood or adolescence (Magnuson & Berger, 2009).

Multiple family structures have been discussed above; however, the three family structures that are discussed in this literature review are single-parented family structures, grand-parented family structures and child-headed family structures, as these family structures are found to be most prevalent in the South African context (Holborn & Eddy, 2011).

2.3.1 SINGLE-PARENTED FAMILY STRUCTURES

The London-based Social Policy Justice Group conducted research on households with both parents and with single-parents with relation to their socio-economic position (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). The research found that single-parented households are more than twice as likely as two-parented households to be living in very low socio-economic conditions (Holborn & Eddy, 2011; Rodgers, 2012). Living in poverty is the experience of many single-mothers (Bramlett & Blumberg, 2007; McLanahan & Percheski, 2008). In many Asian countries, there is an increase in

marital divorce and therefore single-parented families, especially single-mother families, are on the increase and experience financial difficulties (Raymo, Park, Iwasawa, & Zhou, 2014). Cutas and Smajdor (2017) state that since the development of women's rights, women are less vulnerable than they used to be when they were expected to place their family's needs above their own. However, Mkhize and Msomi (2016) state that single African mothers are challenged by financial issues too. Therefore, many of the single-mothers lend money from others to keep the household running, which causes many of them to be in continuous debt. In addition, due to being a single-parent, many mothers have multiple roles and have to forsake career aspirations to look after their children (Mkhize & Msomi, 2016). Financial challenges, daily frustrations and being socially isolated are the realities of single-mothers. This may cause disturbances in single-mothers' parenting as their children may have trouble adjusting to change due to being impoverished and not feeling emotionally secure in their environment (Z. E. Taylor & Conger, 2017). In addition, research has found that child abuse is more pervasive in a single-parented family structure than in families with both parents (Mersky et al., 2009). However, a United Kingdom longitudinal study on children living in a single-parented family structure from birth found that single-mothers had a high level of emotional involvement with their children as well as a more authoritative role than mothers from a two-parented family structure (Golombok & Badger, 2010).

Statistics in South Africa on African urban single-parents found that 31% were unemployed and 70% of them were female (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). There has also been an increase in single-parent households who are living with relatives and a decline of single-mothers living with their children on their own (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). In this research, all the research participants were mothers who mostly had romantic partners living with them and their children.

Masten (2014b) found that even in single-parented family structures that experienced adversity, there was a possibility for children to develop positively, on condition that the single-parent provided a secure and nurturing home for the children to live in. The well-being of single-mothers is one of the most important factors in positive parenting when assisting children in adjusting healthily to change (Luthar & Ciciolla, 2015).

2.3.2 GRANDPARENT-HEADED FAMILY STRUCTURES

Death of a parent or possible abandonment of children by parents may shift the responsibility of childcare to grandparents (Conway, Jones, & Speakes-Lewis, 2011;

Strom & Strom, 2011). Most African American grandparents care for their grandchildren due to neglect, abuse or being orphaned in order to prevent their grandchildren going into state custody and living in foster care (Burnette, Sun, & Sun, 2013). Grandparent-headed family structures are very common for African Americans; however, many of these families experience challenges to provide the necessities for their grandchildren (Burnette et al., 2013). Australian child protection authorities prefer children living with their grandparents when they can no longer live with their parents rather than placing them into foster care (Purcal, Brennan, Cass, & Jenkins, 2014).

Grandparent-headed families in South Africa are often neglected because very few people discuss the challenges that they experience, such as the overwhelming demands of grandchildren being left orphaned (Gasa, 2013). Many grandparents may not be equipped to overcome the novel challenges that their grandchildren bring to them as the challenges of their own children were different (Strom & Strom, 2011). G. C. Smith and Palmieri (2007) state that children living with their grandparents in the United States were found to have more behavioural issues and negative academic outcomes compared to children not living with their grandparents.

Traditionally, elderly individuals are supposed to receive financial and emotional support from their children; however, their children are now deceased, possibly due to HIV/AIDS and now they are in the position to raise their grandchildren (Mtshali, 2015; Schatz, 2007). As a result of HIV/AIDS, grandparents are forced to take on the child-care role despite the financial challenges that they have to face (Mtshali, 2015).

Despite these challenges, grandparent-headed families were found to display resilience as the grandchildren felt supported by their grandparents since they lived in a stable environment despite the trauma of being separated from their parents (Gasa, 2013). In addition, the continuity of relationships among their siblings allowed for feelings of security and a sense of belonging (Gasa, 2013). Casale (2011) states that African grandmothers usually become caregivers to their orphaned grandchildren and are the sole provider for them. Research has found that African grandmothers who look after their households, possess the leadership ability and perseverance to overcome the overwhelming feelings of fear and despair when trying to cope with running a household (Casale, 2011).

External protective factors for orphaned grandchildren included teachers at school who provide encouragement and support as well as healthy social relationships with

peers at school (Gasa, 2013). Another resource for grandparent-headed family structures are the three South African Government grants: the child support grant, the foster grant and the old age grant that may provide support to grandparents that face the financial struggle of raising their grandchildren alone (Ardington et al., 2010).

2.3.3 CHILD-HEADED FAMILY STRUCTURES

South African children experience neglect and various forms of emotional abuse; in addition 35% of children are left orphaned due to losing one or both parents, mostly due to causes other than HIV/AIDS (Seedat et al., 2009). As a result of HIV/AIDS in South Africa, 18 million children who are under the age of 18 have been left parentless (Pappin et al., 2015). It has been estimated that 6.4 million people in South Africa are HIV positive (UNFPA [United Nations Population Fund] South Africa, 2014). The result of HIV/AIDS has left many children and adolescents orphaned in South Africa and contributes to child-headed families (Hlatswayo, 2004; Holborn & Eddy, 2011; Meintjes et al., 2010; Mturi, 2012; Nicholson, 2008). In South Africa, children work as water carriers, taxi conductors or sell loose cigarettes to make money in order to keep their households going (Mturi, Sekudu, & Kweka, 2012). In the Philippines, children from child-headed households often become involved in basic jobs such as sewing and laundering (Kurebwa & Kurebwa, 2014). Extreme poverty in India may cause some parents to sell their children for trafficking in order to survive (Chakraborty, 2014). In addition, child marriage in India is a great concern as early marriage in underage girls prevents them from completing their education, gives them a massive domestic load to contend with and weakens their psychological and physical health (Chakraborty, 2014).

A KwaZulu-Natal study compared child-headed households to adult-headed households in equally disadvantaged areas and found that child-headed households were more helpless than adult-headed households when it came to being able to deal with grief, finding resources and accessing social services (Donald & Clacherty, 2005).

Van Dijk and Van Driel (2012) state that in South Africa, the extended family is involved in child-rearing. However, the social and demographic changes that occurred during Apartheid have limited the assistance of the extended family in child-rearing their relatives' children (Mturi, 2012; Van Dijk & Van Driel, 2012). The extended family has been found to be experiencing poverty, HIV/AIDS and is sometimes overburdened by its own responsibilities for its nuclear family (Mturi,

2012; Van Dijk & Van Driel, 2012). During the Apartheid era, many parents had to leave rural areas and look for work in urban areas, which started the development of child-headed households (Mculu, Mphephu, Madzhie, & Mudau, 2015).

The South African Government promulgated the Children's Act that aims at caring for the quality of life of children through having legislation that protects the rights of children (The Presidency, RSA, 2006). The South African Children's Act has made three provisions for child-headed households; these include recognising that child-headed households exist, possessing the intent to have an adult to care for children in these households and lastly, having a social worker present to identify how to keep these children safe and secure as well as providing guidelines on how to raise the children (The Presidency, RSA, 2006). However, the policies that are put in place need immediate implementation (Mturi, 2012). Government has made two social grants available to children: the foster child grant and the child support grant (Mturi, 2012). However, the issue that remains is how Government makes these grants effective in helping these children (Mturi, 2012).

Children may reach positive levels of self-actualisation if they are provided with quality education that teaches them appropriate skills for suitable career opportunities (Prinsloo, 2016). Quality education provided by Government may have a positive impact on economic growth, employment opportunities as well as a prosperous future for each South African individual and family (Prinsloo, 2016). In this study the participants' children lived with them and their romantic partners and were educated in government schools. I explored risk factors that threatened the resilience of these families but also the resilience processes that were key to the families' survival. This research took into consideration context and faith in G-d that influences the way in which families acknowledge and identify resilience.

2.4 UNDERSTANDING THE CONSTRUCT RESILIENCE

The word *resilience* comes from the Latin verb *resilire* that means to "leap back" (Soanes & Stevenson, 2006, p. 1498). Shaikh and Kauppi (2010) state that diverse professionals in the fields of education, social work, psychiatry and psychology have defined resilience in different ways. The concept of resilience has evolved from its initial understanding that the individual combats adversity on his/her own to recognising that resilience stems from complex processes that include the interactions between the individual and his/her context (Bhana & Bachoo, 2011; Toland & Carrigan, 2011). Therefore, an individual's culture, context and social

institutions influence resilient outcomes and processes (Cicchetti, 2010; Masten, 2013; Ungar, 2008). *Resilience* refers to the ability of a system to adapt positively to challenges that threaten the development or functioning of that system (Masten, 2014a, 2014b). Therefore, resilience may be viewed as a process that is influenced by the individual, his/her social system and environment, as well as type of adversity and is not only seen as a personality trait (Luthar & Zelazo, 2003; Rutter, 2006). Resilience is not directly measured but is understood in the presence of adversity that has the potential to cause chaos in an individual's life but is also seen as the ability to overcome the challenges that the individual is facing (Rutter, 2012). Resilience as a concept may be defined in many ways; however, it is mostly defined around the two main concepts of positive adaptation and adversity (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013; Lee & Cranford, 2008; Leipold & Greve, 2009; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Shaikh & Kauppi, 2010). Motivation is also a key influence in building resilience and propagating learning (Masten, 2014b).

Masten and Narayan (2012) state that resilience may also be seen as the interdependence of systems; for example, when a disaster takes place each system needs to work together with other systems to alleviate the after-effects of a disaster as resilience is not independent but rather interdependent on each system working together. Resilience may also be described as the ability to accept the presence of adversity together with adaptation by using available resources to achieve positive outcomes (Ebersöhn, 2017). Therefore, if an individual appears to be coping in a low socio-economic environment, he/she may be described as resilient as he/she is assumed to be able to deal with the threatening situation (Ungar, 2008). Resilience can therefore be referred to as the individual's navigation system in directing his/her life as well as the ability to negotiate his/her current situation (Ungar, 2008). This research therefore explores parents' perceptions of family resilience while living in a low socio-economic environment as limited research has been conducted on this topic.

2.4.1 PROTECTIVE FACTORS THAT FOSTER RESILIENCE

Protective factors that foster resilience may be explored on an individual level, family level, school level and community level (Noltemeyer & Bush, 2013). Personal resources such as agency, assertiveness and humour were found to be very important factors for building resilience in South African youth who were homeless (Malindi & Theron, 2010). In addition, resilience has also been found in individuals who are hardworking and resourceful in nature (Morales, 2010).

Research has shown that family cohesion can bring about healthy interaction within and outside the family when flexibility is allowed (Noltemeyer & Bush, 2013). Consistent parenting, clear communication between children and parents/caregivers and a nurturing and responsive environment serve as protective factors for children and adolescents across cultures (Noltemeyer & Bush, 2013). Parental responsiveness and stable behavioural control can foster positive development in securing relationships as well as protecting children from struggling with adversity when hardships occur in their lives (Peterson & Bush, 2013). Parental monitoring is a way in which parents show firm behavioural control and are aware of all activities that their children are involved in (Peterson & Bush, 2013). Parental monitoring assists in self-esteem and academic achievement (Noltemeyer & Bush, 2013).

School factors such as peer support were found to assist children living in poverty in Turkey to face adverse circumstances (Gizir & Aydin, 2009). Furthermore, positive teacher-learner relationships have assisted children and adolescents in protecting themselves from experiencing developmental problems (J. A. Baker, 2006).

Community resilience refers to the number of resources that are available to families that are involved in a particular community (Ungar, 2011). Opportunities for education, work and housing and support networks all serve as protective community factors that help to prevent families from experiencing severe hardship (Obrist, Pfeiffer, & Henley, 2010). Feelings of belonging and families feeling supported in a safe and caring community assist youth and families (Noltemeyer & Bush, 2013). This research explores how parents from the four families living in the low socio-economic environment of Mamelodi perceived their family resilience.

2.5 UNDERSTANDING FAMILY RESILIENCE

There is a paucity of literature dealing with family resilience in families living in low socio-economic environments in South Africa. This research therefore explored these factors in the hope of shedding light on the topic. Section 2.4 showed that resilience possesses many themes and may be described as the individual's ability to face adversity and respond to difficulties (Hawley, 2000; Walsh, 2003b). In the past 20 years, the concept of resilience has been extended to the family and has been termed "family resilience" (A. P. Greeff & Lawrence, 2012, p. 211; Mullin & Arce, 2008). Family resilience possesses an array of family characteristics that empower members of a family to overcome difficulty and produce positive outcomes (Richter & Sherr, 2009).

Walsh's Family Resilience Framework (FRF) identifies the key processes of resilience, namely Belief Systems, Organisational Patterns and Communication/Problem Solving (A. P. Greeff & Lawrence, 2012; Walsh, 2012). Walsh's (2012) FRF is explored throughout this research in relation to what the research participants expressed. Family resilience is defined when a family is a functional unit that possesses the potential to make a change for growth as a result of challenging circumstances (Edwards, 2015; Walsh, 2012). Patterson (2002) states that family resilience is not a constant trait but rather a growing process. Through using the key processes of resilience found within the FRF, the family can emerge stronger and more unified when interacting with new challenges (Walsh, 2012). Patterson (2002) describes three considerations when contemplating whether a family is resilient. The first consideration is whether the family can be assessed to identify if they can overcome adversity. The next is the risk that may outweigh the competency of the family in dealing with their stressor. Lastly, there is a need to find out what protective factors assist the family in not being overwhelmed by the stressor (Patterson, 2002). Therefore, it will be important to explore the research participants' protective factors without ignoring the risks that they face on a daily basis.

Walsh (2003b) states that family, the school/work environment, the community and other social resources can be regarded as environments that foster and strengthen family resilience. Furthermore, Walsh (2006) emphasises the need for family therapists to think of families experiencing adversity and resilience from a systemic perspective and not just from an individual lens. This research explored participants' perceptions of their families' resilience and whether they perceived their family's resilience from a systemic lens.

2.6 FACTORS THAT MAY AFFECT FAMILIES' RESILIENCE

The factors that are discussed in the following paragraphs describe issues that may affect family resilience; examples are socio-economic factors, education and employment factors. The discussion below provides a backdrop for understanding factors that may affect family resilience and provides insight into the issues that the participants in this study may have experienced.

2.6.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS THAT AFFECT FAMILIES

The American Psychological Association (2018) defines *socio-economic status* as the social rank of a person or group of people that is usually measured by income, occupation and education. Examination of low socio-economic status has often

revealed inequality with relation to resources such as education, land and access to markets for goods and services that the poor can sell as well as opportunities for employment (Tchombe et al., 2012). The Children's Defense Fund (2014) states that one in five American children lives in very low socio-economic conditions where 29% of families with children under the age of six from the State of Tennessee live in extreme poverty (Children's Defense Fund, 2014). In Hong Kong, it is reported that about 1.15 million individuals live in low socio-economic circumstances (Hong Kong Council of Social Service, 2012). Walsh (2012) emphasises that family functioning and familial support can be founded on how the family perceives its economic status. Family functioning may be affected by low socio-economic circumstances (Rawatlal et al., 2015).

The main effects of poverty on a family comprise the family's psychological well-being, physical health and family interaction (Park, Turnbull, & Turnbull, 2002). Research has shown that families experience more internal conflict and stress when living in low socio-economic circumstances (Han & Rothwell, 2014; Mansfield, Dealy, & Keitner, 2013; Williams, Cheadle, & Goosby, 2015). Existing research suggests that a family's living in a low socio-economic environment results in the family functioning negatively (Botha, Booysen, & Wouters, 2018).

Few studies have been conducted on the key factors of resilience of families living in a low socio-economic environment. Analysis has found that families living in poverty were likely to be resilient when they received support from others and were assertive and made plans in order to achieve their goal (Tchombe et al., 2012). In addition, families from low socio-economic environments stated that religious belief gave them direction in life (A. P. Greeff & Du Toit, 2009; Tchombe et al., 2012). This research explored whether belief in a Higher Power strengthened the participants' family resilience.

Poverty in South Africa is manifested through living in informal settlements, experiencing language and communication difficulties, possessing educational delays, health problems, undernourishment and deprivation of privileges (Prinsloo, 2016). Bundy (2016) states that poverty in South Africa is due to South Africa's history of racial discrimination and the consequences of economic and social change. Statistics South Africa (2013c) states that 31.5% of families do not have enough money for food, 29.9% have smaller portion sizes as there is not an adequate amount of food in the house. Lastly, 26.1% of families do not have three meals to eat per day as there was not enough money to buy food. In addition, the majority of the

South African school going population experiences poverty which is a great concern for the future of the country (Prinsloo, 2016).

Research has found that children living in low socio-economic environments are at risk to develop behavioural problems (Chapman, Dube, & Anda, 2007; Van Oort, Van der Ende, Wadsworth, Verhulst, & Achenbach, 2011). Families from low socio-economic environments have been found to have a higher risk of social and familial stressors, such as living in dangerous neighbourhoods, suffering from job loss, struggling with child care and neglecting medical issues (Holtz, Fox, & Meurer, 2015). Furthermore, developmental studies on behavioural issues have shown that challenging environmental issues lead to the development of behavioural problems (Van Oort et al., 2011). Children from low socio-economic environments do not have genetic predispositions to behavioural disturbances but may develop a more challenging temperament due to experiencing difficult circumstances in their home environment, such as negative parental behaviour towards the children (Holtz et al., 2015; Kassis, Artz, & Moldenhauer, 2013). Therefore, parents/caregivers in low socio-economic environments may experience more difficulty in providing stability and nurturance for their children. This may result in their children being more susceptible to negative outcomes (Holtz et al., 2015).

There is a strong correlation between low socio-economic status and family violence (Gilbert et al., 2009). When children and adolescents are exposed to violent behaviour at home, it may cause them to portray aggression against individuals in their environment during their adolescent years (Dunn et al., 2011).

As the economy has shifted from the industrial to the post-industrial era, those with minimal job skills and limited education have been negatively affected the most by this transition (Walsh, 2003b). Frequent job change and unemployment can negatively influence families with domestic violence, substance abuse, inadequate healthcare as well as possibly being left as a struggling single-parent family (Walsh, 2003a). However, one must not associate families from low socio-economic environments with families with extreme problems and conflict. Tchombe et al. (2012) state that families that experience familial support despite living in disadvantaged circumstances, view poverty as an occasion occurring in their lives that they can cope with. The National Survey on Children's Health found that families from low socio-economic environments experience hardships but may also experience family closeness (Walsh, 2003b).

2.6.2 ACCESS TO EDUCATION

One of the main causes of poverty is lack of access to quality education which has been shown to begin in a child's earliest years of life (Haskins, 2016). The presence of primary education in low socio-economic countries has been seen to reduce poverty and increase the developmental potential of all (Motala, 2011). According to Nasir, Alam, and Alam (2016) the solution to the alleviation of poverty is through education. Education provides a person the opportunity to explore his/her potential and use it to escape the cycle of poverty (Montecel, 2013). Parents from low socio-economic environments generally have less time to spend with their children due to inflexible working hours (Duncan, Magnuson, & Votruba-Dreal, 2014), as a result, children may be less cognitively stimulated than children who come from more privileged backgrounds where parents have more time to spend with their children (Duncan et al., 2014).

The South African Schools Act of 1996 specifies compulsory school attendance for children up to and including Grade 9 or when they reach the age of 15 (Department of Education, 1998). South Africa has achieved structural and physical access to schooling; however, not all learners have equal access to quality education (Lazarus, 2006; Motala, 2011).

During the Apartheid regime, many learners received primary education; however, black impoverished schools received Bantu education, the quality of which was inferior (Motala, 2011). Post-Apartheid education policy was founded on the foundation that all South African citizens have equal right to quality education and training (Soudien & Sayed, 2004). The South African Schools Act includes a policy on children's access and admission to public schools as well as ensuring that children with HIV/AIDS, children with barriers to learning and marginalised children have access to schools (Motala, 2011).

Even though policies were established to increase access to education for all, the implementation of these policies were challenged by: the historical problems from the Apartheid era, the increase of the cost of education and difficulties with redistribution of funds from personnel to non-personnel spending (Motala, 2011). Therefore, redressing access to education for all has become a challenge. The National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSF) requires each provincial education department to rank its schools from most poor to least poor (Department of Education, 1998). The NNSF requires that 60% of funding from Government should

go to the poorest schools, which constitute 40% of schools in the country (Motala, 2011). Poor schools have to request their finances from the provincial Department of Education but do not receive compensation from them (Motala, 2011).

Low socio-economic indicators such as education level, low income, unemployment, neighbourhood quality, discrimination and hopelessness have been found to develop poor mental health in individuals (Pappin et al., 2015). A study conducted on farm workers in the Western Cape in South Africa found that low socio-economic factors, such as a high incidence of illness, low education levels and poor working conditions may have influenced individuals in having suicidal tendencies (Holtman, Shelmerdine, London, & Flisher, 2011). Children who live in high socio-economic environments perform better in school whereas children living in low socio-economic environments are more likely to display aggressive behaviour and mental health problems (Pappin et al., 2015). Twelve-year-old children from rural areas have been seen to leave school in order to look for employment in the agricultural sector (Crouch, 2005). Therefore, an extended family and the community are necessary assets to keep young learners in school (Motala, 2011).

Even though educational policies and laws have been established in South Africa, they have not been fully operationalised in many rural communities (Hlalele, 2012). One of the reasons for this is Government's unwillingness to acknowledge the conditions of rural schools in rural areas (McQuaide, 2009). Rural areas still experience a low enrolment rate in some of their schools; a possible explanation for this is extreme poverty and hunger holding children back from attending school (Sauvageot & Da Graca, 2007). Public schools in rural areas are not equipped to meet the needs of learners with barriers to learning (Ludlow & Brannan, 1999). Rural areas are characterised by a vicious cycle of poverty, minimal learner achievement and low levels of adult education that maintain their level of disadvantage (Hlalele, 2012).

Rural communities do possess assets such as supportive communities that aims to protect their children. The community allows families to raise their children in a supportive space without the cost of high expenses (Malhoit, 2005). Rural schools are generally smaller than urban schools, which may be an advantage for the learners. Research has shown that smaller schools experience fewer discipline problems, have better achievement and increased involvement in extracurricular activities (Little, 2008). In 2005, the Ministry of Basic Education stated that policies and programmes aimed at equal education for all need major intervention in rural

areas (Department of Education, 2005). The Ministerial Committee on Rural Education (MCRE) discussed the complexity of developing rural areas and their education; they have suggested that Government needs to be consistent with its strategy to improve living conditions, reduce poverty and invest in social justice and human rights (Department of Education, 2005). Education in rural areas also involves learners having to travel long distances to get to school, lack of water and sanitation, lack of quality infrastructure at school and a lack of qualified teachers (Department of Education, 2005).

2.6.3 CHALLENGES REGARDING EMPLOYMENT

Unemployment exists all around the world (Diraditsile & Ontetse, 2017). More women are unemployed compared to men (Björklund, Söderlund, Nyström, & Häggström, 2015). Women make up a large portion of the world's working poor, which means that they work but do not make enough money to meet their families' living requirements (International Labour Organization, 2014).

Roy and Jones (2014) point out that young people entering adulthood are increasingly more financially dependent on their families; however, youth from disadvantaged backgrounds are not given the same benefits as their privileged peers. More than one in five children works and most of these children live in poor countries (Edmonds & Schady, 2012). Furthermore, youth from low socio-economic environments may assume adult responsibilities much earlier than their peers, and are therefore regarded as adults at a young age (Burton, 2007; Roy, Messina, Smith, & Waters, 2014).

South African youth between the ages of 15 and 34 experience difficulty in finding employment (Van Aardt, 2012). Youth unemployment challenges may be related to the lack of work experience due to many South Africans lacking the necessary skills for specific employment (Van Aardt, 2012). Loane Sharp, a Free Market Foundation economist, stated that only three million individuals out of the five million that entered the labour market in the past 10 years have found work (Ryan, 2015). The unemployment rate according to Sharp is 26%; Sharp believes that it may increase to 40% in the next seven years if the private sector continues in its trend of not hiring new employees (Ryan, 2015).

The National Treasury (2011) states that 24% of the South African workforce is unemployed. In the mid-1990s, youth unemployment was related to two factors: the first factor was that young people fought for democracy for South Africa and therefore

focused their efforts on their fight for freedom and not on their personal lives (Van Aardt, 2012). The second factor was the problem of not receiving education that was necessary for job achievement (Everatt & Sisulu, 1992).

Adult non-formal education and training (NFET) is an intervention used to provide formal education to marginalised groups in South Africa to assist with increasing employment opportunities, enhancing social inclusion and decreasing the rate of poverty in the South African society (Kedrayate, 2012). NFET provides literacy programmes, livelihood skill programmes and basic education to out-of-school leavers (Mayombe, 2016). The Adult Education and Training (AET) Act 25 of 2010 specifies that NFET centres should communicate with government departments and private institutions to train individuals to develop their skills in areas that are required by the labour market (The Presidency, RSA, 2010). An integration of business skills with technical skills may help graduates of NFET find opportunities in the labour market (Mayombe, 2016).

Efforts are needed to confront the problem of youth unemployment through strong involvement by Government and the private sector, involvement by members in the general public and community participation (Van Aardt, 2012). Interventions should include enhancing job fit programmes, improving the quality of education, and creating jobs in areas where unemployed youth are living (Van Aardt, 2012). The National Planning Commission, 2011 states that the quality of education in rural areas remains poor (Van Aardt, 2012). Government departments involved in education and training need to re-organise the curricula in a manner that addresses employment requirements (Van Aardt, 2012). All the research participants in this research study were unemployed as they lacked advanced skills and higher levels of education to find specialised work positions.

