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The job-seeking experiences of unemployed psychology honours graduates in South Africa

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Abstract

The issue of unemployment is a serious and widely studied socio-economic problem. While many studies have investigated varying aspects relating to employment; graduate unemployment experiences in relation to identity and meaning is not widely studied within the South African context. Moreover, minimal studies investigate the unemployment experiences of Psychology Honours graduates. Therefore, this study sought to gain insight into the unemployment and job-seeking experiences of Psychology Honours graduates to understand how unemployment and job-seeking influence identity as they transition from of being a student to being a graduate, and from being a graduate to being an unemployed graduate, and the meanings made from the transitions and unemployment. To determine this, a qualitative research methodology using interviews and thematic analysis was utilised. The findings suggest that unemployment and job-seeking experiences are influenced by identity. Furthermore, in relation to Wilcock's theory of the human need for occupation, the findings suggest that there is a need for occupation which is evident in the negative experiences associated with unemployment. The implications of this research are that the findings of this paper be considered when finding solutions to and adequately resolving the unemployment problem.