

# **Strategies unemployed caregivers use to enhance the resilience of their school going children**

by

**Thandi Prudence Lukhele**

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

***MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS***

**(Educational Psychology)**

In the Faculty of Education

at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

**Supervisor**

Professor Motlalepule Ruth Mampane

**Co-supervisor**

Bontle Kgopa

2021

## DECLARATION

I Prudence Thandi Lukhele (student number: 15213082) declare that the dissertation/thesis, which I hereby submit for the degree Magister Educationis 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.



Thandi Prudence Lukhele

October 2021

## ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



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

### RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

**CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

CLEARANCE NUMBER: **UP 12/09/01 Mampane 19-002**

**DEGREE AND PROJECT**

MEd

Strategies unemployed caregivers use to  
enhance the resilience of their school going  
Children

**INVESTIGATOR**

Ms Prudence Lukhele

**DEPARTMENT**

Educational Psychology

**APPROVAL TO COMMENCE STUDY**

16 July 2019

**DATE OF CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

23 July 2021

**CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE:** Prof Funke Omidire



**CC**

Ms Thandi Mngomezulu  
Prof M.R. Mampane  
Ms B. Kgopa

This Ethics Clearance Certificate should be read in conjunction with the Integrated Declaration Form (D08) which specifies details regarding:

- Compliance with approved research protocol,
- No significant changes,
- Informed consent/assent,
- Adverse experience or undue risk,
- Registered title, and
- Data storage requirements.

## ETHICS STATEMENT

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this thesis, has obtained the applicable research ethics approval for the research described in this work. 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.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my family. A special feeling of gratitude to my loving parents, Bhamu Amos Lukhele and Thoko Elizabeth Lukhele, whose words of encouragement and push for tenacity ring in my ears. My siblings (Ntomb'fikile Tryphinah Lukhele and Thandeka Precious Lukhele) who never left my side.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To have achieved this milestone in my life, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following people:

- My Heavenly Father - thank You for the courage, strength, perseverance, and wisdom you gave me to finally complete this degree. I would not have done it without You.
- Prof. Ruth Mampane, research supervisor, for her invaluable and continuous support, advice, guidance, and inspiring motivation during difficult times during the research. Your insightful feedback encouraged me to sharpen my thinking skills and improved the quality of my work.
- Ms. Bontle Kgopa, my research co-supervisor, thank you for your continuous support and guidance.
- The Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (HWSETA) for making this journey easier by providing me with financial support.
- Mr. Rory Power and Mrs. Loretta Power - thank you for your continuous support over the years. May the Good Lord grant you all your heart desires.
- Last, but not least, the community caregivers at the Sinqobile/Matimba drop-in centre, as well as the participants who made this study possible, thank you for availing yourselves and for your contribution to this study.

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand the strategies that unemployed caregivers use to enhance the resilience of their school-going children. This research also sought to explore the role that they play in their children's education. A qualitative methodology seemed appropriate for this study, while both purposive and convenient sampling methods were used to select the participants. A case study design and focus group method were used to further understand the caregivers' personal experiences. A focus group discussion was conducted in English and IsiZulu with seven participants from the Mamelodi East community. The session was audio recorded and transcribed subsequently.

An interpretivist approach was employed to gain a better understanding of the participants' lived experiences. Thematic analysis was used to identify the themes that emerged from the participants' experiences as described in the transcripts. The themes that emerged from the data were: resilience-enhancing strategies in families, and barriers to resilience.

Ungar's Social Ecology of Resilience Theory (SERT) served as the theoretical framework for this study. This theory describes how the relationship between schools, family, society, and culture can help individuals to develop positively. SERT was supported in the themes that emerged from the caregivers' strategies for enhancing the resilience of their school-going children. These themes and sub-themes are crucial for those working with individuals challenged by unemployment because they highlight the significance of the social support and interventions available in the community.

**Key Words:** Caregivers; Unemployment; Unemployed caregivers; Enhance; Resilience.

## LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE

# *Exclamation Translations*

To whom it may concern

The dissertation entitled, "Strategies unemployed caregivers use to enhance the resilience of their school going children" has been edited, proofread, technically formatted, and reference control has been carried out as of 01 October 2021.

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

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

Kind regards



Melissa Labuschagne

---

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



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CSG</b>	Child Support Grant
<b>CDG</b>	Care Dependency Grant
<b>FG</b>	Foster Grant
<b>RDP</b>	Reconstruction and Development Programme
<b>SASSA</b>	South African Social Security Agency
<b>SERT</b>	Social Ecology of Resilience

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	<b>I</b>
<b>ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE</b> .....	<b>II</b>
<b>ETHICS STATEMENT</b> .....	<b>III</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	<b>IV</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>V</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>VI</b>
<b>LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE</b> .....	<b>VII</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	<b>VIII</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>XII</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>XIII</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT .....	2
1.3 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY.....	2
1.4 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY .....	3
1.5 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY .....	5
1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	5
1.7 WORKING ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY .....	6
1.8 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION .....	6
1.8.1 <i>Caregivers</i> .....	6
1.8.2 <i>Unemployment</i> .....	7
1.8.3 <i>Unemployed caregivers</i> .....	7
1.8.4 <i>Enhancing</i> .....	7
1.8.5 <i>Resilience</i> .....	7
1.8.6 <i>School-going children</i> .....	8
1.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	8
1.9.1 <i>Social ecology of resilience</i> .....	8
1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	8
1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	9
1.12 CONCLUSION.....	9
1.13 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS .....	10
<b>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	<b>11</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION .....	11
2.2 COMPOSITION OF THE FAMILY.....	12
2.3 DIVERSE FAMILY STRUCTURES IN SOUTH AFRICA .....	12
2.3.1 <i>Grandparent-headed families</i> .....	14
2.3.2 <i>Child-headed family structures</i> .....	15

2.3.3 <i>Single-parent family structures</i> .....	17
2.4 PARENTS .....	18
2.4.1 <i>Caregivers</i> .....	19
2.4.2 <i>The roles and responsibilities of caregivers</i> .....	19
2.4.3 <i>Why focus on caregivers</i> .....	21
2.5 PROTECTIVE FACTORS THAT FOSTER RESILIENCE .....	22
2.6 UNEMPLOYMENT.....	23
2.7 UNEMPLOYED CAREGIVERS .....	24
2.8 CHALLENGES FACED BY CHILDREN LIVING WITH UNEMPLOYED CAREGIVERS .....	25
2.9 UNEMPLOYMENT AND RESILIENCE.....	26
2.10 FAMILY SUPPORT: HOW FAMILIES SUPPORT CHILDREN TO BE RESILIENT .....	28
2.11 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	29
2.11.1 <i>Decentrality</i> .....	30
2.11.2 <i>Complexity</i> .....	31
2.11.3 <i>Atypicality</i> .....	31
2.11.4 <i>Cultural relativity</i> .....	32
2.12 CONCLUSION.....	32
<b>CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>33</b>
3.1 INTRODUCTION .....	33
3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	34
3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: QUALITATIVE METHOD .....	34
3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN: CASE STUDY DESIGN.....	35
3.5 RESEARCH PARADIGM: INTERPRETIVISM .....	36
3.6 SAMPLING .....	37
3.7 SELECTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS .....	38
3.7.1 <i>Research site</i> .....	39
3.8 DATA COLLECTION AND DOCUMENTATION.....	41
3.8.1 <i>Focus group: unemployed caregivers</i> .....	41
3.8.2 <i>Field notes and observations</i> .....	42
3.8.3 <i>Data collection process</i> .....	43
3.9 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION .....	43
3.10 TRUSTWORTHINESS.....	45
3.10.1 <i>Credibility</i> .....	45
3.10.2 <i>Transferability</i> .....	46
3.10.3 <i>Confirmability</i> .....	46
3.10.4 <i>Dependability</i> .....	46
3.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	47
3.11.1 <i>Confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity</i> .....	47
3.11.2 <i>Informed consent</i> .....	48
3.11.3 <i>Honesty and trust</i> .....	48

3.11.4 <i>Debriefing</i> .....	48
3.11.5 <i>Voluntary participation</i> .....	48
3.11.6 <i>Protection from harm</i> .....	48
3.12 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER .....	49
3.13 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY .....	49
3.14 CONCLUSION.....	49
<b>CHAPTER 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS .....</b>	<b>50</b>
4.1 INTRODUCTION .....	50
4.2 DATA COLLECTION DATES .....	50
4.2.1 <i>Brief background of the participants</i> .....	51
4.3 THEME 1: STRATEGIES USED BY CAREGIVERS TO ENHANCE FAMILY RESILIENCE .....	53
4.3.2 <i>Discussion of the findings for Theme 1</i> .....	58
4.4 THEME 2: BARRIERS TO RESILIENCE.....	58
4.5 CONCLUSION.....	62
<b>CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>63</b>
5.1 INTRODUCTION .....	63
5.2 ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	63
5.2.1 <i>Addressing the primary research question</i> .....	64
5.2.2 <i>Secondary research question</i> .....	71
5.3 REFLECTING THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	74
5.3.1 <i>Decentrality</i> .....	74
5.3.2 <i>Atypicality</i> .....	75
5.3.3 <i>Complexity</i> .....	75
5.3.4 <i>Cultural relativity</i> .....	76
5.4 ADDRESSING THE WORKING ASSUMPTIONS OF THIS STUDY .....	76
5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY .....	78
5.6 POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS .....	78
5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS .....	79
5.8 RESEARCHER'S REFLECTIONS .....	79
5.9 CONCLUSION.....	79
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>APPENDIX A.....</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>APPENDIX B.....</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>APPENDIX C.....</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>APPENDIX D.....</b>	<b>98</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Google map of Mamelodi (Google Maps, 2021) .....	4
Figure 1.2: Informal settlement in Mamelodi (Williams, 2007) .....	5
Figure 2.1: Summary of the roles and responsibilities of caregivers (Omidire et al., 2015).. .....	20
Figure 2.2: The principles of Social Ecology of Resilience (Ungar, 2011).....	30
Figure 3.1: Visual representation of the research process .....	34
Figure 3.2: Photo of the Matimba/Sinqobile Drop-in Centre in Mamelodi East (Maimela, 2020) .....	40
Figure 3.3: Photo of the Matimba/Sinqobile Drop-in Centre in Mamelodi East (SA Gov News, 2019) .....	40
Figure 3.4: Services provided by the Matimba/Sinqobile Drop-in Centre.....	41
Figure 3.5: The six phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2014).....	44
Figure 4.1: Visual representation of the data collection process.....	50
Figure 4.2: Visual summary of the strategies the caregivers used to enhance the resilience of their school-going children .....	57
Figure 4.3: Visual summary of the barriers to resilience as highlighted by these Mamelodi caregivers.....	61
Figure 5.1: Schematic diagram of the research findings addressing both the primary and secondary research questions .....	63
Figure 5.2: Visual summary of the strategies the caregivers used to enhance the resilience of their school-going children .....	65
Figure 5.3: Schematic representation of the barriers to resilience-enhancing strategies ..	74

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Overview of research design and methodology .....	9
Table 2.1: Core Family Functions (Patterson, 2002) .....	21
Table 3.1: Demographics of the participants .....	38
Table 4.2: Abbreviation Key .....	52
Table 4.3: Themes and sub-themes emerging from the thematic analysis .....	53
Table 4.4: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 1 .....	53
Table 4.5: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 2 .....	58

# CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Unemployment refers to a scenario in which a person who is actively seeking a job is unable to obtain employment (Statistics South Africa, 2018b). According to Statistics South Africa (2019), since the third quarter of 2017, South Africa's unemployment rate had risen to 27.6% at the end of the first quarter of 2019. Unemployment is one of the major social issues faced by South African communities as the entire family is negatively affected when a parent loses his or her job (Jefferis, 2015). Having a stable source of income is thus crucial in fulfilling all of the needs of a family. When this stable income is lost, financial security is lost, resulting in the family suffering emotionally and psychologically (Wearing et al., 2013).

Jefferis (2015) maintains that the future of the children in a family with unemployed parents might seem bleak. The poor economic standing of parents leads to a compromise on good education. The emotional wellbeing of children is also hindered due to constant conflict and stress between their parents and other family members. Furthermore, Wearing et al. (2013) assert that unemployment also affects the social acceptance of families. Individuals facing unemployment often experience feelings of isolation due to the disruption of their social networks, and the implications of not working for their social class standing and social connectedness (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2016).

In the presence of adversity such as unemployment, individuals can, however, become resilient (Masten, 2014a). Resilience can be described as the ability of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten the functioning, the feasibility, or the development of that system (Masten, 2014a; 2014b). This dynamic process tends to vary in different contexts, making resilience an acquired skill (Theron, 2013). Feeling supported and having the emotional and concrete resources that stem from caring social relationships have been found to encourage the physical and mental health of children (Malindi, 2014). Masten (2014b) argues that resilient children are identified by their ability to perform developmental tasks.

Some children not only survive but actually thrive, even in the most difficult circumstances.

According to the Department of Basic Education (2019), as stipulated in the South African Schools Act of 1996, the term ‘school-going children’ refers to all children between the ages of six and 17 who attend school regularly. Parents and guardians should ensure that all learners of this age are registered to go to school, and that they attend school regularly. This study looked at the strategies that unemployed caregivers use to enhance the resilience of their school-going children. The study took place in Mamelodi in a context where families could be exposed to negative and adverse situations such as unemployment.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

According to Korankye (2014), unemployment contributes to some of the problems faced by communities. It is associated with crime, inadequate living conditions, psychological and physiological ill-health, and the performance of the economy as a whole. These adverse situations may affect not only the quality of life for individuals, but also their family and community as a whole. Therefore, as one of the causes of poverty, we cannot ignore the impact of unemployment (Korankye, 2014). If the phenomenon of unemployed caregivers persists, this could be a risk factor for the well-being and resilience of the family structure, including children and adolescents. South Africa has been a democratic country since 1994, yet the country continues to face countless adversities and socio-economic difficulties at all levels of society (Department of Social Development, 2011). This study was conducted in a predominately Black residential area of Mamelodi, in the East of Pretoria. Mamelodi is a township that is characterised by poverty, a lack of services, and high unemployment (Louw, 2018). This study aimed to explore and understand the strategies that unemployed caregivers use to enhance the resilience of their school-going children.

## **1.3 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

This study was motivated by my personal experience as a student teacher in one of the primary schools in the province of Mpumalanga. I came across many instances



where the teachers did not fully understand the challenges faced by children from families where the caregivers were unemployed. In my role as a student teacher, I witnessed that many unemployed caregivers struggle to take part in school activities that aim to improve their children's school success. Mzizi (2014) and Maluleke (2014) corroborate the above statement as they find that unemployed parents participate less in their children's school activities. This is unfortunate as the authors also find that parent's participation in school activities improves children's success and academic performance (Maluleke, 2014; Mzizi, 2014). There is a dearth of literature on the strategies that unemployed caregivers use to enhance the resilience of their school-going children. Hence, the purpose of this study was to explore these strategies and gain insight into these caregivers' experiences in this regard.

#### **1.4 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

The Mamelodi East Township is situated approximately 20 kilometres east of Tshwane City, Pretoria (Louw, 2018). Mamelodi East is one of South Africa's largest townships, with over a million residents. Blokland (2014) claims that residents of Mamelodi must travel vast distances to reach urban areas. A large number of immigrants, sometimes illegal, move to Mamelodi East in search of work in important cities like Pretoria and Johannesburg. The Moretele River divides Mamelodi into east and west. According to Steyn (2007), the west side is the traditional neighbourhood that expanded during the apartheid era, while the east side was formed in the mid-to-late 1990s. According Mampane (2010), Mamelodi is densely populated and the majority of families and people living in this township are disadvantaged. However, it is a lively and varied township that is home to a number of ethnic groups, including Zulu, Sotho, Tswana, and others. The east side consists of some Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses, but much of the area is comprised of informal settlements (Mampane, 2010; Steyn, 2007). It is important to consider the wider context of the unemployed caregivers' living environment in order to fully understand the strategies that they employ to enhance the resilience of their school-going children.

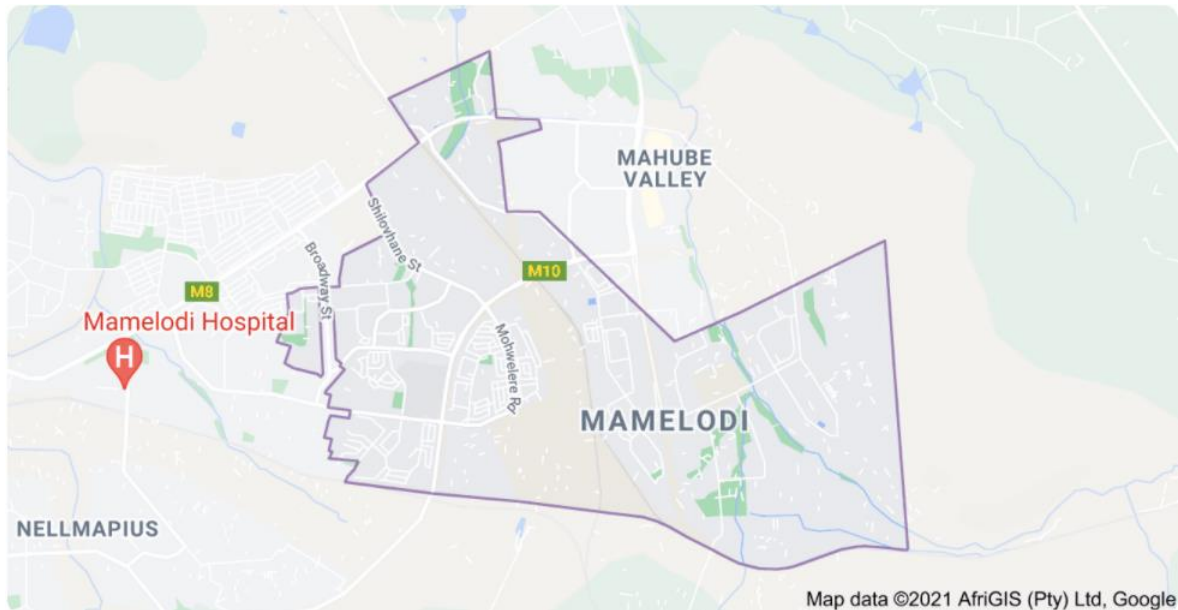


Figure 1.1: Google map of Mamelodi (Google Maps, 2021)

South African townships are full of adversities and challenges (Mampane, 2010). According to Mampane and Bouwer (2011), Mamelodi is a South African township that is demographically divided, yet primarily Black. It is characterised by overcrowded schools, crime, informal settlements, unemployment, poverty, and violence. South African families living in semi-urban townships experience far more stress than other families. To a large extent, townships such as Mamelodi face the following challenges: excessive littering; burst sewers that create an unpleasant and persistent smell; patched roadways; as well as bridges that are too narrow to handle heavy rain (Louw, 2018).

Mamelodi East, like other South African residential neighbourhoods, is periodically in the news due to high crime rates, particularly among children. However, one of the strengths of township communities includes the resilience of some community members in adopting strategies and methods to create entrepreneurial activities to put food on the table and attract business to the community (Mampane, 2010). Unlike previous studies, I draw attention to Mamelodi East for the purpose of analysing the support of school-going children's learning, and, as such, the research participants of this study resided in this part of Mamelodi.



Figure 1.2: Informal settlement in Mamelodi (Williams, 2007)

## 1.5 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand the strategies that unemployed caregivers use to enhance the resilience of their school-going children, as well as the role that they play in their children's education. Therefore, the ultimate aim of this study is to contribute to the literature on how to support the resilience of school-going children, particularly in low socio-economic environments.

## 1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research primary research question guided this study:

*How do unemployed caregivers enhance the resilience of their school-going children?*

The following research question aimed to elaborate and expand on the primary research question:

*What are the challenges that may inhibit unemployed caregivers in supporting their school-going children?*

## **1.7 WORKING ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY**

According to Simon and Leedy (2010), assumptions refer to aspects that are beyond a researcher's control, but if they were to disappear, the study would be irrelevant. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) maintain that assumptions are so straightforward that, without them, the research problem itself would possibly not exist.

The following assumptions were envisaged for this study:

- Caregivers play a crucial and imperative role in their children's development.
- Caregivers' engagement has a positive influence on learners' behaviour and attitude.
- Caregivers' unemployment can have a negative impact on children's educational achievements.
- Caregivers' engagement in the education of their children has a positive effect on learners' academic achievement.
- Caregivers have as much responsibility for the education of their children as educators do.

## **1.8 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION**

### **1.8.1 Caregivers**

According to Manilal (2014), 'caregivers' refers to any individual who has complete, day-to-day responsibility for a child. This person is furthermore legally entitled to custody of the child. In this study, a caregiver could be any individual who is responsible for the daily needs and responsibilities of a child or children. According to Baron (2013), the definition of caregivers can be divided into two main groups, namely, informal, and formal. Informal caregivers comprise individuals who are either family members or acquaintances of someone who is ill. Formal caregivers consist of both volunteers and professionals who have received training and education to care for people who are ill (Baron, 2013). For this study, a caregiver is considered to be a family member or even someone who is not related to the

child/children, although he or she is interested in and supportive of children who need care, and is legally responsible for the children.

### **1.8.2 Unemployment**

Unemployment occurs when an individual who can work and who is actively searching for employment is unable to find work (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2016). For the purposes of this study, unemployment refers to the state of being unemployed.

### **1.8.3 Unemployed caregivers**

The term ‘unemployed caregivers’ refers to caregivers who are jobless, but who are actively searching for, and available to take a job (Powdthavee & Vernoit, 2013). In this study, unemployed caregivers refer to legal guardians, siblings, and grandparents, amongst others, who can work but do not have employment, and who are caregivers to a child or children.

### **1.8.4 Enhancing**

Gafoor et al. (2011) explain that the term ‘enhance’ refers to improving the quality of something. In this study, enhancing is connected to the strategies that caregivers could use to improve the resilience of their school-going children.

