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# Transitioning from graduation to employment: students' perceptions on finding employment in the context of Covid-19

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**Abstract**

In South Africa unemployment continues to be one of the most persistent and important economic complexities. The situation is even more critical among young people. It is worrying that many of South Africa's graduates still struggle to find employment even after graduation. The transition from graduation to employment is commonly characterised by stressful and significant challenges. The challenges associated with this transition have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This study explores the individual experience of exit-level students' perceptions of their transition from graduation to employment in the context of Covid-19. This was done through the application of Schlossberg's (2011) transition theory. The study focused on Schlossberg's 4S system (situation, self, support, and strategies), which is centred on the resources that the students use during a transition. The technique used to obtain participants in the study was purposive sampling. Interviews were conducted with eight participants from various universities in South Africa. Thematic Content Analysis was used for data analysis. The findings suggested the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the transition process. Concurrent stressors such as mental health, lack of work experience and a lack of finances further impacted the transition in the *situation*. Furthermore, *self* was often compromised due to lack of control and challenges to the mental wellbeing of students. In terms of *support*, participants shared the sources of support available to them and expressed their frustration in the absence of some of these support structures. Finally, s*trategies* highlighted the coping techniques that the students utilised to manage the situation. The results highlighted that psychological wellbeing of students was significantly impacted as they navigated through this transition during the global pandemic.