Furthermore, Walsh's FRF relates culture to the individual, family and community through the framework's belief systems (Mampane, 2016). Belief systems include possessing a positive outlook, making meaning of adversity and the use of spirituality and transcendence (Mampane, 2016). I was interested in applying the FRF to this research to see whether the four parents perceived the same resilient processes in their families.

2.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: FAMILY RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK (FRF)

South Africa is a country where many individuals experience financial constraints and are therefore forced to gain support from their environment in order to cope with the challenges that they are facing (Mampane, 2016). Various types of family assessment have a tendency to be static and do not consider the context in which the family lives (Walsh, 2012). The FRF concentrates on strengths under stressful and adverse circumstances (Walsh, 2016). The framework assumes that no single model of healthy functioning is adequate for all families (Walsh, 2016). Family functioning therefore depends on one's context, family challenges and the family's values and resources (Walsh, 2016). Well-being and optimal functioning in the family may change over time as different challenges take place and as the family changes (Walsh, 2016). The FRF was developed as a guide for practitioners to identify key family processes that empower families to overcome stress and prolonged adversity (Walsh, 2012). Walsh (2012, 2016) states that over thirty years of research on family resilience has resulted in the FRF that aims to understand what contributes to resilience in families.

The FRF is a dynamic process (Luthar et al., 2000; Walsh, 2012). The framework assumes that functioning and well-being may change over time, depending on the family's life difficulties and family dynamics (Walsh, 2012). There has been a shift in research on resilience from focusing on shortfalls of the individual and family to identifying the strengths (Mampane, 2016). The family resilience perspective is grounded in the principle that every family has the potential to achieve resilience out of adversity (Walsh, 2003a, 2012, 2016). This study uses Walsh's FRF as a theoretical framework to guide the study. The FRF is guided by three key resilience processes namely Family Belief Systems, Organisational Patterns and Communication/Problem Solving which involve resources and strengths that families can access in order to become resilient (Black & Lobo, 2008; Walsh, 2002a, 2012, 2016). I selected the FRF as it focuses on the strengths that a family possesses in times of hardship.

2.7.1 FAMILY BELIEF SYSTEMS

A family belief system is the shared beliefs, values and perceptions of family members. Family belief systems influence how family members perceive and understand stress and adversity (L. M. Wright & Bell, 2009). Shared beliefs in

families can assist in problem solving and effective functioning (Walsh, 2012). A family's belief system can normalise a difficult challenge and provide support to the family to regard the challenge as manageable, which can assist the family in family cohesion (Plumb, 2011). The family belief system is guided by three criteria, namely making meaning of adversity, positive outlook as well as transcendence and spirituality.

2.7.1.1 Making meaning of adversity

Making meaning of adversity means looking for positivity in challenging circumstances. When families assess a challenge together, they generally can work through it and overcome it (Walsh, 2012). By normalising and contextualizing stress, families are able to work as a team in addressing the challenge without blaming one another for the problem (Walsh, 2012). Family resilience is regarded as a continuous process of growth that is exemplified through the family life cycle (Walsh, 2012). From a family life cycle perspective, what is considered *normal* in a family is dependent on culture and the context the family resides in, as well as acknowledging change over time, which occurs on two dimensions: the horizontal axis and the vertical axis (McGoldrick & Shibusawa, 2012). On a family level, the horizontal axis includes coping with change and dealing with developmental crises and unpredictable events, such as death (McGoldrick & Shibusawa, 2012); the vertical axis includes how families have related and functioned over generations (McGoldrick & Shibusawa, 2012). Furthermore, at a sociocultural level, the horizontal axis relates to community, social policies and present events that impact the individual and family at any time during his or her life, whereas the vertical axis includes social and cultural beliefs and history that are carried through the generations (McGoldrick & Shibusawa, 2012).

2.7.1.2 Positive outlook

A positive outlook is an attitude by which an individual views a situation or circumstance in an optimistic manner. Hope assists families in conquering adversity and having a more optimistic attitude toward life (Walsh, 2012). Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) regard positive psychology on a personal level that values subjective experiences of satisfaction, optimism, purpose and happiness. Seligman (2008) identified psychological processes, such as positive well-being, absence of somatic symptoms, toughness, and individual control over health as subjective and important aspects of positive psychology. Therefore, positive psychology emphasises

an individual's strengths and how happiness can be created through the individual utilising the strengths that he/she has, namely humour, a positive outlook and kindness (Seligman, 2002). Learning from what Seligman says about positive psychology, I explored with the parents selected for this research, when they experienced optimism during times of adversity.

2.7.1.3 Transcendence and spirituality

Transcendence is the ability to go beyond the physical world and enter the realm of spirituality. *Spirituality* is therefore the willingness to accept the belief in a Higher Being. Meaning making for families experiencing adversity may occur when they practise their beliefs (Walsh, 2012). Research has shown that families facing poverty and discrimination often seek comfort through connecting with their spiritual and cultural traditions (Walsh, 2012).

Spirituality is a system of beliefs that provide meaning throughout one's life (Tokpah & Middleton, 2013) whereas *religion* is a set of structured beliefs that include texts, traditions and rituals that individuals can make meaning from, through practising the traditions and rituals in their lives (Tokpah & Middleton, 2013). Spirituality may be understood as one's connection with G-d whereas religion can be seen as outward behaviour toward G-d (Tokpah & Middleton, 2013).

Research conducted on individuals experiencing stress, illness or death found that those individuals desired love, meaning and hope through connections with other individuals and/or G-d (Chandramohan & Bhagwan, 2015). Meditation and prayer were seen to decrease the fear of death in severely ill patients (Chandramohan & Bhagwan, 2015). Spirituality is therefore an important aspect of resilience as it gives families the opportunity to unite and overcome stressful situations (Black & Lobo, 2008).

2.7.2 FAMILY ORGANISATIONAL PATTERNS

Family organisational patterns are the components that make up the family structure enabling a family to achieve its potential. According to the systems approach to family functioning, the whole and its parts must be connected and satisfied for both to last in a positive manner (Black & Lobo, 2008). Family organisational patterns are guided by three criteria, namely adaptability, connectedness, and social and economic resources.

2.7.2.1 Adaptability: Flexibility and stability

Flexibility refers to the family's ability to have an openness for change and the potential to rebound (Walsh, 2012). *Adaptability* is the family's capability to change as a result of its varying circumstances. Walsh (2002b) points out that the ability to rebound does not mean bouncing back but rather bouncing forward. Many families need assistance in the process of rebounding as this process may be new for them, which may make them feel unsettled (Walsh, 2012). Therefore, during times of distress, families need stability that can be obtained through keeping to daily routines, such as going to bed at the prescribed time and eating meals together (Walsh, 2012). Routine within the family is very important as it gives family members boundaries that may make them feel nurtured and protected (Walsh, 2012).

2.7.2.2 Connectedness

Connectedness allows families to collaborate and work together to achieve mutual understanding when faced with adversity (Walsh, 2011b). Stress and constant negative pressure may cause family conflict and misunderstandings to arise (Walsh, 2012).

2.7.2.3 Social and economic resources

Economic resources are contributions that enable a family to have their physical needs met while *social resources* are the ability of the family to accept assistance from the community in challenging circumstances. Families with a low socio-economic status may experience family problems and conflicts like any other family but endure even more challenges, such as possible loss of community and isolation (Black & Lobo, 2008). When families experience isolation and distress with a lack of social support, their ability to be resilient declines tremendously (Black & Lobo, 2008). Therefore, families experiencing adversity may need support from social institutions where social policies have been put in place to encourage the family to grow and overcome its adversity (Walsh, 2012).

2.7.3 COMMUNICATION/PROBLEM SOLVING

Communication is the ability of the family to transfer verbal and non-verbal information among family members. *Problem solving* within a family is the ability to determine a solution to an issue that is present in the family. Families create coping strategies and develop shared meaning when they communicate in a clear and

honest manner (Lindsey & Mize, 2001). Walsh (1998) identified three specific aspects of communication that are vital for resilience to occur in families, namely clear information, open emotional expression and collaborative problem solving.

2.7.3.1 Clear information

Clear information means that messages are consistent and clear (Black & Lobo, 2008). Communication can be categorised into two dimensions: the clear versus marked continuum and the direct versus indirect continuum (Ryan et al., 2005). The *clear versus marked* continuum assesses whether the content of the message is clear or vague (Ryan et al., 2005). The *direct versus indirect* continuum assesses whether the message reaches to the intended individual or is given to another individual (Ryan et al., 2005). When ambiguity occurs in families, confusion and misunderstandings may arise (Walsh, 2012). When circumstances in a family change and the problems are not discussed, children may experience fear and express it through problematic behaviour or somatic issues (Walsh, 2012). Therefore, parents or caregivers need to have clear communication with their children and be open to helping them understand their circumstances at an age-appropriate level (Walsh, 2012). When clear communication occurs within a family, informed decision-making, and future planning may be operationalised (Walsh, 2012).

2.7.3.2 Emotional expression

Emotional expression is the ability of family members to communicate with one another how they are feeling. A wide range of emotions can be expressed by families, even in times of hardship, when clear communication occurs with empathy and tolerance for differences within the family (Black & Lobo, 2008; Walsh, 2012). Secrecy or silence may occur to protect family members from painful information (Black & Lobo, 2008; Walsh, 2012). However, when emotions are held back, it can often cause family members to have intense outbursts of emotion, where conflict is experienced (Walsh, 2012). When families endure struggle, it is important for them to share humour with one another and connect in a positive manner that may then increase their resilience (Walsh, 2012).

2.7.3.3 Collaborative problem solving and preparedness

Collaborative problem solving is when families work together to confront challenges that face them. Problems occur in all families, but the key factor in resilient families is that when a problem is experienced, it is clearly communicated to all family members

and family members are encouraged to express their opinions to the problem (Lindsey & Mize, 2001). Walsh (2012) believes that families need to be proactive when meeting future challenges. This means that families need to acknowledge that there may be other opportunities that they should be encouraged to explore besides the one that they currently have (Walsh, 2012).

Figure 2.1 displays Walsh’s Family Resilience Framework and how the family interacts with it.

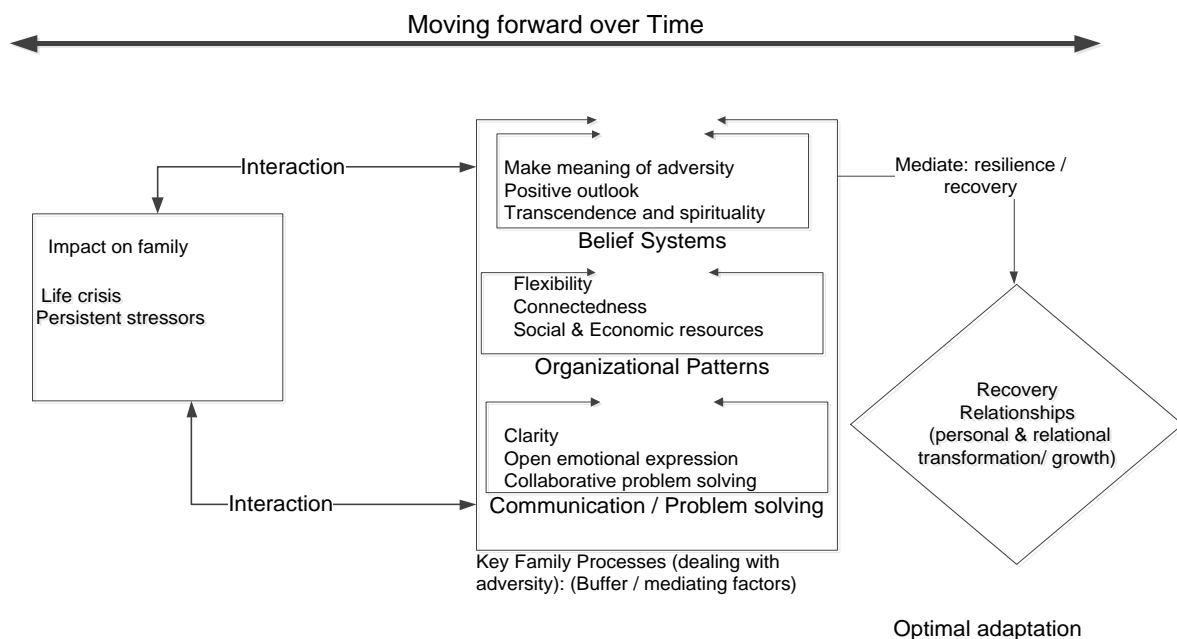


Figure 2.1: Walsh’s Family Resilience Framework (Adapted from Mampane, 2016)

2.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I set out to show an understanding of families living in adversity and the possible challenges that they may endure. I discuss the meaning of resilience and further outline the relevance of family resilience in ensuring family cohesion. The theoretical approach of the FRF by Froma Walsh was discussed. The purpose of exploring the FRF is to determine what makes a family resilient and whether the parents in this research experienced similar family resilient processes to those of the FRF. This research analyses the findings inductively.

In the following chapter, I discuss the research design and methodology to answer the research question. The chapter also describes the theoretical paradigm, indicates how the sample was selected, the way in which data was collected and how the data documentation process took place.

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methodology

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The emphasis in this research is on the perceptions of parents who experience family resilience while living in the low socio-economic environment of Mamelodi. The FRF by Walsh (2012) was used to identify which familial processes the families used to increase their resilience despite experiencing adversity. It was therefore imperative to identify what processes accounted for family resilience. The primary research question that begged to be answered in the research was therefore, *How do families from a low socio-economic environment perceive resilience?*

In this chapter, I use a qualitative research methodology and the research design that includes the strategies for data collection, my role as the researcher as well as the data analysis process.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

3.2.1 EPISTEMOLOGICAL APPROACH: INTERPRETIVISM

Wahyuni (2012) states that interpretivism identifies reality as socially constructed by individuals through subjective social interactions. The interpretive approach gives the researcher the opportunity to account for the unique perspectives of the research participants and allows the researcher to explore these perspectives in greater detail (Fouché & Schurink, 2011; Kelly, 2002). Many families in low socio-economic environments are generally not given the opportunity to share their experiences and the challenges they face with other individuals outside of their environments.

In the 19th century, the interpretive approach was applied to the social sciences by Max Weber, a German sociologist and Wilhelm Dilthey, a German philosopher who believed that there were two variations of science: the natural sciences and the human sciences (Neuman, 2006). The human science approach assumes that individuals make meaning from the world they live in and from the experiences that they have (Neuman, 2006). I therefore selected the interpretive approach to have the freedom of exploring the research participants' perceptions of living in a low socio-economic environment and assessing how the themes of family resilience were present.

3.2.1.1 Key assumptions of the interpretivist approach as it relates to ontology and epistemology

The interpretivist approach focuses on the interaction between individuals and how they give meaning to their experiences (Jansen, 2016; Nieuwenhuis, 2013a). The environment of the individual is very important when attempting to understand how an individual constructs meaning from his/her experiences (Nieuwenhuis, 2013a). The participants lived in the low socio-economic environment of Mamelodi and this has an influence on their family resilience and the risk factors that possibly prevent their families from being resilient.

Through discovering how individuals develop the meanings that they construct, the researcher is then able to gain insight into the meanings that individuals attach to certain experiences (Fouché & Schurink, 2011; Nieuwenhuis, 2013a). Interpretivism suggests that there is no main reality of phenomena, rather there are multiple realities that occur and differ across time and place (Crous, 2011; Nieuwenhuis, 2013a). Through the data collection process I hope to explore the meanings that the parents, living in Mamelodi, attributed to their families' resilience.

There are two types of ontological belief (Fouché & Schurink, 2011). The first belief is that reality should be approached objectively where the researcher remains separated from the study being conducted. The second belief is based on a reality that is constructed socially. This means that the goal of the research is based on finding meaning and interpretation (Fouché & Schurink, 2011). The interpretive method works most appropriately when trying to discover the meanings that the participants attribute to their own family resilience while living in financially adverse circumstances.

The interpretive approach was advantageous in the following ways: It allowed one to gain an understanding of each individual (Babbie, 2010). Therefore, I wanted to gain insight into each of the participants' perceptions of family resilience while experiencing adverse challenges in their daily lives. Furthermore, the interpretive approach provided a deeper understanding of how individuals made sense of their own experiences (Nieuwenhuis, 2013a) as well as allowing the researcher to gain a rich understanding of the data through considering all the nuances and meanings that might be included in it (Neuman, 2006; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002).

The greatest benefit of the interpretive approach is that it allows multiple interpretations to emerge from a specific problem or issue (Creswell, 2009). In the

current research, I was eager to interact with the participants and incorporate their diverse views on family resilience. I was mindful to develop this research based on the insights of the participants and not on the literature that I had read.

The interpretive approach has been criticised for focusing on an individual's or groups' personal experiences and ignoring the social and historical background of the research participants (Eagle, Hayes, & Sibanda, 2002). In the current study, I addressed this concern by discussing the unique background of Mamelodi that the research participants resided in (Consult Chapter 1, Section 1.5).

In addition, I had to be aware not to use the interpretations held in the literature but to account for meaning that the research participants shared with me (De Vos, Strydom, Schulze, & Patel, 2011). When working with the experiences shared by the participants, I tried to make a conscious effort to differentiate clearly between what had been read from existing literature and what insights into family resilience were generated from the participants themselves. Another drawback of using the interpretivist approach is that the findings cannot be generalised and that the approach is totally subjective (Nieuwenhuis, 2013a). This drawback is mentioned in the limitations section of this research (Consult Chapter 5, Section 5.4).

3.2.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: QUALITATIVE APPROACH

Qualitative research generally works with individuals or systems in their social and cultural contexts to gain deeper meaning that is aimed at understanding social phenomena (Nieuwenhuis, 2011). Qualitative research was used in this study by collecting data through a focus group and making observations to identify specific themes of family resilience from parents living in a low socio-economic environment of Mamelodi.

The advantage of conducting qualitative research is that it includes the research process and not only its outcome (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990). A qualitative research approach enabled me to collect data by going out to the community centre in Mamelodi to discuss with the participants their lives, their families and their ability to be resilient. Qualitative research contributes greatly to our understanding of how individuals make meaning of their circumstances from their environment (Nieuwenhuis, 2011). I wanted to determine whether the key processes of the FRF were present in the research sample.

The findings of qualitative research have been questioned by some of its critics; the question is whether the outcomes of qualitative research can be applied universally as they are usually specific to a certain context or culture (Flick, 2009; Nieuwenhuis, 2011). Positivists believe that through using scientific techniques in research, one is able to apply the results universally and generalise them to all contexts and cultures (Nieuwenhuis, 2011). However, social phenomena are very complex where the research participants are not reduced to single variables but need to be viewed in their context (Flick, 2009). Since every culture and context is unique, the findings of qualitative research may not be generalised to other contexts. Therefore, the insight that the research participants shared was specific to the environment of Mamelodi and cannot be generalised to other individuals' interpretations of themselves and their families living in other environments. The qualitative information that was gathered from this research may provide specific information on family resilience in the Mamelodi area.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN: CASE STUDY

3.3.1 SINGLE CASE STUDY

Single case study design was selected for this research in the hope that the data collected might provide an understanding of parents' perceptions of family resilience in Mamelodi East. The OVC Centre in Mamelodi East was approached and a meeting was held to gain knowledge about the centre and to find potential participants that were part of families that utilised the centre's services as a resource. The centre facilitated the data collection process for this research by selecting four parents to attend the focus group; these participants were found suitable based on the criteria for families living in adverse circumstances in Mamelodi and utilised the centre's services. Through a case study design the researcher was able to understand social phenomena through asking the questions of *how* and *why* (Yin, 2014).

The purpose of a single-case study is not to generalise the outcome gained from it to a larger population but rather to understand practices within that case (Erickson, 2012). A single case study allows the researcher to gain detailed information about a single individual or a small group of individuals' lives to understand their behaviours and to look for patterns within their lives (Fouché & Schurink, 2011; Nieuwenhuis, 2013b).

Criticism has been levelled against case study design for often using single case studies that prevent the research from producing generalisable conclusions (Nieuwenhuis, 2013b; Thomas, 2004). The usage of multiple techniques for data collection allows the case study design to be strengthened (Nieuwenhuis, 2013b). However, multiple case studies may weaken the meaning given to a single case study (Zucker, 2009). I made use of a focus group and made observations to gain a perspective on how the participants being interviewed made sense of their family resilience in the low socio-economic circumstances that they lived in.

The benefit of using a case study design is that it gives many individuals a voice who would have otherwise remained unheard and unknown (Nieuwenhuis, 2013b). Thus, conducting research on family resilience in Mamelodi, gave the research participants a platform to be heard.

Case study research implements two main approaches: an instrumental approach and an intrinsic approach. *The instrumental approach* focuses on a particular feature of the case study and uses interviews, questionnaires, observations and policies to analyse the information (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013). The focus of the instrumental case study is to contribute new knowledge on particular social issues (Fouché & Schurink, 2011). An advantage of using the instrumental case study approach is that it allows the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of a specific phenomenon being evaluated or provides insight into a specific issue (Nieuwenhuis, 2016b; Thomas, 2004). The *intrinsic approach* aims to understand the case in its entirety (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013).

The current research implemented the instrumental case study approach; data was collected through a focus group and observations to understand deeper meanings of family resilience. The advantage of using the instrumental case study approach was that it allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the specific phenomenon being evaluated (Mark, 1996).

3.3.2 SAMPLING AND SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Using non-probability sampling techniques, I chose purposive sampling to select the sample. There is no random selection in non-probability sampling and therefore I was careful not to draw generalised conclusions about the sample representing the entire population (Maree & Pietersen, 2011). Non-probability sampling occurs when the researcher does not know all the members of a population (Strydom & Delpont, 2011). Purposive sampling includes research participants who possess unique

characteristics that best represent the population that the research is exploring (Creswell, 2003; Strydom & Delpont, 2011). For this research, four parents were selected by the OVC Centre in Mamelodi East, from four different families that mostly had live-in partners and were experiencing adverse circumstances and lived in the low socio-economic environment of Mamelodi. The parents were selected from a population of 95 families and 180 orphaned and vulnerable children who received some form of support from the OVC Centre in Mamelodi East (P. Maahlo, personal communication, August 10, 2017). In Table 3.1, on page 46 and 47, information about the participants' family demographics is provided.

Non-probability sampling has specific advantages, such as being appropriate when the research study does not have access to funding or has a very low budget, when there is a short space of time to find the sample and conduct the data collection and when the population is difficult to find (Maree & Pietersen, 2011). Therefore, non-probability sampling was most appropriate for this study; I did not have access to funding for this research and the time frame to complete the mini-dissertation was limited.

Table 3.1: Participants' demographics

| Family | Familial caregiver | Level of education of familial caregiver | Marital status of familial caregiver | Children | Language | Family dwelling | Employment | Community support |
|----------|-----------------------|--|--------------------------------------|---|----------|--|--------------|---|
| Family 1 | Mother (47 years old) | Grade 11 | Never been married | 27 years old (Female) 21 years old (Male) 13 years old (Male) 6 years old (Female) | Sepedi | Four-bedroomed house from the Apartheid era | Not employed | Orphaned and Vulnerable Children Centre |
| Family 2 | Mother (45 years old) | Grade 10 | Never been married | 24 years old (Female) 20 years old (Male) 13 years old (Male) 7 years old (Female) | Sepedi | Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) housing (lives with father of children) | Not employed | Orphaned and Vulnerable Children Centre |
| Family 3 | Mother (40 years old) | Grade 7 | Never been married | 6 years old (Male) 4 years old (Female) | Sepedi | Government Housing | Not employed | Orphaned and Vulnerable Children Centre |

| Family | Familial caregiver | Level of education of familial caregiver | Marital status of familial caregiver | Children | Language | Family dwelling | Employment | Community support |
|----------|-----------------------|--|--------------------------------------|---|----------|--|--------------|---|
| Family 4 | Mother (37 years old) | Grade 11 | Never been married | 14 years old (Male) 7 years old (Female) 5 years old (Female) | Sepedi | Lives with boyfriend who is not the father of her children | Not employed | Orphaned and Vulnerable Children Centre Children's grant |

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

3.4.1 DATA COLLECTION AND DOCUMENTATION

I implemented a focus group and observations of the focus group for data collection purposes during the month of May 2017 and did member checking in the month of July 2017.

3.4.1.1 Focus group

Focus groups allow the researcher to see how the participants exchange ideas, challenge and humour one another (Forrester, 2010). Focus groups encourage participants to elaborate on what other participants in the group contribute to the specific discussion and thus allow for more in-depth information to arise (Nieuwenhuis, 2013b). Table 3.2 provides information about the participants in the focus group.

Table 3.2: Focus group information of research participants

| Description of participants | Number of participants | Gender | Relationship to the family |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Participant 1 (P) | 1 | 1 female | Mother |
| Participant 2 (P) | 1 | 1 female | Mother |
| Participant 3 (P) | 1 | 1 female | Mother |
| Participant 4 (P) | 1 | 1 female | Mother |
| <i>n</i> | 4 | Focus group 1 <i>n</i> = 4 adults | |

Furthermore, focus groups allow the researcher to capture data that emerges from verbal and non-verbal interaction among the participants (Nieuwenhuis, 2013b). The advantages of conducting focus groups are that they give the researcher detailed perspectives on the research topic being discussed (Forrester, 2010); focus groups are cost-effective and time efficient (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Through understanding the group dynamics and group discussion, I was able to collect data on family resilience from four parents who lived in the low socio-economic environment of Mamelodi. The data collected may contribute to existing research on family resilience. In addition, I obtained diverse views on the risk factors that threaten family resilience, which assisted me in achieving a greater understanding of the

research participants' experiences and challenges with regard to themselves and their families.

Focus groups allow non-literate individuals to be part of group discussions (Cohen et al., 2011). This was an important factor in the research as the participants lived in the low socio-economic environment of Mamelodi, where adequate education was not accessible to them. Therefore, conducting the focus group did not discriminate against the participants' education level. Not all the participants had completed their high school education.

Focus groups come with limitations, such as making sure the sample selected is an adequate representation of the participants who possess specific characteristics that are related to the study (Cohen et al., 2011). Since the sample consisted of only four parents who experienced similar circumstances in terms of financial constraints while raising a family, this research's results cannot be generalised to all families living in Mamelodi. Nieuwenhuis (2016b) states that focus groups are typically small and cannot be representative of an entire population.