### **1.8.5 Resilience**

According to Luthar, Cicchetti and Becker (2000), resilience is a “dynamic process encompassing positive adaption within the context of significant adversity” (p. 543). Masten (2014a) defines resilience as the characteristics that enable a person to endure unwanted adversity and the results thereof. Malindi (2014) supports this, highlighting that resilience is the capacity to overcome adversities in life. This is further supported by Ungar (2011), who explains that resilience is the capacity to cope or ‘bounce back’, thrive, and remain proficient and effective after encountering a difficult situation, negative event, challenges, or adversities. In this research, resilience refers to the characteristics of caregivers that help their school-going children in dealing with adversity. This study also looks at the ability of the children



to adapt positively to stressful situations such as the unemployment of their caregivers, poverty, and so forth.

### **1.8.6 School-going children**

Petty (2014) defines a school as an institution that is delegated entirely to educating learners. The author further delineates school-going children as those who are between the ages of six to 18 years of age and who attend school. In this study, school-going children refers to children who are between the ages of six to 18 years of age, attending school to obtain their primary or secondary education.

## **1.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **1.9.1 Social ecology of resilience**

The Social Ecology of Resilience Theory (SERT) developed by Ungar (2011) formed the theoretical background of this study. Since resilience persists among multiple risk factors, this theoretical framework suggests that greater focus must be placed on the role of physical and social ecology in positive developmental outcomes when an individual experiences severe levels of stress. This theoretical framework was chosen because of its capacity to forge interventions that promote well-being for people living in environments that hinder resilience-promoting processes (Rutter, 2012b). An in-depth discussion of this theoretical framework will be provided in Chapter 2.

## **1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Creswell (2014) clarifies that qualitative research attempts to gain a better knowledge of the community in which the participants live. Therefore, research methodology can be understood as a way of solving or responding to the research problem systematically. This means that it is the process of studying how the research is conducted in a scientific manner (Gravetter & Forzano 2016). While the research design and methodology applied in this study will be discussed in-depth in Chapter 3, Table 1.1 provides a summary thereof.

Table 1.1: Overview of research design and methodology

Epistemology of the study	Interpretivist paradigm
Methodological approach	Qualitative research methodology
Research design	Single case study design
Selection of participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seven unemployed caregivers (two males and five females);</li> <li>• Case study;</li> <li>• Purposive selection and convenience sampling.</li> </ul>
Research site	Mamelodi East (Matimba/Sinqobile Drop-in Centre).
Data collection and documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus group interview;</li> <li>• Field notes and observations.</li> </ul>
Data analysis and interpretation	Thematic analysis.

## 1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

David and Sutton (2011) clarify that ethics are the principles that guide the researcher to protect the research participants from possible harm, and to safeguard their rights, needs, values and desires. For moral and legal reasons, ethical clearance is necessary, thus ethical clearance to conduct this study was obtained from the University of Pretoria. The overall issues that I looked into during this research were confidentiality, informed consent, the right to withdraw, debriefing, and voluntary consent. These ethical issues, as related to this study, are further explained in Chapter 3.

## 1.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided the introduction, research rationale, research questions, ethical considerations, rigour of study, as well as the working assumptions of this

study. This chapter concludes by briefly defining the important concepts referred to in the study, and giving an overview of the chapters of this dissertation.

## **1.13 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS**

There are five chapters in this mini thesis, which are as follows:

### **❖ CHAPTER 1: SETTING THE STAGE**

Chapter 1 has presented the introduction of the study, the purpose of the study, the research problem, the rationale of the study, concept clarification to prevent ambiguities, and finally, the working assumptions of the study.

### **❖ CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Chapter 2 will cover the relevant literature related to the topic under study. Ungar's (2011) Social Ecology of Resilience Theory (SERT) will be discussed as well as it was utilised as the theoretical framework underpinning this study.

### **❖ CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY**

Chapter 3 will highlight the methodology and research design of the study. The paradigm; selection of participants; data collection methods; as well as data interpretation and analysis thereof will be explained. In addition, ethical consideration will be discussed, as well as the quality of the study.

### **❖ CHAPTER 4: REPORTING ON THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY**

In this chapter, the findings of the study will be presented along with a detailed break-down of the data analysis.

### **❖ CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter will explore the results and findings of Chapters 3 and 4. Chapter 5 consolidates the various sections of the study, and provides the conclusions of this study, as well as recommendations for future research.



## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the background, research questions, research context and objectives, as well as the ethical considerations of this study. This chapter explores the literature that is relevant to the phenomenon under study. This study explored the strategies that unemployed caregivers use to enhance the resilience of their school-going children. Ungar's (2011) Social Ecology of Resilience Theory (SERT) formed the theoretical framework of this study, and will be discussed in more depth in this chapter.

In the last few decades, the definition of family has changed drastically, and has evolved from the traditional nuclear family to a variety of family structures (Carr, 2011). Mokone (2006) and Nhongo (2004) corroborate this as they find that due to unemployment, modernisation, urbanisation, poverty, and migrant labour, family structures in South Africa have changed dramatically. Some parents who earn low salaries or who are unemployed have been found to leave it to their grandparents to raise and care for their children (Mokone 2006). This is known as 'skip-generation families' (Department of Social Development, 2011).

Unemployment is found worldwide (Diraditsile & Ontetse, 2017); however, it has been noted that overall, more females are unemployed than males (Björklund et al., 2015). Women make up a big part of the working class in this country so, based on the findings above, this means that they are working but do not earn enough money to satisfy the financial needs of their families (International Labour Organisation, 2014). South African youth aged 15 to 34 face challenges in finding employment (Van Aardt, 2012). The challenges of youth unemployment can be linked to a shortage of work experience due to many South Africans lacking the skills necessary for certain occupations (Van Aardt, 2012). According to Roy and Jones (2014), young adults are increasingly becoming financially dependent on their families. However, disadvantaged young people do not receive the same advantages as their privileged peers.

## **2.2 COMPOSITION OF THE FAMILY**

Family is defined as a sociocultural group that is connected by blood, foster care, adoption, bonds of marriage (customary, religious, or civil), cohabitation, or a civil union that extends beyond physical location (Department of Social Development (2012). Moreover, Walsh (2012b) defines a family as a "transactional system that functions concerning its broader sociocultural context and evolves over the multigenerational family life-cycle" (p. 29). In terms of the system-based viewpoint, this definition acknowledges that the concept of family evolves and changes over time. Past family definitions based on what was considered 'normal' at the time are becoming obsolete as new family structures evolve and are considered acceptable in our current socio-cultural environment (Walsh, 2012b). Families can be quite diverse; therefore, the interpretation of this concept relies on personal perceptions and attitudes. The meaning of family thus differs in structure, relationship, form, role, attachment, rights, and responsibilities (Okon, 2012; Walsh 2012a).

Family relationships are extremely important in the home as a family's continuity and evolution are reflected in these relationships (De Witt, 2016). The main caregiver's role is imperative in that they must fulfill their responsibilities in order to be supporting pillars for their children. This is important as children often turn to their family for support if other institutions fail to meet their needs, particularly if the family institution is a functioning one (Department of Social Development, 2012). Additionally, a family should improve and encourage its members' health and contribution to the wider community (Holborn & Eddy, 2011; Mokomane, 2012).

## **2.3 DIVERSE FAMILY STRUCTURES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

As mentioned previously, family structures in South Africa have changed significantly due to unemployment, modernisation, urbanisation, poverty, and migrant labour (Mokone, 2006; Nhongo, 2004). According to Nhongo (2004), HIV and AIDS has a significant impact on family structure, particularly on the economically productive age demographic of the population that supports both minors and the elderly. Due to this illness, many extended family members,

particularly grandmothers, have become children's main caregivers (Steven-O'Connor, 2006).

Complex family structures have become the accepted norm. As such, all families have unique social systems with geographical, historical, legal, emotional, and future biological ties (Carr, 2011). According to The White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, 2012) in South Africa, several factors contribute to the multifaceted nature of family structures. These include single-headed, extended, child-headed, skipped-generation, nuclear, and multi-generational (including grandparent-headed) families (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). A nuclear family is considered to include a husband, wife, and children (Parihar et al., 2017). Nuclear families have been shown to be more resilient than other family structures as they support each other, care for the physical needs of the family members, and promote members' ability to solve challenges as a team (Parihar et al., 2017).

Many South African children are cared for by caregivers other than their biological parents, and although many of these children are orphans, not all of them have lost their biological parents due to death (Steven-O'Connor, 2006). This is not uncommon as it has always been the norm in African culture for grandmothers to play an important role in raising their grandchildren while parents work, while incorporating a system of reciprocal exchanges (Mokone, 2006). In the past, grandmothers raised their grandchildren, while the children's parents sent money home and visited them during the holidays. However, these traditional methods of supporting and caring have changed, locally and internationally, often leaving caregivers with enormous responsibility and close to no support (Mokone, 2006; Nhongo, 2004). Moreover, the deaths and unemployment of the breadwinner(s) of a family leave grandparents deprived of the support necessary to raise children (Kiggundu & Oldewage-Theron, 2009).

According to Allendorf (2013), extended family systems have grown over time in many non-Western countries. In many cultures, when traumatic events, such as the death of a parent or family separation, affect the nuclear family, aunts, uncles, and grandparents must take on the responsibility of taking care of children (Hamilton,

2017). In this vein, grandparents in Australia were found to have a positive impact on their grandchildren, particularly when there was separation within the nuclear family (Hamilton, 2017). The following paragraph will specifically discuss grandparent-headed families, as this family structure is predominant in townships.

### **2.3.1 Grandparent-headed families**

South African history and culture testify to the important role that grandparents play in raising younger generations (Casale, 2011). Grandparents' role in African families has always been a significant one as grandparents are forced to take full-time care of their grandchildren because of the loss or absence of their own adult children. Moreover, due to the traditional role of care in gender and socio-cultural practices, the bulk of the burden and responsibility still tends to lie with the grandmother (Casale, 2011). Nhongo (2004) and Mokone (2006) support this, explaining that in South Africa, African grandmothers are known for caring for their orphaned grandchildren. This is further proven in research conducted by Conway et al. (2011) and Strom and Strom (2011), who find that the death of a parent can result in the transfer of childcare responsibility to grandparents. Unfortunately, children often experience abuse, neglect, or, as referred to above, are orphans, so grandmothers take care of their grandchildren to prevent them from living in foster care and/or going into state custody (Burnette et al., 2013). Research further finds that living with grandparents is safer than placing children in foster care (Strom & Strom, 2011).

Grandparent-headed households are very common among African Americans; however, many of these families face challenges in providing the children with basic necessities (Burnette et al., 2013). Grandparent-headed households in South Africa are typically overlooked because very few people address the problems that they face, such as the daunting demands and expectations of orphaned grandchildren (Gasa, 2013). According to Strom and Strom (2011), most grandparents are not well prepared to overcome the new challenges that raising their grandchildren brings, since the struggles of their own children were probably of a different nature due to the ever-evolving nature of society and the raise in living costs. Older people are traditionally supposed to receive emotional and financial support from their children;

however, due to HIV/AIDS, their children are dying, leaving them to raise their grandchildren (Mtshali, 2015; Schatz, 2007).

Notwithstanding these difficulties, grandparent-headed families have been found to exhibit resilience as these children feel embraced by their grandparents as they live in a secure community, despite the pain of being separated from their parents (Gasa, 2013). Casale (2011) explains that African grandmothers who care for their households have the potential and perseverance to overcome the intense feelings of fear and distress while trying to cope with running a household. According to Ardington et al. (2010), the child-care grant, old age grant, and foster grant supplied by the South African Government serve as a resource for grandparents facing the financial struggle of raising their grandchildren.

The stability of relationships between siblings has also shown to encourage a sense of belonging and security (Gasa, 2013). Unfortunately, however, the responsibility and burden of raising children may often fall to the eldest child in the family, leading to child-headed households (Ardington et al., 2010), which will be discussed in the next section.

### **2.3.2 Child-headed family structures**

A child-headed household refers to an individual who is under the age of 18 and who is responsible for the wellbeing of others within the same household (Mturi, 2012). Such a unit is formed when siblings refuse to leave their deceased parents' home, and insist on sticking together. Unfortunately, in order to survive, these children often resort to sex work (Meintjes et al., 2010). The South African Constitution defines a child as a person under the age of 18, therefore the definition of child-headed households is consistent with the terminology used in the Constitution.

Mculu et al. (2015) detail how many parents had to leave rural areas during the apartheid era to look for employment in urban areas, which initiated the development of children-headed households. In the struggle for freedom, apartheid stole some parents away from their children, and killed others. Apartheid-era riots and Black-on-Black violence have also left their mark. Many young children have

been abandoned and are at risk. Conflicts and wars, such as those in KwaZulu Natal and the Qumbu-Tsolo civil war, have resulted in the death of parents and the displacement of children (Mculu et al., 2015). HIV/AIDS is another factor in the orphaning of children. It is expected that when HIV/AIDS prevalence increases, there will be an increase in the number of orphans who are responsible for running their own households. Furthermore, in South Africa, 18 million children under the age of 18 have been left without parents because of HIV/AIDS (Pappin et al., 2014).

South African children suffer neglect and different types of emotional abuse; however, 35% of children are left orphaned because of the loss of one or both parents, often due to factors other than HIV/AIDS (Seedat et al., 2009). According to Mturi (2012), children become orphaned for several reasons, such as vehicular accidents, parents moving away from or leaving their children in some other way. Orphans in child-headed families confront unique challenges and exclusions as compared to others. They experience difficulty in obtaining their birth certificate, getting health care or social security benefits, obtaining food and shelter, and they are at risk of being sexually abused by their neighbours and relatives, to name a few (Mculu et al., 2015). A child's childhood is effectively sacrificed when they become caregivers for people with HIV/AIDS (Meintjes et al., 2010).

It is especially dangerous for children in disadvantaged areas who have no, or dying, adult caregivers. This is either because there is no adult to provide them with support and stability, or because the community in which they live and grow up is extremely impoverished (Mturi, 2012). As a result, these children are more vulnerable than those who have parents to look after them. Nonetheless, there are many similarities between child-headed households and regular families: they provide for their siblings; get food, clothes, and housing for them; and care about their siblings' mental well-being (Pappin et al., 2014).

The government provides financial assistance to alleviate poverty among orphans, child-headed households, and other children who meet the specified requirements. This money is given to the caregiver looking after the children. In this vein, there are three types of social grants for children: the Child Support Grant (CSG), the Foster Grant (FG), and the Care Dependency Grant (CDG). All of these funds are critical

in providing care for children. Children orphaned by HIV/AIDS may potentially benefit from these funds, depending on the category into which they fall (Pappin et al., 2015).

### **2.3.3 Single-parent family structures**

The reasons for a woman becoming a single mother vary per country, ranging from personal preferences to circumstances beyond their control. In South Africa, single-parent families are the norm, with the majority of children growing up with only one parent, most frequently their mother. Absent fathers are becoming more common and a 'men's crisis' in South Africa appears to be repeating the patterns of abuse and abandonment from the past, which will most certainly continue in future generations (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). In 2011 in South Africa, more than 40% of all South African families were headed by a single parent (Department of Social Development, 2012; Holborn & Eddy, 2011). Single parent households in South Africa exist across all races, socio-economic levels, and in all environments. In fact, Holborn and Eddy (2011) find that single parents are more likely to be unemployed, and that HIV/AIDS has had and continues to have a significant influence on household status.

The major concern is that single-parent households appear to be connected with poverty and negative outcomes for children. Single-parent households typically experience three types of challenges: economic, social, and emotional. Single parents may have more difficulties in participating in their children's school activities as they have no partner with which to share parenting responsibilities. This makes it difficult for these parents to engage in activities outside of the house (Lemmer, 2012). As a result, children who come from single-parent households tend to perform poorer in school, and have a lower educational attainment than children who come from a two-parent household. In single-parent households, children are at greater risk for poor achievement academically because they exit school, often without graduating from high school, which leads to unemployment and poverty (Lemmer, 2012). De Lange et al. (2014) support the above sentiment, stating that single-parent households have fewer resources at home and, as a result, are more vulnerable to inadequate or even no schooling. This is due to the fact that children



receive lower-level educational support from a single parent. Moreover, to fulfil the multiple roles required in caring for their children as single parents, many mothers must sacrifice their career aspirations (Mkhize & Msome, 2016). Most of these single parents therefore have extreme financial constraints and are often in constant debt to maintain their households (Mkhize & Msome, 2016).

Despite the numerous obstacles faced by single-parent headed families, they are usually able to maintain their hectic lifestyles (Louw & Louw, 2014). Children from single-parent households are reliant on their parent's qualities, such as their socio-economic situation and age. Donald et al. (2010) believe that single parents are more likely to have high expectations for their children's wellbeing and are willing to make sacrifices to guarantee that their children have the greatest possible existence (Donald et al., 2010). They usually try to help their children in whatever manner they can. In addition, single-parent households may have more leeway in making child rearing decisions. Single parents are not distracted by another adult's expectations or time demands. With fewer schedules to manage, there may be more flexibility to spend time with each child, which may encourage an autonomous problem-solving and daily life approach.

## **2.4 PARENTS**

The word 'parent' refers to the biological or adoptive parent or legal guardian of a child. This person is legally entitled to custody of a child, or they agree to fulfill the obligations of raising a child (South African Schools Act 84 of 1996). A parent is further responsible for their child's care, health, and shelter; and provide physical, mental, and spiritual nutrition (Tough, 2012). There are three ways to define a parent of a child in a South African School (Act No. 84 of 1996): (a) A learner's biological or adoptive parent or legal guardian; (b) An individual who is legally entitled to custody of a pupil; or (c) An individual who undertakes to fulfill the obligations of a parent. Furthermore, parents are expected by society to always put the needs and wellbeing of their children before their own (Tough, 2012).

Parents are among the most influential individuals in the lives of young children, not only in daily activities such as socialisation, but also in terms of schooling. Parents



have an important role in helping children develop and enhance their knowledge, skills, learning expectations, coping strategies, beliefs, and aspirations (De Witt, 2016). As children grow from infants to teenagers to adults, they go through a series of developmental phases that are essential to all facets of their personality, including physical, intellectual, emotional, and social aspects. The primary role of the parent is to provide support, encouragement, and access to activities that will allow the child to master key developmental tasks (Lemmer, 2012). In addition, the parent is responsible for assisting the child with school-related activities. This includes communicating with the child's educators, visiting the child's classroom, collecting the child's report card, and attending parent-teacher meetings. De Witt (2016) stipulates that it is the role of the parent to provide a dynamic and stimulating learning environment for their child throughout their academic career. Examples of this are providing a desk for homework, making books available for reading, and helping the child with homework. The formal education of a child is built on these activities, instilling and highlighting the significance of learning.

#### **2.4.1 Caregivers**

According to Pappin et al. (2014), a 'caregiver' is considered to be the person who plays a main role in meeting all of the needs of a child. This caregiver must consider the child's rights and provide psychosocial support. The Children's Act (38 of 2005) defines a caregiver as any person other than the guardian of the parent who looks after the child. The key role of the caregiver is to provide moral, religious, and cultural instruction, as well as guidance with regard to basic hygiene, among other aspects. A caregiver therefore assumes general responsibility for the child (Pappin et al., 2014). The caregiver is described in the context of this research as family and community members who undertake to care for children who have no accessible parents. These persons are accountable for the child's emotional, spiritual, physical, and educational needs.

#### **2.4.2 The roles and responsibilities of caregivers**

Abdullaeva (2021) defines roles as a set of behaviours that are expected of an individual. Role dominated families are likely to be characterised by gender orientation, organisation, a division of labour, and specific expectations. All families

have different and repetitive roles and responsibilities to be fulfilled by the various members of the family. These roles and responsibilities are important for effective family functioning (Neimetz, 2011). According to Omidire et al. (2015), caregivers' primary roles and responsibilities are to meet basic needs such as food, money, and shelter, providing a physical environment that offers family members comfort and warmth. Furthermore, caregivers' role is to provide family members with nurturance, support, and personal development skills (Omidire et., 2015). Personal development skills are essential for children as this promotes their emotional, physical, educational, and social maturity. These abilities further contribute to the growth of family members' vocational abilities (Abdullaeva, 2021). Figure 2.1 and Table 2.1 below detail the vital roles played by primary caregivers, and the benefits that they provide to their families and society.

