

**THE PSYCHOLOGICAL REPERCUSSIONS OF
UNEMPLOYMENT: A STUDY OF WINDHOEK'S
"STREET UNEMPLOYED"**

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF
ART (PSYCHOLOGY)

OF
UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA
BY

WEBSTER GONZO
NOVEMBER 2001

Supervisors: Prof. I.E. Plattner (UNAM)
Prof. V. van Deventer (UNISA)

ABSTRACT

This thesis sought to investigate unemployment from a psychological perspective in an African country in general, and in Namibia in particular. The research question aimed to investigate what the situation of Namibia's "street unemployed" (men who wait at certain street points to be picked up for a day-job) entails and what its psychological repercussions are. Seligman's reformulated Theory of Learned Helplessness was chosen as the theoretical framework for the study. The empirical investigation followed a qualitative-quantitative research approach. In the qualitative part of the study ten "street unemployed" were interviewed and evaluated through Qualitative Content Analysis. Based on the outcomes a questionnaire was developed for the quantitative part of the study which was answered by 160 respondents. Amongst others the results of the study have shown that most of Namibia's "street unemployed" are youth or young adults who lack education and vocational training. Many of them have either never been fully employed before or are long-term unemployed. Their psychological well-being is characterised by high levels of stress experience about not having a job and about their financial and social network situation. Of major concern should be the fact that 66.3% of the respondents scored on a low level of self-esteem, and that 95% of the respondents showed signs of depression. The results of the study not only challenge some of the findings usually found in western countries (for instance, regarding job seeking behaviour) but also Seligman's theory. It became clear that Windhoek's "street unemployed" do not follow the classical patterns of causal attribution which are assumed to cause

depression. Contrary to the expectations the results rather indicate support for the notion that it is not uncontrollability per se which could cause the depression but the stress linked to it.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE WORLD OF WORK	8
2.1 Work, employment and unemployment	8
2.2 The meaning of work	10
2.3 Social attitudes towards the unemployed	15
3. PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON UNEMPLOYMENT	18
3.1 Investigating unemployed people	19
3.2 Unemployment and psychological well-being	24
3.2.1 The effect of unemployment on self-esteem	25
3.2.2 Unemployment and loss of income	28
3.2.3 Unemployment and poverty	32
3.2.4 Youth unemployment	34
3.2.5 Unemployment and time	36
3.2.6 Unemployment and the social network	39
3.2.7 The effects of unemployment on physical health	41
3.2.8 Unemployment and job-seeking behaviour	44
3.3 Models to explain psychological effects of unemployment	47

4. "LEARNED HELPLESSNESS" - A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE PSYCHOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN NAMIBIA	51
4.1 Uncontrollability - the basis of "learned helplessness"	52
4.2 Causal attribution - a central element in Seligman's reformulated theory of learned helplessness	55
4.3 Unemployment and learned helplessness	61
5. DESIGN OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY ON NAMIBIA'S "STREET UNEMPLOYED"	64
5.1 Research Methodology	64
5.2 Research strategy	69
5.3 Methods	71
5.3.1 Qualitative Data Gathering and Evaluation	71
5.3.2 Quantitative Data Gathering and Evaluation	74
5.4 Sample	80
5.5 Difficulties faced in conducting the research	81
6. DATA PRESENTATION	87
6.1 Demographic variables	87
6.2 Previous job situation	96
6.3 Job seeking behaviour	101

6.4 Financial situation and poverty	114
6.5 Social network situation	121
6.6 Loss of control and helplessness	127
6.7 Self-esteem	138
6.8 Depression	142
6.9 Alcohol consumption	148
6.10 Psychosomatic disorders	150
6.11 Time experience and future orientation	155
6.12 Perceptions about education	161
7. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS	164
8. CONCLUSION	172
9. REFERENCES	176
APPENDIX I : Interview guideline	189
APPENDIX II: Questionnaire	190

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I can only begin by thanking the unemployed men who made this study possible by providing important information to the benefit of this study.

Next would have to be my supervisor Professor I.E. Plattner for her tireless guidance, motivation and mentoring. I would also like to thank the entire UNAM Psychology Department whose patience I must have tried to the very end.

I will always remain indebted to Tabby Moyo for his endless magnanimity which I will never forget!

May I also thank Eunice, Inamvura and Daphne Willibard, Rachel Sheya and Lydia Povanhu for the collection of my data, Onni Ndangi Iithete, Simeon Amunkete, Peter Mbenzi and Beata Nuujoma for the translations, interpretations and cross checking of the Oshiwambo material. Ms. Panduleni Kali, the Deputy Director for Labour Market Information at the Ministry of Labour for timeously providing me with relevant information regarding Namibia's labour market. I am grateful to Ricky Ngandu for his computer 'wizardry' and Marie Clarke for the 'cosmetic surgery' during the editing of my text.

May I also take the opportunity to thank Professor Barnabas Otaala and Mrs. Laura Otaala for their kind encouragement which I sincerely appreciated.

Lastly may I not forget the Almighty for what were surely his numerous blessings that culminated in this work. All praise be unto you!

DEDICATION

To my Mom and Dad who first taught me the value of education.

I hope to make you proud!

DECLARATIONS

I, Webster Gonzo, hereby declare that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or a part there-of has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

No part of this thesis may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, or by any means (e.g. electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the prior written permission of the author or the University of Namibia in that behalf.

In presenting this thesis, I hereby grant the University of Namibia the right to reproduce it in whole or in part, in any manner or format which the University may deem fit, for any person or institution requiring it for study and research; provided that the University shall waive this right if the whole thesis has been or is being published in a manner satisfactory to the University.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last few decades the issue of unemployment has become a world wide phenomenon (Statt, 1994; Argyle, 1990; Banks & Ullah, 1988). Since the Great Depression of the 1930s there is no such thing as a safe job. Neither developing nor the most industrialised countries in the world can claim full employment. Worldwide public and private sectors have seen huge job cuts particularly since the early 1980s (Statt, 1994). As shown by recent industrial mergers, companies are now more vulnerable to take-over bids with consequent job losses. *"Even the largest Japanese companies are having to drop the famous lifetime guarantee of employment for their staff"* (Statt, 1994:152).

Causes of unemployment are generally manifold and are to be found in factors such as economic restructuring, the decline of heavy industry, or in the invention and application of new technologies such as the silicon chip (Statt, 1994). Robotic technology and computerization have forced the problem of unemployment even more prominently into the forefront (Dunkerley, 1996). Underlying the discussion of the impact of job loss is a closely connected issue that may have even greater long-term significance, namely, the changing nature of work itself. Imperative to note is that highly skilled and professional people are also amongst the ranks of the unemployed.

Developing nations such as Namibia have not been spared from the scourge of unemployment (Odada, Nhuleipo & Mumangeni, 2000). Namibia in particular has a fledgling economy borne out of a history of glaring inequality and a harsh desert physical environment that does not give much room to mass industrialisation and employment. It is therefore not surprising that Namibia is faced with alarming figures of unemployment. Statistical data about the labour force in Namibia show that unemployment has risen steadily from 12.3 % in 1975 to 20.6% in 1984, and then hovered around 20% until 1993 (Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development, 1995). The figures then shot up to 34.5% in 1997 (The Namibia Labour Force Survey 1997). What exacerbates the situation is that currently it is estimated that in the age group of 25 to 35 years, unemployment could be as high as 60% (The Namibian 04/9/2000), an astronomical figure by any standards. In other words, the bulk of the country's able bodied and most productive population is without employment.

The problem of unemployment has tended to be diluted within the politics of the globalisation of economic and social policies. Unemployment has become such a familiar phenomenon which "*... has led to the treating of unemployment almost as a numbers game, whether the current rate is two, three or four million becomes a statistical exercise, sanitized and dehumanized though with political overtones*" (Burnett, 1994:1; cf. also Forrester, 1996). All this happens at the expense of the subjective experience of the individual and through the impact of unemployment on ordinary lives. As a consequence the questions that seem to be neglected are: "*How*

does the individual deal with unemployment?", "how does unemployment affect the individual's family life?", "what kind of coping strategies are engaged by the individual?". Research clearly indicates that unemployment affects the psychological and physical health of those concerned, as will be elaborated in this thesis. The emphasis for any government should be to begin to view the problem of unemployment from an individual's angle, thus nationalising the individual's perspective. After all, a healthy society needs healthy individuals.

The central issue that will be dealt with in this thesis is that of unemployment and its psychological meaning and consequences. There are three reasons for dealing with such a topic in detail, namely: (i) the threat and experience of unemployment is increasingly becoming part of the life of many people worldwide, be they educated or not; (ii) understanding the nature of that experience will not only give us a unique insight into the place of work in a person's life but will equip us on how to better handle unemployment; (iii) finally, despite unemployment being a major problem in Africa, most studies mentioned in literature were conducted in developed countries. However, although unemployment is definitely one of Namibia's foremost national concerns, up to now there has not been an empirical study on the psychological implications of unemployment in Namibia. Thus it is of critical importance to undertake a generally African but particularly Namibian study of such an important issue. Namibians stand to benefit from the findings of such a study which could be used in formulating social policies and perhaps even as legislature for the benefit of unemployed people and the nation as a whole. It is with the above mentioned in mind

that an empirical study was carried out with the **research objective** to investigate the psychological effects of unemployment on people unemployed in an African country.

In order to understand the unique Namibian constellation of unemployment one should take cognisance of the fact that in Namibia unemployed people do not receive unemployment or social welfare benefits. As happens in other African countries, Namibians also leave their rural areas in the hope of making a living in the capital city but instead of work they find poverty (Pendelton & Frayne, 1998). Namibia's recent history of colonisation and the legacy of Apartheid mean that most job seekers are from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. They are therefore less educated than the previously advantaged and do not have sufficient qualifications (if any). Although a few employment agencies are available, they do not cater for unskilled or unqualified people. In addition, job advertisements in the print and other media are not common for people without skills or qualifications. It is therefore common in Namibia that unskilled and unqualified men (not women) wait at the sides of busy roads hoping that someone will pick them up for a casual job on a day-to-day basis. These men were the target group in the present study. In this thesis they will be referred to as the "*street unemployed*". This term is neither meant to be offensive nor derogatory, it is used only for the purposes of easier identification and differentiation from other groups of unemployed people in Namibia.

With regard to the objective of this study, the general **research question** was: What does the situation of Namibia's "street unemployed" entail and what are the psychological repercussions of it?

The study was entrenched within Seligman's '**Theory of Learned Helplessness**' (Seligman, 1975; Abramson, Seligman & Teasdale, 1978). This theory is appropriate for the investigation of the psychological effects of unemployment because it deals with loss of control. In the context of the present study, unemployment can be seen as an objective loss of control because when unemployment rates are as high as in Namibia, an unemployed person has little possibility to impact or contribute (i.e. to control) actively to a change in his situation. Applying Seligman's theory, it can be expected that the unemployed individual might experience his job situation as uncontrollable which could (according to Seligman's theory) result in the experience of personal helplessness and even depression.

The presentation of this thesis will be structured as follows:

Chapter 2 will concentrate on the subject of unemployment in a world where most of the people are expected to work. Against this background, key concepts to the present study such as *work, employment and unemployment* will be defined. The *meaning of work* to the individual and society at large will be discussed and a closer look at *social attitudes towards unemployment* will be presented.

Chapter 3 will focus on the existing *psychological research on unemployment*. This chapter will begin with an insight into the complexities surrounding the psychological investigation of unemployment. This will be followed by specific areas that are thematised in psychological unemployment literature, i.e. the effect of unemployment on psychological well-being and self-esteem, loss of income and poverty, youth unemployment, unemployment and time, the role of the social network, the effect of unemployment on physical health and job-seeking behaviour. With regard to these themes, some models that try to explain the psychological effects of unemployment will be presented and critically analysed.

Chapter 4 will elaborate on the chosen *theoretical framework* for this study. This chapter will briefly describe Seligman's 'Theory of Learned Helplessness' and its reformulation by Abramson et al. (1978) and emphasise the relevance of this theory for the situation of unemployment, particularly in the Namibian context.

Chapter 5 will present the *methodology* applied in obtaining the empirical data for the present research which was designed as a qualitative-quantitative study. The qualitative and quantitative methods that have been chosen for the data gathering and evaluation will thus be described. This chapter is subsequently followed by the *presentation of the empirical results* of this study (**chapter 6**). The results will then be *discussed* in accordance with the theoretical framework and the existing literature on unemployment in **chapter 7**. The thesis will conclude with some *recommendations* that could be considered in further unemployment research in

Namibia, as well as in targeting the specific problems of unemployment in the country (**chapter 8**).

2. UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE WORLD OF WORK

2.1 Work, employment and unemployment

In order to sufficiently look at the problem of unemployment, one needs to juxtapose both unemployment and work (Jahoda, 1982). It is also important to clarify the terms employment, unemployment and non-employment.

Although we often use the terms 'work' and 'employment' interchangeably, the terms are not quite straightforward (Statt, 1994). According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1996:1375) work is defined as "*the use of physical strength or mental power in order to do or make something.*" In contrast, the same dictionary defines employment as "*work, especially in return for regular payment*" (p. 378).

Unemployment is defined as "*the state of being without a paid job*" (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 1996:1301). Statt (1994) defines unemployment as the "*involuntary loss of work*" and according to him being unemployed is "*someone who doesn't have a job and would like one*" (Statt, 1994:149).

People usually confuse unemployment with 'non-employment,' the latter meaning "*people who are not in paid employment and who are not looking for paid employment*" (Statt, 1994:148). This group would include people who are retired,

people who care for children or elderly relatives and people who do not need or want paid employment (Argyle, 1990; Statt, 1994).

The confusion between unemployment and non-employment often results in statistics on unemployment figures which exclude individuals who are not actively seeking work or those looking for part-time work (Solow, 1990). According to Kates, Greiff & Hagen (1990), up to half of those who are out of work may not be accounted for in official unemployment statistics. This issue may also apply to the Namibian unemployment statistics (see above). Forrester (1996) describes how at a certain point in France (she does not say when) at a stroke of a pen (literally and figuratively), the national unemployment decreased by approximately 300 000 simply because someone "*...(removed) from the register those who had worked at least seventy-eight hours a month, i.e. less than two weeks work and with no benefits*" (Forrester, 1996: 3). This is just one example of how economists and politicians continue to spew out and manipulate figures of unemployment at the expense of the individual.

With regard to unemployment figures, Burchell (1992) purports that unemployment research itself has tended to dilute some of the bigger social concerns surrounding the world of work. He postulates that the reason why this may be is that unemployment is a relatively soft target because of its visibility in our societies and through numerous works of research and publications worldwide. Burchell (1992) asserts that unemployment is easily detectable because of the ever ready figures and

statistics which all too often paint pictures of doom and gloom in our societies. The problem, Burchell (1992) reiterates, is that by looking at unemployment as the problem within working societies we neglect the wider spectrum of issues surrounding it (unemployment) i.e. the world of work and its ever changing dynamics.

In order to understand the problem of unemployment one has to look at the meaning of work in today's societies.

2.2 The meaning of work

Work and working fill a central role in our lives, meeting a multitude of emotional, social and psychological needs (Kates et al., 1990). It can provide friendship and support, as well as opportunities for gaining recognition and developing competence, and can help young people separate from their families and enter the adult world (Sarason & Sarason, 1985; Winefield, 1997). In addition to the remuneration which helps individuals provide for themselves and their families, a job can engender a sense of purpose and value, offer opportunities for social contacts and shape a person's identity and level of self-esteem (Jahoda, 1982; Feather, 1990; Argyle, 1990; Statt, 1994). Consequently, most unemployed people wish to return to work and to contribute to their own and their loved ones' livelihood but feel increasingly

alienated and isolated if they are unable to do so. Over time, being workless comes to be equated with being worthless (Kates et al., 1994).

Some theorists suggest that in today's world people's worth on the labour market is calculated in terms of the money they earn through work. We have become so used to this notion that we allow it to dictate our everyday life without even questioning it. *"That is how we ... normally perceive the nature of human work and the causes of social wealth. The desire to have a job and to meet all the costs of living from the income received for this work has become the accepted pattern for most people when making their plans and projecting their hopes for the future"* (Offe & Heinze 1992:1).

The roots of the present meaning of work can most clearly be traced back to the Protestant work ethic, which imposed the view that work is central to society and morally right. While before the Protestant Reformation work was seen as something ignoble, left for the lower classes of society, the followers of Protestantism ennobled work. Idleness and leisure time were disapproved (Furnham, 1996). Such attitudes are still present today and have psychological implications. Through the Protestant work ethic, work has come to be seen as a way of self-actualisation. Even identity and self-esteem in our time are largely defined through work. There is a strong focus on future orientation and on planning behaviour as a result of a protestant belief.

Based on the Protestant work ethic, humanity still regards work as one of the most important aspects of being with the implication that those unable to work or without work are made to feel ostracized through their low status in their society (Forrester, 1996; Fagin & Little, 1984). As a consequence a social stigma is attached to being unemployed and full-time employment is still the norm to protect a person's self-image (Argyle, 1990).

Some theorists question the prevalence of the Protestant work ethic in today's society (McFayden, 1995). However, there are other theorists who maintain that some form of this ethic still exists. Furnham (1985), for instance, found a connection between high Protestant work ethic scores and negative attitudes towards social security recipients in a British study. In other words, people with a strong Protestant work ethic were not in favour of receiving social benefits because they felt they had not worked for it and therefore it would be immoral to accept it because they did not deserve it (Furnham, 1985). Wentworth & Chell (1997) examined American college students in regard to their belief in the Protestant work ethic. It was found that the younger the students the more they believed in the Protestant work ethic. Wentworth & Chell (1997:288) explain this result "*... by the fact that the Protestant work ethic is still being exhorted as the path to follow and the ethic is instilled in many college students at a young age. In addition, it seems to be important for younger students to believe strongly in the Protestant work ethic to justify the delay in gratification normally associated with preparing for a career.*"

Hence, even if only in terms of a generally held perception, the notion of a work ethic does exist and thus unemployed people's perceptions of being negatively judged in our societies are understandable. This becomes evident through the importance we attach to the world of work (Statt, 1994). Forrester (1996) describes how economics in our societies dictates and controls the way we view ourselves based on whether we work or not. Her arguments are in total contrast to the dominant work ethic permeated through today's world of global economics. She admits that changing the intertwinement of work and social life that is so intrinsic in today's world would be difficult, especially in view of the fact that capitalist market oriented societies were borne out of a superb marriage of early capitalism and the Protestant work ethic. This view is also expressed by Thompson in his essay, "Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism" (1967). This essay through the various extracts taken from literary classics from between 1300 to 1700 AD, shows how artificial clock-time, work discipline and industrial capitalism intermarried with Protestantism. It is perhaps through these two authors that we see that our societies seem to reify a certain belief system for social order. Just as the Church, through its dichotomous impressions of heaven and hell and reward and punishment, reigned supreme in this period of the Renaissance, today's societies, perhaps not so religious but certainly capitalist in their outlook, have enough reward and punishment in the views asserted through the equally dichotomous images portrayed of employment and unemployment. Forrester (1999), however, postulates that we are living in the dream of an old world order in which work would be available for every man on earth. She says we should now wake up to the reality of the real world of today and of the

future where there is not and will not be enough work for everybody and hence, we must begin to view our social order differently. However, maybe the old world order still serves capitalist societies and unemployment does the same (cf. also Irvine, 1983). Karl Marx (1967 as referred to by Darity, 1999) pointed out that a constant level of unemployment serves two objectives within capitalism. The first objective is that it keeps those who have employment in check merely from visualisations of the abject poverty faced by the unemployed. The second objective is to have what Marx termed an "industrial reserve army", i.e. a constant pool of unemployed people from which to draw labour as and when needed which keeps the costs of capital minimal.

