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The effects of burnout on truck drivers: A study of truck drivers in CityDeep Johannesburg

A report on a research study presented to

The Department of Social Work

School of Human and Community Development

Faculty of Humanities

University of the Witwatersrand

In partial fulfilment of the requirements

For the degree Master of Arts in the field of Occupational Social Work

By

Mpolokeng Codelia Kolobe

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June 2021

DECLARATION

I, Mpolokeng Codelia Kolobe hereby declare that the research is my own original work that was conducted independently, I have correctly referenced and acknowledged all the sources used in the study.

Mpolokeng Codelia Kolobe



Date: 30 June 2021

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Through this journey I have realised my strength and capabilities, I have conquered!!

ABSTRACT

Burnout is conceptualized as the psychological response to chronic work stress, and it is characterized by feeling exhausted. Truck drivers spend most of their time on the road alone, thus making them vulnerable to burnout because of the various job stressors they encounter, such as lack of assistant drivers, rude drivers on the road, lack of sleep, theft and hijacking etc. This study is aimed at exploring the effect that burnout has on truck drivers at a truck depo in Johannesburg. The study, which was conducted at a truck driver depo, adopted a qualitative exploratory approach using case study design. Non-probability sampling, using a purposive sampling technique, was employed to select a sample of eleven truck drivers and two supervisors aged 25 to 50 years. Where consent was given, audio-recorded semi-structured interviews were conducted and later transcribed; alternatively, notes were taken during the interviews. Using multidimensional theory, data was analysed using six steps thematic analysis. The main findings demonstrated that whiletruck drivers may not know the concept of burnout, they do experience physical and mental sign and symptoms of burnout. The impact of burnout impact their personal and work life is impacted negatively. The findings of this study contribute to the existing knowledge base in the specialised field of occupational social work. The results will be used to inform interventions for preventing and managing burnout on truck drivers effectively in the workplace.

Keywords: Burnout, truck drivers, effects, impact, stressors, experiences,

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Truck drivers' job has been associated as a risky career with prolonged periods of driving thathas a number of hazards connected with them, which can lead to burnout (van der Beek, 2012).Disturbed rest cycles, environmental effects, and economic requirements all make it difficult for truck drivers to obtain the rest needed to be able them to safely operate their vehicles. In addition,non-driving tasks, such as loading and unloading freight, finding safe parking, and so on, can have an impact on driver fatigue. Truck drivers may also experience emotional or mental exhaustionbesides the physical kind. Work-related stress causes an emotional state known as emotional exhaustion, which affects one's motivation and commitment and being away from home for long periods negatively affects family relationships (Kemp, Kopp & KempJr. 2013).

This chapter focuses on the problem statement and rational of the study as well as the purpose of the study, furthermore it focuses on the defining the key terms of the study.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Truck drivers face a variety of difficulties as they go about their daily duties, they are susceptible to physical exhaustion because of the demands of their jobs and despitegovernment regulations restricting the number of hours, they can work (Kemp *et al.*, 2013). However, they may experience psychological stress in addition to physical exhaustion on the job and emotional exhaustion can result because of this type of stress. Emotional exhaustion is a component of burnout that manifests because of job-related stress and has the potential to negatively affect overall job performance and retention (Kemp *et al.*,2013).

This study explored the effects of burnout and the impact it has on the personal and work life of truck drivers, as well as the perception of burnout amongst managers and how companies contribute to preventing burnout it the workplace. Truck drivers are constantly subjected to a variety of stress-inducing variables, including employment difficulty, lengthy and gruelling driving distances, exhaustion, an inconsistent rest and sleep routine, nonstop working hours, and traffic mayhem, among other things (Hatami, Vosoughi, Hosseini & Ebrahimi, 2019). When working on trucking excursions, they are away from home because they travel long distances to reach their destinations. As a result, truck driving should be seen as one of the most vulnerable vocations in our community that can lead to increased levels of burnout (Hatami *et al.*, 2019).

Truck drivers frequently experience additional stress levels due to their work schedules, including workweek lengths, daily schedules, intermittent breaks, and shift and rotation design. As a result of repetitive task elements and homogeneous incoming information, occupational drivers' working conditions are monotonous (Chung & Wu, 2013). Truck drivers experience significant reductions in social and family time due to their extensive travel time and weekend shifts, which further lowers their opportunities to obtain social and family assistance. Burnout may result if the occupational drivers who devote substantial effort to their professions and receive limited reward, they will find themselves experiencing emotional burnout and may harm their own and others' well-being (Chung & Wu, 2013). It is important for companies to understand the concept of burnout and the effects it has on drivers work-life balance.

There are minimal studies done specifically on the effects of burnout on truck drivers which are referred to throughout the study, despitethe importance of burnout. Thus, this study may give meaning for trucking companies that want to educate themselves about burnout, the symptoms, prevention, and coping measures and support systems that they can put in place. This study will contribute to the existing knowledge base in occupational social work about burnout and the effects it has in the lives of South African truck drivers as well as in the workplace. The results are used to contribute to education material used by companies to educate truck drivers and trucking companies about burnout, its symptoms, and the effects thereof, as well as make a positive contribution to the knowledge needed for trucking companies on how they can prevent and assist truck drivers to coping with burnout.

1.3 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Burnout

The definition and description of burnout are not cast in stone there are various definitions of burnout. Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter (1996, p.20) state “burnout is a syndrome characterized by chronic exhaustion, cynicism, and a lack of personal accomplishment. It is usually defined as a state of exhaustion in which one is cynical about the value of one’s occupation and doubtful of one’s capacity to perform”.

According to Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter (2001) in most developing countries it has been shown that burnout is worldwide phenomenon that is related the nature of work conditions of

workers, their social relationships, conflicting roles and their workload. Maslach *et al.* (2001 defined burnout in three segments:

- Emotional exhaustion - tiredness people experience from caring too much for others.
- Depersonalization - the reduction of empathising with others, care and understanding.
- Decreased sense of accomplishment is when people are experiencing feelings of irresistible emptiness.

In my study, burnout entails the physical and emotional exhaustion truck drivers experience because of the demanding work environment.

Truck driver

Truck driver is an individual that drives trucks to earn a living, by transporting goods.

In my study, truck drivers are individual employed by any trucking company to transport goodsand empty containers across the county.

Effects

A change, which is a result or consequence of an action or other cause. “The effects of burnout are seen most consistently in various forms of job withdrawal and dissatisfaction, with the implication of deterioration in the quality of care or services provided to clients or patients” International labour office (1998, p.64).

In this study, I looked at the consequence’s burnout has on truck drivers physically, emotionally, their health as well as relationships with their families.

Impact

The substantial influence something has on something or someone (Oxford Dictionary Tenth Edition).

In this study, I looked at the powerful effect burnout has on the lives and work of truck drivers.

Stressors

Stressor can be events or environments that individuals might consider demanding, challenging, and/or threatening individual safety.

In this study I looked at the challenges that truck drivers experienced that led to them experiencing burnout or its symptoms.

Experience

Experiences is to observe facts or events that are taking place at a particular time and place

In this study I observed how certain events that takes place in truck drivers work have an impact in their lives.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to explore the effects burnout has on truck drivers at a trucking company in Johannesburg through examining the individual experience of truck drivers. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the company that I was supposed to conduct my research with was not able to assist me anymore. This was a disadvantage, and it impacted on the whole research process, I had to interview a limited number of truck drivers and it was also a struggle to get the participants.

This research report is divided into five main chapters, structured as follows:

Chapter 1: This chapter explains the problem statement and rational for the study, state the purpose and aim of the study as well as giving an overview of the research methodology that is used. Furthermore, it will give a brief definition of concepts used in the study; lastly, it will state the limitations and, provide how the research report is structured.

Chapter 2: Cites the literature that is relevant to the research study, highlighting where there are gaps in the literature and how the research contributes to filling one or more of these gaps. The theoretical framework that was used is the multidimensional theory of burnout; this framework serves as a justification for conducting research to investigate the research problem in depth. The theoretical framework can be thought of as a conceptual model that establishes a sense of structure that serves as a guide for your investigation.

Chapter 3: The research approach and design that the study took on is the qualitative approach using a case study design to explore the experience of the participants enabling the researcher to gain a better understanding of the effects of burnout amongst truck drivers. Non-probability purposive sampling was used in the study as the researcher selected the participants using defined criteria. The researcher made use of two different semi-structured interview schedules to conduct the interviews with the different groups of participants. To pre-test the research instrument individuals that were not part of the research study were selected.The method of data collection enabled the researcher to get and in-depth understanding of theparticipant’s

experiences and the thematic data analysis that was used helped the researcher tointerpret the data and identify themes of the findings.

Chapter 4: This chapter presents the findings that was collected and analysed. The data was analysed using thematic analyses.

Chapter 5: Summarises the study findings by highlighting the focus arears of the study. This chapter also presents conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focusses on the theoretical framework used to understand perceptions and experiences with burnout by truck drivers including the prominence and effect of burnout. The chapter further focuses on previously documented literature of truck drivers and burn out.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework used in the study is multidimensional theory. The multidimensional theory originated from the ongoing studies of trying to conceptualise burnout. Even though it was clear that, there were three key dimensions of burnout, there was an "underlying consensus about the three key dimensions of the burnout experience, and subsequent research on this issue led to the development of a multidimensional theory of burnout" (Maslach, & Jackson 1981b; Maslach, 1993 cited in Maslach, 1998, p. 69). To conceptualise burnout as multidimensional it will helpin understanding the multifaceted interactions between stressors experienced in the workplace as well as other parts of a person's life (Bianchi, Truchot, Laurent, Brisson & Schonfeld, 2014).

The Maslach Multidimensional Theory of Burnout is widely accepted model for defining the syndrome of burnout (Van der Walt, 2013). The theory states, "burnout is an individual stress experience embedded in a context of complex social relationships, and it involves the people's perceptions concept of both self and others" (Maslach, 1998, p. 69). A majorcontributor to the development of a multidimensional theory of burnout can be traced back to an underlying consensus that the burnout experience can be divided into three primary dimensions (Konstantinou, Bonotis, Sokratous, Siokas, & Dardiotis, 2018), exhaustion on an emotional level, dissociation from oneself and achievement on the individual level described below.

- **Exhaustion on an emotional level.** Burnout is characterized by the central quality of exhaustion, which is also the most obvious manifestation of the condition. When people describe themselves or others as being burned out, they are most often referring to the feeling of exhaustion that they are experiencing. A service provider's ability to be involved with, and responsive to the needs of, service recipients can be exhausted by the emotional demands of their work when they work in the human services field.

Exhaustion is a necessary but not sufficient condition for burnout, despite the fact that it is a necessary criterion for the condition.

- Dissociation from one's own self (cynicism). People who practice depersonalization do so in an attempt to distance themselves from those who receive their services, typically by ignoring the characteristics that distinguish and unite them. In the face of exhaustion, people tend to distance themselves from others. In burnout research, it has been observed that there is a strong relationship between exhaustion and cynicism (depersonalization).
- Achievement on the individual level (inefficacy). The relationship between inefficacy and the other two dimensions of burnout is a little more difficult to pin down and understand. Sometimes, it appears to be a result of a combination of factors such as fatigue, cynicism, or a combination of the two. When you are exhausted or cynical, it is difficult to feel a sense of accomplishment. Ineffectiveness appears to be caused by a lack of relevant resources, whereas exhaustion and cynicism appear to be caused by the presence of work overload and role conflict, according to the research.