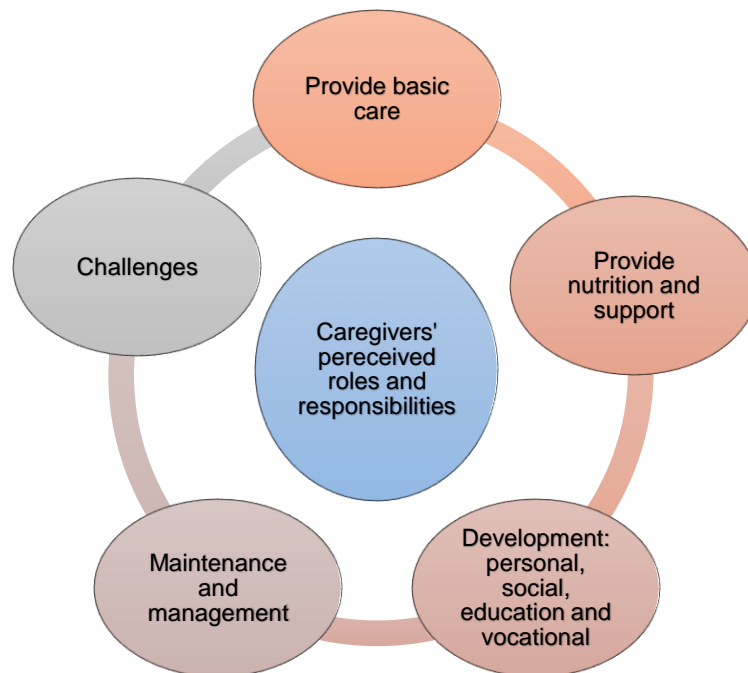


Figure 2.1: Summary of the roles and responsibilities of caregivers (Omidire et al., 2015)

Table 2.1: Core Family Functions (Patterson, 2002)

Family function	Ways each function benefits family members	
	Individual family members	Society
<b>Membership and family formation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a sense of belonging.</li> <li>• Provides personal and social identity.</li> <li>• Provides meaning and direction in life.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Controls reproductive function.</li> <li>• Assures the continuation of the family unit.</li> </ul>
<b>Economic support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides for basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing, and other resources to enhance human development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributes to the healthy development of members who contribute to society (and who need fewer public resources).</li> </ul>
<b>Nurturing, support, and socialisation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides for the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual development of children and adults.</li> <li>• Instils social values and values.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepares and socialises children for productive adult roles.</li> <li>• Support adults in being productive members of society.</li> <li>• Controls antisocial behaviour and protects society from harm.</li> </ul>
<b>Protection of vulnerable members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides care and support for the young, ill, disabled or otherwise vulnerable members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimises public responsibility for the care of vulnerable, dependant individuals.</li> </ul>

### 2.4.3 Why focus on caregivers

This study focused on caregivers because the caregiver's primary responsibility is to support and encourage the children in their household. Moreover, caregivers have a significant influence on their children's lives as they are seen as pillars of love, support, and guidance. Nothing soothes and comforts a child more than their caregiver's embrace, no matter how old they are. If children fail in other areas of their lives, more often than not, they will turn to their families in times of difficulty, especially when the family system functions effectively (Mokomane, 2012). The role of the caregiver is also to assist their child in achieving important milestones in their

growth (Abdullaeva, 2021). Particularly, a child's learning process can be enriched by the engagement of caregivers in their education. In support of this, Olson (2010) finds that caregivers' involvement in children's education improves attitude, morale, and academic success in all subject areas, as well as behavior and social adjustment. This, in turn, helps children to grow up to be productive, responsible citizens.

Caregivers within a family adopt particular responsibilities in order to facilitate the fulfilment of three essential tasks. The first responsibility entails basic tasks and the provision of basic requirements such as food. The second responsibility is concerned with developmental tasks that relate to the difficulties that the family faces as it progresses through various phases of growth, as well as the development of its individual members (Omidire et al., 2015). The last set of responsibilities involves the family's ability to deal with difficulties and traumatic events. Family dysfunction is likely to occur in a family that is unable to handle these difficulties and/or traumatic events. This type of dysfunctional family functioning is commonly seen in families whose caregivers are incapable of coping with these responsibilities (Omidire et al., 2015).

## **2.5 PROTECTIVE FACTORS THAT FOSTER RESILIENCE**

Ungar (2011) defines protective factors as the attributes or qualities of individuals, families, and the wider community that mitigate risk and encourage the healthy development and wellbeing of adolescents, youths, and families. According to Noltemeyer and Bush (2013), resilience-promoting protective factors can be observed at individual, family, school, and community level. Personal resources, which include assertiveness, agency, and humour, have been observed to be very effective and crucial factors in constructing resilience in South African children who have been or are homeless (Malindi & Theron, 2010).

Internal resources may refer to protective factors. For example, a loving and constant relationship with a primary caregiver; a family with clear direction and guidance; and strong, coherent, and consistent values are all examples of internal resources (Donald et al., 2010). Research has identified the protective potential of

a variety of child features such as high intelligence, self-mastery, internal locus of control, excellent coping skills, an easy-going temperament, and planning skills (Noltemeyer & Bush, 2013). Walsh (2016a) also identifies a number of factors promoting the resilience of young people. These variables include but are not limited to supporting relationships, personal identity growth, adherence to cultural traditions, power and control experiences, experiences of social integrity, and experiences of a sense of cohesion with others. When looking at individual resilience, the literature suggests several characteristics that function as protective factors, including individual disposition characteristics such as personality and intelligence, family-connectedness, friendliness, as well as parents' availability (Walsh, 2016a). Clear communication, consistent parenting, as well as a nurturing and responsive environment act as protective factors for minors up to and including the age of 18 across various cultures (Noltemeyer & Bush, 2013).

## **2.6 UNEMPLOYMENT**

Unemployment occurs when a person is ready and able to work, but is unable to do so due to a lack of employment opportunities. In most situations, the individual has attended school or received training in order to become marketable, yet they are still unemployed owing to economic conditions (O'Higgins, 2015). This problem leads to a slew of other societal issues since unemployed people are forced to rely on the government for support (World Economic Forum, 2014). According to O'Higgins (2015), unemployment can contribute to long-term poverty, inequality, and a high level of crime. It also results in a lack of financial resources, resulting in debt (World Economic Forum, 2014). Therefore, the catastrophic consequences for the unemployed are felt not only by the unemployed, but by the entire community as well (Stats SA, 2014b). Unemployment is viewed as a threat because it causes significant structural disorganisation in the family structure and introduces disruption to the family's daily routine. Unemployed husbands often lose their wife and children's respect, which has a direct and detrimental impact on the family structure and its functioning (World Economic Forum, 2014). Mzizi (2014) has discovered that being unemployed has a detrimental effect on marriage and family life in areas such as communication, happiness, companionship, and other significant aspects. In the households of the unemployed, the levels of domestic violence and child abuse are

greater; this may be due to the fact that unemployed caregivers become frustrated and take this out on family members. Moreover, the unemployment problem is exacerbated by the failure of the country's educational system to meet the private sector's ever-increasing need for qualified graduates (Stats SA, 2014b). Even for those with skills, education, and experience, finding a job in South Africa remains a challenge (Mubangizi, 2020). The decline in South Africa's economic growth is also attributed to the difficulty in finding employment. Corruption is at the top of the list. In so many African countries, especially South Africa, corruption has been a huge economic drag on the country's economy. South Africans are subjected to rising levels of corruption and ineptitude in the public sector (Makinane, 2015). The severe economic impact thereof on citizens has resulted in protests across the country at various times. Corruption has been and will continue to be the main impediment to achieving constitutional aims in the future (Mubangizi, 2020).

## **2.7 UNEMPLOYED CAREGIVERS**

Unemployment is a serious social problem that has a devastating effect on the lives of families. Unemployment affects not just the unemployed individual, but the whole family and the wider community (Mzizi, 2014). Unemployment brings uncertainty, which breeds stress. Children of unemployed caregivers may internalise their caregivers' fear, resulting in bad health and poor academic performance (Mzizi, 2014). According to Powdthavee and Vernoit (2013), children are likely to be unhappy with their overall life when one of their caregivers is unemployed. The social and psychological effects of retrenchment and prolonged joblessness during the fruitful years of life severely impact the quality of life of the family and other affected individuals (Powdthavee & Vernoit, 2013). Moreover, experiences of loss of self-identity and low self-esteem impact mental and physical health, and can have wider repercussions in terms of social isolation and the loss of social support (Powdthavee & Vernoit, 2013). Loss of confidence and self-esteem due to job loss can serve as barriers to being employed again.

On another note, for many individuals, work provides a social network (Powdthavee & Vernoit, 2013). Therefore, job loss also limits the capacity of individuals to attend social events and build social networks. Unemployed caregivers are also likely to

be depressed and show signs of anger towards the community. Rutter (2012a) corroborates this finding, indicating that job loss and unemployment involve several changes at once that can undermine an individual's sense of purpose and self-worth. However, while the stress can be overwhelming, there are several things that individuals can do to control the situation, such as maintaining their mental health, which assists them to emerge stronger and more resilient from this difficult period (Rutter, 2012a).

Many South Africans are facing a grim future as unemployment rates rise. In an attempt to mitigate this, many unemployed people create their own businesses in order to keep afloat; these businesses help families put food on the table and also ensure that the fundamental scholastic needs of their school-going children are also met (Makinane, 2015). Mampane (2010) substantiates the above statement, explaining that one of the strengths of township communities includes the resilience of some community members. This is seen in the strategies and methods adopted to create entrepreneurial activities that put food on the table and attract business to the community (Mampane, 2010). In the next paragraph, I will discuss the challenges faced by children living with unemployed caregivers.

## **2.8 CHALLENGES FACED BY CHILDREN LIVING WITH UNEMPLOYED CAREGIVERS**

Children suffer in numerous ways when caregivers are unemployed (Oster, 2014). One of the main effects of caregivers' job loss is that children's performance at school declines (Humal, 2013). For instance, children living with unemployed caregivers sometimes do not go to school because they lack motivation from their caregivers (Humal, 2013). Many of these children do not complete their homework either because they do not have effective resources such as books and tools as their caregivers cannot afford these (Tough, 2012). It has been further discovered that children living with unemployed caregivers are 15% more likely to repeat a grade, perform poorly, and even face suspension from school as opposed to their peers whose caregivers hold a stable job. Unfortunately, this poor performance tends to persist through their schooling career (Oster, 2014).



According to Manilal (2014), unemployed and impoverished caregivers do not prioritise the education of their children, which is why there is a dearth of parental involvement in certain South African schools. This supports the argument put forward by Oster (2014) and Humal (2013) that unemployed caregivers are less likely to be involved in the education of their children. Unemployed caregivers do not take part in the fundraising for their children's school as they fear that they may be required to contribute financially (Humal, 2013).

Contrarily, Powdthavee and Vernoit (2013) argue that caregivers who do not have a stable job and money are more likely to be active in their children's education since they do not have much to do in their spare time. This may be the case as this extra time could be spent assisting their children with homework or other matters to improve the children's academic achievement (Oster, 2014).

Lastly, long-term unemployment can change family dynamics and affect a child's attitudes and aspirations, which shapes their future achievement. Educated people have been proven to have a better chance of finding a job, and access to education is a step towards social mobility for people from lower to higher social standing (O'Higgins, 2015). The author goes on to emphasise that education is still the most effective weapon against unemployment. As a result, it can be said that employment and success in adulthood are largely dependent on education.

## **2.9 UNEMPLOYMENT AND RESILIENCE**

Unemployment refers to individuals aged 18 to 64 who are willing and able to work but are unable to do so due to a lack of employment opportunities (Statistics South Africa, 2019). According to Statistics South Africa (2019) the unemployment rate in South Africa was 30.1% in the fourth quarter of 2019, implying that many people and families are facing adversity in this regard. Presently, the COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated the already suffering economy by influencing the unemployment rate (World Health Organization, 2020). Unemployment has always been a contentious subject across the world since it is related to economic performance and international trade. Locally, the issue of unemployment has always been a reality in South Africa, predating the democratic era (Statistics South Africa, 2019).



Graham and Mlatsheni (2015) have discovered that the long-term effects of unemployment and poor labour-market experiences results in higher rates of depression, lower self-esteem, and a sense of discouragement. It is worth noting that unemployment disempowers people and families, and also impairs their psychological well-being. Rutter (2012) points out that unemployment involves many changes that can impact an individual's self-esteem, sense of purpose, and ability to manage family difficulties. It is also difficult to direct personal and environmental resources in order to overcome these obstacles (Sojo & Guarino, 2011).

Mampane (2014) believes that unemployment threatens family functioning, which is echoed by Walsh (2016b), who finds that economic insecurity can have an impact on family functioning and the resilience of family members. Despite the challenges, Mampane (2014) maintains that families from low-income areas show resilience through building their relationships by openly discussing feelings and emotions, which are predictors of positive coping mechanisms. In terms of the negative effects of unemployment, it should be noted that some people are resilient in life and are able to endure difficulty and overcome tough situations. On this note, resilience is defined as a dynamic process shown in one's ability to recover or bounce back when confronted with adversity (Ungar, 2011). This dynamic process varies depending on the environment, making resilience a learned ability rather than an inherent one. Unemployed people can foster resilience and perhaps minimise the negative effects of job loss on their families and family relationships by employing a variety of relational, social, and physical coping techniques (Beck, 2016; Ungar, 2011). Furthermore, individuals that are capable of developing resilience traits are generally gifted in other areas, such as self-efficacy, confidence, drive, and self-esteem, which allows them to maximise their psychological well-being (Mak et al., 2011).

According to Mahlangu (2015), families from poor socio-economic backgrounds in South Africa use social support and help from extended family members to cope with unfavourable circumstances. In addition, Malekutu (2014) studied the survival strategies of unemployed women in rural areas in the Limpopo province, and found that many of these women relied on social welfare grants, informal trade, and gambling to make it through the tough times. It has been proven that these external

sources increase family resilience as families manage by tapping into their kinship networks, social networks, and other economic resources. Furthermore, Mahlangu (2015) has discovered that families from poor socio-economic backgrounds work together to forge new opportunities and strengths by reorganising their roles. These initiatives demonstrate these families' connection and adaptability. In the following paragraph, I address family support, or rather, how families support children to be resilient.

## **2.10 FAMILY SUPPORT: HOW FAMILIES SUPPORT CHILDREN TO BE RESILIENT**

According to Louw (2018), individuals must be understood in the context of their family as the family is an emotional unit. Families are complex networks of interrelated and interdependent individuals, none of them can be understood in isolation. It is undeniable that the family is vital to the well-being of its members. Well-functioning families are better able to cope with adversity and deal with unforeseen circumstances (Koen et al., 2012). Moreover, these families communicate effectively, nurture one another emotionally, spend time together, support one another, and practice good parenting skills (Koen et al., 2012). Walsh (2016c) adds to this that resilient families are cohesive and have flexible roles, a positive belief system, and effective communication and problem-solving skills. She describes the positive feelings that are promoted when families express their feelings, nurture, and support each other. Flexible family roles further assist families to adapt to stressors such as economic difficulties and illnesses and helps the family as a unit to take advantage of the strengths of individual family members (Walsh, 2016b).

Family plays a huge role during the developmental stages of the child as it is the best resource available to children whenever they encounter challenges. Interestingly, effective parenting is considered to be the most well studied protective factor for children exposed to trauma and stress (Howell et al., 2010). Masten (2014a) concurs, explaining that a family can act as a protective factor that enhances familial ties through family rituals and resilience. Protective factors such as a strong sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem do not necessarily protect children from risk. Rather, having at least one warm, caring, and supportive parent can cushion

children against the adverse effects of divorce, poverty, child abuse, and family conflict. According to Das (2010), family plays a crucial role in building children's resilience and in the prevention of risky behaviour. Bowes et al. (2010) concur with this statement as they find that the extended family unit is also imperative as it meets children's social requirements and offers them extra assistance.

The children living in Mamelodi need significant protection and resilience in order to overcome the adversities and barriers in their development contexts. Success stories usually acknowledge the involvement of at least one significant person and/or other resources from the immediate environment (Mampane & Boucher, 2011). The above literature has uncovered the critical points of interest relating to how unemployed caregivers support the resilience of their school-going children. However, a large portion of the studies explored has failed to see and understand how unemployed caregivers support the resilience of their school-going children. The strategies that unemployed caregivers use to enhance the resilience of their school-going children therefore need to be investigated to gain an in-depth understanding. In the case of this research, this was gained from learners about the participating caregivers' personal experiences.

## **2.11 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical framework of this study is Ungar's (2011) Social Ecology of Resilience Theory (SERT). The concepts that underpin this theory are discussed in the following sections.

This framework seeks to understand the variables that contribute to the resilience process. In this section, I discuss how the participants' experiences resonated with the goals of using this framework. The SERT has four key principles that can be used to explain the resilience of caregivers. According to Ungar (2011) the social-ecological definition of resilience emphasises the significance of the dynamic relationship between people and their social ecologies to positively adapt in the face of difficulties. Ungar's (2011) SERT views resilience as a system in which individuals and their relationships, or social ecologies, work together to help individuals prevent the negative results that are seen in adversity. In this process, resources already

present in the social ecology are used and scaffolded by inherent and extrinsic variables, leading to beneficial adjustments (Ebersöhn, 2012b). Ungar (2015) highlights the social ecology's role and accountability in allowing children and adolescents to thrive. The literature on resilience emphasises social ecologies' contribution to resilience. Therefore, in SERT, the emphasis is not on the individual's static characteristics, but on the processes involving a child and their social ecology in accessing the resources required to adapt well despite adversity.

The four principles are presented as the foundation for an ecological interpretation of the structure of resilience: decentrality, complexity, atypicality, and cultural relativity. These four principles and the research on which they are grounded inform the definition of resilience that highlights the background of positive environmental growth (Ungar, 2011). Figure 2.2 below depicts the four principles of Ungar's Social Ecology of Resilience Model.

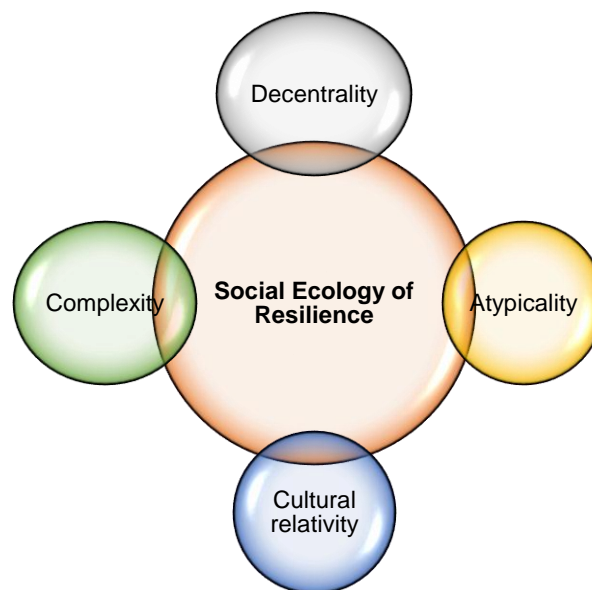


Figure 2.2: The principles of Social Ecology of Resilience (Ungar, 2011)

### 2.11.1 Decentrality

Decentrality emphasises the importance of the social ecology of the individual, while de-emphasising the individual in explaining resilience processes (Ungar, 2011). In terms of SERT, the focus is thus on the responsibilities and contributions of social ecologies (Ungar, 2011). Ungar (2015) claims that "individual traits typically count

for less of the variance in children's outcome than systematic factors" (p. 14). SERT therefore does not view the adolescent as central in explanations of resilience. This does not mean that the adolescent cannot be held responsible for being or not being resilient. However, according to Theron (2016a), social ecologies must take responsibility for creating resilience rather than putting the burden on the child to positively embrace it through their own efforts alone.

### **2.11.2 Complexity**

Complexity in this context means that resilience is not a simplified process. Instead, it entails a dynamic and complex interaction between an individual and his or her social environment (Ungar, 2011). According to Van Rensburg (2014), the complexity principle proposes that contextually and temporally specific models must be developed to explain the results of resilience. Although patterns may appear, the evidence encourages caution when claiming the generalisability of results if social and physical ecologies are not kept continuously (Van Rensburg, 2014). According to Ungar (2011), resilience is a diverse and dynamic phenomenon embedded in the personalised social ecologies of individuals, and is linked to normative demands and challenges related to adaptation, both positive and maladaptive (Ungar, 2011). However, resilience is not a structured concept that can be applied in the same manner to all contexts, which is explored further below.

### **2.11.3 Atypicality**

The second principle, atypicality, states that resilience is a context-specific process and, based on cultural and sub-cultural factors, what encourages resilience may be interpreted differently in different contexts. Any resilience processes may be regarded as atypical since they encourage resilience in a particular context only (Bottrell, 2009). Ungar (2011) suggests that many different experiences, resources, or opportunities could lead to positive results, even if they do not reflect socially acceptable resilience paths. Atypicality also characterises the protection of children's environments when resources are scarce (Ungar, 2011).

#### **2.11.4 Cultural relativity**

The final principle of Ungar's Theory of Resilience concerns cultural relativity. According to Luthar et al. (2000) and Ungar (2011), SERT considers resilience as a process that is rooted in transparent social ecologies and integrated structures that function at different levels. Adolescents in these systems must navigate the available services and bargain positively for resources that are required but inaccessible (this process of negotiation and navigation is influenced by culture). It is thus critical to explore the interwoven relationship between resilience and culture (Theron & Phasha, 2014). Panter-Brick (2015) defines culture as a shared worldview and expectation. Cultural norms such as attitudes, behaviours, expectations, and beliefs can have both good and negative effects on the resilience cycle (Theron, 2016b).

Rutter (2012b) suggests that resilience processes be interpreted through a culturally relevant lens. As a result, descriptions of young people's resilience and how resilience processes express themselves should be adapted to the society and environment in which they exist (Rutter, 2012b). Therefore, SERT views resilience as a process rooted in open and intertwined social ecologies that operate at multiple levels.

#### **2.12 CONCLUSION**

The preceding literature review provided a comprehensive overview of the topic of resilience. The SERT was used to guide the observation and exploration of essential principles relating to the resilience of school-going children. The following chapter will address the research methodology, data collection methods, the role of the researcher, the research ethics, as well as the rigour of this study.

## CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I present a thorough explanation of how the current study was carried out by examining the chosen methodological approach and research design. Details of the participant selection process and methodology, as well as the participants' demographics are provided, followed by a description of the data collection method employed. Following that, I discuss the reason for utilising a thematic analysis, as well as the procedure of applying the approach deductively. Qualitative research is aimed at offering an in-depth understanding of the community in which the participants live. Qualitative research is commonly characterised as a naturalistic, interpretive approach that is concerned with examining phenomena from the perspective of the participants (Ritchie et al., 2013). According to Ritchie et al. (2013), the researcher's role is to learn about how the participants make sense of their material and social situations, views, perceptions, and backgrounds. The trustworthiness of the study is further demonstrated. This chapter closes with the ethical concerns that were followed throughout the data collection and analysis phases to ensure safety standards.

Figure 3.1 below depicts a schematic representation of the process that I followed during the research process. In this study, I took an interpretative approach since this was a qualitative study, I thus found the participants' perspectives to be crucial. I utilised a single case study design, and chose the participants using purposive and snowballing sampling methods. Furthermore, a focus group discussion was conducted to collect valuable data from the participating caregivers. The data obtained was then analysed using a thematic data analysis in order to answer the research questions and validate or invalidate the researcher's assumptions, depending on the answers obtained.