The importance of work and our relationship to it is taken for granted in small ways and in large, throughout our lives (Statt, 1994). Even small children are socialised into this value system of the world of work from a very young age. This is reflected, for example, in questions routinely asked to small children, such as *'What are you going to be when you grow up?'*. According to Statt (1994), what this question really means is *'What job are you going to do for a living?'*. Likewise, as an adult the question *'What do you do?'* is one we are usually faced with when someone meets us for the first time. Answering this question offers instant clues to income, social status and lifestyle and some idea of how a person will expect to be treated. Certain professions such as medical practitioners or lawyers imply their holders as respectful and successful members of society. Other occupations such as being a mine worker, a fisher man or a shop attendant have a much lower status and its holders are perceived as just 'ordinary' members of society.

Moreover, the role associated with certain work serves many different social and interpersonal functions (Kates et al., 1990). At one level, the employer delegates clearly defined tasks and expectations that are part of a job description or title. These may be accompanied by spoken or unspoken assumptions as to behaviors associated with the position (Kates et al., 1990). At another level, the interpersonal contacts that are an integral part of most jobs offer opportunities to meet psychological needs (Kates et al., 1990). Work roles and their associated behaviors can shape, as well as reflect an individual's internal identity depending on the way in which others respond. Work roles that encourage personal growth or creativity or that bring recognition and respect will enhance a person's self-esteem. Work roles or role behaviors that are demeaning or stultifying can have the opposite effect. Therefore, the loss of the various roles and role activities a job provides is likely to be significant to the study of unemployment.

2.3 Social attitudes towards the unemployed

As a result of the meaning of work in our societies, certain attitudes and prejudices towards unemployment can be expected. Those with hostile attitudes towards the unemployed usually take the assumption that unemployed people could get work if they really wanted it. In other words, it is assumed that unemployed people choose to

be unemployed. As Kelvin & Jarret (1985, as quoted by Winefield, Tiggemann, Winefield and Goldney 1993:11) state:

"In effect, the unemployed individual always seems to be somehow suspect: at best he is seen as probably in part to blame for his unemployment; and even if he is 'genuine' it is thought that he should be kept short, so that he keeps looking for work - otherwise there is the suspicion that he might just sit back and do nothing."

A factor which can contribute to hostile attitudes towards the unemployed is the policy of a government. For example, following a change of government in Australia in 1975, the new government sought to implement a policy of getting tough with the unemployed, many of whom it viewed as 'dole cheats' (Winefield et al., 1993). This view was widely disseminated by the news. Public opinion polls taken in the late 1970s showed that, despite evidence to the contrary, 40 to 50 per cent of Australians thought that the main cause of unemployment was that the unemployed did not want to work (Winefield et al., 1993). Indeed this is an example of how governments through their 'well oiled' state machinery, can manipulate public opinions to their own ends.

Another factor that seems to be important is that some unemployed people, even if only a minority, do cheat the system (in countries that have social benefits) either by deliberately avoiding work or by taking unemployment benefits to which they are not entitled (Winefield et al., 1993). This may result in ambivalent attitudes towards

unemployment as shown by research. Furnham (1983) discovered that a sample of British workers agreed with both sympathetic and negative statements concerning unemployed social security recipients.

Finally, social attitudes to unemployment are influenced by the fact that unemployment is unevenly distributed throughout society: *"...(people) who piously claim that unemployment is a burden which affects everyone are usually not affected by it themselves. It is mainly those who are already disadvantaged upon whom the main burden falls: people in low-paying and insecure jobs, the very young and the oldest in the labor force, people from ethnic or racial minorities, people from among the disabled and handicapped, and generally those with the least skills and living in the most depressed areas"* (Winefield et al., 1993:12). The latter aptly applies to the Windhoek "street unemployed" as described above.

The uneven distribution of unemployment in society may, however, change. As unemployment becomes more widespread almost everyone will be affected by it, directly or indirectly (Winefield et al., 1993). Therefore, attitudes towards the unemployed may also change over time. In this case, elements of new attitudes, which may be more sympathetic because of high unemployment, could be expected to mix with the old ones.

3. PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON UNEMPLOYMENT

Having looked at the meaning of work and the attitudes towards unemployed people in a working society, this chapter will focus on the psychological implications of unemployment. It is predicted that two out of every three people in the world will lose a job at some time or another during their lives (Kates et al., 1990; Argyle, 1990; Banks & Ullah, 1988; Goamab, 1994). For some lucky people the effects of unemployment will be minimal, particularly if they possess marketable skills or live in areas where there are plentiful work opportunities. For those with strong emotional investment in their work or limited financial resources, being unemployed may have a major impact on their activities, relationships, physical and emotional well-being (Kates et al., 1990).

In the following sections I will give an insight into psychological unemployment research as it has been conducted since the 1930s up to today (3.1). Against that background I will emphasise the major aspects of job loss relevant to psychological well-being (3.2). Finally, some of the theoretical approaches which try to explain the psychological effects of unemployment will be presented (3.3).

3.1 Investigating unemployed people

Investigating unemployed people presents many challenges. Research has to include an appreciation of the meaning a job can have for a person. It also has to consider that the effects of unemployment may change over time. In addition, research has to pay attention to the relationship between work and social activities. Moreover, it needs to understand the complexities of the ways in which unemployment can affect an individual and his or her family.

Psychologists have devoted a great deal of attention to the emotional changes that usually occur within the individual following job loss (Winefield et al., 1993). Consequently, numerous studies have been conducted concerning the psychological effects of unemployment.

The most famous and classical study about unemployment is the Marienthal study, conducted by Jahoda, Lazarsfeld & Zeisel in 1930 during the time of the Great Depression (Jahoda et al., 1971). Marienthal was a small industrial village in Austria, built around established textile factories. After the closure of these factories the whole village became unemployed. Jahoda, Lazarsfeld and Zeisel went to Marienthal in order to investigate the affected families from a social-psychological perspective. As an important result, four different types of family responses were recognized and classified, the first of which were called the *unbroken* families. This group of families maintained hope throughout their ordeal, i.e. they held on to future plans and

perspectives whilst showing a general vitality. For example, the fathers in these families continued job-hunting and family activities were maintained. The second group were called the *resigned* families. These families had lost their future orientation and no longer made plans. Their purchases were reduced to basic necessities, although they maintained a relative sense of well-being by caring for their children and the general household. The third group, called the *broken* families, also still tried to look after their children and to keep their households in order. However, they had given up on finding work and they showed much more emotional despair than the second group as well as depression and hopelessness. The fourth group were called the *apathetic* families. This group simply had no future plans and also neglected themselves as well as their children. They were unable to keep the households clean and tidy, and family quarrels frequently occurred. Many of them tried to escape from their misery through alcohol abuse (Jahoda et al., 1973). According to the findings of the Marienthal study, unemployment seemed to lead to an overall "*diminution of expectation and activity, a disrupted sense of time, and a steady decline into apathy through a variety of stages and attitudes*" (Jahoda et al., 1971:2). Hence, the Marienthal study was the first unemployment research conducted by social scientists that brought clear evidence about the psychological effects of unemployment (Fryer, 1992).

Many changes have taken place between the 1930s and our present times. In many countries today there is more social welfare provision and the general levels of health and education have improved, as emphasised by Jahoda (1982). Therefore it could be

expected that unemployment should be *"less catastrophic in its general consequences for both individuals and society"* (Statt, 1994:154). However, the changes Jahoda mentions still say nothing about the individual's subjective experience of unemployment, and in addition do not apply to many countries in the developing world. Unemployment can be viewed as a "critical life event" (Holmes & Rahe, 1967) because it means a major change in personal life circumstances. How a person responds to such a change will depend on the nature of the change, the person's prior life experiences, and on the personal characteristics of the individual such as age, sex, social class, education and previous job experience (O'Brien, 1986).

Researchers have generally focused on diverse aspects of the relationship between unemployment and mental health. It seems that although the world of work has changed dramatically, the psychological effects of unemployment still remain more or less the same, as already found in the 1930s through the Marienthal study. A consistent finding of research on the impact of job loss has been an increase in emotional problems and symptomatology among jobless people (Westcott, Svensson & Zöllner, 1985; Argyle, 1990; Murphy & Athanasou, 1999). The psychological effects of unemployment include increased anxiety, lack of self-confidence, low self-esteem, pessimism, fatalism, hopelessness, depression, alcoholism, apathy, suicide, as well as stress-related psychosomatic disorders such as headaches, stomach ulcers, dermatitis, bronchitis, and heart diseases (Argyle, 1990; Statt, 1994; Creed, Hicks & Machin, 1998). Different variables such as financial stress, social support, length of unemployment, individual characteristics, and coping styles determine the impact of

unemployment on psychological well-being (Feather, 1990; Argyle, 1990; Fryer, 1988; Warr, 1987; O'Brien, 1986).

Different approaches have been applied to measure the psychological consequences of unemployment. They can be summarised into three ways of investigating unemployment. The first is to evaluate subjective reports of unemployed people, as to the changes they perceive and the distress they are experiencing due to unemployment. The second approach in the investigation of unemployment and mental health has been to use validated screening instruments such as the General Health Questionnaire (Murphy & Athanasou, 1999). These instruments identify changes in symptoms but not necessarily their severity. Many recent studies have included scales designed to measure specific symptoms such as anxiety or depression like, for example, the Beck Depression Inventory. However, unemployment researchers have not so far used instruments such as the Diagnostic Interview Schedule or the Present State Examination that might identify the presence of major psychiatric disorders (Murphy & Athanasou, 1999).

There is consistent evidence of decreases in overall life satisfaction, general well-being and self-esteem, and of increase in symptoms of depression. However, few conclusive findings exist as to the possible role of unemployment in the development of more severe psychiatric disorders. Therefore the third approach of investigating unemployment and its psychological effects is to study changes in mental health hospitalization rates, the assumption being that an increase in unemployment figures

would lead to higher hospitalisation rates. While hospitalisation rates fluctuate, it is often unclear whether this fluctuation reflects new cases or re-admissions of individuals with pre-existing problems that have been exacerbated. There may also be little information on the problem or diagnosis leading to the admission. Hospitalization rates depend on many other variables unconnected to job loss. Admittedly there are some limitations to this research approach although a number of studies acknowledge a definite relationship between hospitalisation rates and employment status.

Not surprisingly, the variation in research methodologies and their design has sometimes tended to lead to conflicting findings. Therefore, when examining the psychological studies on unemployment, it is necessary to look at each one as providing a piece of a large puzzle. There are many findings that are either consistent or non-consistent from study to study, but even seemingly contradicting conclusions may prove to be complementary.

Adrian Furnham (1992:200) asserts that *"because of practical issues such as time and money, most social science research is cross-sectional. Yet most researchers want to infer cause, which may be possible in laboratory-based research but is difficult, if not impossible, in interview-based or questionnaire studies"*. To demonstrate the difficulty with causality Furnham further alludes to the paradox that exists in unemployment research, that is whether unemployment is a cause or a consequence of psychological distress (Furnham, 1992). In other words the questions

would be whether losing a job creates new problems for those individuals who are already vulnerable, or whether losing a job leads to multiple life adjustments that in themselves become sources of further stress. Individuals who lose their job may already be struggling to cope with personal or family difficulties, while pre-existing social disadvantages can create additional obstacles to re-entry into the work force. Clearly this is not an either/or-issue. Unemployment can be a predisposing, precipitating, or perpetuating factor in the onset of psychological problems (Creed et al., 1998; Argyle, 1990; Statt, 1994). Furnham further concedes that presently there has been no real conclusive evidence to allay this complexity of unemployment, yet there can only be little doubt that the relationship of the different variables is so intertwined, multifaceted and multicausal (Furnham, 1992:201).

3.2 Unemployment and psychological well-being

The following sections will refer to psychologically relevant aspects of unemployment. Attention will be given to self-esteem, which can be negatively affected by unemployment, as well as to the loss of income and poverty and their impact on psychological well-being. This will be followed by the specific predicaments of youth unemployment. Furthermore, I will concentrate on the issue of time and its relevance to psychological health. The role of the social network in coping with unemployment will also be elaborated upon. Against the background of

the effects of unemployment on psychological well-being, unemployment becomes clear that it can also negatively affect physical health as I will show below. Finally, emphasis will also be given to the debilitating effects unemployment may have on job-seeking behaviour.

3.2.1 The effects of unemployment on self-esteem

"I thought I'd get a job in a couple of weeks, but now it's a couple of years. That's frightening, my confidence is going. When you're unemployed you feel like you've committed a crime somewhere but nobody tells you what you've done. Sometimes I think I'll go barmy. Of course you get depressed, you convince yourself it's you. Sometimes I feel really ashamed" (unemployed machinist as quoted by Kates et al., 1990: 3).

This quotation clearly illustrates how particularly long-term unemployment debilitates the confidence of an individual. It can be assumed that the shame and self-blame which are quite evident in this quotation will have a negative effect on that person's self-esteem.

A publication of the Committee on Psychiatry in Industry in the USA (1982:72/73) came to the conclusion that *"the ability to work is an integral part of a healthy self-esteem, and is essential for the good mental health of most of the population"*. A

sense of worth as a person depends on perceiving oneself as strong and effective, seeing oneself as conforming to ideas of what is right, and being valued by other people. Lane (1997, as referred to by Goldsmith & Veum, 1997) asserts that opinions about the “self” are the most treasured of all our opinions and are a crucial aspect of personality. Goldsmith & Veum (1997) further reinforce this notion by deriving from Rosenberg's (1965) survey instrument on self-esteem. This multidimensional instrument comprises notions of worth, goodness, health, appearance, skills, and social competence. Deficits in one area can be overcome by strengths in another. For Rosenberg, high self-esteem expresses the feeling that one is “good enough”, “a person of worth.” Against this background it can be understood that self-esteem decreases due to loss of work, especially when people have internalised the attitude that work makes one a valuable person as asserted by the Protestant work ethic (as described above in chapter 2.).

In the case of job loss the person might experience this as a threat to him/herself. *"Our experience in industry and with patients suggests that those who lose their functional role as workers may behave as if their society no longer values them. Because they accept that as true, they suffer a consequent loss in the perception of their value in their families and to themselves"* (Committee on Psychiatry in Industry, 1982:5).

Diminished self-esteem has been a central finding in almost every study of workers who lose their jobs. Goldsmith and Veum (1997), for instance, investigated the

relationship between unemployment and self-esteem using data drawn from a longitudinal survey on youth in the USA. They found that the longer young people are unemployed, the lower their self-esteem becomes. A reason for this might be that long-term unemployment signals a loss of control. Lefcourt (1982) suggests that the belief of being in charge of events that are shaping one's life, contributes to positive feelings about self-worth. As a consequence, losing charge of one's life through the event of unemployment might affect self-esteem negatively.

Many studies of the psychological effects of unemployment have concentrated on blue-collar workers but it has also been found that professionals experience even more severe psychological problems (Winefield et al., 1993). This could be attributed to the fact that white-collar workers are more exposed to the corporate image of their employment and also largely centre their lives more around work. Therefore, in the case of job loss, they are likely to lose some of their self-identity which could also affect self-esteem.

Unemployment, especially male unemployment, has been known to affect men's gender identity by ceasing their traditional role of breadwinner. Kenneth W. Brown (1995:2) recounts his ordeal as an unemployed male: *"... I find it increasingly difficult to remain hopeful, positive and confident. Prolonged unemployment can do a number on your soul and your spirit ... Being unemployed also makes me question my manhood. I was brought up to be a responsible household member who would carry my share of the weight. But now I am no longer keeping my end of the bargain.*

... Everyday I must remind myself that being without a job does not make me any less of a man."

This impressive quotation (by an American man) is also a reminder about the Namibian situation in which traditional gender roles are still largely prevalent. Owing to the high unemployment rates, however, it has become common that the mother (usually working as a domestic worker) is often the only provider of an income in a household. One wonders how this affects the concerned men's self-esteem.

In order to understand the psychological effects of unemployment, socio-economic factors as well as the loss of income also have to be taken into consideration (Kates et al., 1990).

3.2.2 Unemployment and loss of income

Studies have shown that one of the greatest sources of personal and family problems is the shortage of money. Unemployment usually means the loss of an income. In most developed countries there are formal support systems for unemployed people although this does not necessarily reduce the stress experience of unemployment.

Depending on a country's unemployment policy, unemployment benefits (if available) only last for a certain period of time. Long-term unemployed people or those who do not qualify for unemployment benefits (because they have not worked long enough to have paid a sufficient contribution into the unemployment benefit fund) may become recipients of social welfare if provided by the country. It is, however, quite interesting to note that unemployed people who are living on welfare are at significantly higher risk of depression and disease than those who receive unemployment benefits (Lang, 1995). *"While both unemployment and welfare benefits help relieve economic deprivation during unemployment, only unemployment subsidies have the psychological benefit of protecting against depression, regardless of household income, socioeconomic status, and length of unemployment"* (Lang 1995:1). Lang's explanation is that one's earned benefits act as an insurance in times of unemployment, thus when receiving these benefits, one does not have the heavy feeling of being a social burden. Therefore unemployment benefits reduce the risk of depression. The apparent stigmatisation attached to social welfare benefits is one of the major reasons highlighted as a factor contributing to mental health problems for unemployed people (Lang 1995).

In addition to the social stigma, the unavailability of money would also have to be considered when investigating the psychological repercussions of unemployment. Ullah (1990) emphasises that the role played by financial hardship has not yet received enough attention. Some researchers have suggested that low income may

contribute indirectly to ill-health through affecting other variables known to be associated with poor physical and/or psychological health.

Fryer (1986), for example, states that low income in general limits family, social and leisure activities as those which are future orientated. Lack of money during unemployment may be expected to lead to a reduction in social and entertainment activities, and this has been found to be associated with higher General Health Questionnaire scores (Warr, 1984). In a study with two samples of unemployed Australian youths, Ullah (1990) found that high financial strain caused lower levels of structured activity which contributed to poor mental health. In other words, those people who experienced the greatest financial burden during unemployment tended to be less active in their leisure pursuits which led to poorer psychological health (Ullah, 1990). Rowley & Feather (1987) report a significant correlation between financial strain and time structure among their samples of unemployed Australian men. Those people with the greatest amount of financial strain also reported less time structure in their normal day-to-day activities.

Low income may also be associated with a reduction in the purposeful and goal-directed behavior that Jahoda suggests is a function of employment and beneficial to mental health (Jahoda, 1982; Feather, 1987). Yet there is also evidence that those unemployed people experiencing the most economic hardship make the greatest efforts to find a job (Ullah, 1990). When unsuccessful, however, these efforts may lead to higher depression scores and ill-health.

Theories about unemployment have in common an emphasis on factors that influence the genesis of poor psychological health during unemployment (cf. chapter 3.3). They however, vary in the role attributed to financial variables in causing poor mental health. According to Jahoda (1982) for example, the loss of latent functions of employment rather than the loss of payment causes psychological disintegration. In contrast, Fryer (1986) emphasizes the psychological burdens of material poverty and hardship. Warr (1987) states that availability of money affects the opportunity for personal control, skill use, and physical security. He concluded that low pay could be related to a person's locus of control and can contribute to low context-free mental health (Warr, 1987). Interestingly, an explanation of how income might be directly related to mental health is not offered by these authors. However, Warr (1987) pointed out that since most studies had not controlled for the effects of variables correlated with income (e.g. occupational level), it is not clear that income makes an independent (i.e. direct) contribution to mental health over and above the influence of other variables. There is, therefore, some confusion over the relative contributions of psychological and economic factors toward psychological ill-health during unemployment.