Burnout is not a single concept, but rather a collection of concepts, with exhaustion leading to depersonalisation and a concurrent progression to a diminished sense of personal accomplishment (Van der Walt, 2013).

The Maslach model of burnout states that burnout can only develop inside the workplace and that the theory definition of a multidimensional burnout is incompatible with the idea of burnout being a phenomenon that is context-free. However, the multidimensional theory states that burnout is context-free as it can happen in any event where there are feelings of cynicism and depersonalization. “Any object that is invested in by (or important for) an individual whether related or unrelated to work can be a “target” for cynicism and feelings of inefficacy, and there is no reason to postulate that the object in question would be less identifiably burnout-related if it is unrelated to work” (Bianchi *et al.*, 2014, p. 2).

The multidimensional theory of burnout is assumed to include the dimension of exhaustion as well as two additional dimensions, such as response toward others (cynicism) and response toward oneself (self-loathing) (reduced personal accomplishment) (Zhang, Klassen & Wang, 2013). Several studies have demonstrated that job dissatisfaction and self-efficacy are closely connected to burnout. Additionally, high levels of stress are correlated with a decrease in job performance, reduced job engagement, and an increase in the incidence of health problems.

Workload and time pressure have been identified as job-related stressors that are strongly linked to burnout (Federici & Skaalvik, 2012). Maslach hypothesized that burnout is a state that occurs as a result of a prolonged mismatch between a person and at least one of the six dimensions of work which include deterioration (Dall'Ora, Ball, Reinius & Griffiths, 2020):

- Workload: an excessive amount of work and demands that prevents recovery from taking place.
- Control: employees do not have adequate control over the resources that are required to complete or accomplish their job.
- Reward: a lack of adequate compensation for the work completed. Financial, social, and intrinsic rewards (such as the sense of accomplishment one feels after completing a task) are all possible.
- Community: Employees do not perceive a sense of positive connections with their co-workers and managers, which leads to frustration and a reduced likelihood of receiving social support.
- In the workplace, fairness is defined as a person who perceives unfairness, such as inequity in workload and compensation.
- Values: When employees feel compelled by their jobs to act against their own values and aspirations, or when they experience conflicts between the organization's values, this is referred to as a constraint.

Maslach suggested that these six work characteristics are characteristics that contribute to burnout, and he classified deterioration as well as negative consequences such as an increased likelihood of illness and lowered job performance levels as being related to burnout. (Dall'Ora *et al.*, 2020).

Burnout is assessed by two different schools of thought, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) and Burnout Measures (MB) (Qiao & Schaufeli, 2011). Using MBI to measure burnout it is assumed that burnout is confined to professionals that render human services and being multidimensional (Kleijweg, Verbraak, & Van Dijk, 2013), whereas Burnout Measures assumes that burnout is one dimensional that mostly places focus on exhaustion (Qiao & Schaufeli, 2011). Despite the fact that the BM was designed to be a context-free, one-dimensional burnout instrument, it turned out to be composed of three distinct but highly correlated factors, which were dubbed "demoralisation," "exhaustion," and "loss of motivation." In a small number of studies involving German human services professionals, this

three-factor structure was observed (Qiao & Schaufeli, 2011). However, these factors do not correspond to the three aspects of exhaustion that were originally hypothesized: emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion, respectively. Furthermore, the terms "demoralisation" and "exhaustion" are highly correlated, whereas the term "loss of motive," which is exclusively defined by items that are positively phrased, is the factor that correlates least with both of the other terms (Qiao & Schaufeli, 2011).

Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) defines burnout as a state of emotional exhaustion combined with depersonalization and a lack of sense of personal achievement. One factor involving the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization items appears to be underpinning the MBI, while another factor involving the personal accomplishment items appears to be underpinninganother factor involving the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization items. According to this study practice the findings are consistent with the theory of burnout, which entails combining the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization elements of burnout while also measuring personal success separately (Kleijweg *et al.*, 2013).

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) is a standard tool for determining the extent and nature of burnout in a workplace. It is widely recognized in the burnout literature as having two distinct advantages over other tools: it is the most widely used empirical tool in assessment and research while also playing an important role in shaping the theoretical debate about what causes burnout (Yadama, & Drake, 1995). Burnout is than reduced to various kinds of exhaustion with the assumptions that burnout does not only take place within the workplace but also in different contexts such as marriage, love and politics as long as there is long-term emotional involvement (Qiao & Schaufeli, 2011). The main characteristic of burnout is exhaustion, and it is perceived as the most obvious way in which this complex syndrome manifest itself. When people are articulating their experiences of burnout or thee of other, they most often describe burnout as feelings and experiences of exhaustion (Zhang *et al.*, 2013).

In accordance with Maslach's model, this inventory assesses burnout as a multidimensional construct that can be measured. Because of its popularity and empirical validation, this model has emerged as the most widely accepted conception of professional burnout in the world. Employees who are burned out not only feel physically and emotionally exhausted, but they also become cynical and prone to disappointment, withdraw from social situations, and become increasingly convinced that their work is pointless and of little value, according to the study. When they begin to question their own abilities and competence, they become less respectful

of their clients and, worse yet, become hostile to the people who they are supposed to be assisting (Chirkowska-Smolak & Kleka, 2011).

For this study burnout was looked at as a multidimensional theory because when looking at the effect's burnout has on truck driver's I also explored its effects on their productivity at work, their health and family relationships. This helped me understand and conceptualize burnout amongst truck drivers not only as experienced in the workplace but also in other aspects of their lives and the effects it has.

2.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review gives a researcher an indication of whether the topic of interest is worth studying (Creswell, 2014). Four themes are identified and discussed: the psychological and physical burnout of truck drivers, the contributing factors to burnout, the impact of burnout on family relationships, and on the health of truck drivers. The demands of the company, long working hours, time constraints, and a lack of sleep are some of the physical and psychological factors that contribute to truck drivers suffering from burnout. A variety of contributing factors, such as the loading and unloading of goods, hijacking and theft, as well as role stressors, in which truck drivers are required to perform a variety of roles, can result in emotional exhaustion, which eventually leads to burnout. Furthermore, burnout has a negative impact on family relationships because people are unable to spend quality time with their families and as a result of the work they do and the effects of burnout, they have poor health.

2.3.1 Psychological and physical burnout of truck drivers

In this section I am going to discuss the psychological and physical aspects that lead to burnout, the consequences of those aspects as well as briefly discus how truck drivers cope with burnout.

Truck drivers are on the front lines of an organization, whose primary responsibilities are meeting the needs of both employers and clients, and also following safety regulations. Due to the intense work they have to do and the extended hours they often have to work, truck drivers are often subjected to emotional and physical exhaustion (Sârbescu, Sulea & Moza, 2017). Truck drivers are one of the vulnerable groups to suffer from burnout due to the psychological and physical stress they experience daily with the nature of work they do. Burnout can cause deterioration in the quality of work that is produced by truck drivers and has an attributing factor in absenteeism, turnover and low staff morale. Burnout appears to be connected to

personal distress, including physical exhaustion, insomnia, increased use of alcohol and drugs, as well as marital status.

The psychological stress truck drivers experience is also a factor they may experience which can lead to emotional exhaustion. (Semeijn, Waard, Lambrechts, & Semeijn, 2019). In a study conducted by Shattell, Apostolopoulos, Sönmez and Griffin, (2010, p. 563), truck drivers faced occupational stressors leading to burnout. The stressors such as; "time pressures, loneliness, boredom, financial pressures, fatigue and lack of sleep, being away from home, driving conditions (bad weather, accidents, highway construction), road rage, city traffic, violence (gettingmugged/robbed, being a victim of assault), dangers around truck stops and shipping and receiving warehouses, racism and discrimination, as well as negative perceptions of truckers believed to be held by the general".

According to US Fed News Service (2018), truck-driving jobs are viewed as extremely tiring and demanding with no gratitude from employers making the job unappealing. The demands of the job results in truck drivers being away from their homes and families, unhealthy lifestyle as they are always on the road and with all that their salaries are diminishing. Due to the high likely hood of truck drivers experiencing and being exposed physical and emotional exhaustion, it can influence the decision of truck drivers of whether it will be in their best interest to continue working with the company (Kemp *et al.*, 2013). De Croon, Sluiter, Blonk, Broerson and Frings-Dresen (2004) refers to employees leaving the company as employee turnover, when employees suffer from exhaustion that ultimately lead to psychological strain, it results in employees choosing to voluntary turnover which can be viewed as a behavior reaction. However, unpleasant conditions result in truck drivers leaving the industry without having replacements (Hartley, 2019).

Due to the unpleasant working conditions and irregular working hours, truck drivers suffer from fatigue. Truck drivers fatigue manifest through lack of sleep and they suffer from possible lack of sleep due to their irregular working hours and sleep disturbance at parking lanes during work hours. Having irregular sleeping patterns can be associated with physical and psychological stress (Semeijn *et al.*, 2019). Over 700 commercial goods drivers and managers were interviewed and completed survey questions in over 17 countries, it was found that drivers experience fatigue while driving was associated on what time of the day it is and when shifts rotate, and the associations were minimal. However, the link between the experience of fatigue

and the way in which drivers manage when and how they take breaks as well as scheduling of routes was high (Adams-Guppy & Guppy, 2003).

In a survey conducted in Australia reported that 38% of truck drivers drive more than 14 hours on several days a week and close to one third work 72 hours a week in surplus, 17% of truck drivers in Scandinavian drive more than the nine hours driving as per requirement of the European regulation (Maldonado, Mitchell, Taylor & Driver, 2002). A study done by Leechawengwongs, Leechawengwongs, Sukying, and Udomsubpayakul (2006) showed that 61% of the truck drivers worked more than 12 hours without taking any off days. Furthermore, a study conducted by Maldonado *et. al*, (2002) reported that three-quarters of truck drivers that they interviewed are always tired at work because they work long hours (± 93 hours/week). As in many other countries, lot of South African truck drivers work long hours illegally as it may be, and they often do so to supplement their income and to meet deadlines given to them by their companies. However, in South Africa there is not enough data regarding the work hour schedules, driving schedules and additional conditions that South African truck drivers are facing (Maldonado *et. al.*, 2002).

When truck drivers get to resting stops their sleep is either interrupted or cut short because of the noise around them and 62 percent acknowledged that they fall asleep while driving. These drivers have been involved in life threatening incidents on the roads and police records in South Africa from 1992 to 1997 on the N1 and N3, Tolcon road indicate that 24 percent of accidents of heavy vehicles on the road are due to drivers falling asleep while driving (Maldonado *et. al.*, 2002). Combined with physical fatigue, emotional exhaustion, and cognitive weariness, this depletion can have a significant impact on a driver's ability to drive safely and avoid getting into an accident, according to research. Drivers' ability to perform driving tasks is impaired by physical fatigue,which lowers their level of alertness and vigilance. Fatigue is also recognized as a critical factorin the involvement of motor vehicle collisions (Chung & Wu, 2013).