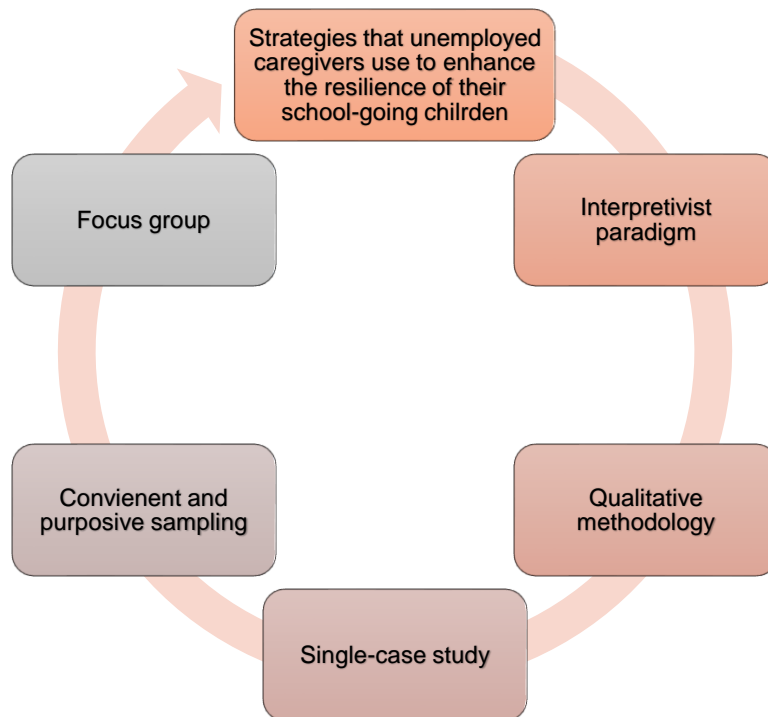


Figure 3.1: Visual representation of the research process

### 3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research primary question and sub-question aimed to direct the focus of the study:

*How do unemployed caregivers enhance the resilience of their school-going children?*

*What are the challenges that may inhibit unemployed caregivers in supporting their school-going children?*

### 3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: QUALITATIVE METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research refers to a thorough holistic investigation and description of the phenomenon identified in a specific field. Qualitative research aims to help people understand phenomena rather than test hypotheses (Willig, 2013). Qualitative research allows researchers to study the daily life of various groups of people and societies in their natural environment; it is especially useful for studying educational settings and processes.



It concentrates on the 'why' rather than the 'what' of social phenomena and on human beings' direct experiences as meaningful agents in their everyday lives (Creswell, 2007).

According to Myers (2009), qualitative research is intended to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural environments in which they reside. Research methodology is a way of solving or responding to the research problem systematically. It can, therefore, be understood essentially as the process of studying how the research is conducted in a scientific manner (Gravetter & Forzano 2016). Qualitative research was deemed suitable in this study because it seeks to describe and explain how people experience events (Willig, 2013). Due to the subjective nature of this study, qualitative information needed to be gathered from the participants to gain an in-depth understanding of their experiences. In particular, I was interested in understanding the personal experiences of unemployed caregivers. A qualitative research method therefore assisted me to explore these experiences, and enable the caregivers to share their stories of being unemployed and how they supported the resilience of their school-going children.

### **3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN: CASE STUDY DESIGN**

This study employed a case study research design, which allows the researcher to obtain tangible, contextual, and in-depth knowledge about a certain real-world subject (Thomas, 2010). When employing a case study method, the researcher is able to evaluate the data in a specific context in great detail. In most situations, a case study technique focuses on a small geographic region or a small number of individuals (Creswell, 2012). Furthermore, it also seeks to understand individuals or groups' behaviours and attitudes through active involvement in the research, observation, interviews (individual or group), and analysis of the data collected from these methods (Thomas, 2010). Phelan (2011) asserts that case study research allows for in-depth analysis of novel or ambiguous phenomena while "retaining the holistic and relevant features of real-life occurrences" (p. 4). These findings have led to the basic case study being recognised as more than just a research method, but also a design in its own right. A descriptive single-case study was deemed appropriate for this study since it attempts to investigate and explore the lived

experiences of a single research participant group (Creswell, 2012). In this case, the participants were unemployed caregivers, and the study was carried out in the participants' natural context, namely, the Singobile Drop-in Centre in Mamelodi.

### **3.5 RESEARCH PARADIGM: INTERPRETIVISM**

Research is based on some fundamental philosophical assumptions regarding what constitutes validity, and which research methods are ideal for enhancing knowledge in a given study (Ritchie et al., 2013). A research procedure has three primary elements: ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). A research paradigm is a systematic framework of interrelated practice and thought that determines the essence of inquiry in these three dimensions. According to Walsham (1993), the interpretivist approach emphasises that there is no objective knowledge waiting to be uncovered. Knowledge and reality are socially constructed by human beings. According to Willis (1995), interpretivists are anti-foundationalists who believe that there is no single correct route or a particular method of obtaining knowledge. Walsham (1993) argues that there are no 'correct' or 'incorrect' theories in the tradition of interpretation. Rather, each theory should be judged by how 'interesting' it is for both the researcher and those involved in the same field.

Reeves and Hedberg (2003) note that the interpretivist paradigm stresses the need to contextualise the analysis. The interpretive paradigm deals with understanding the world as it is from individuals' subjective experiences. Therefore, I decided to use the interpretivist paradigm in this study. This position later determined the basis for my research design and data collection methods. An interpretivist approach enabled the interviewed caregivers to interpret their own lived experiences as they perceived them and give the phenomenon a subjective interpretation. This study aimed to understand the participants' experiences based on their descriptions, deliberations, and interpretations of the interactions in their social contexts through their own interpretation (Walsham, 1993).

## 3.6 SAMPLING

### 3.6.1.1 Purposive and convenient sampling

Purposive sampling was utilised to select the participants for this study because it allowed me to select suitable participants that would be able to provide an answer to the research questions. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that is selected based on the characteristics of a population and the study's purpose (Creswell, 2012). Purposive sampling is also referred to as judgmental, subjective, or selective sampling. According to Maree (2016), purposive sampling refers to sampling in which specific settings, events and individuals are deliberately selected to provide important information that cannot be obtained from other methods. Purposive sampling is suitable in cases where the researcher wishes to detect specific types of cases that meet the study outline and require further in-depth examination. Purposive sampling does not allow for the generalisability of the findings to a large population, but rather gains a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study (Maree, 2016). Consequently, I selected seven caregivers that I knew would provide relevant information about the strategies that they used to support the resilience of their school-going children. The advantages of purposive sampling are that it reaches a targeted sample very fast, the research designs can include multiple phases, and there are numerous types of purposive sampling methods available. This enabled me to find homogenous samples, look at the characteristics of an entire population, and perform typical case sampling (Ayres, 2019).

Convenience sampling was also utilised. This is a sampling technique used by qualitative researchers to attract individuals who are easily accessible and conveniently located in proximity to the researcher. This frequently includes making use of geographical location and resources that make participant recruiting easier (Ayres, 2019; Maree, 2016). Convenient samples are often referred to as 'accidental samples' since they are randomly picked because they are located in close proximity to where the researcher is collecting data. Moreover, convenience sampling is inexpensive and easy because the subjects are readily available. The primary assumption behind convenience sampling is that the target population is

homogenous (Willig, 2013). The purposive and convenient sampling methods allowed me to learn more about the strategies that caregivers use to enhance the resilience of their school-going children. A small focus group of seven people was also employed for quality assurance reasons to ensure that the collected data was accurate.

### 3.7 SELECTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The sample of this study comprised seven participants (two males and four females). The age group of the participants ranged from 39 to 72 years of age, and all of them were unemployed at the time of this study (see Table 3.1 below). Caregivers were selected from a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) in Mamelodi. They were required to have school-going children, and be able to speak English and IsiZulu. A translator was present to assist with those who spoke Setswana and Sepedi. In short, the participants fulfilled the following criteria, they were:

- Residents of Mamelodi; and
- Unemployed caregivers with school-going children under their care, or dependents who attended school.

Table 3.1: Demographics of the participants

Participants	Age	Gender	No. of dependents	Marital Status	Year started receiving support from the centre	No. of years unemployed	Education
P1: Single mother	39	Female	1	Single, never married.	2019	15 months.	Grade 12.
P2: Single mother	42	Female	2	Single, never married.	2017	19 months.	Grade 12.
P3: Single mother	50	Female	2	Single, never married.	2016	Two years.	Grade 11.

Participants	Age	Gender	No. of dependents	Marital Status	Year started receiving support from the centre	No. of years unemployed	Education
P4: Single mother	40	Female	8	Single, never married.	2009	Five years.	Grade 12.
P5: Father	50	Male	3	Married	2018	Four years.	Grade 11
P6: Grandfather	72	Male	2	Married	Two.	Retired.	No formal education
P7: Grandmother	71	Female	2	Married	Does not remember.	Retired.	No formal education

In South Africa, many families are headed by grandparents, which explains why the sample in this study included retired citizens.

### 3.7.1 Research site

The Matimba/Sinqobile Drop-in Centre is a community non-profit organisation that serves the area's most vulnerable families and children. Weekly visits are carried out by formal caregivers to ensure that families' psychosocial needs are met. For funding, the centre engages and partners with a variety of private firms, as well as government stakeholders, such as the Department of Social Development. This helps social workers to reach out to disadvantaged families and provide them with the required psychosocial interventions. Police stations, libraries, the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), Home Affairs, and clinics are some of the involved stakeholders. Photos of the Matimba/Sinqobile Drop-in Centre are displayed below.



Figure 3.2: Photo of the Matimba/Sinqobile Drop-in Centre in Mamelodi East (Maimela, 2020)



Figure 3.3: Photo of the Matimba/Sinqobile Drop-in Centre in Mamelodi East (SA Gov News, 2019)

Figure 3.4 below depicts the support services offered at the Sinqobile/Matimba Drop-in Centre.

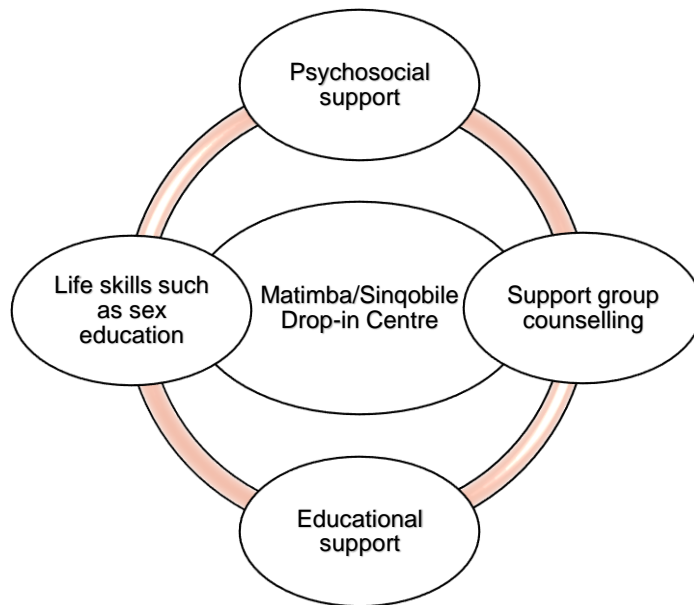


Figure 3.4: Services provided by the Matimba/Sinqobile Drop-in Centre

### 3.8 DATA COLLECTION AND DOCUMENTATION

#### 3.8.1 Focus group: unemployed caregivers

A focus group is considered as a one-time meeting with people who have not met before and who share a common experience, such as unemployment or the death of a child (Carey & Asbury, 2016). According to Silverman (2016), focus groups usually consist of six to 12 individuals coming together to engage with each other and the researcher and share their experiences. I had a focus group with seven unemployed caregivers. According to Carey and Asbury (2016), focus groups are best suited to situations and communities in which the participants are competent, eager, and able to communicate; the subject and group atmosphere should also be conducive to group interaction.

The participants were shared a common language and had similar, significant experiences. A focus group can offer insights into people's beliefs and attitudes, and provide context and perspective that allow a more holistic interpretation of experiences. The explanations of the participants' experiences can provide unique information about how the members organise and make sense of their experiences (Carey & Asbury, 2016). The focus group interview took approximately 60 minutes and was held at the Matimba/Sinqobile Drop-in Centre as I assumed that they would



feel more comfortable in an environment that which was familiar to them. Creswell (2012) corroborated this, stating that it is easier to conduct interviews with participants in a comfortable environment where the participants do not feel limited or uncomfortable sharing information. In this case, this allowed the participants to speak freely, honestly, and openly on the subject being researched (Creswell, 2012).

The focus group interview assisted me in getting detailed information from the participants. Moreover, since my research questions were open-ended, the participants were able to answer fully and openly about their experiences. I used a voice recorder with the participants' permission to document their feelings and perceptions regarding their situations. This enabled the information that was collected to be accurately captured. The use of the tape recorder ensured that a detailed account of the interview was recorded, and it enabled me to focus on the research process (Carey & Asbury, 2016). The interview was conducted primarily in English, however, there was a translator present to translate for those who did not understand some of the English terms used. The translator ensured that every participant's voice is heard, and this strengthen the study even more.

### **3.8.2 Field notes and observations**

I used field notes and observations as a second data storage method. These included notes regarding the participants' gender, age, education, and other characteristics. Several qualitative studies suggest taking notes to supplement the audio recording of an interview. In a focus group interview, the nonverbal cues of the interview can be captured by notetaking. However, note-taking may be distracting and obtrusive for the respondents (Opdenakker, 2006). I recorded notes and made recordings of the interview conducted. The data were then transcribed and analysed using the thematic analysis. I read and listened to the transcribed data repeatedly during the analysis phase.

According to Nieuwenhuis (2007), observation can be defined as a systematic process of documenting participants' behavioural patterns without questioning or talking to them. This approach implies that behaviour is purposeful and reflects underlying values and ideas. I was able to gain an insider's perspective on group



dynamics and behaviour in a variety of settings through observation. Field notes were used to document my informal observations. During the focus group discussion, the informal observations focused on the physical look of the community centre, as well as the interactions of the participants. The fundamental goal of observation is to immerse the reader in the context of the study as observed by the researcher. As a result, I was able to observe and describe the participants' backgrounds, lifestyles, and interpersonal relationships (see Appendix D).

### **3.8.3 Data collection process**

The data were collected on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2020, the focus group session was conducted in English and IsiZulu with a translator present to assist with Sepedi and Setswana because the participants would sometimes respond in those languages. The focus group discussion was held at the Matimba/Sinqobile Drop-in Centre. I used an audio recorder to record the session with unemployed caregivers. The discussion was guided by open-ended questions (see Appendix C) derived from the research questions. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, I phoned the participants on 11 January 2021 to confirm the accuracy of their responses in our first meeting, this is known as member checking.

## **3.9 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Data analysis refers to the process of bringing structure, order, and meaning to the mass of the collected data (Anney, 2014). Thematic analysis was chosen as an appropriate approach to identify, analyse, and report patterns in the data in this study. Thematic analysis was also chosen due to its versatility, since it can be used with a variety of theoretical frameworks, and is not limited to usage in situations that employ certain pre-existing theoretical frameworks (Braun & Clarke, 2019). According to Braun and Clarke (2019), thematic analysis refers to the process of identifying themes or patterns within qualitative data in a way that offers a rich and comprehensive account of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2014). The authors suggest that thematic analysis is the first qualitative method to be learned as it provides core skills that are useful in carrying out other types of analysis.

Thematic analysis allows the data to be interpreted and trends to be identified in the conclusions or results of a study. Thematic analysis goes beyond simply counting words or phrases in a text, but rather extends to the classification of implicit and explicit ideas within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2014). A thematic analysis allows the researcher to create a link between frequent themes and the main, overarching theme of the research (Clarke & Braun, 2012). Braun and Clarke (2014) contend that thematic analysis can be changed according to the needs of the study, providing detailed and rich, yet multiple accounts of the data. Lastly, thematic analysis is a useful method for investigating the perceptions of different participants, generating unexpected insights, and highlighting differences and similarities (Braun & Clarke, 2014).

As outlined by Braun and Clark (2014), the following six steps were followed to carry out a thematic analysis in this study:

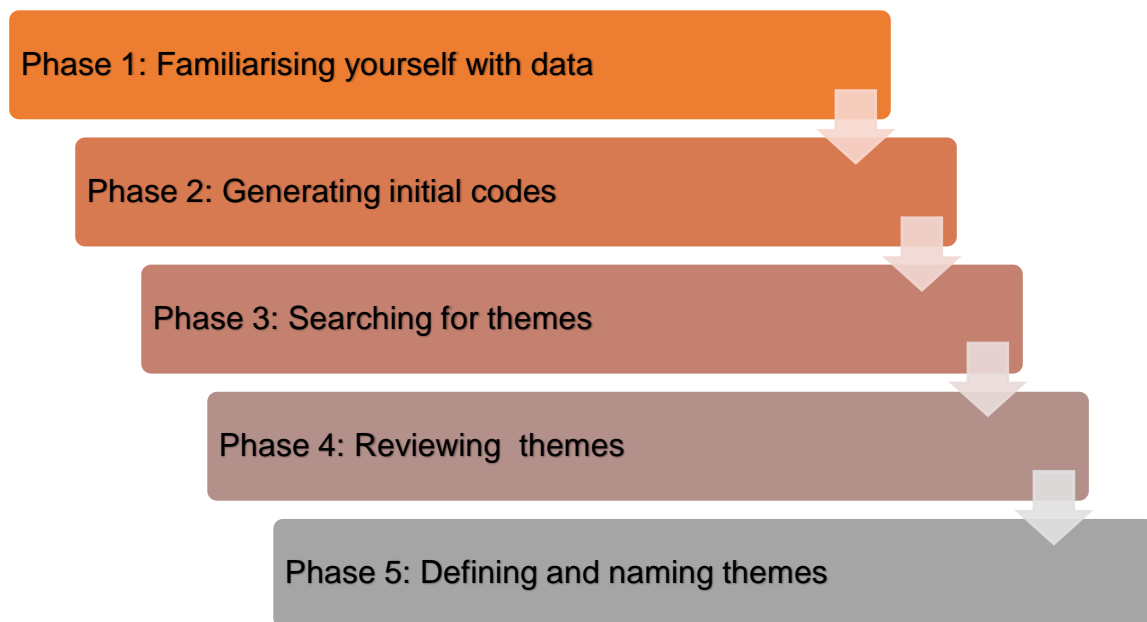


Figure 3.5: The six phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2014)

During Phase 1 of the thematic analysis, I familiarised myself with the data by going through the written transcript, listening to the recorded audio, and taking notes. In Phase 2, which involved coding, I read the transcripts frequently and attentively, and I linked the identified themes according to their similarities (Braun & Clarke, 2019). In Phase 3, I made sense of the themes that emerged. Braun and Clark (2012) point

out that the researcher can group all additional information that relates to the identified themes in the thematic analysis in order to acquire rich meaning. This is done by referring to coded data during Phase 4, which includes examining possible themes (Braun & Clarke, 2012). If there is no relevant data to support a particular theme, the researcher may have to reject it (Braun & Clark, 2012). Determining the themes and labelling them comprises the fifth phase. The fifth stage involves naming and defining the topics. The researcher must describe how closely the topic relates to the study question, if it is precisely targeted, and whether the themes tell a cohesive story at this point (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The sixth phase entails producing a report. The goal of the report is to present a cohesive story based on the interwoven themes; this should be rational, persuasive, and answer the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

### **3.10 TRUSTWORTHINESS**

According to Maree (2016), when conducting qualitative research, the researcher is expected to consider different criteria for improved research validity and to ensure accuracy and reliability. In qualitative research, trustworthiness is defined as exhibiting integrity, competence, and ethics, particularly during the data collecting and analysis process. The credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability principles established by Creswell (2014) were used to ensure rigor in this work. The four principles are explained further below.

#### **3.10.1 Credibility**

The degree to which information and data in a study are found to be genuine and continuous relates to credibility in qualitative research. Credibility is equivalent to internal validity as it examines the results of the study and compares it with environmental truth (Creswell, 2014). Creswell (2012) argues that data should be analysed by more than one researcher to ensure trustworthiness. In this case, my supervisor examined my data analysis to ensure that reasonable interpretations were made, and that the data were presented clearly. In addition, I did two interviews four months apart to allow for personal reflection. The second interview allowed for the member checking process, in which the preliminary results and interpretations

were tested against raw data with the participants. The participants were also allowed to validate their initial responses and confirm the preliminary findings. This greatly assisted me to rule out the risk of misinterpreting the accuracy and meaning of the participants' utterances. It also assisted me in identifying personal biases and misunderstandings regarding any of the initial data obtained.

### **3.10.2 Transferability**

According to Nowell et al. (2017), research results are regarded as transferable or generalisable if, in addition to the actual study context, they are acceptable in, and applicable to new contexts. When the results are released, it enables the reader to take note of the particular information of the study scenario and techniques, and thus compare them to familiar circumstances. This study focused on unemployed caregivers in Mamelodi East who met specific requirements (see Section 3.5). Moreover, the context, methodology, and design of the study were discussed in detail so that the findings and conclusions may be applied to other contexts.

### **3.10.3 Confirmability**

Confirmability is a measurement of how well the information gathered supports the results of an investigation (Creswell, 2014). It relates to the extent that other people can confirm or corroborate the study results. Confirmability enhancement strategies include searching for negative cases that run counter to most findings and conducting a data audit to identify bias or areas of distortion (Creswell, 2014). To guarantee the credibility of this study, I detail the theoretical lens, methodology, and provide direct quotes of the participants' opinions in Chapter 4 to demonstrate how these fit into the designated themes. In order to improve confirmability, I also included my supervisor as a reviewer in the data analysis step. After the study was completed, the data were checked and rechecked to confirm that the findings and interpretations were accurate.