On the whole, researchers have failed to distinguish between direct and indirect effects of income on psychological health. One reason for this is that studies differ in the way the relationship between financial income and psychological health has been conceptualized. Two important conceptual distinctions could be outlined. The first is

the distinction between the direct and indirect effects of income on psychological health. The second is the distinction between objective and subjective levels of financial deprivation. Another reason for these distinctions lies in the practical difficulties involved in investigating the relationship between financial income and psychological health. A proper investigation of the psychological effects of income reduction following job loss would require a measure of the psychological states before and after the onset of unemployment. Even when this would have been achieved, there would still be the problem in that job loss and income reduction are confounded. Since both occur at the same time it is not possible to determine their relative and independent contributions to psychological deterioration.

3.2.3 Unemployment and poverty

For many unemployed people unemployment means poverty. This is more so in a country like Namibia (cf. Pendleton & Frayne, 1998) where the unemployed do not receive unemployment or social welfare benefits. Lack of money characterises the life of Namibia's "street unemployed" in particular, as will be shown in chapter 5.

Poverty not only denies a person the most basic of needs such as food, clothing and shelter, but also binds one into inactivity (Statt, 1994). If one has no money at all then one cannot participate in social activities. It is difficult if not impossible for poor people to integrate into a social order which denies respect to them, as Forrester

(1996) emphasised. Poor people are regarded as undesirable and are forced to live in suburbs, in "*ostracized places*" where they have been "*put aside*" (Forrester). She further explicates that "*'social exclusion' is ascribed to differences of colour, nationality, religion and culture, which supposedly have nothing to do with market laws. But the socially excluded are the poor, as it has been always and forever*" (1996:53). What makes this even worse is that the poor people are faced with prejudices against them which go even so far that they are blamed for living in such areas (Forrester, 1996). This clearly applies to Namibia's "street unemployed" who are often chased away as unwanted vagrants suspected of committing various crimes or offences.

Poverty not only leads to disrespect and social exclusion, it also affects the psychological state of minds of individuals. It creates the experience of personal insecurity and "*reduces one's sense of personal control*" (Statt, 1994:157) and therefore has a negative impact on psychological well-being. For example, future orientation is regarded as an expression of psychological well-being. However, to plan the future is a luxury for those whose future is not ensured through work and regular income. Forrester (1996:54) quotes a person who was asked "*How do you see yourself in ten years' time?*" and whose reply was: "*I don't even see myself at the end of this week!*". A reduced time perspective due to unemployment and poverty, as expressed in this quotation, is especially negative for youth who are just at the beginning of a life career.

3.2.4 Youth unemployment

In Namibia, due to lack of research, not much information is available about the demographic distribution of unemployment. As mentioned before, the unemployment rate amongst the age group of 25 to 35 years is estimated to be 60% (The Namibian, 4/9/2000). Against such figures we can assume that the unemployment rate amongst youth is as high or even higher; a problem not just for the economic development of the country but also very relevant in terms of developmental psychology.

Developmental psychologists recognise the transition from school to work as a significant phase in the maturation of young people (Kaplan, 1998). This transition represents their entrance into the adult world. For the vast majority, their first job means that they are no longer completely dependent on their parents financially. They are requested to perform on the job which also includes certain responsibilities such as being punctual, industrious, competent, socially agreeable and accountable (Winefield et al., 1993; Hess, Petersen & Mortimer, 1994; Caplan, 1998).

In countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) the *"proportion of adolescents who are unemployed is typically two to three times greater than that of adults"* (Hess et al., 1994:5). In these countries reasons for youth unemployment are seen in the facts, that a) the demographic number of young

people entering the job market is on the increase, b) based on social policies youth employees have to be paid wages which may exceed their productive value to employers, c) their education and training is often insufficient, and d) generally poor economic conditions make youth suffer more than adults (Hess et al., 1994). Such reasons could probably also be applied to the Namibian context (cf. Odada et al., 2000).

Several studies have been conducted to thematize the specific problems of unemployment amongst young people (cf. Winefield & Tiggemann, 1991). School leavers who enter the job market immediately experience an improvement in their psychological well-being while those who become unemployed experience a significant deterioration in it (Feather & O'Brien, 1986; Statt, 1994). This indicates the psychological importance of employment for young people.

Winefield et al. (1993) conducted a longitudinal study on youth unemployment and its psychological impact investigating 3000 South Australian school leavers throughout a whole decade, from 1980 to 1989. The study brought evidence that unemployment among youth leads to lower self-esteem and increases emotional depression, particularly in the case of long term unemployment. It was reported that such youth who were still unemployed seven months after leaving school were less satisfied with themselves and felt more depressed, unhappy, and lonely (cf. also Winefield, 1997).

Other studies on youth unemployment have shown a negative impact of unemployment on identity. This was shown as a result of the lack of opportunities for personality and identity formation which are usually provided by work experience (Hess et al., 1994). Unemployed youth show significantly higher rates of anxiety, anger, helplessness, guilt and shame than those over the age of 20 (Hess et al., 1994). Psychological research on youth unemployment also identified time as an important dimension in the experience of unemployment as will be shown in the following section.

3.2.5 Unemployment and time

Negative psychological consequences of unemployment amongst youth have been shown to be related to unstructured and directionless free time. Because of the lack of financial resources, unemployed youth are often excluded from the leisure activities assumed by their working peers. Hence, not only are the young unemployed people alienated from their structured world of work but also from the social activities they have been accustomed to (Hess et al., 1994).

Winefield et al. (1993; cf. also Winefield & Tiggemann, 1992) in their longitudinal study on school leavers found that the unemployed school leavers spent their spare time less productively than those employed. It was found that for the unemployed, time spent doing nothing was most often correlated with negative well-being.

Ironically a large amount of "free time" becomes a problem for many unemployed people, although it may appear to be a luxury for those employed who complain about never having enough time for anything. Free time "*oppresses them <the unemployed>, ruins the hours, and becomes their enemy*" (Forrester, 1999:56).

As pointed out by Jahoda (1982) unemployment means the loss of a pre-given time structure. As a consequence of unemployment the individual has a lot of free time at his/her disposal which one has to learn to organise constructively. This can become a major cause of stress for the individual concerned. The relevance of time has already been emphasised through the findings of the Marienthal study. Jahoda et al. (1971) described how the time structure of the unemployed slowly disappeared and how they stopped planning their time: "*Now that they are no longer under any pressure, they undertake nothing new and drift gradually out of an ordered existence into one that is undisciplined and empty*" (Jahoda et al. 1971:66). This however, referred mainly to the men in the Marienthal study whilst the women still maintained a time structure based on household duties. "*For the men, the division of the days into hours has long since lost all meaning. ... Getting up, the midday meal, going to bed, are the only remaining points of reference. In between, time elapses without anyone really knowing what has taken place*" (Jahoda et al. 1971:67). The less that happened in Marienthal, the more the impression of an abundance of time occurred throughout the town. "*Nothing is urgent anymore; they <the unemployed> have forgotten how to hurry*" (Jahoda et al., 1971:66).

As shown by research unemployment can result in hopelessness, resignation and depression. Such emotional states make it difficult to maintain a time consciousness which includes goals, plans and wishes for the future. When duties are reduced it is necessary to readjust one's planning according to the time available. However, if a person stops planning, it is possible to lose a sense of future orientation. A vicious cycle may ensue: the more time and planning becomes meaningless due to a lack of varied activity, the more the person may become caught up in the monotonous cyclic manner in which time passes. Time seems to 'melt away' and future orientation diminishes.

People's difficulties in determining their time could also be linked to an industrialised way of life. From early childhood, kindergarten, school and the work place people become used to externally determined time structures. When a person is suddenly confronted with joblessness and therefore a lack of structured time this person may find it difficult to occupy him/herself throughout the whole day, especially after many years of formal employment (Plattner, 1999).

One could assume that unemployed people would appreciate the sudden abundance of time to spend with their family and friends. However, not all of them feel comfortable within their social network as will be shown in the next section.

3.2.6 Unemployment and the social network

Research has shown that support from the social network has an obvious impact on how the unemployed cope with their situation (Statt, 1994); "*... informal support systems such as friends and relatives, can buffer against the negative effects of unemployment*" (Lang, 1995:1). Amongst other results it was found that "*... unemployed youngsters who felt they were receiving support from family, friends, and community social services were likely to have a more positive and optimistic orientation toward the future*" (Hess et al., 1994:16).

Social support is a crucial issue of unemployment which has been investigated particularly since the 1980s (Sarason & Sarason, 1985). Social support can be differentiated into emotional support, instrumental support, informational support and appraisal support provided by relatives, friends and others relevant to the unemployed individual (House, 1981). An approach often mentioned in literature is that of Cobb (1976) who emphasised the cognitive aspect of social support. He defined social support as the information conveyed to a person that s/he a) is being cared for and loved, b) receives acknowledgement and esteem, and c) is part of a network of communication and mutual duties.

Social resources are assumed to reduce negative consequences of stressful events and by so doing, contribute to the maintenance of psychological as well as physical health (Sarason & Sarason, 1985).

However, research has also brought evidence that the social network of the unemployed in particular can face a number of problems. For instance, several studies have found that *"unemployed youth are likely to experience decreased family social support and increased family conflict and tensions"* (Hess et al., 1994:16). Unemployed men often perceive their situation as a loss of their social status which may lead to them avoiding contact with friends (Argyle, 1990). Thus the potential of social support is reduced. In addition, men's position of power within marriage and the family as a whole is consequently affected (Statt, 1994).

Several empirical studies have proven that not only is the male head of the family negatively affected, but so are the rest of the family members. Juke & Rosenberg (1993) refer to the study on children of unemployed household members whose responses to a parent's dismissal vary dependent on age, personal characteristics, life circumstances and family dynamics. Jones (1992) reviews the literature on wives' reactions to their husband's unemployment. Two important results are that firstly women with unemployed husbands report high levels of depression, and secondly that unemployment increases marriage conflicts. It has not been established, however, whether this conflict could lead to divorce (Jones, 1992).

Unemployment not only leads to family problems but can also negatively affect physical health.

3.2.7 The effects of unemployment on physical health

Changes in physical health amongst unemployed people have been noted through both the presence of illness or symptoms of illness and an increased utilization of health services (Kates et al., 1990).

Studies that have measured utilisation of health services amongst unemployed people have reported an increase in their frequency of visits to family physicians. More frequent visits to a family physician may, aside from health problems also represent attempts to find additional help or support to deal with the problems being faced. Due to physical symptoms greater limitation on daily activities have been reported for both the unemployed themselves and their spouses (Fagin & Little, 1984; D'Arcy, 1986; Kates et al., 1990).

Fagin & Little (1984) found that there was likely to be an increase in 'psychosomatic' symptoms among both unemployed workers and their spouses, and more behavioral problems in their children. The authors postulated that these symptoms might be maintained because *"it is better (more acceptable) to be sick and unemployed than healthy and unemployed for a job-less man in our society"* (Fagin & Little, 1984:117). The authors identified the meaning of a job, perceptions of societal attitudes toward unemployment, financial pressures, job opportunities, marital support, and the ability to occupy time as being important factors that

contribute to the physical and emotional well-being of the unemployed and their families.

While pre-existing symptoms may become more debilitating, other outcomes have been described. Fagin & Little (1984) examined the impact of unemployment on the health of members of 22 families in England and identified several possible courses. Pre-existing health problems of unemployed males usually deteriorated, but in some cases they improved. This improvement occurred if the original health problem was a manifestation of stress or of dissatisfaction with the job that had been lost, or if good health could facilitate job search.

Warr, Jackson & Banks (1988) tested unemployed men of different age groups regarding their general health. They found that the health of men between 40 and 49 years of age suffered the most, followed by the group of 30 to 39 years. The older and younger age groups showed significantly better health than these two groups. The younger age group felt more optimism about finding a job due to a lack of experience with the reality of the labour market whilst the general feeling amongst the older age group was that of acceptance of unemployment as their transition to retirement.

Interesting to note is that many of the reported changes in the physical health of unemployed people are similar to those experienced by individuals at times of stress or crisis. Such typical changes are, for example, increases in blood pressure or serum

cholesterol levels (Miles, 1987, as referred to by Kates et al., 1990). It is therefore no surprise that a frequent long-term effect of unemployment is an increase in the likelihood of developing cardiovascular problems (Moser, Fox & Goldblatt, 1986; Argyle, 1990). Kates et al. (1990) suggested that a 1% increase in unemployment could lead to a 2% increase in cardiovascular mortality rates over a three year period. They based their suggestion on a study conducted by Brenner (1987, as referred to by Kates et al., 1990). Brenner reviewed the correlation between cardiovascular disease mortality rates and unemployment rates in nine industrialized countries between 1954 and 1978. Using a multivariate analysis Brenner was able to control for the effects of smoking and animal fat consumption, both of which increase the risk of heart disease. The author found a positive association between unemployment and increased heart disease mortality in all nine countries.

Another study of importance in this area is the longitudinal study conducted by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys in the United Kingdom (Moser et al., 1986). It compared mortality patterns of 6000 unemployed workers, aged 15-64, with a larger sample of employed individuals, drawn from the general population, over a 10-year period beginning in 1971. It was found that unemployed males had a significantly higher overall (standardised) mortality rate of 137, compared to the national mean of 100. Even when socio-economic class and housing tenure were considered, a 20 - 30% increase in mortality rate among the unemployed still remained. These figures were higher for younger and middle-aged men and could not be explained by other demographic characteristics.

Such results clearly indicate a relationship between psychological well-being and physical health in general, and within the situation of unemployment in particular. So far we have seen that unemployment can be regarded as a potentially stressful life-event that affects the person's emotional, cognitive and physical states. However, it can also affect a person's job-seeking behaviour.

3.2.8 Unemployment and job-seeking behaviour

"People whose psychological well-being is low are less likely to be offered jobs and/or are more likely to be sacked" (Headley, 1997:1). The psychological effects of unemployment on an individual's general well-being have been known to affect job-seeking behaviour (Feather, 1992; Landy, 1989). Low self-esteem, self-blame and lack of confidence as a result of unemployment can negatively affect the outcome of job-seeking behaviour. For example, in a job interview the candidate may not assert him/herself in a positive manner which could reveal his/her potential. Dodey (1992:277), through a longitudinal study with Dutch technical college graduates, found that *"less psychologically distressed graduates were more likely to become employed than more distressed graduates."* What is clear here is that unemployed people could get stuck in a vicious cycle: i.e. the longer they stay unemployed the lower their self-esteem may become and therefore the less likely they are to perform well in job interviews, and so on. Ullah (1990) found that those unemployed who are

most actively engaged in job seeking tend to experience higher levels of depression and general psychological distress. This can lead to another vicious cycle: the more distressed the unemployed person is, the more s/he is likely to be unsuccessful in finding a job and therefore the more depressed and distressed s/he becomes, and so on.

Feather (1990) draws upon the Expectancy-Value Theory in order to analyse depressive responses to unemployment and job-seeking behaviour. According to the Expectancy-Value Theory, a person's actions are related to the perceived attractiveness or aversiveness of the expected outcomes. Through a study on job seeking behaviour, Feather (1990:199) illustrated that "*... low expectations of finding a job, reflected in feelings of hopelessness and pessimism, <which> may also be linked with feelings of helplessness about one's potential for changing outcomes.*" High expectations of finding a job on the other hand can "*be linked to beliefs that one has some control over outcomes and can change them for the better*" (Feather, 1990:199). Depending on the expectations and beliefs a person has he/she might behave differently in the job-seeking approach.

Against that background many intervention and training programmes have been developed to assist unemployed people by giving them skills for job-searching. Amundson (1996) describes a set of strategies used by employment counsellors to support clients looking for jobs. The applied approach focuses on a change in the clients' subjective perspective ("*reframing*") regarding themselves and the labour

market. The clients should explore career possibilities in order to generate career options and to come up with concrete plans for actions (Amundson, 1996). Another example of assistance in job-seeking behaviour is "The Employment Support Network Programme" (Davies, 1996). This programme focuses on the improvement of self-confidence levels in job-searching. The idea behind the programme is that unemployed people meet others in the same situation, and that through their interactions they learn to *"move away from the paralysing effect of self-blame into mobilizing their energies toward creating changes in their lives"* (Davies, 1996:6). Proudfoot & Guest (1996) applied the principles of cognitive-behavioural therapy in a training programme for job-seekers among long-term unemployed people. Their training programme led to significant improvements in mental health. Interesting to note however, was that the benefits tended to dissipate after a three month period.

Creed et al. (1998) assert that only a few studies are available which have evaluated the psychological outcomes of training based interventions. Reductions of psychological distress as well as negative consequences such as a decline in social support or participants perceiving even less control over their lives through the training programmes can be observed (cf. for a review Creed et al., 1998). In a longitudinal study Creed et al. (1998) investigated training courses offered to improve occupational skills and personal development regarding their outcomes for psychological well-being, attitude to work and life-situation. An interesting finding was that immediate benefits were apparent in variables dealing with well-being and attitude towards work. Notably however, most of the improvements in life-

satisfaction and employment expectations did not persist. Creed et al. (1998) further maintain that training interventions which include personal development and/or occupational-skills have been known to improve the well-being of some unemployed in the short term, and that these results may persist following the end of the course or intervention. However, there is little evidence to suggest whether such interventions operate to change other moderating variables, such as social support, financial strain, and use of community resources which have not been adequately investigated.

3.3. Models to explain psychological effects of unemployment

Research has clearly established that unemployment can cause the jobless individual to experience poor mental health (Feather, 1985; O'Brien, 1986; Warr, 1987; Kates et al., 1990; Murphy & Athanasou 1999). The question is: Why this is so? A number of possible explanations have been advanced.

Probably the most prominent approach to explain the psychological effects of unemployment has been provided by Jahoda (1982). Jahoda argues that poor mental health as a result of unemployment is caused by the removal of the 'latent' functions of organized wage labour, which: a) includes a pregiven structure of time, b) extends social horizons, c) delivers possibilities of collective working, d) determines status and identity, and e) makes activity necessary. Therefore the loss of work means the

loss of these functions (Jahoda, 1982; Furnham, 1996). Several unemployment researchers have based their work on Jahoda's model, some of whom have expanded on it. For instance, Fagin & Little (1984) also focus on these functions of work and in addition emphasise that work is an opportunity to develop skills and creativity, as well as a source of a sense of purpose, income and of control, which get lost during unemployment.

Another model often mentioned in literature is Warr's (1987) so-called 'vitamin model of mental health' which tries to account for the differences in well-being experienced between the employed and unemployed. Warr assumes that mental health is *"to be influenced by the environment in a manner analogous to the effect of vitamins on physical health"* in the same way as vitamins are *"important for physical health up to but not beyond a certain level"* (Warr, 1987:9). Like vitamins to the body, certain environmental factors when absent can cause impairment in mental health while when present beyond a required level can either be of no further benefit or, as in the case of some vitamins, could even become harmful. Warr differentiates between nine environmental features ("vitamins") which are assumed to be associated with mental health and resulting from being employed. These are: opportunity for control, opportunity for skill use, externally generated goals, variety, environmental clarity, availability of money, physical security, opportunity for interpersonal contact, valued social position. Warr assumes that these nine environmental categories are all conducive to better mental health. Low levels of these features are depicted as *"particularly harmful and those in the middle range*

are shown as having a constant beneficial effect on mental health ..." (Warr 1987:9/10). The nine features overlap and are not independent. For instance, higher status positions usually include larger incomes, and more personal control may include with it a greater opportunity for skill use. Closer analysis of Warr's list reveals that it overlaps with Jahoda's (1982) latent functions of work.

