Experiences of unemployed Zimbabweans, living in Johannesburg, who graduated at South African universities.

A report on a research study presented to

The Department of Social Work

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By

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DECLARATION

I, Tinashe Clare Rudo Chimonyo, hereby declare that this research report is my own original work. I have correctly referenced all the sources utilised. This research report has not been submitted previously for any degree or examination purpose at any other institution.

Tinashe C.R Chimonyo   Date

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DEDICATION

This thesis is a dedication to my son, Kai Munesu.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 <u>Introduction</u>

This study was conducted to explore the experiences of unemployed Zimbabwean graduates residing in Johannesburg, that had studied at South African universities. This chapter introduces the study by providing the problem statement and rationale for the study. The primary research question and main aim and objectives of the study are presented. A brief overview of the research methodology that was utilised is provided, as well as the theoretical framework underpinning the study. Key words relevant to the study are clearly defined and lastly, the structure of the research report is summarised.

1.2 <u>Background to study</u>

To acquire a university degree was once considered a guarantee for securing paid employment in the public or the private sector, however this is no longer so (Idowu, 1987; Oritlieb, 2015; Rana, 2016). Graduate unemployment has become prevalent across the world (Papola, 2008; Seife, Ayele, Khan & Sumberg, 2015). For example, in China graduate unemployment is growing significantly and identified causes relate to economic development, education policies and reforms in higher education (Bai, 2006; Chan, 2015; Li, Whalley & Xing, 2014). In Taiwan, in 2010, the global economic recession was highlighted as directly related to graduate unemployment. Furthermore, in Europe the rapid expansion of higher education has also " … produced an unprecedented number of high skilled workers whose employment prospects have become more uncertain than used to be a few decades ago" (Nunez & Livanos, 2010, p. 3).

Graduate unemployment is not unique to developed countries. For example, in sub-Saharan Africa, mass unemployment and chronic underemployment among the educated graduate increasingly dominates policy discussion on education and employment. Graduate unemployment in Nigeria has become a serious concern to the government and to society at large (Okoye, 2015). Graduate unemployment is also a concern in both South Africa (Allais, 2017; Cloete, 2015; Oluwajodu, Greyling, Blaauw & Kleynhans, 2015; van de Rheede, 2012)

and Zimbabwe (Khumalo & Nkala, 2015; Julia Mutambara, Makanyanga & Mudhovozi, 2018).

1.3 <u>Problem statement and rationale for study</u>

Literature and research studies have emphasised that the unemployment rate in Zimbabwe has increased significantly over the years and it is now viewed as one of the highest in the world (Mazikana; Peku, Sifile & Mudziso, 2019). As mentioned, graduate unemployment is also a concern.

According to Shen (2007), migration and education have become associated; that it is impossible to isolate the two from each other. Globally, student migration is identified as an increasingly significant phenomenon (Luebker, 2008; Okafor, 2011; Zuehlke, 2009). Globalisation and internationalisation of higher education has resulted in a rapid rise in students seeking higher education in foreign countries. A number of factors have been identified as reasons for migration taking place. These factors include other countries perceived many developing countries do not have sufficient employment opportunities for graduates. Studying in other countries is also seen as an opportunity to enhance professional business opportunities and a stepping-stone to permanent residency in a country (Gribble, 2008; Varghese, 2008).

Affordable fees, government subsidies for students, perceived quality of higher education, proximity to home and cost of living have been identified as factors drawing students from other African countries to South Africa (MacGregor, 2014). Economic crisis and inflation have also forced young people to migrate to countries like South Africa in search of education and employment in order to sustain themselves (New World Immigration, 2017).

Within the year 2013, South African universities saw close to 74 000 international student (undergraduate plus postgraduate) enrolments, which accounted for nearly 8% of the student body. More specifically, most of the students came from Africa (84.29%), with the most prominent countries being Nigeria (18.6%), Zimbabwe (33.8%), Lesotho (4.9%) and Congo (4.2%). In 2018, a total of 55% of the students were studying an undergraduate degree. It is important to note from these statistics, that most undergraduate students studying at South African universities are from Zimbabwe (Mokhothu & Callaghan, 2018, p. 3).

Statistics have not changed much in recent years. A total of 69 381 students of foreign nationality enrolled in public Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in 2016, comprising 7.1% of

total enrolment in public HEIs. More than a third of all foreign national students were from Zimbabwe (37.0% or 25 642), while a smaller proportion of students were from Kenya (2.0% or 1 365) and the United States of America (2.1% of 1 465) (Department of Higher Education, Republic of South Africa, 2018).

However, in South Africa, most research on unemployed graduates focuses on South Africans (Baldry, 2014; Mlatsheni, 2014), ignoring scenarios that include foreign nationals, more specifically Zimbabweans who have graduated with a degree from a South African tertiary institution. There is thus a knowledge gap regarding the experiences of unemployed Zimbabweans in South Africa who graduated at South African universities.

This study focuses on Zimbabwean graduates living in Johannesburg because the researcher has personally observed a high number of unemployed Zimbabwean graduates living in this city. Johannesburg is also the largest city in Gauteng and employment opportunities have led to migration of skilled and unskilled workers to this city (Verma, Yadav, Deshpande, Gubbi & Balamuralidhar, 2019).

1.4 <u>Research question</u>

The main research question in this study was:

What are the experiences of unemployed Zimbabwean graduates living in Johannesburg who have studied at a South African university?

1.5 <u>Primary aims and secondary objectives</u>

The primary aim of this study was to explore the experiences of unemployed Zimbabwean graduates living in Johannesburg, who have studied at a South African university.

The secondary objectives were:

- To explore the reasons why Zimbabwean graduates, decide to pursue higher education in South Africa.

- To explore the challenges faced by Zimbabwean graduates while studying at South African universities

- To explore why Zimbabwean graduates, make the decision to remain in South Africa to secure employment.

- To investigate challenges faced by Zimbabwean graduates when trying to secure employment in South Africa.

- To explore strategies taken by Zimbabwean students, who have graduated in South Africa, to deal with failing to secure employment

- To explore perceptions of participants regarding how the circumstances of unemployed Zimbabwean graduates can be improved.

1.6 Brief overview research methodology

The researcher made use of an interpretivism paradigm within a qualitative research approach. This facilitated the researcher to get an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences (Delport, Fouché & Schurink, 2011). The research design implemented for the study was phenomenological because it focused on gaining in-depth insight about the experiences of unemployed Zimbabwean graduates living in Johannesburg, South Africa. One-on-one interviews were used to gather data and an interview guide was used as the research tool to focus on fulfilling the main purpose of the study. Non-probability, purposive sampling was used to recruit suitable participants. The data collected were audio-taped, transcribed verbatim and implemented interpretive phenomenological analyses so as identify themes and sub-themes focusing of the main aim of the study.

1.7 Definition of key concepts

1.7.1 Unemployment

Unemployment is one among many issues that youth face in the labour market (ILO, 2006). There are various definitions of unemployment. For this study, unemployment is defined as "members of the economically active population who are without work, but available and seeking work, including people who have lost their jobs and those who voluntarily left work" (World Bank, 2009, p. 59).

1.7.2 Youth

The definition of youth varies from country to country. According to Karl (2012), youth are individuals that are aged between 15 and 24 years in Europe and in countries like the USA, Australia and Japan. This age range is also accepted by the United Nations (2017). However, in South Africa, South Africa's National Youth Policy, as well as its National Youth Commission Act (1996) and its Integrated Youth Development Strategy defines youth as "14 to 35 years of age".

1.7.3 Graduate

Graduate can be defined as "a person who has successfully completed a course of study or training, especially a person who has been awarded an undergraduate or first academic degree". (Oxford Living Dictionary accessed in June 2018). In this study, unemployed graduates will be denoted as recently degree-graduated youth who are without employment.

1.7.4 Experiences

Experience is defined as "the things that have happened to you that influence the way you think and behave" (Hornby, 2005, p. 513).

1.8 Theoretical framework

Two main theoretical concepts underpinned this study, namely social exclusion and the capability approach.

1.8.1. Social Exclusion

Mungule (2016, as cited in Toye & Infanti, 2004) explains that social exclusion broadly describes both the structures and the dynamic processes of inequality among groups in society. In this study, Zimbabwean graduates can be considered one such group in the South African context because they are not securing employment.

1.8.2. Capability approach

The capability approach is defined as a theoretical framework that entails two core normative claims: first, the claim that the freedom to achieve well-being is of primary moral importance, and second, that freedom to achieve well-being is to be understood in terms of people's capabilities, that is, their real opportunities to do and be what they have reason to value" (Standford University of Philosophy, 2016, para. 1)

1.9 <u>Organisation of report</u>

This chapter contextualised the problem researched and provided an overview of the study. Specific references were briefly made to the theoretical frameworks that were utilised by the researcher to underpin the study. Key words were defined, and the goal and objectives of the study were presented. A brief description of the research design and methodology were discussed.

The second chapter focuses on the reviewed literature study on the research topic. Key works to build upon in the research are identified, thereby clarifying the theoretical and substantive focus of the research.

Chapter Three contains a detailed a description of the research methodology and ethical considerations that were applied in this research study. Trustworthiness related to the study is discussed in detail.

The findings based on data analysis are presented and critically discussed in Chapter Four.

In the final chapter, Chapter Five, the focus is on the main goal and objectives of the study and whether they were achieved or not. The researcher also summarises the key findings of the study, draws conclusions and makes recommendations based on the findings.

<center>**CHAPTER TWO**</center>

<center>**LITERATURE REVIEW**</center>

2.1 <u>Introduction</u>

The situation of youth unemployment is frequently viewed as a national emergency, as the high level of youth unemployment is expected to lead to an increasing sense of exclusion among young people and to heightened 'levels of frustration and impatience' (National Planning Commission, 2012 cited by De Lannoy, Graham, Patel & Leibbrandt, 2018, p.5). Furthermore, De Lannoy, Leibbrandt and Frame (2015) highlight that extended periods of unemployment among youth can have profoundly negative effects on their physical and mental well-being and feed the vicious cycle of exclusion and poverty.

This chapter explores the dominant themes of the research by discussing comprehensively the topic of youth unemployment in general and then, more specifically, the determinants of unemployment among graduates. The impact of unemployment is also focused on.

2.2 <u>Statistics regarding Youth Unemployment</u>

The International Labor Organization (ILO) considers a person of working age fifteen years and older to be unemployed if during a specified reference period (a week) if that person is not working for some kind of financial compensation but is: (a) willing to work; (b) available to work; and (c) actively searching for work (Statistics South Africa, 2011).

The problem of high youth unemployment is a global phenomenon (Lam, Leibbrandt and Mlatsheni, 2008; Zinhnwe, 2012 and Yarima, 2014). As stated by the ILO (2010), youth unemployment dramatically increased after the worldwide economic crisis that began in 2007/2008 and led to the largest recession in 2008 to 2009. Nations around the world felt the effects of low economic perforce, employment and labour productivity. More so, in other countries like Italy, France and Belgium, youth unemployment got to unprecedented levels, and demonstrated greater problems (Karl, 2012).

One of the most urgent issues in Sub-Saharan Africa has been recognized as youth unemployment (Hilson & Osei, 2014). According to the Population Reference Bureau (2013) in Sub-Saharan Africa, less than half of 296.9 million youth that are aged between 14-26 years

were working in the formal economy. In some African nations, such as Ghana and Mozambique, their youth unemployment rate is as high as eighty percent. (Oppenheimer & Spicer, 2011).

As far as South Africa is concerned, at the period of transition, the economy was in poor shape and unemployment was high. Based on the research report submitted by the Central Statistics Service in 1996, it was estimated that 53.2% of young people were unemployed. In the late 1990s and the early part of the 2000s, the unemployment problem was growing, and with young people being worst affected (De Lannoy, Graham, Patel & Leibrandt, citing Bhorat 2005, p. 962).

Youth account for 63,4% of the total number of unemployed persons. Almost 4 in every 10 young people in the labour force did not have a job, with the unemployment rate within this group at 39,6% in the 1st quarter of 2019. Just under 30% of the youth have jobs and about half of them (48,8%) participate in the labour market. The unemployment rate in South Africa increased to 27.6 percent in the first quarter of 2019 from 27.1 percent in the previous period. It is the highest jobless rate since Q3 2017, as the number of unemployed individuals went up by 62 thousand to 6.20 million and employment fell by 237 thousand to 16.29 million Statistics South Africa (2015). The unemployment rate in South Africa averaged 25.66 percent from 2000 until 2019.

2.3 Graduate Unemployment

South Africa is experiencing growth in its graduate labour force, but graduate unemployment is rising with the overall unemployment rate (Gumede, 2019). Graduate unemployment is problematic, because it wastes scarce human capital, which is detrimental to the economy in the long run

The youth aged 15–24 years are the most vulnerable in the South African labour market as the unemployment rate among this age group was 55,2% in the 1st quarter of 2019. Among graduates in this age group, the unemployment rate was 31,0% during this period compared to 19,5% in the 4th quarter of 2018 – an increase of 11,4 percentage points quarter-on-quarter. However, the graduate unemployment rate is still lower than the rate among those with other educational levels, meaning that education is still the key to these young people's prospects improving in the South African labour market (STATS SA, 2018).

Furthermore, these studies findings argue that youth unemployment may be problematic not only to the directly affected persons, but as well as to the economy as an entity. Firstly, youth unemployment translates to idle labour potential, and thus has an adverse impact on any prospective economic growth. Secondly, youth's unemployment infers that there is reduced labour contribution from those who, in spite of less - or no - work experience than older workers, are thought to progress the practices of production with the use of their more recent and fresher and innovative expertise (Gomez Salvador & Leiner-Killinger, 2008).