### **3.10.4 Dependability**

This refers to an evaluation of the quality of information collection, data analysis, and theory generation procedures. Unless it is dependable, qualitative research

cannot be considered credible (Nowell et al., 2017). A reliability investigation must provide evidence to an audience that the results would be comparable if they were to be repeated with the same or similar participants in the same or a comparable context (Creswell, 2014). As detailed in Sections 3.6 and 3.7 of this chapter, I have clearly outlined the research method and process in a logical and traceable manner to assure dependability. Specifically, I explained why two sample techniques were chosen, the data collection and transcription, the interview protocols, and the data analysis process. Furthermore, the data collection, analysis, and theory were all extensively integrated and analysed to assure repeatability should a similar and comparable study be conducted in the future.

### **3.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

According to Yegidis et al. (2012), ethics are the principles governing the behaviour that is considered correct or incorrect by society. In addition, David and Sutton (2011) mention that ethics guide the researcher to protect the research participants from possible harm, and to safeguard their rights. When conducting a study, ethical considerations should be prioritised to protect the dignity and rights of the participants (Gravetter & Forzano, 2016). Furthermore, Gravetter and Forzano (2009) state that research ethics guide researchers to be truthful and respectful towards all participants. Ethical clearance must therefore be sought before conducting research for moral and legal reasons. Therefore, before conducting this research, I obtained ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria (UP 12/09/01 Mampane 19-002).

#### **3.11.1 Confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity**

Confidentiality can be defined as a situation in which the researcher knows the identity of the participants, but takes steps to prevent the discovery of the participants' identity by others (Gravetter & Forzano, 2016). I assured my participants that confidentiality and anonymity would be preserved by removing any identifying features and information before disseminating the findings of the study. I also made it clear to the participants that their names would not be utilised.

Therefore, conscious efforts were made to maintain confidentiality throughout the study.

### **3.11.2 Informed consent**

According to Foxcroft and Roodt (2013), informed consent refers to participants' voluntary agreement to take part in the research. It is not just a signed form, but rather a process in which participants fully comprehend the research and its risks. Informed consent is crucial before conducting any study involving human participants. Written informed consent was obtained from the caregivers prior to the interview (refer to Appendix A).

### **3.11.3 Honesty and trust**

During the data collection and analysis, I rigorously followed all ethical guidelines and standards pertaining to honesty and trustworthiness.

### **3.11.4 Debriefing**

Debriefing refers to discussing the purpose of the study and the implication of the final report with the participants (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2013). The participants were debriefed to learn about their experiences regarding the topic under study, and to update them based on adjustments to the research (Willig, 2013).

### **3.11.5 Voluntary participation**

The participants should be provided with the option to participate or not in the research (Gravetter & Forzano, 2016). All of the participants took part in the study of their own free will and were neither bribed nor coerced into it. The participants were also free to withdraw from the study at any time without fear of negative repercussions. The research ethics were fully discussed with them before obtaining their signed consent/assent letters.

### **3.11.6 Protection from harm**

According to Anney (2014), social research should never harm the people being studied, whether or not they volunteer to be part of the study. This indicates that the

participants should be aware of the risks and purpose of the study from the start. The participants' right to privacy was respected in this study, and I took measures to safeguard them from psychological harm. I made certain that a social worker from the drop-in centre was present to cater to any emotional or psychological issues that may develop as a result of participating in this study.

### **3.12 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER**

According to Nieuwenhuis (2007), the researcher takes part and is involved in the social or research environment. Furthermore, the role of the researcher is to collect, analyse the data, and report on the findings.

### **3.13 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Language barriers and cultural differences were foreseen to cause difficulties between the participants and the researcher. This limitation was overcome by having a caregiver act as a translator. The translator ensured that every participant's voice is heard, and this strengthened the study even more.

### **3.14 CONCLUSION**

This chapter outlined the research methodology, research design, data collection techniques, quality assurance, as well as ethical considerations of this study. The next chapter concentrates on the findings of the study, providing in-depth data on the main research results resulting from the thematic analysis.

## CHAPTER 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. I begin this chapter by addressing the inclusion and exclusion requirements for each theme and the sub-themes defined. The themes and sub-themes emerged from a thematic analysis of the raw data. Furthermore, the thematic analysis was used to formulate a description of the participants' strategies for enhancing the resilience of their school-going children. The results presented in this chapter are both supported with and contrasted against the literature, which will be focused on in the next chapter.

### 4.2 DATA COLLECTION DATES

Figure 4.1 below summarises the data collection process, as stipulated in Chapter 3.

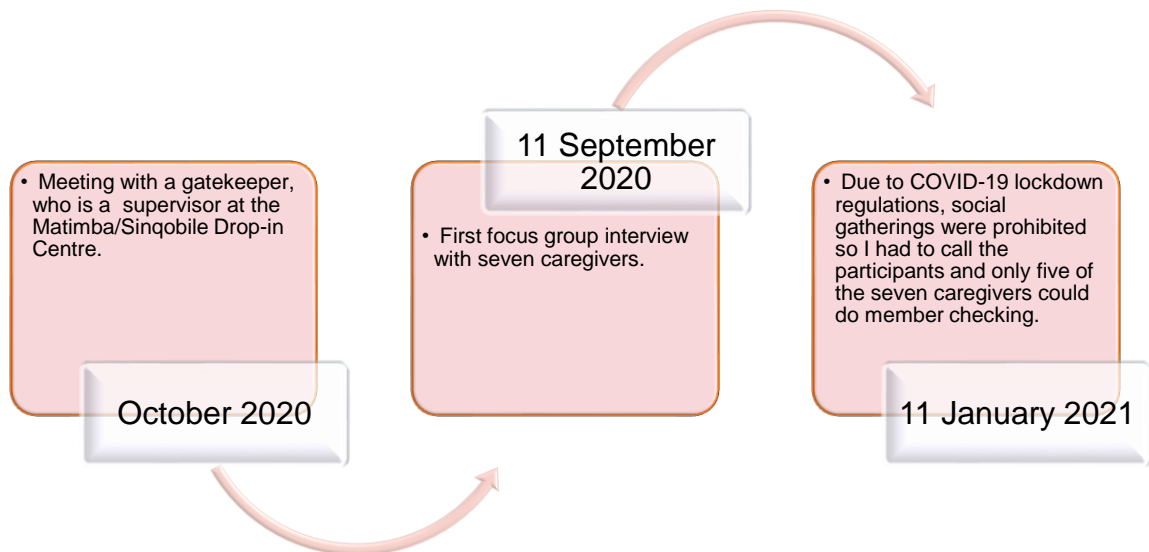


Figure 4.1: Visual representation of the data collection process



#### 4.2.1 Brief background of the participants

The information that follows was obtained from a focus group that was held at a drop-in centre in Mamelodi with unemployed caregivers. I used a voice recorder, field notes to record the interview, and made notes while listening to the interview recordings. Participant 1 (P1) is a single parent who is unemployed and has one child under her care. In 2019, she began getting assistance from the drop-in centre after being unemployed for five months. In total, at the time of this study, she had been unemployed and receiving support from the centre for 15 months.

Participant 2 (P2) is an unemployed single parent with two children. In 2017, she began getting assistance from the centre and had been unemployed for 19 months at the time of this study. Participant (P3) is an unemployed single parent with two children who has been unemployed for two years, and has relied on the centre since 2016. Participant 4 (P4) is a single mother with eight children who has been unemployed for five years and has been getting assistance from the drop-in centre since 2009. Participant 5 (P5) is a married father of three children who has been jobless for four years. At the time of this study, he had begun to sell fragrances to help put food on the table but had been getting assistance from the drop-in centre since 2018. His wife worked for a feeding scheme in one of the schools in Mamelodi.

Participant 6 (P6) is a grandfather who currently lives with his two grandchildren. His children abandoned their children to him to look after. Participant 6 had worked for the government for 12 years and thus received a pension. Participant 7 (P7) is an unemployed parent on pension with 2 children. One of her children is mentally handicapped and refuses to undergo treatment. Her other children have grown up and have started their own families, and do not support her financially. She is currently on both a government pension and her previous company pension.

In many cases, a single-parent family entails a single source of income. According to a 2019 analysis produced by Multnomah County, this increases the likelihood of poverty in such families. Single-parent homes account for 33% of all poverty in the county, the highest percentage of any group (Lu et al., 2019). The situation is similar in South Africa but is worsened by low levels of education. Those with Grade 12 or no formal qualifications at all account for the largest percentage of jobless youth

(1.23 million), with these South Africans also being the least likely to obtain any formal job over a longer length of time (Statistics South Africa, 2020). The link between poverty and single parenthood is undeniable. Unfortunately, it is even worse when the single parents are women. According to Holborn and Eddy (2011), 13% of single mothers in metropolitan areas are between the ages of 16 and 24; 33% of single mothers are between the ages of 25 and 34; 24% of single mothers are between the ages of 35 and 44; and 23% of single mothers are between the ages of 45 and 64. As a result of shifting marital norms, the number of absentee fathers is on the rise (Mokomane, 2012). When a single parent's income is insufficient to meet the family's needs, they face financial difficulties (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). Children in single-parent households encounter several educational obstacles like economic difficulty, poor academic performance, poverty, a lack of guidance and counselling, a high percentage of dropouts and absenteeism, a lack of school discipline, and a low level of education (Lu et al., 2019). The statistics on single parents and unemployed caregivers over the last five years, according to the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the South African Race Relations Institute (SARRI) show that 60% of South African children have absent fathers. Moreover, more than 40% of South African women are single parents (Lu et al., 2019). Table 4.2 below provides a reference to the abbreviations used in the representation of the data.

Table 4.1: Abbreviation Key

SOURCE	Abbreviation
Researcher	Prudence
Participant	P1: Caregiver
	P2: Caregiver
	P3: Caregiver
	P4: Caregiver
	P5: Caregiver
	P6: Caregiver (Grandfather)
	P7: Caregiver (Grandmother)
Translator	Translator

This study asked the question, ‘What strategies do unemployed caregivers use to enhance the resilience of their school-going children?’ During the thematic analysis, two main themes emerged, as shown in Table 4.3 along with their sub-themes. These themes emerged after evaluating and assessing the raw data produced from the focus group interview, as well as the field notes. The following themes are supported by statements provided by the participants during the data collection process as well as from the field notes:

- Resilience-enhancing strategies that caregivers use with their families; and
- Barriers to resilience-enhancing strategies.

Table 4.2: Themes and sub-themes emerging from the thematic analysis

Theme	Sub-theme
<b>Resilience-enhancing strategies in families</b>	Resilience of the family
<b>Barriers to resilience</b>	No education or qualifications. Age as a barrier. Corruption by the government.

### 4.3 THEME 1: STRATEGIES USED BY CAREGIVERS TO ENHANCE FAMILY RESILIENCE

Table 4.3: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 1

Sub-theme	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
<b>Religiosity/spirituality as a resilient factor</b>	Any reference to religiosity/spirituality as a resilient factor.	Any reference to religiosity/spirituality as a resilient factor other than that of the unemployed caregivers.

#### 4.3.1.1 Subtheme: religiosity/spirituality as a resilient factor

Family resilience refers to the ability of the family to survive and rebound from difficult life experiences (Walsh, 2016a). Families are systems of interconnected and interdependent people, none of whom can be understood in isolation from the system (Walsh, 2012a). When a family approaches adversity as a mutual challenge, they become stronger, loving, and more resourceful when confronted or faced with potential adversities (Patterson, 2002).

According to Walsh (2016a), one of the examples known to secure the stability and power of the family is a belief system. This is effective as it encourages a sense of optimism and hope through trust being invested in a higher being. The caregivers indicated that their religion/spirituality helped them reframe their situation and look for positives, which was related to their belief in God's plan. Furthermore, the caregivers mentioned that they used prayer as a source of hope and strength, and that their trust in God had sustained them. Five of the seven caregivers had the following to say regarding the strategies they used to enhance resilience in the family:

*P3: "What I can say for my side, through prayer, prayer strengthens me, prayer gives me power. I am a single mother, not employed. I survive with the social grant of one child. Now, I have started collecting something, the collection of tin cans so that I can survive. That is what strengthens me, like prayer, it gives me power" (line 120-125).*

Participant 7 supported Participant 3's answer, saying:

*P7: "Prayer and hope" (line 286).*

In a similar vein, Participant 2 also concurred with Participants 3 and 7:

*P2: "Faith in God" (line 289).*

*P5: "... I wish God can give me strength to help them. This is a challenge I am facing" (line 182-183).*

Four of the seven participants expressed the same opinion, indicating that hope, prayer, and faith in God were part of the strategies that they employed to help their school-going children be more resilient. In addition to discussing their belief systems, the caregivers further highlighted communication as a strategy that they used to enhance the resilience of their school-going school. A few of the participants discussed how communication had helped them:

*P4: "Communicate with each other at home" (line 19)*

*P2: "I just sit down with my children and communicate with them. Even the drop-in-centre helps, give strength" (line 165-166).*

This was also evident in the fieldnotes, as it was detailed that:

*P6: "It is challenging but I am trying to take care of my grandchildren, to bring joy and happiness at home. I help the children to resolve the problems it is not easy, but I am trying, whereas it is challenging" (line 24-27).*

Another significant factor that the participants cited as helping to increase resilience and hope was the help they received from the drop-in centre, and their entrepreneurial skills. Four of the seven caregivers had the following to say about the support they received from the drop-in centre:

*P6: "We have problems at school. They give children homework that they did not teach the children and me, I cannot do it because I am uneducated and old and now, I must go to the drop-in centre so that the community care workers, they can help with homework" (line 153-157).*

*P7: "Drop-in centre has really helped me. My grandchild has received awards from the school due to support from the drop-in centre last year. Their mother is not working so I am the one who is providing for them. Really, we must be grateful to the drop-in centre for taking care of our children. Me personally, it has helped me a lot. I can see a lot of progress with my grandchildren. Whenever I have a problem with my grandchildren, I always come to the drop-in centre" (line 158-165).*

*P5: "Sometimes when there is no food at home, food from the drop-in centre helps because now we can all eat" (line 134-135).*

In P4's family, community support as a resilient factor was also evident:

*P4: "Another problem is that children who are at high school, they need smart phones for researching, whereas I do not have money to buy that cell phone or data, so I just sit down with them and explain the situation, and the one who is doing Grade 11, he goes to the drop-in centre and Sir Thabo would assist him with research. Sometimes, I go with my child to the Stanza Bopape centre to help him with research" (line 198-204).*

Five of the seven caregivers had the following to say about their social grant and other sources of income as sources of resilience:

*P5: "I have three children attending the same school. I am not working their mother, she works at the feeding scheme at school. Her salary is not enough to cover everything, and I lost my job so I have started selling perfumes door-to-door so that I can feed my children at home and also the drop-in centre is also helping.*

*Sometimes, they do not buy the perfumes, but at least I know there is social grant that I will receive month-end to buy sugar and eat with pap. It is hard” (line 126-133).*

*P6: “The time I was working I built rooms at home for people to rent so that we can cover the basic needs at home. My social grant money plus the child’s grant is not enough, we buy groceries, pay the bills, and rent, then it runs out, we are left with nothing, but we are trying our best. There is nothing we can do, that is how things are in the world” (line 66-72).*

*P3: “Now, I have started collecting something, the collection of tin cans so that I can survive. That is what is strengthens me, like prayer, it gives me power” (line 123-125).*

*P6: “I am older I do not have hope that I will get a job. I am depending on the social grant, there is no way forward besides collecting bottles and tin cans” (line 184-187).*

Five of the seven caregivers added the following regarding their social grant and other sources of income as sources of resilience in line (190-200):

*P4: “I survive with collecting cans so that I can get some money and sometimes I do some piece jobs, like cleaning, washing, and ironing so that I can survive”.*

*P2: “I do washing”.*

*P1: “I do washing, and I sell cold drinks”.*

*P5: “I sell perfumes and I do carpentry; however, I get gigs for carpentry only by luck. It is worse now, because of the lockdown there is no work. Sometimes I struggle to buy stationery for my children. There is a lack of piece jobs since the lock down”.*

*P3: “I am single mother, not employed. I survive with the social grant of one child. Now, I have started collecting something, the collection of tin cans so that I can survive” (line 121-124).*

Three of the seven caregivers added that being strong and present for the children was also key to promoting resilience:

*P6: “It is challenging, but I am trying to take care of my grandchildren, to bring joy and happiness at home. I help the children to resolve the problems, it is not easy, but I am trying whereas it is challenging” (line 24-27).*

*P3: “Me and my family, we support each other, and we love each other in thick or thin, we support each other” (line 17-18).*

*P4: “Communicate with each other at home” (line 19).*

*P2: “I just sit down with my children and communicate with them. Even the drop-in centre helps, give strength” (line 175-176).*

As can be seen from the above, the caregivers modelled and promoted their school-going children to be resilient despite their adversities. As can be seen above, they were willing to do whatever they could to support their children's resilience. These resilience strategies served as protective factors for the caregivers and their families. In the literature, Walsh (2016c) finds that resilient families are cohesive and have flexible roles, a positive belief system, and effective communication and problem-solving skills. The author continues to describe the positive feelings engendered when families express their feelings, nurture, and support each other. Moreover, Ungar (2011) views resilience as a coping mechanism in which people and their social ecology interact to achieve efficient results in the face of adversity in contextually and culturally appropriate ways. Many of the caregivers expressed that the support they received from the centre was really beneficial and had changed their lives for the better. The diagram below depicts the strategies that these Mamelodi caregivers used to enhance the resilience of their school-going children.

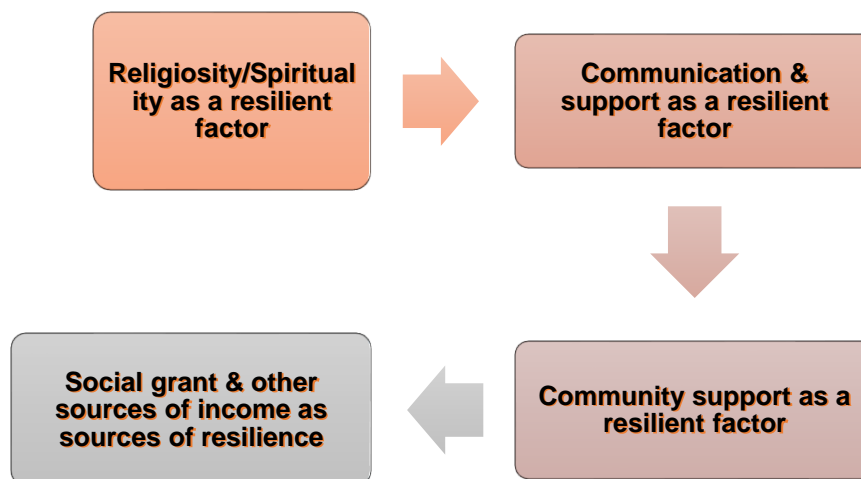


Figure 4.2: Visual summary of the strategies the caregivers used to enhance the resilience of their school-going children

### 4.3.2 Discussion of the findings for Theme 1

This theme stresses the importance of individual roles in the family, the significance of spirituality in connection to family resilience, and the importance of community support in providing hope and helping families to survive. According to Noltemeyer and Bush (2013), resilience-promoting, protective factors can be observed at individual, family, school, and community level. The participants also mentioned and discussed their entrepreneurial skills, as well as the support they received from the centre, which can be seen as community support. Ungar's (2011) research supports this as the SERT regards resilience as a system in which individuals and their relationships, or social ecologies, work together to assist individuals to avert the undesirable outcomes predicted by their adversity. The assistance that these caregivers obtained at the drop-in centre seemed satisfactory and valuable to them.

### 4.4 THEME 2: BARRIERS TO RESILIENCE

According to Walsh (2016a), for resilience to exist, there must be a risk. Risk factors are variables that have been linked to an increased chance of poor physical, behavioural, or emotional outcomes (Edleson & Gewirtz, 2007). Variables like unemployment and poverty could have adverse negative consequences for children, even carrying over to adulthood (Walsh, 2016b). This theme highlights the challenges or risk factors hindering these unemployed caregivers from meeting the needs of their school-going children. Table 4.5 below provides the inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 2.

Table 4.4: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 2

THEME 2: BARRIERS TO RESILIENCE		
Sub-theme	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
<b>Sub-theme:</b> <b>Lack of education/qualifications</b>	Any reference to lack of education and qualifications.	Any reference to other risk factors other than lack of education and/or qualifications.
<b>Sub-theme:</b> <b>Age as a barrier</b>	Any reference to age being a barrier to opportunities.	Any reference to other forms of barriers and not age.