The only way truck drivers can escape the stressors they experience in order to perform their jobs companies can put in place supportive measures to alleviate the stressors. Some of the mitigating factors found by Keller and Ozment (1999) is that if communication from dispatchers display attitude of care towards truck driver’s turnover decrease. Moreover, it is evident that when truck drivers receive care and support from their employees, they feel valued and become committed and their performance and productivity levels improve. To assist and decrease burnout levels, managers should allow employees to provide them with their idea of

what burnout is so that they can be able to identify where the problems originate from and then work together in coming with solutions to combat burnout. Steps to take against burnout include utilization of providing courses, training, seminars and workshops about burnout, work-family conflict, separation from individual and family life, have equal distribution of workload, do away with role conflict and role ambiguity, be clear and define roles, put more focus on reward and award than discipline (Mete, Ünal & Bilen, 2014).

2.3.2 Contributing factors

Truck drivers are prone to experiencing difficulties and challenges while carrying out their job responsibilities. They must meet both the needs and demands of the employers and clients, this result in them working long hours making them susceptible to experiencing physical exhaustion as well as making sure they comply with the safety regulations (Semeijn *et al.*, 2019). Truck drivers stated companies expect them to make deliveries, but they do not give them enough time to drive resulting in them driving throughout the night even when they are tired, this made truck drivers feel powerless (Shattell, *et al.*, 2010). This manifest as "role conflict when truck drivers receive divergent requests from various departments within the company (e.g., safety and operations) (Kemp *et al.*, 2013, p. 33).

Similarly, factors such as loading and unloading goods, communicating with shippers and receivers as well as finding parking space when they are not working also present itself as a contributing factor to their stress and serves an important predictor for fatigue among truck drivers (Crum & Morrow, 2002). This manifest as "role ambiguity when drivers must assess and make decisions about equipment malfunctions, which could result in safety hazards, before making a delivery" (Kemp *et al.*, 2013, p. 33). The role stressors that truck drivers are faced with and can be the major cause of emotional exhaustion. Truck drivers indicted challenges to meet deadlines set by employees and customers can be made difficult to meet because of that factors that are not in their control such as change of weather, distracted and absent-minded drivers, traffic and road conditions and lack of sleep (Kemp *et al.*, 2013).

In South Africa truck drivers truck drivers work long hours illegally because either they are under pressure to meet company deadlines or do it to get extra money, due to this they sleep less resulting in them feeling drowsy while driving leading to an increase in road accidents (Maldonado *et al.*, 2002). Aside from that, driving for an extended period of time results in decreased concentration and alertness, a longer reaction time, and feelings of fatigue or drowsiness. Falling asleep while driving is a relatively common occurrence as a result of this.

When it comes to sleep or a sleep-like state, the late night/early morning hours are the most vulnerable. Evidently, falling asleep at the wheel can result in a car accident in which the driver is the only person injured or killed, as well as other people. Other road users frequently suffer severe injuries or even death as a result of the size and weight of trucks. However, it has also been documented that truck drivers who are involved in accidents are relatively frequently seriously or even fatally injured themselves (Van der Beek, 2012).

When lack of sleep and circadian disruption are joined together, it can be liable for the high levels of sleep and fatigue of workers, which leads to workers being unable to perform their duties at work. This then put them at risk of making errors and causing accidents on duty as well as traveling from work to home and the other way around (Iskra-Golec, Barnes-Farrell & Bohle 2016). The findings of a study conducted by Hege, Lemke, Apostolopoulos, Whitaker and Sönmez (2019) demonstrate that scheduling practices and sleep outcomes have the potential toreduce job stress, and that these issues must be addressed in order to more effectively support work-life balance in the workforce. Future research and interventions should be focused on policy and system-level change rather than on individual cases.

Recent studies conducted by Ndubisi, Nataraajan and Sersland (2015) shows that working long shifts causes sleep deprivation, poor eating habits and being lonely deteriorates the mental and physical health of truck drivers. In this regard, reduces quality of sleep and the job struggles have a positive correlation with burnout (Semeijn *et al.*, 2019). Truck drivers do not get enough sleep as they are chasing to make deliveries; it has been shown that more deliveries they make them also get more money because whenever they go do deliveries, they get spending money apart from their salaries. This is an indication that if they make more deliveries in a week than what they supposed to that is more money for them, this is a way of supplementing their salaries (Maldonado *et al.*, 2002).

It has been reported through a study that in South Africa the truck drivers in KwaZulu-Natal Midlands work 16 hours a day which results in them being at home 2 ½ or less days with their loved ones (Maldonado *et al.*, 2002). Being away from family and friends, meeting rigid to keep to the company schedule as well as having to operate their vehicles in conducive environments causes an enormous amount of stress to the drivers (Langan-Fox & Cooper, 2011). Work-family conflict indicates that people take on roles and cannot fulfill the responsibilities thus causing stress and tension, the idea of burnout regarding work-family conflict individuals than experience stress and anxiety due to these roles (Mete *et al.*, 2014).

Truck drivers have become victims of hijacking not only in South Africa but across the world. The stealing of goods is a global problem and majority of freight transport is done by in most countries, in the European Union (EU) countries the annual loss of cargo theft is estimated at EUR 8.2 billion or per trip, it is calculated at an average value of EUR 6.72 (Ekwall & Lantz, 2013). About 41% of hijacking incidents take place while driving and 60% of them take place at trucking stops. While these incidents are not foreign in other countries, South African truck drivers seem to frequently deal with the hijacking, diesel and goods theft and sex workers that visit truck stops, as well as be content with truck stops poor facilities and small unfavourable sleeping truck berths unlike truck drivers from developed countries (Ekwall & Lantz, 2015).

In the 2008/2009 financial year the hijacking of trucks increased by 15, 4% and by 319% since 2004/2005. According to the numbers presented by the South African Police Services (SAPS) 10 years ago truck drivers have been under attack on the South African roads being hijacked by armed robbers which results in over 1400 of trucks being taken. Statistically, this is an indication that within every hour, 10 cars were being stolen and in the 2010 yearly crime statistics between April 2009 and March 2010 SAPS reports indicated that 1412 were hijacked and this is by suspects that were running a syndicate (Zvomuya, 2011).

Stress and anxiety are also contributing factors to burnout and for drivers the stress and anxiety is their personal and family lives being affected. They must adjust to their new reality that they will not be able to spend time with their families on a regular basis and their lives not being the way it was in the past. Truck drivers are lonely, and they are isolated and the strain of the changes it brings to their family's lives is psychologically heavy on them. In addition, because they are away from home and their families, they develop unhealthy eating habit such as eating fast food and consuming a lot of caffeine (coffee or energy drinks) to help them to stay awake and alert (Williams Jr, Thomas & Liao-Troth, 2017).

2.3.3 Impact burnout has on truck driver's family relationships and health.

Burnout does not only have impact on the drivers but has impact on the truck driver's relationship with family as well as the impact it has on their health.

Impact on family relationships

Mete *et al.* (2014) in study statistically founded that there is a 67 percent positive link between work-family conflict and burnout and 36 percent work-family conflict and family-work conflict. This is an indication that unhappy individuals at work are likely to experience conflict

at home and on-going conflict can increase burnout. Findings also indicate that individuals that experience conflict at home are like to experience increased burnout at work, this shows that work-family conflict has a notable impact on burnout meaning individuals who experience both conflict at work and at home their burnout levels increase drastically.

Studies conducted in the United States of America shows that almost two million middle aged, married white truck driver's experiences strain on their marriages and families because they spent long periods of time away from home due to their demanding jobs. The job stressors experienced by the truck drivers and lack of healthy work-life conflict leads to them experiencing lack of sleep and mental illness such as anxiety and depression (Hege *et al.*, 2019). Being away from family can cause stress and social disorientation and can lead them to find comfort in substances.

Having to experience such stressors is contributing factor to risky behaviors that truck drivers engage in such as drug use and paying for sex, thus it is important area of concern for organizations to promote, provide mental health awareness and treatment for the transportation industry (Shattell *et al.*, 2010). The use of the substances can affect their family relationships and their health in a negatively. A large percentage of long-distance truck drivers lead an isolated life far from their families and friends, a situation that encourages risk behaviors such as unsafe sex with multiple partners and drug use (Santos, Junior, Cardoso & de Melo Bonini, 2019).

Impact on health

Truck drivers are exposed to working environments that have no job control, excess workload, chronic stress, unstable work schedules, disrupted sleep patterns and having to work under time pressures. Due to these working environments the health of the truck drivers are threatened because they are exposed to various illness such as hypertension, hyperlipidemia, diabetes, cancer, sleep apnea, musculoskeletal and gastrointestinal disorders as well as cardiovascular diseases (Apostolopoulosa, Sonmezc, Shattell, Gonzalese, Fehrenbacherf, 2013). The conditions of the work environment are an attributing factor to the causes of cardiovascular diseases and the work-related risk factors such as chemical compounds, noise and vibrations, however the increase of the diseases is also linked psychosocial factors namely work organization, the behaviour of workers as well as their work schedules (Stave & Wald, 2016).

Excessive exposure to truck and traffic noise, particularly in older drivers who have driven noisy trucks in the past, can result in hearing loss in the long term. Van der Beek (2012) discovered that driving with the radio on and the driver's side window open increased noise exposure above the current threshold. Truck drivers have been found to have a higher incidence of lung cancer and a higher mortality rate from lung cancer than the general population on a consistent basis. It is almost certain that exposure to diesel exhaust is a contributing factor to this increased risk of lung cancer (van der Beek, 2012).

Truck drivers have irregular work hours, which can affect the health and well-being of the truck drivers (Jensena & Dahl, 2009). Various health risks such as being at risk of coronary heart disease, which can be because of abnormal work hours, or having to work during the night, which is also connected to stress (Jensena & Dahl, 2009). The number of years of being exposed to shift work causes an increment of risk of illnesses such as, diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular diseases, and depression (Stave & Wald, 2016). According Sangaleti *et al.* (2014) this makes truck drivers work a serious occupational health safety problem in the society as it is proven instudies that their working conditions have greater risk to them contracting cardiovascular diseases.

The findings of recent research indicate that truck drivers bear a disproportionate burden of both communicable (HIV, sexually transmitted infections (STI), tuberculosis (TB)) and noncommunicable diseases (chronic illnesses such as depression, anxiety, respiratory problems, cardiovascular problems, and muscular problems) (Lalla-Edward *et al.*, 2017). Trucking companies and other healthcare providers already providing healthcare for truck drivers reoriented their services in order to address the new issues posed by HIV, including preventing the disease and providing medication to those who have it. Notably, little is known about the prevalence of health service utilization patterns among truck drivers, or if truckers' current focus on HIV/AIDS is in accordance with client demand. Whether this applies to other service provision or whether other specialized programmes should be established and are encouraged to expand service provision to truck drivers, is a grey area (Lalla-Edward *et al.*, 2017).

In Brazil, China and USA studies shows that truck drivers are not protected under the public health policies which can serve as in indication why health state of truck drivers is poor (Sangaleti *et al.*, 2014). The traveling lifestyle may also result in limited access to healthcare facilities, particularly for long-distance drivers from outside of South Africa who frequently

and easily cross international borders to get to their destinations. However, traditional public health facilities are available to truck drivers across the country, but because truck drivers are unable to take time off work and because clinics are inaccessible to large trucks, truck drivers rarely use these services (Lalla-Edward *et al.*, 2019).