Warr (1987) emphasises that a person who loses a job is usually faced with a situation of multiple losses, and that the overall effect of these losses may be cumulative. Whilst the impact of any one loss by itself may not be as severe as 'bereavement', the initial process of adaptation and the stages of adjustment during unemployment may be similar to a grieving process (Warr, 1987). Proudfoot & Guest (1996), who based their work on Warr's model, pointed out that further losses as a direct result of losing one's job may be encountered over a lengthy period of time but their implications may not be fully appreciated until many weeks after the job has been lost. Such losses could include the loss of social contact with former work colleagues and/or other cumulative benefits arising from such contact.

In as much as Jahoda and Warr's models present a plausible explanation to the psychological effects of unemployment, the question still remains: Why are there individual differences to unemployed people's psychological responses to job loss? In other words these models do not necessarily explain why certain people experience more psychological problems than others do, i.e. the individual differences in the occurrence of psychological effects and in their severity. Another

problem with these models is that they are based on the premise of people who have worked before and subsequently lost their jobs. They therefore do not necessarily apply to unemployed people who have never been employed as is often the case with youth unemployment. This also applies to countries such as Namibia where unemployment rates are extremely high and therefore even some adults have never been employed as this study will show. This is the reason why I have chosen Seligman's theory of learned helplessness (Abramson et al., 1978) for my research on Namibia's "street unemployed" as will be described in the following chapter.

4. "LEARNED HELPLESSNESS" - A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE PSYCHOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN NAMIBIA

As shown above, a number of studies have proven the psychological effects of unemployment and theoretical models have tried to explain the link between job loss and psychological well-being. In order to investigate the psychological repercussions of unemployment amongst Namibia's "street unemployed", and to understand and interpret the results, I applied Seligman's "Theory of Learned Helplessness" (Seligman, 1975) and its reformulation (Abramson et al., 1978). Whilst this theory was not developed to deal with unemployment per se, it does however, deal with certain issues which are of high relevance to the situation of unemployment. These issues are 'uncontrollability', 'generalisation' and 'causal attribution', and through them Seligman's theory explains motivational, cognitive and emotional deficits as well as depression which are often observed amongst unemployed people (as described above).

In this chapter I will briefly present Seligman's theory and its reformulation and then apply it to the situation of unemployment with particular reference to the Namibian context.

4.1 Uncontrollability - the basis of “learned helplessness”

The cornerstone of Seligman's theory is based on the uncontrollability of either an event itself or the outcome of an event. An event or outcome is said to be *“uncontrollable for an individual when the occurrence of the outcome is not related to his <the person's> responding. That is, if the probability of an outcome is the same whether or not a given response occurs, then the outcome is independent of that response”* (Abramson et al., 1978:51). The assumption made is that when a person is faced with an outcome that is independent of his/her responses, s/he *learns* that the outcome is independent of his/her responses (Seligman, 1975). Prolonged failure to control important outcomes will eventually result in the generalised expectation that such outcomes are uncontrollable. This will lead to helplessness.

Seligman defines helplessness as *“the psychological state that frequently results when events are uncontrollable”* (Seligman, 1975:9). Seligman developed his theory after a lengthy series of laboratory experiments with animals as well as with human beings. In certain situations of unpleasantness the experimental group could stop the unpleasantness with a particular response (controllable situation) whilst in other

situations they could not (uncontrollable situation). Significant to note was that subjects which had previously learned how to avoid the unpleasantness mostly sought ways of avoidance in uncontrollable situations, whereas subjects which had previously been exposed to uncontrollable events resigned to the unpleasantness with obvious signs of helplessness. Interestingly, the latter group did not attempt to avert the unpleasantness even in situations where it could have been avoided through a particular response, i.e. these respondents *generalised* their previous experience of uncontrollability to their present situation and therefore did very little or nothing at all to change their new situation. Seligman's studies have revealed that the experience of loss of control will be generalised towards other life situations (even when control is possible), particularly when the loss of control continues for a long time. In other words, whatever we have learnt from a particular situation will, if repeated often enough, be generalized as the result thereafter. This is what Seligman termed "*learned helplessness*".

Seligman further found that "learned helplessness" or the expectation that outcomes will be uncontrollable, produced motivational, cognitive and emotional deficits within the individual. According to Seligman, these deficits are a result of learning: when a person experiences an event in which the probability of the outcome is the same whether or not s/he responds, learning takes place. People who experience uncontrollable outcomes will later tend not to make responses to control that outcome (Seligman, 1975; Abramson et al., 1978). Thus, the expectation that outcomes are uncontrollable will result in a reduced desire or motivation to try to

control them. Cognitively, it will produce a belief in the futility of responding and in the difficulties of learning that responding succeeds. *“Learning that an outcome is independent of a response makes it more difficult to learn, later on, that responses produce that outcome”* (Seligman, 1975:51). Response-outcome independence is learned actively, and like any other active form of learning, interferes with learning about contingencies that contradict it. Thus, the cognitive deficits are applied in interference with new learning. The expectation that outcomes are uncontrollable will result in a reduced ability to recognise those that are controllable, and hence impair problem solving (Abramson et al., 1978). Emotional deficits occur when the failure to control important outcomes is experienced as painful or traumatic and such failure will then produce anxiety.

Because motivational, cognitive and emotional deficits as found with helplessness can similarly be observed amongst depressed people, Seligman regards "learned helplessness" as the basis for developing depression. One of the major criticisms of Seligman's theory was that it could not explain why in certain cases uncontrollability and experience with helplessness leads to depression and not in others. The original theory was thus subsequently modified in order to account for these individual differences (Abramson et al., 1978).

4.2 Causal attribution - a central theme in Seligman's reformulated theory of learned helplessness

Consistent with Seligman's original theory (1975), the reformulated theory of learned helplessness regards a person's expectation of noncontingency between response and outcome to be the crucial determinant of the symptoms of learned helplessness. However, in their reformulation, Abramson et al. (1978) postulate that mere exposure to uncontrollability is not sufficient to render a person helpless, rather the person must come to *expect* that outcomes are uncontrollable in order to exhibit helplessness. Abramson et al. (1978) referred to Bandura (1977) who elaborated that even if a person is assured of his/her capabilities she might give up trying them when s/he expects his/her behavior to have no effect on an unresponsive environment. According to Bandura it is possible for humans to stop aspiring when the required behaviour lacks a sense of efficacy in achieving the outcome.

With regard to the expectation of uncontrollability, Abramson et al. (1978) differentiate between *universal* and *personal helplessness*. In other words, they distinguish between cases in which outcomes are uncontrollable for all people (universal helplessness) and cases in which they are uncontrollable only for some people (personal helplessness). According to the reformulated theory of learned helplessness, situations in which subjects believe that they cannot solve solvable problems are instances of personal helplessness. Alternatively, situations in which

subjects believe that neither they nor relevant others could solve the problem are instances of universal helplessness (Abramson et al., 1978). Considering the high numbers of unemployment in Namibia one could assume that many people experience 'universal' helplessness because the individual person has indeed little possibility to 'control', i.e. solve the problem of unemployment.

Against the background of this differentiation between universal and personal helplessness Abramson et al. (1978) integrated the concept of "*causal attribution*" (Heider, 1944; Weiner, 1986) into the theory of learned helplessness. The reformulated theory assumes that when people are unable to control outcomes they would ask themselves *why* they are unable to do so. While seeking an answer, an individual would apply three dimensions of causal attribution:

Firstly, when a person is confronted with an uncontrollable situation s/he could assume an *external* or *internal causal attribution*:

- Suppose a person loses his job. He utilizes all his resources to get another job. Nothing he does, however, gets him another job. Eventually he comes to believe that he will not get a job because there are just not enough jobs for every one in Namibia. He subsequently gives up trying to find a job and exhibits signs of helplessness. This example fits the specification of *universal* helplessness and *external* causal attribution as explicated by Abramson et al. (1978). In this case the person believes that the course of his job seeking is independent of all his efforts

as well as of the efforts of relevant other people (such as friends, relatives who could assist in finding a job).

- On the other hand, suppose an unemployed person tries very hard to find a job. She is well educated, has taken remedial courses to expand her knowledge and has sufficient working experience. Despite this, she still fails to find a job. The person comes to believe that it is her fault that she does not find a job and subsequently perceives herself as incompetent and not good/qualified enough for the job market. She gives up trying to find a job and shows signs of helplessness. This would be an example of *personal* helplessness and *internal* causal attribution.

Another concept used by Abramson et al. (1978) in the reformulation of the theory of learned helplessness is Rotter's "locus of control" (Rotter, 1966; 1975). This concept is based on the assumption that people's beliefs about causality could easily be explained along the lines of 'locus of control', i.e. the expectation about the possibility of controlling outcomes. According to this concept, people with an internal causal attribution tend toward the belief that a result depends on their own effort (*internal locus of control*) and those with an external causal attribution regard outcomes as dependent on external factors such as luck or fate or other factors (*external locus of control*). Accordingly, an unemployed person with an internal locus of control would believe that it is up to his/her own efforts whether or not a job can be found whilst a person with an external locus of control would believe that finding a job would depend on circumstances out of his/her influence.

The second dimension of causal attribution a person could assume, as mentioned by Abramson et al. (1978), is the *stable-unstable* dimension. This dimension entails whether a person perceives the cause of an outcome as consistent (stable) or as inconsistent (unstable). For example, a person who cannot find a job might expect that the unemployment situation in Namibia will not change and therefore he will never find a job (stable attribution); or the person might expect that his unemployment situation is temporary (unstable attribution) and therefore he expects to become employed sooner or later.

A third dimension of causal attribution considered by Abramson et al. (1978) refers to whether a person believes the cause of an outcome is *global* or *specific*. For example, a person unsuccessful in finding a job could generalise the cause of her failure to other situations, i.e. the person could perceive the cause of her unemployment also as reason for not being successful in her family and social life (global attribution). Or the person could attribute the cause only to the unemployment situation and regard herself as successful in family and social life (specific attribution). Abramson et al. (1978:57) explain that “*a global attribution implies that helplessness will occur across situations, whereas a specific attribution implies helplessness only in the original situation*”.

According to Abramson et al. (1978:56) people apply different patterns of causal attribution. “*When a bad outcome occurs, an individual can attribute it to (a) lack of*

ability (an internal-stable factor), (b) lack of effort (an internal-unstable factor), (c) the task being too difficult (an external-stable factor), or (d) lack of luck (an external-unstable factor)”. The pattern of causal attribution chosen influences whether expectations of future helplessness could be acute or become chronic, narrow or broad, and whether helplessness could lower self-esteem or not (Abramson et al. 1978).

Whether the causal attribution is internal or external will determine if the individual will experience self-blame (reduced self-esteem and increased depressive affect); whether the attribution is stable or unstable will determine whether or not the reaction will persist over time; and whether the attribution is global or specific will determine the extent to which the reaction may generalise to other situations. The causal attribution a person assumes will also determine *“the generality and chronicity of his helplessness deficits as well as his later self-esteem”* (Abramson et al., 1978, p 50).

Weiner (1974, as referred to by Abramson et al., 1978) suggested that failure attributed to internal factors, i.e. lack of ability, produces greater negative effect than failure attributed to external factors, such as task difficulty. The particular attention to causal attribution and its different dimensions within the reformulated theory of learned helplessness can better explain the development of depression than the original theory did. The reformulated hypothesis suggests that the chronicity and generality of helplessness deficits and depression follow from the stability and

globality of the attribution a person assumes for his/her helplessness (Abramson et al., 1978). In the state of helplessness and depression motivational disturbances are seen as a consequence of the (cognitive) expectation that outcomes are uncontrollable, i.e. if a person expects that his/her response will not affect an outcome then the likelihood of emitting a response decreases, which can lead to a disturbance in their emotional balance (Seligman, 1975). The reformulated theory of learned helplessness views depression as a syndrome which is made up of four classes of deficits: (i) motivational (ii) cognitive (iii) self-esteem and (iv) affective. The first three deficits are seen as the result of uncontrollability. With regard to the affective, deficits the authors believe that these result from a person's expectation that bad outcomes will occur from their expected uncontrollability (Abramson et al., 1978). According to Abramson et al. (1978), at least three factors determine the intensity of the emotional component of depression, (a) the desirability of an unobtainable outcome, (b) the aversiveness of the unobtainable outcome and (c) the strength or certainty of the expectation of uncontrollability.

Worth taking note of is that the intensity of the cognitive and motivational components of depression does not depend on whether helplessness is perceived as universal or personal (Abramson et al., 1978). Cognitive and motivational deficits occur in both personal and universal helplessness. However, Abramson (1977, as referred to by Abramson et al., 1978) has empirically demonstrated that lowered self-esteem occurs only in personal helplessness which therefore can contribute to the development of depression.

Seligman's theory of learned helplessness has, however, like any other theory also been criticised, particularly in regard to its explanation of the development of depression. It has been argued that it is not helplessness per se which causes depression but rather the stress which is experienced by the individual when confronted with uncontrollability (Holmes, 2001). In other words those individuals who experience uncontrollability over a long period of time will also experience increased stress. There is empirical support based on animal studies which showed *"that animals in helpless situations showed physiological changes in their brains that were stress-related and known to cause depression"* (Holmes, 2001:226). Such an explanation could also be relevant to the situation of unemployment as unemployment is usually accompanied by large amounts of stress, particularly in the case of long-term unemployment.

4.3 Unemployment and learned helplessness

As I have mentioned before, Seligman's theory can be assumed as relevant to the psychological effects of unemployment. For instance, the inability to find a job might be seen as a failure to control an important outcome. Such failure is usually painful (Winefield et al., 1993). Long-term unemployment in particular often results in signs of helplessness and even depression (cf. Statt, 1994). On the basis of Seligman's theory it can be expected that the unemployed individual may experience his/her

jobless situation as uncontrollable, especially when unemployment rates are high as is the case in Namibia.

To a certain extent the unemployment situation in Namibia can be seen as a situation of objective loss of control because due to high unemployment figures the unemployed individual has little possibility to actively change (i.e. control) his/her situation. This is even more so for the "street unemployed" who lack education and vocational training and therefore cannot actually 'control' the outcome of their job seeking attempts. According to Seligman's theory one could assume that this objective situation of uncontrollability could have a significant impact on a large part of the Namibian population. In other words when the Namibian unemployed *learn* that they cannot change (i.e. control) their unemployment situation through their own behaviour, then they subsequently - through a process of generalisation - will *expect* that they cannot do anything and therefore will stop behaving proactively to change their situation. As a result they would experience universal helplessness with external locus of control. Depending on the patterns of causal attribution which the individuals will apply, motivational, cognitive and emotional deficits may occur. The motivational deficits could perhaps be observed in a reduced job seeking behaviour combined with passivity instead of applying a pro-active approach such as self-employment. Cognitive deficits could appear in the form of generalised expectations about the hopelessness of finding employment, and the emotional deficits could lead to depression.

With regard to Seligman's theory and the objective of this study one could make the following three predictions: (i) that due to the high unemployment figures and the reduced possibilities of 'control' the Namibian "street unemployed" should tend to become helpless, showing all three of the associated behavioural deficits (motivational, cognitive and emotional), (ii) unemployed people who characteristically attribute bad outcomes to internal, stable causes and good outcomes to external, unstable causes, should be those most likely to suffer from depression; and (iii) people who have been unemployed for six months or more should be at greater risk (of suffering from helplessness leading to depression) than those who are more recently unemployed.

I will return to Seligman's theory and these predictions in the presentation and discussion of the empirical results of my study.

5. DESIGN OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY ON NAMIBIA'S "STREET UNEMPLOYED"

In this chapter I will describe how the present empirical study of Namibia's "street unemployed" was designed. I will briefly elaborate on research methodology in general and elucidate on which research paradigm the present study was based. Against this background the research strategy and methods applied for the data generation and evaluation as well as the sampling will then follow. I will also elaborate on some specific difficulties I faced when gathering data for this study.

5.1 Research methodology

When conducting an empirical study the question always arises as to which methodological doctrine the research should be based. In the social sciences there is a continuous debate on the nature and essence of research (Mouton & Marais, 1996; Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 1996). This debate is frequently characterized by questions such as (among others): *"Is it possible to measure social phenomena? How do scientist study underlying dynamic social processes? How scientific (and also*

objective) is research in which it is not possible to build in adequate inter-subjective controls?" (Mouton & Marais, 1996:153/4).

In very simplistic terms research today exists largely on the basis of two different paradigms. These are the quantitative and the qualitative research paradigms. The quantitative research paradigm dates back to Positivism which regarded research as scientific and objective only when it dealt with observable phenomena. Quantitative research became highly popularised by the natural sciences and not long after by psychology which tried to find acceptance with the natural sciences (Shaughnessy, Zechmeister & Zechmeister, 2000). Quantitative research, as can be derived from the word quantity, explains all phenomena including the social in terms of numbers. In order to meet the requirements for quantitative research in psychology, methods such as experimental designs, standardised tests, questionnaires and systematic observation became established (Shaughnessy et al., 2000). The qualitative research paradigm on the other hand arose as a result of the criticism towards Positivism and its emphasis on observable behaviour only. The argument was that phenomena can also exist even if they cannot be observed and/or expressed as numbers. This has led to the fact that some authors are likely to classify all research that does not contain statistics as qualitative research (Mouton & Marais, 1996). However, qualitative research includes specific methods such as hermeneutics, ethno methodology and phenomenology (Mouton & Marais, 1996; Silverman, 2000). Since the 1960s the social sciences have adopted the qualitative research paradigm as a valid research strategy. Qualitative research methods have also become widely used in psychology

in order to investigate human behaviour, emotions and cognitions (Plattner, 2001; Shaughnessy, 2000).

A debate has, however, arisen about the value of either qualitative or quantitative research approaches. The question still remains whether quantitative research is more "scientific" or "objective" than qualitative research (Blaxter et al., 1996). A confusion arose also from the exact meaning of qualitative and quantitative research approaches. In general terms the quantitative research approach may be described *"...as that approach to research in social sciences that is more highly formalized as well as more explicitly controlled, with a range that is more exactly defined, and which in terms of the method used, is relatively close to the physical sciences"* (Mouton & Marais, 1996:155). Qualitative research on the other hand is described as those *"...approaches in which the procedures are not as strictly formalized, while the scope is more likely to be undefined, and a more philosophical mode of operation is adopted"* (Mouton & Marais, 1996:155/6).

Mouton & Marais (1996) explain the difference between the two approaches by means of two terms, namely, "concepts" and "hypotheses". "Concept" (operational specificity) here refers *"...to the extent to which a concept has been explicitly defined so that its meaning becomes unambiguous"* while hypotheses are the *"...specific suppositions about the manner in which different phenomena are related"* (Mouton & Marais, 1996:158). Given these descriptions of terms, in quantitative research the researcher is likely to choose concepts or even to create words in such a way that no

more than a single meaning can be attached to the word that s/he has chosen. It is also essential that the quantitative researcher should provide an operational definition (meaning the description of the actions that are required ultimately to measure the concept) from the outset of the study (Mouton & Marais, 1996). Contrary to these, the qualitative researcher's concepts and constructs are meaningful words that can be analyzed in their own right to gain a greater depth of understanding of a given concept. In most cases qualitative researchers will conduct an etymological analysis of a concept as part of their description regarding a chosen phenomena. Qualitative researchers will then interpret the chosen phenomena on the basis of the wealth of meaning of the concept (Mouton & Marais, 1996; Sliverman, 2000).

Furthermore, quantitative researchers are far more concerned with making sure that the hypotheses have been formulated before they embark on the investigation. It is crucial that the hypotheses are formulated in such a way that they can be rejected or falsified. In quantitative research, to a large extent, the whole study revolves around the hypotheses (Mouton & Marais, 1996). Qualitative researchers on the other hand will provide a general research aim in their introductions, and the aim is usually not formulated in such a manner that it is falsifiable. In fact, in most cases hypotheses tend to emerge as the result of the qualitative investigation (Mouton & Marais, 1996). Qualitative research tends to deal with highly complex problems and thus, according to Mouton & Marais (1996), it would be unfair to expect that investigations of this nature would include simplistic empirical-based hypotheses.