In addition, group dynamics may lead to dominant participants taking over the discussion (Cohen et al., 2011; M. Greeff, 2011). I was aware of the group dynamics and tried to facilitate the focus group as efficiently as possible in order that two participants, who were quieter than the others, were given the opportunity to participate and share their perspectives. I made sure that the participants were comfortable in the focus groups to give them the opportunity to discuss their true feelings and perspectives on the research topic selected (Cohen et al., 2011). I tried my best to make the research participants feel comfortable by providing a confidential space for them to express themselves as well as by enlisting the help of an interpreter who spoke Sepedi, which was the mother tongue of all the participants. Lastly, beverages and lunch were provided for the participants.

The focus group and observations took an hour and a half to complete. I arranged a time to meet the participants for the focus group and observations through the assistance of management at the OVC Centre in Mamelodi East. The focus group and observations took place in one of the rooms at the OVC Centre. All four participants as well as the interpreter and myself were present.

3.4.1.2 Audio recordings

Audio recordings were used to capture the verbal information that was discussed in the focus groups (Nieuwenhuis, 2013b). Audio recordings allow the participants to express themselves freely without the researcher having to stop the process because of note-taking limitations (Yin, 2016).

Before audio recordings proceeded in the focus group and member checking sessions, I gained consent from the participants (Nieuwenhuis, 2013b). I audio-recorded all the information in order to make sure that the transcriptions were translated as closely as possible from what the research participants expressed in Sepedi into English for data analysis to be conducted objectively. The transcriptions assisted with the data analysis process (Nieuwenhuis, 2013b). The drawback of the transcriptions was that an interpreter translated them; this implies that meaning of what the research participants shared during the translation process may have been lost.

3.4.1.3 Qualitative observations

Qualitative observations provide in-depth understanding of the participants' interactions with one another as well as of their behaviour (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013; McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Through building rapport with the research participants and observing their interactions and behaviour in the focus group, I was able to reflect on how comfortable the research participants were with discussing their families' resilience and the risk factors that threatened their resilience (Consult Appendix H for the observations). Since the data collection was conducted in a semi-urban township, the context provided me with more of an understanding of the research participants' challenging context. When the research participants discussed their adversities, two of them became very tearful. During this time, the other individuals in the focus group were very understanding as they genuinely looked concerned and respected their peers by remaining silent and not interrupting them while they spoke.

I was a non-participant observer, which meant that I was an outsider looking in at the research site (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013). The drawback of the researcher being a non-participant observer is that the researcher may not clearly understand the situation that he/she is seeing as the researcher is not involved in the actual situation (Nieuwenhuis, 2013b).

3.4.2 DATA COLLECTION AND DOCUMENTATION PROCESS

Table 3.3 below demonstrates the data collection and data documentation process. The process was conducted in consecutive stages.

Table 3.3: Table displaying a summary of the data collection and data documentation process

| Stages | Description |
|---------------------------|---|
| Ethical clearance | The research proposal was submitted for approval to the University of Pretoria, Faculty of Education’s ethical committee where ethical clearance to collect data was approved. Ethical clearance number UP 16/09/01 Mampane 16-001. (Please refer to page iii.). |
| Meeting with stakeholders | A meeting was held with the stakeholders at the OVC Centre in Mamelodi East on April 24, 2017 to request assistance in finding suitable research participants for the research study as well as gaining permission to utilise the venue of the centre to conduct the focus group and member checking sessions. |
| Sampling | Non-probability, purposive sampling was used to identify research participants that best represented what the research study was exploring. |
| Informed consent | Families were initially informed by the stakeholders at the OVC Centre in Mamelodi East about the purpose of the research and requested whether they would be willing to participate in the study. Before data collection took place, ethical considerations such as the right to withdraw from the study at any time, voluntary participation and confidentiality were discussed with the participants. The participants were given time to ask any questions on what they did not understand about the research and then signed the letter of informed consent without coercion (Consult Appendix B). The participants provided consent for the audio recording equipment to be used. |
| Focus group | The focus group was conducted on the 19th of May 2017 to gain insight into the perceptions of parents who lived in a low socio-economic environment on family resilience. |
| Member checking | Member checking was conducted on the 31st of July 2017 to clarify, confirm and include any additional information that might have been misinterpreted. Researcher bias was controlled by conducting the member checking session, using a reflective journal, having the guidance of a research supervisor as well as having a peer debriefer. |
| Transcription | The focus group interview and the member checking session were transcribed verbatim by Mary-Anne Makgoka. (Consult Appendices D and F). |

3.5 DATA DOCUMENTATION

Various data documentation techniques such as field notes, audio recordings and a reflective journal were used in this research.

3.5.1 OBSERVATION NOTES

Observation/field notes should include everything that the researcher observes (Strydom, 2011b). The reason for taking observation/field notes at the beginning of the study was to allow me to record information and interpret it later on in the research process (Strydom, 2011b). There are two guidelines for observation/field notes: The researcher must take note of what was seen, heard and then the observation/field notes must also be expanded on (Strydom, 2011b). The notes that the researcher jots down during observations, focus group interviews or semi-structured interviews should be converted into adequate observation/field notes as soon as possible afterwards (Strydom, 2011b). I tried my best to capture all the observations that occurred in order to have a record of everything I had witnessed (Consult Appendix H to peruse the observations for the study).

3.5.2 REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

My objective in this research was to be reflective throughout the process; therefore I used a reflective journal. Being reflective means that I reflected on the biases, assumptions and expectations within the research (Creswell, 2012). Additionally, I shared personal experiences as well as the interactions that occurred with the research participants in the reflective journal (Creswell, 2012; Yin, 2016). Reflexivity can also include noting down one's cultural background and the effect that it might have had on the interpretation of the research data (Creswell, 2014). I felt at times that it was difficult to interact fully with the research participants during the focus group and the member checking session due to a language barrier as I do not speak Sepedi. A reflective journal may include the researcher's thoughts, feelings and critical attitudes about the research study (Burns, 2000; Schurink et al., 2011; Shaw, 2010). (Consult Appendix C for the reflective journal.)

3.6 THEMATIC DATA ANALYSIS

The main goal of thematic data analysis is to change the data into themes that reveal the participants' core experiences (Schurink et al., 2011). The advantage of using qualitative thematic data analysis is that it brings meaning to the data collected

(Braun & Clarke, 2006; Schurink et al., 2011). The researcher's role is to make the thematic data analysis process an inductive one where the researcher narrows the data into limited themes (Schurink et al., 2011). In qualitative research, the subjectivity of both the participants as well as the researcher contributes to the themes that emerge (Flick, 2009). I present the main themes that emerged from the data collection process to assist readers in gaining context-specific perspectives on parents' experiences of family resilience as well as acknowledging the risk factors that they endure.

Using thematic data analysis, I analysed the data source – transcriptions. Transcriptions are the process of converting field notes and audio recordings into text (Creswell, 2012; Nieuwenhuis, 2016a). When creating transcriptions, the researcher and the participants should be clearly distinguished in order to make it easier for data analysis to be conducted (Creswell, 2012). I had a translator present for the focus group and member checking session as the participants spoke Sepedi fluently and were comfortable in this language whereas I do not speak Sepedi. The transcriptions were then translated from Sepedi into English and transcribed so that I could continue with data analysis. The limitation of having an interpreter and having another individual translating the audio-recordings into transcriptions in English, was that meaning and nuances may have been lost through translation and misunderstanding may have occurred, which were beyond my control.

The coding process divides the data into sections and labels them in order to see whether there is repetition or overlap (Creswell, 2014). It allows for some data to be used where other data has been overlooked (Creswell, 2014). In this research, open coding was conducted, firstly to name and categorise the data found into discrete parts (Schurink et al., 2011). Axial coding that places the data together in new ways to find similarities and relationships between categories and sub-categories was then completed (Nieuwenhuis, 2016a; Schurink et al., 2011). I then focused on creating themes that related to the research questions and this specific research (Consult Appendix E for an excerpt of the axial codes). I was eager to find during data analysis, themes that relate well to family resilience within a low socio-economic environment as well as careful not to dismiss the prevalent risk factors that threatened the family from being resilient.

Description and theme development are often used in case study research (Creswell, 2014). Description assists the reader in understanding the research site and the research participants through the researcher providing sufficient detail about them

(Creswell, 2014). The area of Mamelodi where the participants lived, assisted me as the researcher in gaining insight into their context. It provided more insight into how the OVC Centre assists these families. Themes are very important in qualitative data analysis (Creswell, 2012). Many types of themes can be identified; the major themes that revealed key concepts expressed by the research participants are discussed in Chapter 4.

The last step of the data analysis process is interpretation (Creswell, 2009; Schurink et al., 2011; Yin, 2016). Interpretation includes the meanings and essence of the data collected (Creswell, 2009; Nieuwenhuis, 2016a; Schurink et al., 2011; Yin, 2016). Interpretation encompasses the researcher's perceptions of the research study, the researcher's culture and beliefs that may be imposed on the research study and past literature that endorses or deviates from the study's findings (Creswell, 2009; Nieuwenhuis, 2016a). The interpretation of the research themes is discussed in Chapter 5 to determine whether the themes correlate with previous literature. Some of Walsh's FRF processes found commonality to the themes of family resilience discussed in this research.

3.6.1 LIMITATIONS OF DATA ANALYSIS

A limitation of qualitative research is a lack of accuracy (Creswell, 2014). In order to mitigate this limitation, triangulation was used. *Triangulation* is a process of using multiple techniques to verify meaning on a certain observation or theme that has been developed in qualitative research (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2016). I used a focus group, observations from the focus group as well as the member checking session to draw on multiple sources to support a theme created.

In addition, the themes that were created may be inappropriate where there is a large degree of researcher bias (Creswell, 2012). I conducted an external audit to make sure that the research study was credible and accurate. An external audit is achieved by using an individual who is well skilled in research to analyse the different aspects of the research study to assess the methodology, research findings, themes and the researcher's biases (Creswell, 2012). I also had a research supervisor evaluate the research. In addition, an internal audit was conducted by myself to evaluate the suitability of the study. An internal audit was accomplished by implementing a reflective journal (Schurink et al., 2011).

3.7 ENHANCING TRUSTWORTHINESS

3.7.1 QUALITY CRITERIA: TRUSTWORTHINESS

Quantitative research relies on facts and certainties whereas qualitative research achieves validity through trustworthiness (Altheide & Johnson, 2011). In qualitative research, trustworthiness is crucial for assessing data analysis, outcomes and conclusions (Nieuwenhuis, 2011). Validity refers to the ability of the research study to ascertain what it is designed to study, whereas reliability refers to the consistency of the research study's findings when the research study is conducted multiple times (Kumar, 2014). In qualitative research, standardisation of research methods becomes difficult as it does not use the same methods of validity and reliability that quantitative research employs (Kumar, 2014). Validity and reliability in qualitative research can be determined through trustworthiness, which has four indicators (Kumar, 2014; Schurink et al., 2011). The four indicators are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Kumar, 2014; Schurink et al., 2011).

The aim of *credibility* is that the researcher's representation of the participants is congruent with the participants' perceptions and feelings that they shared with the researcher (Schurink et al., 2011). Various research studies have ensured that credibility exists by using peer debriefing (Schurink et al., 2011) as well as using multiple data sources to produce the same findings (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, 2011; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2016). Peer debriefing adds validity to the research study and allows the peer debriefer to read, question and review the research study (Creswell, 2009). Peer debriefers can also assess the research study for bias (Nieuwenhuis, 2011; Yin, 2016). I ensured that credibility existed in the research by creating themes that were congruent with the perceptions of the participants through conducting a member checking session and making observations throughout the data collection process. In addition, the research supervisor guided the research process in an objective manner; moreover, I used a peer debriefer who read my study. The research participants' utterances had to be stated correctly in order to ensure that their statements were not taken out of context (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, 2011).

Qualitative research makes findings difficult to be generalised to other environments (Schurink et al., 2011). The researcher may achieve *transferability* to some extent through describing the research process in extreme detail, which would allow other researchers to replicate the study (Kumar, 2014). I provided as much detail as possible when writing up the research process.

Dependability is assessing whether one can achieve the same results twice (Kumar, 2014; Nieuwenhuis, 2011). The researcher needs to question whether the research process has been conducted logically and has been recorded precisely (Schurink et al., 2011). The concept of replication becomes problematic in qualitative research as a result of its flexible methods. However, the researcher may keep records of the research process to make the process easier for other researchers to duplicate (Kumar, 2014). I detailed the processes that were used to collect and analyse the data.

Confirmability is similar to reliability in quantitative research and wants to determine whether the results of the study can be confirmed by other researchers (Kumar, 2014). Lincoln and Guba (1985) define confirmability as the degree of objectivity in the findings that excludes researcher's bias. In qualitative research, objectivity is difficult to achieve; however, this research was supervised by my research supervisor and read by a peer debriefer in order to obtain objectivity.

Success in establishing validity and reliability in qualitative research is generally dependent on whether a study is replicated in the same way as the original research study (Kumar, 2014). In qualitative research, replication is very difficult to achieve (Kumar, 2014). However, utilising techniques of trustworthiness can assist in validating the findings of the study (Nieuwenhuis, 2011). I employed certain trustworthiness techniques to ensure that validity and reliability for qualitative research are present in the research study.

I clearly stated the drawbacks of the study so that a reader can understand why certain research processes were conducted (Consult Chapter 5, Section 5.4 to peruse this). I did not generalise the research findings to other studies and ensured that confidentiality was maintained at all times.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Researchers in the social sciences employ complex ethical issues in order to protect humans from being harmed or taken advantage of in any way during the research process (Strydom, 2011a). Many ethical issues in this present research were addressed, such as informed consent, avoidance of harm, confidentiality, anonymity, deception of subjects, debriefing of participants and demands and stress placed on the participants resulting from the research.

Informed consent means that participants understand what the research study is about and agree to provide information about themselves that relates to the data collection processes as well as understanding the reasons for conducting the research (Kumar, 2014; National Research Council, 2003). In addition, I informed the participants that participation in the study was voluntary and they could decline to participate or even withdraw from the study at any time (Kumar, 2014). Each participant received an information sheet, which explained that they have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without giving a reason for doing so (Consult Appendix A to see the Participation Information Sheet). Additionally, the participants were encouraged to request a summary of the results of the research study once the study was completed. Consent forms for participation in the study and for audio-recording during the focus group were signed by the participants before data collection took place (Consult Appendix B to peruse the Letter of Informed Consent).

Vulnerable individuals include children, individuals with cognitive problems or individuals from troubled backgrounds (Schnell & Heinritz, 2006). Informed consent was necessary from the parents, family or medical staff of these vulnerable individuals (Flick, 2011). Since I interviewed parents from four different families in challenging circumstances, I needed to gain consent from them before conducting data collection.

Avoidance of harm is necessary in all social research (National Research Council, 2003; Strydom, 2011a). One may expect that harm to participants may be more of an emotional nature than of a physical nature in social research (Strydom, 2011a). I had the moral responsibility to protect the participants from any physical and/or emotional harm (Strydom, 2011a). Researchers often learn about the participants' unusual behaviour or something that they may want to keep confidential about themselves; therefore I needed to keep the information that was shared anonymous by not providing identifying information about any of the participants (Babbie, 2010). In this way, I upheld beneficence and non-maleficence with participants by ensuring their well-being during the data collection process. In addition, I aimed to attain beneficence by being aware of the benefits and risks of the research study for the participants (Fouka & Mantzourou, 2011).

Confidentiality is necessary to conduct ethically sound research (National Research Council, 2003; Nieuwenhuis, 2007, 2011; Strydom, 2011a). *Confidentiality* can be viewed as limiting the public's access to the participants' information whereas anonymity refers to ensuring the privacy and identity of the subjects (Strydom,

2011a). Anonymity did not apply in this research study, as I conducted a focus group and therefore I interviewed each participant; however, I kept their identity private whenever discussing the participants in the study.

Deception of subjects includes misinforming participants about the true aim of the research study or withholding information from the participants (Struwig & Stead, 2001). I made sure that no participants who attended and shared information in the focus group and member checking sessions were deceived by clearly informing them about the research and answering any questions they had pertaining to the study and themselves participating in it.

Debriefing of participants is usually conducted after the study when participants get the opportunity to work through their feelings about what occurred or arose for them during the research process (Strydom, 2011a). I conducted a debriefing session straight after the data collection process as the research was not a longitudinal study and I did not have the opportunity to run another focus group due to time constraints. However, I did manage to conduct a member checking session with the research participants in order to clarify, verify and expand what they had discussed in the focus group.

Demands and stress placed on the participants need to be carefully evaluated all the time during the research process (Flick, 2011). The researcher must always assess whether the demands placed on the participants are reasonable or are causing harm to the participants (Flick, 2011). I assessed the questions that were asked in the focus group to see whether the topic or questions could possibly cause harm when the participants were discussing their families' circumstances and their socio-economic difficulties.

The ethics committee assesses whether the researcher has accounted for ethical considerations in the research proposal before giving consent to the researcher to begin the research study (Schnell & Heinritz, 2006). I applied for ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria, Faculty of Education's ethics committee and was granted approval before conducting data collection for this study.

3.9 CONCLUSION

The interpretivist approach, qualitative paradigm and the case study design were selected and justified in order to assist in answering the study's research questions. During the research, I kept in mind how these processes relate to family resilience. In the following chapter, I plan to discuss the results of this research by presenting the

four identified themes with their respective sub-themes that emerged through thematic data analysis.

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Chapter 4

Results and Findings of the Study

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3, I focused on the research methods and strategies that guided this study. The research design and research method were selected based on what was most appropriate for the study. Justification for the selection of this research design and the methodological choices with relation to the research questions and the study's aim were also given. Chapter 3 was concluded by discussing the ethical considerations and the quality criteria that directed this research.

Chapter 4 presents the findings and results of the research. I begin this chapter by discussing the inclusion and exclusion criteria for each theme and identified sub-themes. The findings in the themes and sub-themes have been derived from thematic analysis of the raw data. An in-depth discussion of each theme correlating it with existing literature may confirm or contradict the results. This may provide new insight into the research topic.

4.2 RESULTS OF THE THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Four major themes emerged during thematic analysis which are displayed with their sub-themes in Table 4.1. The major themes are:

- Focusing on collectivist culture
- Significance of individual beliefs
- Upholding family values
- Risks experienced by families living in a low socio-economic area

Table 4.1: Themes and sub-themes

| |
|--|
| <p>Theme 1: Focusing on collectivist culture</p> <p>Sub-theme 1.1: Access to social and economic support in the community</p> <p>Sub-theme 1.2: Examining social responsibility</p> |
| <p>Theme 2: Significance of individual beliefs</p> <p>Sub-theme 2.1: Faith and prayer make the families feel grounded</p> <p>Sub-theme 2.2: Reducing individual stress and enhancing resilience</p> |
| <p>Theme 3: Upholding family values</p> <p>Sub-theme 3.1: Improving children and family life through education</p> <p>Sub-theme 3.2: Financial support from family of origin and a romantic partner</p> <p>Sub-theme 3.3: Positive parenting creates a moralistic context for children.</p> <p>Sub-theme 3.4: Traditional beliefs and shared family values enable cohesiveness</p> |
| <p>Theme 4: Risks experienced by families living in a low socio-economic environment</p> <p>Sub-theme 4.1: The belief that financial difficulty reduces family resilience</p> <p>Sub-theme 4.2: Barriers to education that result in difficulty to find employment</p> <p>Sub-theme 4.3: Individuals' challenges of being with unsupportive romantic partners</p> <p>Sub-theme 4.4: Lack of child maintenance and difficulties faced by mothers</p> |

Table 4.2 provides the abbreviations for the terminology used in this chapter.

Table 4.2: List of abbreviations

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| FG | Focus Group Participants |
| MC | Member Checking Participants |
| OBS | Observations |
| REFL | Reflections |
| Lines (For example, 111–121) | Line Cited |

4.2.1 THEME 1: FOCUSING ON COLLECTIVIST CULTURE

In Theme 1, the participants focused on their collectivist culture where two sub-themes were identified. In this research, collectivist culture is defined as the importance of interdependent relationships among people where group cohesion is valued and maintained (Keshavarz & Baharudin, 2009). Therefore, collectivist culture is viewed as communal in nature (Triandis, 2001). Collectivist culture also refers to group members being loyal to one another (Van Hoorn, 2015) and having a clear understanding of what behaviours are acceptable in the group (Papadopoulos, Foster, & Caldwell, 2013). The two sub-themes include positive resources that

maintain family resilience. The positive resources are access to social and economic support from the community that the parents reside in, and social responsibility for others around them that provides a sense of security to the parents. The inclusion and exclusion criteria for each sub-theme are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 1

| Theme 1: Focusing on collectivist culture | | |
|--|---|--|
| Sub-theme | Inclusion criteria | Exclusion criteria |
| Sub-theme 1.1: Access to social and economic support in the community | Any reference to the understanding of community or governmental support for families from low socio-economic circumstances. | References that exclude the understanding of community or governmental support for families from low socio-economic circumstances. |
| Sub-theme 1.2: Examining social responsibility | Any reference to intervention with relation to social crises. | References that exclude interventions that relate to social crises. |

4.2.1.1 Sub-theme 1.1: Access to social and economic support in the community

By conducting the focus group and member checking session as well as making observations, it became clear that the participants regarded their community as a resource. Participants utilised these resources in order to assist themselves and their families.

Participants recognised that Government plays a role in assisting their families. One parent stated the following:

We are surviving because life goes on, the child grant also assists us, when you have children you have to fend for your children, and you cannot wait for a man to assist you (FG, lines 131–132).

Data collection took place at the OVC Centre in Mamelodi East. The services offered by the centre included nutritional support that provided food to orphaned and vulnerable children as well as food parcels to their families (P. Maahlo, personal communication, August 10, 2017). The participants stated:

The drop-in (centre) assists us because they eat, when they arrive home they are not as hungry, I know that the child has eaten rice with meat or pap and the child is full (FG, lines 147–148).

Another parent said:

Sometimes the drop-in (centre) gives them food that we cannot afford, they eat well at the drop-in centre (FG, lines 149–150).

During the member checking session, the following was indicated:

Most of the things that the children are doing in school, she doesn't understand. But thanks to the drop-in centre, because they actually are able to assist the children with homework, and so she is actually, she is thankful to that because she mostly relies on them to assist the child with homework (MC, lines 92–95).

Another parent pointed out further avenues in which she found her community supportive, which is through joining community members and saving money together for various needs:

You can also join saving clubs which will help you in the long run, you can buy food (FG, lines 336–337). You share the money, you join burial clubs so that should one of the children die, you must be able to bury the child, people talk you know. This will save face for you (FG, lines 38–39).

Furthermore, another participant recognised the importance of having a friend. Friends can be a resource when one is in need:

If I say to her, my children do not have body lotion, she will share what she has with me, she will share her body lotion with me (FG, lines 481–482). When the participant said this, she looked over at the other research participant that was across from her and gave each other a knowing smile (OBS, lines 31–32).

4.2.1.2 Sub-theme 1.2: Examining social responsibility

Another sub-theme that emerged was that some of the participants felt socially responsible to intervene between children who are fighting one another, even if the children are not their own. One participant said:

When I see an older boy fighting a brother, I go out and tell them off, I also tell the mother that it is wrong. I sometimes hit the child if they are naughty,

when her children are bullying other children, I just go out there and call them to order (FG, lines 490–492).

Another participant stated:

Even if your child is not involved, when you find kids fighting, you call them to order. The other day I met six boys who attend school at Rethakgetse; they were fighting one girl, can you imagine, I screamed at them until they stopped beating her up. How can they be bullies at this young age? (FG, lines 497–500).

4.2.1.3 Discussion of findings from Theme 1

Moshabela, Sips, and Barten (2015) state that the primary caregivers in South African families are mostly women who are responsible for their household. Furthermore, community care workers are recruited by home-based care organisations who volunteer their time to assist families in their home environment. In this research, all the participants were female and were responsible for their children's well-being. A study conducted by Mampane (2017) at the OVC Centre in Mamelodi confirmed that most participants supported by the centre were unemployed females in single-headed households and without a high school education.

In Sub-theme 1.2, examining social responsibility, it became evident how some of the research participants felt responsible to discipline and protect children that were not their own. This sub-theme is closely related to the African principle of *Ubuntu* (Maluleke, 2012). *Ubuntu* means "I am what I am because of who we all are" (Maluleke, 2012, p. 4). The participants in this research took care of other children in the community and protected and disciplined them when needed.

4.2.2 THEME 2: SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIVIDUAL BELIEFS

Critcher and Lee (2018) describe an individual's belief as having faith in G-d. Religious faith has been found to decrease the uncomfortable feelings of having to experience "the unknown" in one's life (Hogg, Adelman, & Blagg, 2010). Positive behaviours towards seeking health result from having religious beliefs (Koenig, King, & Carson, 2012). Two sub-themes emerged, namely Sub-theme 2.1: Faith and prayer make the families feel grounded, and Sub-theme 2.2: Reducing individual stress and enhancing resilience. Table 4.4 outlines the inclusion and exclusion criteria that categorised the data for Theme 2.

Table 4.4: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 2

| Theme 2: Significance of individual beliefs | | |
|---|--|---|
| Sub-theme | Inclusion criteria | Exclusion criteria |
| Sub-theme 2.1: Faith and prayer make the families feel grounded | Any reference to faith and prayer that makes the families feel grounded. | References that exclude making the families feel grounded through faith and prayer. |
| Sub-theme 2.2: Reducing individual stress and enhancing resilience | Any reference to reducing individual stress and enhancing resilience. | References that exclude reducing individual stress and enhancing resilience. |

4.2.2.1 Sub-theme 2.1: Faith and prayer make the families feel grounded

Faith and prayer relate to the views expressed by all the participants. Faith and prayer appears to assist the participants in building their families’ resilience as well as give them hope that their circumstances will improve. One participant explained as follows:

When you are stressed, do not share your problems with your children, give your problems to G-d (FG, lines 351–352).

Another participant stated:

For me, the big thing is prayer, when you go job hunting when the children are at school, you pray to G-d to keep them safe until they come back home, when I leave home to visit someone at hospital you pray for them, prayer is important (FG, lines 606–608).

The participant continued:

G-d helps us all, I also taught my children to pray. I teach my children not to ask for wrong things from G-d, like to go and steal from someone else (FG, lines 611–612).