Lack of economic opportunities in South Africa continues to create hatred between foreign nationals and locals, sparking xenophobic attacks. South African citizens accused foreigners of stealing their jobs and other opportunities (Harris, 2002; Mbembe, 2015; Rabkin, 2015).

2.4 <u>Unemployment in Zimbabwe</u>

The absence of employment opportunities in Zimbabwe has become a norm as this has been happening since 2008 (Bhebhe et al., 2016; Mpofu & Chimhenga, 2016). In 2008, Zimbabwe faced economic challenges and high inflation that forced a lot of investors to flee the country, leaving the country with very high unemployment rates and also high poverty rates.

In Zimbabwe, large numbers of graduates remain unemployed for several years following graduation. Unemployment in Zimbabwe continues to rise – it was 10.8% in 1982; 21.8% in 1992; 30% in 1995; and 95% by 2012 (Ncube, 2000; Econometer Global Capital Report, 2013).

It was reported that in 2009, Zimbabwe's unemployment was ranked the world's largest at 95% (Bhebhe et al., 2016; CIA World Factbook, 2017; Mananavire, 2015). This in turn has led to a vast number of people moving to look for employment in other countries, including South Africa.

Youth in Zimbabwe have the highest unemployment rate among the labor market in the country (Mpofu & Chimhenga, 2016). With the new leadership in place now the people of Zimbabwe can only hope that things get better, as it will take some time before the economy stabilizes and jobs can be created. In Zimbabwe, youth unemployment has been rapidly rising. Government of Zimbabwe's very successful Education for all policy has caused most unemployed youths in Zimbabwe to be educated youths who are holders of Ordinary Level certificates, Advanced Level certificates, diplomas and degrees. By 1986, 34% of the unemployed youths had Ordinary Level qualifications. The percentage rose to 73.4% in 1994, 74.6% in 2004 and to

85% by 2012 and it continues to rise to a level where almost all unemployed youths will be educated youths (Zim Stats, 2012).

Most people in urban areas in Zimbabwe are said to be underemployed since the current labor market is not offering competitive opportunities. University graduates are outnumbering the current employment opportunities; leaving other graduates unemployed (Mpofu & Chimhenga, 2016).

The attainment of independence in Zimbabwe in 1980 was met with a mounting problem of rural to urban migration by people who had long been constrained by the colonial administration (Bond 2003). The influx of migrants into the urban areas quickly swallowed the available jobs that the urban areas could offer to the new urbanites. In 2010, the urban youth unemployment in Zimbabwe had reached 42 per cent among the urban unemployed, which is among the highest on the continent (Feresu, Chimhowu and Manjengwa 2010).

In Zimbabwe's urban areas, most youth are underemployed since the labour market is not offering competitive opportunities. Youth who are graduating from various colleges or universities far outnumber the employment opportunities available on the market. According to ILO (2009, p. 13) "… unemployment among youths is further worsened by the fact that the formal economy only absorbs 20 000 to 30 000 from the 200 000 to 300 000 school leavers per year." In 2016 alone, Zimbabwe churned out about 20 000 graduates from its State universities and thousands of other graduates from private universities in the country, but of those, maybe only a tenth were absorbed into employment, locally. The rest end up taking other enterprises to make ends meet due to the economic challenges facing the country (Crush, Chikanda & Tawodzera, 2012).

Faced with the prospect of abject poverty, many youths are ready to take any job even if they are overqualified for it. On this score, Zhangazha (2012) noted that 'due to lack of jobs graduates for instance in accounting have found themselves driving taxis and working at fast food outlets, something they never imagined while still at university'. Some graduates are opting for self-help projects such as cross border trading and exchanging foreign currency at the parallel market. As such, there is no relationship between level of education and the nature of employment. Besides the fact that the formal sector is drastically declining, the government of Zimbabwe has frozen recruitment of new employees into the public sector. This has adversely affected the capacity of the country to absorb jobseekers (Crush, Chikanda &

Tawodzera, 2012). Similarly, Mpofu and Chimhenga (2016), point out that in the effort to try escaping poverty, university graduates in Zimbabwe are ready to take up any job even though it is not in line with their area of study in order to make a living. In Zimbabwe, because of the high levels of unemployment, there is no relation between the level of education and the nature of employment as even the qualified graduates are not employed as well (Bhebhe et al., 2016).

Besides the fact that the formal sector is drastically declining, the government of Zimbabwe has frozen recruitment of new employees into the public sector. This has adversely affected the capacity of the country to absorb job seekers. From the researcher's perspective, based on personal experience, the question arising is: With all the resources in the country, how can the government freeze posts rather than exploring ways of creating employment? Such short-cited policies can only find space in a country where the policymakers are locked in unnecessary squabbles that will only drag the nation into the doldrums of abject poverty.

Furthermore, apart from not being able to be absorbed in the Zimbabwean labour market, graduates' qualifications are not marketable on the international labour market. Graduates faced with such a situation, will then opt to pursue their studies in South Africa as they view South African qualifications as more internationally recognised, and can be used to search for employment in more countries (MacGreogor, 2007).

According to New World Immigration (2017) a lot of Zimbabweans have been moving to South Africa since the hyperinflation in 2007-2008 to escape the economic crisis. It is also to be noted that a lot of prospective Zimbabweans have been coming in hundreds to the South African embassy to apply for study permits in order to study in South African institutions. (New World Immigration, 2017). According to News24 (2017), 20% of Rhodes university students are international students, and around 50-60% of them are from Zimbabwe.

In Zimbabwean cities such as Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare and Chitungwiza, a considerable number of young people who can be potentially employed have been involved in petty thievery and pilferage, as they lack significant forms of earning a living. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe [RBZ] (2015) further highlighted that the occurrence of white-collar offences, including fraud and misappropriation, have been on the increase due to lack of employment prospects amongst the youths and the middle-aged populace in Zimbabwe. This same view is earlier contributed by Curtain (2004) who also noted that creating employment opportunities

for the youths increases national security by adjusting downwards the chances of young people engaging in violent activities and criminal deeds.

There are a number of causes of instability in Zimbabwe. For example, elections are highly manipulated and almost always accompanied by violence against citizens. The controversial land reform continues to shape Zimbabwe's economic recovery, poverty, and its relations with international actors. Decades of human rights abuses and impunity have diminished political participation by citizens and civil society and shaped a risk averse and fearful citizenry. The socio-economic challenges are huge, and the list is long. It includes long-term economic stagnation, unemployment, inflation, food insecurity, poverty, HIV/AIDs prevalence, limited provision of basic services, power outages, droughts, lack of clean water, etc. Despite the huge negative impacts on Zimbabweans, citizens have so far not mobilised protests against the government comparable to those in 1998. Migration, remittances and demographics are key insecurity dynamics. An estimated three million migrants have left Zimbabwe. Meanwhile, statistical analysis of youth bulges and civil unrest suggests Zimbabwe is at risk.

2.5 <u>Educational migration</u>

The two main elements affecting migration are wages, and quality of education. It should be stressed that the countries with the highest-quality education are not necessarily those with high wages. Therefore, there is a need to explore whether it is quality of higher education or wage levels that determine the direction of student flows. Immigration may lead to a specialisation of non-migrant workers in the destination country in areas where they have a competitive advantage (Samarrai, Samer, Bennell, & Paul 2006)

Recent years have seen considerable migration patterns of young people moving from the 'Francophone Africa' due to the search for better quality education. "Francophone Africa" is a term that refers to countries within sub-Saharan African region that use French as their official language. These encompass countries that were colonised by Belgium and France, such as Cameroon. One dominant feature about migrant students is the fact that they are self-funding, hence they lack the traditional monetary sustenance from their respective states (Shen, 2007).

Globally, student migration has been identified as an increasingly significant phenomenon, which nonetheless has received insufficient attention from either policy and/or research points of view as reflected in studies by Luebker (2008), Okafor (2011) and Zuehlke, (2009).

According to Shen (2007), migration and education have become so meticulously connected that it's nearly unmanageable to separate each from the other.

South Africa, among various rich nations, such as USA, Canada and China, has become the most highly regarded and popular study destinations. This is because of the significance it ascribes in their immigration policy called "migration of quality". The South African government has taken their policy on education into account during implementing changes to the programmes on skilled migration (Balaz & Williams, 2004). However, issues of youths being migrant students emerged recently as a freshly discovered societal constituency within intra-African migration.

Recent studies and surveys report that there has been a huge growth in foreign students studying in South African (SA) universities (McGregor 2007; ASSAf 2010). According to MacGregor (2007, p. 1), "… international students at South Africa's 23 public universities quadrupled since 1994 from 12,557 to 53,733 in 2006." Two out of three of the international students in SA universities are from the 14 member Southern African Development Community (SADC), with Zimbabwe as the major "source" country, followed by Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. The numbers of students from non-SADC African countries also nearly doubled during the period 2001 to 2006 (MacGregor (2007, p.1).

Expectedly, for Zimbabweans there are several reasons for choosing to study and seek employment in South Africa. These can include South African research expertise offered in their tertiary institutions, the possibility of procurement of financial aid and securing employment after graduation. Moreover, in Zimbabwe there is reported inadequate provisions within the tertiary education because of the shortage of programs offered. There are also few, if any, employment prospects and the extremely competitive university admission requirements are several of the push factors forcing students to pursue educational opportunities and employment in South Africa. For these students, moving to South Africa is being regarded as the exit option (Okafor, 2011).

In the 2010, ASSAF PhD study, it is reported that one third of non-South African doctoral students who were studying in SA during the time of the study, intended to stay in SA after graduation, compared to a very small number of SA national graduates who intended to migrate to other countries (ASSAf 2010). This therefore has a potential of changing the profile of SA graduates and academics.

While the increase of international students in the SA universities may be credited for the educational gains in the SA society – the increase in the number of black graduates, and the expressed intention of non-SA PhD graduates to stay in SA after graduation, and therefore contribute economically; the phenomenon has not been without problems, controversy or contestation. There are perceptions in SA that the universities, especially the historically white universities, are admitting the international black students so as to meet the admission quotas they have been set for black students. A preference for non-SA black students over local black students is a result of the observation that the non-SA students tend to be more academically prepared and stronger than the local black students, and therefore, the universities do not have to spend copious amounts of resources in remedial and academical development of underprepared students (Chikarara, 2016)

Along this line, education migration may be viewed as a causative factor to the brain gain speaking from South Africa's perspective and the relative brain drain from that of Zimbabwe and other countries. It has been debated elsewhere that in most of the instances, Zimbabwean students who migrate to South African do not return home but work as skilled professionals in South Africa (Skeldon 2005). Zimbabwean graduates are pushed into migrating due to the perception that there are less educational facilities and employment opportunities within the borders of Zimbabwe. In South Africa, receiving improved education is not discordant with participation within the local labour market; thus, Zimbabwean students and graduates make it a way to legitimize their continuous stay within the South Africa whilst others may decide on alternative options (Luebker, 2008; Zuehlke, 2009).

2.6 Preference for South African universities

According to International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) (2008), the reasons that can be said, to be the motivating factors for choice of studying at a foreign country's institutions of higher learning by international students include: geographic location, past associations among countries, language, the seeming quality of the country's higher education and its ease of access, affordability and the potential of getting employed using the qualifications that are obtained from the same institutions. South Africa is considered close in terms of its topographical location to most Southern African countries. About two thirds of the international students at South African universities are from the African continent (Rouhani, 2002, p. 11).

Zimbabwean students find it actually very close considering the fact that the two nations share the same border and they are together in Southern Africa. Some foreign scholars choose to study in South Africa essentially because of the well-built historical relations and harmony between the states. Although, semantically there are eleven official languages in South Africa, the nation uses English as the principal language of instruction in institutions of learning. The use of English attracts more learners from other foreign countries as they will not be forced to learn any other language as the case with countries that prefer their own local languages or their colonial languages other than English as a primary language of instruction. Bates (2001) contributes that English is the leading language as far as global education is concerned.

Yang (2007) highlights that students that are more likely to get qualified at international institutions of higher learning are favored and well recognized by companies in their home countries. Universities in South Africa offer globally accredited credentials. The qualifications are professed to be of superior quality by foreign students and are accepted and valued in many countries across the globe. South Africa flies its own kite with a higher education segment that is within reach. It also has a relatively lower cost of living compared to European and American institutions. Mpinganjira (2010) is of the same view that the costs of studying and living are moderately affordable in South Africa. For several students, studying overseas may be the only way of accessing higher education due to the problems of accessing education in their own countries (Alam, 2009).

Education access related impediments include unavailability of courses of first preference in home institutions, as well as lack of ability of learners to meet highly aggressive entry requirements that may be required by local institutions due to high demand exceeding supply (Mpinganjira, 2009; Mazzarol and Souter, 2002).

The majority of the immigrants to South Africa come from Zimbabwe, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Angola, and Ghana (Stats SA, 2013). Some of these migrants are accompanied by their children who are then enrolled in the South Africa's education system – a situation that gives rise to socio-education challenges in the education sector (Peberdy, 2016).

According to Mpinganjira (2009) and Cubillo et al. (2006), international learners' mobility can emanate from the students' needs to get high quality education and also to widen their

individual personal experiences. South African universities offer improved access to contemporary innovative and technological tools of learning for example, the use of computers and access to internet. These advancements make learning effortless and significant not only to international students but to all learners in the country. Other factors that can lead international students to choose and prefer to study in South Africa include the opportunities earn income while studying, and in some instances the non-availability of courses of preference in the home country take the toll in motivating students to migrate to South Africa for their undergraduate studies.

The conviction that studying in South Africa can enhance the chances of getting employed internationally is also another important factor leading foreign students to prefer South African Higher Education. Where there are not easily readable and comparable degrees, the question of whether or not foreign-trained professionals should be granted professional recognition continues to generate heated debates in migrant receiving countries. The difficulties of transferring and evaluating qualifications obtained from a different place further complicate the matter (Hawthorne, 2002).