Qualitative and quantitative research may appear to be two very different and even opposing paradigms. In reality however, it is rather the opposite. In fact, the two could most effectively work in complementary fashion. For example, and as supported by Plattner (2001:3), "*.....each quantitative study also has a qualitative component, at least at the stage of designing a research question or an instrument for data gathering*". Furthermore "*.....qualitative outcomes can result in the generation of hypotheses which can motivate a follow-up research project with a quantitative character*" (Plattner 2001:3). Equally so, quantitative research could lead to further dimensions with additional qualitative initiatives.

It is important to point out that "*...science is a relatively open system which must necessarily comply with the systemic characteristics of equifinality - the idea, that the same goal may be attained through different methods*" (Mouton & Marais, 1996:155). In the social sciences, according to Blaxter et al. (1996), research projects are often multi-method. This is mainly because both qualitative and quantitative methods are valid and useful (Blaxter et al., 1996).

With regard to the present study, the question still stood as to which approach was best suited in order to investigate the psychological repercussions of unemployment in Namibia. As already shown in chapter 3, numerous studies on unemployment and its psychological relevance have been conducted and many of their variables highlighted. It was therefore justifiable to make use of these variables in the present study and to conduct it within a *quantitative* research approach. This enabled an

insight into the Namibian unemployment situation and its psychological implications. However, since most of the unemployment studies were based in western countries and there were no Namibian psychological studies on unemployment available, a pure *quantitative* research approach (based on variables found in western studies) could possibly have neglected certain uniquely Namibian issues of unemployment. Therefore, a *qualitative* research approach was also necessary in order to explore relevant unknown knowledge on the Namibian unemployment situation.

Thus, in order to get insight into the Namibian specific situation, the "street unemployed" and the prevalence of related psychological effects, a *qualitative-quantitative* research approach was adopted for the present study (McClelland, 1997).

5.2 Research strategy

In order to apply a qualitative-quantitative research approach the following strategy was employed:

- As the first step, a *qualitative study* was conducted on the basis of semi-structured interviews with ten unemployed men waiting at certain street points to be hired for

a job (cf. sample below). These interviews were then evaluated with Qualitative Content Analysis (cf. chapter 5.3, below). The aim of this qualitative study was to explore, from a Namibian perspective, information about certain variables crucial to the psychological experience of unemployment as gathered from mainly western literature (cf. chapter 3).

- The second step involved the development of a questionnaire based on the outcomes of the interviews, the theoretical framework, as well as on the available literature on the psychological effects of unemployment. The qualitative outcomes in particular also served the purpose of ensuring **validity** of the variables operationalised and investigated in the questionnaire.

- The third step which was the *quantitative* part of the study included the distribution of the questionnaire with mainly closed questions to 160 respondents (cf. sample below), and the ensuing statistical evaluation. The aim of this quantitative study was to gather knowledge on how the psychologically crucial variables of unemployment are represented and distributed among the Namibian "street unemployed."

5.3 Methods

5.3.1 Qualitative data gathering and evaluation

In the qualitative part of the research the *interview* was chosen as the method for data gathering. The interview is a common method or technique of gathering data from individuals or even groups of people. Psychology as a discipline also makes extensive use of the interview.

The interview as an instrument has many advantages. One of which is that it allows for greater flexibility in asking questions than a questionnaire. For example, in an interview the respondent could always receive clarification when questions are unclear whilst the trained interviewer could also follow-up on incomplete or ambiguous answers to open-ended questions. Another advantage of the interview is that it allows the interviewer control over the order of questions and can ensure that all respondents complete the questions in the same order. The response rate for interviews has also been higher than for mail surveys, for example in research by Shaughnessy et al.,(2000). The interview, however, also has its disadvantages, one of which is that because of the rise of urban crime people have become less trusting especially of strangers and are therefore less likely to agree to an interview (Shaughnessy et al., 2000). The use of trained interviewers is usually expensive both in terms of money and time. Perhaps the biggest disadvantage of an interview is interviewer bias. This occurs when the interviewer records only selected portions of

the respondents' full responses, or tries to adjust the wording of a question to fit the respondent (Mouton & Marais, 1996; Shaughnessy et al., 2000).

There are differing types of interviews, one of which is the narrative. This type of interview, as can be discerned from the word narrative, is one whereby the interviewer asks a question whilst the respondent freely narrates the topic in question. In contrast to this the structured interview is set in such a way that both the interviewer and interviewee cannot veer from the set questions in the interview guideline. The interviewer has to follow the order of the questions regardless of the interviewee's responses. In turn, the interviewee may only answer the questions asked and not elaborate further than the question allows. The semi-structured interview on the other hand allows more dynamics in the interview; the interviewer has more flexibility in asking questions in the sense that s/he can adjust the order of the questions in the interview guideline in relation to the progress of the interview, i.e. the responses of the interviewee. The interviewee is thus neither restricted in content nor direction of his/her answers (Shaughnessy et al., 2000).

For the present qualitative study, a *semi-structured interview* was decided upon. The reason for choosing a semi-structured interview was to give the unemployed men the opportunity to elaborate freely on their experiences of unemployment and thus gain insight into the individual life situation.

An *interview guideline* was developed on the basis of the literature review and the theoretical framework, i.e. Seligman's "Theory of Learned Helplessness." The interview guideline entailed an introduction regarding the purpose of the study, the identity of the interviewers, the interview procedure and the promise of confidentiality concerning all information gathered (cf. Appendix I). Then a number of questions investigating 18 different *variables* followed. These variables referred to the respondent's previous job situation, vocational training, educational background, current financial circumstances and their social support. Further variables were causal attribution, locus of control and self-esteem. The interview also targeted emotional experience, time experience, future expectations and psychosomatic disorders as variables. Nutrition, alcohol usage, modes of transportation to and from the streets were additional variables covered. For each of these variables one main question was formulated together with some sub-questions that would be asked in the event that the respondent did not understand and/or did not sufficiently answer the main question (cf. Appendix I).

The interview guideline was initially developed in English. However, because of the expectation that the target group would be mainly Oshiwambo speaking, the interview guideline was translated into Oshiwambo (cf. Appendix I). All of the interviews were conducted in Oshiwambo with the help of an Oshiwambo speaking interpreter. With the permission of the interviewees all interviews were recorded on an audio tape recorder. In preparations for the evaluation process, each interview was translated back to English and transcribed verbatim.

The interview transcripts were subsequently evaluated through *Qualitative Content Analysis* as developed by Philipp Mayring (cf. Plattner, 2001). Qualitative Content Analysis is a systematic evaluation method which involves, amongst other techniques, Summarising Content Analysis. This technique helps us *"to summarise contents of verbal material into categories related to the research question and its theoretical framework. It is the aim of this technique to reduce the material in such a way that the essence of the content remains. As part of the process of evaluation the verbal material is rendered increasingly abstract without losing the original content"* (Plattner, 2001:6). On the basis of the elaborate steps of this technique, the responses of each of the ten interviewees were paraphrased for each variable, i.e. the essence of the answers was extracted while those parts of the text which did not carry content were left out. These paraphrases were then generalised, i.e. transformed to a more general, abstract level (cf. Plattner, 2001). Finally, the generalisations made for each variable and interviewee were then reduced to a system of categories reflecting the responses of all ten interviewees as one result (per variable).

5.3.2 Quantitative data gathering and evaluation

As described above, the major part of this research project entailed a quantitative investigation of the psychological effects of unemployment. The instrument used for the data gathering was the *questionnaire*.

The majority of survey research makes use of the questionnaire as a measure for their variables (Shaughnessy, 2000). As simple as it may look, the construction and administration of a questionnaire requires meticulous input which can determine the success or failure of research based on this method.

In contrast to the interview a questionnaire allows the respondents to reply in written form. A questionnaire can consist of open-ended and/or closed questions. The questions have to be designed in such a way that their meaning is unequivocal. In a questionnaire the different variables are operationalised through the formulation of specific questions and, in the case of closed questions, their answer categories. The number of questions and order of the questions in a questionnaire are two aspects that have to be carefully considered by the researcher as they can influence the way the respondents answer the questions (Shaughnessy, 2000).

Choosing the questionnaire as an instrument for gathering data has advantages and disadvantages. For example, conducting research through a questionnaire is fast and much less work for the researcher than through an interview. The respondents can fill out the questionnaire on their own and a number of respondents could be approached at the same time. Also, because the questionnaires are filled out by the respondents on their own, this technique avoids interviewer bias. A questionnaire is probably the best method in "*...dealing with highly personal or embarrassing topics, especially when anonymity of respondents is preserved*" (Shaughnessy 2000:158). However,

there are also several disadvantages to the questionnaire. One of which, of course, is that the respondents usually have no means of asking questions in cases of limited clarity. The researcher also has no way of controlling how the respondent completes the questionnaire. Sometimes the order of the questions may be fundamental to the outcome of the results. However, the respondents are in a position to change the order in which to answer the questions. A disadvantage of the questionnaire can also be that for one reason or another respondents may not or cannot sufficiently answer all questions. Open-ended questions in particular may lead to a decrease in motivation to answer, especially when they are too many (Shaughnessy, 2000).

Questionnaires are usually administered through the mail. Aside from the problem of a rather low return rate of about 30% (Shaughnessy, 2000), another threat to the mail questionnaire is what is known as response bias. This is when only a certain group of people within the larger group that has been approached fills in and returns the questionnaires, which could threaten the representativeness of a given sample.

For the present study the questionnaire was personally administered to the target group. The reason for this was that in Namibia unemployed people are not registered and therefore could not have been reached with a questionnaire by mail.

The questionnaire was developed with regard to literature and the theoretical framework (as described in chapter 3. and 4.). It entailed 89 questions. All questions were closed questions requiring a simple tick on any of the answers provided (cf.

Appendix II). The questionnaire was once again investigating the 18 variables as previously covered in the qualitative study. Many of the questions for the questionnaire were designed on the basis of the results of this qualitative study, i.e. the systems of categories extracted from the interview were used for the formulation of the questions and their answer categories.

For example, in the interview the respondents were asked how they view themselves with regard to the variable self-esteem. Another question for this variable referred to the thoughts of the "street unemployed" about the way others, i.e. passers-by view them (the assumption being that how one views him/herself is also influenced by how one believes themselves to be viewed by others; cf. Mead, 1934). As a result of the Qualitative Content Analysis the following categories were extracted for the variable self-esteem:

Example: Categories extracted from the answers given in the interviews

<u>"How do you view yourself?"</u>	<u>"How do you think others view you?"</u>
- as an unemployed person	- as an idiot
- as an unpopular person	- as a stupid fool
- as someone living in poverty	- as someone who is dirty
- as someone suffering	- as an unemployed person
- as a human being	- as someone suffering
	- as someone standing in the street
	- they do not look at us
	- they do not care about us
	- they do not feel for us

Subsequently out of the above mentioned categories nine statements were formulated in order to operationalise the variable self-esteem in the questionnaire. For instance,

one of the statements was "*Someone unemployed is an unpopular person*". All nine statements were answerable on a five-point Likert Scale (from strongly agree to strongly disagree; cf. Appendix II). The respondents were instructed to tick their opinion.

Besides the variable self-esteem other variables, namely depression, psycho-somatic disorders and time experience were also operationalised in the form of statements which could be answered on an ordinal measurement level (often, sometimes, never). All the other variables were operationalised in the form of closed questions with pre-given answer categories on a nominal measurement level. The statements used for the investigation of depression and psycho-somatic disorders were based on literature and have already been applied and validated in other studies (DSM-IV, 1994; Cooper & Straw, 1998) the answer categories for the questions on a nominal level were based on the outcomes of the qualitative study. Some of the answer categories allowed the respondents to specify their responses.

Once again, because my target group was mainly Oshiwambo speaking, the questionnaire had to be translated from English to Oshiwambo. With the help of Oshiwambo speaking interpreters the questionnaire was then distributed at various points throughout Windhoek, to the "street unemployed" of whom 160 returned their questionnaire (cf. sample below).

The evaluation of the data collected through the questionnaire was then conducted by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS; cf. Bryman & Cramer, 2001). However, those answer categories which requested the respondent to specify (mostly in case of the answer category "other") had to be coded first. All of the specified responses were listed and then reduced to additional categories with their own codes. The latter was, however, done only when a certain category appeared in at least five cases (for statistical reasons). Thus, the answer categories in the questionnaire could have been extended by such additional categories (which however was only the case in very few questions because not many of the respondents did specify their answers). Otherwise the specified answers were used as additional, qualitative information for the data analysis.

The statistical evaluation of the data was based on descriptive statistics, i.e. on frequencies and crosstabulations. For the latter, correlation studies together with significance tests were conducted. Chi² as a measurement for statistical independence of two variables as well as for expected and observed frequency distribution, was applied for the data on nominal measurement level. Together with Chi² the Cramer's V was chosen in most cases as correlation coefficient since in the crosstabulations the numbers of columns and rows were mainly unequal, otherwise the Contingency coefficient C was chosen. With regard to the variables on ordinal level, Spearman's rho was chosen as correlation coefficient. The correlations were tested regarding their statistical significance applying the three levels of significance commonly used in social sciences, i.e. $p \leq 0.05$ (*), $p \leq 0.01$ (**), and $p \leq 0.001$ (***). Within the

process of the statistical evaluation some of the variables were recoded in order to reduce the number of cells, and for certain variables such as job seeking behaviour, self-esteem, depression or psychosomatic disorders, indices were built and then correlated with other variables (cf. chapter 6).

5.4 Sample

Unemployed people in Namibia are not registered. Therefore this research could not draw a random sample and could not claim to be of a representative character.

For the qualitative study an accidental sample of ten men was chosen from three different 'waiting posts for the unemployed' around Windhoek, one in Khomasdal, one in Windhoek West and one in Eros. There were no specific requirements for being part of the sample in terms of demographic or other variables, aside from being male, unemployed, and regularly going to the streets to look for work (in Namibia unemployed women do not wait along street sides to find a job as their male counterparts do). The participation in the interviews was based on a voluntary, first-come-first served basis.

For the quantitative study the original idea was to have 200 respondents as the sample. Well over 300 questionnaires were distributed but because of the constraints described below, only an accidental sample of 160 "street unemployed" could be obtained as the final sample, again with no other requirements than those already mentioned for the interview sample. However, those who had already participated in the interview were not allowed to fill in the questionnaire. The participation was again based on a voluntary, first-come-first served basis.

5.5 Difficulties faced in conducting the research

The recruitment of the samples as well as the gathering of the data for both the qualitative and the quantitative study were accompanied by several difficulties which should be kept in mind when analysing and interpreting the data.

One of the difficulties was in regard to language. My first encounter with the language barrier was when I had to find someone to translate my interview-guideline into Oshiwambo. Whilst I knew that most of the unemployed people I would find on the streets would be Oshiwambo speaking, I could not tell which of the many dialects of this language would be most prevalent. In addition and also surprisingly, it was very difficult to find an authority who could advise me on any of these dialects. Eventually I found a someone employed at the University of Namibia who had co-

published an Oshiwambo-English dictionary and also had a degree in psychology. The latter was of importance because I needed someone who could translate the psychological terminology into vernacular. The dialect chosen by this language expert was Oshindonga. It was planned that he would also accompany me in my data gathering as my interpreter and translate the recorded interviews back into English. However, due to unforeseen circumstances he left town before we could gather the data and I had to find yet another Oshiwambo speaking assistant with a notable psychological background. Indeed I was very lucky to find another person who was willing to do the above mentioned. However, because she was also busy with her own research, she could not find the time to translate my questionnaire into Oshiwambo and be the interpreter for my data gathering in the quantitative study. Once again I had to find other people for this part, an exercise which proved rather taxing. I eventually found two student colleagues who were willing to help in the exercise of translating the questionnaire. In addition, a lecturer in Oshiwambo at the University of Namibia, who incidentally had co-published the Oshiwambo-English dictionary mentioned above, proved very helpful and checked the final version of the questionnaire. I still had to look for Oshiwambo speaking assistants in distributing the questionnaire. I approached Oshiwambo speaking psychology students at the University of Namibia and about fifteen students indicated that they would volunteer to help with the data gathering. Unfortunately, various commitments, excuses and appointments suddenly sprung up at crucial moments eventually leaving me without any of these students as assistants. Through some stroke of luck, however, I managed

to find three very dedicated assistants from the Polytechnic of Namibia who then assisted me throughout the rest of my study.

In as much as I appreciated all of the help I received in translation and administration of both the interview and the questionnaire, for me, the most regrettable aspect was 'losing control' of my own research through the language barrier - and this ironically in a study in which loss of control was central to the chosen theoretical framework. I therefore could only trust that all who assisted me understood exactly what I wanted from the study. One therefore cannot put aside the nagging feeling that one could have capitalised more profitably on the instantaneous non-verbal and verbal responses of my respondents, particularly in the interview. I therefore acknowledge that the **reliability** of both the interview and the questionnaire might have been negatively affected through this language problem.

Another difficulty I had not anticipated was the unwillingness of the "street unemployed" to take part in my research. From the onset it was clear that they would be reluctant to cooperate with me and my assistants inspite of the carefully worded appeal I had thoroughly made my assistants practice. In regard to the interviews, as soon as we arrived at a spot with our interview-guideline in hand we were immediately surrounded with a throng of "hopefuls" believing that we were from an agency recruiting people for work. Their interest in us would just as quickly die when we informed them who we were and what we were after. Most of them then would turn away in disappointment, some even using abusive language, as I would

be told later by my assistant and could discern from their body language. We were told that often people come to the streets asking all sorts of questions, some even promising employment but never returning. They were now *"sick and tired of cooperating with people who only poked us <the unemployed> about with questions and empty promises without delivering"* as was expressed by some of the unemployed. This to me was more a sign of their disappointment rather than a display of insolence. Things, however, changed for the better a little later when we finally persuaded the first respondents to take part in our study. After the completion of their interview, I personally thanked the interviewees and gave them some bread rolls with margarine and jam and a small juice. This seemed to somehow "sweeten" our relationship as from then on as it served as something of an incentive for other respondents to also do the interview. After successfully convincing some of the men to respond to my questions other difficulties immediately arose. For instance, the interviews drew a sizeable amount of curious onlookers listening in to the interviews. This group, mainly consisting of fellow unemployed people and some passers-by, proved a huge distraction to the interview, not only because of the noise, but also because the interviewees' answers were being influenced by the onlookers who often burst into laughter or somehow sounds of approval or disapproval at the given answers. I therefore had to cancel such interviews and to disperse the crowd. This was sometime a little difficult for me. Unexpectedly the more senior or dominant members onsite often took the initiative and easily dispersed the crowd. Eventually, ten interviews were conducted and recorded under acceptable circumstances.

Getting hold of 160 respondents for the questionnaire proved even more difficult as I encountered the same resistance as when I conducted the interviews. Once again, this resistance crumbled after I had given the first few respondents bread rolls spread with margarine and jam.

In regard to the distribution of the questionnaires additional problems appeared, the main one being that a sizeable number of respondents proved to be illiterate whilst even most of those who could read and write kept on incorrectly filling in the questionnaires. In the end my assistants had to sit with almost all of the questionnaires in hand, ask the respondents the questions, give them the answer categories, and fill in the responses for them. In other words, in many cases the questionnaire turned into a structured interview which might also have affected the **reliability** of the outcomes.