Furthermore Sangaleti *et al.* (2014) states that other factors investigated that serve as a risk to the health of truck drivers is the use of alcohol, when truck drivers are at rest and supply stops, they consume alcoholic beverages, which has an effect on the functioning of the cardiovascular system that ultimately results in the accidents caused on the roads. Nonetheless, nothing has been done to address the risk alcoholic beverages have in order to minimize intake or seek alternative beverages for truck drivers at rest and supply stops. It is suspected that the reason for the intake of alcoholic beverages could be stress and exhaustion of being far away from home and family members, driving long hours and fear of being in constant danger.

The job stressors experienced by the truck drivers and lack of healthy work-life conflict leads to them experiencing lack of sleep and mental illness such as anxiety and depression (Hege, *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, it has been evident that truck drivers are prone to experiencing low back disorders due to the body being exposed to heavy vibrations as well as the amount of time that is driven is a health threatening exposure on its own (Jensena & Dahl, 2009). Study conducted by van der Beek (2012) has found that whole-body vibration and prolonged sitting in a static posture increases the risk of back pain among truck drivers. How exposed a location is depends largely on various factors, such as whether the road is designed well, whether the truck is old, whether the driver is comfortable, and how well the seating and suspension systems work.

2.4 SUMMARY

This chapter outlines that burnout has a great impact on truck driver's productivity within the workplace, and due to their working conditions, their health, family relationships are also affected. There is not enough interventions or measures put in place to address burnout oftruck drivers and the impact it has on various aspects of the truck drivers lives. Looking at burnout as a multidimensional theory it serves as a guide to gain a better understanding of burnout that it is context-free and does not only take place within the workplace as well as how each dimension affects truck drivers. However, there is not enough research conducted about the relationship of truck drivers with their families and how their jobs affect their marriages, relationships with their children as well as they manage work-life conflict. Furthermore,

medical attention for trucks drivers appears to be a factor that is not taken a priority by companies and because of the stringent working conditions, it should be a priority. Chapter Three is going to describe the research methodology that guided the research study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

"Research strategy is a generalised plan for a problem which includes, structures desired solutions, in terms objectives of research and an outline of planned devices necessary to implement the strategy, the research strategy is based on the objectives of the research while the research method is based on the nature of the research problem" (Singh, 2007, p. 188). This chapter states the research questions, the primary aim and secondary aim of the study as well as giving a description of the research approach, design and methodology that was used during the study. How trustworthiness was achieved in the study will also be explained as well as the ethical considerations that was looked at concluding with the limitations of the research study and giving a conclusion of the chapter.

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What are the effects of burnout on truck drivers in the truck depo in Johannesburg?

3.3 THE PRIMARY AIM AND SECONDARY OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary aim of the study is to explore the effect burnout have of truck drivers.

The secondary objectives are:

- To examine the effects burnout has on truck drivers.
- To investigate how burnout impacts truck driver's productivity in the workplace.
- To explore the perception of burnout amongst management.

3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

3.4.1 Research approach

To carry out this study, a qualitative approach was utilised; it was explorative and descriptive in nature. Qualitative research allowed the researcher to understand and make meaning of the views of the participants regarding the issues that are being identified in the study through their perspective (insider's perspective) (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011). An advantage of qualitative method is its ability to describe and events of the study population as they perceive and experience it, in the smallest detail and in their own way is a significant attribute of

qualitative research (Maruster, 2013). It helped me understand the working conditions truck drivers make the choices they do and helped me find ways that can help improve those conditions. This approach uses a smaller sample size, this made it easy for me to collect the data from participants and did not take me many days to do so. It allowed for the description from my perspective and observation and gave me the opportunity to interpret the non-verbal communication of participants (Tracy, 2012). The disadvantage of qualitative method is that analysing of the data took a lot of time, from transcribing identifying codes and forming themes and analysing those themes. It required me to identify the non-verbal cues of participants and it is not always easy to remember all the non-verbal cues of all participants and it also helped me to interpret the data (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011).

3.4.2 Research Design

A case study was used as the research design. Swanborn (2010, p. 13), states that a case study refers to "the study of a social phenomenon and is carried out within the boundaries of one or a few social systems such as people, organizations, groups, individuals or local communities". Case studies are used in exploratory research and can help understand the connections between various aspects of a person's life. It assisted the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the entities that was being studied (Swanborn, 2010). It exposed the researcher tothe real-life stores and experiences of the truck drivers thus reducing chances of being biased and assisted in generalisation of data.

3.5 POPULATION, SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Population is a group of people who possesses similar characteristics or traits (Strydom & Delport, 2011). This group may have the needed knowledge and experience (Holloway & Wheeler, 2013). For this study, the population was truck drivers and supervisors because is similar in every way to the population from which it was drawn in terms of characteristics relevant to the research being carried out. Even though they are from different companies who are employed independent contractors, their job descriptions and duties of truck drivers are the same which is to transport goods from one place to another and goods that are in big quantities are on most occasions collected and delivered at depots.

Sample is a portion of the people that will be in the study (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the company initially approached could not grant permission for data collection however, recommended the use of truck depot. The selection of

participants was be based on the judgement of the researcher, when recruiting the participants; the researcher defined them according to their gender, age, preferred language, and experience (Krysik & Finn, 2013).

For this study, the researcher went to a truck depo in CityDeep Johannesburg, and approached the truck drivers that were either sitting in their trucks or standing outside their trucks. The reason for the approach was explained to the truck drivers and permission was asked to conduct the interview and to audio-record the interview. Based on the information of age and experience the truckdrivers gave the researcher made the decision to interview them or not. Participants were selected as per the selection criteria: eleven (11) truck drivers between the ages of twenty-five and fifty(25 and 50). Two supervisors between the ages of forty and sixty (40 and 60). All participants were males;the truck drivers have experience between five to forty years as truck drivers. The supervisors had experience of more than five years' as supervisors, and more than ten years' as truck drivers.

Sampling is the process of selecting a portion of the population to participate in the study that will provide information to get a better understanding of the topic that is being researched on (Cargan, 2007). For this study probability, simple random sampling was used. Participants were selected using probability sampling in a non-systematic and random manner; the likelihood that the sample will represent the population is greater with probability sampling compared to non-probability sampling (Wagner, Kawulich & Garner, 2012). The experience of the participants in the field of truck driving will help the researcher select participants that will best help the researcher to understand the problem and the research questions (Padget, 2008). The advantages of this methodare that it requires little prior knowledge of the population, that it has high internal and externalvalidity, and that it is simple to analyse the data (Acharya, Prakash, Saxena & Nigam, 2013).

Choosing a sample that will help the researcher to understand the research questions serves as an advantage because participants that has experience, knowledge, characteristics and understand the phenomena that are being researched improves and adds on existing data (Macnee & McCabe, 2008).

The study was supposed to consist of fifteen truck drivers and two supervisors. However, the researcher was unable to reach fifteen truck drivers because of the COVID-19 pandemic some of the truck drivers at the depo did not feel comfortable doing the interview and mentioned the safety restrictions and regulations of the pandemic. The selection criteria that were used by the researcher required the participants to be able to at least speak and understand English, Sesotho or Isizulu so that there can be no language barriers.

Participants were willing and available to participate in the research study. Additionally, the key informants who are the supervisors they have direct contact with the truck drivers as they give them information on and schedules on where they should collect and deliver goods. The disadvantage of choosing a sample from the population, there will not be a broader range of data not all truck drivers experience, or understanding will be heard (Macnee & McCabe, 2008). In choosing the sample size there are no rules, the sample depends on what the researcher wants to know, and what information will be useful, reliable, including the available resources (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 1998).

3.6 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The research instrument that was used was interview schedule. Two different schedules were used, one for each group of participants. The purpose of an interview is to gather information about the participants' ideas, experiences, beliefs, views, opinions, and behaviors. An interview is a two-way conversation and a purposeful interaction in which the interviewer asks the interviewee questions in order to collect data about the participants' ideas, experiences, beliefs, views, opinions, and behaviors. The goal is to collect detailed descriptive information that will allow us to see the work from the perspective of the participant (Wagner, *et al.*, 2012). Semi-structured interview schedules were used and are provided in Appendices C, and D. The strengths of semi-structured interviews are that it assisted the interviewer to probe at any time during the interview; this made it easier for the researcher to ask questions in detail that was not part of the initial structured interview questions (Karjornboon, 2005).

3.7 Pre-testing research instrument

Pre-testing the research tool is to enhance the reliability and validity of the research instrument as well as to evaluate whether the interview questions are appropriate, understandable, and relevant to the study (Recker, 2011). The semi-structured interview schedule was tested with one truck driver who has five years’ experience as a truck driver. The semi-structured interview for the supervisors was tested with a supervisor who has 3 years’ experience. The data collected during the pre-testing with the two people were not included in the data analysis as they were not part of the research. Pre-testing the research instrument was to help the researcher identify questions that were going to be a challenging and misunderstood by participants and adjust them where possible. The questions used for pre-testing did not change nor was there any additional questions added to the questionnaire.

3.8 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Face to face interviews was used to collect data in this research study; interviews are used to collect data from individuals to acquire knowledge (Kajornboon, 2005). The primary aim of conducting interviews was to allow the researcher to explore a topic more openly (Schuh & Associates, 2011) giving individuals the platform to express their thought, feelings and perceptions of the given situation in the way they view it (Kajornboon, 2005). Interviews have a better response rate, enables the interviewer to ask open and it allows for immediate clarification, however interviews can be costly, not ideal for wide coverage and can be time consuming (Gray, 2004). The interviews in this study were semi-structured and it gave more flexibility to the interviewer as it is not fixed, and it enabled the researcher to direct the interview, and this gives some freedom to shape it the way in which the interview flows (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). Interviews are convenient and purposeful because it gave freedom to the interviewees to fully express themselves and it made them feel their information will remain confidential because no writing was involved nor was anything put on paper (Gray, 2004).

Each interview lasted approximately twenty to thirty minutes. Before data collection took place participants were given participants information sheets (Appendix A) the researcher prepared the interviews, but the participants first gave consent for the interviews to take place and gave consent for the interviews to be audio-taped (Appendix B) which will be transcribed into verbatim. The collection of data only commence once ethics clearance was received from the university. The same research conducted all the interviews with the participants.