2.7 Causes of unemployment

There are various factors resulting in the high unemployment level of graduates in general.

2.7.1 Skills mismatch

Jobs skills mismatch occurs when education and training institutions teach skills that employers no longer demand or when competencies of graduates do not meet the requirement of employers (CEDEFOP, 2014). According to Liu, Salvanes and Sorensen (2015), the adverse labour market circumstances at the period of labour market entry have huge and persistent destructive effects on careers. The researchers analysed the Norwegian national unemployment statistics and discovered that a mismatch amongst the skills supplied by graduates and skills required by hiring companies is a significant mechanism that is behind persistent career loss to the graduate youth (Liu et al., 2015).

Skill imbalances may be due to skills shortages, skills deficit or the underutilisation of skills. Skills shortages occur when there are not enough skilled individuals in the labour market to fill

the available positions. Related to this, a skills deficit occurs when workers lack the necessary skills to perform a job. Skills underutilisation, on the other hand, is present when workers possess (CEDEFOP, 2014).

Béduwé and Giret (2011) identified two categories of skills mismatch which are horizontal and vertical. The mismatch between the job level (this refers to the job position) and educational level (the educational requirements for performing the job) is known as vertical mismatch and/or over-education, whereas mismatch between the person's field of study and the field that one is employed in is called horizontal mismatch. Beduwe and Giret (2011) reported that both vertical and horizontal mismatches resulted from young graduates finding themselves possessing skills not valued in the labour market.

Similarly, in Ghana, Alfred, Simon, Ashiagbor and Baku (2008) conducted a research to investigate the reasons for graduate unemployment and they discovered misdirected training of graduates. This means that most graduates pursued courses not relevant to the current labour demands.

Major percentage of unemployment of youth in South Africa may be seen as a form of structural unemployment because young graduates usually don't have the right skills including experience and training. As noted by Van Aardt (2012), inexperience is a major obstacle to employment prospects among youths and explains the age discrimination in the labour market. Graduates find it hard to attain work experience, which is seen as an important contribution by employers to almost all, but the greatest elemental work specifications.

 2.7.2 Location mismatch

John Kain is credited as being the "father" of the Spatial Mismatch Hypothesis (SMH). Underlying these hypotheses are a number of premises. The first maintains that black residential segregation within metropolitan areas is not voluntary but is largely the result of racial discrimination in the housing market. Additional premises maintain that commuting is costly to blacks and that information on job opportunities declines with distance. As a result, blacks are more likely to work within, or close to, their residential neighbourhoods, which is Kain's first hypothesis. Another factor identified by Kain that may reinforce this tendency is the possibility that blacks encounter less consumer dis- crimination in those areas where they

represent a larger percentage of the resident population. White customers may have an aversion to dealing with black employees, causing employers to hire fewer blacks in predominantly white areas. This hypothesis is sometimes labelled the "sheltered workplace hypothesis" (Anderson & Wassmer, 2000, citing Kain, 1986).

The notion behind Kain's second hypothesis is that because discrimination constrains the residential locations of blacks, their job opportunity set is smaller than it would be if their locational choices were dependent on the forces affecting whites: preferences, prices, and incomes. A smaller job opportunity set results in higher black unemployment because there is less chance that a successful match will occur between worker and job. (Canon & Chen, 2011)

Kain's third hypothesis—that the negative effect on housing segregation of black employment is magnified by the decentralization of jobs—is what most people have in mind when they make reference to the SMH. There is a spatial mismatch in the sense that there is a surplus of workers relative to the number of available jobs in those areas where the black population is concentrated and a shortage of resident labor relative to the number of jobs outside these areas. (Ihlanfeldt, 1994).

2.7.3 Gender and personal attributes

 As alluded to by Moleke (2005), a graduate's field of study, choice of institution, geographic area, race and gender are vital determining factors to whether they find employment. According to findings by Li et al., (2014), and Li and Zhang (2010), in China the unemployment rate is lower for males than it is for females (e.g., 28.6% compared to 44.2% in Shanghai region). Another study by Li et al. (2014) however, warns that the low rates of unemployment amongst females may be attributable to the fact that more females are likely to work at home informally.

Miles (2002) found that family-level and cultural factors influence not only whether females are active in labour markets, but their success also in finding jobs. It is evident that the location of works matters more for females than it is for men. Young women are most vulnerable in many countries when it come to the job search experiences, some unemployed women are abused in the process of trying to get employed. According to (Statistics South Africa, 2015), youthful women from the black African populace cluster are the most susceptible in the South African labour market. The trend for joblessness rate at of young women stood at 42 –46 %

each year over the period 2008–2015. Additionally, it was significantly advanced than that of black African male youth (30 –37 %) and to a great extent worse than the rate amongst youth from the white male populace group which stood at (7 –12 %).”

The high rates of unemployment among females' graduates in South Africa were supported by Kyei and Gyekye (2011). Using principal components analysis specific to data in Limpopo Province, they established that the unemployment rates for men were 25.7% whereas it was 32% for women. However, Kyei and Gyekye (2011) claim that regardless of gender, the unemployment rate for higher degree holders is about 6% while it is 41% for those with only high school education or less. This implies that despite the unemployment rates sky rocketing, higher degree holders are still more likely to find employment than uneducated individuals. Badat (1992) stated that education improves the chances of being employed and that access to education is part of the progress of facilitating the social mobility of individuals from the lower to the higher social status. According to the Statistics of South Africa census (2014) most people who are unskilled have a lower chance of being employed compared to skilled ones, while unemployed job seekers largely stay unemployed because unfilled vacancies often require certain skills.

2.7.4 Influence of educational institution

Naong, (2011) found that in South Africa, graduates struggle to find work because they may have chosen wrong fields of study and also the preferment and cultivation of entrepreneurship amongst the youth, specifically at school level, is relatively far from enough. Graduates from any faculty must have certain skills consistently represented by the subject and class of a degree. A result of higher education experience, there is the long-established idea that graduates are anticipated to possess certain general abilities.

Bhorat and Visser (2010) found out that the type of institution, whether private or public as well as the ranking of the institute the graduate attended determines the employment prospects in South Africa. Graduates from universities that were previously reserved for white individuals during apartheid for example Stellenbosch University, have better employment prospects and are more easily assimilated or absorbed into the labour market, compared to graduates from historically black institutions like the University of Limpopo. Universities are getting more involved in mobility of graduates through their participation in employability of graduates.

2.8 <u>How unemployment impacts individuals</u>

Graduates' unemployment produces social results that are dire, with deficits such as increasing dependency on family, increasing crime rates for foreigners, especially prostitution and theft, and also leads to very low self-esteem, to a certain degree domestic violence and poor social adaptation as alluded to by Kabaklarli, Er and Bulus (2011).

Medical research endorses the fact that graduate youth unemployment is linked to many psychological symptoms, such as the loss of confidence and also leads to depression. In support, Morrel, Tylor and Kerr, (1998) state that the studies conducted in UK, Norway and Scotland established the existence of a strong positive correlation amongst smoking and drug possession with being jobless.

Hussainat, Ghnimat and Al-dlaeen (2013) noted that the delay in marriage is a prominent problem socially amongst unemployed graduates in South Africa, while anxiety, inferiority complex and carelessness were reported to be the main psychological effects of unemployment. Similarly, (Knabe and Ratzel (2011) explored the psychological influence of past unemployment experience and the future unemployment risk amongst Germans aged 25-50 years, using quantitative methods in a national survey. This study spanned across 22 years, and revealed that past experiences of unemployment robs persons of life satisfaction since it causes the distress of future unemployment, even after or if they are currently employed.

There are thus several effects of being unemployed. These effects are irrespective of gender, race or age; however, they are likely to affect the youth more than other age groups. This is because the youth are not given an opportunity to become independent from parents. Unemployment has forced people to find alternatives in order to make a living and earn an income. These alternatives may include being involved in criminal activities, transactional sex, which in turn could pose as harm to them (Bhebhe et al., 2016; Mpofu & Chimhenga, 2016).

Being unemployed increases the chances of white-collar crimes, for example fraud, in order for people to make an income. Another effect of being unemployed is a decline in an individual's quality of life. Quality of life depends on one's income; so being unemployed means that the quality of life declines as well (Uddin & Uddin, 2013). Another effect of unemployment is that those without jobs are likely to be hopeless, whether their situation will

change and they get jobs (Bhebhe et al., 2016). Lastly, with be the emigration of people to other countries which poses as a problem to the receiving countries (Mpofu & Chimhenga, 2016). It is evident that if you are an unemployed graduate you are confronted with many challenges. These challenges also have effects which are usually more negative than positive.

Henrik (2006, cited in Onno, 2011) asserts that low opportunities for young graduates create problems of violence due to lack of jobs and idleness because without a job they will not be able to play a useful role in the society. Unemployed graduates therefore may end up being the chief perpetrators of violence in society (Curtain, 2004).

Having acknowledged that inequality, poverty and unemployment are interconnected; other studies conducted in South Africa have established that the blend of inequality and unemployment, when associated globally, is exclusively high with youth graduates having the worst possible rates. While admitting the rate of unemployment is remarkably high for graduate youth, Griep, Rothmann, Vleugels and de Witte (2012) paralleled the psychological dimensions of unemployment amongst youths in Belgium and South Africa using a cross-sectional survey method. The results revealed that the bulk of South African graduate youths had no labour market experience, thus are also not on any social welfare grant hence giving them negative experiences of unemployment with very poor psychological outcomes. (de Witte, Rothmann &Jackson, 2012).

2.9. Theoretical Framework

As mentioned in Chapter One, two theories underpinned this study, namely social exclusion and capabilities approach.

2.9.1. Social Exclusion

The concept 'social exclusion' describes both the structures and the dynamic processes of inequality among groups in society (Mungule, 2016, as cited in Toye & Infanti, 2004). In this study, Zimbabwean graduates can be considered one such group in the South African context because they are not securing employment.

With time, social exclusion is seen to have a negative impact on the individual experiencing it, and on society at large. According to the South African Human Rights Commission, (2004, as

cited in Hinkey & Du Toit, 2014, p.18), social exclusion is defined as" the process that excludes individuals or groups from full participation in the society in which they live". As indicated by Ward (2009) and Guilford (2000), social exclusion in a community reflects various forms of poverty, which include unemployment and lack of education amongst others. The social exclusion theory as alluded by Sen (1999) is of utmost importance as it seeks to build inclusion to ensure that people are not excluded. The researcher selected the concept of 'social exclusion' for this study because it facilitates an understanding of the nature of graduate youths' (in this case Zimbabwean youth) exclusion from employment opportunities. It also provides understanding into the relational causes of this exclusion and the consequences of this exclusion from employment.

2.9.2. Capability Approach

The Capability Approach supports the concept of human development and well-being, in which people are seen to be active rather than passive agents in the development of their own future. Hence, concepts like empowerment, freedom/human rights, and participation are commonly used in this approach (Mungule, 2016, citing Sen, 1999). The capability approach openly recognizes the differences among individuals (Egdell & McQuaid, 2016). It also accepts that people's capabilities are affected by outside factors coming from interaction with other individuals (Egdell & McQuaid, 2016).

 Sen (1992) points out that ultimately, capabilities denote a person's opportunity and ability to generate valuable outcomes, taking into account relevant personal characteristics and external factors. The important part of this definition is the "freedom to achieve", because if freedom had only instrumental value (valuable as a means to achieve an end) and no intrinsic value (valuable in and of itself) to a person's well-being, then the value of the capability set as a whole would simply be defined by the value of a person's actual combination of functioning's.

In terms of the capability approach, it is surmised that unemployed Zimbabwean graduates residing in South Africa are not enjoying personal and social well-being because they are being denied the opportunity to implement their knowledge and skills in the work environment; to realise their goal and to live as they wish.

2.10 <u>Conclusion</u>

The above chapter reviewed significant theoretical and empirical articles reflecting the phenomenon of graduate unemployment among youth in South Africa and worldwide. The emphasis of the chapter was engaging with the relevant literature and becoming acquainted with what other researchers are reporting on the phenomenon. Research has generally tended to adopt a quantitative approach, which restricts the voice of graduate unemployed youth. It is evident, however, that youth unemployment is related to various factors and the experience thereof has a negative impact on their well-being. Reasons why Zimbabwean youth decide to study at South African tertiary institutions is understandable in light of the poor socio-economic problem currently existing in Zimbabwe

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 <u>Introduction</u>

The main aim of this study was to gain in-depth knowledge about the experiences of unemployed Zimbabwean graduates living in South Africa and thus a qualitative research approach was utilized. This chapter initially presents the qualitative research approach and why the said approach was adopted by the researcher. The research design is then described in detail by focusing on the following matters: the qualitative research method adopted to address the purpose of the study; the procedure used to recruit and select a sample of research participants; how data were gathered and analyzed. The chapter also highlights steps taken to enhance the trustworthiness of the study and ethical issues the researcher took into consideration. In conclusion, the limitations of the study are highlighted.

3.2 <u>Research Question</u>

The main research question in this study was:

What are the experiences of unemployed Zimbabwean graduates living in Johannesburg who have studied at a South African university?

3.3 <u>Primary Aim and Secondary Objectives</u>

The primary aim of this study was to explore the experiences of unemployed Zimbabwean graduates living in Johannesburg, who have studied at a South African university.

The secondary objectives were:

- To explore the reasons why Zimbabwean graduates decide to pursue higher education in South Africa.
- To explore the challenges faced by Zimbabwean graduates while studying at South African universities
- To explore why Zimbabwean graduates make the decision to remain in South Africa secure employment.

- To investigate challenges faced by Zimbabwean graduates when trying to secure employment in South Africa.
- To explore strategies taken by Zimbabwean students, who have graduated in South Africa, to deal with failing to secure employment
- To explore perceptions of participants regarding how the circumstances of unemployed Zimbabwean graduates can be improved.