Another participant was concerned that her children should grow up in wrong ways and therefore she prayed for guidance in this regard:

When I pray, I ask G-d to give me the strength to bring my children up, to live so that they can grow so that my kids are not like me. I want to see my children achieving, to become “somebody.” I pray to G-d that my children do not become thugs, I pray to G-d that my children do not get involved with the

wrong crowds. When I pray, I do not close my eyes, I pray and ask for G-d's guidance (FG, lines 596–600).

When the participant said this, her words were filled with sincerity and she had hope in her voice. She looked eagerly around the group to see if the other participants also prayed, many nodded their heads in agreement and shared their stories of having faith in G-d and praying (OBS, lines 35–38).

Some participants prayed for employment opportunities:

I am praying to get a job (FG, line 269). I pray to G-d to give me a job so that I can earn a salary (FG, line 209).

The participants also noticed that through prayer, certain challenges in their lives improved. One participant stated:

I prayed to G-d and spoke to my ancestors, when I gave birth. I heard someone talking to me, pray you will survive, you will get the baby normally. I asked G-d to bring my baby safe, after my prayer, the baby was born, and the baby turned and was born normal (FG, lines 631–634).

One participant said that prayers helped heal her physically:

My uncle took me to a traditional doctor who assisted me, he prayed for me. I am better now (FG, lines 57–58).

Another participant explained:

I see an improvement in my life, G-d answered my prayers (FG, lines 626–627).

Another participant added:

G-d has given me the strength (FG, line 603).

A participant pointed out that one needs to pray in order for success to come in one's life:

G-d does not answer you immediately, but you need to pray (FG, line 610).

Other participants stated:

We ask G-d for the strength, ask G-d to provide you with your needs (FG, line 307) and We pray together for a better life (FG, line 252).

4.2.2.2 Sub-theme 2.2: Reducing individual stress and enhancing resilience

The participants shared their views on what assisted them in alleviating stress. Some of the participants said that social support from others around them alleviated their stress:

I share with one of my friends, I will send her a message and tell her I need her, or I will go and look for her until I find her, irrespective of the time. I will find her and tell her my problem. Once I speak to her, I heal (FG, lines 362–364).

Another participant agreed:

You should not keep things to yourself because that will break you, you must find a person to share your problems with, otherwise the stress will make you sick or you will collapse. Other illnesses are caused by keeping things to yourself (FG, lines 352–355).

Social support was valued among the participants as one participant explained:

Even if you do keep things to yourself, find someone to share problems with (FG, line 357).

One participant said the following:

If you talk about things that bother you, you find relief (FG, line 359).

Some of the participants had specific individuals such as a sister or daughter that they reached out to when they were feeling stressed. One participant explained:

When I have a problem, I tell my sister. She also does the same, she shares her problems with me (FG, lines 360–361). My child is my friend. I share secrets with my daughter (FG, line 381).

Another participant indicated that she felt comfortable to reach out to her friend when she was in need:

I know that if I do not have sugar or teabags at home, I know where to go (FG, line 369). We, as friends, we share and it's our secret (FG, lines 371–372).

Furthermore, a few participants felt that finding employment and being employed reduced the stress of the financial burdens that they were facing:

A job can change your life for the better, sometimes a friend comes and says, let us go and look for work and you go (FG, lines 393–394).

Another participant added:

All I want is to get a job and work for my children. I just want to live with my kids, even if it's not a permanent job, a three-day job would assist, and it would make a difference in my life (FG, lines 267–269).

One participant found that even non-permanent work positions made a difference:

I get piece jobs here and there to survive (FG, line 107).

During member checking, one participant felt that she could find part-time employment opportunities in order to feed her children:

Even if I don't have anything, mostly they don't go to bed hungry. There's always a plan. Something comes up. I am caring for a child that a mother brought to me when the child was two months old (MC, lines 171–173).

Another stress reducer that assisted some of the participants was making sure that their family functioned effectively through strict routine and collaborating as a family:

As a parent, when children come back from school, what we do is we eat, no television (TV) until they have done school work. I assist them and ask them what happened at school today, how was school generally (FG, lines 438–440).

Another participant explained as follows:

The family should live harmoniously with no fights, shouting, etc. (FG, line 345).

The final stress reducer appeared to motivate each mother through possessing hope and patience:

We must not be impatient, one day things will come right, one day things will happen for us (FG, lines 285–286).

One participant added:

I hope that one day things will be okay (FG, line 283).

Lastly, two participants felt that encouragement was important in relieving stress:

We encourage each other (FG, line 290). So, you encourage and comfort each other (FG, line 295).

I learned from my research participants the value of appreciation for what one has and having a positive attitude towards the future, filled with hope, despite the deprivation and difficulties they face on a regular basis (REFL, lines 72–75).

4.2.2.3 Discussion of findings from Theme 2

Walsh (2011) states that family health is understood as family functioning, where families are well-balanced and functional. Family health is related to the practice of religious customs that assist families in handling adverse circumstances (Kim, Kim-Godwin, & Koenig, 2016). The participants used prayer to assist them through their difficult times. Prayer was also utilised for the assistance in finding employment and helping them to raise their children responsibly.

Families who live in poverty experience much more stress than advantaged families (Herberle, Thomas, Wagmiller, Briggs-Gowan, & Carter, 2014). This is because they contend with dangerous neighbourhoods, little employment security, inadequate housing, food insecurity and challenges in their families (Hreberle et al., 2014). High rates of stress and depression were found among low-income mothers with young children (Harmeyer, Ispa, Palermo, & Carlo, 2016). Research has found that parents who struggle to find work that provides a sufficient income to care for their family, also struggle to develop skills that can help them plan for a more positive future (Sattler & Thomas, 2016).

The participants in this study experienced adversity; however, they did plan for their families' future through discussing their stressors with a family member or friend to help manage their challenges. Some of their planning included looking for work and supporting their family by having a positive disposition to their future. The participants

made sure that their children’s homework was completed daily, which is another way of planning for their children’s future by investing in their children’s education.

4.2.3 THEME 3: UPHOLDING FAMILY VALUES

In Theme 3, I discuss the values that the families kept and upheld. Schwartz (1992) states that choices and movement in an individual’s life are guided by values. Family values are defined as the maintenance of upholding social and moral principles in a family (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2016). Research on the commitment to family values has found achievement in education (Fulgini, 2007) and working towards wellbeing (Juang & Cookston, 2009) to be significant values. Four sub-themes emerged, namely Sub-theme 3.1: Improving children and family life through education; Sub-theme 3.2: Financial support from family of origin and a romantic partner; Sub-theme 3.3: Positive parenting that creates a moralistic context for children, and Sub-theme 3.4: Traditional beliefs and shared family values that enable cohesiveness. Table 4.5 outlines the inclusion and exclusion criteria that categorised the data for Theme 3.

Table 4.5: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 3

| Theme 3: Upholding family values | | |
|---|---|--|
| Sub-theme | Inclusion criteria | Exclusion criteria |
| Sub-theme 3.1: Improving children and family life through education | Any reference to improving children and family life through education. | References that exclude improving children and family life through education. |
| Sub-theme 3.2: Financial support from family of origin and a romantic partner | Any reference to financial support from the family of origin and the romantic partner. | References that exclude financial support from the family of origin and the romantic partner. |
| Sub-theme 3.3: Positive parenting that creates a moralistic context for children | Any reference to positive parenting that creates a moralistic context for children. | References that exclude positive parenting that creates a moralistic context for children. |
| Sub-theme 3.4: Traditional beliefs and shared family values that enable cohesiveness | Any reference to traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. | References that exclude traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. |

4.2.3.1 Sub-theme 3.1: Improving children and family life through education

During the focus group, many of the participants discussed the importance of their children getting an education.

The mood in the room felt hopeful when the research participants discussed the need for their children to be educated (OBS, lines 47–48).

One research participant said:

We are encouraging our children not to be like us, we did not study because our parents could not afford it, we lived in rural areas; when we came to town, we brought up our children so that we can educate them and not be like us (FG, lines 14–16).

In the member checking session, one of the research participants expressed her challenge of not achieving an education and therefore strove to make sure her children receive their education. She said:

My mother passed on, but she had a mental illness, so she was never going to be able to afford to give me an education, the education that I needed. So as a mother, I want to give my children what my mother did not give to me” (MC, lines 56–59).

In relation to her children obtaining an education another research participant explained:

We want what is best for our children (FG, line 22).

One research participant specified that change needed to occur, and she felt that this change needed to start with her children achieving a school education:

We were brought up in poverty and do not want our children to live the same lives that we lived, things have to change (FG, lines 25–26).

An important factor that was raised by some of the participants in relation to supporting their children in achieving an education was the significance of motivation and encouragement. One participant said:

My child failed four subjects, I asked him to do better next time, improve on his marks, he had tried but had to do more, and he needed to improve on his marks (FG, lines 582–583).

Another participant added:

There is no need to shout at the child when he is not performing, encourage him instead, don't make him feel as if he is a fool (FG, lines 586–587).

Furthermore, one participant felt that because of her own experience of not being able to complete her education, she wanted to motivate her children to complete their education:

When you see your children studying, you need to encourage them to study so that they do not end up like you (FG, lines 19–20).

When the research participant spoke of encouraging her child to study, all the other research participants nodded their heads strongly in agreement with her (OBS, lines 51–53).

Another participant felt like the previous research participant and said,

The main thing is perseverance – encourage children to study and tell them not to end up like you ... (FG, lines 579–580).

Two of the participants encouraged their children to study as they believed that if their children obtained an education, they would be financially independent. The participants said:

Once our children have schooled and are educated, they will look after us (FG, line 287) and I think they will be able to look after me at a later stage (FG, line 603).

In addition, one participant felt that if her children were educated, they would be able to support themselves financially:

Today's children are not like us. In our time, your parents used to buy you clothes. You didn't complain, you just [wear them], even if they bought you bigger clothes, bigger sizes, and they said you would grow into them. You would just wear them. But nowadays they choose what they want. So, then

as a parent, you have to have money to buy for them. It's [better] for them to be educated so that they can do most of these things, because they want the whole, they want all these things. And you can't afford them, as parents (MC, lines 62–67).

During the member checking session, one participant explained that she encouraged her children to study in order that they could, in the future, afford possessions that they desired. She stated the following:

I wish that my child could actually be a lawyer or a doctor but then she comes home and tells me that he has seen one child with this or that, you know, beautiful things. I will say, don't look at such things. Focus on your education and study so that you could be able to afford those things. Because I can't afford just to get you those things (MC, lines 69–73).

I was inspired by one of the participant's attitude to her child's future as she understood that she could not predict what would occur with her child and his/her education but that she invested in her child's achievement. She said:

I don't know what will happen to my child, whether he becomes a soldier or a policeman or a teacher or whatever. I will be able to say I have won if my children have achieved something, for now I can't say I have won, I am still on this journey (FG, lines 574–576).

From the above discussion, promoting the education for the participants' children was of paramount importance to them in terms of their wanting the best for their children as well as believing that education would bring about change to their low socio-economic circumstances. Motivation was of paramount importance to the participants in encouraging their children to continue to study.

4.2.3.2 Sub-theme 3.2: Financial support from family of origin and a romantic partner

In the focus group it became clear that financial support originated from some of the participants' families or from their romantic partners. One participant pointed out the following:

I have never worked in my life, my family provides for me. My children are also supported by my family (FG, lines 66–67).

She continued by stating:

If we have nothing at home they come and find out what we need, they pay for electricity and other things (FG, lines 70–71). Sometimes they would leave me money, R500 or so, for food and for the child for school, electricity and other needs, they pay for us (FG, lines 81–82).

Another participant explained that her family was willing to contribute financially to her child's needs as she said:

For me, they would bring shoes or whatever my children need (FG, line 96).

Lastly, another participant added:

My other brother would call and check on me, and ask if I need anything; the other one will bring soap or something else (FG, lines 99–100).

Some participants admitted that their romantic partners assisted them financially, such as the following participant:

I live with him and his parents. He is much better because he has piece jobs, although the money is not enough, we are able to survive. I appreciate him because he took me with three children, I do not have a child with him (FG, lines 194–196).

The same participant expressed her appreciation for her romantic partner and said:

He supports me although his money is not a lot, he has helped me, maybe by now I would have six children, by being there I am home, maybe I would be all over the place, getting drunk who knows, so I want to say because he is in my life, he is strict with me, when he is not home, I have to stay home because I am expecting him, I don't have to be all over. I am waiting for him all the time (FG, lines 223–227).

During member checking another participant agreed on what had been said in the focus group and said:

I am in that relationship because it's a good relationship for me. Even if this man is not working, when he gets a job, let's say he gets paid R500, he will take R100 for himself, the R400 comes to the house (MC, lines 142–144).

4.2.3.3 Sub-theme 3.3: Positive parenting that creates a moralistic context for children

Sub-theme 3.3 discusses how some of the participants valued the need to parent their children positively. The participants' aim for their children was to teach what is morally right and wrong and to behave in a dignified manner. One participant said:

Others would say my family is good because they have children who go around and steal from people by breaking into their cars and stores, the family lives on that ... that is not good (FG, lines 318–320).

Another participant said:

If my child tells me he found a phone, picked it up somewhere, I ask why. Other parents would take that phone and sell it, maybe you get R5,000, you do not enjoy that kind of money. I want money that I work hard for (FG, lines 325–327).

There are various parenting principles that the participants observed and shared in the focus group. The first principle was not to burden their children with their challenges:

Some parents when they are stressed take out their stress on the children which is wrong ... work your things out and do not take it out on the children (FG, lines 347–348).

Another participant emphasised the importance of teaching her children to share:

One goes to the drop-in centre, the other one does not. The one from the drop-in centre can sometimes bring meat home, and we don't have meat. The very child will share with the other one who does not have, I am teaching my children to learn and share (FG, lines 467–470).

The same participant underscored the importance of sharing:

... all the things we do not have, he will share with his sibling ... (FG, line 474).

The participant went on to discuss the importance of not showing favouritism to one of her children over another:

I do not have a favourite child, I treat them the same; this does not create hatred among children, if you treat them the same (FG, lines 474–475).

Another parent discussed the value of teaching her children to share with others:

I have two children, we will all share (with my friend's children), a small thing can be extended. This has to do with what you teach your children as a parent ... so it's okay. Sunlight bar soap, I am able to share (with my friend), we will share it (FG, lines 479–481).

Another parenting principle that arose was to prevent the use of swear words in the home environment:

No swearing, swearing is not encouraged at home, there are certain swear words that are forbidden (FG, lines 515–516).

Lastly, children were prevented from bullying one another:

He used to bully his friends, but I was surprised he did not do this at school, he bullied his friends at home. I would beat him up but for some reason, he did not do this at school. I was constantly telling him not to bully other children (FG, lines 562–564).

It is clear that discipline was sometimes enforced at home using violence (in this case-beatings) to problem solve by this participant.

The participants had their children's best interests at heart. Some of them took the effort to find employment:

You have to go out there and look for jobs in order to fend for your children, look for jobs, ask people (FG, lines 136–137) You have to find a job so that your children do not sleep on an empty stomach, you have to fend for them (FG, lines 138–139).

One participant spoke for all participants by stating the following:

We want to provide for our children, but life is tough (FG, line 27).

In general, the participants wanted the best for their children but often found their circumstances very challenging.

Another participant expressed the need to teach children not to compare what they had to what others had and to accept their lot:

I don't encourage my children to crave other children's things because this will put me under tremendous pressure, this will also create hatred (FG, lines 466–467). I must not compete with anyone, I know my condition and I must accept this (FG, line 460).

The above was confirmed by another participant who underscored what the other participant had stated:

You have to teach your children to accept even if there is nothing they must accept, they must not look outside, they must actually be content with what the family is providing (FG, lines 461–463).

The two participants showed acceptance and acknowledgement of their lack of financial resources. They wanted their children to be content with what their families could offer them.

4.2.3.4 Sub-theme 3.4: Traditional beliefs and shared family values that enable cohesiveness

The participants discussed the traditional rituals, which gave their families a sense of security that they were involved in. The first ritual that arose was the manner in which the participants were expected to greet people and how to interact with others. The participants also expected the same social conduct from their children. The following is an example:

I teach my children what I was taught by my own parents; they taught me well, I was taught how to live with people. I was taught not to speak back particularly to an older person, that is how I was brought up (FG, lines 525–527).

One participant agreed:

I wouldn't know what to say if an older person was to speak rudely to me. I will just keep quiet (FG, lines 529–530).

The participants agreed that greeting others is important in their lives:

I taught mine to greet older people when they meet them, other children just don't greet (FG, lines 534–535).

One participant stated the following:

My little girl greets when she comes from school (FG, line 536).

Another participant said:

In the morning, everyone must greet each other (FG, line 537) and If a child does not greet in the morning then I know something is wrong (FG, line 538).

Another ritual that was very important to the participants, was the significance of showing respect:

Respect should not be shown at home only but to everyone outside the children must actually have respect (FG, lines 546–547). A child must respect not only those at home but also other people (FG, line 544). Swearing, and disrespect, you tell yourself that I do not want this kind of life, I want my children to respect each other, no swearing (FG, lines 541–542).

There was also the concept that respect should be shown to anyone, irrespective of age:

Respect old and young, age should not be an issue, if you want the young ones to respect you, you must also respect them (FG, lines 521–522).

There should be respect both ways irrespective of age (FG, line 346).

Another participant agreed:

Yes, there should be respect both ways irrespective of age, there must be respect, there must be respect and love (FG, lines 447–448). I'm talking about mutual respect (FG, line 455).

The participants were very serious about teaching their children respect:

The main thing is love, respect and treating each other well; the children must be taught to respect other people (FG, lines 568–569).

A participant agreed:

Respect is the main thing, you must know how to discipline a child (FG, line 570).

During the member checking session, respect was confirmed to be of importance when the participants taught their children about upholding their family values:

If you want the young ones to respect, you must also respect them (MC, lines 29–30).

The last ritual that was discussed was the spiritual service that was directed at the participants' ancestors. The participants pointed out that they observed spiritual rituals to the ancestors:

Yes, I do the ancestral rituals, yes, I appease them (FG, line 617).

The participants further explained how spiritual homage to the ancestors took place:

You have to do it once a year; the whole family gets together, if things are not going well for you, you speak to the ancestors and ask for luck and blessings. We prepare African beer for the ancestors (FG, lines 620–622).

Another participant described a different way of performing the spiritual ritual to the ancestors:

Not necessarily with African beer, when I speak to the ancestors, inform my parents that they left me with nothing, I use maize and water, and coarse salt, white candles and matches and talk to them in my own yard, or go to the mountains and appease my ancestors, I pray to G-d and speak to ancestors at the same time (FG, lines 623–626).

4.2.3.5 Discussion of findings for Theme 3

Parents are an immense resource to their children as they can provide daily assistance in their academic journey as well as support their children to experience emotional regulation (Amato, Patterson, & Beattie, 2015). The parents in this study encouraged their children to focus on their education so that, in the future, they could reach their desired career paths. Poverty has been found to affect a child's well-being and academic success when living in a single-parented household as compared to a child, in a two-parented household (Waldfoegel, Craigie, & Brooks-Gunn, 2010). However, poverty is not the determining factor in academic success, despite the child

coming from either a single-parented or a two-parented household (Woessmann, 2015). Malczyk and Lawson (2017) state that an explanation for achieving academic outcomes in single and two-parented families may be found in family dynamics and parental practises. The participants had not completed their high school education; therefore they encouraged and motivated their children to do so. Education was valued by the participants as they worked hard to pass their values on to their children. Furthermore, they regarded educating their children as a solution and a resource for the family.

Even though the participants were raising their children on their own, it did not prevent them from teaching their children what is morally correct, the value of sharing and being able to be content with what one has. Some of the participants felt comforted that their family relatives or their romantic partners contributed financially to their households, which assisted them in raising their children and alleviated some of their financial stress.

Furthermore, the participants discussed how they upheld family values through instilling into their children the value of respect, the importance of not swearing and performing spiritual rituals to their ancestors. These values assisted the families in their resilience even though they experienced severe financial difficulties. Annalakshmi and Abeer (2011) state that religious belief has been seen to strengthen Indian families who experienced adverse conditions. Furthermore, the study conducted with Indian families in rural areas found that family members who practised religious beliefs and rituals, and interacted with their family and community, were identified as key factors in contributing to resilience (Hebbani & Srinivasan, 2016).

4.2.4 THEME 4: RISKS EXPERIENCED BY FAMILIES LIVING IN A LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

In this theme, four sub-themes were apparent. Risks are defined as the adverse individual, societal and/or environmental issues that negatively impact on the healthy development of a child (Kraemer, Lowe, & Kupfer, 2005). Families, from a low socio-economic environment, are known to experience higher stress and social isolation in their lives (A. P. Greeff & Fillis, 2009). Furthermore, the family's well-being is at risk for unemployment (C. Smith & Carlson, 1997) and inadequate education (Engle, Castle, & Menon, 1996). The risks in the research included: the belief that financial difficulty reduces family resilience; difficulty in finding employment as a result of

barriers to education; being challenged with unsupportive romantic partners, and lack of child maintenance and difficulties faced by mothers.

The inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 4 are summarised in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 4

| Theme 4: Risks experienced by families living in a low socio-economic environment | | |
|--|--|---|
| Sub-theme | Inclusion criteria | Exclusion criteria |
| Sub-theme 4.1: The belief that financial difficulty reduces family resilience | Any reference to the belief that financial difficulty reduces family resilience. | References that exclude the belief that financial difficulty reduces family resilience. |
| Sub-theme 4.2: Barriers to education that result in difficulty to find employment | Any reference to barriers to education that results in difficulty to find employment. | References that exclude barriers to education that result in difficulty to find employment. |
| Sub-theme 4.3: Individuals' challenges of being with unsupportive romantic partners | Any reference to individuals' challenges of being with unsupportive romantic partners. | References that exclude individuals' challenges of being with unsupportive romantic partners. |
| Sub-theme 4.4: Lack of child maintenance and difficulties faced by mothers | Any reference to lack of child maintenance and difficulties faced by mothers. | References that exclude lack of child maintenance and difficulties faced by mothers. |

4.2.4.1 Sub-theme 4.1: The belief that financial difficulty reduces family resilience

In this sub theme, the participants shared how their financial challenges affected their families' ability to be resilient. One participant said:

Our children know that life is tough at the moment, I am unable to provide for them, I want to work and provide for them, life is difficult (FG, lines 23–24).

Another research participant added:

When I am working, I know I want to buy this and that for this child; some Fridays I want to buy nice food for my children, like cake, we are unable to do so. Because you are unemployed, you are unable to do so (FG, lines 28–30).

Two of the research participants shared their financial challenges of having governmental social grant money that was too little to cover their family's needs:

You wish to do so much, the money we receive for the grant is too little. Very little, even when you get the grant for two children, it is too little, you are able to buy maize and other things, sometimes the child will go to school without food (FG, lines 31–33).

Some participants outlined their issues regarding employment:

Yes, sometimes she will say don't come tomorrow so that she can reduce the payment, the money is getting less and less every day. Sometimes she will ask you to leave at 10 in the morning and I had to leave. I left at 10 in the morning after cleaning, the payment was reduced because I did not work a full day (FG, lines 47–50).

One research participant explained:

If there is no food, it is disheartening ..., it breaks one's heart, it is sad for a child to sleep on an empty stomach and wake on an empty stomach and go to school with no food (FG, lines 140–142). In my reflective journal, I stated the following,

I was humbled by the research participants as some of their circumstances were extremely dire to the point where they did not have enough food to feed their children. Even though my culture was different to the participants' culture in this study, I felt that some of the issues that they experienced I could relate to. For example, growing up with limited funds by a single mother allowed me to empathise and sympathise with their adversity but also allowed me to admire their resilience which came through via their faith and prayer in G-d and being fully invested in their children's future (REFL, lines 41–47).

Another participant discussed how the community drop-in centre assisted her children with food on week days, but the difficulty was to be able to feed her children over the weekend when they did not go to the community drop-in centre:

The problems arise during weekends, Saturday and Sunday. Monday, I know they eat, sometimes you will find that there is no money on the weekends to buy any food (FG, lines 154–155).

Lastly, another participant felt conflicted and guilty because she sometimes wanted to prevent her children from attending certain events that she felt could influence her children negatively even when she knew she might not be able to provide for their basic necessities:

Children want to go and have fun elsewhere, they tell you that so and so has invited them to this and that, and you know that you have nothing. You can't say don't go because you can't provide (FG, line 451–453).

4.2.4.2 Sub-theme 4.2: Barriers to education that result in difficulty to find employment

All the participants did not graduate from high school because of their limited educational backgrounds. They believed that it had prevented them from finding suitable employment. One participant stated that the reason that she was not able to complete her schooling was the following:

My parents died when I was still young, and I couldn't get to where I wanted to be with my education (FG, line 6–7).

Another participant felt that she could not further her education because she already had a child:

The family brought me up, aunts etc., my siblings were brought up by the government and were able to study further; unfortunately for me, I had a child already (FG, lines 10–11).

Two of the participants discussed how they could not complete their education because of their families' challenges:

We did not study because our parents could not afford it, we lived in rural areas (FG, lines 14–15) and It was a sad situation in the family, I was the oldest and had to leave school and go to work (FG, line 114).

Furthermore, one of the participants shared her opinion on the drawback of not achieving an education:

Education is important because nowadays you cannot get the kind of job that you want, if you are not educated (MC, lines 59–60).

However, all participants showed determination and resolve to support the education of their children. They wanted to protect their children from their pain of not having graduated high school: The following from my reflective journal proves this:

The participants really impressed on me that they were invested in their children's future by making sure they achieve an education and are willing to assist them in whatever way they can (REFL, lines 64–66).

4.2.4.3 Sub-theme 4.3: Individuals' challenges of being with unsupportive romantic partners

From the data, it appeared that some of the research participants felt that their male romantic partners were not financially or emotionally supportive of them:

Men do not help us with anything, I simply forget that they exist because they do not assist us with anything, things remain the same (FG, lines 133–134).

Another discussed how her partner negatively reminded her that she was unemployed:

Your man is better. Mine told me that women are working out there (FG, lines 168–169).

In one research participant's romantic relationship she felt financially unsupported:

He will never give you a R100 note for the home, he will not give me a cent or buy groceries, never ... (FG, lines 173–174).