3.9 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The method of data analysis that was used in the study was thematic analysis making the research descriptive in nature. This type of data analysis involves the researcher to read the data that is collected repeatedly in order to identify the emergent themes and then use the themes to organize the data collected (Wells, 2007). “A satisfactory thematic analysis portrays the thematic content of interview transcripts (or other texts) by identifying common themes in the texts provided for analysis” (Anderson, 2007, p. 1). It helped the researcher look across a set of data then within one case and it centralized its concentration more on what the phenomenon; event or social interaction looked like to the individual of interested and their live experiences (Seale, 2012). The researcher was able to identify themes and interpret them

efficiently and adequately. To illustrate the themes there are six phase process that was followed:

i. Becoming familiar with the data, it is necessary to read and reread transcripts as part of any qualitative analysis process in order to be successful. Before proceeding, the researcher should become intimately acquainted with the entire body of data that is, all the interviews and any other data that may be used (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). I prepared the data through transcribing information that was obtained and I also took notes and jotted down the initial impressions are beneficial at this stage.

ii. Generate codes, coding is the systematic and thorough creation of meaningful labels that are attached to specific segments of the dataset that have meaning that is relevant to the research question. Coding is intended to facilitate the analyst in understanding and discovering information, as well as developing greater insight and presenting a complete and thorough foundation for the analysis. I first identified the relevant data within each data item, and then "tag" those data segments with a few words or a pithy phrase that accurately captures the meaning of that data segment to the researcher, I did this by using different pens and highlighters (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke & Braun, 2017).

iii. Search the themes, a theme is a pattern that is relevant to the study and can present some valuable information about the topic. Codes are examined to develop themes. Following this step, codes are organized into larger concepts that seemed to be trying to express a distinct question about this study's research question (Maguire & Delahunt,2017). I examined and clustered all the similar codes together and developed a theme out of them.

iv. Review the themes, reviewing is similar to performing quality control checks to ensure that the themes are relevant and work well in relation to coded data, a dataset, and the study question. It has been discovered that themes that have been reviewed in conjunction with the dataset actually do work well and tell a distinct and meaningful story that answers the research question (Terry *et al.*, 2017). I looked at the data associated with each theme and considered whether the data actually supported the theme in question. It involved asking questions such as (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017):

    - Are the concepts logical?
    - Are the data in line with the themes?
    - Is there too much information in a theme?
    - Are the themes truly separate when they overlap?

- Are there subthemes?
- Do there appear to be other distinct aspects in the data?

v. Define the themes is to convey a narrative that considers the findings and discusses how patterns and variability shape the meaning is part of this. Analysing the presented data involves writing the analytic narrative, which describes the extracted data. The work done during this phase is about ensuring that the development process is clear, cohesive, precise, and of high-quality (Terry *et al.*, 2017). This is done through looking at what the message of the piece is, how the subthemes should be addressed and examined in light of the main theme and checking if there is a connection between the themes (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

vi. Write up, the results of the study are interpreted and analysed laying out everything, carefully putting together the data, analysis, and connections, in order to turn the research question into a clear and well-defined output. I transitioned from an analytical focus in the research process to a wider view of the project as a whole (Terry *et al.*, 2017).

3.10 TRUSTWORTHINESS

The term trustworthiness is used to describe the characteristics of the process and the product of qualitative research that is desired. The four characteristics of trustworthiness that indicate the trustworthiness of a study are credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

The trustworthiness of research is evident in the findings of the study, and whether the researcher carried out the process of research fairly and in a manner that represents the experiences of the people that participated in the study as closely as possible (Anzul, Ely, Freidman, Garner & McCormack-Steinmetz, 2003). To achieve trustworthiness, audio tapes was used to enable the researcher to go back capture the important information that is worth paying attention to.

With credibility the main issue is that the study must capture what is really happening, the researcher must ensure that the findings of the study is supported by the data that is collected and the data must provide enough detail to be able to meet standards for credibility (Pitney & Parker, 2009). The researcher ensured this by going over and over the participants perceptions to make sure it is gathered accurately through listening to the audio-taped interviews.

Transferability is to see whether generalizability is possible and whether the findings of the study can be applied in a context or environment that is similar. Qualitative research does not seek to generalize, but contextualizes phenomenona and look for links across various studies and compare it across people and settings (Tappen, 2010). To ensure transferability the researcherprovided a detailed description of the situation of the study and methods used so that it can bepossible for the next person to be able to transfer the results to a different context.

According to Holloway & Wheeler (2013, p. 303) when a study is dependable it should be "consistent and accurate". The main issue that is addressed with dependability is whether the study is believable. The researcher made use of recordings of every interview. While conducting the research study the researcher must create and maintain an audit trail; this helps to provide dependability (Tappen, 2010).

Confirmability is the effort of the researcher to remain objective throughout the whole process of conducting the study (Tappen, 2010). The pre-conceptions and prior presumptions of the researcher should not be the results of the study, but the research must be judged in the way the findings and conclusion achieve the aim of the study (Holloway & Wheeler, 2013). Various steps must be put in place to ensure that the findings of the research study are the experiences, feelings, and ideas of the participants and not the preference of the researcher (Tappen, 2010).

- Through the course of the study, the researcher can keep track of the procedures for checking and rechecking the data.
- Another researcher can act as a "devil's advocate" in regard to the findings, and the entire process can be documented for future reference.
- It is possible for the researcher to actively seek out and describe negative instances that are in direct conflict with previous observations.
- After the study is completed, it is possible to conduct a data audit, whichexamines the data collection and analysis procedures and makes judgments about the likelihoodof bias or distortion occurring (Tappen, 2010).
- To enhance and ensure conformability the researcher will maintain and an audit trail.

3.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ethical issues that this study is going to look at include the following:

Permission to do the research.

Permission to conduct research at Motoria Trucks was requested (Appendix B) but was denied due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As soon as I realized that conducting research at a company would be impossible due to the pandemic, so I went to the CityDeep truck depot in Johannesburg. Because the truck drivers working at CityDeep are independent contractors, I only needed permission to conduct research with them at the truck depot.

Ethical approval

When doing research permission should be obtained not only from possible participants, but also from higher authority. I received ethics clearance from the Social Work Departmental Ethics Committee, protocol number SW20/06/08.

Voluntary participation

No one was be forced to participate in this study, but everyone gave consent and was aware that they are participating in a study, each participant was given a participant information sheet and a consent form. Participation voluntarily implies that participants have theright and freedom to leave the study whenever they want to, and that there will be no consequences for their decision (Padgett, 2016). When doing social work research, no coercionshould be used and the participant must consent to participate, and they must be made aware of the study's goals and objectives (Marlow, 2010).

Informed consent

When a participant agrees to participate in a study without being forced to do so and after being informed of their rights, this is referred to as given informed consent. Informed consent was obtained both verbally and in writing from participants regarding the nature of the study (Babbie, 2013). Participation in the study was discussed with all the participants prior to their consenting to participate, and they were also given a participant information sheet (Appendix A) that contained the researcher's name and contact information, an outline of the research study, and the purpose of the study.

Anonymity

Because of anonymity, the identities of those who took part were not revealed. By not including any names or numbers in the data collected, this was accomplished so that readers and

researchers would not be able to associate a particular response with the respondent (Monette, Sullivan & DeJong, 2011).

Confidentiality

Confidentiality means that identifying information collected from the participants is not made public or cannot be related in any way to the participants (Monette, Sullivan & DeJong, 2011). Confidentiality is regarded as a big issue in research and in this study, it was guaranteed by informing the participants that their identities will not be revealed when reporting on the findings of the study and the information they gave during the study will not be specifically linked to them (Padgett, 2016). Confidentiality was achieved when the researcher did not reveal the identity of the responded even though he knows him/her (Babbie, 2013).

To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were used in the research report. It is important to do so that the participants can feel free and comfortable to openly share their experiences and for them to be honest and truthful. In qualitative studies the participants share a lot of information about themselves, thus it is very important for the researcher to ensure that there are confidentiality measures in place during data collection as well as when the results are being reported (Padgett, 2016).

Doing no harm

No harm to participants means that no harm was inflicted on them in any way while they were participating in the study, and that there was no risk or any harm that occurred while they were participating in the study (Farrimond, 2012). The research ensured this by refraining from placing participants in situations that could put them in danger, either physically or psychologically. I consistently monitored the emotional reaction of participants and provided them with information on the available psychological services that we have in the case that they might need it.

Providing feedback on outcomes of research study to participants

Individuals who participate in a study have a right to know the results of their participation, and the researcher has an obligation to provide that information to them, particularly if they express a desire to do so. I told the participants that they can contact me or my supervisor if they want feedback our contact details are on the information sheet they received.

3.12 LIMITATIONS

The study's limitations are those aspects of its design or methodology that have had an impact on or influenced the interpretation of the findings from the research. Generalizability,

applications to practice, and/or utility of findings are constrained as a result of design decisions made at an early stage of the study, as well as by the method used to establish trustworthiness, as well as by unexpected challenges that arise during the course of the investigation (Price & Murnan, 2004).

Qualitative studies: The limitations of the study are that the data collection tool only capture the reconstruction of events and not the behaviour of people, as well as limiting the researcher's interpretation of the findings.

Language barrier: The participants were not fluent in the written language of the research study, however I tried to speak in a language that the participants understood for them to be able to understand and communicate with me.

Sampling: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic made it difficult for the researcher to get the total number of participants as intended in the proposal.

3.13 SUMMARY

This chapter gave a description of research methodology used in the study. Trustworthiness of the study as well as the limitations of the study explained. The collected and analysed data is presented and discussed in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter present study findings. From thematic analysis four themes emanated as follows; understanding of burnout, the experienced impact due to the work, and measures taken by truck drivers to cope with problems. The chapter will first present a profile of the participants in a table form (Table 4.1) followed by discussion. Thereafter, the themes will be discussed.

4.2 Profile of participants

Table 1: Profile of participants (N=13)

Demographic factor	Sub-Category	No.
Groups of participants	Truck drivers Supervisors	11 2
Participant's gender	Male	13
Years of services	1 - 5 years 6 - 10 years 11 - 15 years 16 - 20 years 21 - 25 years 26-30 years	2 2 4 2 2 1
Age range	20 – 30 31 – 40 41 – 50 51 – 60	2 5 4 2

In summary, the participants' demographics are as follows; thirteen all participants were males, and of the thirteen two were key informants who are supervisors, supervisors had more than five years' experience as supervisors and more than ten years' experience as truck drivers. The

eleven truck drivers have experience between five to forty years as truck drivers. What follows is the presentation of the themes.

Truck drivers understanding of burnout.

This theme presents the truck drivers understanding of what burnout is. To efficiently conduct the research and get truthful answers from the participant it was important for the researcher to have an idea of what participants know and what their understanding is of what burnout is. All the participants did not know what burnout as a concept is, one of the questions that was asked by the researcher is for the truck drivers to explain in their own words what they think burnout is. They did not know what it is and asked the researcher to explain.

"*No, I do not know what that is"* (Participant No. 1, 42-year-old truck driver).

"um. ..no, but I can say that I know some people that suffer from burnout, because sometimes we sit and talk about our problems, so I can tell that some they are suffering from it" (Participant No. 6, 47-year-old truck driver).

As evidenced in the quotes above the participants did not know what burnout is nor did they understood the term, however, at the end of the interview the researcher explained to the participant in layman's terms what burnout is participants. Supervisors understood the concept burnout while ordinary truck drivers did not know the concept.

"*Burnout is when a person is tired to a point that they cannot work anymore and they body is sore from working to much without getting much needed rest"* (Participant No. 13, 49-year-old supervisor).

Participants wanted a simple explanation of what burnout is, at the end of the interview the researcher explained to the participants according Maslach *et al.*, (2001), who describes burnout as being characterised by three aspects: emotional exhaustion - tiredness people experience from caring too much for others, depersonalization - the reduction of empathising with others, care and understanding and inefficiency - decreased sense of accomplishment is when people are experiencing feelings of irresistible emptiness. Yet when explained to them at the end of the interview some truck drivers realized that they do experience the symptoms.

Findings on the study done by Magazi and Mohammed (2015) on the importance of heavy vehicle driver education in South Africa showed that the formal training and education for

truck drivers are few and they are not made a priority or a requirement when being hired as a truck driver. Although, one supervisor understood the concept of burnout and explained it in his own words, the researcher explained the concept to him as well in detail because he only understood one segment of it.