3.4 <u>Research approach and design</u>

Basically, qualitative research focuses on phenomena that occur in its natural setting (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). Qualitative research studies the interaction between systems by interacting with and observing such systems or participants in their natural habitat, while placing emphasis on their meanings and interpretations of such interactions and resulting behaviours (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014; Nieuwenhuis, 2007a). Qualitative research is non-numerical and results are words (Babbie, 2011). This means that qualitative research gathers data in a subjective manner by focusing on the interaction of people and their environment and their responses to their context. This approach helps to enrich the findings while at the same time, ensuring a broad, holistic perspective (Fouché & Delport, 2011; Poduthase, 2015).

In this study, the researcher was interested in knowing and exploring the experience of unemployed, Zimbabwean graduates while residing in Johannesburg, South Africa. The participants' responses reflect their experiences which are a reality to them. With the qualitative research, participants are providing the truth and meaning and. unlike in quantitative research, the meaning is the interpretation of the researcher (Poduthase, 2015). However, qualitative approach is time-consuming and also requires in-depth analysis that places focus on meaning and themes unlike in the quantitative approach (Poduthase, 2015).

The research made use of the interpretive phenomenology research design. The purpose of interpretive phenomenological research is to understand the phenomena of the study in the participants own terms, thus providing a description of human experiences as experienced by the subjects (Fouché & Schurink, 2011; Tomkins, 2019). It is categorised as a qualitative approach, which generally seeks to explore subjective realities in an effort to understand deeper subjective meanings of a phenomenon within its social context (Mariwilda, 2015). Furthermore, there are two

complimentary commitments of Interpretive Phenomenology: It involves 'giving voice' and 'making sense', of participants' response. In other words, researchers seek to attain an 'insider perspective' of lived experiences.

As pointed out by Quest, (2014, p. 43), interpretive psychological research is dedicated to gleaning individuals' (i.e. unemployed Zimbabwean graduates living in Johannesburg) direct experiences through encouraging respondents to tell their own story in their own words – participants are considered the experiential experts. However, it also makes an "explicit commitment to person-in-environment and not just phenomenon-as experienced." In other words, researchers must focus upon the context-dependent life worlds of participants, contingent upon social, historical and cultural factors (Eatough & Smith, 2008). As such the researcher is required to present an interpretive account of what it means for respondents to have such experiences, within their particular context (Noon, 2017). Zimbabwean student participants were living in the Johannesburg and the socio, cultural and economic variables in this context impacted on their well-being.

3.5 <u>Research population and sampling procedure</u>

The study population is defined by Strydom (2011 p. 222) as the "sampling frame" and refers "to any sampling units, such as individuals, with which the specific study is concerned". The population for this study included all unemployed Zimbabwean graduates that had studied at a South African university that were residing in Johannesburg.

 Kumar (2005 p. 24), defines a sample as ''a segment of the population selected to represent the population as a whole''. A sample of 12 participants was purposively selected from the population to participate in the research in order for the researcher to gain insight into the experiences of unemployed Zimbabwean graduates living in South Africa. In non-probability sampling (which occurred in this study), the researcher does not know the population size or members of the population, so the odds of selecting an individual are unknown (Strydom & Delport, 2011). This means that individuals in non-probability sampling do not have an equal chance of being selected (Strydom, 2011; Strydom & Delport, 2011). The idea for this sampling technique is to classify a particular group or kind of persons that you wish to study in-depth to learn about a specific phenomenon (Christensen, Johnson, & Turner, 2015). Purposive sampling is based on the

judgment of the researcher, in that the sample is composed of elements that contain the most characteristics and attributes of the population that serve the purpose of the study (Strydom, 2011). In other words, it is used when specific criteria are expected to be met. In other words, the participants are chosen deliberately (Ritchie, Lewis, Elam, Tennant & Rahim, 2014; Rubin & Babbie, 2014).

A sample of 12 participants was selected who met the following criteria:

- Both men and women
- Youth between the ages 21-35 years (because graduates usually start university at the age of 18 years and don't graduate before the age of 21 years, even if completing a three-year degree).
- Completed an undergraduate degree at a South African university
- Unemployed
- Residing in Johannesburg

3.6 Method of gathering data and tool used

Data collection refers to "how the researcher obtains the empirical data in an attempt to answer the research question" (Christensen et al., 2015, p. 70). According to Nieuwenhuis (2007b, p. 87), "… interviews are a two-way conversation between the researcher and the participant(s) in order to collect data and to learn more about the participants' ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours". The aim of interviews is to perceive phenomena through the participant's frame of reference (Greeff, 2011; Nieuwenhuis, 2007b). This means that interviews are conversations with a definitive end goal.

Personal, one-on-one interviews were conducted with the selected participants in this study to gather data. One-on-one interviews are the most common method used by researchers when obtaining data in qualitative research (Greeff, 2005). This type of interview is the best because the participant is able to seek clarification whenever participants do not understand anything at any point of the interview (Seidman, 1998). In order to gain insight and a detailed description on the experiences of unemployed Zimbabwean graduates in South Africa, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with them. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer also has the

freedom to probe the interviewee to elaborate on the original response or to follow a line of inquiry introduced by the interviewee (Mathers et al., 2002).

Interviews conducted took approximately 45 minutes. All interviews were conducted in English and Shona as the researcher is Zimbabwean, so she was able to translate the interviews herself.

Most of the interviews took place at a private, convenient venue on campus where the participants and researcher felt comfortable. According to Patton and Cochran (2002) there are a number of issues to be taken into account when conducting interviews. Firstly, the place where the interview is to be held has an impact on the responses the researcher might get. The researcher should make sure that the place where the interview will be conducted allows the right privacy so as to make the participant comfortable to share with the researcher. Secondly the researcher should make the participant feel warm in order to for trust to be created. If trust is created, the participants will be comfortable and feel that the researcher is interested and makes opening up easier for the participant.

A semi-structured interview guide (See Appendix C) consisting of open-ended and semi open-ended questions, based on the topic area the researcher wanted to cover, was the research tool used. This provided opportunities for both interviewer and interviewee to discuss some topics in more detail (Mathers, Fox & Hunn, 2002, p. 2).

Data were collected with the aid of an audio-voice recorder; allowing the researcher to have time to pay attention to non-verbal communications such as body language, facial expressions which the participant might be saying.

3.6.1 Pre-testing the research tool

Pre-testing the research tool ensures that possible weaknesses or shortcomings of the tool are identified and rectified timeously prior to the commencement of the actual study (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003). A pre-test of the semi-structured interview guide was carried out to test the appropriateness and relevance of the questions with one participant who was not going to form part of the actual study. It was done before the commencement of the actual study. It provided the researcher with experience of the research procedure and allowed the researcher to gain confidence

in using the designed interview guide (Christensen et al., 2015). The interview guide did not require amendments as the questions proved relevant and understandable.

3.7 <u>Data analysis</u>

Data analysis is the central and most important step in qualitative research (Flick, 2013). Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011, p.3 97). There are three main aims of qualitative data analysis which are: (i) to describe the phenomenon in some or greater detail, (ii) to identify the conditions on which differences are based and lastly (iii) to develop a theory of a phenomenon under study from the analysis of empirical material (Flick, 2013).

The research study made use of interpretative phenomenological analyses to data analyse the data collected. The aim of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is to explore in detail how participants are making sense of their personal and social world. It involves detailed examination of the participant's lifeworld; it attempts to explore personal experience and is concerned with an individual's personal perception or account of an object or event, as opposed to an attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

IPA also emphasizes that the research exercise is a dynamic process with an active role for the researcher in that process. One is trying to get close to the participant's personal world, to take, in Conrad's (1987) words, an 'insider's perspective', but one cannot do this directly or completely. Access depends on, and is complicated by, the researcher's own conceptions; indeed, these are required in order to make sense of that other personal world through a process of interpretative activity. Thus, a two-stage interpretation process, or a double hermeneutic, is involved. The participants are trying to make sense of their world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

IPA researchers wish to analyse in detail how participants perceive and make sense of things which are happening to them. It therefore requires a flexible data collection instrument. The way most IPA studies have been conducted is through the semi-structured interview. This form of interviewing allows the researcher and participant to engage in a dialogue whereby initial questions are modified in the light of the participants' responses and the investigator is able to probe

interesting and important areas which arise (Smith & Osborn, 2007). The assumption in IPA is that the analyst is interested in learning something about the respondent's psychological world. This may be in the form of beliefs and constructs that are made manifest or suggested by the respondent's talk, or it may be that the analyst holds that the respondent's story can itself be said to represent a piece of the respondent's identity (Smith, 2003).

Interviews were facilitated by the fact that the researcher has good communication skills and was thus able to build rapport and gain trust of the participants. Data analysis involved a cyclical process there the researcher proceeded through several integrative stages:

☐☐Stage 1: first encounter with the text
☐☐Stage 2: preliminary themes identified
☐☐Stage 3: grouping themes together as clusters
☐☐Stage 4: tabulating themes in a summary table

The researcher began the whole process afresh with the second or subsequent interviews and produce a list of themes for each interview.

3.8 Trustworthiness

Streubert and Carpenter (2003, p. 364) describe trustworthiness as "establishing the validity and reliability of qualitative research". Qualitative research is trustworthy when it accurately represents the experiences of the participants in the study (Streubert & Carpenter, 2003). The research demonstrates trustworthiness when the experiences and feelings of the participants are accurately represented when data were organised (Streubert & Carpenter, 2003, p. 38). Four criteria are used to measure trustworthiness of data namely: credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability.

Credibility is "an evaluation of whether or not the research findings represent a 'credible' conceptual interpretation of the participants' original data" (Fenton & Mazulewicz, 2008, p. 474). It focuses on establishing the match between the constructed realities of the participants and those realities presented in the research (Sinkovics, Penz & Ghauri, 2008). Credibility just makes sure

that the study measures what it actually intended (Shenton, 2004). The researcher ensured accuracy by making use of a digital recorder to make sure that the findings were consistent with what the participants reported during the interviews.

Dependability is "an assessment of the quality of the integrated process of data collection, data analysis and theory generation" (Fenton & Mazulewicz, 2008, p. 474). It is concerned with assessing if research is to be repeated in the same context, with the same participants and same methods, the same results are likely to be obtained (Shenton, 2004). This report outlines methodology and also highlights in detail how data were analysed; therefore replication with similar results should be possible. Dependability was also assured, with the supervisor acting as an independent third party to assess the soundness and consistency of the process of data collection, analysis and the integration of the literature.

Transferability is defined by Fenton and Mazulewicz (2008, p. 475) as "the degree to which the findings of the study can apply or transfer beyond the bounds of the study". It is concerned with the extent to which the research study can be applied to other situations. It assumes that results obtained in a small population can be applied to a wider population (Shenton, 2004). Transferability did not really apply to this study, as the findings cannot be generalised. However, the researcher provided adequate details of the context of the fieldwork for a reader to be able to decide whether the prevailing environment is similar to another situation with which he or she is familiar and whether the findings can justifiably be applied to the other research settings.

Confirmability is "the measure of how well the inquired findings are supported by the data collected" (Fenton & Mazulewicz, 2008, p. 475). According to Shenton (2004) confirmability "is the qualitative investigator's comparable concern to objectivity". There are various steps that are taken to ensure that findings are a result of the experiences and ideas of the participants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher (Sinkovics et al., 2008; Shenton, 2004). To ensure conformability the researcher made sure that she linked her findings with what literature says concerning the findings throughout the research report.

3.9 <u>Ethical considerations</u>

Ethical issues are complex, and it is important for the researcher to bear in mind that the collection of data may never be gathered to the detriment of the members involved. In order to conduct the study in an ethical manner the researcher took into consideration the following ethical issues:

Avoidance of harm: Strydom (2011, p. 115) states that "the fundamental rule of social research is avoidance of harm to the participants that are involved in the study". The researcher is obliged to make sure that the participants are free from being harmed throughout the study. Participants were thus informed beforehand about the potential emotional impact of the study. If participants were not comfortable, they were allowed to withdraw from the study if they did not wish to continue (Strydom, 2011, p. 115). The researcher ensured sensitivity throughout the study.

Voluntary participation: Participation should at all times be voluntary; no one should be forced into participating in a research study (Christensen et al., 2015; Strydom, 2011). In other words, no one should feel pressured to participate, because this could affect the results of the study if the participants are not willing to take up the study. This ethical consideration was born in mind when recruiting prospective participants. Only information that a participant was willing to share was obtained. If a potential participant did not want to participate, they were also free to decline or withdraw from the study at any time (See Appendix B)

Informed consent: Christensen et al. (2011, p. 125) define informed consent as "fully informing the research participants of the aspects of the study". The participants are entitled to being informed of the purpose and procedures of the study. Informed consent is considered to be vital because of the fact that individuals have the right to determine what is done to their bodies and minds (Christensen et al., 2015, p. 125). A Participant Information Sheet that described the purpose of the research study and what participating in the study would entail was provided to the prospective participants (See Appendix A.)

Deception of participants: Deception refers to "deceit" (Christensen et al., 2015, p. 129) and it involves misleading the participants or deliberately withholding information from the participants (Strydom, 2011, p. 118). Consideration was given to the issue of deception when conducting the study. The researcher ensured that there was no deception of the participants, by providing participants with all adequate information regarding the research study.

Violation of privacy, confidentiality and anonymity: Christensen et al. (2011, p. 134) defines privacy as "controlling other people's access to information about a person". Every individual has the right to privacy, and he or she can decide who they want their actions, attitude of beliefs to be revealed to (Strydom, 2011, p. 119). The privacy of participants was respected during the study and the researcher allowed the participants to share only what they were willing and comfortable to share. Confidentiality in the context of the research study refers to an agreement with research investigators about what might be done with the information that is obtained in the study. The researcher ensured confidentiality by not discussing the participants' response with anybody except the researcher's supervisor.