A further exacerbating problem was that all the questionnaires had to be filled in under the constant "threat" of possible employment arriving any moment from any vehicle that slowed down or stopped within the vicinity of the waiting spot of the unemployed. As a consequence there was constant scampering towards the road (mostly due to false alarms) resulting in my valued questionnaires, held by those who tried to fill them in by themselves, being flung in my general direction by those hoping to get lucky. This occurred despite my constant appeals to leave the questionnaires on the ground in the case of 'a job driving by.' Indeed, some got lucky

at the 'expense' of my study. However, all of this only served to make the process of data gathering rather painstakingly slow.

Despite all these difficulties there were a few light hearted moments. One of which stands out was when two of my assistants were rather unceremoniously chased away by a mob of elderly men who suspected us of tricking them into signing up for a certain political party. Needless to say, we got no volunteers to do the questionnaires that day (much to the relief of my shaken assistants). We were asked to return only *"...with a car that has the UNAM <University of Namibia> emblem on the side and a letter from Katjavivi <the Vice-Chancellor of the university> ...!"* as worded by the many spokesmen for the angry mob.

These difficulties were coupled with the added disadvantage of not having a vehicle at my disposal to transport my assistants and myself to the various and widely strewn waiting points for the unemployed. A borrowed vehicle sometimes helped. The car could, however, not be counted on to be consistently available and often had to be returned at the most inopportune times. Transportation was, however, a necessity as I soon discovered that the unemployed men move around Windhoek constantly in search of a busier waiting point, especially in the afternoon. Because of this, I had to move around as well in order to get respondents and to ensure not to have the same respondents twice.

In essence, however, the whole process of data gathering, aside from the long hours and complications beyond my control, proved a worthwhile experience as the results of the study will show in the next chapter.

6. DATA PRESENTATION

The presentation of the results in this chapter will begin with demographic variables followed by the variables previous job situation, job seeking behaviour, financial situation, and social network situation. These results will be followed by referring to the variables loss of control and helplessness, self-esteem, depression, alcohol consumption, psychosomatic disorders, time experience, future orientation, and perceptions about education.

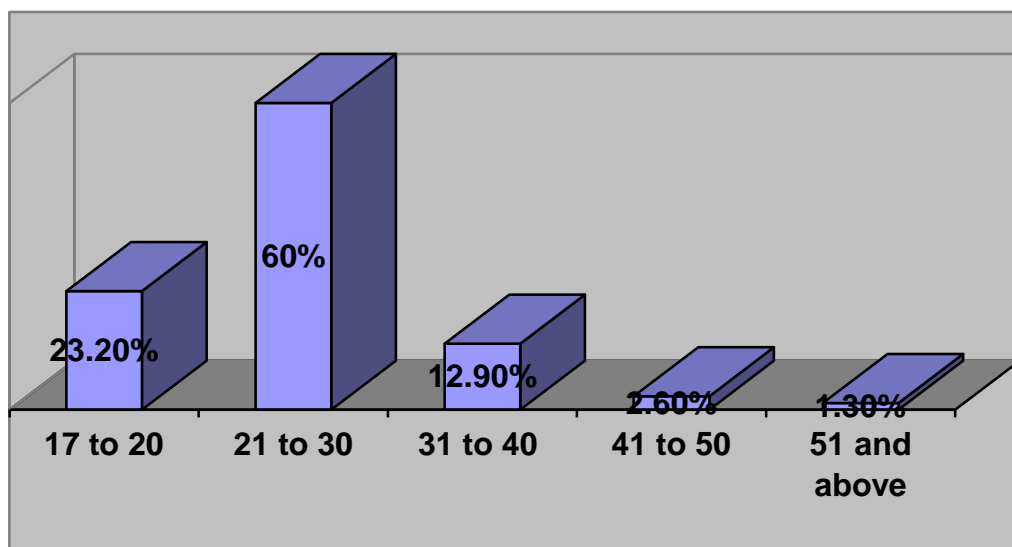
The results presented below will mainly entail the outcomes of the quantitative part of the research. As explained above, the qualitative part was used to prepare the questionnaire and the operationalisation of its variables as well as to ensure validity. In order to illustrate the quantitative results in more concrete terms however, I will simultaneously refer to the qualitative study.

6.1 Demographic variables

Age

As already described above, the final sample for the quantitative study comprised of 160 unemployed men who waited for jobs on the streets of Windhoek. Their average age was 25.6 years (mean) with a range from 17 to 56 years. Graph 1 shows the distribution according to the different age groups.

Graph1: Age distribution



Graph 1 shows a gross over-representation of the young generation amongst the "street unemployed". 23.2% of the sample belonged to the age group of 17 to 20 years, followed by 60% from the age group 21 to 30 years. In other words 83.2% of the sample were youth or young adults. Although the present study cannot claim to

be statistically representative, it does, however, reflect one of the realities of Namibia's unemployment problem: very high unemployment amongst young people (The Namibian 04/9/2000). When compounded with the next age group of 31 to 40 years which was represented by 12.9%, a staggering figure of 96.1% is realised for those who are expected to be the most productive members of a nation's workforce and economy. 2.6% represented the age group of 41 to 50 years and only 1.3% were older than 51 years.

Education

Aside from unemployment amongst young people, another serious problem regarding Namibia's unemployment situation is lack of education which readily presented itself amongst the investigated "street unemployed". Table 1 reflects the level of education attained by the respondents.

Table 1: Educational level attained

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	
Grade 12	17.1%
Grade 11	1.9%
Grade 10	19.0%
Up to Grade 9	34.0%
Up to Grade 5	23.4%
Never been to school	4.4%

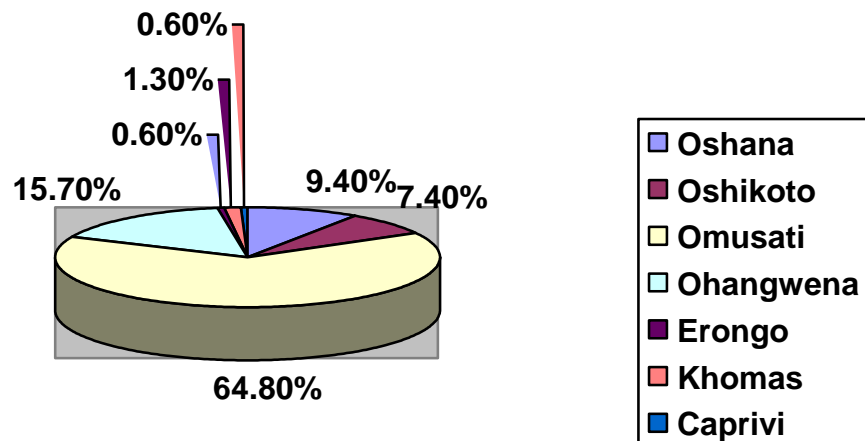
As depicted in table 1, the highest level of education attained amongst the respondents was Grade 12 which, however, had been achieved by only 17.1%. A further 1.9% of the respondents had attained Grade 11, whilst 19% had reached Grade 10. 34% of the respondents had gone up to Grade 9, and 23.4% up to Grade 5. The latter two percentages indicate that the majority of the sample (i.e. 57.6%) had a very low level of education. 4.4% of the respondents had never been to school.

The lack of school education amongst the "street unemployed" was accompanied by a lack of vocational training which could have assisted the unemployed in obtaining a job or given them skills to become self-employed. 78.3% of the questionnaire respondents had never received vocational training. 21.3% of the respondents reported having received some form of vocational training but only a few specified their answers to refer to such training in painting, welding or carpentry.

Regional background

Another interesting result was that all but four of the "street unemployed" who participated in this study came from northern Namibia to the capital city of Windhoek in order to find work, as depicted in the following graph.

Graph 2: Regions from which respondents came



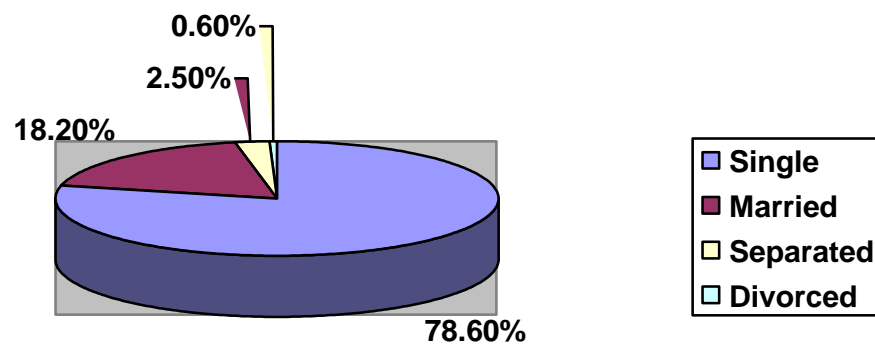
Graph 2 shows that most of the respondents came from the Omusati region which represented 64.8% of the sample. According to the 1991 Population and Housing Census (Central Statistics Office, 1994) this is the most populated region in the country and therefore the figures in the present study meet the expectation that most of the job seekers would have come from that region. 15.7% came from the Ohangwena region, 9.4% from Oshana and 7.5% from the Oshikoto region. Both the Erongo and Caprivi regions were represented with a figure of only 0.6% each. Only 1.3% of the respondents came from the Khomas region. The latter is an especially interesting result in view of the fact that this region is the third largest in the country in terms of population distribution (Central Statistics Office, 1994) and Windhoek, where the present study took place, lies in this region. This indicates that most of this

region's unemployed do not look for work on Windhoek's streets. The question would be why not, or rather where do they look for work?

Marital status

Graph 3 provides information about the marital status of the sample.

Graph 3: Marital status



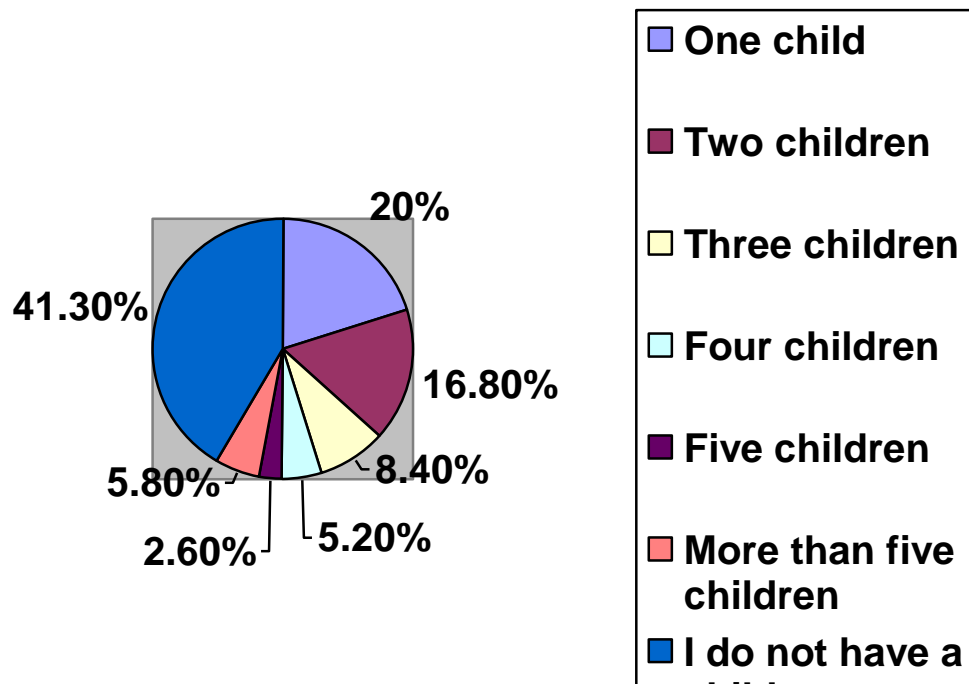
In reference to their marital status, 78.6% of the respondents were still single, 18.2% are married, 2.5% were separated and one respondent (0.6%) was divorced. However, of those who were single, 16% were apparently in some kind of relationship which they perceived to be like a marriage. When asked in a follow-up question "How often do you see your wife?", a question that was meant for those who were married, this 16% of respondents who had previously indicated that they

were single were amongst those who replied to this question (cf. marital and parental obligations below).

Children

Although the majority of the sample were neither married nor in a union that could be perceived as a marriage, many of them were fathers (cf. graph 4).

Graph 4: Children



Graph 4 shows that 58.8% had children, of which 20% had only one child, 16.8% had two children, 8.4% had three children, 5.2% had four children, 2.6% had five

children and 5.8% had more than five children. However, 41.2% of the total sample had no children.

Marital and parental obligations

When one considers that most of the respondents in this study came from well over 800km away from Windhoek the question that quickly springs to mind is whether the respondents live with their wives and children in Windhoek or not. Table 2 refers to those who have marital and/or parental obligations and also shows how often they see their wives or children respectively.

Table 2: Frequency of seeing wife/children

“HOW OFTEN DO YOU SEE YOUR WIFE / CHILDREN?”	WIFE	CHILDREN
Everyday	17.2%	14.3%
At least once a month	17.2%	14.3%
At least once in three months	10.3%	14.3%
At least once in six months	3.4%	7.7%
At least once a year	38.0%	30.8%
Less than once a year	13.9%	18.7%

Of those who are married or perceive themselves to be in some sort of relationship equivalent to marriage (cf. variable marriage above), 17.2% see their wives/partners daily, in other words their wives/partners live with them in Windhoek. The others could be assumed to be living apart from their wives/partners of which 17.2%

indicated seeing them at least once a month whilst 10.3% see them at least once in three months. Another 3.4% see their wives/partners once every six months, whilst the largest percentage only get to see their wives/partners once a year (38%). 13.9% of the respondents see their wives/partners even less than once a year.

Table 2 also shows that of those respondents who have children the frequency of seeing them is rather low. Only 14.3% of those with children see them every day. The rest apparently do not live with their children. 14.3% see their children once a month, whilst 14.3% see their children once every three months. A further 7.7% see their children once every six months. The majority of the respondents see their children only once a year (30.8%) or even less (18.7%).

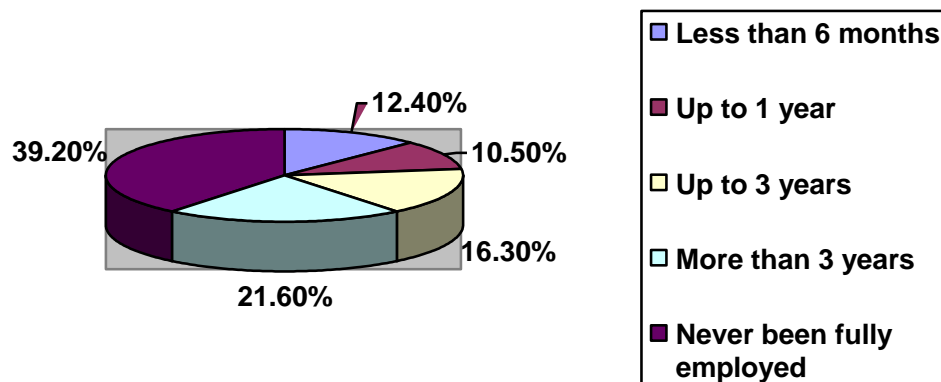
Crosstabulations

Crosstabulations between the different demographic variables did not reveal any significant correlations. It therefore can be concluded that the participants in this study formed a more or less homogenous sample in terms of age, education, regional background, marital status and marital and parental obligations.

6.2 Previous job situation

In the questionnaire the respondents were asked how long they had been unemployed. Graph 5 shows the results.

Graph 5: Length of Unemployment

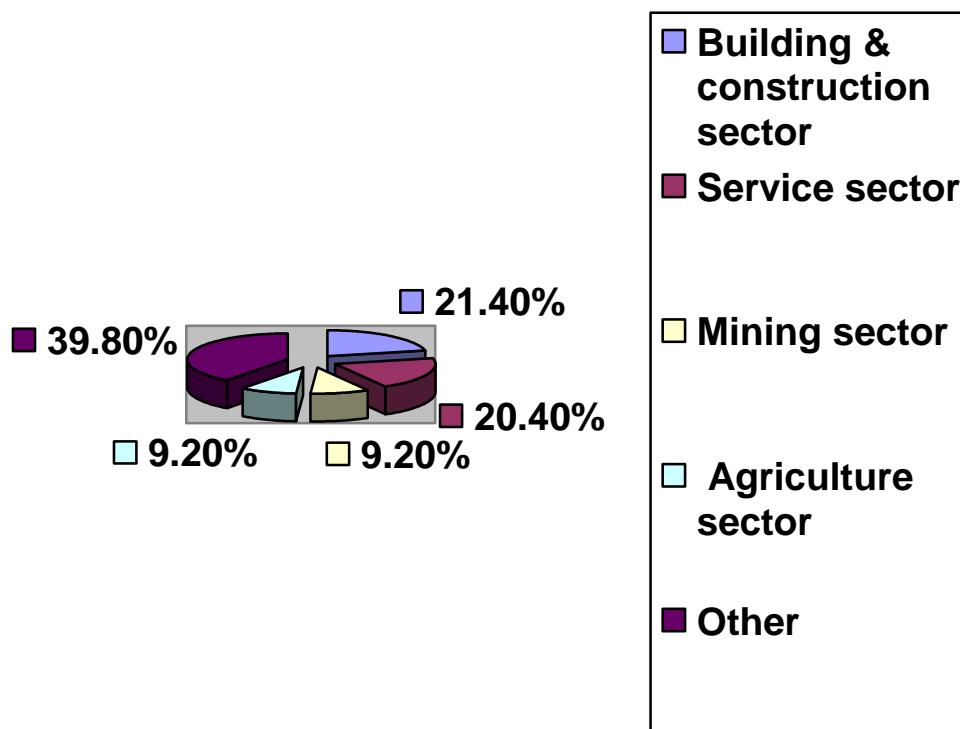


Looking at graph 5 it immediately becomes obvious that the majority of the respondents, i.e. 39.2%, have never been fully employed. 21.6% had not been employed for more than three years and 16.3% of the sample had been unemployed for up to three years. This proves that most of the investigated "street unemployed" fall into the category of the long-term unemployed. This result is of particular significance to this study as literature clearly indicates that long-term unemployed people are more at risk for developing psychological health problems (cf. chapter 4.).

Only 10.5% of the sample had been without a job for up to one year and 12.4% had not been employed for less than six months.

Those who had been employed before had worked in the sectors pointed out in graph 6.

Graph 6: Field of previous employment (refers to those who had worked before)

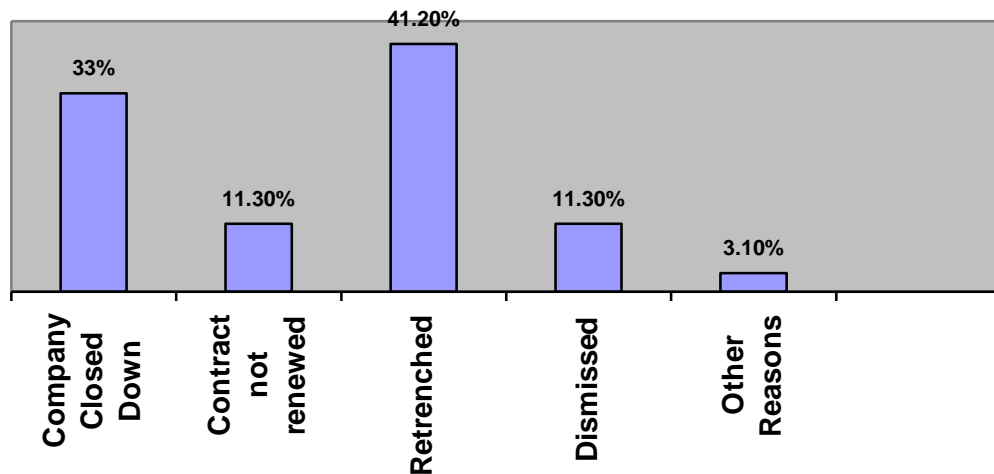


In graph 6 we can see that 21.4% of the previously employed had worked in the building and construction sector. 20.4% had worked in the service sector (in the qualitative study, interviewees reported that they had worked as waiters, cleaners,

shop or petrol attendants). Both the mining and agriculture sectors were represented with 9.2%. However, the majority of those who had worked before, (39.8%), ticked the category "other" in the questionnaire, unfortunately without further specification. It therefore remains unclear what their previous employment was.