This finding demonstrates that the participants did not know what burnout is and yet experienced the symptoms as it is evident in the discussion that follows. Not having knowledge about the concept 'burnout' does not prevent them from being susceptible to it, what seem important is being able to identify the symptoms. The next theme is going to highlight the problems as experienced by truck drivers.

Problems experienced by truck drivers at work.

This theme is about the problems truck drivers are experiencing at work, this theme has two sub themes, long working hours due to company demands and socio-economic issues of truck drivers and the risk of hijacking and theft which will be discussed in the discussion that follows. Truck drivers work long hours and sometimes it is because of the time pressure they find themselves under. Furthermore, because of the nature of their work of transporting goods, they are prone to being victims of hijacking and theft.

Long working hours due to company demands and socioeconomic issues of truck drivers.

This subtheme is concerned with the demands placed on truck drivers by their employers, such as time pressure which causes truck drivers to work long hours; however, at times truck drivers also make a personal choice to work long hours because they want to earn an additional income, and this is due to the socioeconomic difficulties they are faced with.

The participants shared that they have to work long hours in order to meet the demands of the employer. Due to these time pressures truck drivers spend long hours on the road without getting proper rest.

"At times we have to work under pressure because some customers' goods come late to us then we have to rush and deliver them which put us under serious pressure to drive long hours without taking breaks" (Participant No. 7, 35-year-old truck driver).

Another aspect is the salaries that truck drivers earn which then drive them to work long hours to supplement their income and at times sacrifice their days off. The reason for that was that their main income depended on the passenger's fees or the b distance they drove.

"*I normally work long hours when I want to earn extra money because the more loads, I do a month, the more money I am going to receive because we get paid extra according to the number of loads that we do"* (Participant No. 11, 40-year-old truck driver).

"Overtime work is really helpful because we get paid extra for the extra trips that we do; this helps us to maintain our families. Even though I am not able to get enough rest at time but at the end of the day we need to put food on the table, right?" (Participant No. 9, 44-year-old truck driver).

There is an indication that some of the truck drivers that work longer hours do so to try and earn extra income. However, they are not aware of the consequences working without rest on their well-being. Emphasising the importance of earning more money this is what another participant had to say. This finding shows that the long hours that drivers' work are not always involuntary, but drivers are compelled by own monetary benefits (Ulhôa *et al.*, 2011). From the company perspective truck drivers drive long hours in order to reach their destinations quicker so they can make more trips a day. This enables them to do more trips which in return results in them making extra money. These extra trips are counted as overtime, and they get paid for it. However, they also work long hours because at times they find themselves working under pressure resulting in them working long hours to meet the demands of employers and customers (Benstowe, 2007).

Both personal and employer demands, go against the legislated time frames as stipulated by regulatory policies. According to The South African Labour Relations Act, 1995 truck drivers work 45 hours per week including overtime work, however the proceeds of the legislation are not always implemented. The South African Labour Relations Act provides that truck drivers must rest for at least 30 minutes after every 5 hours they drove and per day and they must be off to rest for nine hours and can go back to work after 34 hours of consecutive rest (Maldonado et., al, 2002). "In South Africa, the majority of goods are transported by road, but research on the status of drivers is scant. Truck drivers in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands work on average 16 hours per day, and that approximately 70% spend two and half days or less at home per month" (Maldonado, Mitchell, Taylor, & Driver, 2002, p. 319). This is due to truck drivers' schedule demands that are internally inflicted on them and they must always meet those schedules, if they do not there are consequences that could stem from their inability to meet the demands (Benstowe, 2007). This problem is not distinctive in South Africa most countriesare not following the rules and regulations stipulating truck drivers working hours.

The risk of theft and hijacking

This subtheme presents the risks of theft and hijacking that truck drivers are faced with on a daily basis while on the road. Their lives are at risk daily as they are an easy target for thieves and hijackers because of the work they do of transporting goods.

"Crime such as high jacking, they check the number plate and they can see that the truck is from Gauteng or Durban, when you enter to deliver at the shop, they brake window truck and take the bag, and all other things, as we as peak now am no longer taking along my bag, I only take a trouser and shirt that if I bath it becomes safe" (Participant No. 4, 29-year-old truck driver).

"I also know of other truck drivers that have been hijacked before at gun point, they take the truck and leave the driver just there with no money or a phone to get help" (Participant No. 8, 38-year-old truck driver).

As the evidence in the quotes above truck drivers are not safe and their lives are in danger daily because of the nature of their work. They are aware of the danger they are in because they have either experienced the crime by being victims of either hijacking or theft or know of a colleague that has been a victim of the crime.

However, in this study it is evident that some people choose to become truck drivers because it pays better than other jobs, some of the truck driver participant stated he left his office job to become a truck because the salary he gets as a truck driver is more than what he was earning at his office job. It is apparent that truck drivers in South Africa are not turning a blind eye to the risks that are involved with being a truck driver and they are aware they might be putting their lives in danger. However, they would rather choose to look at ways on how to minimise exposure to the crimes and protect themselves, then to be unemployed or to work lower paying jobs.

"What I think is another problem is that the drivers get hijack a lot and also a lot of time use to complain about their things being stolen in the trucks when they stop at garages when they go to the toilet of buy food" (Participant No. 10, 58-year-old supervisor).

Hijacking of trucks is one of the biggest job stressors truck drivers are faced with daily while being on the road and the numbers are increasing every year faster than anything else. The truck hijackings that are happening in the industry is because of the load that the trucks are

carrying, which is the main target of the syndicates, and the numbers were doubling every year (Zvomuya, 2011). Unlike, in developed countries such as Europe, North America, or Australia, truck drivers in South African must frequently deal with problems such as hijacking and theft of the goods that their transporting even that of their personal belongings (Maldonado et., al, 2002). The next theme presents the physical and emotional impact their job in their lives.

Physical and emotional impact their job has on their lives.

This theme analyses and discuss the physical and emotional impact the job of truck drivers has in their lives. This theme has three sub themes that will be discussed in the following discussion, truck drivers experience of not getting enough sleep, the physical conditions they experience as well as their inability to have in social engagements because of the nature of their work. Truck drivers reported to not get enough or proper sleep on their non-working days, they try to catch up on sleep thus results in them having minimal interaction with society, family, and friends.

Drivers experience of not getting enough sleep.

Problems of not getting adequate sleep and sleepiness is something that is familiar with truck drivers, sleepiness is a problem that does not only influence the well-being of truck drivers but also poses unpleasant results on performance and safety of the truck drivers and ultimately leads to fatigue.

"It's very easy to fall asleep while driving especially when I have been driving a long distance without sleeping, driving overnight or not sleeping properly. Sleeping during the day is almost imposable for me because of the noise coming from outside and these beds in here are not comfortable at all" (Participant No. 7, 35-year-old truck driver).

"But there are some people…errr you find that they do not want to rest. These are the ones who cause accidents you should relax" (Participant No. 2, 71-year-old-driver).

"*Most of the time I drive long hours without resting because I am under pressure to deliver the goods of customers and most of the time it happens when the goods arrived late at the depot where I have to pick them up"* (Participant No. 9, 44-year-old truck driver).

In the quote above it is evident that some truck drivers do not get enough sleep, due to time pressures to deliver thus working long working hours. The long working hours leads to truck

drivers not getting enough or sufficient sleep as some of them drive over night especially when they do long trips to other provinces.

Some truck drivers drive over night because the roads are queter. When they are unable to sleep during the night they try to sleep during the day when they are waiting for loading information however, either the noise from the outside or the uncomfortable sleeping berths always interrupt sleep during the day. Not getting enough sleep or having interrupted sleep because of the noise, uncomfortable bed, and comfortable temperatures consecutively will ultimately lead to fatigue.

In South Africa, truck drivers falling asleep cause twenty-four percent of the heavy-vehicle accidents on the road. This may be a sign that truck drivers do not get adequate sleep to perform their jobs competently. Similarly in a study conducted by Maldonado et. al., (2002) eight out of ten truck drivers disclosed that while sleeping in the truck, sleep berth noise coming from the outside disturb their sleep. Sixty two percent acknowledged they slightly fell asleep while driving and this was connected to their sleep being interrupted, driverswho disclosed that they show signs of sleep disorders or complained about not being able to have uninterrupted sleep have a higher probability of being involved in sleep related accidents.

Because truck drivers consider money as an important value to their lives and thee of their families, they sacrifice their sleep and resting time. Previous studies have showed that waiting in queues lead to drivers being unable to use the time to rest while they are in the queue to load to unload, they must stay involved because they must drive forward as the queue is moving and they are not sure when their waiting will finish. These waiting times can add a lot of extra working hours which in turn increase driver fatigue (Friswell, & Williamson, 2019). Contrary to another study truck drivers reported that while they waited for instructions to load or unload, they sleep at truck stops (Matthew, Hankins, Venter, & Gome, 2018). This happens when truck drivers have not yet been instructed by supervisors on what to do so while waitingupon those instructions, they use that time to take a nap. However, inadequate facilities at truckstops and inferior truck berths are not conducive to sleeping which can result in fatigue, whichcan then also be a contributing factor to fatigue (Maldonado et. al, 2002).

Physical conditions experienced by drivers.

Furthermore, as truck drivers' work requires them to sit most of the time with minimal movement and the condition of their truck that are exposing them to intense vibrations truck

drivers reported to experience various physical problems. They reported physical conditions such as suffering from back pains and having painful shoulders as demonstrated below.

"*You see the trucks that we drive how they look; they kill our kidneys because the truck is always like vibrating and that affects your lower back of which its associated with your kidneys and the fact that the body is always tired. So, most of the time we experience pains in the lower back and commonly it is associated with your kidneys"* (Participant No. 5, 27-year-old truck driver).

"You see the truck that I am driving is old it does not have the latest equipment, the steering wheel is hard and big, seat is uncomfortable I have to put a pillow underneath to make it a little more comfortable. And vibration causes your whole body to shake and sometimes sitting in one position for too long I get cramps and back pains and my shoulders get muscle pulls and become very stiff" (Participant No. 12, 47-year-old truck driver).

As evidenced in the quotes above, the trucks that are driven by the truck drivers do not have latest ergonomics thus truck drivers suffer from health conditions such as lower back pains which is the most common one because of the vibrations of the trucks that they are subjected to on a daily basis while driving. Truck driving is an occupation that has been associated to being to being one of the causes of occupational Lower Back Pains (LBP), it has been identified that being exposed to vibration, lifting of heavy objects frequently, sitting or standing for long hours, strained posture are elements that lead to occupational LBP (Miyamoto, Shirai, Nakayama, Gembun, & Kaneda, 2000). However, some truck drivers drive trucks that sends minimal to no vibrations to the truck and the seats are comfortable and supports the back, even though with the ergonomics these trucks come. Truck drivers still experience stiff muscles and pains because they sit for long hours with minimal movement.

Robb and Mansfield (2007) conducted a similar study and discovered that participants who reported being subjected to vibration worked 12 to 85 hours per week for a total of 256 to 6400 hundred kilometres per week, depending on the length of time they were driving. Furthermore, Robb and Mansfield (2007) states that eighty-one percent of the participants reported they suffered musculoskeletal pain and sixty percent gave reports of suffering from low back pains. Due to the unusual working hours of truck drivers, they drive more than 50 kilometres a day and that can expose them to acute physical and mental problems.