Anonymity means "keeping the identity of the participants unknown" (Christensen et al., 2015, p. 134). The researcher cannot ensure full anonymity due to the personal interviews conducted with the participants, but when reporting findings the researcher refers to the participants not by their real names but using pseudonyms.

Debriefing of participants: Debriefing refers to a "post-interview or discussion with the participant about the purpose and details of the study, including an explanation for the use of any deception" (Christensen et al., 2015, p. 131). According to Strydom (2011, p. 122) the simplest way to debrief participants is to discuss their feelings and experiences during a session after the study has been conducted. There was no need for debriefing for this study.

The researcher gained ethical clearance to conduct the study from Human Research Ethics Committee (non-medical) from the University of the Witwatersrand prior to conducting the study (See Appendix D).

3.10 <u>Limitations of study</u>

An interpretivist view, as in qualitative research of this nature, is essentially shaped by the bias of the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The limitation of this study was therefore the interpretation being constrained by the intellect, perceptions and bias of the researcher. The researcher's version of what was said during an interview may have been easily miscomprehended if not understood in the correct context (Creswell, 2007). This was avoided by the pre-test of the research tool and the researcher's self-reflection. According to Rubin and Babbie (2005)

participants can self-report on socially desirable responses, usually in face-to-face interviews, and the researcher may unintentionally influence the participant by leading a line of questioning and steering the participant to a point of view. A uniform and consistent approach was adopted for all interviews and impartiality was ensured. Some participants did not provide information with adequate depth despite being prompted with leading questions.

The research depended on the subjective reporting of participants, which in turn raises concerns about objectivity. Unfortunately, owing to time restraints the research could only interview a limited number of research participants and thus she has no surety that saturation was reached.

3.11 <u>Chapter Summary</u>

This chapter presented a detailed description of the approach that was used for this study, the research design and methodology that was utilised for this study, including the sampling type and process of recruitment, data collection method and research tool. A clear description of how data were analysed, trustworthiness and ethical considerations applicable for this study were also described in this chapter. This chapter concluded with the possible limitations of the study. The next chapter will present and discuss the research findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 <u>Introduction</u>

This chapter presents and discusses the results of the study. The fundamental goal that drove the collection of data and subsequent analysis was to explore the experiences of unemployed Zimbabwean graduates living in Johannesburg who had studied and graduated at a South African university. The findings of the study will be structured in relation to the study objectives.

However, firstly the demographic profiles of the participants are described. Table No. 1 on the following page, summarises the particulars of the research participants.

The said table shows that a total of 12 participants were interviewed. Out of the 12, seven of them were males and five were female. The ages of the participants ranged from 22 to 32 years. All the participants in this study were Africans. The participants graduated between 2012 and 2017 representing periods of unemployment of between 1 year and 6 years. Because of the varying years of being unemployed, participants were able to provide relevant information about their experiences as unemployed foreign graduates.

All the participants attended universities in South Africa. Four of the unemployed graduates hold business degrees in tourism and hospitality management, accounting, mathematics and statistics, and business management. Three unemployed graduates hold degrees in sciences, while the other five unemployed graduates hold degrees in arts. The participants in this study were thus from different faculties and had done divergent qualifications. This can be considered a benefit to the study because findings are related to a wide spectrum of graduates with different degrees.

4.2 Demographic profiles of participants

Table No. 1: Profile of Participants

Pseudonyms	Age	Sex	Race	Graduated	University	Diploma/degrees
Tinaye	23	M	African	2016	University of South Africa	Tourism & Hospitality Management
Abigail	27	F	African	2015	University of Pretoria	Business Management
Aswald	25	M	African	2017	Wits University	Law
Millicent	31	F	African	2010	University of Limpopo	Accounting
Nehemiah	32	M	African	2012	Tshwane University of Technology	Food Technology
Nigel	25	M	African	2015	Tshwane University of Technology	Social Sciences
Tinomutenda	26	M	African	2014	University of Johannesburg	Graphic Communication Design
Casper	24	M	African	2017	Stellenbosch University	Social Work
Sharon	27	F	African	2014	North West University	Engineering Sciences
Susan	29	F	African	2014	University of Cape Town	Bsc Environmental Science
George	22	M	African	2017	Rhodes University	Bachelor of Education
Natasha	29	F	African	2013	University of the Free State	BA Criminology and Psychology

4.3 <u>Findings related to the objectives of the study</u>

As pointed out in Chapter 3, the research study made use of interpretative phenomenological analysis to analyse the data collected. This entailed exploring in detail how participants are making sense of their personal and social world. The following themes related to the study objectives emerged when analysing data.

<u>4.3.1 Objective 1: Explore students' reasons for deciding to pursue higher education in South Africa</u>

The first objective of this study was to explore the reasons why Zimbabwean graduates decide to pursue higher education in South Africa. When discussing their experiences in this regard, they all presented as having felt confident coming to complete their degrees in South Africa. Their reasons were simple and direct; implying that they had every reason to have studied in South Africa. They felt that their reasoning was not unique; most university foreign students strongly believe that universities in South Africa offer a high standard of education compared to universities in their countries of origin (in this case, Zimbabwe).

<u>Theme 1: Degrees completed in South Africa are highly regarded</u>
Many of the participants chose to study at a South African university because they were of the opinion that South African universities offer tertiary training that is of a high regard and offers better learning conditions than universities in Zimbabwe. The following excerpts exemplify this sentiment:

> South Africa is the education hub for southern Africa, I simply chose South Africa for my higher education qualification because the universities are better ranked on world rankings compared to Zimbabwean universities. Therefore, it means they provide with employability potential more than those obtained in Zimbabwe. The standards in SA are also far above those obtaining in Zimbabwe. Though Zimbabwe is ranked among the best countries with high literacy rates in Africa, it remains far from being recognized in terms of contributions

to research and development. Most of the universities in Zimbabwe are not recognized once one step out of the Zimbabwe boarder. (Natasha)

I strongly feel Zimbabwe is still operating in the ancient times. They still lack in many aspects when it comes to the profile of universities in Africa. Technologically, Zimbabwe still lacks innovation as compared to its counterpart across the Limpopo. There are still many aspects to be improved, for example the programmers offered are limited and myopic. Same programmers are offered in almost all the universities; there are no unique and signature programmers for universities as in South Africa. (Nehemiah)

Hmm… definitely I would say the engineering field is very vast in this country compared to any other country on this continent or within the SADC region. So, my drive would be to get as much experience from world renowned institutions that are based in South Africa. (Sharon).

According to Menon (2009, as cited in Mpinganjira, 2009), South Africa is considered to be the most developed country in Africa, hence a lot of students migrate to enrol for tertiary education here. The said researcher highlighted two main factors why individuals decide to come study in South Africa. Firstly, it a fact that South African university are better ranked, and qualifications are much more accredited that home country qualification, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Secondly, in South Africa the facilities and technology are generally advanced as compared to Zimbabwe (Chimucheka, 2016). Lee and Sehoole (2015), who investigated the factors that drive and shape educational migration toward South Africa, also emphasised that African students repeatedly state the significance of a South African degree in comparison with their options in their home countries.

In many senses the capability approach is apparent in this theme. Zimbabwean graduates had regarded South African universities as the place to develop their skills and knowledge. They had exercised freedom of choice when deciding to study in South Africa and anticipated the decision as being able to enhance their sense of well-being and realise their future goals.

4.3.2. Objective 2: Explore challenges faced by Zimbabwean graduates while studying at South African universities

The second objective involved exploring what challenges Zimbabwean graduates faced while studying at a South African University. Participants' viewpoints differed; a small group voiced that that they were fairly treated, whereas the other group voiced that that they experienced a number of challenges.

Theme 1: International students are usually treated fairly

Some of the participants emphasised that they did not experience any form of discrimination. They spoke highly of the way South African universities responded to their needs as foreign students. They emphasised that they felt that they were treated fairly and thus deemed the experience of studying in South Africa as meaningful and rewarding.

One of the students pointed out that she felt all students were treated fairly, and even if some form of discrimination came to the fore, this was managed appropriately:

> I would like to say all students were treated equally at this university and fairly at this university. In least cases, you would find the locals wanting to get preference over foreigners and staff would address it professionally. Therefore, I would like to comment that South African universities treat foreign students fairly and equally. (Tinaye)

Another participant remarked that Zimbabwean students were probably dealt with fairly because of the agreement between the Zimbabwean government and South African universities. Generally, participants tended to emphasise professional policies facilitating the general acceptance of foreign students.

> I would want to positively comment on the way Zimbabwean students were treated at my college. I presume it's because of the relationships that have been created between the government of Zimbabwe and Rhodes University. There are numerous students from

Zimbabwe that come on the presidential scholarship scheme and the government of Zimbabwe war veterans' fees paying scheme.

It was relatively a good experience getting my qualification here in SA. The university was favourable place to be during the entire learning experience. At university of Limpopo they have operate with the guidance of the Equal Opportunity and Access to Fair Treatment policy". (Millicent).

Theme 2: The needs of foreign students are not adequately met.

Some of the participants focused on the issue that sometimes students experienced challenges because their needs were not adequately met.
For example, the issue of transport was highlighted:

I strongly feel there is room for improvement. I can't say the university treated students 100% fairly and equally as some traces of discrimination was experienced in the way tuition was provided …. when it comes to facilities, such as accommodation, no priority was given to international students. Some students would stay out of campus in areas where it will be difficult for them to travel well after hours, which ultimately limits international students on the time they can be at campus either learning or researching. (Natasha)

Moving away from institutional structures and government policy and arrangements regarding foreign students studying in South Africa, a few students expressed a particularly pertinent issue. They emphasised that even on a grassroots level, that is, with other students, they felt accepted. They felt surprised that South African students showed acceptance to their presence; they made them feel welcome:

Even students would accommodate us as if we were of their own. (George)

Coming here I stayed in res, I never felt as welcomed as I did because we were all treated equally as first years. I made friends easily too. I would say most of my friends where

South Africans. At least the ones I meet were nice and genuine towards me. I really felt at home and welcome (Sharon).

Theme 2: Exposed to crime

From a conflicting perspective, quite a few students emphasized that international students are often exposed to different forms of risk; particularly crime. As the participant shared his story you could tell that he was hurt about this incident and it still at the back of his head as it was a very traumatic event in his life. This point of view is captured in the following verbatim quotes:

With me it was a bit difficult living in South Africa for my undergraduate studies. I almost had to quit halfway through my studies. In my first year I got all my pocket money stolen within two weeks of coming into the country. In my second year of study I got attacked with two friends of mine, while on our way to campus from the shopping mall. I sustained serious injuries (Nigel).

When asked if he had reported the case to the relevant authorities this was his response:

Umm well, I thought of reporting the case to the police, but then what could they have done? The most I did was let the people at my university know about it and they did manage to give me a few Rands in order to see myself through till the next month when my parents could send money (Nigel).

The incident cited basically reinforces the fact that there is high crime rate at South African universities. Research has established that tertiary institutions are often affected the country's high crime rated. Many people perceive universities as being safe environments, but crime on campus is a problem that affects students and staff; both foreign and national students (Jennings, Gover & Purdzynska, 2007).

Theme 3: Foreign students experience discrimination

Some of the participants mentioned that they faced discrimination by the mere fact that they are foreign nationals. The participants indicated that being discriminated because of their foreign

status made them feel unwelcome and inadequate and inferior which in turn could lead to a poor self-esteem. This is highlighted by the following verbatims:

> Coming to South Africa I never thought I would be faced with issues of discrimination right in my face like that. Firstly it was when I was in my first year and had to be removed from a double room that I had been placed with a white person only to be told that I had to share with a black person as we were from different social classes. I really felt very inferior because to me colour means nothing (Susan).

Another participant who had faced some form of discrimination added:

> Even in shops when you walk in everyone assumes that since you are black you are South African and you should know Zulu or a South African language. When you let them know politely that you aren't from South Africa they are rude about it (Casper).

Marginson, (2011), states that in South Africa discrimination towards African international students is more prevalent. Buthelezi (2009) argues that discrimination is also apparent when there is exclusion of people from other countries from jobs and educational opportunities. Lee (2010) concurs with Buthelezi (2009), adding that some government legislation has discriminatory implications for international students.

The contributions of the participants in this study suggests that the laws of the South Africa and the individual policies of the universities in South Africa, reject discrimination of foreign students in institutions of higher learning. Perceived cultural discrimination, verbal insults and physical assaults experienced by international students - both inside and outside the university - are prime examples that some of the problems faced by international students have less to do with their own adjustment, and have more to do with the host institution and the host society's shortcomings (Lee & Rice, 2007). It has been noted that international students experience higher levels of discrimination than domestic students (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007).

It is also evident in literature that institutions that do not cater to the unique needs and requirements of international students may leave students feeling disappointed, unfulfilled and in certain instances exploited (Sherry, Thomas & Chui 2010). Moving to a foreign country can be exciting and filled with opportunities to learn about oneself and others, but it can also be challenging and traumatic in dealing with an unfamiliar environment and a different cultural mentality (Ward et al., 2001). Including the effects, it has on international students from alienation, adjustment and acculturation to the host country, to difficulties with academic performance and mental and physical health (Klomegah, 2006; Sam, 2000; Ward et al., 2001).

As has been mentioned, migration can be traumatic and stressful, as well as having an impact on both physical and psychological health. In South Africa, this may be further confounded by the atmosphere of xenophobia. The xenophobic attacks that started in 1994 and raged fiercely in May of 2008 saw predominantly black African immigrants being targeted, regardless of whether they were legal or illegal immigrants (Lippert and Mpanza, 2008; Mattes et al., 1999, in Harris, 2001).

In many respects, the negative responses shared by the participants reflect that discrimination leads to social exclusion. They do not feel that sense of belonging…rather they are victims of a social environment that is making them vulnerable.