Another participant felt neglected by her partner:

Yes, he only comes home to change his clothes, what I must do is the washing, when he comes home, he comes to change clothes, I haven't asked him where he is going ... (FG, lines 180–181). She further explained: "I don't know where he eats and bathes, I haven't asked him anything, if he is dirty, he changes his clothes, he finds his clothes clean, he changes and leaves in a rush (FG, lines 189–190).

Another participant mentioned that she felt restricted by her romantic partner:

If you want to go out he will call you and want to know where you are, and ask you to come back home; when you come back, he does not say anything, he just wants to see you home. He can go wherever he wants to go (FG, lines 205–207).

Lastly, another participant said that she did not value her romantic partner:

The one I am with now is just useless (FG, line 267).

In this sub-theme, it is clear that most of the participants were in unsupportive relationships. Their relationships can be regarded as a form of spousal abuse. However, none of the participants regarded their partners as abusive but merely considered their actions as unsupportive.

4.2.4.4 Sub-theme 4.4: Lack of child maintenance increases the difficulties faced by mothers

Most of the participants experienced immense challenges to receive financial support from their children's biological fathers for their children:

Many of the research participants raised their voices and spoke louder than usual in the group showing the utter frustration that they felt with their children's fathers not contributing to their children's needs. In addition, a lot of head nodding was done in relation to this discussion when they agreed with one or more of the participants about not receiving child maintenance as well as shaking their heads in disappointment that fellow participants also experience lack of child maintenance (OBS, lines 69–74).

One participant said:

Sometimes I wish he (the research participant's romantic partner) was the father of my children; the father to my last born is a lawyer, he does nothing for the child. He does not maintain the child. I've been to social workers and I have given up. G-d will sort him out, a lot of women are getting maintenance and their children died; I would rather have my child living than force his father to maintain him (FG, lines 228–231).

Another participant discussed the difficulty of feeding her children because she did not receive adequate maintenance for her children:

When there is no food at home and you tell him, there is no maize meal or meat, he will promise. He will leave the house and come back, hoot at the gate and leave R50 with the child, then he is gone. The following day he comes back and calls the child and gives him another R50. I believe he has money, he is just spiteful, he does not want to support his children (FG, lines 237–240).

The same participant continued by saying the following:

He is supporting the person he is staying with, he has four children, he probably lives with a woman who has three or two children who are not his own, he does not care about his own children and does nothing for the kids. The children know that the father does not care. His family has tried talking sense into him, asking him to care for his family, when they leave he also leaves, I don't ask his family anymore, they come, they see what is happening (FG, lines 241–243, 246–248).

One of the participants experienced an issue where the father of her one child would not financially provide child maintenance. Only after much effort on her child's part exerting pressure on his father, he would then provide only for him but not for the other children who were also the participant's children with another man:

"He does not support them, unless the eldest one, he goes after him, if he does not chase him, he does not care. The second child also is the same. I chased him away because I felt he wanted to support his child only, it looked very bad (FG, lines 255–257).

4.2.4.5 Discussion of findings for Theme 4

Families living in poverty experience financial insecurity but this is not their only stress (Corr, Milagross Santos, & Fowler, 2016). These families may also experience lack of employment, increased risk of academic failure and lack of health insurance (Aber, 2012). In addition, children from low socio-economic areas who live in single-parented homes may experience insufficient nutrition and inadequate schooling (Orfield, 2013). The participants in this research outlined the financial challenges they experienced as they desired to do so much more for their children, but they felt limited by their financial circumstances. This issue was emphasised when the participants stated that sometimes their children went to bed hungry which made them feel discouraged by their circumstances.

Research has found that single mothers experience limited wage opportunities, employment instability and difficult work schedules (Johnson, Kalil, & Dunifon, 2012). In this study, the participants expressed a desire to find more permanent work, but they felt that their limited education prevented them from attaining better work opportunities.

Some of the participants outlined the challenge of not feeling supported either financially, emotionally or both by their romantic partners. In this research, the mothers each had a romantic partner. However, co-parenting did not exist between them, and the focus of the research is not on parenting. Conger et al. (2010) found that romantic couples from low socio-economic areas experience less satisfaction and stability in their relationships. The findings of this research therefore appear to correlate with the literature.

Lastly, the participants expressed how difficult it was to raise their children when they did not receive child maintenance from the children's fathers. Research shows that poverty is one of the main causes of family disruption and conflict (R. S. Baker, 2015). A report in 2012 found that 69% of black children in South Africa live without their fathers (Hall, Meintjes, & Sambu, 2014). South African black fathers are commonly known for not supporting their children financially (Madhaven, Richter, Norris, & Hosegood, 2014). This situation progressively worsens once a child's mother and father separate or find other romantic partners (Madhaven et al., 2014).

I presented the results of the current research through inductive thematic analysis by stating the four themes and their associated sub-themes. In the explanation of each sub-theme, I included quotations from the focus group, the member checking session as well as excerpts taken from my observations and reflective journal.

In Chapter 5, I discuss the findings of my research and compare them with existing literature; I highlight the silences that may have occurred in my study. The limitations of the study as well as the contributions that the study has made are addressed. Lastly, I offer recommendations for future study.

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Chapter 5

Responding to Research Questions, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to explore and discuss parents' perceptions of family resilience from a low socio-economic environment. In Chapter 4, the results of the research study are discussed after inductive thematic analysis to explicate the themes and sub-themes that emerged.

In this chapter, I provide answers to the primary and secondary research questions that are displayed in Figure 5.1. Furthermore, a discussion on the theoretical framework in relation to the findings of the research is included. The research is concluded by addressing the limitations of the study, its potential contributions and making recommendations for further research, practice and training.

5.2 RESPONDING TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

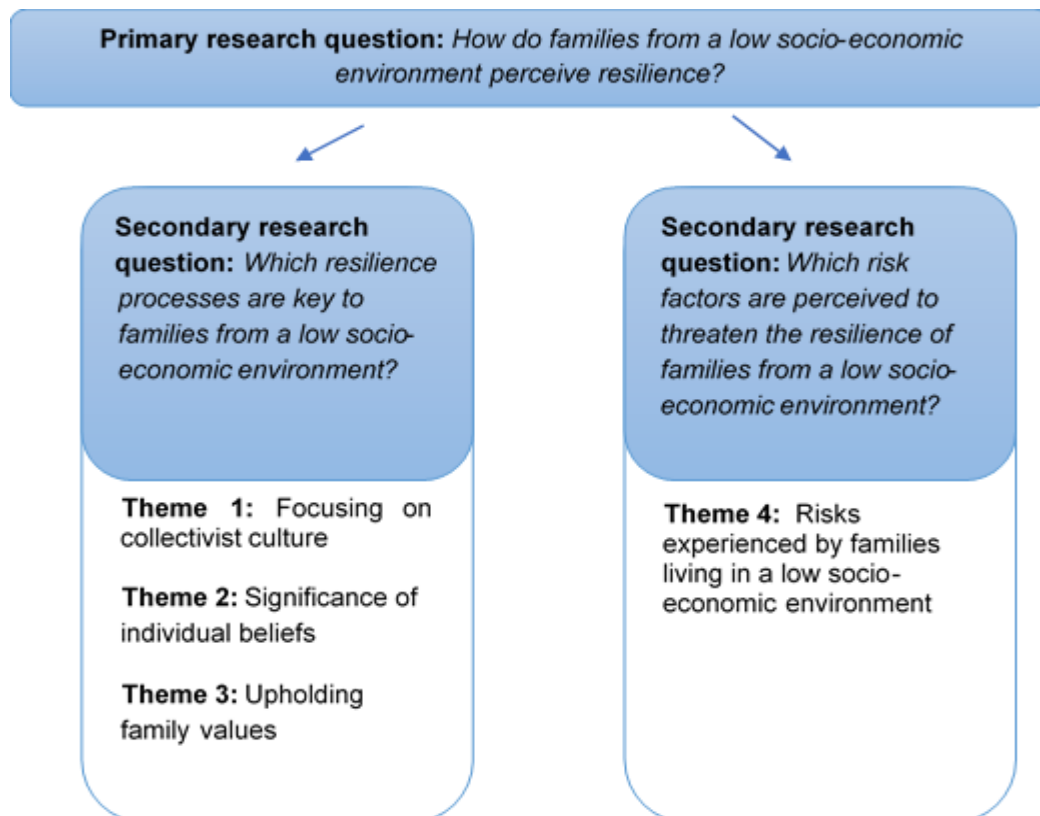


Figure 5.1: Presentation of the research questions and themes addressed to the research questions

5.2.1 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION: WHICH RESILIENCE PROCESSES ARE KEY TO FAMILIES FROM A LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT?

Despite the number of risk factors that were experienced by the participants' families living in Mamelodi, there were also processes that assisted them in strengthening their family resilience. Walsh (2016) states that key processes of resilience in a family, support them to unite together when they are faced with challenging circumstances. These processes of resilience aim to diminish threats and enable family members to work together to adapt positively to the challenge (Walsh, 2016). Research has found that being resilient is affiliated with positive life outcomes (Meng, Fleury, Xiang, Li, & D'Arcy, 2018). In Sub-theme 3.1: *Improving children and family life through education*, the participants strongly believed that if they supported their children in achieving an education, their lives would improve.

Theme 2: *The significance of individual beliefs* and Theme 3: *Upholding family values* are indicative of the resilience processes that the families possessed and that assisted them in being resilient. Individual beliefs were expressed through the significance of faith and prayer as well as finding stress reducers that assisted the parents in raising their children in a positive manner. Mahoney and Cano (2014) state that when families practise their religion and spirituality, lower levels of parental stress and improved parent-child relationships have been found. Most of the participants are very spiritual and use prayer to alleviate their feelings of stress. They also teach their children how to pray and what to pray for.

Sub-theme 3.4: *Traditional beliefs and shared family values that enable cohesiveness*, showed that traditional beliefs included practising shared values such as having respect for all as well as greeting everyone. Oduaran (2015) states that young individuals in South Africa have trouble greeting their elders. This research however, found the opposite to be the case. All parents in the research instilled the tradition and habit of greeting everyone and being respectful to all, irrespective of age, in their children. Traditional beliefs included the participants speaking to their African ancestors, making offerings to them and asking them for blessing in their difficult times. Ancestral belief and worship show respect for the elders (South African History Online, 2011, para. 12). According to African traditional religion, ancestors assist the individual in maintaining a spiritual connection with them (South African History Online, 2011, para. 12). Some of the participants would connect to their ancestors with specific rituals in order to seek guidance and request assistance from them. It appeared that the participants' connection to their ancestors assisted in

strengthening their resilience by knowing that their ancestors were available to connect with.

Another resilience process that was found to be important for an individual experiencing challenges in life was maintaining spirituality (Drumm et al., 2014). In this research context, faith and prayer were practised by the participants, which gave them hope, strength and resilience to raise their children as best as they could as they continued to seek employment despite the adverse circumstances that they endured.

Research on poverty has found that families with low-income are more vulnerable to stressors and experience many more challenges than families from higher-income margins (S. D. Taylor & Distelberg, 2016). As the stressors are much greater in low-income families, these families may develop damaging strategies such as abuse of substances to deal with their problems (S. D. Taylor & Distelberg, 2016). In this research, the participants shared many resilience processes during times of adversity, such as seeking social support from a friend or their own child, having an open-mind to any employment opportunity even if it was part-time employment, as well as working collaboratively with their family through speaking politely to one another and possessing hope and providing encouragement to their family members that their circumstances would improve.

Literature has found that families living with poverty experience hopelessness and hardship; however, some families have been found to be resilient despite the burden of poverty and the extreme challenges that it comes with (Conger et al., 2010). Walsh (2003b) points out that the ability of the family to exceed its crises and become stronger as a family unit is known as family resilience. Family resilience is the foundation for how low-income families survive and flourish in spite of their adversity (Walsh, 2003b). Bhana and Bachoo (2011) state that family resilience is not created from the immediate family only but that the family's community and family resilience are interdependent. In this research, the participants received financial support for their families from various role players, such as specific family members, some of the participants' romantic partners, the South African Government's child grant as well as the OVC Centre providing food on weekdays. Therefore, the participants' family and community assisted the participants' in strengthening their family resilience.

The most well-known variables for families being resilient in a low socio-economic environment include self-esteem, spirituality, hope and education (Bhana & Bachoo,

2011). The participants expressed their hope for their children's future and were committed to their children's education.

Children's mental and emotional health have been related to the socio-economic status of their parents (Van Oort et al., 2011). The participants in this research were hopeful and encouraged their children to persevere and achieve more than they had despite their severe financial difficulties. Oduaran (2015) is of the opinion that family values are understood as a set of standards that originate from many cultures that are accepted and lived by the family. These values provide the family with a foundation for raising their children. The participants in this study were adamant to raise their children to be moral and kind individuals. For example, some of the participants expressed how they were averse to their children stealing from other individuals. Some of them instilled into their children the value of sharing with one another and being satisfied with their lot.

5.2.2 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION: WHICH RISK FACTORS ARE PERCEIVED TO THREATEN THE RESILIENCE OF FAMILIES FROM A LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT?

The percentage of South Africans living below the poverty line of spending equivalent to \$1.25 or R15.34 (XE Currency Converter: USD to ZAR, 2018) per day has decreased from 11.3% in 2000 to 4.0% in 2011 (Obi & Tafa, 2016; Statistics South Africa, RSA, 2013a). However, at the household level, poverty is still rife (Obi & Tafa, 2016). The majority of the participants in this research were disheartened by their poverty and felt that it impeded them from raising their children in a comfortable home environment as some of the children would go to bed hungry as well as not being able to attend any extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, the participants experienced unemployment; they felt that they were not able to find suitable employment as a result of not completing high school or studying further.

Meyer (2014) states that the main reasons for poverty in South African households are unemployment, income disparities and the difficulties of educational achievement and land ownership. The post-Apartheid government is challenged by the issue of unemployment (IDC, 2013). Netshitenzhe (2013) states that even though the unemployment rate has decreased from 31.2% in 2003 to 23% in 2007, South Africans are still looking desperately for employment.

Additional risk factors that emerged from the study are the lack of support from the participants' romantic partners as well as from their own families, and the lack of child

maintenance. Surprisingly, three challenges that the participants did not raise during the data collection process were the threat of HIV/AIDS syndrome, abuse of women as well as the hardships that South African children experience.

Women in Africa experience the highest incidence of partner violence of 45.6% and sexual assault of 11.9% in the world (McCloskey, Boonzaier, Steinbrenner, & Hunter, 2016). South African women have reported being victims of physical abuse against them by their romantic partners (Seedat et al., 2009). A survey completed in an antenatal clinic in the township of Soweto found that 20% women reported sexual abuse by their romantic partner and 68% of women reported psychological abuse, which included humiliation, threats of violence and control of movement (Seedat et al., 2009). Patriarchal social norms view intimate partner violence as socially acceptable and tolerated in some cultures (Seedat et al., 2009). Mazibuko and Umejesi (2015) highlight the fact that domestic violence still remains high in South Africa despite the South African Government introducing the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 to protect the rights of women. In this research, partner violence is not directly addressed in the focus group and therefore remains a silence within the research. However, some of the participants did allude to their partners being emotionally abusive towards them. For example, one participant indicated that her partner came home only for clean clothes and left again but expected her to remain in the house waiting for him.

5.2.3 PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION: HOW DO FAMILIES FROM A LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT PERCEIVE RESILIENCE?

The findings of the research show that there are diverse perceptions of family resilience. The research participants' resilience processes included Theme 2: *The significance of individual beliefs* and Theme 3: *Upholding family values*. Theme 1: *Focusing on collectivist culture* supported Theme 2 and 3 as community support and being socially responsible for others can cultivate and strengthen the resilience processes that the participants in this research experienced. The culture of being socially responsible was evident as some of the participants cared for other children in their community and intervened when they felt certain youngsters were being victimised by other children. African culture displays a strong moral code where immoral behaviour is believed to bring a curse to the individual (Idang, 2015). The participants in this research were Africans who expressed the importance of having a moral compass but did not discuss the drawbacks of displaying immoral behaviour.

Moro (2014) discusses how practising one's values can assist parents in giving meaning to their lives despite the difficulties that come with raising children. The participants taught their children the value of sharing as well as the necessity to help one another, which the participants felt were essential to survive and thrive in their adversity. The ethos of helping one another was evident in the study through joining burial clubs in the community in order to assist with funeral costs when the loss of a loved one occurred. Neighbours in the community assisted one another through providing necessities when they are needed to each other.

McDonald (2013) states that what contributes to families being resilient is having devoted and caring family relationships. Care was shown by the participants wanting more for their children than what they had experienced during their childhood. This was particularly evident by the parents wanting their children to be more than they were as they were not able to complete their own education. Furthermore, the participants' care for their children was seen in the focus group, in the devastation they showed on their tear-stained faces when they described their children going to bed hungry. Research conducted on single-parented households in the United Kingdom showed that they were two and a half times more likely to be living in poverty compared to two-parented households (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). In addition, international and local research has found that children living with both parents can make a significant difference to their future lives as compared to children who come from single-parent homes (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). Children from single-parented households may develop into adults with fractured relationships and persistent difficulty within their family (Holborn & Eddy, 2011).

Universally, the number of challenges that children are facing are increasing (Goldstein & Brooks, 2013). Challenges such as illness, exposure to traumatic incidents and poverty, make children vulnerable to developing in adverse ways (Theron & Theron, 2014). Hall and Woolard (2012) found that in 2010, there were 18.5 million South African children and 60% of them were impoverished. In this research, the main risk factors that emerged from Theme 4 are the belief that living with poverty reduces family resilience, barriers to education that cause difficulty in finding employment, experiencing unsupportive romantic partners as well as not receiving child maintenance.

5.3 RELEVANCE OF THE FAMILY RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK IN THIS RESEARCH

McDonald (2013) states that family resilience is an excellent way of viewing family functioning, as it allows families to manage their stressors as well as help them navigate their way through prolonged adversity. Family resilience involves more than managing adverse and stressful circumstances, as it encompasses the potential for growth in relational and personal transformation despite the family’s adversity (Walsh, 2012). The FRF has three key processes, namely belief systems, organisational patterns and communication/problem solving that foster healing and growth in a family experiencing chronic adversity (Walsh, 2012). The four participants in this study experienced multiple resilient processes and risk factors while living in the low socio-economic area of Mamelodi. The FRF further identifies the family’s adversity but does not include the family’s risk factors, whereas in this research, the family resilience model that is based on the themes identified include the risk factors that the family experiences. The reason for this is to underscore the importance of resilience in the face of adversity.

The FRF assumes that no single model of healthy functioning can fit each family and every situation (Walsh, 2012). This research has found that families living in the low socio-economic environment of Mamelodi utilised two out of the three key processes of the FRF; the key process of communication/problem solving was not expressed. In Table 5.1 a comparison is provided between Walsh’s (2012) FRF and the resilience model derived from the themes of this research.

Table 5.1: Comparison between the Family Resilience Framework and the resilience model derived from the themes in this research

| Family Resilience Framework (FRF) | Resilience model derived from the themes in this research |
|--|--|
| Belief systems Make meaning of adversity Positive outlook Transcendence and spirituality | Individual beliefs Faith and prayer Individual stress reducers Family Values Traditional beliefs |
| Organisational patterns Flexibility Connectedness | Collectivist culture Social responsibility Social and economic support within the |

| Family Resilience Framework (FRF) | Resilience model derived from the themes in this research |
|---|---|
| Social and economic resources | community |
| Communication/Problem solving Clear consistent messages Open emotional expression Collaborative problem solving | No correlation to the FRF |
| No correlation to the themes of this study | Family values Improving children and family life through education Financial support Parenting to create a moralistic environment |
| No correlation to the themes of this study | Risk factors Poverty reduces family resilience Barriers to education Unsupportive romantic partners Lack of child maintenance |

Botha and Booyesen (2014) state that life satisfaction and happier individuals correlate well with improved family functioning. Healthy relationships have been found to be very valuable to a family member's life satisfaction and happiness (Botha & Booyesen, 2014). It was interesting to observe that the FRF and the resilience model derived from the themes of the research do not account for healthy relationships or positive emotion in building a family's resilience. The FRF's key process of organisational patterns correlates well with the research's theme of collectivist culture as they both discuss social and economic resources and who provides the family with them; however, the concept of culture is not present in the FRF. In South Africa, there is a paucity of research on the role of African culture's influences on an individual's resilience (Theron & Theron, 2010).

The key processes of the FRF have been shown to support families in adverse circumstances. The FRF could assist mental health professionals in assessing family resilience in low socio-economic areas in South Africa and recognising which areas need intervention.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

5.4.1 SMALL SAMPLE SIZE

The small sample size ($n = 4$) may have influenced the generalisability of the research outcome and therefore caution needs to be taken when assessing its

results. The participants were selected with the assistance of the OVC Centre in Mamelodi East. When the stakeholder meeting took place at the centre to assist with finding the participants for the present study, mothers without husbands were not requested; however, those were the parents who were available to participate in the research study. The research population consisted of four mothers and therefore cannot represent all families living in Mamelodi and beyond. Each of these mothers had a romantic partner; however, they did not co-parent their children according to the mothers. Since the romantic partners were not present during the data collection, this could not be confirmed.

5.4.2 THE ROLE OF THE FATHER

The father's role in the family has been omitted as there were no fathers available to participate. Valuable information on the father's role was therefore not addressed. In addition, the population group cannot represent other population groups that are not African. Furthermore, this research was conducted in the semi-urban township of Mamelodi; the results cannot therefore be generalised to all families living in semi-urban townships in South Africa.

5.4.3 THE USE OF INTERPRETERS

An interpreter was present at the data collection and member checking sessions as the participants spoke Sepedi fluently and were comfortable using this language; I, the researcher, did not speak Sepedi. The transcriptions therefore had to be translated from Sepedi into English so that data analysis could take place. The limitation of having an interpreter and having another individual typing the transcriptions could have resulted in a loss of meaning through the translation. Misunderstandings may have also occurred which were beyond the researcher's control.

Nieuwenhuis (2013b) states that the limitation of using the interpretivist approach as well as the case study method is that they are subjective and therefore the results of the study cannot be generalised. The aim of this research is to provide the reader with insight into the particular issues that families endure in the Mamelodi Township and how they perceive family resilience. The purpose of the research was however not aimed at attempting to generalise results.

5.4.4 RESEARCHER BIAS

A potential challenge in the study that may have occurred was researcher bias. I controlled this through a peer debriefer as well as my research supervisor guiding me and assisting me in identifying any misinterpretations or assumptions that I may have made that I was unaware of. In addition, member checking helped me to confirm that the themes and sub-themes generated through data analysis reflected what the participants shared and not anything I created.

5.5 POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS

This research may act as a foundation for similar studies to be conducted in Mamelodi and other South African townships as minimal research has been conducted in South Africa on family resilience in low socio-economic environments. The current research may assist psychologists in identifying the main challenges that families in low socio-economic environments face and possibly create interventions that can strengthen the families' resilience.

The research highlights the risk factors of families living in a low socio-economic area and therefore stakeholders in the South African Government may need to assess current policies in relation to healthy family development and support.

The research underscores the relevance of the FRF to families living in the low socio-economic environment of Mamelodi. The comparison between the FRF and the themes of this research underscore the need for psychologists to develop family assessments and possible interventions that are culture relevant to the families they are interacting with.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Literature on family resilience in the South African context, especially in townships, is scarce. Therefore, multiple longitudinal research studies need to be conducted to contribute to knowledge of the protective and risk factors that South African families endure as well as to the processes that may assist families to develop resilience.

South Africa is rich in cultural diversity and therefore further research needs to be conducted on families from different cultures to identify whether and how their culture assists them in developing resilience. Once the outcomes of the research studies

becomes available, social services and professionals in the communities can adapt their services to be more culturally relevant to diverse families in South African townships.

Future research needs to assess current family interventions in low socio-economic areas in South Africa to assess their effectiveness and identify areas in which interventions can be implemented and amended for best service delivery. In addition, further research can be conducted on family resilience to determine the influence that co-parenting with romantic partners has on the family.

South African policies, relating to healthy family development and social development that are already established need to be assessed for their effectiveness in areas of poverty and to identify which policies have not yet been operationalised. These policies can then be amended or operationalised to give support to South African families particularly living in a low socio-economic environment. In addition, the research has found that the participants lacked the necessary skills to find employment. Policies surrounding woman empowerment need to be addressed to assist mothers, living in a low socio-economic environment, with skill development to enable them to find suitable work positions to become financially independent.

5.6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAINING AND PRACTICE

Universities that train educational psychologists should educate them to engage with families through viewing them in a holistic manner. This means that student psychologists need to be made aware of the family's resources and their protective factors as well as understanding the risk factors that the family may be facing. Focusing on how to strengthen the families' protective factors can enable the family to enhance its resilience and self-efficacy in current and future challenges. This change in training may be remarkable in the effect of the intervention given instead of the traditional approach of seeing clients through the lens of the medical deficit model that focuses on pathology that seems to label the family and stunt its growth.

5.7 META-REFLECTION BY THE RESEARCHER

Ortlipp (2008) states that writing a self-reflective journal assists the researcher in assessing personal goals and assumptions made as well as in identifying his/her subjectivity and beliefs. During the research process, I was often confronted with my own beliefs about family resilience, and what protective and risk factors a family may be exposed to from my own frame of reference. Through the process of self-

reflection, I was able to gain awareness of how I perceived what the participants expressed and was careful to create the qualitative themes based on what the participants shared (Consult Appendix C to view the reflective journal). I was mindful not to allow my own shortcomings of not speaking Sepedi and not being from the same culture as my research participants to cloud my objectivity.