<b>Sub-theme:</b>  <b>Corruption within the government system</b>	Any reference to corruption within the government system being a risk factor.	Any reference to risks other than corruption within the government system.
---	---	--

#### 4.4.1.1 Sub-theme: lack of education or qualifications

The caregivers expressed that most of them did not have Grade 12 (also referred to as Matric) and/or other qualifications. In South Africa, a Grade 12 qualification is obtained as an exit qualification for basic education, and as an entry into higher education or other forms of career opportunities that require post-Matric qualifications (Chawula, 2021). The statements below are evidence of this:

According to P7: *“The government is corrupt, that is why our children do not get jobs. In the olden days they did not want Form 5, now when you do not have Matric you cannot get a job” (line 233-236).*

P6: *“You see how old I am, I did not go to school because my parents did not have money. My children I did take them to school, but they did not finish and now I live with my grandchildren and taking them to school. I am trying my best to see them succeed at school” (line 136-139).*

P7: *“They used to teach us with patience, but now they want Matric, and they are forgetting that God has given us different talents and skills” (line 241-243).*

#### 4.4.1.2 Sub-theme: age as a barrier

Several of the unemployed caregivers indicated that they were too old to find employment in companies. The caregivers had the following to say regarding their beliefs systems in relation to their age and unemployment:

According to P2: *“The reason why there is a lot of unemployment is because of many companies they have age limits. You find that those who qualify for the jobs do not want to work and those who do not qualify they are the ones who want that job. So that is why there is a lot of unemployment. If the companies did not have age limits, every adult in the house would work. If they can remove the age restrictions, a lot of people would be able to work. The cause of unemployment on my side is the age limits, if they can remove the age limits. Other times you want that job but because of your age you do not get it” (line 247-257).*

*P7: "This is surprising because there are people who are 80 years of age and working for the government and in parliament, when it comes to our children, they say they are over age" (line 258-261).*

Participants 2 and 6 corroborated the above statement:

*P2: "...35 years and above they do not qualify, and these people are strong and can do the job. Thirty-five years and below they do not want to work, they have a mentality that my mother will do this thing for me" (line 262-265).*

*P6: "I am old, and I do not have hope that I will get a job. I am depending on the social grant, there is no way forward besides collecting bottles and tin cans" (line 184-187).*

*P6: "My social grant money plus the child's grant is not enough, we buy groceries, pay the bills, and rent, then it runs out we are left with nothing, but we are trying our best. There is nothing we can do, that is how things are in the world" (line 68-72).*

#### 4.4.1.3 Sub-theme: corruption within the government system

The caregivers blamed the government for the high rate of unemployment in South Africa. They had the following to say regarding this sub-theme:

*P6: "Sometimes unemployment is caused by the government, we have land to grow. In other words, for job opportunities, the government have resources to farm to create job opportunities. As long as our government leave our children to roam around the streets on Nyaope, there will not be unemployment, our children could work there. The land is there for us to work but the government is not allowing us" (line 204-214).*

*P7: "In our times you would not find us not working or roaming the streets. You would get arrested. Job opportunities were there but now jobs are scarce because of the contracts with government and contracts do not have benefits. When you are in a contract, when your job ends it ends. In the olden days before you got hired, you knew that you would benefit, something like us even now, I get a pay from the government besides the social grant. I still get a pay every month that I was receiving while I was working. The government is corrupt, that is why our children do not get jobs. In the olden days they did not want Form 5, now when you do not have matric you cannot get a job" (line 204-214).*

Figure 4.3 below summarises the risks highlighted by the caregivers above.

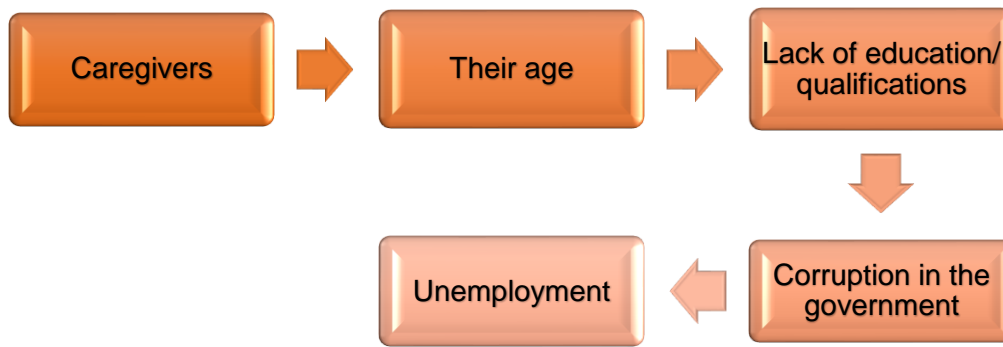


Figure 4.3: Visual summary of the barriers to resilience as highlighted by these Mamelodi caregivers

#### 4.4.1.4 Discussion of the findings for Theme 2

This theme highlights the risk factors or challenges faced by unemployed caregivers living in Mamelodi. These risk factors hinder them from taking care of the needs of their school-going children. Korankye (2014) confirms the assertion that unemployment contributes to some of the problems we face as a community. It is associated with crime, inadequate living conditions, psychological and physiological ill-health, and the performance of the economy as a whole.

These aspects of adversity not only affect the quality of life for the person but also his/her family and the community as a whole. Therefore, as one of the causes of poverty, we cannot ignore unemployment (Korankye, 2014). If the phenomenon of unemployed caregivers persists, this could pose a serious risk to the well-being and resilience of the family as a whole, and specifically the adolescents in the family. However, having at least one warm, caring, and supportive parent can cushion children against the adverse effects of unemployment and poverty. According to Ungar (2011), resilience is ever-changing and malleable in nature. Thus the processes of resilience may differ across time and/or environments, individuals, and communities. Multiple variables could have an effect on resilience processes, such as the possession or lack of significant resources, exposure to new or different environments, or experiencing new or different types of relationships.

## 4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter highlighted the findings of this study based on the group interview held with unemployed caregivers in Mamelodi. In addition, this chapter discussed and described the identified themes as well as sub-themes. In relation to the related literature on the subject, the next chapter will concentrate on addressing the findings. The research questions, as well as the working assumptions of this study will also be discussed in relation to the results explored in this chapter. Furthermore, the possible contributions and limitations of the study are also presented, along with final conclusions.

## CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and explores the answers to the research questions, as supported by the underlying theoretical framework and the results described in Chapter 4. These findings are based on the responses from the participants to the questions posed during the group interview. A review of the limitations of the study and the recommendation for future research is also presented.

### 5.2 ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This section highlights the research questions posed by this study. These are answered in conjunction with the applicable literature, as discussed in Chapter 2, and the findings as described in Chapter 4. The primary research question is answered first, followed by the secondary research questions. This is done to gain a holistic view of the study and its purpose.

Figure 5.1 depicts a schematic diagram of the research findings, which answer the secondary research question, and ultimately the primary research question.

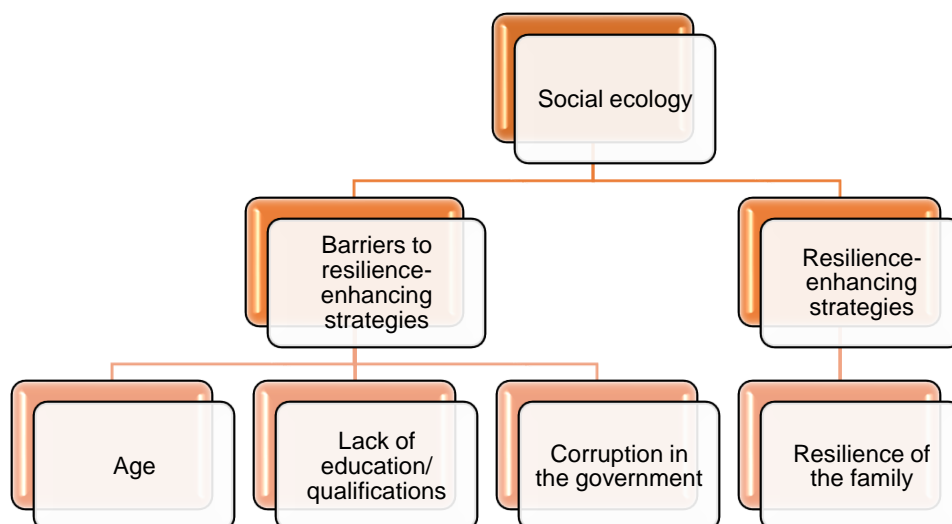


Figure 5.1: Schematic diagram of the research findings addressing both the primary and secondary research questions

Ungar's (2011) Social Ecology of Resilience Theory (SERT) views resilience as a system in which individuals work together to assist each other in averting the negative outcomes predicted by adversity. According to Ungar (2011), the focus is not on the individual's static characteristics, but on the processes employed in which a child and his or her social ecology participate to obtain the tools needed to respond well despite adversity (Ungar, 2011).

### **5.2.1 Addressing the primary research question**

#### **How do unemployed caregivers enhance the resilience of their school-going children?**

The primary research question can be answered by looking at the statements given by the employed caregivers regarding the resilience of the family, the first strategy of which was to model resilience in their own lives to assist their children. This sub-theme stemmed from the theme 'resilience-enhancing strategies in families'. Ungar (2011) defines protective factors as attributes or qualities of individuals, families, and the wider community that mitigate risk, and encourage the healthy development and wellbeing of adolescents, youth, and families. According to Noltemeyer and Bush (2013), resilience-promoting protective factors can be observed at individual, family, school, and community level. Donald et al. (2010) further this, explaining that both internal and external resources can act as protective factors. Internal resources include a loving and consistent relationship with a primary caregiver; a family with clear direction and guidance; and solid, coherent, and consistent values. Walsh (2016a) contends that family resilience lies in processes that facilitate coping in challenging conditions and which allow children to resist stress more efficiently.

Figure 5.1 below comprises a visual representation of the strategies that the caregivers in this study used to enhance the resilience of their school-going children.

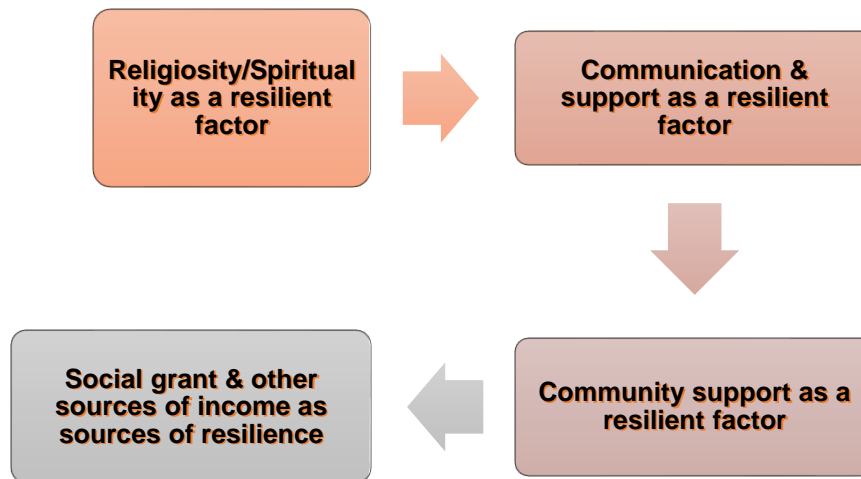


Figure 5.2: Visual summary of the strategies the caregivers used to enhance the resilience of their school-going children

The findings regarding these strategies are further detailed below.

#### 5.2.1.1 Religiosity/Spirituality as a resilient factor

The second strategy that the caregivers utilised was their trust, hope and faith in God. The participating caregivers indicated that prayer, faith, and hope in God strengthened and sustained them. Family resilience is encouraged when family members share the same belief, and these shared beliefs help the family to make sense of adversity and gain a sense of coherence (Walsh, 2016b). These beliefs further promote problem-solving, growth, and healing possibilities. These assist family members to make sense of adversity, fostering an optimistic perspective, and providing transcendent or spiritual anchors (Walsh, 2016a). However, not everyone believes in God or supernatural beings, which is referred to as atheism. Caldwell-Harris (2012) defines atheism as the rejection of all religious beliefs, including the belief in God or gods. These individuals thus deny the existence of a supreme entity or beings.

#### 5.2.1.2 Community support as a resilient factor

The caregivers also listed the support they had been receiving from the Matimba/Sinqobile Drop-in Centre as a resilience promoting factor. The drop-in centre provided the caregivers with daily meals, homework supervision, educational support, life skills, support groups, and lay counselling for both the children and the

caregivers. Most of the participants expressed that the support they received from the drop-in centre was really valuable and had changed their lives for the better. Family, school, and community have a key influence in increasing the innate resilience capacity of individuals through the social structures to which they belong (Mampane & Bouwer, 2011). In support of the above statement, Ungar (2011) explains resilience as a process in which people interact with their social ecology to achieve efficient results in the face of adversity in contextually and culturally appropriate ways. The participants exhibited resilience through accessing and using available resources (Mampane, 2011). However, not every community has resources such as the drop-in centre to assist its needy people. Petty (2014) corroborates this, clarifying that not all communities are homogeneous. There are many rural areas in the Eastern Cape, for example, where communities have few libraries, and those that do exist are located far from schools and are difficult to reach. Many schools and communities are still dealing with the effects of apartheid's political and economic policies. As a result, many children's educational experiences in South Africa are still heavily influenced by where they are born, how affluent they are, and the colour of their skin (International Labour Organisation (ILO), 2015).

#### *5.2.1.3 Social grant and other sources of income as sources of resilience*

Many young people in South Africa face a bleak future as unemployment rates climb. In order to stay afloat, unemployed people have turned to creating their own enterprises, with some particularly wanting to be their own boss (Makinane, 2015). The participating caregivers reported that they were struggling to get employment as most of them were above the age of 35. However, that did not hinder them in making ends meet. These caregivers mentioned that they collected cans, sold perfumes and cold drinks, and did laundry for other people. These caregivers worked long hours to make ends meet, which had a negative impact on their children's education since they were exhausted by the time they got home and paid little or no attention to their children's education. Regardless of the adversities they experienced, these caregivers were surviving and even thriving socially and emotionally, and their children were thriving at school as well. Mampane (2010) finds that one of the strengths of township communities is the resilience displayed by some community members in adopting strategies and methods to create



entrepreneurial activities that put food on the table and attract business to the community. Most of them mentioned that their children were doing well at school, and were receiving awards because of their resilience and the support they were receiving from the community. However, whatever motivates entrepreneurs to launch their own businesses, they will face several challenges before they can succeed. A slowdown in business might have a negative impact on personal income, and an entrepreneur's work schedule might be erratic. Another significant drawback of being an entrepreneur is that it necessitates more effort and longer hours than working as an employee of a company (Makinane, 2015).

#### *5.2.1.4 Communication and support as resilient factor*

The caregivers indicated that one of the strategies they employed to be strong for their children was to communicate with them and explain difficult situations to them. According to Walsh (2016a), clear and consistent communication facilitates open emotional expression and empathy, and promotes collaborative problem solving, which are particularly crucial in facilitating resilience. Noltemeyer and Bush (2013) agree that clear communication, consistent parenting, as well as a nurturing and responsive relationship between children and caregivers act as protective factors for culturally diverse children and adolescents. Communication processes promote resilience by providing clarity in crisis situations, encouraging open emotional expression, and fostering collaborative problem solving. Family communication is crucial because it teaches people how to interact with others while taking their age and emotional capacity into account (Walsh, 2016b). Beavers and Hampson (2000) concur that competent families are better equipped to resolve conflicts and communicate openly, honestly, and directly. However, communication in dysfunctional families is disjointed, as opposed to direct. Each family member feels misunderstood or unheard because the members are unable to listen to one another. Beavers and Hampson (2000) term such a family as a severely dysfunctional one. The structure of such a family is poorly defined, and communication is unclear, ineffective, and unsatisfactory.

The caregivers indicated that they survived with the little they had; which really shows that they were resilient. They further stated that they supported, loved, and

cared about each other. Feeling supported and having the emotional resources that stem from caring social relationships have been found to encourage and promote the physical and mental health of children (Malindi, 2014). Walsh (2016b) also identifies a number of factors promoting the resilience of young people. These include, but are not limited to supporting relationships, personal identity growth, adherence to cultural traditions, power and control experiences, experiences of social integrity, and experiences of a sense of cohesion with others. When looking at individual resilience, the literature suggests several characteristics that function as protective factors, including individual disposition characteristics such as personality and intelligence, family connectedness and friendliness, as well as parents' availability (Walsh, 2016b). According to Das (2010), family plays a crucial role in building children's resilience and in the prevention of risky behaviour. A family can also serve as a risk factor raising the vulnerability of family members (Masten, 2014a). Petty (2014) describes the family in light of two situations, firstly, as a risk factor, and secondly as a protective factor. This indicates that while the family is a significant source of child support, it can also be a source of vulnerability. Both situations simply regard the family as an individual context. Rutter (2012a) supports this, adding that some parents contribute to their children's adversities or impair their children's capacity to deal with difficult situations. The severe effects of a lack of emotional warmth, stimulation, and responsive care is typically detrimental to their intellectual, communication, and behaviour development. For this reason, the intellectual, social, and emotional development of these children lags considerably in comparison to their counterparts (Rutter, 2012b).

This question was answered by the theme 'resilience of the family'. This theme stemmed from the overarching theme 'resilience-enhancing strategies in families'. The findings of the study suggest that these unemployed caregivers enhanced the resilience of their school-going children in numerous ways and through similar patterns. In this study, the caregivers demonstrated the ability to enhance the resilience of their school-going children by making use of internal and external resources. Internal resources include hope, a positive outlook, and faith, while external resources include the community. The participants made use of community resources such as the drop-in centre. The drop-in centre in Mamelodi provided the

caregivers and their families with daily meals, homework supervision, educational support, life skills, support groups, and lay counselling.

Most of the unemployed caregivers mentioned that they went to the centre for almost everything. Participant 4 indicated that her child was in Grade 11 and needed to do research most of the time, and because she did not have the financial means to get her son a smartphone, she went to the centre with her son to assist him with his research. The centre has computers that can be used for schoolwork by Mamelodi's learners. In support of the above statement, Participant 6 also reported that he was too old and uneducated to assist his grandchildren with homework, therefore he took them to the centre every time they had homework so that they could be assisted by community workers. In addition, Participant 7 concurred with the two participants above as she said her children also went to the centre for assistance with their schoolwork. This resulted in her children performing better at school and even receiving awards for excellent academic performance.

Caregivers' role is to provide family members with nurturance, support, and personal development skills (Omidire et al., 2015). Personal development skills are essential, particularly for children as achievement helps them with their emotional, physical, educational, and social development. These abilities further contribute to the growth of family members' vocational and career abilities (Abdullaeva, 2021). Furthermore, a child's learning process can be enriched by the engagement of caregivers in their education. Olson (2010) finds that caregivers' involvement in children's education improves their attitude, morale, and academic success in all subject areas, as well as their behaviour and social adjustment. The author goes on to explain that caregivers' involvement in their children's education helps them grow up to be productive, responsible citizens.

The above-mentioned resources and factors can serve as protective factors. According to Ungar (2011), protective factors refer to attributes or qualities of individuals, families, and the wider community that mitigate risk and encourage the healthy development and wellbeing of adolescents, youth, and families. According to Noltemeyer and Bush (2013), resilience-promoting protective factors can be examined at individual, family, school, and community level. Moreover, personal

assets or resources that include assertiveness, agency, and humour have been observed to be crucial factors in constructing resilience in South African children who have been homeless (Malindi & Theron, 2010).

Internal resources can serve as protective factors. Internal resources include a loving and consistent relationship with a primary caregiver; a family with clear direction and guidance; and solid, coherent, and consistent values (Donald et al., 2010). The caregivers mentioned that prayer, hope, and faith strengthened and united them. An example is that one of the participants believed a belief system secures, unites, and empowers a family (Walsh, 2016b). Therefore, this instills a sense of optimism and reassurance as one's trust is invested in a higher being. It can be assumed that the views of a family are rooted in cultural beliefs and shaped by their arbitrary location in their community (Walsh, 2016c). This indicated that these caregivers had a positive outlook on life, with their spirituality acting as a protective factor.

The caregivers indicated that most of them were entrepreneurs, doing laundry and ironing for other people, collecting cans and bottles, and even selling perfumes and cold drinks. However, these piece jobs are not considered to be stable and do not guarantee a consistent daily income. Most of the unemployed caregivers indicated that they collected cans and bottles, which is time-consuming as you must fill up a sack before you can go and trade. In order to get the cans and bottles, they had to search the trash bins they come across at malls, bottle stores and supermarkets. Their commitment to this tough act served to enhance the resilience of their school-going children. One unemployed caregiver mentioned that they sold perfumes door-to-door. Most of the participants indicated that they were unemployed, and thus relied on their businesses and social grants to meet the basic needs of their children such as food, shelter, and clothing. Their entrepreneurial skills also ensured that the fundamental scholastic needs of their school-going children were met.

## 5.2.2 Secondary research question

### **What are the challenges that may inhibit unemployed caregivers in supporting their school-going children?**

This question was answered by the three sub-themes, namely, a lack of education/qualifications, age as a barrier, and corruption in the government. These three themes were derived from the overarching theme 'barriers to resilience-enhancing strategies'. These barriers or challenges inhibited the ability of the caregivers to support their school-going children. Each sub-theme is further detailed in the following sections.

#### *5.2.2.1 Lack of education/qualifications*

The majority of the caregivers stated that they only had a Grade 12 certificate or no formal education, which further put them at risk because employment in South Africa currently requires more than Grade 12 education. In South Africa, the burden of unemployment affects everyone, regardless of their educational background or occupation. Employers prefer candidates with skills and experience and consider unskilled or inexperienced candidates to be a risky investment. Contrarily, and interestingly, in spite of having education, skills and experience, many are not employed due to being overqualified (Statistics South Africa, 2020).

#### *5.2.2.2 Age as a barrier*

The unemployment rate in South Africa is high, with the majority of the country's young people being unemployed. However, this affects people of all ages as most of the participating caregivers voiced that they were struggling to find employment due to the scarcity of jobs, as well as their age.

#### *5.2.2.3 Corruption in the government*

The caregivers stated that corruption within the government system is another reason for the lack of jobs in South Africa. They believed that in order to acquire a job, you must have government connections or know someone who works for the government. They also maintained that the government has plenty of land available for jobless people to cultivate, however, the government does not want the youth to

utilise this land as it would eradicate poverty and unemployment, which negatively impacts certain political agendas. According to Mubangizi (2020), the majority of South Africans are fed up with corruption of the government. South Africa has several issues, including crime, unemployment, poverty, gender-based violence, inequality, and low economic development, to name a few. The fact that corruption is found across all of them makes it the most serious threat of all. The South African Constitution envisions a society founded on democratic principles, social fairness, and basic human rights. That kind of society is unlikely to materialise with the way things are going since corruption has been and continues to be the biggest obstacle to any prospect of realising that constitutional goal. In South Africa, like in other countries where corruption is prevalent, it affects democracy and human rights through degrading institutions and diminishing public faith in government (Mubangizi, 2020).

Furthermore, corruption hinders the government's capacity to meet its responsibilities and guarantee accountability in the delivery of economic and social services, including healthcare, housing, education, clean water, and social security. Corrupt officials transfer public cash to private accounts, which obstructs service delivery, prolonging poverty, inequality, and injustice. For the purposes of this study, the term government refers to the group of individuals who have power to rule over a country or state (Mubangizi, 2020).