4.3.3 Objective 3: Explore why Zimbabwean graduates make the decision to try secure employment in South Africa

The third objective involved exploring why Zimbabwean graduates make the decision to try secure employment in South Africa, rather than returning to Zimbabwe. Even though most of the graduates' families still stay in Zimbabwe, the graduates interviewed were not keen to return to Zimbabwe for a number of reasons.

Theme 1: Efforts made to secure employment in Zimbabwe unsuccessful

Out of the twelve interviewed participants, nine indicated that they had not returned to Zimbabwe since their graduation and indicated that they did not intend doing so. Only three participants had

returned temporarily and had not been able to secure employment during their short stay in Zimbabwe forcing them to return to South Africa to search for employment.

Participants generally felt despondent when sharing with the researcher why they made the decision to return to South Africa. The participants indicated that staying in South Africa is stressful, but it cannot be compared to going back to Zimbabwe, this is evident from the quotes below:

> I failed to secure employment during my stay there. It was difficult for me to cover my day to day expenses as my uncle had also been retrenched and was no longer earning a steady income. I even tried to look for menial jobs as a way of earning a basic living income, but to no avail. I had no option but to come back to SA to search for employment (Nigel)

> After completing my studies, I went back to Zimbabwe in the hope that I would get employed within the shortest period of time. I would send applications to the many adverts that I would see in the newspaper. It was a difficult situation as I was only called for only one interview which I did not get any feedback as to whether I was successful or otherwise. I ended up giving up until I decided to return back to South Africa (Sharon)

Theme 2: Zimbabwe has poor socio-economic circumstances

The nine participants who made it clear that they did not intend returning to Zimbabwe also focused on Zimbabwe's poor socio-economic circumstances and the negative impact this is having on employment opportunities. They felt that being unemployed in South Africa was relatively better as the potential for getting employed was more likely when they compared the situation with being unemployed in the Zimbabwean context. They had resigned themselves to the reality of problem-situation in Zimbabwe and felt returning to Zimbabwe would serve no purpose. They were very familiar with the hardships other graduates were experiencing in Zimbabwe. The following comments capture this sentiment:

> Firstly, unemployment is so high in Zimbabwe. There are more and more graduates entering the job market, yet the government is unable to create jobs for the ones already there. The

few jobs available become so difficult for us to qualify for as minimum requirements often require additional experience or qualifications due to the high number of applicants available. So, no connections within the company means it is close to impossible for one to get a job at the company. To make things worse, I have friends working in Zimbabwe who will tell you they've gone for months at a time unpaid, because the companies have no money for interns, but the graduates require work experience, so they end up doing it. There isn't much confidence in the economy. Others lose those jobs after a few months of employment, so there really isn't much motivating graduates to return to Zimbabwe me included. So, going back to Zimbabwe is a trap. (Tinaye)

I would say, ideally, I would have loved to work in Zimbabwe but due to the economic climate that is there right now Zimbabwe is not the place to be; it really is not conducive. And also, another thing Zimbabwe is kind of limiting. You cannot climb up the cooperate ladder due to the few numbers of food industry opportunities that are there. So South Africa was the next best option. Besides I was here for my tertiary education so I would think getting a job here will be easier. (Nehemiah)

Muchichwa (2016) highlighted that Zimbabwe's economic and political crisis continues to bring economic hardship and suffering to the majority of Zimbabweans. It is evident from the responses of the participants that they have been excluded from participating in contributing to the economy as they cannot secure employment even after they have studied tertiary degrees.

In many senses they now feel socially excluded. They are not been included in the Zimbabwean economy and feel as though there are no doors being made open to them to gain work experience and make a meaningful contribution to the country.

Theme 3: Salaries low and living costs high in Zimbabwe

One of the three participants pointed out that although she was able to find employment in Zimbabwe, it did not prove profitable because her salary was rather low and the living costs high. This is evident from the quotes below:

I actually went back to Zimbabwe after graduation. However, my challenge was the salary I was earning was little and could not suffice my budget. I could not bear the situation and had to resign. I came back to South Africa and even though I am still looking for the right job I can't complain as I usually get part time jobs that are able to remunerate me enough to cover my monthly expenses whilst I am searching for a proper job. (Susan)

The life in Zimbabwe is different. First of all, it's expensive and it's very, it's much more expensive than here". With the little money I get I can do a lot more in SA than in Zimbabwe, with the current economic environment (Millicent)

Well, I have to admit the facilities in South Africa are generally nice. So many malls, prices are generally cheaper than in Zimbabwe. Cost of living is better than in Zimbabwe so that's another consideration that I take. The life here for an unemployed graduate is more bearable than in Zimbabwe where it is highly costly to meet the daily requirements especially when you are not employed. (Natasha)

The Zimbabwean economy has deteriorated over the years. The rate of unemployment for the potentially employable active group has risen drastically to more than 90% (BBC News, 2017). It is difficult for the industry to absorb more graduates from training colleges and universities when the current employees are being retrenched. The Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI) Report (2013) gives a gloomy picture of the Zimbabwean industrial situation and its declining capability to absorb more human capital in the form of workers who include educated youths. Closure of companies and retrenchments: According to the July 2013 National Social Security Authority (NSSA) Harare Regional Employer Closures and Registrations Report for the period July 2011 to July 2013, 711 companies in Harare closed down, rendering 8 336 individuals jobless.

Rusvingo (2014) highlights that the educated youth unemployment rate is exacerbated by the efficient and effective supply-side of the education sector where the government policy on Education for All (EFA) has produced wonderful results. The flourishing informal sector gives the best evidence of the low industry capacity utilisation and high unemployment state in Zimbabwe.

Street vendors have literally clogged most pavements, market places, bus termini, high density road sides and open spaces in the urban centres. Rusvingo (2014) had this advice to share, perhaps the most telling deficiency of our development strategies in Africa is the failure to register singular importance to the problem of unemployment. Yet the problem of unemployment in Africa is so critical that, we may not legitimately resolve underdevelopment if we do not solve it (Rusvingo, 2014).

These themes suggest that Zimbabwean graduates are currently being social excluded from Zimbabwe because of the poor socio-economic circumstances impacting on their country of origin.

4.3.4. Objective 4: Explore challenges faced by Zimbabwean graduates when trying to secure employment in South Africa

This objective aimed at exploring the various challenges that Zimbabwean graduates have faced whilst trying to secure employment in South Africa. Experiences that the graduates faced when trying to secure employment in South Africa were similar in most instances however some had worse experiences as compared to other graduates. The following themes emerged with regard to the exploration of challenges that are faced by Zimbabwean graduates when trying to secure work in South Africa.

Theme 1: Require work permits

For Zimbabweans to be able to study in South Africa they are required to apply for a study permit. Same applies to instances when foreigners desire to work in South Africa they are required to be in possession of a work permit. The procedures however to obtain a permit in south Africa has not been made easy. Individuals that have qualifications that fall under the special skills category as stated by the south African government are at a better chance of obtaining their work permit with less hustle.

Lee and Rice (2007) report that international students experience discrimination on the national level. This discrimination is observed in many current contexts; such as fingerprinting and profiling procedures, the long processes that international students have to go through to get their

study permits or visas approved (Lee &Rice, 2007). It is evident from the following quotes by the participants:

> For us Zimbabweans it is rather difficult to get a job, firstly because for you to get a job in South Africa you being a Zimbabwean you need a work permit. And for you to get a work permit you need an offer letter… and as a Zimbabwean who studied social sciences, I do not qualify for a critical skills permit, I find it hard to find a job worse more a permit in South Africa. You might be offered a job but it comes with one requirement of holding a work permit. Most companies will not even help you to process the permit, they will just tell you the job is there but it requires a work permit". (Nigel)

> If you are not a South African national you will need a work permit and securing that takes time. It is a process and a lot of companies are not willing to wait for so long. They do not have that patience or time to facilitate that, well especially for a non-South African citizen. So, in turn that makes it difficult for me to get employment. (Nehemiah)

> I have also been called to a number of interviews, but employers get demotivated when they learn that I do not hold a work permit. Actually I would say the reason why ex South African graduates are unemployed is solely because we cannot get permits". (Natasha)

> The work permit requirements have made it impossible to get a work permit without getting a job offer and vice versa, without a work permit you're basically not a good candidate. (Tinaye)

Theme 3: Black economic empowerment policy

Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) is a racially selective programme launched by the South African government to redress the inequalities of Apartheid by giving black (Blacks, Coloureds and Indian) South African citizens' economic privileges not available to Whites (Davis, 2004; Shava, 2016). Most of the participant's mentioned to the researcher that the BEE policy was one of the many hinderances for them securing employment in South Africa. They strongly felt that

new employment legislation stopped them from being able to get jobs unlike a couple of years back. Below are some of the participants' responses regarding BEE:

> Situations differ from person to person. Based on how you are viewed in this country. By how you are viewed. I mean that some people that is some Zimbabwean graduates are permanent residences in this country. Some own dual citizenship in this country. And those with the above-mentioned documents are usually afforded the courtesy of first preference because they are treated the same way or almost the same way as South Africans when it comes to finding employment. So in my situation, I have not come across scenarios where I am afforded employment regardless of me holding a South African permanent residency. (Tinomutenda)

> And looking at the BEE in South Africa it stipulates that for a company to hire it needs to look at black South Africans, then colored, whites and also the disabled before it looks at hiring a foreigner. So, for us foreign students to get jobs it is rather difficult, unlike 10-15 years ago, because of these policies that have been implemented. (George)

> Opportunities are presented to South African nationals more than to non-South African nationals. And local companies are much more prepared to employ South African nationals who are qualified more than a foreign qualified individual because of the current regulations. They want to promote employment within South African citizens". (Nehemiah)

> They want to know really why you are in their country. Why is it that you are not looking for a job in your country? You know sometimes it might influence their decision. So it's very difficult being in South Africa and looking for a job. Because you already are disadvantaged from a South African point of view because there's also those things like BEE. (Millicent)

As a result of the socio-economic situation in South Africa, many employers are faced with a flood of job applicants whenever a new or vacant position is advertised. Often such job applicants

include both South African citizens and foreign nationals who may hold permanent residence. However even though some graduates are permanent residents, South African citizens are favoured. When determining which candidate to appoint, employers often, and rightly so, seek to advance their employment equity targets and to obtain the maximum amount of BEE points. Consequently, South African citizens are often favoured over foreign nationals for employment (Shava, 2016).

The employment of foreign nationals is regulated by the Immigration Act which provides that a foreign national shall *"enjoy all the rights, privileges, duties and obligation of a citizen"*. Critically, the Immigration Act also contains an express limitation of that right to the extent that a foreign national shall not enjoy the rights, privileges and duties which legislation or the Constitution explicitly ascribes to South African citizens (Immigration Act 2000).

The Employment Equity Act is one piece of legislation which explicitly ascribes rights to South Africans. It applies to *'designated groups'* who are defined as *'black people'*, women and people with disabilities who are South African citizens or who became citizens by naturalization before 27 April 1994 (Employment Equity Act 1998).

Furthermore, the Employment Services Act empowers the Minister of Labour to make Regulations to facilitate the employment of foreign nationals which may include a measure that *"employers must satisfy themselves that there are no other persons in the Republic with suitable skills to fill a vacancy, before recruiting a foreign national"* (Employment Services Act 2014).

Theme 4: Graduates don't have critical skills required in the labour market

Closely related to the issue of requiring a work permit to secure employment in South Africa, some participants highlighted that when students graduate they do not have critical skills and do not meet the requirements to obtain a critical skills permit in any case, such as engineering, health science degrees. The following quotations from the participants supported this.

If I look at the people in my contacts, most who did courses that fall under critical skills are all working right now, be it actuarial science, accounting and engineering. But looking at those who did social work, sociology and psychology, only maybe two or three are employed. (Nigel)

And also the fact that my programme is not classified as a scarce skill has also greatly contributed to me being unemployed. This is because I would have applied for a critical skills permit which makes it easier for me to secure employment in South Africa, than having to apply for a general work permit. (Tinaye)

Yes, I think my qualification has contributed to my unemployment, because it's a very common field. I mean we have so many graduates who are graduating out of the commerce field; the BCom faculty. The problem with this faculty is that because it's so broad, when you have a general degree, one that's not specialized it can be a little disadvantageous and at the same time it can be beneficial so it's literally a game of luck. (Millicent)

Well I think yes it has contributed largely, why, because sociology and social work is a field that is overcrowded. It has a lot of people doing it. The number of people graduating with a social science degree is enormous. Because of this the job market is unable to cope with the number of social science graduates every year. So yes I can safely say that it has contributed. (Casper)

Umm… well my thinking is that the fields of study to a greater extent determine a graduate's employability. Well I think it depends with the field of study you are in. You would find that science students or graduates relatively acquire employment quicker as compared to graduates that are in the arts related fields or business related qualifications, you know. (Tinomutenda)

The education system is failing to meet the needs of the economy, creating a mismatch between demand and supply. Apart from its wastefulness, the relevance of the curricula has been questioned by among others, the Nziramasanga Presidential Commission of 1999 and the Ministry of Higher

Education Report (2006). The poor quality of basic and further education severely limits the opportunities for young people in the labour market, as they lack the practical skills and work readiness. This is one of the reasons why the unemployment rate for people with tertiary qualifications is higher than that of people with only primary education. The National Youth Policy also highlighted that high youth unemployment was due to inadequacy of the educational system that does not adequately prepare the youth for the current job market in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy; inadequate training and education materials at all levels; and lack of access to resources among many others.

Both the capabilities approach and the social exclusion theory comes to the fore in these themes. In terms of social exclusion, Zimbabwean graduates do not have the same work of opportunities as South Africa in terms of work selection criteria. In terms of policy and practice, opportunities to provide employment for South African graduates is being prioritised.