5.8 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to gain an understanding of how parents living in the low socio-economic environment of Mamelodi perceive their own family resilience. The research provided insight into the resilience processes and risk factors that the families perceived and how these strengthened their family resilience or inhibited them from becoming resilient. The data was analysed inductively and the themes compared with Walsh's FRF to assess whether the FRF was relevant to South African families facing adversity. The research has found that the participants' families used the same and similar resilience processes that can be found in the FRF except for the key process of communication/problem solving that was not expressed by the participants. Therefore, the FRF can be used and adapted by psychologists to assess a family's resilience when creating interventions.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Participation Information Sheet

Appendix B:

Letter of Informed Consent (Template)

Appendix C:

Reflective Journal

Appendix D:

Excerpt of Transcriptions

Appendix E:

Excerpt of Axial Codes

Appendix F:

Excerpt of Member Checking

Appendix G:

Interview Schedule

Appendix H:

Observations

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Appendix A: Participation Information Sheet



Faculty of Education

Participation Information Sheet

Pretoria 0002 Republic of South Africa
Department of Educational Psychology
24 April 2017

Hi

My name is Lee-Anne Lewis and I am currently doing a master's degree in the educational psychology programme at the University of Pretoria. As part of my degree requirements, I am conducting a research study on *Parents' perceptions of family resilience in a low socio-economic environment*.

I therefore wish to invite you to participate in my study. My only reservation is that if you are currently undergoing psychological or psychiatric therapy, you will not be able to participate in this research study. Your participation is entirely voluntary and refusal to participate will not be held against you in any way. You may withdraw from the study prior or during the focus group and/or member checking session and you may also refuse to answer any questions that may make you feel uncomfortable.

If you agree to take part in this study, I shall arrange a focus group and member checking session at a time that is suitable to you and the other parents from your area, which will take place in the Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC) community centre in Mamelodi East.

The duration of the focus group will be a minimum of 45 minutes and a maximum of 60 minutes to complete. The member checking session will occur on a different day after the focus group has been completed and will last 30 to 60 minutes.

The sessions will be conducted in English; however, an interpreter will be present to explain information to you that you may not understand in English. The interpreter will join in on the focus group and the member checking session in order to ensure that clear communication occurs between myself and you. Therefore, the interpreter's role is to translate anything that I am communicating in English that you do not understand into an African language that you do understand. The interpreter will then translate from the language that you are fluent in, into English, so that clear communication occurs. This process will occur when you do not understand what I am saying or when you are not comfortable to express yourself in English.

No one other than the research supervisor, the individual translating the audio recordings into English and I will have access to the raw data that you contribute to.

Please be assured that your name and personal details will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be included in the final research. All audio-recordings will be destroyed after some time. Additionally, the researcher cannot promise any type of reward for participating in the research study. Your participation is completely voluntary.

If you feel psychologically vulnerable after the focus group or member checking session in any way, please inform the researcher in order to arrange counselling for you.

Once the study is complete, a summary of the results will be emailed to you on request.

Please feel free to ask me or my supervisor about any concerns or questions that you may have regarding the study.

Thank you for considering participation in this study.

Yours sincerely

Researcher: Lee-Anne Lewis
leeannelewis.edpsych@gmail.com

Supervisor: Prof. Dr Ruth Mampane
ruth.mampane@up.ac.za

Appendix B: Letter of Informed Consent (Template)



Faculty of Education

Pretoria 0002 Republic of South Africa
Department of Educational Psychology
19 May 2017

LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

Parents' perceptions of family resilience in a low socio-economic environment

Dear Parents

My name is Lee-Anne Lewis. I am a master's student and researcher from the University of Pretoria. I am involved in an ongoing research study headed by Prof. Dr Ruth Mampane in Mamelodi East.

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into your perceptions of family resilience. I will also explore and describe which resilience processes are key to families from a low socio-economic environment.

You have been selected to be part of this study as you meet the requirements of the research topic. I will have the opportunity to interact with you in a focus group and a member checking session. The duration of the focus group will be a minimum of 45 minutes to a maximum of 60 minutes. The member checking session will occur on a different day after the focus group interview has been completed and will last 30 to 60 minutes.

The sessions will be conducted in English; however, an interpreter will be present to explain information that you may not understand in English. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time. In such case, please notify me of your intention to withdraw. You will not be penalised should you choose to withdraw.

You will not be exposed to any risk or harm in the study. The discussions held will be audio-recorded to assist me in compiling the necessary research report. Your information will be kept confidential and no one other than the research supervisor, the individual translating the audio recordings into English and I will have access to the raw data that you contribute to. Your information will be stored in a secure place and after a specific period of time, your information will be deleted. Your identity will be kept confidential and your names will not be included in the final report. You will not be subjected to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes. I will tell you about any changes in the study that may affect you

in any way. Additionally, I cannot promise any type of reward for participating in the research study. Your participation is completely voluntary.

The study is not of such nature that you are likely experience any injuries. If you feel psychologically vulnerable in the focus group interview or member checking session in any way, please inform me so that I can arrange for you appropriate counselling.

Once the study is completed, a summary of the results will be emailed to you on request.

Please feel free to ask me or my supervisor about any concerns or questions that you may have regarding the study.

Lee-Anne Lewis
Researcher
leannelewis.edpsych@gmail.com

Prof. Dr Ruth Mampane
Supervisor
ruth.mampane@up.ac.za

Declaration and signature

Consent

I _____ declare that I have read and understood what the study is about and hereby agree to participate in the study.

Printed Name of Research Participant

Signature of Research Participant

Date and Time

1 **REFLECTION**

2 **First visit: Stakeholders meeting (24 April 2017)**

3 The stakeholders meeting was held at the Orphaned and Vulnerable Children Centre in
4 Mamelodi East. The purpose of the meeting was to see if the centre would be willing to
5 assist this research study in finding research participants for the study as well as using
6 their venue for the data collection process. The meeting was attended by the manager of
7 the centre, Pertunia Maahlo, as well as the centre management team who were
8 responsible for various needs in the centre such as administration, co-ordinating the
9 social workers and auxiliary social workers as well as food related responsibilities. My
10 supervisor, Professor Ruth Mampane also attended the meeting as she has a long-
11 standing relationship with the centre since she has completed multiple research studies
12 at the centre.

13 The centre's team were very accommodating and willing to find research participants for
14 the study. The request was to find research participants who were parents that were
15 experiencing immense poverty and still had their children living with them. The centre's
16 team explained that the families that they were already providing services to will be
17 appropriate participants for the study. The meeting was held mainly in English as I was
18 the only one who could not speak Northern Sotho, I felt respected and very much included
19 in the discussions held.

20 Telephonic and email communication was confirmed in order to ensure that all the
21 responsibilities that were agreed upon in the meeting by all stakeholders would be
22 operationalised.

23 **Second visit: Focus group scheduled and cancelled (08 May 2017)**

24 Disappointment came over me, as my supervisor and I arrived at the OVC Centre to
25 conduct the focus group. The administration manager that I was in communication with
26 in relation to confirming the willing research participants attendance for the focus group
27 that day confirmed that they would be attending however, not one research participant
28 was there. My supervisor and I spoke with Pertunia Maahlo who explained that in future,

29 she would prefer to be contacted to confirm the research participants attendance in order
30 to ensure that the research participants are present.

31 This incident taught me that the research process can sometimes have stumbling blocks
32 in it and I needs to be resilient through the process.

33 **Third visit: Focus group (19th of May 2017)**

34 When Professor Ruth Mampane and I visited the centre for the third time, the research
35 participants who volunteered themselves to participate in the study were present. I was
36 relieved to see them present. The research participants did not know each other except
37 for one research participant who included a friend of hers to join in on the study. The four
38 research participants who attended the focus group were single-mothers. The focus
39 group was conducted, at the Children and Vulnerable Centre, in Northern Sotho as this
40 was the research participants' home language. An interpreter translated for me into
41 English during the session. I was humbled by the research participants as some of their
42 circumstances were extremely dire to the point where they did not have enough food to
43 feed their children. Even though my culture was different to the participants' culture in this
44 study, I felt that some of the issues that they experienced I could relate to. For example,
45 growing up with limited funds by a single mother allowed me to empathise and sympathise
46 with their adversity but also allowed me to admire their resilience which came through via
47 their faith and prayer in God and being fully invested in their children's future.

48 I was distressed about the participants' approach towards themselves as it felt as if the
49 research participants had developed learned helplessness. The reason I expressed this
50 concern was because the participants relied on the centre to provide food for their children
51 as well as either having the government child grant and/or a family member or romantic
52 partner to assist them financially. Even though the participants desired positive futures
53 for their children's lives, they did not display enough encouraging things to say how they
54 would assist themselves more positively. For example, they desired employment to assist
55 their challenging circumstances but did not express clearly their ambition or plan to
56 achieve appropriate employment. In saying this, possibly the OVC Centre need to run
57 skills development workshops in order to assist parents in finding employment in order to
58 be less dependent on the centre and more self-sufficient to provide for their families.

59 After the focus group and debriefing concluded, lunch was given as well as providing the
60 participants with transport money to attend the session.

61 **Fourth visit: Member checking (31 July 2017)**

62 I appreciated that the participants who were able to attend the member checking session
63 came. All the themes that were found during the data analysis process were confirmed
64 by the participants during the session. The participants really impressed on me that they
65 were invested in their children's future by making sure they achieve an education and are
66 willing to assist them in whatever way they can.

67 I noticed that one particular participant did not express herself, therefore, at times, I would
68 specifically ask her if she confirms or disagrees with what I am saying.

69 **Conclusion**

70 My experience in data collecting at the OVC Centre in Mamelodi East stretched my
71 understanding of what it means to live in a semi-urban township as a single-parent family
72 and raise children under difficult financial circumstances. I learned from my research
73 participants the value of appreciation for what one has and having a positive attitude
74 towards the future, filled with hope, despite the deprivation and difficulties they face on a
75 regular basis. Through conducting the focus group, I learned to allow each participant to
76 express themselves and tried to regulate the participants from speaking over each other.
77 Overall, the research process has given me the skills to conduct the data collection and
78 data analysis process in a competent manner under the guidance of my supervisor as
79 well as peer supervision. I feel confident in my abilities to create future research projects
80 with the skills and experience that I have gain through my current research journey.

Appendix D: Excerpt of Transcriptions

- 1 **Facilitator/Translator:** Okay, the first question I want to ask all of you is how your family successful?
- 2 **Female Respondent:** (mumbling – not clear) are you fine with that. What was the first question?
- 3 **Facilitator/Translator:** How is your family successful? (the respondents, some of them referred to their
4 own families, where they come from and probed before responding)
- 5 **Female Respondent:** Education ...
- 6 **Translator:** She is actually saying her parents died when she was still young and she couldn't get to
7 where she wanted to be with her education, but what she wants is for her child to get a good education.
8 I should actually just go back to the parents thing, the parents died (the translator spoke very soft and was not clear)
- 9 **Translator:** Your parents died, who brought you up?
- 10 **Female Respondent:** The family brought me up, aunts etc., my siblings were brought up by the
11 government and were able to study further, unfortunately for me, I had a child already.
- 12 **Translator:** What makes your family successful?
- 13 **Female Respondent:** I think when we work together.
- 14 **Female Respondent:** We are encouraging our children not be like us, we did not study because our
15 parents did not afford, we lived in rural areas, when we came to town, we brought up our children so
16 that we can educate them and not be like us. In those days people struggled, in some cases no one
17 was employed in the family, one would do piece jobs here and there, maybe once a month in order to
18 put food on the table, we lived on vegetables (Morogo) that is how we grew up and we decided we do
19 not want our children to be brought up like us. When you see your children studying, you need to
20 encourage them to study so that they do not end up like you. They must study and be educated so that
21 they can assist us as parents. We could not study because our parents could not educate us, there was
22 no money. We want what is best for our children.
- 23 **Female Respondent:** Our children know that life is tough at the moment, I am unable to provide for
24 them, I want to work and provide for them, life is difficult ...
- 25 **Female Respondent:** We were brought up in poverty and do not want our children to live the same
26 lives that we lived, things have to change.
- 27 **Female Respondent:** We want to provide for our children, but life is tough.

28 **Female Respondent:** When I am working, I know I want to buy this and that for this child, some
29 Fridays I want to buy nice food for my children, like cake, we are unable to do so.

30 **Female Respondent:** Because you are unemployed, you are unable to do so.

31 **Female Respondent:** You wish to do so much, the money we receive for the grant is too little.

32 **Female Respondent:** Very little, even when you get the grant for two children it is too little, you are
33 able to buy maize and other things, sometimes the child will go to school without food.

34 **Translator:** How much do you get per child?

35 **Female Respondent:** R370 per child

36 **Translator:** This is the money that comes in to the house?

37 **Female Respondent:** Yes, we rely on it, you are able to do a little more for the kids if you are getting a
38 grant for two children, you share the money, you join burial clubs so that should one of the children die
39 you must be able to bury the child, people talk you know. This will save face for you.

40 **Translator:** So you are all living off your children's grants ...

41 **Female Respondent:** Yes and the piece jobs we are doing ..., although it is not much ..., sometimes
42 one gets a contract for 6 or 9 months.

43 **Female Respondent:** Or one-year, last year I was working the contract has come to an end ...

44 **Female Respondent:** I was a domestic servant in Villeria, the wife was a nurse, she promised to pay
45 me R2,000 per month.

46 **Female Respondent:** Was this a white person?

47 **Female Respondent:** Yes, sometimes she will say 'don't come tomorrow' so that she can reduce the
48 payment, the money is getting less and less everyday ..., sometimes she will ask you to leave at 10 in
49 the morning and I had to leave ..., if I left at 10 in the morning after cleaning, the payment will be
50 reduced because I did not work a full day, you would have worked a full day ..., that was not our
51 agreement. One day she said to me, I did not tidy the garden, we did not agree on garden work, I
52 expected her to hire a garden person ..., I left her after she paid me R700, I was paid less and less. I
53 left her in September last year. In December, I was so sick, I thought I was going to die, I am much
54 better now.

55 **Female Respondent:** What was wrong, did you have heart problems?

56 **Female Respondent:** No something just happened to me, I was vomiting and could not keep food in
57 my stomach, I was shivering. My uncle took me to a traditional doctor who assisted me, he prayed for
58 me. I am better now.

59 **Female Respondent:** I get a grant for only two children, last year I was studying and was paid R1,000
60 per month ...

61 **Female Respondent:** I worked at a school in 2013 at a school, we were told that we cannot earn more
62 than R1,000 – we were paid R940 per month. Now it has been increased, you work January to
63 December ..., it is a year contract. Now because I feel better, I wish to get a piece job for 3 days a
64 week.

65 **Facilitator/Translator:** What about you?

66 **Female Respondent:** I have never worked in my life, my family provides for me, my children are also
67 supported by my family.

68 **Facilitator/Translator:** The very same family that brought you up, aunts and uncles, they are assisting
69 you to date?

70 **Female Respondent:** Yes, if we have nothing at home they come and find out what we need, they pay
71 for electricity and other things.

72 **Facilitator/Translator:** You still live in your mother's house?

73 **Female Respondent:** Yes.

74 **Facilitator/Translator:** So she left you a house?

75 **Female Respondent:** Yes

76 **Facilitator/Translator:** So she left the house for you and they brought you up and after that they are
77 caring for you and your children?

78 **Female Respondent:** Yes they are still supporting me ...

79 **Facilitator/Translator:** What about your siblings?

80 **Female Respondent:** They are all married, they have wives ..., they sometimes come and check if I
81 am okay, sometimes they would leave me money, R500 or so, for food and for the child for school,
82 electricity and other needs they pay for us.

83 **Facilitator/Translator:** So in your family you were three, two boys and you?

84 **Female Respondent:** Yes ...

85 **Facilitator/Translator:** And they are working and have moved out of the family house, you are left at
86 home and they are looking after you?

87 **Female Respondent:** Yes.

88 **Facilitator/Translator:** They love you ...

89 **Female Respondent:** She is very fortunate, it does not always happen like that, siblings are always
90 fighting each other.

91 **Female Respondent:** Others would have just forgotten about her and moved on with their lives, she is
92 fortunate.

93 **Female Respondent:** Others would say she must go and look for work ...

94 **Female Respondent:** Others, brothers in particular, if they marry, they will not support their sisters
95 because the wives will not allow that ..., it's a big problem.

96 **Female Respondent:** For me, they would bring shoes or whatever my children need.

97 **Female Respondent:** My children have never had that comfort, especially with my married brothers, it
98 will never happen.

99 **Female Respondent:** My other brother would call and check on me, and ask if I need anything, the
100 other one will bring soap or something else.

101 **Female Respondent:** That's better.

102 **Facilitator/Translator:** So, for you, is support from your siblings and support from your family that
103 makes you to be able to manage whatever is happening ...

104 **Female Respondent:** (unclear) I would also like to work even if I get R1000, it would give me comfort
105 that I have worked for it.

106 **Facilitator/Translator:** What about you?

107 **Female Respondent:** I get piece jobs here and there to survive. When my father died, in the 1980s, we
108 had to leave school and look for piece jobs where he used to work, he worked for a dry cleaner, I left
109 school, at least we learnt from that, if they have temporary work available I go and work there ..., we
110 started at an early age of 15 ...

111 **Facilitator/Translator:** You started working at the of 15?

112 **Female Respondent:** Yes, we had nothing, my mother would also go and work there if we had no
113 food, my mother was sickly, during a lot of strikes she was pushed at the train station and did not
114 recover. It was a sad situation in the family, I was the oldest and had to leave school and go to work,
115 now they have contracts which expire, and then they will call you again ...

116 **Female Respondent:** Yes you start looking for something else ...

117 **Facilitator/Translator:** I hear you ladies, none of you is working and you all do not have matric ...

118 **Female Respondent:** I am diabetic.

119 **Female Respondent:** I used to work, I also worked at the Department of Water Affairs, they would call
120 me from time to time, I would clean for them, a lot of places ..., I attended a course in Nelmaphius, we
121 were taught how to make bricks and entalogues??, how you build using bricks, how it is done, using the
122 machine ...

123 **Female Respondent:** I used to work for ... (unclear) the work was difficult ..., it was hard work, we
124 would wear those heavy boots ...

125 **Female Respondent:** We used a machine to make the bricks ..., they showed us how to make the
126 bricks.

127 **Female Respondent:** A concrete TLB used to come and we would mix the concrete ..., they called
128 them stock bricks ...

129 **Facilitator/Translator:** How do you survive, I hear you have had difficulties, you've been through a lot,
130 how have you survived?

131 **Female Respondent:** We are surviving because life goes on, the child grant also assists us, when you
132 have children you have to fend for your children, you cannot wait for a man to assist you.

133 **Female Respondent:** Men do not help us with anything, I simply forget that they exist because they do
134 not assist us with anything, things remain the same.

135 **Facilitator/Translator:** So as a woman you have to stand up, what do you mean by that?

136 **Female Respondent:** You have to go out there and look for jobs in order to fend for your children, look
137 for jobs, ask people.

138 **Female Respondent:** You have to find a job, so that your children do not sleep on an empty stomach
139 you have to fend for them.

140 **Female Respondent:** If there is no food, it is disheartening, it breaks one's heart ...

141 **Female Respondent:** It is sad for a child to sleep on an empty stomach and wake on an empty
142 stomach, go to school with no food ...

143 **Female Respondent:** After school, at 2, they go to dropping (the drop in centre) after two the dropping
144 lasts until 4, you have not gone to work you are home you phone me and ask me to iron your washing
145 ..., I come and iron the washing for you, at 4:30 I am back home, I have done something, I can buy
146 them bread, I do not wait for handouts from my family.

147 **Female Respondent:** The drop-in (centre) assists us because they eat, when they arrive home they
148 are not as hungry, I know that the child has eaten rice with meat or pap and meat and the child is full.

149 **Female Respondent:** Sometimes the drop-in (centre) gives them food that we cannot afford, they eat
150 well at the drop-in centre.

151 **Facilitator/Translator:** So feeding at the drop in centre helps because they come home having ate
152 something and when the food at home is poor quality they still might say they are full because they
153 have eaten.

154 **Female Respondent:** Yes, the problems arise during weekends, Saturday, Sunday. Monday, I know
155 they eat, sometimes you will find that there is no money on the weekends to buy any food ... (unclear)

156 **Female Respondent:** Sometimes they eat and ... (unclear)

157 **Facilitator/Translator:** Sorry Dr Ruth, how are they taking control of their lives despite the hardships
158 they have?

159 **Female Respondent:** I pray to G-d for help ..., because she doesn't have parents, give me
160 possibilities, the strength so that I don't fall into temptations ...

161 **Female Respondent:** We pray to G-d for guidance, so that we can get what we needs, we want to be
162 able to assist our children, sometimes you might get a job, when you are working ..., you will know what
163 to do in your home, for yourself ...

164 **Female Respondent:** As a parent you must stand up and do things, you cannot wait for handouts, that
165 is why I am saying you cannot wait for the man to provide for you ..., sometimes he will provide

166 sometimes not ..., the men complains when you ask too much for, if you want to do your hair he will
167 promise to give you money tomorrow, you will wait up to a month ...

168 **Female Respondent:** Your man is better he promises, mine told me that women are working out there
169 ...

170 **Female Respondent:** My man will promise you, but he won't give you anything, I've asked for
171 sneakers, he promised me but I am still waiting. You can't trust a man, as a woman you have to
172 actually find ways and means to make it ..., men are unreliable ...

173 **Female Respondent:** He will never give you a R100 note for the home ..., he will not give me a cent or
174 buy groceries ..., never ..., he is always in his car, day and night. When I became sick in December, he
175 was going up and down with cars ..., he sometimes does not come home, he comes home to change
176 clothes ...

177 **Female Respondent:** Who does his washing?

178 **Female Respondent:** How will I know ...

179 **Facilitator/Translator:** So, your husband is a driver?

180 **Female Respondent:** Yes, he only comes home to change his clothes, what I must do is the washing,
181 when he comes home, he comes to change clothes, I haven't asked him where he is going.

182 **Female Respondent:** Where does he live?

183 **Female Respondent:** He lives with us at home, but not full time, what I mean is he does not sleep in
184 his home, he comes back ..., he left yesterday we haven't seen him, we live in Extension 6 ...

185 **Female Respondent:** He doesn't sleep at home?

186 **Female Respondent:** He is worse.

187 **Female Respondent:** Since December ...

188 **Female Respondent:** It means he is living with someone else ...

189 **Female Respondent:** I don't know where he eats and bathes, I haven't asked him anything, if he is
190 dirty, he changes his clothes, he finds his clothes clean, he changes and leaves in a rush.

191 **Female Respondent:** Maybe you shouldn't ask him anything ..., let it be on his conscience, if you ask
192 him he is going to get worse, leave him ...

193 **Facilitator/Translator:** What about you?

194 **Female Respondent:** I live with him and his parents. He is much better because he has piece jobs,
195 although the money is not enough, we are able to survive, I appreciate him because he took me with
196 three children, I do not have a child with him. He does his best even though I am not completely
197 satisfied as his woman, I wish I could find a job so that I can help him, we should both bring something
198 home.

199 **Facilitator/Translator:** So he lives with his mother?

200 **Female Respondent:** Yes, his mother stays in the back room, it's a big yard ...

201 **Female Respondent:** When I met him I had three children, and have one child by him, things are just
202 the same ..., that is why as a woman you must stand up and work for yourself. It is the same,
203 sometimes he comes back home, sometimes he does not, sometimes he will tell you he is not coming
204 back ...

205 **Female Respondent:** If you want to go out he will call you and want to know where you are, and ask
206 you to come back home, when you come back he does not say anything, he just wants to see you
207 home. He can go where ever he wants to go.

208 **Female Respondent:** My case is like yours, when I met the man I had two children, he does piece
209 jobs, I want to have my own salary, I pray to G-d to give me a job so that I can earn a salary.

210 **Female Respondent:** Even if you do not get a daily job, two or three days a week it will help.

211 **Female Respondent:** He will come back home with the money he gets for the piece jobs he does, he
212 drinks a lot, he will give me money and say I need R20 to buy beer, I am not happy because I do not
213 drink, not even cool drink.

214 **Facilitator/Translator:** I think they all, even though they are not married, they are in relationships with
215 men. She is in a relationship with a man who, she has one child with that man but the others are not
216 his. She is also in a relationship, they are all in a relationship with men ..., all of them ...

217 **Facilitator/Translator:** And do they feel that the men are supportive towards them?

218 **Facilitator/Translator:** Not financially ...

219 **Facilitator/Translator:** And emotionally?

220 **Facilitator/Translator:** Do you think the men are supporting you financially, emotionally or ..., how do
221 they support you?

222 **Female Respondent:** They do not support us ... (cross talking)

223 **Female Respondent:** He supports me although his money is not a lot, he has helped me, maybe by
224 now I would have 6 children, by being there, I am home. Maybe I would be all over the place, getting
225 drunk who knows ..., so I want to say because he is in my life, he is strict with me, when he is not home
226 I have to stay home because I am expecting him, I don't have to be all over, I am just waiting for him all
227 the time, the R1,000 that he gives me is enough because nobody else would give me that kind of
228 money. Sometimes I wish he was the father of my children, the father to my last born is a lawyer, he
229 does nothing for the child ..., he does not maintain the child. I've been to social workers and I have
230 given up ..., G-d will sort him out, a lot of women are getting maintenance and their children died, I
231 would rather have my child living than force his father to maintain him ..., I want my child alive ..., the
232 child will go and look for the father through "Khumbulekhaya" (a TV programme which unites families) –
233 I will tell him who his father is and where he comes from ..., he will decide.

234 **Facilitator/Translator:** She is in a relationship who is not the father to any of the children, but he is
235 actually a good man, I think you will get the information from the transcripts, she is happy in that
236 relationship.

237 **Female Respondent:** When there is no food at home and you tell him, there is no maize meal or meat,
238 he will promise ..., he will leave the house and come back, hoot at the gate and leave R50 with the
239 child, then he is gone The following day he comes back and calls the child and give him another
240 R50. I believe he has money, he is just spiteful, he does not want to support his children.

241 **Female Respondent:** He is supporting the person he is staying with, he has four children, he probably
242 lives with a woman who has 3 or 2 children who are not his own ... He does not care about his own
243 children and does nothing for the kids. The children know that the father does not care.

244 **Facilitator/Translator:** She lives with a man who is the father of all her four children, he is not actually
245 financially supporting them ...

246 **Female Respondent:** His family has tried talking sense into him, asking him to care for his family,
247 when they leave, he also leaves ... I don't ask his family anymore, they come, they see what is
248 happening.

249 **Female Respondent:** You cannot change a person ..., especially an adult ...

250 **Female Respondent:** He supports me even though not fully, as I indicated, he does piece jobs here
251 and there. I think we have a good relationship, if he can get a good job, we will live happily and prosper.