The research results revealed other challenges faced by the caregivers that threatened the process of resilience. These risk factors included unemployment; no education or higher qualification; dependency on social grants; their age (as most of them were older than 35), which put them at risk as their chances of getting employed were slim; and living in a low socio-economic community that lacks adequate access to external resources. The risk factors discussed above gave rise to unemployment. Unemployment is one of the major social issues faced by South African communities (Jefferis, 2015), which not only affects the caregivers, but their entire family.

Having a stable source of income is extremely crucial in fulfilling all the needs of the family, but when this stable income comes to a halt, financial security is lost,

resulting in the family suffering emotionally and psychologically (Wearing et al., 2013). When caregivers are unemployed, children suffer in a variety of ways (Oster, 2014), one of which is a drop in their academic performance. According to Humal (2013), unemployment has a variety of effects on academic achievement. Children living with unemployed caregivers, for example, may stop attending school because their caregivers lack motivation, which is mirrored by the children in their care (Humal, 2013). Many children also do not do their homework because their caregivers cannot afford to provide them with resources such as books and stationery (Tough, 2012).

Oster (2014) echoes the view expressed above, stating that when a family member is unemployed, the entire family is likely to be affected, which has an impact on the children's school performance. Children who live with unemployed caregivers are 15% more likely to repeat a grade, do poorly, or even be suspended from school than their peers who have secure caregivers, and this poor performance tends to persist through high school or college (Oster, 2014). The majority of these caregivers fall under the informal sector, also known as the grey economy. This economy is not taxed nor regulated by any government, and is characterised by a number of characteristics, including skills gained outside of a formal education, ease of entry, a small scale of operations, as well as a lack of stable employer-employee relationships (International Labour Organisation (ILO), 2015). These caregivers work in dangerous and harmful, undefined work locations, with unpleasant working conditions, poor or irregular wages, and long working hours.

Figure 5.3 below provides a visual representation of the barriers and challenges discussed above as faced by the unemployed caregivers interviewed in this study.



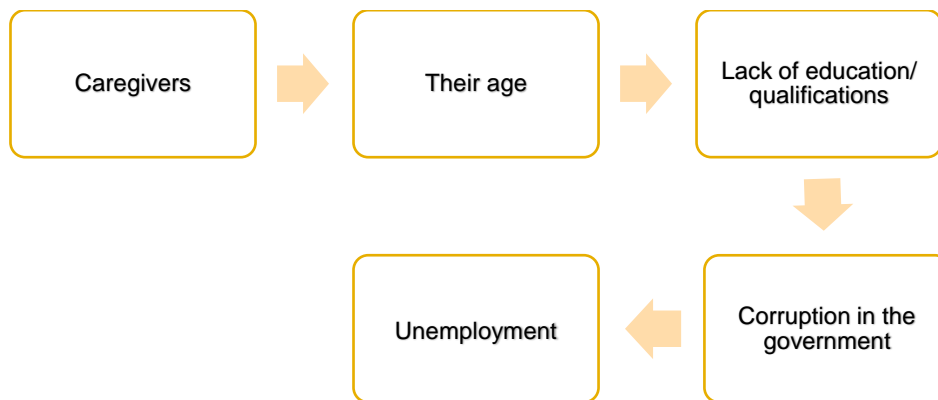


Figure 5.3: Schematic representation of the barriers to resilience-enhancing strategies

### 5.3 REFLECTING THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In Chapter 2, I outlined the underpinning theoretical framework developed by Ungar (2011), the Social Ecology of Resilience (SERT), which is based on four principles: decentrality, complexity, atypicality and cultural relativity. As I conclude this study, I believe it is crucial to revisit this theoretical framework to locate the findings within the framework. According to Ungar (2011), resilience was traditionally thought to be an intrinsic personality characteristic specific to each individual. Resilience is currently described as a reciprocal interaction between individuals and their environment. Individuals' ability to positively adapt within supporting social ecologies is characterised as resilience. This means that school-going children's capacity to flourish is determined by how they employ the resilience-promoting resources available in their social ecologies, not through their own personal characteristics or efforts alone. This encompasses making use of community resources and support, such as those provided at the Matimba/Sinqobile Drop-in Centre. Since resilience is linked to numerous risk factors, this theory argues that when people are under a lot of stress, they should pay more attention to the function of physical and social ecology in achieving beneficial developmental outcomes (Ungar, 2011).

#### 5.3.1 Decentrality

Ungar (2011) further describes resilience as a coping mechanism in which people interact with their social ecology to achieve efficient results in the face of adversity



in contextually and culturally appropriate ways. Ungar (2011) alludes to how social ecology has become an effective collaborator in processes of resilience. Ungar (2015) highlights the significance of comprehending the environmental factors that surround individuals and how these influence development when individuals interact with these settings. In this research, it was evident from the data above that the caregivers, community members, and their children were all working together. They also noted the assistance they received from the drop-in centre, as well as the impact of communicating with their children. Therefore, the findings of this study support those of Ungar's (2011) research concerning the SERT framework.

### **5.3.2 Atypicality**

In SERT, atypicality refers to a variety of different pathways that may contribute to resilience, and adolescents can vary in their views of how important a pathway may be (Ungar, 2011). Atypicality concerns people's non-typical responses to adversity. Rather than focusing on individuals, atypicality examines the resilience processes of the social environment in which individuals find themselves. In certain cases, what is considered a risk factor may really be a protective one. For example, an adolescent struggling with mathematics may go to his/her teacher for support, while another may become part of a gang in order to survive, or a mother may turn to prostitution to feed her family (Theron & Malindi, 2010). This was found to be the case in this study as most of the caregivers worked in hazardous and risky environments. However, the caregivers saw this as a coping mechanism.

### **5.3.3 Complexity**

According to Ungar (2011), resilience is a dynamic phenomenon related to normative expectations and difficulties of adaptation, both constructive and maladaptive, and is rooted in the customised social ecologies of individuals. The concept of complexity states that as individuals grow and their environments change, what cultivated resilience at one time may not do so at another (Jefferis & Theron, 2017). The difficulty of resilience lies in the assumption that what supports or facilitates meaningful progress in one context may not lead to resilience in the process of another person or context (Ungar, 2011). The responses of the unemployed caregivers in this study supported this notion. These caregivers drew

their strength from having faith and hope in a higher being, communicating with their school-going children, assisting them with homework, and the support from the drop-in centre. All of this helped them to become more resilient. However, for other people this may not be the case.

#### **5.3.4 Cultural relativity**

The SERT (Ungar, 2011) views resilience as a process that is rooted in social ecologies that are transparent, integrated structures that function at different levels. According to Luthar et al. (2000) and Ungar (2011), in these systems, adolescents need to navigate to the resources available that will enable them to respond or bargain positively for resources that are required but not accessible. This process of negotiation and navigation is shaped by culture. This was the case in this study as the children of these caregivers were already navigating or tapping into the available resources, such as the help they received from the drop-in centre in the form of computers, meals, homework supervision, counselling and so on. This helped them to cope more effectively. The majority of the caregivers expressed that the support they received from the centre was beneficial and had changed their lives for the better. To cope effectively with unemployment, the caregivers in this study used personal resources such as religion, positive traits, and their entrepreneurial skills, as well as social ecological resources such as assistance from the drop-in centre as proposed by the SERT (Ungar, 2011).

#### **5.4 ADDRESSING THE WORKING ASSUMPTIONS OF THIS STUDY**

This section of the research assesses whether the findings of the study validated the assumptions held prior to data collection.

- Caregivers play a crucial and imperative role in their children's development.
- Caregivers' engagement has a positive influence on learners' behaviour and attitude.
- Caregivers' unemployment can have a negative impact on children's educational attainment.

- Caregivers' engagement in the education of their children has a positive effect on learners' academic achievement.
- Caregivers have as much responsibility for the education of their children as educators do.

Based on the findings of this study, one can clearly see that caregivers play an important role in their children's lives and development. From the data obtained, it was evident that the caregivers were immensely involved in the education of their children, and tried their best to ensure that their children attended school and performed well. Some of the caregivers mentioned that they even accompanied their children to the centre and helped them with schoolwork. It can thus be safely said that when caregivers are engaged in their children's education, the children are likely to perform well at school. This supports the argument put forward by Ungar (2011) that as researchers, we need to draw our attention to the social ecology of the child. The child at risk (through the unemployment of caregivers) and the social ecology must work together in order to accomplish functional outcomes such as school attendance.

Jefferis (2015) maintains that unemployment not only affects the parents but the entire family. The caregivers in this study supported this idea as they reported having difficulty purchasing school uniforms, clothes, cell phones, data, and stationery for their children. Furthermore, they stated that they sometimes struggled to provide their children pocket money so that they could buy lunch at school. Given the relationship between family adversity and lack of employment, unemployment among caregivers is expected to have a reciprocal effect on each of the ecological systems accounted for in Bronfenbrenner's Theory (1979) owing to the subsequent changes in the environment, family cohesion, way of life, and financial situation. The adolescent's adaptation to these changes affects their ability to respond to these changes, and might have a significant impact on their development. Furthermore, parents' engagement in their children's education begins at home, where they provide a secure and healthy atmosphere, suitable learning opportunities, support, and a good attitude regarding school. Several studies have shown that children who have their parents involved in their education perform better academically (Olson,

2010). Parental engagement offers schools a valuable chance to enhance current school programmes by involving parents in the learning process. Parental participation has been linked not only to better student achievement, but to improved parent-teacher relationships, and a positive school climate (Olson, 2010).

## **5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The implementation of lockdown due to COVID-19 limited my access, thus I struggled to recruit enough participants and had to prioritise data collection before the imposing of severe restrictions. As a result, I had to call the participants for member checking in order to confirm and authenticate the data and themes that arose during the transcription and thematic analysis.

Furthermore, the qualitative nature of the study meant that it was not possible to generalise the findings of the study to the broader population. The lack of interviews with school-going children is also viewed as a drawback of this study. Since the study was particularly focused on the strategies that unemployed caregivers use to enhance the resilience of their school-going children, the children were not included in this study.

Another drawback is that the findings of this study are contextually bound. This is because the sample is not representative of the entire population. Although quality assurance criteria were followed (member checking), subjectivity may be considered as a limiting factor as the researcher's subjectivity may have influenced the data collection and interpretation processes. I would have loved to gain insight into the experiences of other caregivers who are between the ages of 25-35 years.

## **5.6 POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS**

The findings of this research will contribute to the limited literature on the resilience of unemployed caregivers, as well as literature on the strategies that they use to engender this trait in their school-going children. This provides school-going children with coping strategies that enhance their resilience.

## **5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings of this study cannot be applied to other situations because of the qualitative nature of this research. However, the study provides an indicator that there are multiple variables that lead to the resilience of unemployed caregivers. Based on the findings of this study, I recommend that it is important to promote and expand access to community resources. This is the case as it serves as a buffer against adversity, and enables unemployed caregivers and their families to make use of the available resources. Another recommendation is that the government needs to create more job opportunities for people who are above the age of 35 years old, and promote the significance of entrepreneurial skills to augment family income in the absence of employment.

## **5.8 RESEARCHER'S REFLECTIONS**

After the focus group interview, the caregivers articulated that they felt so much better after sharing what they had been going through. I was pleased that I could provide them with a safe space to talk about their challenges. It is possible that the focus group offered them a platform to share stories that were important to them. Participant 7 revealed that she was on the verge of giving up before the interview. As much as these caregivers were unemployed, they had faith and were hopeful that they would find employment one day. I inferred from the data that diverse socio-ecological systems have a role in building resilience in school-aged children. This will also help me in my own practice when I begin working with clients, since I will need to understand the system that may impact them, as well as the clients' risks and resilience-enabling resources.

## **5.9 CONCLUSION**

The primary aim of this study was to explore and understand the strategies that unemployed caregivers use to enhance the resilience of their school-going children. Therefore, the purpose of the research was to provide an answer to the main research question regarding what strategies unemployed caregivers use to enhance the resilience of their school-going children. All of the participants contributed to

answering this question by voicing their lived experiences regarding promoting resilience in their school-going children. They also described different variables promoting and leading to resilience in the face of adverse life circumstances.

## REFERENCES

- Abdullaeva, M. (2021). The Role of Parents in Raising Children in The Family. *The American Journal of Social Science and Education Innovations*, 03(01), 410-415. <https://www.doi.org/10.37547/tajssei/volume03issue01-75>.
- Anney, V. N. (2014). Ensuring the quality of the findings of qualitative research: Looking at trustworthiness criteria. *Scholar Links Research Institute Journals*, 17(8), 115-120.
- Ardington, C., Case, A., Islam, M., Lam, D., Leibbrandt, M., Menendez, A., & Olgati, A. (2010). The impact of AIDS on intergenerational support in South Africa: Evidence from the Cape area panel study. *Research on Aging*, 32(1), 97–121. <https://www.doi.org/10.1177/0164027509348143>.
- Ayres, C. (2019). *18 Advantages and Disadvantages of Purposive Sampling*. <https://connectusfund.org/6-advantages-and-disadvantagesof-purposive-sampling>
- Baron, A. (2013). *Perceptions of resilience by caregivers of children in a residential care facility*. [Master's Dissertation, University of Pretoria]. UP Space Institutional Repository. <https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/31740/browse?value=Baron%2C+Andreas&type=postgraduate>
- Beck, G. (2016). Surviving Involuntary Unemployment Together: The Role of Resilience-Promoting Communication in Familial and Committed Relationships. *Journal Of Family Communication*, 16(4), 369-385. <https://www.doi.org/10.1080/15267431.2016.1215315>
- Blokland, L. M. E. (2014). Mental health care in Mamelodi East: Disadvantaged geographical positioning in a South African township. *De Jure*, 47(2), 175-188.
- Bottrell, D. (2009). Understanding 'marginal' perspectives: Towards a social theory of resilience. *Qualitative Social Work*, 8(3), 321–339. <https://www.doi.org/10.1177/1473325009337840>

- Bowes, L., Maughan, B., Caspi, A., Moffitt, T. E., & Arseneault, L. (2010). Families promote emotional and behavioural resilience to bullying: Evidence of an environmental effect. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 51(7), 809–817.
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. In H. Cooper, P. M. Camic, D. L. Long, A. T. Panter, D. Rindskopf & K. J. Sher (Eds.), *APA handbook of research methods in psychology, Vol. 2. Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological* (pp. 57–71). American Psychological Association.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2014). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101.
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2017). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 11(4), 589-597.
- Braun, V., Clarke, V. (2019). Thematic analysis. In P. Liamputtong (Ed.), *Handbook of Research Methods in Health Social Sciences* (pp. 843-860). Springer.
- Caldwell-Harris, C. (2012). Understanding atheism/non-belief as an expected individual-differences variable. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 2(1), 4-23. <https://www.doi.org/10.1080/2153599x.2012.668395>
- Carey, M., & Asbury, J. (2016). *Focus group research*. Routledge.
- Carr, A. (2011). *Positive psychology: The science of happiness and human strengths* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Casale, M. (2011). 'I am living a peaceful life with my grandchildren. Nothing else.' Stories of adversity and 'resilience' of older women caring for children the context of HIV/AIDS and other stressors. *Ageing and Society*, 31, 1265–1288. <https://www.doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X10001303>
- Chawula, L. (2021). *What is Matric exemption?* <https://www.careersportal.co.za/grade-12/matric-advice/what-is-matric-exemption>
- Children's Act (38 of 2005). *Family law and regulations*. Aquilia Publications.



- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative research methods: A data collector's field guide*. Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design* (4<sup>th</sup> ed). Sage Publications.
- Das, C. (2010). Resilience, Risk and Protective Factors for British-Indian Children of Divorce. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 25(1-2-3), 97-108.
- David, M., & Sutton, C. D. (2011). *Social research: An introduction* (2nd ed). Sage Publications.
- de Lange, M., Dronkers, J., & Wolbers, M. (2013). Single-parent family forms and children's educational performance in a comparative perspective: effects of school's share of single-parent families. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 25(3), 329-350.  
<https://www.doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2013.809773>
- Department of Basic Education. (2019). School admissions.  
<https://www.education.gov.za/Informationfor/ParentsandGuardians/SchoolAdmissions.aspx>
- Department of Social Development. (2011). *Green Paper on Families: Promoting Family Life and Strengthening Families in South Africa*. Government Gazette.
- Department of Social Development. (2012). *White Paper on Families in South Africa*. Government Gazette.
- Diraditsile, K., & Ontetse, M. A. (2017). Lived experiences and consequences of unemployment on women: An empirical study of unemployed young women in Mahalapye, Botswana. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 18(4), 131-143.
- Ebersöhn, L. (2012b). *Rural schools, poverty, and resilience in education: A South African perspective illustration how relationships can create supportive schools*. In International symposium on poverty and education. Symposium conducted at the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE). Sydney, Australia.

- Foxcroft, C., & Roodt, G. (2013). *Introduction to psychological assessment in the South African context* (4<sup>th</sup> ed). Oxford University Press Southern Africa.
- Gafoor, A. K., Neena, K., & Kottalil, J. (2011). Within child factors fostering academic resilience: A research review. *Endeavours in Education*, 2(2), 104-117.
- Gasa, V. (2013). Resilience in the context of learners and youth raised in grandparent-headed families. *Commonwealth Youth and Development*, 11(1), 22–31.
- Google Maps. (2021). *Mamelodi*.  
<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Mamelodi,+Pretoria,+0122,+South+Africa/@-25.7139787,28.3802264,13z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x1e9558c1f6a5bb69:0x831017ba520c79a!8m2!3d-25.7234441!4d28.4221519>
- Gravetter, F. J., & Forzano, L. B. (2009). *Research methods for the behavioural sciences*. Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Gravetter, F. J., & Forzano, L. B. (2016). *Research Methods for Behavioural Science* (5<sup>th</sup> ed). Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Hamilton, A. (2017). Children’s flourishing inside and outside the nuclear family. *Eureka Street*, 27(9).
- Holborn, L., & Eddy, G. (2011). *First Steps to Healing the South African Family*. South African Institute of Race Relations.
- Howell, K. H., Graham-Bermann, S. A., Czyz, E., & Lilly, M. (2010). Assessing Resilience in Preschool Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence. *Violence and Victims*, 25(2), 150-164.
- Humal, K. (2013). *Education-occupation mismatch and its effects on unemployment in Sweden*. Lund University press.
- International Labour Organization. (2014). Global employment trends 2014.  
[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_233953.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_233953.pdf)

- International Labour Organisation. (2015). *Formalization of the informal economy: Area of Critical Importance*. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_412833.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_412833.pdf)
- Jefferis, T., C. (2015). *Resilient black South African girls in contexts of adversity: A participatory visual study*. [Doctoral thesis, The North-West University]. <https://docplayer.net/80571193-Resilient-black-south-african-girls-in-contexts-of-adversity-a-participatory-visual-study-tc-jefferis-ma-research-psychology.html>
- Jefferis, T., & Theron, L. (2017). Promoting resilience among Sesotho-speaking adolescent girls: Lessons for South African teachers. *South African Journal of Education*, 37(3), 1-11. <https://www.doi.org/10.15700/saje.v37n3a1391>
- Kiggundu, E., & Oldewage-Theron, W. (2009). Coping: A Challenge for Guardians of Children Orphaned by HIV/AIDS in a South African Township. *Development Southern Africa*, 26(3), 383–97.
- Koen, J., Klehe, U., & Van Vianen, A. E. M. (2012). Training career adaptability to facilitate a successful school-to-work transition. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 81(3), 395-408. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2012.10.003>
- Korankye, A. A. (2014). Causes of Poverty in Africa: A Review of Literature. *American International Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(7), 147-153.
- Leedy, P., D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2010). *Practical research: Planning and Design*. Prentice Hall.
- Lemmer, E. (2012). Who's doing the talking? Teacher and parent experiences of parent-teacher conferences. *South African Journal of Education*, 32(1), 83-96. <https://www.doi.org/10.15700/saje.v32n1a460>
- Louw, D., & Louw, A. (2014). *Child and Adolescent Development*. SunBonani Media.
- Louw, J. A. (2018). *Adolescents' perceptions of family resilience in an absent father family*. [Master's dissertation, University of Pretoria]. UP Space Institutional Repository.

[https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/67773/Louw\\_Adolescents\\_2018.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/67773/Louw_Adolescents_2018.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

- Lu, Y., Walker, R., Richard, P., & Younis, M. (2019). Inequalities in Poverty and Income between Single Mothers and Fathers. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(1), 135. <https://www.doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17010135>
- Luthar, S. S., Cicchetti, D., & Becker, B. (2000). The construct of resilience: A critical evaluation and guidelines for future work. *Child Development*, 71, 543-562.
- Mahlangu, E. S. (2015). *Resilience processes employed by families from a low socio-economic background*. [Master's Dissertation, University of Pretoria]. UP Space Institutional Repository. [https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/52941/Mahlangu\\_Resilience\\_2015.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/52941/Mahlangu_Resilience_2015.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)
- Mak, W., Ng, I., & Wong, C. (2011). Resilience: Enhancing well-being through the positive cognitive triad. *Journal Of Counselling Psychology*, 58(4), 610-617. <https://www.doi.org/10.1037/a0025195>
- Makinane, S. (2015). *The real barriers to entrepreneurship in South Africa*. <https://www.howwemadeitinafrica.com/the-real-barriers-to-entrepreneurship-in-south-africa/52560/>
- Malekutu, M. J. (2014). *Survival strategies used by unemployed rural women in Calais village: Maruleng Municipality in Mopani District*. [Master's Dissertation, University of Limpopo]. UL Space. [http://ulspace.ul.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10386/1245/malekutu\\_mj\\_2014.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](http://ulspace.ul.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10386/1245/malekutu_mj_2014.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)
- Malindi, M., J. (2014). Exploring the roots of resilience among female street-involved children in South Africa. *Psychology*, 5(1), 35-45.
- Malindi, M. J., & Theron, L. C. (2010). The hidden resilience of street youth. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 40, 318–326.