4.3.5. Objective Five: Explore the experiences of Zimbabwean graduates failing to secure employment

The fifth objective focused on exploring the experiences of Zimbabwean students when failing to secure employment after graduation. The impact of unemployment is so enormous on the participants and it affects all facets of their lives. Participants reported how unemployment is shattering their desire for independence and how lack of a job has led some of them to socially exclude themselves.

Theme 1: Disappointment and embarrassment
Most of the participants indicated that they experienced negative experiences when they fail to secure employment in South Africa. A lot of the participants mentioned that being unemployed was very stressful and affected their self-esteem in a bad way. This is evident from the quotes below:

> Yes, being unemployed has affected me a whole lot. This has been nothing but a dream that I am still hoping will come true sooner than later. This delays the idea of starting my own family, because what will I give them if I cannot take care of myself firstly. I want to

be economically emancipated from my parents. This job searching thing can be very depressing and stressful honestly. (Tinaye)

It can also be negative because the world is rough. It's really rough sometimes and it just doesn't work, and you just get to a point where as a person you can break down and think you know what, I must really not be of this world. Like I really, I just don't deserve to be alive because things just don't want to work for me you know. So it's a little bit of everything really. (Tinomutenda)

After completing my studies hoping to get into the job market psychologically it does impact you negatively in the sense that after completing your tertiary education you sort of expect to gain employment so as to be able to lay foundations for your future. But not being able to do so is demotivating and puts your spirit down even your self-esteem could be affected, it literally drains it. Financially it puts a strain on your guardians, because at this stage in life you would think that you are to take care of them and not the other way around. And it is kind of embarrassing. (Millicent)

It just knocks you back and you cannot even speak about your achievements in public, because it will be said 'but you cannot get a job'. Yeah so psychologically it hits you hard. You lack confidence and will actually have a low self-esteem because it will keep bothering you how you cannot get a job. You see it has been very bad on my side, and financially and socially it has put a strain on me being unemployed for 4 years now. It is very hard and heavy for me. (Nigel)

Theme 2: Feelings of guilt because of remaining financially dependent on parents
A lot of the participants 'responses revealed that they had guilt feelings as they were still dependant on their parents especially after studying a tertiary degree. Their feelings are stated below:

I had planned to be independent and making a living for myself by now, but I still have to get my parents to take care of me. I thought by now I would be taking care of them.

Being supported by my parents makes me feel like I am being a burden to them. (Tinaye)

Like now considering that I am old, when you have finished school you no longer want to bother your parents. You no longer want to put the burden on your parents; you just want to be financially independent. (Abigail)

Financially when you look at it you are straining your parent's pocket. Because to them you went to school to get out of school and get employment, especially if the industry is called a scarce skills industry. (Sharon)

Most of the participants indicated that they are still fortunate enough that they have parents that are still supporting them, especially financially. This is evident from their responses below:

I am grateful that my parents are still taking care of me. They still pay my rent and living expenses and university fees. I try to do small side ventures to make the most out of any extra money I have so I avoid being idle and stop being so dependent. (Tinaye)

Well I can just for now I'm still depending on my parents. We also have a poultry project, so sometimes if you are selling stuff, they come to your pocket, so you really can't say you have no cent. (Abigail)

Well, like I said before, at least I'm with an extended family that takes care of me, they provide food, they provide shelter for me. And then my parents back in Zimbabwe they send money. I am grateful that I have a supportive family, they understand my situation and they try to provide as much as they can. (Aswald)

Most of the participants indicated that they are still financially dependent on their parents. This can be seen as a source of stress and frustration as they are limited in their ability to provide for themselves and have full control of their lives. Money allows people to have full control of their lives which is very essential for developing and maintaining self-esteem and identity (Fryer, 1995).

The capabilities approach is reflected in these themes. At this stage, most Zimbabwean graduates are not experiencing the opportunity to choose to work. They feel embarrassed and guilty because unemployment curtails their desire to realise their desire to find employment that will stimulate them and enhance their sense of well-being. Instead their choices are limited because they still dependent on their parents.

4.3.6 Objective 6: Explore the survival strategies of unemployed Zimbabwean graduates in South Africa

The sixth objective for this study was to explore ways in which unemployed Zimbabwean graduates are maintaining themselves. However, an important theme emerging was that some of the graduates were still dependent on parents to meet their needs.

Theme 1: Entrepreneurial Enterprises

Participants stated that because of being unemployed they have had to look for ways to generate income in order to lessen the burden on their parents. This is evident from their responses below:

> I recently have started this poultry project. And so far it has been going well, so that's another source of income that has been helping me get by. If I am to get a job the better, but for now this is what has been keeping me afloat (Nehemiah).

> I am currently buying and selling things. Yeah this is just to make a living because you cannot just sit on your hands because time waits for no man. I am getting old and time is flying and I need to do anything to make myself financially independent. It's life. (Nigel)

> I have managed to actually get a bit of income. It is not stable but it does cover my expenses. I am currently into trading forex and also commodities. So yeah there is a lot of stuff that I do by the side that make me see the next day or next month or two. (Susan)

Theme 2: Furthering education

It emerged from this study that graduates were advancing in their fields of study to pursue a postgraduate qualification, while some were now pursuing a different course altogether after realizing that the course they completed is less marketable in the labour market. The following quotes supported this:
.

> I've done extra courses and also that I have enrolled for my master's programme, maybe it will give me a better chance of landing a job if I have a high qualification. And I have also done the odd part time jobs to get experience so I can account for this period I am unemployed to future recruiters. (Tinaye)

> Whilst I'm looking for the job I will continue studying, like those other professional courses. (Abigail)

Theme 3: Gaining work experience by offering voluntary services

Participants made it clear in their responses that in order to get employment one should have working experience. The participants mentioned that they would be looking to engage organizations in order to gain experiences, hoping that it will give them a better chance to get employed.

> So that maybe voluntary work and all these things they kind of help me get a gist of how the business environment really is like so that I can get some work experience because a lot of people don't mind you working as long as you are working for free you know". (Natasha)

> Well I have been communicating with universities to get me certain programmes where I have to go and work for a company for a limited time so that they are able to see what I am

capable of and what I have to offer them and hopefully from there I can get myself a contract of employment. (Sharon)

Although key commentators, such as Knight and Yorke (2004) have argued for employability skills education to have good standing by being integrated into the curriculum, many students are encouraged to enhance their employability above and beyond what is provided by their academic studies. This may be particularly important for undergraduates enrolled on non-vocational programmes but applying for graduate positions where having some previous work experience could confer an advantage. Work experience obtained prior to graduation has been shown to clearly boost the employment prospects of graduates (Reddy & Moores, 2006), although some commentators are more sceptical about the evidence for a causal link between volunteering and employability (Holdsworth & Quinn, 2010).

These themes suggest that unemployed Zimbabwean graduates are making determined efforts not to face the negative affect of unemployment and social exclusion. Innovative work opportunities are being focused on or efforts to further their work experience by rendering volunteer services. The capability approach is applicable in this regard.

4.3.7. Objective 7: Explore the perceptions of how the circumstances of unemployed Zimbabwean graduates can be improved.

The final objective for the study involved exploring the participants' views of how their circumstances can be improved. The following themes capture their perspectives in this regard:

Theme 1: Destigmatize foreign graduates

The participants made it known that they were hard working and would need the employers and the government to destigmatize the perception they had about foreigners. Suggestions were that critical skills visas should be given on a first come first served basis rather than on racial, degree basis and citizenship basis. Especially when it comes to foreign students who studied in South Africa. Graduates strongly felt that employment policies that gave unequal opportunities to foreigners were detrimental to the graduate's career growth potential.

I really think we deserve to be offered some prospect of employment after acquiring South African qualifications. There is a need to de-stigmatize 'Zimbabweans', we are hard-working and should be given a chance to show it. (Tinaye)

Eish, yeah that part I feel like it's pretty much difficult because I know they are other people with other degrees who are getting critical skills visa, or work permits or permanent residences soon after finishing their degrees. So I feel like maybe if they can open such to everyone and then recruit people based on their knowledge and skills instead of looking at nationality and stuff. I think maybe that might help, because instead of you thinking that you are not getting a job because you are a foreigner you might blame that on your own failures in passing the interview or your lack of skills, but being given a chance to take the job. (Abigail)

And, the issue of permits, if this issue can be addressed especially for us students who studied in South Africa and maybe give us the benefit of doubt and make it a little easier for one to obtain a permit. Maybe say those who studied here the requirements will be loosened up a bit, MAYBE. Because I really think it could help because if we are to be treated the same way as someone who studied in Zimbabwe it's hard and unfair. (Nigel)

Well I think it is first addressing our politics in South Africa. For example, before 2014, the Home Affairs was very lenient with regards to employment of foreign nationals who had studied in South African institutions. But when then implemented the 6 then 1 policy, it basically mean advertise a job, 6 South Africans are to be interviewed besides their racial background and also hold the same qualification and 1 foreigner who holds a similar qualification. And if the company sees that it is not fit to employ any of the six South Africans then they come to the one foreigner. So, such policies are very detrimental to most foreign national companies, because it hinders companies from attaining the best candidates and having a diverse recruitment programmes (Tinomutenda)

Theme 2: Cooperation between the South African and Zimbabwean governments to generate employment

Participants indicated that joint cooperation between the two countries could yield good results of creation of employment.

> I think the most that could happen is maybe if we had like a collaboration between all the governments involved in such a thing. I think if the governments can collaboratively work to allow Zimbabwean companies to more easily invest in the country and be able to hire their own people. (Millicent)

> Maybe some dialogue between the two countries governments to come to a resolution that accommodates non-South African graduates who studied here since they also obtained their qualifications here and since they are in a position to contribute to the South African economy in whatever way that they can. And if it's a long shot, umm maybe having some arrangements with other countries including Zimbabwe where graduates can go for internships, mostly for exposure and experiences than for financial reasons. Because it is very important to have experience, especially when looking for employment. Because I have seen that a lot of companies are quick to look at work experience when one applies for a job, so at least one will have something. (Nehemiah)

Theme 3: Stabilize South African economy

This participant was of the view that South Africa should stabilize its economy, in order to create more jobs. This is evident from the response below:

> I think firstly the South African economy is not performing at full capacity I can say it is taking a bit of a dip, so that's the first thing that they need to do, to stabilize the economy. That way employment will grow as the economy grows there by creating more jobs, even creating surplus to be afforded to foreign graduates. I think if the economy is stabilized more opportunities will come up that we can be part of too. (Nigel)

The study revealed that the unemployed graduates do not only blame their personal traits for their unemployment. They strongly feel the Government, the institutions they attended and the prospective employers had a collective role to play in reducing unemployment in the economy of South Africa especially when it comes to foreign nationals who will have graduated from South African universities. Ferreira (2016) recommends that clearly, South Africa needs a well-informed and responsive economic policy framework if it is to escape the potentially explosive unemployment crisis in which it has long been mired. The framework should be an all-inclusive policy for locals and foreigners staying in South Africa. Ferreira (2016) adds that the new joint government and business-sponsored initiatives like the Youth Employment Service (YES) in South Africa are aiming to intervene by persuading corporates to commit to providing learner ships to first-time jobseekers, thereby enhancing their long-term employability. Such initiatives are laudable and necessary; indeed they represent the first significant collaboration between government and business in recent memory.

The emerging picture of this study, therefore, is that graduates who have had prolonged periods of unemployment needs counselling as they end up giving up on the job search mission. Warr (2009) contributes that careers counselling must be planned to help unemployed graduates to motivate, fully identify and develop their potentials optimally. They should be counselled to keep them motivated and positive that it's a matter of time one day they will land their dream job. The government should make it possible for graduates who have acquired qualifications at South African universities to have equal and fair chances of being employed in the country. Participants also felt that the company registration processes were too rigid and denying entrant companies that are foreign owned to create more jobs in the economy. The responses suggested a bilateral relationship between the Government of Zimbabwe and that of South Africa for the employment of Zimbabwean graduates.

4.4 Chapter Summary

The aim of this chapter was to present data gathered during the study and discuss the findings thereof. Data analyses was done by means of identifying emerging themes. The main reason for pursuing a higher education qualification by the participants in this study was to pave way for

employment. The choice of the field of study for the participants was motivated by such factors as parents advise, peer to peer recommendations, inspiration from parents or guardians. It was evident in this study that only one participant had received career guidance which may have led the graduates in pursuing qualifications that are flooded in the labor market and that render them unemployed up to date from the graduation day.

The participants had mixed feelings about their treatment at South African universities some believed the institutions treat foreigners fairly and equally while some cited issues of discrimination and assault. It was highly regarded that South African universities offer quality tuition than Zimbabwean universities though two participants felt that the standard was equally the same only that Zimbabwe was affected by negative international image and high levels of economic unrest.

The participants highlighted that their experiences during the job search were disastrous, dissatisfying and stressing. Issues highlighted included no feedback from the employers, requirements of permits to secure employment yet the permits are nothing easy to obtain. Overall, the graduate's experiences were highly negative but there was no option as they felt returning to Zimbabwe would even worsen the situation. The next chapter will look at summary, conclusions and recommendations.

The theoretical framework underpinning the study, namely the capability approach and social exclusion theory, frequently became apparent. Zimbabwean unemployed graduates longed for the opportunity to be treated fairly and not be subject to discrimination. They desired to become part of the labour market and make a meaningful contribution through their capabilities so that they could enjoy a sense of well-being.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECCOMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the main research findings in relation to the objectives of the study. Conclusions are drawn and recommendations made on the research findings. This study explored the experiences of unemployed Zimbabwean adults who had graduated at universities in South Africa and living in Johannesburg (South Africa) at the time the study was conducted.