Those who were employed before were also asked why they were no longer employed. The results are presented in graph 7.

Graph 7: Reasons for being unemployed (refers to those who were previously employed)



With regard to graph 7 it has to be noted that most of those who had employment before lost their jobs either because of retrenchment (41.2%) or because the company they had worked for closed down (33%). In other words about three quarters (74.1%)

of the "street unemployed" who had previously been employed lost their job for reasons beyond their control.

There is a perception in Namibian society that the "street unemployed" are on the streets because they do not want to work or, for one reason or the other, cannot keep a fulltime job. The results about the reasons for being unemployed found in this study are therefore clearly contradicting these notions. These results also reflect the labour situation in Namibia. Often, companies and organisations close down unexpectedly and inexplicably or large numbers of employees get retrenched leaving them with a very insecure future. In the current study 11.3% of those employed before lost their work because their contract was not renewed (for reasons unspecified in the questionnaire), and another 11.3% had been dismissed (for reasons also not specified in the questionnaire). Only 3.1% mentioned "other" reasons for losing their last job (without specifying).

Against the background of the duration of unemployment and/or reasons for having lost their last job, the respondents were asked "how does it make you feel not to have employment?" (Question 21, cf. Appendix). This question was used to find out about the psychological strain related to the lack of employment. The same question was previously asked in the interviews of the qualitative study. In the interviews all responses depicted a negative sense of feeling expressed by statements such as "very bad", "bad", "not good". Therefore, in the questionnaire, this question was designed with answer categories on an ordinal measurement level (cf. table 3).

Table 3: Stress about not having employment

“HOW DOES IT MAKE YOU FEEL NOT HAVING EMPLOYMENT?”	
Very stressed	80.6%
It is difficult but I can cope	12.5%
Not stressful	5.0%
I do not know	1.9%

Table 3 proves what can be seen in line with other studies on unemployment (cf. chapter 4). A staggering figure of 80.6% of the "street unemployed" investigated in the quantitative part of this study indicated to be very stressed about their situation of being without employment. This result is important in so far as it edifies the fact that unemployment is a situation of loss of control (cf. chapter 5) and therefore necessarily a stressful situation (Holmes, 2000). Another 12.5% of the respondents stated that they find it difficult to cope with the lack of employment but still manage to do so. Interestingly, 5% of the respondents indicated that they do not find their unemployment situation stressful, whilst 1.9% could not say whether or not being without employment makes them feel stressed. The latter was also expressed by one of the interviewees who said: *"I don't really know how it makes me feel. Because most of my needs are not satisfied because I do not have a job"* (case 7:6). In as much as it remains ambiguous, such an answer, however, indicates a certain amount of discomfort (which can also be interpreted as stress) because of the lack of employment.

Crosstabulations and hypothesis testing

One hypothesis of this study was that length of unemployment would correlate with stress about not having employment. It was expected that the longer someone had been unemployed the more he would experience stress about not having employment. It was interesting however, that no significant correlation between these two variables could be found. This could be taken to mean that length of unemployment somehow does not influence stress about not having employment, at least for this study.

Furthermore, no significant correlations could be found between length of unemployment, stress about not having employment and demographic variables.

6.3 JOB SEEKING BEHAVIOUR

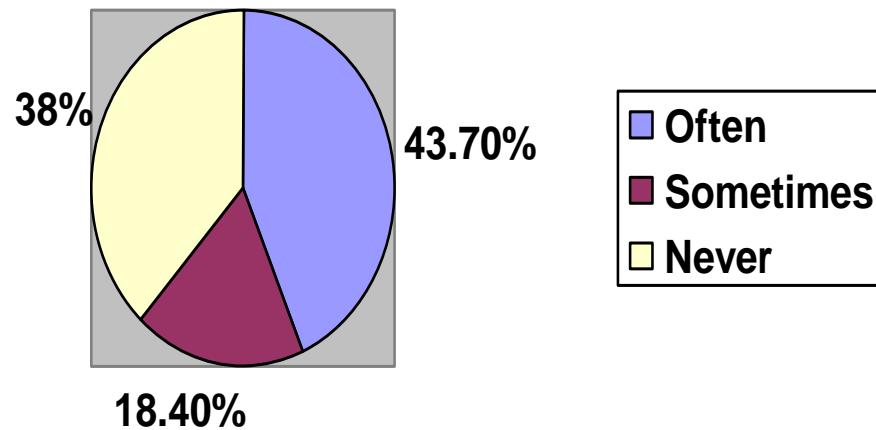
As already described in chapter 5.8 unemployment can have a debilitating effect on the individual's job seeking behaviour. As research has shown, unemployed people often blame themselves for not having a job. The long-term unemployed in particular are much more likely to resign from actively seeking employment (Jahoda et al.,

1971, Davis, 1996; Headley, 1997; cf. chapter 5.8). Hence, in the present study, the aim was also to investigate the job seeking behaviour of the "street unemployed". Based on the outcomes of the interviews, several questions were designed for the questionnaire in order to draw a clearer picture about the job seeking behaviour of the "street unemployed".

Approaching companies

The fact that the unemployed choose the street to find work might give the impression that they are not proactive in terms of such permanent employment as would be offered by companies. In order to investigate whether this impression is actually correct the respondents were asked whether they have approached companies for employment. Graph 8 shows the results.

Graph 8: Do the "street unemployed" approach companies for employment?

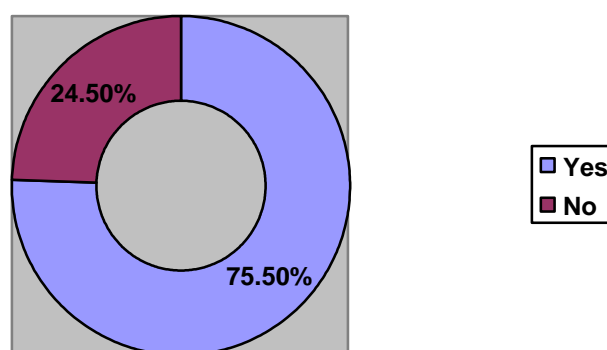


At first glance one of graph 8's more noticeable results is that 38% of the sample indicated that they never look for a job in companies. However, a surprisingly higher percentage of 43.7% indicated that they 'often' approach companies for employment, whilst 18.3% stated that they 'sometimes' search for employment in companies. These figures reveal that the generalisation often held by the public, that the "street unemployed" are aimlessly milling around the streets, is unfounded.

Mobility in searching for work

Further in connection with job seeking behaviour, literature reports that the immobility of certain populations is a reason for unemployment (Hess et al., 1994). In other words, because of certain convictions some populations may be unwilling to move to another geographical location in order to find employment. This apparently does not apply to the Namibian context because, as shown before, nearly all of the investigated "street unemployed" had already left their home regions in order to find work. However, it is also a commonly held belief, particularly amongst the Windhoek residents, that most unemployed people only 'flock' to Windhoek in search of employment. In this regard this study sought to investigate whether the respondents had looked for employment in other towns or cities (cf. graph 9).

Graph 9: Do the "street unemployed" search for employment in other towns or cities than Windhoek?



As shown in graph 9 and contrary to research and commonly held beliefs, 75.5 % of the respondents had looked for work in other towns and cities before whilst only

24.5% had not done so. In the interviews of the qualitative study, the more frequently mentioned towns and cities were Oshakati, Tsumeb, Usakos, Karibib, and Walvisbay. These are some of Namibia's more economically viable urban settlements and therefore present a greater chance of employment.

Attempts at Self-employment

In order to alleviate unemployment in Namibia it is government's view that Namibians should not just depend on the formal and informal sectors of employment but rather seek through self-initiative to find ways and means to generate employment for themselves. The government and other organisations have gone as far as to organise various workshops and seminars to teach people how to start self-employment initiatives. It was therefore against this background that I sought to investigate whether or not the "street unemployed" had ever thought about self-employment and, if so, had ever tried it.

A high percentage of 78% of the sample had thought of becoming self-employed, of which 81.5% had actually made attempts at it. Through an open-ended question the participants were asked what kind of self-employment they had tried. The "street unemployed's" attempts at self-employment included the selling of vegetables and fruits, the selling of raw or cooked meat, and the brewing and selling of traditional alcoholic beverages. However, only 17.1% of those who had tried such kinds of self-

employment were still involved in it at the time the study was conducted. This figure is not as large as the number of those who were no longer involved in self-employment schemes (52.5%). The main reasons mentioned for having stopped self-employment was lack of money to sustain the business, (60.4%), followed by not making enough profit (19.8%), and other reasons such as helpers stealing the profits and/or the products for sale (also 19.8%).

The main reason mentioned by the respondents for not having tried self-employment was the lack of initial capital to start the business (81.8%), followed by those who indicated in the questionnaire that they either did not know what to do or simply did not know how to go about becoming self-employed (13.6%).

Approaching employment agencies

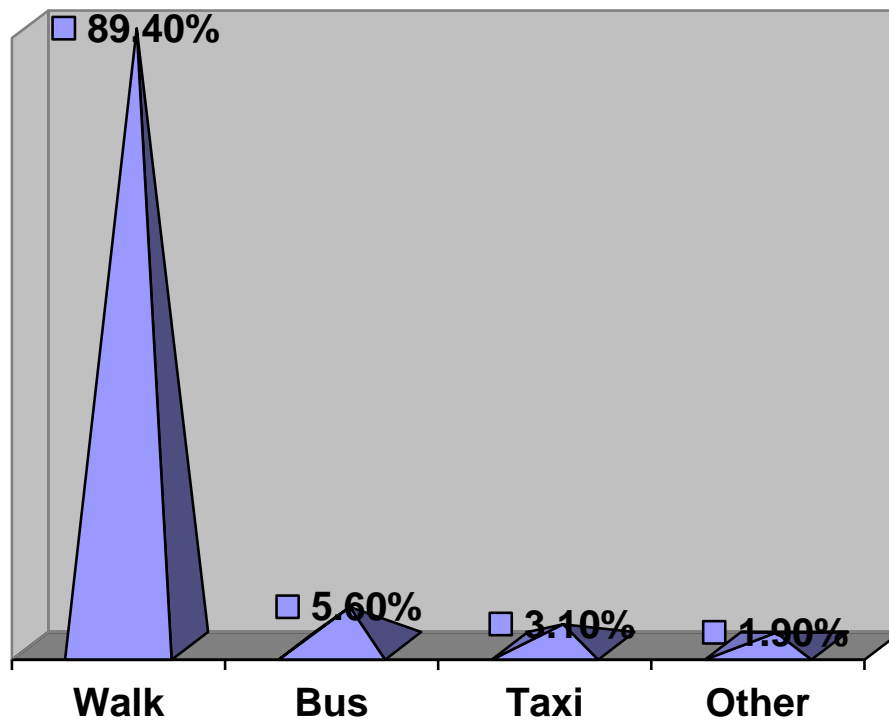
Another three questions investigating job seeking behaviour were related to employment agencies. Of considerable interest is that three quarters of the sample (75.6%), did not know about employment agencies. Only 24.4% of the respondents knew about them. The latter were asked whether they had also approached such agencies. Of this 24.4%, 69.2% had actually approached employment agencies, whilst 30.8% of these had not. However, only 53.9% of those who had approached unemployment agencies actually received feedback.

Efforts made to find work on the streets

These results on job seeking behaviour clearly indicate that a number of Windhoek's "street unemployed" do show some initiative in actively seeking employment irregardless of their long-term unemployment. This is even more commendable against the background of the specific circumstances the "street unemployed" face in Namibia in general, as already mentioned in the introduction. In view of the fact that the few employment agencies available do not cater for unskilled or unqualified people and that job advertisements in the print and other media are not common for people without skills or qualifications, the target group investigated here has no choice but to go to certain points on the streets.

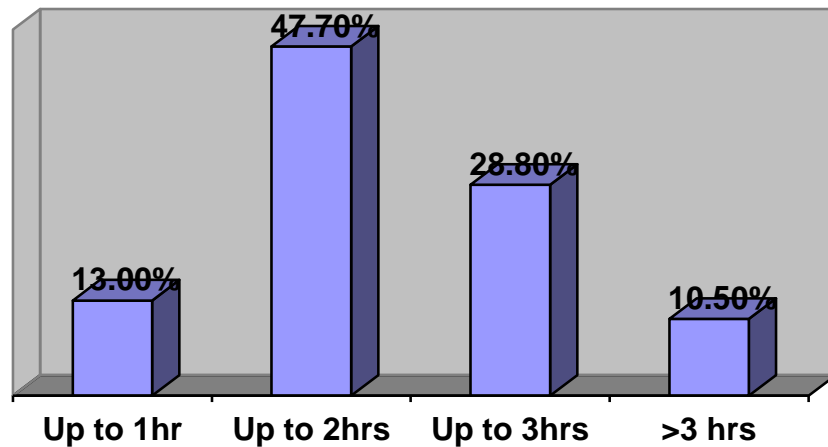
In order to better appreciate the effort made by the unemployed to reach the various street points around Windhoek, it would be worthwhile to be aware of the following. Most Namibian urban settlements are designed as centres with sprawling isolated suburbs with long distances in between them. It is therefore very difficult to move from one part of town to the next without transport. Buses are very rare, and taxis are the generally preferred mode of public transportation. Taxis are, however, expensive and not affordable for those who do not have a regular income. Therefore the "street unemployed" have no choice but to walk these long distances to central points in search for a job (cf. graph 10).

Graph 10: Mode of transportation to the waiting points



As graph 10 illustrates the great majority (89.4%) of the respondents walk to the various points in town where they wait for work. Only 5.6% take a bus and 3.1% use taxis. 1.9% indicated "other" modes of transport but did not elaborate further. The fact that nearly 90% of these "street unemployed" have to walk becomes even more significant in the light of the long distances from their homes to various waiting points. Most of the respondents stay in the far reaches of Katutura, the biggest high density suburb in Windhoek which is some 15 odd kilometers north west of the city. Therefore, the "street unemployed" have to spend a considerable amount of time walking from their homes to town to look for work (cf. graph 11).

Graph 11: Amount of time taken to walk to a waiting point



Graph 11 shows that 10.5% of the respondents have to walk for more than three hours (one way only) to reach their waiting point and 28.8% are compelled to walk up to three hours. 47.7% of the job seekers walk up to two hours and 13% walk up to one hour. These results become even more astounding when taken in conjunction with the result regarding their arrival times at the waiting points.

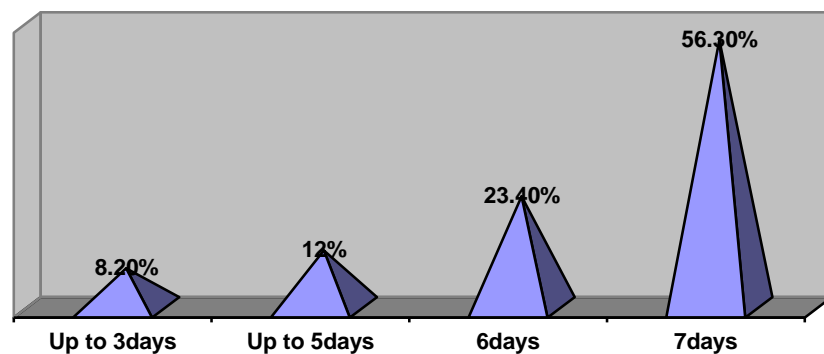
25.9% of the investigated "street unemployed" arrive at their waiting points around 7am each morning, and 50% arrive around 8am. 24.1% indicated "other" times of arrival without specifying. The implication of these results is that some of the respondents would have to start walking at or before 4am each morning to get to their waiting points at the said times. As can be imagined this effort not only takes its toll on the respondents' physical health (particularly in view of the fact that they mostly do not eat well as will be shown below) but also their mental well-being. This

was illustrated in the qualitative part of the study when one of the interviewees stated: *"You do not sleep freely because you keep thinking it must be time to wake up and go and look for a job"* (case 6:8).

In view of the long distances they have to walk it is also interesting to note the times when the "street unemployed" depart for home after looking for work. 34% of the respondents depart for home by 1 o'clock. Another 33.3% depart between 1 and 2 o'clock whilst 25.2% depart between 2 and 4 o'clock p.m. A small number of 7.5% of the respondents depart only later between 4 pm and 6pm.

With regard to job seeking behaviour the respondents were also asked how many days a week they look for work (cf. graph 12).

Graph 12: Number of days the unemployed search for work per week



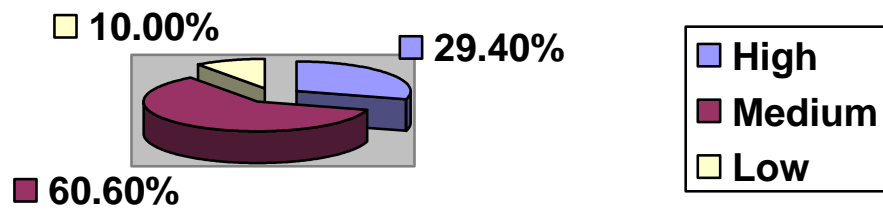
These results in graph 12 are surprising in the sense that 56.4% of the respondents come to the streets seven days a week to look for a job and an additional 23.4% try

their luck six days a week. Only 12% of the respondents come to the streets five days a week and a minority of 8.2% up to three days a week in order to find work.

These findings on job seeking behaviour indicate that despite their circumstances most of the "street unemployed" do not give up and remain motivated to actively change their situation. It is obvious that they persistently stick to a rigid time table in searching for work. This is especially interesting in view of the fact that, although they do not have to, the "street unemployed" leave home early in the morning in order to be at their waiting spots at a specific time and stay there for another specified time before returning home (also at a specific time). In other words these unemployed men structure their days very much as employed people do. Hence, in view of all the above presented efforts of the "street unemployed" to better their plight, it can be concluded that they are definitely not "lazy" as is often heard in public.

In order to present a summarized picture of the efforts made in job seeking behaviour an index was built out of the following variables: approaching companies, searching for work in other towns, approaching employment agencies, number of days searching for work on the streets per week and daily hours waiting for work at the street. For instance, someone who had approached companies and searched for work in other towns and approached employment agencies and came six to seven days a week to the streets and waited there up to eight hours each day received a high level of job seeking behaviour. In the same manner the medium and low levels were also determined. Graph 13 shows the summarised results.

Graph 13: Level of job seeking behaviour



Graph 13 shows that 29.4% of the respondents could be categorised as having a high level of job seeking behaviour and 60.6% with a medium level. Only 10% fell into the category of low level of job seeking behaviour.

Crosstabulations and hypotheses testing

The level of job seeking behaviour was crosstabulated with the demographic variables. Here the hypothesis was that the more children the unemployed have the higher their level of job seeking behaviour would be. This hypothesis was confirmed in the sense that those respondents who had no children were significantly more

amongst the ones with a low level of job seeking behaviour although the correlation between these two variables (number of children and level of job seeking behaviour) is regarded as weak ($\rho = .28^{***}$).

No significant correlations were found between job seeking behaviour and the other demographic variables.

As mentioned before, literature reports that the length of unemployment can negatively affect job seeking behaviour. This was therefore why the variable length of unemployment was correlated with the different variables of job seeking behaviour, as well as with the level of job seeking behaviour.

The hypotheses for the latter was that the longer someone is unemployed, the lower his level of job seeking behaviour would be. This hypothesis was, however, not confirmed.