Work keeps drivers from social engagements.

Truck drivers are unable to have or maintain a consistent, predictable, and socially fair structure and the consequence is a lack of work-life balance. Furthermore, an increase of truck drivers in lack of collaboration and companionship amongst them eventually leads to the ongoing social isolation of truck drivers.

"I spend most of my time alone in the truck while waiting for instruction from the office if I am going to load today or not, I do not have friends here because there is no-where that I am renting but there are a few drivers that I know but I have met them here at the depo" (Participant No. 11, 40-year-old truck driver).

As evidenced in the quote mentioned above truck drivers are socially isolated, most of them come from different provinces and do not have friends at the workplace but it is also clear that it might be a personal choice for them to not form any social relationships. An observation was made by the researcher that majority of the truck drivers were alone in their trucks either on their phones, eating or sleeping very few truck drivers were standing outside their trucks conversing with one another.

"eh! The time is always small, my wife is always complaining and sometimes I get home for a weekend, and I want to sleep then I would have to leave incredibly early in the morning, if I came back early from delivering, I will go home" (Participant No. 4, 29-year-old truck driver).

It is evident from above quotes that participant only go home once a month or sometimes once in two months. Due to their inability to have social engagements, they experience various problems in relation to their social relationships due to the nature of their work. According to Matthew *et al.* (2018) despite the fact that there are no clear findings, truckdrivers displayed emotional disconnection when they spoke about the exchange between spending time with their families and working that kind of work. They get an income so they can take care of their families their work has become their life and consumes themselves intowork so that being away from their families and not being actively involved in the lives of theirchildren become more difficult than it already is for them. Being away from family and friendshas become a norm for truck drivers especially the ones that are working and staying in other provinces.

"I think most of the truck drivers are always alone because most of the time they are tired from the driving and when they are at the depo, as you can see the majority of them are in their

trucks resting for their next trips, so they hardly get time to sit and talk with each other or even form friendships" (Participant No. 13, 49-year-old supervisor).

Truck driving has always been viewed as a job that isolates people as most of the duties, responsibilities are done individually, driving alone for long hours, and that restricts social connections (Hege *et al.*, 2016). Truck driver's irregular schedules and long working hours decrease their chances of being able to spend time with their families, which ultimately lead to work-family conflict (Shin & Jeong, 2020). This prevents truck drivers from being actively involved in the upbringing of their children and forming strong bonds with them, because they miss important milestones, and this causes a lot of conflict between them and their partners.

Despite all the problems experienced by truck drivers, they do make means to cope with their problems. The next theme presents the measures implemented by truck drivers to cope with problems and impact of the problems.

Measures implemented by truck drivers to cope with problems and impact of the problems

This theme analyses and discuss the measures that drivers implemented to cope with the problems and impact of the problems that they are faced with at work. Theft, as well as health issues such as lower back pain, are among the difficulties they face. As a precaution against becoming victims of theft, they have put in place measures such as not leaving valuables in their trucks when they go out to the shop or toilet, and to prevent them from becoming victims of various health conditions, they always make sure they have water with them in the truck.

"When you travel you do not leave your wallet or phone in the truck when you go out because when you come back you find it gone. That is why I do not travel with a lot of things anymore I just travel with my backpack that has my toiletries in so that when I do overnight because there is somewhere I can shower" (Participant No. 8, 38-year-old truck driver).

"*I do get time to rest when I am travelling, for example when I go to Durban in the morning, I do stop at truck stops when I feel I am tired and would rest maybe for 30 minutes to an hour. When I get to Durban after delivering, I sleep at the depo in my truck where I deliver the goods than I come back the following day"* (Participant No. 9, 44-year-old truck driver).

As evidenced in the quotes above truck drivers have taken it upon themselves to ensure that they are safe and to protect themselves, they have learned to do so from their own experiences

and some of them are through the experiences of other drivers. Not leaving any valuables in the trucks makes their chances of becoming targets of theft less but it does not take it away because valuables of the truck itself can be stolen. Evidence from the quotes also shows that do not take the risk to drive over night or to drive while they are tired, they would take breaks when needed and would rather sleep in the truck instead of driving overnight which is not save. Thus, they have learned to put in place safety measures for themselves that would minimise their chances of falling victims of either theft or hijacking. A study done by Kubanova, and Kubasakova (2020) indicates that in Europe there is a lack of brave truck drivers as truck driving is classified as a profession that is dangerous and putting the lives of truck drivers at risk because anything can happen during transportation time.

Truck drivers are aware of the implications and dangers driving without getting enough rest thus they rest as much as they can, even though the sleeping berths are not the most comfortable to sleep on. Not enough factual studies that explored the safety implications of the useof sleeper berths might have over long-haul road transport operations. However, some studiesshow that the use of sleeping berths is associated with poor driving duty performance that are responsive to fatigue and an increase in driver mortality rates especially for drivers that drive alone (Darwent, Roach & Dawson, 2012). As much as the sleep berths are notcomfortable and causes many physical ailments for the truck drivers, they feel is a better optionfor them to sleep than rushing to go back home. Truck drivers practice caution and safety not only for their own benefit but for others on the road as well, however there are some truck drivers that do not uphold the same principle especially when they want to make extra moneyor is under pressure to meet customers' demands.

Truck drivers experience various risk factors that are intrinsic in their work which causes high levels of stress, the amount of stress is highly dependent on the support and demand received on the job and truck driving is characterised as a high demanding job. However, the stress can be reduced by receiving support and types of coping (Cavagioni, Pierin, Batista, Bianchi, & Costa, 2009). Also knowing that they have support and understanding from their family members can reduce stress of truck drivers as they would not have to worry about disappointing family for not spending enough time with them and always being away from home.

Companionship and working together as a team with colleagues can increase work motivation, job satisfaction, and ameliorate work performance. Having a partner to work with and support can cause a decrease in employee stress, consequently stress caused by heavy job demands can

be reduced by assistance, support, and involvement of a co-driver (Hatami, Vosoughi, Hosseini & Ebrahimi, 2019). Truck drivers will be able to get enough rest when they have co-drivers especially long-distance truck drivers. Studies show that co-drivers can assist in getting rid of driver loneliness, by being a companion, partner, a confidant, and close friend and can play an integral role in the health and safety of drivers. Thus, they can be viewed as a significant factor that can have a positive impact on the truck driver (Hatami, *et. al.*, 2019). Having a co-driver will not only have a positive impact on the drivers but also increase the chances of protecting the drivers against theft and hijacking. However, in this study not all truck drivers interviewed had co-drivers.

Exposure to whole-body vibration (WBV) over a long period can have a negativeeffect on a person's body, great importance has been placed by literature in the fact that beingexposed to WBV over a long period is the main consequence of lower back pains in truck drivers. Lower back pains in turn have a negative impact on quality of sleep, which mightdecrease alertness during the day (Du, Bigelow, Wells, Davies, Hall, & Johnson, 2018).

"As they say that you should always drink water, I always drink water and as you can see the kind of truck that I drive is extremely comfortable" (Participant No. 4, 29-year-old truck driver).

As evidenced in the quote above truck drivers are informed and they are aware of the health implications of driving an old truck has such as being exposed to high vibration volumes, thus they have taken it upon themselves to try and protect themselves by keeping two litre water bottles to drink in the truck to keep their bodies hydrated. Whereas some truck drivers stated their trucks are the modern trucks that have seat suspension, thus they do not experience vibration and they are comfortable, however as evidenced in the quote above they also drink a lot of water as a form of prevention.

To improve the working conditions of drivers there a various types of seat suspension that have been put in place to heavy-duty vehicles, these seats can be easily adjusted and enhanced to best fit the truck driver. The seat suspension is an effective and simple technique that has been put in place to separate vehicle vibration being transferred to the driver's body (Ning *et al.*, 2016). In this study there are some truck drivers that are driving trucks that have the ergonomics and it has been of great help to them, but they still take measurements to protect themselves such as always making sure that they have water in the truck to drink.

SUMMARY

The nature of truck drivers work forces them to spend long hours on the road due to the company demands but they also make personal decisions because of the need to earn an extra income. Because of the work hours and time pressure drivers do not get enough sleep and it also socially excludes them because their work keeps them away from family and friends which in turn results in increased burnout levels of truck drivers. The working environments demands from truck drivers to be motionless in the driver seat for a long period of time which is a contributing factor that eventually led to poor health because of their inactive lifestyle (Boyce, 2019). The conditions of the trucks can also lead to physical health conditions such as lower back pains, though it is evident that there are measures that can be taken to minimize the risks and effects. Factors that lead truck drivers to burnout can be minimised and managed with support from their companies for them to make the working environment more work friendly for truck drivers. Chapter five will discuss the main findings, conclude and give recommendations to companies on how burnout and its effects can be dealt with.

CHAPTER FIVE

MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discuss the main findings of the research study in relation to the overall aims, primary and secondary objectives of the study.

The primary aim of the study was to explore the effect burnout have of truck drivers.

The secondary objectives were:

- To examine the effects burnout has on truck drivers.
- To investigate how burnout impacts truck driver's productivity in the workplace.
- To explore the perception of burnout amongst management.

Furthermore, a conclusion of the study will be given as well as the recommendations will be highlighted on the interventions that can implemented to minimise the effects of burnout on truck drivers.

5.2 Main findings

Findings indicate that truck drivers do not know what burnout is thus is was difficult for them to explain it or know that the symptoms they are experiencing are those of burnout. It is evident through the data presented that truck drivers work very long hours because their job requires them to spend most of their time on the road driving and they drive long distances because they deliver goods across different towns and provinces. Even though it is part of their job requirements to be on the road most of the time, they work long hours at times because of the time pressures they receive from customers to deliver the goods.

Findings show that truck drivers experience various problems in the workplace and some of the problems mentioned by the truck drivers is working long hours because of the pressures they put themselves under some of the reasons are to earn an extra income, so they work overtime by doing more loads per day or month then they usually have to. According to the Department of Transport hours of service regulations who in essence determine the working hours of truck drivers which gives allowance of up to 14 hours of work per day which 11 hours of it is driving time (Ulhôa *et al.*, 2011). From the work schedule of the truck drivers, it is

evident that they do not have set working times, they start work early in the morning at any given time and knock off late depending on the last delivery they do that day.

The other problem that was presented was that truck drivers are exposed to danger because of thegoods that they transport thus making them vulnerable to theft and hijacking atwork. Some of the truck drivers have been victims of theft, their personal belongings got stolenfrom the trucks when they were at truck stops to either go buy food or go to the toilet. Some ofthe truck drivers know of their colleagues that have been hijacked before and because of their own experiences and the experiences of their colleagues they have decided to make their own provisions to protect themselves from falling victims of theft again. According to Kemp *et al.* (2013) these are some of the stressors that truck drivers face and can be one of the causes to burnout.

Findings indicate the physical and emotional impact their job has in the lives of truck drivers their lives. Having to drive long hours and having irregular work schedules makes it exceedingly difficult for the truck drivers to get proper rest not getting enough or proper rest and that can eventually lead to increased levels of burnout. The effects there off does not only impact their productivity but also many other aspects of their lives. They do not have ample information on things that can help with having consistent and uninterrupted sleep thus, they do not believe that fatigue can lead to the multiple accidents on the road, they also believe that they can manage driver fatigue. Therefore, they donot adhere to the work regulations mainly because of the economy and social pressure they face (Braeckman, Verpraet, Van Risseghem, Pevernagie, & De Bacquer, 2011).