252 We pray together for a better life. I think things will get better compared to the people I am with. The
253 father of my three children is much better than their partners ..., he has never supported the children ...

254 **Facilitator/Translator:** Even now he does not support them ...?

255 **Female Respondent:** He does not support them, unless the eldest one, he goes after him, if he does
256 not chase him, he does not care. The second child also is the same. I chased him away because I felt
257 he wanted to support his child only, it looked very bad. The one I am with now came after my mother
258 died. I explained my situation to him and he explained his situation, we then continued and lived
259 together.

260 **Facilitator/Translator:** She has a steady boyfriend, she doesn't have any children with him, and he
261 doesn't have a full-time job, he just gets jobs here and there. She is content with him.

262 **Female Respondent:** My boyfriend does not have a full-time job, but he does not do things right, he is
263 also doing piece jobs, but my children, Sean and Glen go to their father every month, at first he did not
264 want them, he used to fight.

265 **Facilitator/Translator:** He is the father of both children?

266 **Female Respondent:** Yes, Hazel and Glen, he used to fight at first, they go to him, he buys them
267 whatever they need, the one I am with now is just useless. All I want is to get a job and work for my
268 children, I just want to live with my kids, even if it's not a permanent job, a three-day job would assist, it
269 would make a difference in my life. I am praying to get a job.

270 **Facilitator/Translator:** She is saying she's also staying with a man, she has one child by this man, the
271 other two children have their own father, they go to their father on a monthly basis, their real father. She
272 is more content if she can just find a job even if it's not a full-time job, but she also sees
273 cracks/problems within the relationship because this man is not supporting her.

274 **Facilitator/Translator:** Financially?

275 **Facilitator/Translator:** Financially ...

276 **Female Respondent:** Even if I can get a cleaning job.

277 **Female Respondent:** We are not educated, a cleaning job would be okay because you don't need to
278 read anything, all you need is your hands.

279 **Facilitator/Translator:** How do you as a family experience strength?

280 **Facilitator/Translator:** You all live with your children, with your men, and sometimes as a family what
281 gives you the strength? What gives you the strength as a family, what makes you as a family to be that
282 strong?

283 **Female Respondent:** I hope that one-day things will be okay.

284 **Female Respondent:** We encourage each other.

285 **Female Respondent:** We must not be impatient, one-day things will come right, one day things will
286 happen for us.

287 **Female Respondent:** Once our children have schooled and are educated, they will look after us, they
288 have dreams to make it, my child has been ...

289 **Female Respondent:** My child has dreams, she says one day I am going to drive my own car.

290 **Female Respondent:** We encourage each other.

291 **Female Respondent:** I know that children may not turn out the same, but one of them will make things
292 happen for me.

293 **Facilitator/Translator:** There's that hope and there's that ..., you know when you see the success of
294 someone else you think that one day it will be you, one day is one day ...

295 **Female Respondent:** So, you encourage and comfort each other.

296 **Facilitator/Translator:** My question was how do you as a family experience strength?

297 **Female Respondent:** Hope and patience.

298 **Facilitator/Translator:** And what are those strengths and the weaknesses of a family?

299 **Female Respondent:** Prayer and patience, if you are not patient ...

300 **Female Respondent:** If you are not patient is a problem

301 **Female Respondent:** Prayer, we hope things get better one day.

302 **Female Respondent:** You must be patient and strong.

303 **Facilitator/Translator:** How do you do that? How do you do it?

304 **Female Respondent:** You mean the patience?

305 **Facilitator/Translator:** Yes.

306 **Female Respondent:** Like we said this goes hand in hand with prayer.

307 **Female Respondent:** We ask G-d for the strength, ask G-d to provide you with your needs.

308 **Female Respondent:** You ask G-d to be with your children at all times, you ask him to give them
309 success in life.

310 **Female Respondent:** Yes, when we pray we also pray for our children.

311 **Female Respondent:** So that your children do not end up like you, they should have a better life, we
312 pray for a better life.

313 **Facilitator/Translator:** Their answer is about prayer, we pray that things could just be better ...

314 **Facilitator/Translator:** What is your family good at?

315 **Female Respondent:** When you do not have money, nothing works out for you ..., you have nothing ...

316 **Facilitator/Translator:** They are looking at the weakness, their weakness is lack of money ..., if you
317 don't have money you can't do anything.

318 **Female Respondent:** Others would say my family is good because they have children who go around
319 and steal from people by breaking into their cars and stores, the family lives on that ..., that is not good
320 ...

321 **Female Respondent:** You should earn your money.

322 **Female Respondent:** A family which has money lives a healthy and happy, you are able to provide for
323 all your needs because you are working ... (cross talking)

324 **Female Respondent:** You are happy because you worked hard for the money.

325 **Female Respondent:** If my child tells me he found a phone, picked it up somewhere I ask why ...,
326 other parents would take that phone and sell it maybe, you get R5000, you do not enjoy that kind of
327 money. I want money that I work hard for.

328 **Facilitator/Translator:** So money is an issue ..., it is the number 1 thing ...

329 **Female Respondent:** It is so bad when you do not have money, I would do anything to get a job and
330 earn a salary ..., sometimes I feel the ancestors are not with me, I talk to them for guidance but nothing
331 happens.

332 **Facilitator/Translator:** What you are saying is none of you is employed, so none of you is receiving a
333 salary that comes every month. So are you saying none of you is strong as a family?

334 **Female Respondent:** You see if you are working, you get a R1000 a month, you are able to do this
335 and that ...

336 **Female Respondent:** You can also join savings clubs which will help you in a long run, you can buy
337 food.

338 **Female Respondent:** Even when you are broke, you know that at the end of the month you will get
339 money ..., you can borrow and continue with life ...

340 **Facilitator/Translator:** So because you are not working, you don't see yourselves as being strong?

341 **Respondents:** No.

342 **Facilitator/Translator:** So, is there anything else that you think can make your family strong apart from
343 money?

344 **Female Respondent:** Love, understanding and respect.

345 **Female Respondent:** The family should live harmoniously with no fights, shouting etc.

346 **Female Respondent:** There should be respect both ways irrespective of age.

347 **Female Respondent:** Some parents when they are stressed, they take out their stress on the children
348 which is wrong, work your things out and do not take it out on the children.

349 **Facilitator/Translator:** A weakness would be if you take your problems out on children ..., that is
350 wrong, that would be a weakness ...

351 **Female Respondent:** When you are stressed do not share your problems with your children, give your
352 problems to G-d. Pray to G-d or find someone to share your problems with, you should not keep things
353 to yourself because that will break you, you must find a person to share your problems with otherwise
354 the stress will make you sick or you will collapse. Other illnesses are caused by keeping things to
355 yourself.

356 **Facilitator/Translator:** So, you do not keep things to yourself?

357 **Female Respondent:** Even if you do keep things to yourself, find someone to share the problems with.

358 **Female Respondent:** I don't keep grudges because I have realised that it is not right.

359 **Female Respondent:** If you talk about the things that bother you, you get a relief.

360 **Female Respondent:** When I have a problem I tell my sister, she also does the same, she shares her
361 problems with me.

362 **Female Respondent:** I share with one of my friends, I will send her a message and tell her I need her
363 or I will go and look for her until I find her, irrespective of the time I will find her and tell her my problem.
364 Once I speak to her, I heal.

365 **Facilitator/Translator:** Okay, so you guys are friends?

366 **Female Respondent:** Yes.

367 **Facilitator/Translator:** They share their problems, they speak to each other because they are also
368 friends ...

369 **Female Respondent:** I know that if I do not have sugar or teabags at home, I know where to go.
370 Where I live, people can afford and therefore I cannot go and ask from the neighbour, I go to my
371 friends, those people live a high life, I cannot ask them for anything, we as friends, we share and it's our
372 secret.

373 **Female Respondent:** Yes, it is our secret, some friends will talk about you, when you turn your back
374 they talk about you.

375 **Female Respondent:** We have been friends for more than 20 years.

376 **Facilitator/Translator:** You grew up together?

377 **Female Respondent:** If I don't see her for long I feel incomplete.

378 **Facilitator/Translator:** What about Flora and ...

379 **Female Respondent:** I don't have friends ...

380 **Female Respondent:** She is my one friend.

381 **Female Respondent:** My child is my friend, I share my secrets with my daughter.

382 **Female Respondent:** I share with my first born, I do not go to anybody's house.

383 **Female Respondent:** When I am with my daughter, everybody thinks she is my friend because we are
384 so close.

385 **Facilitator/Translator:** They all do not know each other, these two know each other and are friends,
386 and the two are meeting for the first time ...

387 **Female Respondent:** Those three know each other, I am from another side. I am meeting them for the
388 first time today.

389 **Facilitator/Translator:** Okay and then what do you do best?

390 **Female Respondent:** To take my handbag and go out there to search for a job.

391 **Facilitator/Translator:** Do you do that?

392 **Female Respondent:** Yes, we all want to get jobs.

393 **Female Respondent:** A job can change your life for the better, sometimes a friend comes and says let
394 us go and look for work, you go.

395 **Female Respondent:** When you are working, you can survive and achieve all the things you want.

396 **Female Respondent:** A friend once took me, we went to look for work at CPF, we did not get paid for 6
397 months, but I stayed on.

398 **Female Respondent:** I wish I had space in my yard to plant vegetables, or get a start-up money to run
399 a small business at home I would be happy ..., I also wish someone can give me money to sell
400 chickens and make a living out of chickens and vegetables ..., this will be an income of some sort ...

401 **Facilitator/Translator:** So all of you are saying it is important that you work for yourself, and earn a
402 living, you don't like handouts ...

403 **Respondents:** Yes ...

404 **Female Respondent:** I don't want to be a burden, you get tired of it.

405 **Facilitator/Translator:** There must be something that you are good at?

406 **Female Respondent:** ... (unclear)

407 **Facilitator/Translator:** What about you ...

408 **Female Respondent:** I am good with my hands, I can do anything ...

409 **Female Respondent:** I have a certificate for gardening (landscaping) and plant production, I also have
410 the certificate for that ..., I do not have transport to go and look for the kind of work, I am also good with
411 flowers ..., I need transport to get those kind of jobs ...

Appendix E: Excerpt of Axial Codes

Primary Research Question

How do families from a low socio-economic environment perceive resilience?

| OPEN CODES | EXAMPLE | AXIAL CODE | Inclusion Criteria | Exclusion Criteria |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| 1) Mother guides children to not be like her and to be educated | Lines 14–16 “We are encouraging our children not to be like us, we did not study because our parents did not afford, we lived in rural areas, when we came to town, we brought up our children so that we can educate them and not be like us” | Parental promotion of education | Any reference to improving children and family life through education. | References that exclude improving children and family life through education. |
| 2) Mother guides children to not be like her and to be educated | Lines 19–20 “When you see your children studying, you need to encourage them to study so that they do not end up like you” | Parental promotion of education | Any reference to improving children and family life through education. | References that exclude improving children and family life through education. |
| 3) Mother’s intention to provide for her child (Hope) | Line 27 “We want to provide for our children, but life is tough” | Parental support: Parental intention to financially support child/children | Any reference to the intention to financially support one’s children. | References that exclude the intention to financially support one’s children. |
| 4) Mother’s intention to give her child the best in nice things like treats | Lines 28–29 “When I am working, I know I want to buy nice food for my children, like cake, we are unable to do so” | Parental support: Parental intention to financially support child/children | Any reference to the intention to financially support one’s children. | References that exclude the intention to financially support one’s children. |
| 5) Piece jobs to financially survive | Line 107 “I get piece jobs here and there to survive” | Willingness to be employed | Any reference to willingness to be employed. | References that exclude willingness to be employed. |
| 6) Skill development | Lines 125–126 | Skills | Any reference | References |

| OPEN CODES | EXAMPLE | AXIAL CODE | Inclusion Criteria | Exclusion Criteria |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| in making bricks | “We used a machine to make the bricks ..., they showed us how to make the bricks ...” | development | to skills development. | that exclude skills development. |
| 7) Being assertive when looking for a job in order to provide for their children. | Lines 136–137 “You have to go out there and look for jobs in order to fend for your children, look for jobs, ask people” | Parental support: Parental intention to financially support child/children | Any reference to the intention to financially support one’s children. | References that exclude the intention to financially support one’s children. |
| 8) Being assertive when looking for a job in order to provide for their children. | Lines 138–139 “You have to find a job, so that your children do not sleep on an empty stomach you have to fend for them” | Parental support: Parental intention to financially support child/children | Any reference to the intention to financially support one’s children. | References that exclude the intention to financially support one’s children. |
| 9) Self-reliance to financially provide for her family | Lines 145–146 “... I come and iron the washing for you, at 4:30, I am back home, I have done something, I can buy them bread, I do not wait for handouts from my family” | Parental support: Parental intention to financially support child/children | Any reference to the intention to financially support one’s children. | References that exclude the intention to financially support one’s children. |
| 10) Hope to find a job to provide for her children. | Lines 267–269 “All I want is to get a job and work for my children, I just want to live with my kids, even if it’s not a permanent job, a three-day job would assist, it would make a difference in my life” | Parental support: Parental intention to financially support child/children | Any reference to the intention to financially support one’s children. | References that exclude the intention to financially support one’s children. |
| 11) Family experience strength-patience and strength | Line 302 “you must be patient and strong” | Life motto | Any reference to experiencing emotional strength within the family. | References that exclude experiencing emotional strength within the family. |
| 12) Keeping to family values | Lines 318–320 “Others would say | Parenting in a moral way | Any reference to positive parenting that | References that exclude positive |

| OPEN CODES | EXAMPLE | AXIAL CODE | Inclusion Criteria | Exclusion Criteria |
|------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|---|--|
| | my family is good because they have children who go around and steal from people by breaking into their cars and stores, the family lives on that ... that is not good ...” | | creates a moralistic context for children. | parenting that creates a moralistic context for children. |
| 13) Keeping to family values | Lines 325–327 “if my child tells me he found a phone, picked it up somewhere I ask why ..., other parents would take that phone and sell it maybe you get R5,000, you do not enjoy that kind of money. I want money that I work hard for” | Parenting in a moral way | Any reference to positive parenting that creates a moralistic context for children. | References that exclude positive parenting that creates a moralistic context for children. |
| 14) Family values | Line 344 “Love, understanding and respect” | Family value-Respect | Any reference to traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. | References that exclude traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. |
| 15) Family values | Line 346 “There should be respect both ways irrespective of age” | Family value-Respect | Any reference to traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. | References that exclude traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. |
| 16) Family values | Lines 347–348 “Some parents when they are stressed, they take out their stress on the children which is wrong, work your things out and do not take it out on the children” | Parenting in a moral way | Any reference to positive parenting that creates a moralistic context for children. | References that exclude positive parenting that creates a moralistic context for children. |

| OPEN CODES | EXAMPLE | AXIAL CODE | Inclusion Criteria | Exclusion Criteria |
|--|--|------------------------------------|---|--|
| 17) Willingness to get a job | Line 392 “Yes, we all want to get jobs” | Willingness to be employed | Any reference to a willingness to be employed. | References that exclude a willingness to be employed. |
| 18) Social support | Lines 393–394 “a job can change your life for the better, sometimes a friend comes and says ‘let us go and look for work and you go’ | Willingness to be employed | Any reference to a willingness to be employed. | References that exclude a willingness to be employed. |
| 19) Desire to be financially independent | Line 404 “I don’t want to be a burden, you get tired of it” | Willingness to be employed | Any reference to a willingness to be employed. | References that exclude a willingness to be employed. |
| 20) Keeping to family rules | Lines 438–440 “As a parent, when children come back from school, what we do is we eat, no TV until they have done school work. I assist them, and ask them what happened at school today, how was school generally” | Individual Stress Reduction | Any reference to reducing individual stress and enhancing resilience. | References that exclude reducing individual stress and enhancing resilience. |
| 21) Keeping to family values | Line 445 “understanding and support, respect” | Family value-Respect | Any reference to traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. | References that exclude traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. |
| 22) Keeping to family values | Lines 447–448 “yes, there should be respect both ways irrespective of age. There must be respect, there must be respect and love” | Family value-Respect | Any reference to traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. | References that exclude traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. |
| 23) Keeping to family values | Line 455 “I’m talking about mutual respect” | Family value-Respect | Any reference to traditional beliefs and shared family values that | References that exclude traditional beliefs and shared family |

| OPEN CODES | EXAMPLE | AXIAL CODE | Inclusion Criteria | Exclusion Criteria |
|---|---|---------------------------------|---|--|
| | | | provide/enable cohesiveness. | values that provide/enable cohesiveness. |
| 24) Keeping to family values | Lines 467–470 “The other one goes to the drop-in centre, the other one does not, the one from the drop in centre can sometimes bring meat home, and we don’t have meat ..., the very child will share with the other one who did not have. I am teaching my children to learn and share” | Parenting in a moral way | Any reference to positive parenting that creates a moralistic context for children. | References that exclude positive parenting that creates a moralistic context for children. |
| 25) Keeping to family values (sharing) | Line 474 “... all the things we do not have, he will share with his sibling ...” | Parenting in a moral way | Any reference to positive parenting that creates a moralistic context for children. | References that exclude positive parenting that creates a moralistic context for children. |
| 26) Parental values in raising children | Lines 474–475 “... I do not have a favourite child, I treat them the same. This does not create hatred among children, if you treat them the same” | Parenting in a moral way | Any reference to positive parenting that creates a moralistic context for children. | References that exclude positive parenting that creates a moralistic context for children. |
| 27) Keeping to family values (sharing) | Lines 479–481 “... I have two children, we will all share with her children, a small thing can be extended, this has to do with what you teach your children as a parent so it’s okay. Sunlight bar soap, I am able to share with her, we will share it” | Parenting in a moral way | Any reference to positive parenting that creates a moralistic context for children. | References that exclude positive parenting that creates a moralistic context for children. |
| 28) Keeping to family | Line 506 | Family value- | Any reference | References |

| OPEN CODES | EXAMPLE | AXIAL CODE | Inclusion Criteria | Exclusion Criteria |
|--|---|---------------------------------|---|--|
| values (sharing) | “respect and love ...” | Respect | to traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. | that exclude traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. |
| 29) Keeping to family values | Line 511 “Respect” | Family value-Respect | Any reference to traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. | References that exclude traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. |
| 30) Keeping to family values | Line 514 “love” | Family value-Love | Any reference to traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. | References that exclude traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. |
| 31) Keeping to family values | Lines 515–516 “No swearing, swearing is not encouraged at home, there are certain swear words that are forbidden” | Parenting in a moral way | Any reference to positive parenting that creates a moralistic context for children. | References that exclude positive parenting that creates a moralistic context for children. |
| 32) Keeping to family values | Line 519 “Love and respect, my parents have always given me love” | Family value-Respect | Any reference to traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. | References that exclude traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness |
| 33) Keeping to family values | Lines 521–522 “Respect old and young, age should not be an issue, if you want the young ones to respect you, you must also respect them” | Family value-Respect | Any reference to traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. | References that exclude traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. |
| 34) Keeping to family values (parental discipline) | Lines 557–558 “you do not respect | Family value-Respect | Any reference to traditional beliefs and | References that exclude traditional |

| OPEN CODES | EXAMPLE | AXIAL CODE | Inclusion Criteria | Exclusion Criteria |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| | me, you also beat me up at school! This was the younger one. I said to him this must stop ..., they must respect each other” | | shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. | beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. |
| 35) Keeping to family values (parental discipline) | Lines 562–564 “he used to bully his friends but I was surprised he did not do this at school, he bullied his friends at home. I would beat him up but for some reason, he did not do this at school. I was constantly telling him not to bully other children” | Parenting in a moral way | Any reference to positive parenting that creates a moralistic context for children. | References that exclude positive parenting that creates a moralistic context for children. |
| 36) Keeping to family values (parental discipline) | Lines 568–569 “The main thing is love, respect and treat each other well, the children must be taught to respect other people” | Family value-Respect | Any reference to traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. | References that exclude traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. |
| 37) Keeping to family values (parental discipline) | Line 570 “Respect is the main thing, you must know how to discipline a child” | Family value-Respect | Any reference to traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. | References that exclude traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. |
| 38) Parental encouragement with regard to education | Lines 582–583 “My child failed four subjects, I asked him to do better next time, improve on your marks, you have tried but do more, you need to improve on your marks” | Parental promotion of education | Any reference to improving children and family life through education. | References that exclude improving children and family life through education. |
| 39) Parental encouragement with regard to education and | Lines 586–587 “There is no need to shout at the child | Parental promotion of education | Any reference to improving children and family life | References that exclude improving children and |

| OPEN CODES | EXAMPLE | AXIAL CODE | Inclusion Criteria | Exclusion Criteria |
|---------------------|---|------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| child's self esteem | when they are not performing, encourage them instead, don't make them feel as if they are fools because they will think they are fools" | | through education. | family life through education. |

Secondary Research Questions

- 1) Which resilience processes are key to families from a low socio-economic environment?

| OPEN CODES | EXAMPLE | AXIAL CODE | Inclusion Criteria | Exclusion Criteria |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| 1) Collaborating with each other to support their family | Line 13 "I think when we work together" | Collaboration is a family strength | Any reference to traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. | References that exclude traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. |
| 2) Family financial support | Lines 66–67 "I have never worked in my life, my family provides for me, my children are also supported by my family" | Family financial support | Any reference to financial support from the family of origin. | References that exclude financial support from the family of origin. |
| 3) Family's financial support for their family | Lines 70–71 "Yes, if we have nothing at home, they come and find out what we need, they pay for electricity and other things" | Family financial support | Any reference to financial support from the family of origin. | References that exclude financial support from the family of origin. |
| 4) Family's financial support for their family | Lines 80–82 "... they sometimes come and check if I am okay, sometimes they would leave me money, R500 or so, for food and for the child for school, electricity and other needs they pay for | Family financial support | Any reference to financial support from the family of origin. | References that exclude financial support from the family of origin. |

| OPEN CODES | EXAMPLE | AXIAL CODE | Inclusion Criteria | Exclusion Criteria |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| | us” | | | |
| 5) Family’s financial support for their family | Line 96 “For me, they would bring shoes or whatever my children need” | Family financial support | Any reference to financial support from the family of origin. | References that exclude financial support from the family of origin. |
| 6) Family’s financial support for their family | Lines 99–100 “My other brother would call and check on me, and ask if I need anything, the other one will bring soap or something else” | Family financial support | Any reference to financial support from the family of origin. | References that exclude financial support from the family of origin. |
| 7) Financial survival through the child grant | Lines 131–132 “We are surviving because life goes on, the child grant also assists us, when you have children you have to fend for your children, you cannot wait for a man to assist you” | External economic resource | Any reference to the understanding of community or governmental support for families from low socio-economic circumstances. | References that exclude the understanding of community or governmental support for families from low socio-economic circumstances. |
| 8) External resources like the community drop-in centre assists children with food | Lines 147–148 “The drop-in (centre) assists us because they eat, when they arrive home they are not as hungry, I know that the child has eaten rice with meat or pap and meat and the child is full” | External economic resource | Any reference to the understanding of community or governmental support for families from low socio-economic circumstances. | References that exclude the understanding of community or governmental support for families from low socio-economic circumstances. |
| 9) External resources like the community drop-in centre assists children with food | Lines 149–150 “Sometimes the drop-in (centre) gives them food that we cannot afford, they eat well at the drop-in centre” | External economic resource | Any reference to the understanding of community or governmental support for families from low socio-economic circumstances. | References that exclude the understanding of community or governmental support for families from low socio-economic |

| OPEN CODES | EXAMPLE | AXIAL CODE | Inclusion Criteria | Exclusion Criteria |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| | | | | circumstances. |
| 10) Boyfriend is a financial resource | Lines 194–196 “I live with him and his parents. He is much better because he has piece jobs, although the money is not enough we are able to survive, I appreciate him because he took me with three children, I do not have a child with him” | Boyfriend as an economic resource | Any reference to financial support from the romantic partner. | References that exclude financial support from the romantic partner. |
| 11) Boyfriend is a financial resource | Lines 223–226 “He supports me although his money is not a lot, he has helped me, maybe by now I would have six children, by being there, I am home. Maybe I would be all over the place, getting drunk who knows ..., so I want to say because he is in my life, he is strict with me, when he is not home I have to stay home because I am expecting him, I don't have to be all over” | Boyfriend as an economic resource | Any reference to financial support from the romantic partner. | References that exclude financial support from the romantic partner. |
| 12) Hope for a better future | Line 283 “Hope that one day things will be okay” | Positivity for the future | Any reference to faith that makes the families feel grounded. | References that exclude making the families feel grounded through faith. |
| 13) Hope for a better future | Lines 285–286 “We must not be impatient, one day things will come right, one day things will happen for us” | Positivity for the future | Any reference to faith that makes the families feel grounded. | References that exclude making the families feel grounded through faith. |
| 14) Social Support | Line 290 “We encourage | Social support | Any reference to the | References that exclude |

| OPEN CODES | EXAMPLE | AXIAL CODE | Inclusion Criteria | Exclusion Criteria |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| | each other” | | understanding of community support for families from low socio-economic circumstances. | the understanding of community support for families from low socio-economic circumstances. |
| 15) Social Support | Line 295 “so, you encourage/comfort each other” | Social support | Any reference to the understanding of community support for families from low socio-economic circumstances. | References that exclude the understanding of community support for families from low socio-economic circumstances. |
| 16) Family experience strength-hope and patience | Line 297 “Hope and patience” | Familial positive approach to life | Any reference to faith that makes the families feel grounded. | References that exclude making the families feel grounded through faith. |
| 17) Family experience strength-prayer and patience | Line 299 “prayer and patience” | Strength through prayer | Any reference to prayer that makes the families feel grounded. | References that exclude making the families feel grounded through prayer. |
| 18) Family experience strength-prayer | Lines 308–309 “you ask G-d to be with children at all times, you ask him to give them success in life” | Strength through prayer | Any reference to prayer that makes the families feel grounded. | References that exclude making the families feel grounded through prayer. |
| 19) Pray for children to have a better life | Line 310 “Yes, when we pray, we also pray for our children” | Strength through prayer | Any reference to prayer that makes the families feel grounded. | References that exclude making the families feel grounded through prayer. |
| 20) Pray for children to have a better life | Lines 311–312 “so that your children do not end up like you, they should have a better | Strength through prayer | Any reference to prayer that makes the families feel grounded. | References that exclude making the families feel grounded |

| OPEN CODES | EXAMPLE | AXIAL CODE | Inclusion Criteria | Exclusion Criteria |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| | life, we pray for a better life” | | | through prayer. |
| 21) Social support through financial saving | Lines 336–337 “you can also join savings clubs which will help you in a long run, you can buy food” | Social Support-finance | Any reference to the understanding of community support for families from low socio-economic circumstances. | References that exclude the understanding of community support for families from low socio-economic circumstances. |
| 22) Harmonious family living | Line 345 “The family should live harmoniously with no fights, shouting etc.” | Desire for content family interactions | Any reference to traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. | References that exclude traditional beliefs and shared family values that provide/enable cohesiveness. |
| 23) Techniques of alleviating stress | Line 357 “even if you do keep things to yourself, find someone to share the problems with” | Stress reducers | Any reference to reducing individual stress and enhancing resilience. | References that exclude reducing individual stress and enhancing resilience. |
| 24) Techniques of alleviating stress | Line 359 “if you talk about things that bother you, you get a relief” | Stress reducers | Any reference to reducing individual stress and enhancing resilience. | References that exclude reducing individual stress and enhancing resilience |
| 25) Techniques of alleviating stress | Lines 360–361 “when I have a problem, I tell my sister, she also does the same, she shares her problems with me” | Stress reducers | Any reference to reducing individual stress and enhancing resilience. | References that exclude reducing individual stress and enhancing resilience. |
| 26) Techniques of alleviating stress | Lines 362–364 “I share with one of my friends, I will send her a message and tell her I need her or I will go and look for her until I find her, irrespective of the time, I will find | Stress reducers | Any reference to reducing individual stress and enhancing resilience. | References that exclude reducing individual stress and enhancing resilience. |

| OPEN CODES | EXAMPLE | AXIAL CODE | Inclusion Criteria | Exclusion Criteria |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| | her and tell her my problem. Once I speak to her, I heal” | | | |
| 27) Strong mother and daughter relationship | Line 381 “My child is my friend, I share secrets with my daughter” | Family relationships | Any reference to strong familial relationships. | References that exclude strong familial relationships. |
| 28) Strong mother and daughter relationship | Line 382 “I share with my first born, I do not go to anybody’s house” | Family relationships | Any reference to strong familial relationships. | References that exclude strong familial relationships. |
| 29) Strong mother and daughter relationship | Lines 383–384 “When I am with my daughter, everybody thinks she is my friend because we are so close” | Family relationships | Any reference to strong familial relationships. | References that exclude strong familial relationships. |
| 30) Being assertive when looking for a job | Line 390 “To take my handbag and go out there to search for a job” | Willingness to be employed | Any reference to a willingness to be employed. | References that exclude a willingness to be employed. |
| 31) Acceptance of your lot | Line 460 “I must not compete with anyone, I know my condition and I must accept this” | Acceptance of your lot | Any reference to feeling content with what one possesses. | References that exclude feeling content with what one possesses. |
| 32) Acceptance of your lot | Lines 466–467 “I don’t encourage my children to want other children’s things because this will put me under tremendous pressure, this will also create hatred” | Acceptance of your lot | Any reference to feeling content with what one possesses. | References that exclude feeling content with what one possesses. |
| 33) Family values (the importance of education) | Line 579–580 “The main thing is perseverance, encourage children to study and tell them not to end up like you ...” | Parental Promotion of education | Any reference to improving children and family life through education. | References that exclude improving children and family life through education. |