5.2 Summary of research findings

In South Africa, most research on unemployed graduates focuses on South African youth; ignoring scenarios that include foreign nationals, more specifically Zimbabweans who have qualified with a degree from a South African tertiary institution. Therefore, the primary aim of this study was to explore the experiences of non-South African citizens, namely Zimbabwean adults.

5.2.1 Objective One: Explore the reasons why Zimbabwean graduates decide to pursue higher education in South Africa.

The findings revealed that most of the participants decided to pursue higher education in South Africa, rather than their country of origin (in this case Zimbabwe), because they believed that the higher education in South Africa provided degrees that are highly regarded. The major theme highlighted that Zimbabweans looked forward to coming to South Africa; they perceived the opportunity to study in South Africa as holding many benefits. The capability approach is relevant regarding this research finding. At the time of making their personal decisions to study in South Africa, they hoped to be appropriately educated and trained at a university that has a high status in South Africa, and in Africa in general.

5.2.2 Objective Two: Explore the challenges faced by Zimbabwean graduates while studying at South African universities

Three main themes emerged when analyzing data to meet this objective. The participants seemed to have different thoughts and feelings when it came to the challenges that they had experienced while studying in South Africa. Some participants emphasized that they had faced some forms of

discrimination, whereas some others felt that international students were treated fairly. However, some participants indicated that there is still room for improvement when it comes to the treatment of international students studying in South Africa.

Participants who experienced discrimination felt it was unjustified. However, they probably experienced this because they fell into a special category; namely international students.

5.2.3 Objective Three: Explore why Zimbabwean graduates make the decision to remain in South Africa to secure employment.

Findings revealed that most participants were generally not keen to return to Zimbabwe to try secure employment. They felt that their efforts would be in vain, hence they decided to settle and look for employment in South Africa. The issue highlighted was that the socio-economic circumstances in Zimbabwe are very poor; consequently, the salaries are not good and at the same time the cost of living is high, compared to the circumstances in South Africa. They reasoned that staying in South Africa would be more manageable.

As highlighted in Chapter 4, by staying in South Africa they hoped to fulfil goals they had chosen, namely secure meaningful employment based on their education on a tertiary level. However, this desire was not being realized.

5.2.4 Objective Four: Investigate challenges faced by Zimbabwean graduates when trying to secure employment in South Africa.

Findings showed that most of the participants faced similar challenges. Their greatest challenges were that of obtaining work permits to be eligible to work in South Africa. They also indicated that the degrees that they completed were not part of the scarce skills list which made it particularly difficult to apply for a work permit. Participants also mentioned that the Black Economic Empowerment policy in South Africa makes it very hard for foreigners to secure employment because preference is given to all South African races before it considers foreign nationals.

Apart from feeling frustrated because work permits were difficult to obtain, they regretted not completing degrees that would be more likely to have been more likely to help them secure employment; namely skills that are short in South Africa. This would have facilitated obtaining work permits.

5.2.5 Objective Five: Explore strategies taken by Zimbabwean students, who have graduated in South Africa, to deal with failing to secure employment.

The fifth objective for this study was to explore ways in which unemployed Zimbabwean graduates are maintaining themselves. However, an important theme emerging was that most of the graduates were still dependent on their parents to meet their needs because they had not secured employment. However, findings also revealed that some participants were trying to address the problem-situation by starting up their own entrepreneurial enterprises. This is being done in order to become less dependent on parents; they perceive themselves as being a financial burden on their parents and led to feelings of embarrassment. Some participants indicated that they have approached companies in order to see if they can offer voluntary services in order to gain work experience. However, these efforts prove to be 'catch 22' scenario because they have noted that most companies expect one to have a certain number of years of experience before offering employment.

This finding suggests that Zimbabwean graduates are determined to implement their capabilities. They are seeking independence from their parents by exploring alternative options. Unfortunately, this independence is probably going to prove difficult to achieve because they are being denied the opportunity to gain work experience.

5.2.6 Objective Six: Explore the perceptions of participants regarding how the circumstances of unemployed Zimbabwean graduates can be improved.

Most of the participants mentioned that if the circumstances of unemployed foreign graduates (in this case Zimbabweans) is to be improved, the South African different systems need to destigmatize foreign students. Suggestions were that critical skills visas should be given on a first come, first served basis, rather than on racial, degree basis and citizenship basis. This is especially when it comes to foreign students who have studied in South Africa. Graduates strongly felt that employment policies that gave unequal opportunities to foreigners were detrimental to graduates' career growth potential. Participants also indicated that the two governments (South African and Zimbabwean) should cooperate and generate employment opportunities.

In many senses they see the current situation as being socially unjust. They reason that they should be granted equal opportunity to develop and make a meaningful contribution of the economic situation. This could prove difficult to realise, especially considering the poor economic

circumstances in South Africa. South African graduates probably reason that their needs should be prioritised in light of the high rate of unemployment.

5.3. Conclusion

In conclusion, the main findings of this study indicated that participants decided to study in South Africa because they were afforded the opportunity to do so. Furthermore, the graduates had chosen to study at South African universities because of the perceived higher quality of education compared to Zimbabwean universities. The Zimbabwean labour market is continuously becoming non-absorbent to the new graduates from tertiary institutions as capacity utilisation is continuously deteriorating and current employees are being retrenched. Participants acknowledged that some qualifications are less marketable and are congested in the labour market. Furthermore, in South Africa issues of work permits and policies on employment quarters affect foreigners significantly; rendering them unemployed for a longer period than usual. Unemployed Zimbabwean graduates living in South Africa are not keen to return to Zimbabwe any time soon. Even though their job search experiences are disheartening, depressing and de-motivating, they still have hope that the South African labour market has a better potential and is promising for them to secure employment. The participants are also considering options to increase their employability by making such moves as enrolling into postgraduate studies, regularising their stay in South Africa and applying for work permits, accepting low profile jobs just for the sake of gaining experience and getting the opportunity to apply for internal vacancies. Entrepreneurial efforts are also being made to create employment.

As far as improving Zimbabwean students' possibility of securing suitable employment, the participants expressed appreciation that the South African government had initiatives and programmes that were meant to benefit the unemployed. However, they strongly felt there was a need for equality and fairness to access such resources and benefits of the empowerment programmes. The graduates also highlighted that destigmatising foreign nationals would assist in the way locals and local companies viewed foreign graduates and would provide favourable conditions to secure employment. The participants also felt that if they were to work collaboratively, their grievances would have more influence when making the South African government mindful of their needs. Career guidance and counselling were highlighted as important

parameters in the job search journey. The graduates believed inter government memorandum of understanding between the government of Zimbabwe and South Africa would assist in creating better chances of employment for graduates. On a more important point, the graduates emphasised that they were of the opinion that the South African economy was dwindling in terms of capacity utilisation and recommended that a raft of measures be employed to resuscitate the economy so as to increase the number of job vacancies in the market making surplus to accommodate foreigners.

5.4 Recommendations

In this section, certain recommendations based on research findings are presented.

5.4.1 Government of Zimbabwe

The government of Zimbabwe should create statutes that provide employment quarters for graduates who pursue their studies abroad in order to cross pollinate the labour industry with international experiences and skills. The Government should effectively allocate funds for graduates who would want to enterprise and form small to medium enterprises as these can create employment for the other graduates. The government should also create an investment arm that profiles all possible projects that can be possible done in the economy providing information on the capital and material resources required as well as the information of how to run the project.

5.4.2 Government of South Africa

The South African government should grant Zimbabwean adults that have graduated in South Africa, an equal opportunity to apply for employment in the country, by adopting a capability approach. In other words, they should be granted the ability to practice their skills and make a meaningful contribution to the South African economy.

5.4.3 Graduates

It is highly recommended that graduates should appreciate that the global trend is pointing to the scarcity of employment opportunities and experience is also being considered an important factor in employment of human resources in organisations.

5.4.4 Tertiary Institutions

Tertiary institutions should provide pre – enrolment career guidance for the prospective students. This will help graduates to choose the correct careers paths before they enrol for their undergraduate study. Universities need to streamline and merge degrees that are not marketable and have lean employment opportunities. Institutions of higher learning should also constantly do research on the industry development trends in order to identify new fields that need training and to put to extinction degree programmes that will be no longer relevant in the contemporary environment. This will ensure minimisation of idle graduates who cannot be absorbed in the labour market.

5.5.5. Further research

Further research is necessary to investigate perceptions of college and or university students on self-employment and employment opportunity for them after their studies. It would also be prudent to have further research on marketability of qualifications in order to establish relevant and irrelevant courses in the current business and economic environment.

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TITLE OF RESEARCH: Experiences of unemployed Zimbabweans, living in Johannesburg, who had graduated at South African universities.

Greetings Sir/Madam

My name is Tinashe Chimonyo and I am a Masters student in Social Development at Wits University in Johannesburg. As part of my studies I must undertake a research project, and I am investigating the experiences of unemployed Zimbabwean graduates who studied at South African universities. The aim of this research project is to find out the challenges that these graduates face and the coping mechanisms used to get by each day.

Description of how I will gather information

If you agree to take part, I will personally interview you at a time and place that is suitable and convenient for you. The interview will take about 45-60 minutes to complete. In the interview process you may choose to answer or not to answer a question, and you are free to get clear understanding of anything. The interview will also be carried out in the language of choice, be it your home language or English.

Apart from asking you to agree in writing for me to interview you (I will give you a form to complete), I will also give you a separate form to complete if you agree for me to record our interview.

Right to refuse or withdraw

The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study *at any time* without any consequences. You have the right to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely from the interview at any point during the interview. Furthermore,

you have the right to request that I do not use any information that I collect from you during our interview.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Research records will be kept in a locked cabinet, and all electronic information will be coded and secured using a file on my password-protected computer.

I will also not include any information in my research report, or in any article I may publish that would make it possible to identify you. Instead I will use pseudonyms (false names) for all the people taking part in this study that I interview.

No-one, other than my research supervisor (Dr. Priscilla Gerrand) and me, will have access to research information gathered during the interview.

Material Benefits

If you take part in the research, there will be no material benefits, that is, you will not receive and money or goods that you can use.

Risks/Discomforts of being in this study

I don't think that there will be any risks or discomforts if you decide to take part in the research. If you feel stressed or unhappy, please let me know and I'll avoid talking about the issue if you want me to.

Further questions about the study and report concerns

If you have any questions afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me or my supervisor via the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you upon request.

If you have any queries, concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (non-medical), telephone + 27(0)11 717 1408, email: hrec-medical.researchoffice@wits.ac.za/ Shaun.Schoeman@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

Name of researcher: Tinashe C. R Chimonyo

Cell number: 0781313797

 Alternatively, you can email me at 1345027@students.wits.ac.za.

Supervisor name, email, phone number: Dr Priscilla Gerrand; Email address: [Priscilla.Gerrand@wits.ac.za:](Priscilla.Gerrand@wits.ac.za). Telephone number: 011 717-4475.

APPENDIX B: Consent and Audio- Tape Form for participants

SOCIAL WORK
THE SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SHCD)

Title of project: Experiences of unemployed Zimbabweans, living in Johannesburg, who had graduated at South African universities.

I hereby consent to participate in the research study. The purpose and procedures of the study have been explained to me.   I understand that:

- My participation in this study is voluntary and I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.

- I may choose not to answer any specific questions asked if I do not wish to do so.

- There are no foreseeable benefits or particular risks associated with participation in this study.

- My identity will be kept strictly confidential, and any information that may identify me, will be removed from the interview transcript.

- A copy of my interview transcript without any identifying information will be stored permanently in a locked cupboard and may be used for future research.

- I understand that my responses will be used in the write up of a research and may also be presented in conferences, book chapters, journal articles or books, but I will remain anonymous.

Name of Participant: ……………………………………

Date: ……………………………………………………

Signature: ………………………………………

APPENDIX C: Consent for audio-recording in interview

SOCIAL WORK
THE SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SHCD)

Title of project: Experiences of unemployed Zimbabweans, living in Johannesburg, who had graduated at South African universities.

I hereby agree that the interview can be tape recorded.

I understand that:

➢ The recording will be kept in a secret and safe place where no one else can find and no-one other than me and supervisor will have access to the recorded information.

➢ The recording will be typed and some of the words or information that I share will be written in the final research report, but my identifying information will not be shared.

➢ The recording will be kept for two years following any publications or for six years if no publications are made on the study.

➢ I may be quoted directly in the research report but then my identifying details will not be disclosed.

Name of participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D: Interview Guide

SOCIAL WORK
THE SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SHCD)

Title of project: Experiences of unemployed Zimbabweans, living in Johannesburg, who had graduated at South African universities.

Section A: Biographical information

Code: Age:

Gender: Race:

Year graduated: University attended:

Course studied:

Section B: Interviewing themes

1. **To explore the reasons why Zimbabwean graduates find it hard to find jobs in Zimbabwe**

   1.1 Please tell me some of the reasons why Zimbabwean graduates do not want to return to Zimbabwe?

   1.2 What is the driving force behind your search for employment in South Africa? (Probe: motivation)

2. **To explore the challenges faced by Zimbabwean graduates in gaining employment in South Africa**

   2.1 Tell me about your field of study (Probe: why and how this field of study was chosen, was any career guidance provided?)

2.2 Please explain to me whether you think your field of study has contributed to you being unemployed?

2.3 Please talk to me about your job-search experiences thus far.

2.4 Does being unemployed impacted you in any way? (Probe Yes or No answer)

2.5 If you have had any positive experiences related to unemployment, please share these with me.

3. **To investigate strategies that are used by unemployed Zimbabwean graduates in South Africa to survive**

3.1 How do you survive not having an income of your own?

3.2 What measures are you as an individual applying or opting for to create a better chance of being employed?

3.3 How do you picture your future if you do (not) find a job?

Is they anything else you would like to share with me that I have not asked but is important for the study?

Thank you for taking part in my study ☺

APPENDIX E: Ethical Clearance Certificate