Findings also indicate that truck drivers are unable to have social engagements because the nature of their jobs, which requires them to be always on the road and spend less time with their families and friends. Truck drivers get paid per kilometres, some per load and theymake extra income if they work longer hours and drive more kilometres by collecting or delivering more loads, but they pay the price with their sleep and having minimal social engagements (Ulhôa *et al.*, 2011). Again, this shows that working long hours is sometimes a personal choice that truck drivers make. However, they make these choices because they wantto be able to take care of their families, although in turn what they consider as being best for the families so they can provide for them is the same thing that keeps them away from them. The literature indicates that if individuals experience work-life conflict it is very likely for them toexperience increased burnout levels (Mete *et al.*, 2014).

The long hour's truck drivers work, working in high stress working environments, rushing to meet deadlines and demands that are placed on them, not getting enough sleep during the day and at night. It is expected of them that when they are home, they rest by catching up on sleep so they can recuperate and prepare for their upcoming trip and go back to work fully recovered. As a result, it hinders their non-work-related activities, because of the amalgamation of meeting work demands, poor sleep and stress it is expected to play a big role in anticipating how truck drivers are going to consider how they will be going to balance they work-life (Matthee *et al.*, 2018).

Findings further show that truck drivers experience some health issues because their job requires them so sit for long periods of time with minimal movement. This causes them to experience physical ailments such as painful arms and joints and their whole bodies become sore and tired because of the driving. Some of the truck drivers experience lower back pains that is caused by the vibration from the trucks and the lower back pains, However, they have put measures in place to protect themselves by drinking a lot of water as lower back pains are mostly associated with kidney problems. Truck drivers have put in place measures that will help them cope with the problems and the impacts of the problems they are experiencing. They have decided to put in place these measures through what they have experienced and by seeing the experiences of other truck drivers.

Most of the truck drivers appeared to be physically exhausted as they were interacting with the researcher and seemed very uninterested in the discussion and according to the multidimensional theory of burnout individuals suffering from emotional exhaustion aredrained have a lack of energy (Maslach, 1998). It was evident that truck drivers do notreceive any medical assistance from their companies, and they also do not go for frequent medical check-ups, this might be because they do not have the funds to do so, or they are simplyjust ignorant because they do not suffer from severe health issues. However, they are not awarethat because of the type of work they do they are more susceptible to various health problems.

5.3 Conclusion

There definitely is burnout, they do not know the concept, but they suffer from burnout. It does have impact, and the effects are very serious as they can lead to various health issues. They learn from some of their experiences and come up with strategies to avoid dire consequences, where unavoidable they make means to cope. Theydo not have the information or knowledge about what burnout is they are unable to identify thesymptoms that could lead to burnout. The effect of burnout has an impact on truck drivers in

the workplace as well as in their personal lives, thus making work-life balance a challenge for them that can lead to increase levels of burnout.

Through data collection truck drivers looked physically and emotionally exhausted a some of them have been away from home for a long time and has not been taking care of themselves properly also due to the isolation they find themselves in. Because they are working for independent contractors, they do not get the needed support from their companies, this make it difficult for them to raise their concerns, challenges, and problems with their employees as there is minimal communication between them. It appears that companies do not know or educate themselves and their employees about burnout or have any programmes or policies that speaks to anything in relation to burnout. The stressors that truck drivers face on a daily basis in their personal life and at work while they are on the road will eventually lead to high levels of burnout. Some of the truck drivers did not appear to be truthful in answering the questions of the researcher, looking at their body language and facial expressions as well as thecondition of their trucks. The researcher is of the notion that some of the truck drivers were scared that the interviews might jeopardise their jobs and gave one-word answers even when some questions were open-ended.

5.4 Recommendation

The following recommendations are made are based on the aforementioned findings and conclusions of the research study.

- Truck drivers should be educated on handling the symptoms of burnout and supported when they do get the symptoms. Knowing how to handle the symptoms can minimise the effects it may have when left untreated.

- It will be beneficial not only for the employees but also for the companies to implement wellness programmes that will prevent, minimise, and help employees cope with burnout and the effects thereof.

- Policies should be in place to guide the wellness programmes implemented.

- Fleet managers/supervisors should develop regular and set work schedules for the truck drivers so they can also have a routine, as well as communication between companies and customers should be strengthen this will help truck drivers from working and driving longs hours because they feel they under pressure to deliver.

- Companies should consider investing in electronic devices such as electronic logging devices (ELD). Such devices will prevent truck drivers from being on the road longer than they should and will assist them in taking more breaks in between their driving.
- Channels of communication between the truck drivers and the companies should be open so that companies can know what challenges and problems truck drivers face on the road. Knowing what the problems of the truck drivers are could make it easier for companies to deal with them this will results in curbing burnout and its effects amongst the truck drivers.
- Companies should consider investing in new trucks that have improved seating and reduced suspension systems to reduce vibration exposure levels that lead to physical injuries of truck drivers.
- Companies should also consider investing in medical assistance for truck drivers for example to take them for medical check-ups every year, this will in turn serve as a prevention measure and improve health conditions of truck drivers.
- Having a co-driver will be beneficial for truck drivers because they will be able to take turns to drive which will give each driver enough time to be able to rest, co drivers also bring more than just physical support.

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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND JOHANNESBURG

APPENDICES

Appendix A

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Good day

My name is Mpolokeng Kolobe and I am a second (final) year student registered for the Masters in Occupational Social Work at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of the requirements for the degree, I am conducting research aimed at exploring the effects of burnout on truck drivers. It is hoped that the information obtained in this study will contribute to the knowledge base on how burnout has an effect on truck drivers in the workplace and their personal lives and how organizations can effectively manage it.

I therefore wish to invite you to participate in my study. Your participation is entirely voluntary and refusal to participate will not be held against you in anyway. If you agree to participate, I shall arrange to interview you at a time and place that is suitable for you. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes to an hour and you may withdraw from the study at any time and you may also refuse to answer any questions that you feel uncomfortable with answering.

With your permission, the interview will be taped-recorded. No other than my supervisor will have access to the tapes. The tapes and interview schedules will be kept for two years following any publications or six years if no publications emanate from the study. Please be assured that your personal details will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be included in the final research report. Your answers will be used in the masters' research report and may be used in conferences, book chapters, journal articles, or books.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on 081 363 5797 or 683039@students.wits.ac.za or my supervisor, Dr. Busisiwe Nkala-Dlamini on 011 717 4483 or email, busisiwe.nkala-dlamini@wits.ac.za for clarity on any questions you might have regarding the study. You will be answered to the best of our ability. If you have any concerns or complaints about the study, please contact Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical) Contact Detail: Chairperson: Jasper.Knights@wits.ac.za or administrator: Ms. Shaun Schoeman Tel 011 717 1408 Shaun.Schoeman@wits.ac.za

Appendix B



REF: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR COMPANY

Dear Sir

My name is Mpolokeng Kolobe and I am a second (final) year student registered for the Masters in Occupational Social Work at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of the requirements for the degree, I am conducting research aimed at exploring the effects of burnout on truck drivers. It is hoped that the information obtained in this study will contribute to the knowledge base on how burnout has an effect on truck drivers in the workplace and their personal lives and how organizations can effectively manage it.

The aim of the study is to explore the effect burnout have of truck drivers, this will be done through conducting interviews with 15 truck drivers and two supervisors that are supervisors any of the 15 truck drivers. For the study to take place I have received ethics clearance from the WITS Ethics Committee. Throughout the whole process of gathering data I will be under the supervision of Dr Busisiwe Nkala-Dlamini.

It is hoped that the information obtained in this study will contribute to the knowledge base on burnout of truck drivers and to enhance the practice of Occupational Social Work in South African workplace.

I therefore wish to conduct the study at Motorvia Trucks to obtain the information that is needed reach the aim of this study.

Thank you for taking the time for considering me to conduct the study at your company.

Yours sincerely

Mpolokeng Kolobe

Appendix C

The effects of burnout on truck drivers: A study of truck drivers at CityDeep Johannesburg

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

I hereby consent to participate in the research study. The purpose and processes of which has been explained to me.

I understand that:

- I am voluntarily participating in this study and can stop at any time with no negative consequences.
- I can choose not to answer any questions that I am uncomfortable with.
- I will not receive any benefits or be exposed to risks as a result of the study.
- My identity and identifying information will be kept confidential and removed from the interview transcript.
- A copy of the transcribed interview with no identifying information will be permanently stored in a locked cupboard and may be used for future research.
- My answers will be used in the masters' research report and may be used in conferences, book chapters, journal articles, or books.
- I can withdraw from the study at any point with no negative consequence and if I feel uncomfortable answering any questions I can choose not to.

Name of participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix D

The effects of burnout on truck drivers: A study of truck drivers at CityDeep Johannesburg

CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO RECORDING

I hereby also consent to the interview being audio-taped. I understand that my confidentiality will be maintained at all times and that the tapes will be destroyed two years after any publication arising from the study or six years after completion of the study if there are no publications.

Yes ☐

No ☐

Name of participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix E

The effects of burnout on truck drivers: A study of truck drivers at CityDeep Johannesburg

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TRUCK DRIVERS

Pseudonym: _____

Age of participant: _____

Gender of participant: _____

1. Do you understand what burnout is?
2. Would you say you suffer from burnout?
3. How often do you travel?
4. Do you get enough sleep when you are traveling?
5. What are the stressors you experience in the workplace?
6. Do you get to rest when at home?
7. How does your work affect your relationship with family and friends?
8. How do you manage your personal life and work?

Appendix F

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

The effects of burnout on truck drivers: A study of truck drivers at CityDeep Johannesburg

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SUPERVISORS

Pseudonym: _____

Age of participant: _____

Gender of participant: _____

1. Would you mind sharing with me your views on burnout?
2. With your experience in the workplace do you think truck drivers are experiencing burnout?
3. What do you think are some of the stressors truck drivers' experience?
4. How do the stressors affect truck drivers?
5. What contribution does the organization make to address those stressors?
6. In which ways do you think burnout can be managed in the work place?

Appendix G

Ethics clearance



UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND JOHANNESBURG

DEPARTMENTAL HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (SOCIAL WORK)
CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Protocol number: SW20/06/08
Project title: The effects of burnout on truck drivers: A study of Motovia Trucks Pretoria.
Researcher/s: M Kolobe, student number: 683039
School/department: SHCD Social Work
Date considered: 22 June 2020
Decision of the committee: Approved (Low risk)
Date ratified: 24 July 2020
Expiry date: 31 July 2023

Date: 31 July 2020 **Chairperson:** Prof E Pretorius
Cc: Supervisor: Dr B Nkala-Dlamini

Declaration of researcher(s)
To be completed in **DUPLICATE** and **ONE COPY** returned to the Administrative Assistant, Room 8, Department of Social Work, Umthombo Building Basement or e-mailed to Fezile.Ndebele@wits.ac.za

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorised to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the committee. **For Masters and PhD an annual progress report is required.**

SIGNATURE 12 / 08 / 2020 DATE

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND | YUNIVESITHI YASEMPUMALANGA | UNIVERSITEIT VAN WES-RAND