Secondary Research Questions

2) Which risk factors are perceived to threaten the resilience of families from a low socio-economic environment?

| OPEN CODES | EXAMPLE | AXIAL CODE | Inclusion Criteria | Exclusion Criteria |
|---|--|-----------------------------|--|---|
| 1) Being orphaned prevented her from succeeding in her education | Lines 6–7 “She is actually saying her parents died when she was still young and she couldn’t get to where she wanted to be with education” | Barrier to education | Any reference to barriers to education. | Reference that excludes barriers to education. |
| 2) Barrier to studying because mother already had child to look after | Lines 10–11 “The family brought me up, aunts etc., my siblings were brought up by the government and were able to study further, unfortunately for me, I had a child already” | Barrier to education | Any reference to barriers to education. | Reference that excludes barriers to education. |
| 3) Barrier to studying because parents couldn’t afford education for their children | Lines 14–15 “... we did not study because our parents did not afford, we lived in rural areas ...” | Barrier to education | Any reference to barriers to education. | Reference that excludes barriers to education. |
| 4) Financial difficulty (Cannot provide for her children) | Lines 23–24 “Also, our children know that life is tough at the moment, I am unable to provide for them” | Financial difficulty | Any reference to the belief that financial difficulty reduces family resilience. | References that exclude the belief that financial difficulty reduces family resilience. |
| 5) Financial difficulty (Mother discussing her childhood of poverty) | Line 25 “We were brought up in poverty” | Financial difficulty | Any reference to the belief that financial difficulty reduces family resilience. | References that exclude the belief that financial difficulty reduces family resilience. |
| 6) Financial difficulty (Cannot provide for her children) | Line 27 “We want to provide for our | Financial difficulty | Any reference to the belief that financial | References that exclude the belief that |

| OPEN CODES | EXAMPLE | AXIAL CODE | Inclusion Criteria | Exclusion Criteria |
|---|---|-----------------------------|--|---|
| | children but life is tough” | | difficulty reduces family resilience. | financial difficulty reduces family resilience. |
| 7) Financial difficulty (Cannot provide for her children) | Lines 28–29 “When I am working I know I want to buy this and that for this child, some Fridays I want to buy nice food for my children, like cake, we are unable to do so” | Financial difficulty | Any reference to the belief that financial difficulty reduces family resilience. | References that exclude the belief that financial difficulty reduces family resilience. |
| 8) Financial difficulty (Unemployment-cannot provide for her children) | Line 30 “Because you are unemployed you are unable to do so” | Financial difficulty | Any reference to the belief that financial difficulty reduces family resilience. | References that exclude the belief that financial difficulty reduces family resilience. |
| 9) Financial difficulty (Grant is too little to provide for the mother’s children) | Line 31 “You wish to do so much, the money we receive for the grant is too little” | Financial difficulty | Any reference to the belief that financial difficulty reduces family resilience. | References that exclude the belief that financial difficulty reduces family resilience. |
| 10) Financial difficulty (Grant is too little to provide for the mother’s children) | Lines 32–33 “Very little, even when you get the grant for two children it is too little, you are able to buy maize and other things, sometimes the child will go to school without food” | Financial difficulty | Any reference to the belief that financial difficulty reduces family resilience. | References that exclude the belief that financial difficulty reduces family resilience. |

Appendix F: Excerpt of Member Checking

1 F: Okay. I just want to say good morning, and thank you so much all for coming, and also thank
2 you for sharing your stories and your experiences of your families with myself and Professor
3 Ruth Mampane. Basically, we just wanted to go through certain ideas that you said and then
4 you could just either confirm them or if we couldn't understand correctly, if you could just
5 then help us understand better what you meant by what you said.

6 And then if you could just, when you discuss it, if you could just say your name as we've just
7 discussed now, so that we don't get confused about who said what. Is that okay with you?

8 So, we first were discussing certain expectations of children as parents, as mothers.

9 As parents, you want your children, you were discussing [about] them [previously] to be
10 more educated than you. Like, for instance, you said, 'we are encouraging our children not
11 to be like us.' 'We did not study because our parents could not afford. We lived in rural areas.
12 When we came to town, we brought up our children so that we can educate them and not be
13 like us' (FG, line 14–16).

14 R: I'm not going to say what you just said.

15 F: Okay.

16 R: Exactly what you said.

17 F: Okay. When you were here, we recorded everything and then after recording we went and then
18 we transcribed. And after transcription, [we analysed what you said into themes], and now
19 we are coming back to confirm with you and then to make you aware of the findings. And
20 now, we want to confirm what you have expressed. Which is what we are now going to do.

21 F: Okay.

22 F: (Inaudible). Ja, so lines 14 to 16, they agree with that.

23 F: Okay. So, I mean, the next line also, ['when you see your children studying, you need to encourage
24 them to study so that they do not end up like you (FG, line 19–20)], it was just another line
25 confirming that, about the studying, and that they do not end up like their parents. And then
26 the next [expectation that you have of your children] one is with showing respect.

27 R: [Yes]. There should be respect for all irrespective of age. So, what I think, that they have to do is
28 respect the children, and the children should respect them. So, respect is both ways. Okay? And
29 whether we respect old and young, it should not be one way, if you want the young ones to respect,
30 you must also respect them.

31 F: Okay. So, then [the next expectation of your children] is about having morals and values.

32 R: What are values?

33 F: Would it be tradition?

34 R: So, we should have morals and respect from you.

35 **F: Okay? And then the other one was about morals and values as one of you said 'The other one**
36 **goes to the drop-in centre the other one does not, the one from the drop-in centre can**
37 **sometimes bring meat home, and we don't have meat ..., the very child will share with the**
38 **other one who did not have, I am teaching my children to learn to share'(FG, line 467–470).**
39 **Where does that come in?**

40 **F: So that's about having the value of sharing, that even if one goes to the [drop-in] centre and**
41 **another does not go to the drop-in centre, they must share.**

42 R: Participants. So that issue of sharing is [not just] what one is saying. She agrees [with] that, yes.

43 F: 'I do not have a favourite child, I treat them the same. That does not create hatred, if they are treated
44 the same' (FG, line 474–475). So, the participant said, that of all her children, she treats the same.
45 In that way, then the children learn to know that mother does not favour anybody. We are all the
46 same. Okay.

47 So, it's not about encourage it for only at home, so it's not only at home, (inaudible) it's not only at
48 home. It's also in and outside, when they are with other kids. There are certain ways that they are
49 forbidden, not only at home, even when they are outside. Even when they are playing with others.
50 Okay.

51 **F: Okay. And then going on to the clarification, that's when you [the mothers] say they want**
52 **their children to be educated, but how do they support their children to be educated?**

53 F: Why? Why did? The participant is saying that, education is important because her parents passed
54 on before they could give her education. She was not able to achieve what she wanted to achieve
55 in life. And so, she would want her children to be educated so that they can achieve those things.
56 Okay, so the participant stated that her mother passed on, but her mother had a mental illness, so
57 she was never going to be able to afford to give her an education, the education that she needed.
58 So, as a mother, she wants to give her children what her mother did not give to her.

59 F: She says, education is important because nowadays you cannot get the kind of job that you want if
60 you are not educated. Otherwise if she, it's people like her, all she could get is just contract work,
61 which [is why] she can't find important work because she's not educated.

62 R: Today's children are not like us. In our time, your parents used to buy you clothes. You don't
63 complain, you just [wear them], even if they bought you bigger clothes, bigger sizes, and they said
64 you would grow into them. You would just wear them. But nowadays, they choose what they want.
65 So, then as a parent, you have to have money to buy for them. It's [better] for them to be educated
66 so that they can do most of these things, because they want the whole, they want all these things.
67 And you can't afford them, as parents.

68 F: (Inaudible) They wanted to say something.

69 R: The participant said, her mother wished that she could be a boy, but she passed on. She wishes
70 that her child could actually be a lawyer or a doctor but when her child comes home and tells her
71 that he has seen one child with this or that, you know, beautiful things, she will say, don't look at
72 such things. Focus on your education and study so that you could be able to afford those things.
73 Because I can't afford to just get you those things.

74 Another participant said her son has got a school report recently and then he came home and found
75 her in the room, praying. She was praying that she could get a job. And when her son came, she
76 told him that she was praying so that she could get a job. And her son showed her, his report, and
77 she read it. When she saw the report, she cried because I think emotionally, she was just excited
78 that her son had passed. But [she] also [cried], that she is not able to assist him the way she would
79 want to as a mother. Because of lack of education, she doesn't have the skills and knowledge to get
80 a better job. Therefore, her son said to her, don't worry, he'll get a job [when he is older in order to
81 provide for them].

82 **F: So, and how, if we can just discuss how are they as parents, helping their children? Is it just**
83 **more encouragement? [Participant begins to have tears in her eyes]. Sorry, I don't even have**
84 **a tissue, I'm sorry.**

85 R: What she does is that when the child comes with homework, she then will assist the child with
86 homework, and when she is stuck, there's a friend who has a matric [who she can call to come help
87 her child].

88 **F: Okay.**

89 R: She will go to that person and the person will help the child. She will even go to the drop-in centre
90 to ask them to assist her child with homework.

91 **F: And they do help? The drop-in centre? Sjoie.**

92 R: Yes, they do help. The participant is saying that most of the things that the children are doing in
93 school, she doesn't understand them. But thanks to the drop-in centre, because they actually are
94 able to assist the children with homework, and so she is actually, she is thankful to that because she
95 mostly relies on them to assist the child with homework. The participant even said the other child is
96 actually so clever that she helps the other one and she says actually also the drop-in centre assists.
97 The drop-in centre is also helping the children with homework. And sometimes they even go beyond,
98 they take children to camping, you know, children would go out to get education [and knowledge in
99 an alternative way].

100 **F: Okay.**

101 R: So, kind of actually they, the participant said, even the care workers, when they come for home
102 visits, she will sometimes ask them [the care workers], how she can support her child [in terms of

103 homework]. And then they will show her, and then she would actually then do exactly what they told
104 her.

105 **F: Another thing, can I go to the next clarification?**

106 **F: Ja.**

107 **F: The intention to be employed is genuine, but what action is taking place in order to fulfil the**
108 **goal of being employed?**

109 R: What the participant is saying is, these kind of piece jobs, you know, someone will call you, you
110 know, because your children are going to school, so you take care of their children. Or come iron
111 my clothes, so it's mostly people from the community. Another participant also said that they actually
112 (inaudible), you know, you hear there is something, there's a job there, you go there, if there's a job
113 there. So, you know, this kind of short, short term jobs, not long-term jobs. So, this is what they do.

114 **F: How do you know that somebody wants you to do cleaning or washing?**

115 R: So sometimes it's a wait of months and then somebody who heard that you are looking for
116 something, they will tell someone else and then they will call you that so-and-so is looking for
117 someone to assist them.

118 **F: So, is that generally how you find work? Yes, word of mouth?**

119 R: Okay. She says actually, most people will bring their children to her, and then she will take care of
120 their kids. And in fact, they say, that sometimes, you know, it can go for three months without
121 someone actually asking me to do anything. So, you just, you know, it is periodical. It comes and
122 [goes].

123 R: And she says sometimes when she hears that at such-and-such a place they are looking for people,
124 she will get whatever money she has and then go there and then drop her CV. And they will normally
125 say, we'll call you, but most of the time they don't call. So that's how it is.

126 **F: Okay.**

127 **F: And then another thing [in the section of] clarification. What is the reason that you stay in**
128 **your romantic relationships with men that you often complain about?**

129 R: They say sometimes, you know, sometimes [say] this man works, but sometimes they don't work.
130 So, it's just not proper to leave a person because you don't have a job.

131 **F: Okay.**

132 R: And you know, she says, maybe one day you will leave him. And after leaving him, he gets a job.
133 So, they say, all you have to do is keep praying that he gets a job. So, they say, if he gets a piece
134 job, then life at home, things change.

135 **F: Okay.**

136 R: So, you just have to keep praying that he gets that so that things can actually be different. The only
137 problem we've got is there's no job, but feel satisfied with our partners.

138 **F: So, you feel satisfied?**

139 R: Ja, they said that their relationships are fine, the only concern, no job. You know, when there's no
140 job there's no money. Ja.

141 **F: But otherwise it's okay? Okay.**

142 R: What she says is that she is in that relationship because it's a good relationship for her. Even if this
143 man is not working, when he gets a job, let's say he gets paid R500, he will take R100 for himself,
144 the R400 comes to the house.

145 **F: Oh, okay.**

146 R: And then what, even if she gets a policeman who is working and has a job, but then he doesn't give
147 her a cent, so what's the use of being in that kind of a relationship.

148 **F: Yes.**

149 R: It won't benefit her. What she is in [her relationship] now actually benefits her.

150 **F: Okay.**

151 R: Because, ja.

152 **F: And, because I remember, but maybe it was the other participant [that was not present for
153 member checking], that money wasn't coming in a lot, and that his job was a driver but gave
154 little money to his family?**

155 R: That's the other one.

156 **F: Okay, all right. And you're also satisfied or happy [looking at another participant]?**

157 R: Ja. I'm happy.

158 **F: In the relationship?**

159 R: Ja. The job is not the most important thing in the relationship. Then she says that it's not right for,
160 just because the man is not working, then you are in and out of the relationship. You will end up
161 actually bringing some form of illnesses into the relationship.

162 **F: Spiritual illness or physical?**

163 R: Physical.

164 **F: Okay.**

165 R: Ja. So, you must also think about children. Things like, it's complex, hey. They said (inaudible) things
166 like HIV/AIDS, you will invite them into the relationship and there's a lot of children who die now
167 because of that. So, what they are doing is that [staying in their same romantic relationships].

168 **F: And then your partners, do they feel the same way as you? To be loyal to you?**

169 R: (Inaudible) it's a saying in Setswana, that they say. You know, they say, 'there is no grave that is
170 actually written, I died because of hunger.' Something like that. There's no grave for hunger.

171 Okay, yes, what she is saying is, that even if I don't have anything, mostly they don't go to bed
172 hungry. There's always a plan. Something comes up. She's caring for a child that the mother brought
173 the child to her while the child was two months.

174 **F: Sjo.**

175 R: And then now the child is two years. She's been caring for that child. So that's the kind of jobs that
176 you have. There's another eight-month-old baby that she's caring for, for two months now. So
177 actually (inaudible).

178 R: She says another person came to her and said to her, how do you do it? I see the children that you
179 care for, they are happy, they are healthy. How do you do it? And then she said, I do my best and
180 most of the time I just pray, and I actually make sure that the children are happy.

181 **F: Are these her biological children or the children she cares for?**

182 R: Children she cares for.

183 **F: Okay.**

184 R: Ja, (inaudible) she will do a good job.

185 **F: Yes. Okay, thank you. And as we said before, we just want to thank you for sharing such**
186 **personal information with us. And thank you to all of you for helping [with my research] and**
187 **coming. And also that, as we said before, that this is the last session, so after this session**
188 **we won't be here again. But we thank you for helping me to actually clarify and confirm**
189 **information from the previous session [the focus group], which assists me to write the**
190 **research for the thesis, for the project.**

191 F: Okay. I was just actually saying, the [ou klere], like, you know, I was just thinking that actually maybe,
192 I've got old clothes that actually I could give to them. Maybe if you can get their contact details then
193 we can actually be in contact with them.

194 **F: Yes.**

195

196 Member checking completed on the 31/07/2017 at the OVC Centre in Mamelodi East.

197 [End of recording at 00.33.21]

198 **Key:**

199 **F** stands for facilitators, where there were two present, where one was the researcher and one was the
200 interpreter.

201 **R** stands for the research participants.

Appendix G: Interview Schedule

PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF FAMILY RESILIENCE IN A LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE:

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

- What does resilience mean to you?
- How do families from a low socio-economic background experience resilience?
- Which resilience processes are key to families from a low socio-economic background?
- How do you as a family experience strength?
- What are your strengths as a family?
- What is your family good at?
- What do you do best?
- What do you struggle in?
- Which risk factors are perceived to threaten the resilience of families from a low socio-economic background?
- In which area do you think your family needs to better themselves in?
- Where do you think you need to grow more?
- Where do you get your strengths from?
- Does your religion/spirituality play a role in your life?

MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION:

How do families from low socio-economic background perceive resilience?

SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

Which resilience processes are key to families from low socio-economic background?
Which risk factors are perceived to threaten the resilience of families from low socio-economic background?

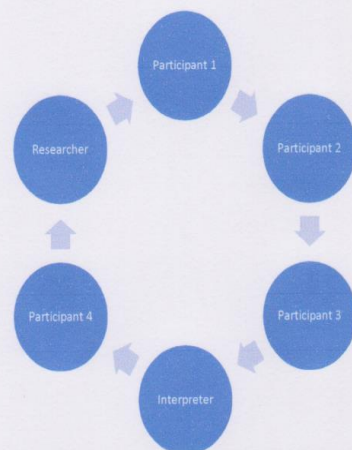
1 Observations during my data collection process:

2 Stakeholders' Meeting at the OVC Centre on the 24th of April 2017:

3 The two photographs I took on the 24th of April 2017, were included in Chapter 1, Figures 1.1
4 and 1.2 depict the entrepreneurial flair of some of the residents who live in the semi-urban
5 township of Mamelodi. The photographs show fresh produce and second-hand furniture being
6 sold on the side of the road within the semi-urban township. Driving through the township to arrive
7 at the OVC Centre in Mamelodi East, one can see the poverty that the residents of Mamelodi
8 experience. For example, there are informal dwellings that individuals and/or families live in,
9 locally known as 'shacks' which are made of tin. The shacks are built very close to each other
10 which are well-known to lead to health hazards for example in the case of fire it can spread easily
11 through multiple shacks. Furthermore, unsanitary conditions are also prevalent as some shacks
12 do not have running water and/or electricity in them. On some of the roads, there were large
13 potholes where pedestrians often did not have a pavement to walk on due to vendors selling
14 his/her products on the pavement or due to infrastructure not being developed properly in
15 particular areas.

16 When arriving at the OVC Centre, in the morning, shelves of bread were laid from the floor to the
17 ceiling in preparation for the staff members to make sandwiches for the children that arrive in the
18 afternoon for lunch and homework supervision. The managerial team were very friendly towards
19 me and communicated with me in English as they normally speak Northern Sotho. During the
20 meeting, we discussed how they were going to find suitable research participants for my research
21 which they would find from the individuals who benefit from the services that their centre provides.

22 Focus group on the 19th of May 2017: Seating arrangement of focus group:



24 The focus group was conducted on the 19th of May 2017. The four research participants were all
25 women and dressed in a respectable fashion and possessed a friendly disposition towards me.
26 As a result of the language barrier between the research participants (who speak Northern Sotho)
27 and myself (who speaks English), an interpreter was present.

28

29 When the research participants were discussing the resources, they use within their community
30 to help them, the one participant discussed that her friend and her share things with each other
31 that they do not have such as body lotion. When the participant said this, she looked over at the
32 other research participant that was across from her and gave each other a knowing smile.

33

34 One of the research participants were discussing about having faith in God and praying to God
35 for her children to achieve and do well in life. When the participant said this, her words were filled
36 with sincerity and hope in her voice. She looked eagerly around the group to see if the other
37 participants also prayed, many nodded their heads in agreement and shared their stories of
38 having faith in God and praying.

39

40 When discussing enhancing resilience within the research participants lives, the one research
41 participant expressed at the end of the conversation that her daughter assists her with relieving
42 her of her stress through discussing the problem with her. The research participant looked
43 uncomfortable when she said this as others had stated that they had adult interaction to assist
44 them in dealing with their issues. She crossed her legs the other way around to how she was
45 sitting and fidgeted with her fingers when saying this.

46

47 The mood in the room felt hopeful when the research participants discussed the need for their
48 children to be educated. There were numerous reasons for wanting their children to be educated:
49 firstly, their children would have an opportunity to develop themselves in a career that they are
50 interested in. Secondly, the children would be able to financially assist themselves and lastly, they
51 would possibly be able to financially assist their mothers. When the research participant spoke of
52 encouraging her child to study, all the other research participants nodded their heads strongly in
53 agreement with her.

54

55 A sombre moment arose when the research participants were discussing their challenges of not
56 having enough money to feed their children on the weekend. During the focus group, I could see
57 how discouraged the research participants' faces were when they discussed the financial issues
58 they were experiencing and how it affects their children, their voices became lowered and
59 sounded hopeless.

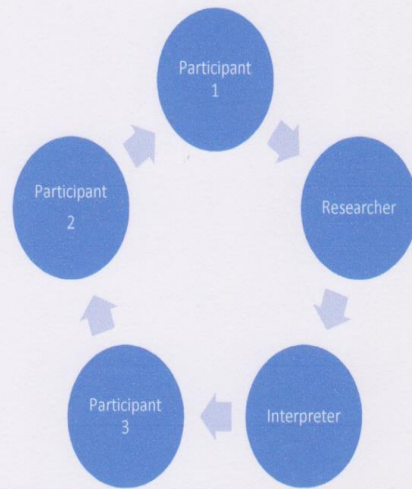
60 One of the research participants looked forlorn when she discussed that she would like to buy her
61 children treats for the weekend, but she cannot afford to. Tears rolled down her face with her head
62 lowered and her arms folded tightly around her chest in a way to console herself for the painful
63 feelings that were evoked in her when she discussed this.

64

65 When the research participants were discussing the topic on child maintenance, the one
66 participant expressed anger in her tone of voice when she described how the father of her child
67 does not want to give money willingly to his child. The discussion on lack of child maintenance
68 caused all the research participants in the room to eagerly share their opinions and their personal
69 experiences. Many of the research participants raised their voices and spoke louder than usual
70 in the group showing the utter frustration that they felt with their children's fathers not contributing
71 towards their children's needs. In addition, a lot of head nodding was done in relation to this
72 discussion when they agreed with one or more of the participants about not receiving child
73 maintenance as well as shaking their heads in disappointment that fellow participants also
74 experience lack of child maintenance.

75 Member checking session: 31st of July 2017:

76 Seating arrangement of the member checking session:



77

78 Three out of the four research participants attended the member checking session.

79 When the discussion about the need for children to be educated arose, one research participant
80 discussed how she was not able to receive an education because her mother had a mental illness.

81 When she said this, there was a sadness in her voice and disappointment seemed to be seen on
82 her face as she looked down.

83 One research participant was discussing the need for her child to focus on his education and that
84 he should not be concern with what other children have. When she said this, her voice possessed
85 a serious tone as well as making use of her hands while she spoke to emphasise her stance.

86 After discussing how the OVC Centre assists the research participant's child with homework
87 supervision, a wide smile spread across her face in gratitude where her face looked relieved as
88 she had explained that she can not assist him with homework as she did not finish school.

89 A positive moment occurred when a research participant expressed that her children do not go to
90 sleep hungry as she makes a plan to ensure this. She said this in a proud manner where a small
91 smile was on her face.

---ooOoo---