- Maluleke, S. G. (2014). *Parental involvement in their children's education in the Vhembe district: Limpopo*. [Master's dissertation, UNISA]. UNISA Institutional Repository.  
[https://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/18814/dissertation\\_maluleke\\_sq.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/18814/dissertation_maluleke_sq.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)
- Mampane, M. R. (2010). *The relationship between resilience and school: A case study of middle adolescents in township schools*. [Doctoral thesis, University of Pretoria]. UP Space Institutional Repository.  
<https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/28510/Complete.pdf?sequence=6>
- Mampane, M. R., & Boucher, C. (2011). The influence of township schools on the resilience of their learners. *South African Journal of Education*, 31, 114-126.
- Mampane, M. (2014). Factors contributing to the resilience of middle-adolescents in a South African township: Insights from a resilience questionnaire. *South African Journal of Education*, 34(4), 1-11.  
<https://www.doi.org/10.15700/201412052114>
- Manilal, R. (2014). *Parental involvement in education: A comparison between a privileged and underprivileged school*. [Master's dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal]. UKZN Research Space.  
[https://ukzn-dspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/12655/Manilal\\_Rubaina\\_2014.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://ukzn-dspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/12655/Manilal_Rubaina_2014.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)
- Maree, K. (2016). *First Steps in Research* (2nd ed.). Van Schaik Publishers.
- Masten, A., S. (2014a). Global perspectives on resilience in children and youth. *Child Development*, 85(1), 620. <https://www.doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12205>
- Masten, A., S. (2014b). *Ordinary magic: Resilience in development*. Guilford Press.
- Mculu, L. V., Mphephu, K. E., Madzhie, M., & Mudau, T. J. (2015). Challenges and coping strategies of child-headed households at Mkhuhlu, Mpumalanga province, South Africa. *African Journal for Physical, Health Education, Recreation and Dance, Suppl. 1*, 95–104.

- Meintjes, H., Hall, K., Marera, D. H., & Boulle, A. (2010). Orphans of the AIDS pandemic? The extent, nature, and circumstances of child-headed households in South Africa. *AIDS Care*, 22(1), 40–49.  
<https://www.doi.org/10.1080/09540120903033029>
- Mkhize, N., & Msomi, R. (2016). African single mothers' experiences of work and career in South Africa. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 47, 323–342.
- Mokomane, Z. (2012). *Role of Families in Social and Economic Empowerment of Individuals*. Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa.
- Mokone, J. M. (2006). Challenges experienced by grandparents raising children. An exploratory study. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Work*, 42(2), 187-200.
- Mturi, A. J. (2012). Child-headed households in South Africa: What we know and what we don't. *Development Southern Africa*, 29, 506–516.  
<https://www.doi.org/10.1080/0376835X.2012.706043>
- Mtshali, M. N. G. (2015). The relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren in the black families in South Africa. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 46(1), 75–83.
- Mubangizi, J. (2020). *Corruption in SA: The politics, the law and all the shenanigans in between*. City Press.  
<https://www.news24.com/citypress/voices/corruption-in-sa-the-politics-the-law-and-all-the-shenanigans-in-between-20201007>
- Mzizi, J. (2014). *A qualitative study of the impact of unemployment in 'Mazakhele' KwaZulu-Natal*. [Master's dissertation, University of KwaZulu-Natal]. UKZN Research Space.  
[https://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/23776/dissertation\\_mzizi\\_jn.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1](https://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/23776/dissertation_mzizi_jn.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1)
- Myers, M. D. (2009). *Qualitative research in business & management*. Sage Publications Ltd.
- Neimetz, C. (2011). Navigating family roles within an institutional framework: An exploratory study in one private Chinese orphanage. *Journal of Child and family studies*, 20(5), 585-595.

- Nieuwenhuis, J. (2007). Introducing qualitative research. In J. W. Creswell, L. Ebersohn, I. Eloff, R. Ferreira, N. V. Ivankova, J. D. Jansen, J. Nieuwenhuis, V. L. Pietersen, V. L. Plano Clark & C. van der Westhuizen (Eds.), *First Steps in research*. Van Schaik.
- Nhongo, T. M. (2004). *Impact of HIV/AIDS on generational roles and intergenerational relationships workshop on HIV/AIDS and family well-being*. Paper Presented at the Workshop on HIV/AIDS and Family Well-being, Namibia, 28 – 30 January 2004.
- Noltemeyer, A. L., & Bush, K. R. (2013). Adversity and resilience: A synthesis of international research. *School Psychology International, 34*, 474–487.
- Nowell, L., Norris, J., White, D., & Moules, N. (2017). Thematic Analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 16*(1), 160940691773384. <https://www.doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847>
- Omidire, M. F., AnnaMosia, D., & Mampane, M. (2015). Perceptions of the Roles and Responsibilities of Caregivers in Children’s Homes in South Africa. *Social Work Review, XIV*, 113-126.
- Olson, G. (2010). *The benefits of parent involvement: What research has to say*. <http://teaching.about.com/od/JRteachingvocabulary/g/Parental-Involvement.htm>
- Opdenakker, R. (2006). Advantages and disadvantages of four interview techniques in qualitative research. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 7*(4), 9-11.
- Oster, W. (2014). Locus of control and at-risk youth: A comparison of regular education high school students and students in alternative schools. *Education, 123*(3), 548–552.
- Pappin, M., Marais, L., Sharp, C., Lenka, M., Cloete, J., Skinner, D., & Serekoane, M. (2014). Socio-economic Status and Socio-emotional Health of Orphans in South Africa. *Journal Of Community Health, 40*(1), 92-102. <https://www.doi.org/10.1007/s10900-014-9903-1>



- Patterson, J.M. (2002). Understanding family resilience, *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 58(3), 233-246.
- Petty, K. (2014). Ten ways to foster resilience in young children – teaching kids to “bounce back”. *Dimensions of Early Childhood*, 42(3), 35-39.
- Phelan, S. (2011). Case study research: design and methods. *Evaluation & Research in Education*, 24(3), 221-222.  
<https://www.doi.org/10.1080/09500790.2011.582317>
- Powdthavee, N. & Vernoit, J. (2013). Parental unemployment and children’s happiness: A longitudinal study of young people’s well-being in unemployed households. *Labour Economics*, 24(C), 253-263.  
<https://www.doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2013.09.008>
- Reeves, T., & Hedberg, J. (2003). *Interactive Learning Systems Evaluation*. Educational Technology Publications.
- Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., Nicholls, C. M., & Ormston, R. (2013). *Qualitative Research Practice: A guide for social science students and researchers* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Sage.
- Roy, K., Messina, L., Smith, J., & Waters, D. (2014). Growing up as “man of the house”: Adulthood and transition into adulthood for young men in poor families. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 143, 55–72.  
<https://www.doi.org/10.1002/cad.20054>
- Rutter, M. (2012a). Resilience as a dynamic concept. *Developmental Psychopathology*, 24 (2), 335.
- Rutter, M. (2012b). Resilience: Causal pathways and social ecology. In M. Ungar (Ed.), *The social ecology of resilience: A handbook of theory and practice* (pp. 33-42). Springer.
- SA Gov News [@SAGovnews]. (2019, March 08). *The Minister will later visit Matimba/ Sinqobile Orphaned and Vulnerable Children Centre adopted by the @deptsmallbus #GoodGreenDeeds*. [Tweet]. Twitter.  
<https://twitter.com/sagovnews/status/1103950080749592577>
- Schreuder, A.M.G, Coetzee, M. (2016). *Careers. An organisational perspective*. (5<sup>th</sup> Ed). Juta Academic.



- Silverman, D. (2016). *Qualitative research*. Sage Publications.
- Simon, C. (2011). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Sage.
- Sojo, V., & Guarino, L. (2011). Mediated Moderation or Moderated Mediation: Relationship between Length of Unemployment, Resilience, Coping and Health. *The Spanish Journal of Psychology*, 14, 272-281.
- Statistics South Africa. (2018b). *General Household Survey*. Statistics South Africa. <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0318/P03182014.pdf>
- Statistics South Africa. (2019). *Quarterly Labour Force Survey Quarter 4, 2019 (No. P02112)*. <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/P02114thQuarter2019.pdf>
- Statistics South Africa. (2020). *Quarterly Labour Force Survey Quarter 2, 2020 (No. P03022)*. [http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/Presentation%20QLFS%20Q2\\_2020.pdf](http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/Presentation%20QLFS%20Q2_2020.pdf)
- Steyn, G. (2007). Are illegal squatters ruralising the urban edge? *South African Journal of Art History*, 22(3), 70-82.
- Strom, P. S., & Strom, R. D. (2011). Grandparent education: Raising grandchildren. *Educational Gerontology*, 37, 910–923. <https://www.doi.org/10.1080/03601277.2011.595345>
- Terre Blanche, M., & Durrheim, K. (1999). *Research in Practice: Applied Methods in the Social Sciences*. UCT Press.
- Theron, L. (2013). Black students' recollections of pathways to resilience: Lessons for school psychologists. *School Psychology International*, 34(5), 27-539.
- Theron, L.C. (2016a). The everyday ways that school ecologies facilitate resilience. Implications for school psychologists. *School Psychology International*, 37, 87-103.
- Theron, L., & Phasha, N. (2014). Cultural Pathways to Resilience: Opportunities and Obstacles as Recalled by Black South African Students. *Youth Resilience And Culture*, 51-65. doi: 10.1007/978-94-017-9415-2\_4.

- Thomas, G. (2010). Doing case study: Abduction not induction, phronesis not theory. *Qualitative inquiry*, 16(7), 575-582.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/10778004/0372601>
- Tough, P. (2012). *How children succeed: Grit, curiosity, and the hidden power of character*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Ungar, M. (2011). The social ecology of resilience: Addressing contextual and cultural ambiguity of a nascent construct. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 81(1), 1-7.
- Ungar, M. (2015). Resilience and culture: The diversity of diversity processes and positive adaptation. In L. C. Theron, L. Liebenberg, & M. Ungar (Eds.), *Youth resilience and culture: Commonalities and complexities* (pp. 37–48). Springer Science + Business Media.
- Van Aardt, I. (2012). A review of youth unemployment in South Africa, 2004 to 2011. *South African Journal of Labour Relations*, 36(1), 54–68.
- Van Rensburg, AC. (2014). *A social-ecological investigation of African youths' resilience process*. [Master's dissertation, North-West University]. NWU Repository.  
<http://repository.nwu.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10394/14065/Van?sequence=1>
- Walsh, F. (2012a). Family Resilience: Strengths forged through adversity. In F. Walsh (Ed.), *Normal Family Processes: Growing Diversity and Complexity* (pp. 399-421). The Guilford Press.
- Walsh, F. (2012b). Family Resilience. In M. Ungar (Ed.), *Multisystemic Resilience* (pp. 255-270). Oxford Scholarship Online.  
<https://www.doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190095888.003.0015>
- Walsh, F. (2016a). Family resilience: a developmental systems framework. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 13(3), 313-324.  
<https://www.doi.org/10.1080/17405629.2016.1154035>
- Walsh, F. (2016b). Applying a Family Resilience Framework in training, practice, and research: Mastering the art of the possible. *Family Process*, 55(4), 616-632. <https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12260>

- Walsh, F. (2016c). Family resilience: Developmental system framework. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 13(3), 313-324.
- Walsham, G. (1993). *Interpreting Information Systems in Organizations*. Wiley.
- Wearing, A., Fildes, J., & Robbins, A. (2013). *The impact of family joblessness on the school to work transition: Young people's insights and concerns*. Mission Australia Report. <https://policycommons.net/artifacts/1532386/the-impact-of-family-joblessness-on-the-school-to-work-transition-v/2221953/>
- Williams, G. (2007). *A girl runs up a mud slope beside an area of slum dwellings in Nellmapius, Mamelodi township*.GWL00281SAF.jpg.  
<https://felixfeatures.photoshelter.com/image/I0000Mw0YuYdLpK4>
- Willig, C. (2013). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology*. Open university press.
- Willis, J. (1995). A recursive, reflective instructional design model based on constructivist interpretivist theory. *Educational Technology*, 35(6), 5-23.
- Yegidis, B. L., Weinbach, R. W., & Myers, L. L. (2012). *Research methods for social workers* (7<sup>th</sup> ed). Cengage Learning.

## APPENDIX A



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

Dear Sir/madam

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH IN MATIMBA SINGOBILE  
DROP IN CENTRE IN MAMELODI**

I hereby wish to apply for permission to conduct research in Matimba Singobile drop in centre at Mamelodi. My research project will involve 12 caregivers with who have school-going children. My research topic is **“The strategies that unemployment caregivers use to enhance the resilience of their school-going children”**

This study is meant to understand the strategies that unemployed caregivers use to enhance the resilience of their primary school-children in Mamelodi. You were selected to participate in this study because of your experience and knowledge as well as vulnerable input on the above subject matter. By participating in this study, you agree that the information you provide may be used for research purposes.

This research project will also involve focus group interview with caregivers. The duration of the focus group will be a minimum of 45 minutes and a maximum of 60 minutes to complete. 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 information obtained will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and will be used solely for this research purposes only.

You do not have to participate in this research if you do not want to, and you will not be penalised in any way if you decide not to take part. If you decide to participate, but you change your mind later, you can withdraw your participation at any time. Your

identity will be protected. Only my supervisor and I will know your real name, as a pseudonym will be used during data collection and analysis.

The information you give will only be used for academic purposes. In my research report and in any other academic communication, your pseudonym will be used, and no other identifying information will be given. Collected data will be in my possession or my supervisor's and will be locked up for safety and confidential purposes. After completion of the study, the material will be stored at the Department of Educational Psychology , University of Pretoria according to the policy requirements.

If you agree to take part in this research, please fill in the consent form provided below. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me at the numbers given below, or via Email.

Signature of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number for student: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Yours sincerely

-----



## APPENDIX B



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

### Consent form

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (your name), agree / do not agree (delete what is not applicable) to take part in the research project titled: **“The strategies that unemployment caregivers use to enhance the resilience of their primary school children”**. I understand that I will be interviewed about this topic for approximately 45 minutes to 60 minutes at a venue and time that will suit me, but that will not interfere with school activities or teaching time. The interview will be audio taped. I understand that the researcher subscribes to the principles of:

- Voluntary participation in research, implying that the participants might withdraw from the research at any time.
- Informed consent, meaning that research participants must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in the research.
- Safety in participation; put differently, that the human respondents should not be placed at risk or harm of any kind e.g., research with young children.
- Privacy, meaning that the confidentiality and anonymity of human respondents should be protected at all times.
- Trust, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Education

**The strategies unemployed caregivers use to enhance the resilience of their school-going children**

### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE:**

#### **FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS**

- What is your family good at or do best?
- How many children do you have that are still in school?
- What does resilience mean to you?
- How do you as family experience strength?
- What does unemployment mean to you?
- Where do you get your strength from?
- How do you cope with unemployment?
- What are the basic challenges that you are struggling with?
- How does spirituality or religion play a role in your life.
- Do you have any support structures? If yes, how do they support you?
- How do you stay positive?

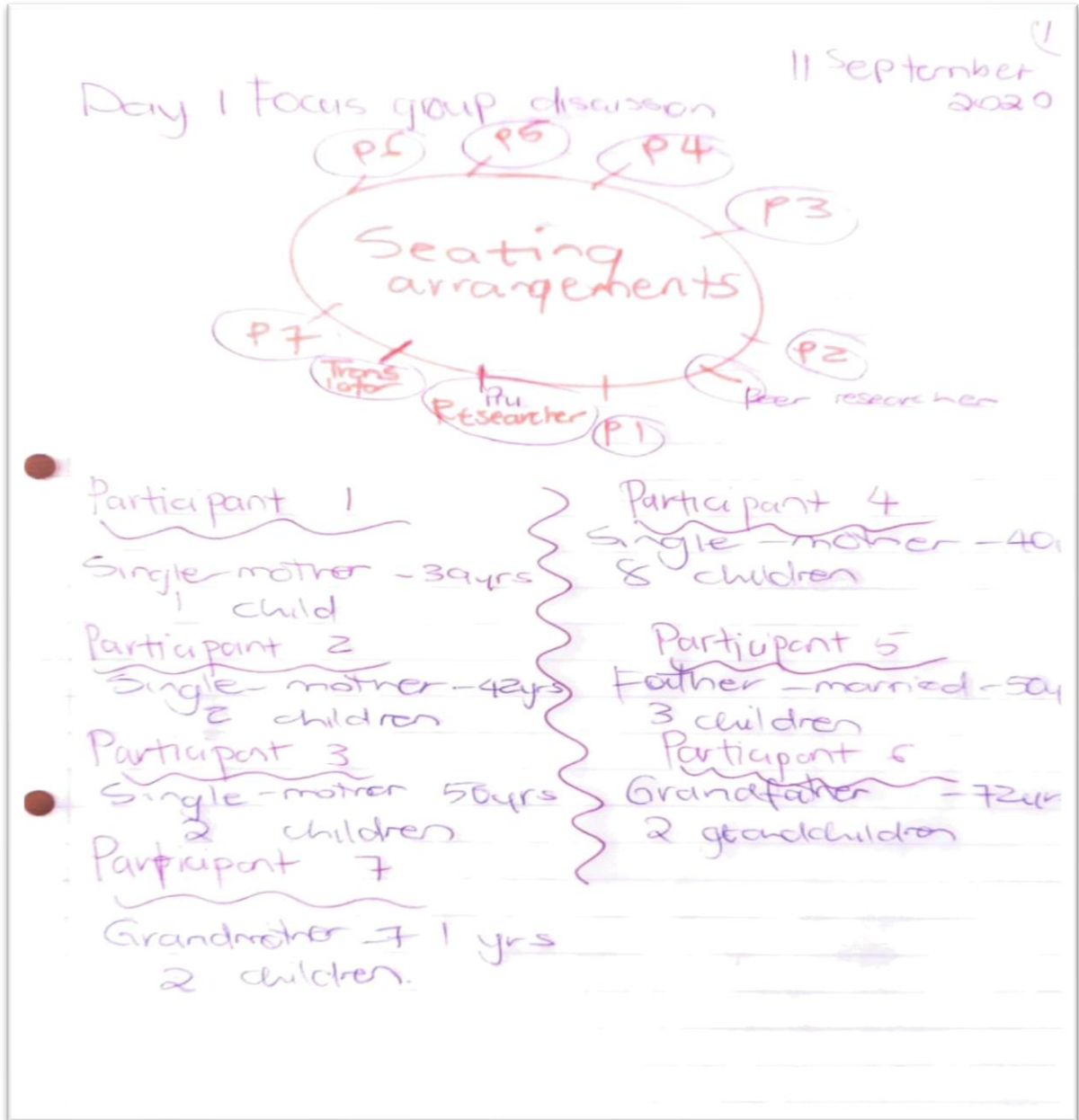
#### **Primary research question:**

*How do unemployed caregivers enhance the resilience of their school-going children?*

#### **Secondary research question:**

1. *Which resilience strategies do unemployed caregivers use to support their school-going children?*
2. *What are the challenges that can inhibit the ability of unemployed caregivers to support their school-going children?*

## APPENDIX D







## Observations

Participant 3 was super late and did not talk much during the session.

→ Session started at 11:00 am

### Observations

P 6 and P 7 were very verbal - talked most of the time. They expressed that they are grateful for the opportunity to express their emotions.

**P 7** - Expressed that she's fed up - this ~~explains~~ explains her excessive talking. Her children are stressing her - 1 of them is mentally retarded and the other one is on drugs.

**P 6** - kept on expressing that the government is the one responsible for their unemployment becoz of the promised land

### Personal reflections

The centre organised everything for us (the chairs, water). I was excited and nervous at the same time.

I really felt bad and I still do for gogo (P7) when she <sup>cried</sup> thought. The session is going to help her by taking her child who is using drugs to rehab.

P 6 - he seemed to be enjoying the session, sometimes he would ask the translator to translate what was said. ~~that~~ I believe that



## Observations

The other participants did not talk much.

## Personal reflection &

The masks and social distancing attributed to this I, my self had to repeat questions because of the mask.

When the other participant did not talk much - I felt disappointed I had to ask them specifically to answer the question; just to make them feel included!

## Personal reflection

I enjoyed the session as I could relate to what they are going through. My mother is also unemployed - she is sewing people's clothes to put food on the table.

What I learned from the participants - is that we resilient and hopeful.

All of them are doing something to put food on the table and only want the best for their children and grand children.





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

The strategies unemployed caregivers use to enhance the resilience of their school-going children

*Impact of the socio-economic situation - due to covid loss of jobs*  
*Grandmother - Ntshinyane - Loka*

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE:

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

- What is your family good at or do best? *laefuqo! Thuk/Tsing/communion*
- How many children do you have that are still in school?
- What does resilience mean to you? *Try in q/...*
- How do you as family experience strength?
- What does unemployment mean to you? *Drop in centre*
- Where do you get your strength from? *Drop in centre*
- How do you cope with unemployment? *down with their children - divider*
- What are the basic challenges that you are struggling with? *can't afford school uniforms, peer pressure, divorce, etc.*
- How does spirituality or religion play a role in your life? *Pray - strength of Christ*
- Do you have any support structures? If yes, how do they support you?
- How do you stay positive? *little we have*

Primary research question:

*Drop-in centres*  
 How do unemployed caregivers enhance the resilience of their school-going children? *Drop in centre social grant*

Secondary research question:

1. Which resilience strategies do unemployed caregivers use to support their school-going children? *Drop in centre*
2. What are the challenges that can inhibit the ability of unemployed caregivers to support their school-going children? *peer pressure, smart phones, more items from school, etc.*

*Drop-in-centre - progress bar of the drop-in-centre*  
*Financial scheme - drop*

SW  
What does unemployment mean to me...

- entitlement
- dependent on me
- like to have my part

Scriptor

- = inferior perspective
- Government is responsible for unemployment
- Government has resources

to leave children or drugs + doing nothing

Government is cause of the unemployment


so much land to give  
- so that children can go and work there

- Nuisance - children - because not work

Government

in our times

- you would get arrested for wandering off

The stress Translator: 

- Contact work - no benefit

- Social work and work - every month from the Government besides the SASSA.

- children - Government is focusing on

- children scattered

- nuisance nuisance

- Government about ppl with qualifications  
- to treat & teach the new