Nor were any significant correlations found between length of unemployment and the individual job seeking behaviour variables, except for the variable "searching for work in companies." Here, respondents who were unemployed for more than three years were significantly more amongst those who "often" had searched for work at companies. The correlation was, however, quite weak ($\rho = .16^*$).

6.4 Financial situation and poverty

As shown in chapter 5.2, researchers differ on their opinions about the influence of loss of income as a contributor or cause of subjective stress within unemployment. For example, Jahoda (1982) argues that it is more the loss of what she describes as the 'latent functions' of work rather than the loss of payment that is assumed to cause psychological deterioration. However, although research cannot make a definite correlation between lack of money and subjective stress, one could safely assume that lack of money could inadvertently mean the lack of basic commodities. This could therefore be perceived as at least potentially stressful, particularly in countries such as Namibia which cannot provide unemployment benefits. Hence, in order to investigate the financial situation of the respondents, a number of questions were asked ranging from the amount of money respondents get per job, to average income per week, to whether or not they have any other means of income, to how they experience their financial situation.

The qualitative part of this research has shown that the financial situation of the "street unemployed" is greatly dependent on how often they get per job. Therefore, as part of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked how often they get a job per week. Table 4 shows the results.

Table 4: Frequency of getting a job per week

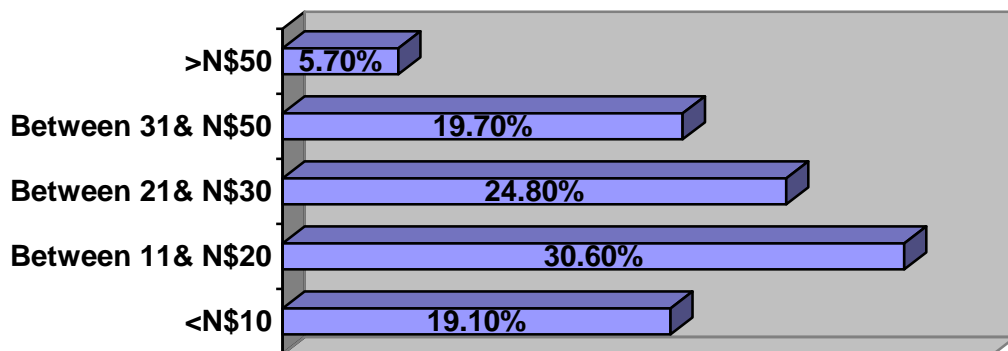
“HOW OFTEN DO YOU GET A JOB PER WEEK?”	
Once a week	40.6%
Two to three times	17.5%
More than three times	7.5%
Everyday	1.9%
Sometimes nothing at all	32.5%

Juxtaposed with the effort the "street unemployed" make in order to find work (see above, job seeking behaviour) the results in table 4 can only be seen as rather pitiful. 40.6% of the respondents succeed in getting a job only once a week. Another 17.5% of the sample indicated that they get a job two to three times a week whilst 7.5% reported that they get a job more than three times a week. A very small number of 1.9% are apparently the lucky ones who get a job every day. Imperative to note is that almost a third (32.5%) of the participants indicated that sometimes they do not receive a single job for an entire week. These results clearly indicate that per week, the majority of the "street unemployed" get either no jobs at all or only one job per week. This, of course, highlights the desperate financial situation the "street unemployed" find themselves in on a daily basis.

The interviews of the qualitative part of the study showed that the jobs mostly available to the "street unemployed" include some form of gardening. This usually entails digging, weeding and cleaning of yards. Another common type of job is loading and/or unloading of various goods into or out of vehicles and/or buildings/homes. Other jobs available also include the cleaning of homes, building or

construction work, welding, and carpentry. In other words, these jobs usually entail hard manual labour albeit with extremely low wages as shown below in graph 14.

Graph 14: Payment received for a job



The results in graph 14 clearly indicate a form of exploitation of the "street unemployed" in terms of the payment they receive for the jobs they do (in the qualitative part of the research it was found that the "street unemployed" are paid according to a job done, independent of the labour input and how long it takes). Almost a fifth of the sample (19.1%) usually receive less than N\$10 for a job. The biggest percentage of the respondents (30.6%) earn between N\$11 and N\$20, another 24.8% receive between N\$21 and N\$30, whilst 19.7% earn between N\$31 and N\$50 for a job. A paltry 5.7% of the sample receive more than \$N50 per job. This means that about three quarters of the sample (74.5%) earn less than N\$30 per job, a shocking result especially in light of the fact that the majority of the respondents either get only one job per week, or nothing at all (cf. table 4 above). These figures

of payment per job would be better understood in view of the fact that Windhoek is one of Africa's most expensive cities, and N\$30 is by far not enough for food let alone accommodation and other basic needs.

With such low remunerations and the low probability of getting a job, it is therefore not surprising that 52.9% of the sample have less than N\$30 available per week, of which 23% have less than N\$10 available per given week. Another 22.3% have between N\$30 and N\$50, whilst only 24.8% of the sample have more than N\$50 per week (as shown in the questionnaire results). One can only imagine what kind of sacrifice it is to live on such meager budgets. This especially in light of the fact that 83.3% of the respondents indicated in the questionnaire that they have no other means of income.

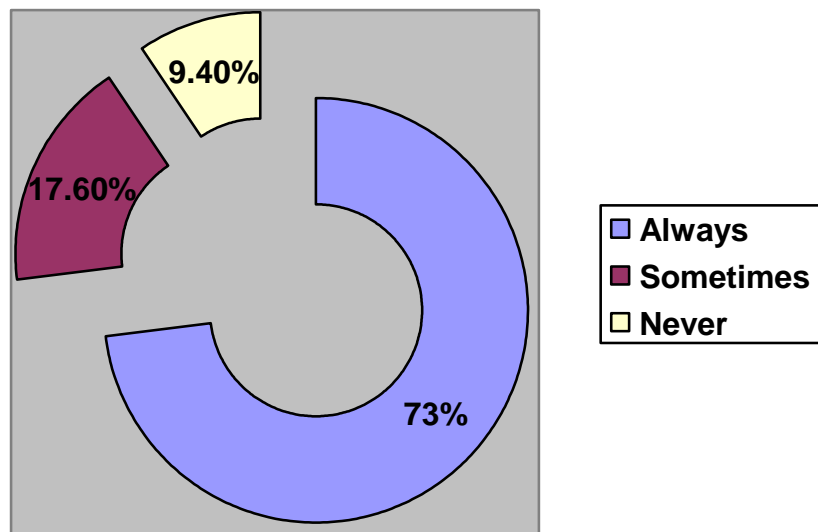
The financial situation of the Namibian "street unemployed" can best be described as desperate. It is a seemingly hopeless situation characterised by poverty and hunger (see results below). The impression given in the interviews of the qualitative study that a great number of the "street unemployed" go for days without a proper meal due to lack of money is very real (see also the results on social support below). When the unemployed are on the streets, most of them do not have even a morsel to eat or to drink while waiting for hours for a job to come their way.

81.3% of the questionnaire respondents indicated that they never eat anything at all while waiting on the streets for a job. 13.8% only sometimes get something to eat,

whilst a dismal 5% always have something to eat. In addition and especially in light of the extremely hot and dry Namibian climate, it is astounding that 70.6% of the sample do not even have anything to drink while waiting on the streets, also that 21.9% only sometimes have something to drink and that just 7.5% always have something to drink.

Throughout the interviews 'hunger' was a recurring theme constantly referred to by the interviewees. Therefore, in the questionnaire the respondents were asked whether they felt hungry or not (cf. graph 15).

Graph 15: Feeling of hunger



Graph 15 shows that an overwhelming 73% of the respondents report feeling hungry 'always' with an additional 17.6% who feel hungry 'sometimes'. This is in stark contrast to the 9.4% who reportedly 'never' feel hungry. In juxtaposition to the mainly manual jobs available to the "street unemployed", these results are especially pertinent. One can only imagine what it would be like to do heavy manual labour on an empty stomach.

To get a clear idea as to subjective stress experience in relation to finance, the respondents were asked how they experience their financial situation. The results are shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Financial stress experience

“HOW DO YOU EXPERIENCE YOUR FINANCIAL SITUATION?”	
Very stressed	56.6%
It is difficult but I can cope	29.6%
Not stressful	8.8%
I do not know	5.0%

As is clear in table 5, the percentage of respondents who find their financial situation very stressful was 56.6%. Although representing more than half of the sample, this figure admittedly falls far short of what one might expect. This especially in respect to the meager payments the respondents obtain per job and money available per week, let alone per month. 29.6% of the respondents indicated that they do

experience their financial situation as difficult, 'but can cope,' whilst 5% did not know how they felt about their financial situation. Interestingly, there was a small percentage of respondents (8.8%) who indicated that they did not experience their financial situation as stressful.

It could be assumed that the percentage of those who reported experiencing high subjective financial stress may be lower than expected because of the helpful input of the social support system (cf. results below).

Crosstabulations and hypotheses testing

Crosstabulation between demographic variables and financial stress did not reveal any significant correlations.

However, the hypothesis that financial stress would correlate with the variable stress of not having employment was confirmed as follows: the more financial stress someone experienced, the more stress about not having employment was experienced ($\rho = .34^{***}$).

Another hypothesis which was confirmed was that those who experience no financial stress are significantly more from those who are never hungry although the correlation was also quite weak ($\rho = .22^{**}$).

The hypothesis that the higher the financial stress, the higher the level of job seeking behaviour would be, was not confirmed.

The hypothesis that the longer someone is unemployed, the higher the financial stress would be, was also not confirmed.

Interesting to note is that the hypothesis that the more money available per week, the lower the financial stress, was also not confirmed.

6.5 Social network situation

Literature emphasises that social support can be a buffer to subjective stress experience during unemployment (cf. chapter 5.7). The African family support system is still largely in place in Namibia and may be a significant economic buffer for many people with financial and other needs. Within African families it is common to have several members (inclusive of the extended family) taking collective responsibility of the household needs such as food, rent and amenities. This collective approach helps lessen the burden on the shoulders of all concerned especially considering the daily expenses involved in urban communities. In order to investigate their social support base, the respondents were asked whether someone

was helping them with food, accommodation, money, and finding a job. The results of this investigation are presented in table 6.

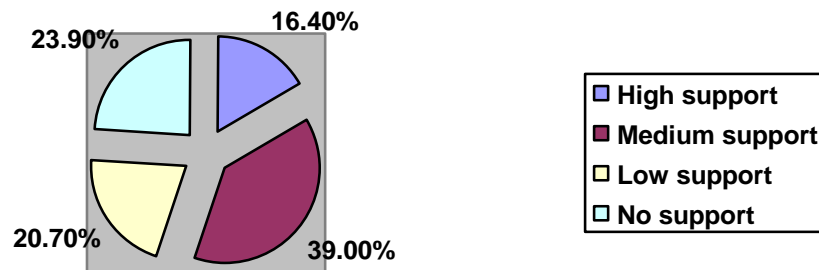
Table 6: Social support

IS SOMEONE HELPING WITH	FOOD	ACCOMODATION	MONEY	JOB SEEKING
No-one	55.4%	33.8%	55.7%	69.8%
Relatives	22.6%	32.5%	20.9%	14.5%
Friends	13.2%	24.2%	16.4%	11.3%
Both relatives and friends	8.8%	9.5%	7.0%	4.4%

What is immediately apparent in table 6 is that a sizeable amount of the family and friends of the respondents are willing to support their unemployed relatives with accommodation (66.2%). However, they are a lot less willing to help with food (44.6%), monetary support (44.3%), and finding a job (30.2%). The provision of food seems to be an especially crucial issue as was vividly expressed by the interviewees in the qualitative part of the study. One of the interviewees spoke about his family's behaviour concerning food: *"I can only watch as they quickly and secretly consume their food"* (case9:3).

An index for social support was built on the basis of the results presented in table 6 in order to summarise the level of social support (cf. graph 16).

Graph 16: Index social support



Graph 16 shows that the level of social support received by the "street unemployed" can be summarised as high for 16.4% of the respondents, as medium for 39.0%, and as low for another 20.7%. Nearly a quarter of the sample (23.9%) could be categorised as receiving 'no support'. These figures are especially surprising as they refute the notion of social support through the African extended family. Perhaps this could be seen against the background of extremely high costs of living in Windhoek which could contribute to the erosion of the traditionally held courtesies in terms of social support towards members of the extended family. However, the lack of social support could perhaps also be linked to the unemployment status of the respondents. They were asked whether they thought that their unemployment status negatively affected their relationships with family and friends.

Contrary to literature based expectations, a relatively high percentage of the respondents indicated that their unemployment status does not affect their relationship with their family (63.3%) and friends (58.9%). However, 29.7% of the

respondents indicated that their unemployment status does negatively impact their relationship with their family and 32.9% experienced the same with regard to their friends. In the interviews of the qualitative study, a number of interviewees reported feelings of lowered and degraded positions within the household. This sentiment was expressed by an interviewee who said: *"My social position compared to my friends is low, in fact I don't fit in the group as I don't have a job"* (case 10:4). Other interviewees felt that their family members had either ambivalent or negative feelings about their unemployment situation. One interviewee elaborated on this as follows: *".....To them <the family> I am like an unpleasant person because I do not have a job. They do not look at me in the same light as the other people in the house who are working.....Yes indeed the relationship has changed since I do not have a job. When it comes to discussing things you find that you are always not included in the discussions"* (case 4:6/7). This quote not only highlights a loss of respect, stature and standing within the family, but also highlights the loss of dignity and even dehumanisation of the affected individual in the face of even the younger members of the family.

In regard to stress experience, the respondents were asked how they experience the support of their relatives or friends (cf. table 7).

Table 7: Experience of social support (refers to those who reportedly receive support)

“HOW DO YOU EXPERIENCE THE SUPPORT OF YOUR RELATIVES OR FRIENDS?”	
Very helpful	26.8%
Helpful	42.9%
I don't know	3.6%
Not very helpful	18.7%
Not helpful at all	8.0%

The figures in table 7 refer to the respondents who receive either high, medium or low social support, of which 26.8% indicated that they experience the support as 'very helpful' and 42.9% as 'helpful'. Another 3.6% of the respondents chose the category 'I don't know'. 18.7% of the respondents indicated that they did not experience their social support as helpful whilst 8% experience it as 'not helpful at all'.

Crosstabulations and hypotheses testing

Crosstabulations between the index social support and demographic variables did not show any significant correlations except with age. The age group of 41 years and above received significantly more often no support than the other age groups. The correlation was, however, quite weak ($\rho = .22^{**}$).

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

1. The lower the social support, the higher the job seeking behaviour would be. This hypothesis was confirmed, although, the correlation coefficient was not that strong ($\rho = .33^{***}$).
2. The longer someone is unemployed, the less that person would receive social support. This hypothesis was not confirmed.
3. The more social support someone receives, the less stress is experienced about not having employment. This hypothesis was not confirmed.
4. The more social support someone would receive, the less he would experience financial stress. This hypothesis was not confirmed.
5. Those whose unemployment status affects their relationship with family or friends negatively receive a lower level of social support. This hypothesis was not confirmed.
6. The higher the level of social support the more helpful it is perceived as. This hypothesis was confirmed with a relatively high correlation of $\rho = .46^{***}$.

6.6 Loss of control and helplessness

The results presented thus far give an indication of the situation of Windhoek's "street unemployed". Against this background the question arises: What are the psychological repercussions of it? This question has already been partly answered with regard to three variables: i.e. stress about not having employment, financial stress, and experience of social network support. To gain more insight into the psychological effects of unemployment, further variables were investigated. As already explained in chapter 4, Seligman's Theory of Learned Helplessness has been applied as the theoretical framework for this study. Seligman's research has proven that loss of control or the subjective perception of it makes the individual learn to generalise their helplessness, even in situations which they may be able to control. An important concept of Seligman's reformulated theory (Abramson et al., 1978) is that of *causal attribution* which could help to explain individual differences in responding to loss of control. *Locus of control* as well as *universal vs. personal helplessness* are other concepts Seligman highlights as important.

The present study was based on the assumption that unemployment, especially long-term unemployment, could be perceived as a situation of loss of control and thus learned helplessness could result from it. Therefore, the different concepts applied in Seligman's theory were operationalised through specific questions in the questionnaire distributed to the "street unemployed".

Causal attribution

According to Seligman, causal attribution will determine the generality and chronicity of the helplessness deficits (i.e. cognitive, motivational and emotional) which in turn can have an impact on self-esteem (cf. chapter 4). In the questionnaire causal attribution and its *internal vs. external* dimension was operationalised with the question: "Do you think you have to blame yourself for being unemployed?" Selfblame could be seen as a factor hampering the general well-being and contributing to the lowering of self-esteem of an unemployed individual (cf. chapter 3.2.1). Table 8a shows the results to the question on self-blame.

Table 8a: Selfblame (internal vs. external causal attribution)

"DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE TO BLAME YOURSELF FOR BEING UNEMPLOYED?"	
Yes (internal causal attribution)	12.1%
No (external causal attribution)	68.8%
I don't know (undecided)	19.1%

Contrary to western literature which reports about the problem of self-blame amongst unemployed people (Kates et al., 1990) the Namibian situation seems to be somewhat different. In table 8a one can see that 68.8% of the respondents indicated

that they do not blame themselves for their situation, compared to only 12.1% who replied that they blame themselves. It is worthwhile to note, however, that 19.1% indicated that they did not know whether they blamed themselves for not being employed. According to Abramson et al. (1978), this result connotes that the sample had a predominantly external causal attribution (68.8%) whilst only 12.1% ascribe to an internal causal attribution.

The dimension *stable vs. unstable* causal attribution was operationalised with the question "Do you think the reason for your unemployment can ever be solved?". The results are presented in table 8b.

Table 8b: Do the "street unemployed" think that their unemployment situation can ever be solved? (stable vs. unstable causal attribution)

"DO YOU THINK THE REASON FOR YOUR UNEMPLOYMENT CAN EVER BE SOLVED?"	
Yes (unstable causal attribution)	38.5%
No (stable causal attribution)	24.4%
I don't know (undecided)	37.2%

As is evident in table 8b, only 38.5% of the respondents thought that the reasons for their unemployment could ever be solved, an indication of an unstable causal attribution. 24.4% replied "no" to the above mentioned question and could therefore be assumed to have a stable causal attribution. However, a relatively large percentage

of 37.2% replied "don't know" to the same question, which could be regarded as indifference.

The third dimension of causal attribution (*global vs. specific*) was operationalised through the question "Do you think the reason for your unemployment is also causing other problems in your life?" Table 8c shows the distribution of the responses.

Table 8c: Unemployment causing other problems in respondents' lives (global vs. specific causal attribution)

“DO YOU THINK THE REASON FOR YOUR UNEMPLOYMENT IS ALSO CAUSING OTHER PROBLEMS IN YOUR LIFE?”	
Yes (global causal attribution)	80.3%
No (specific causal attribution)	10.2%
I don't know (undecided)	9.6%

As can be seen in table 8c a high percentage (80.3%) of the respondents believe that the reason for their unemployment is causing other misfortunes in their present lives which could be regarded as an indication of global causal attribution. Only 10.2% do not believe that the reason for their being unemployed brings other problems in their lives and therefore can be assumed to have a specific causal attribution. However, 9.6% of the respondents indicated that they did not know whether or not the reason

for their unemployment is indeed causing other problems in their lives, i.e. their causal attribution cannot be classified as either global or specific.

According to Seligman's theory, internal, stable and global causal attribution would be a prerequisite for the development of depression as a result of helplessness. Thus, those respondents who showed a pattern of an internal-stable-global causal attribution as well as those who had an external-unstable-specific causal attribution were selected. It was, however, surprising to note that only six respondents showed these two attribution patterns. Instead, the participants revealed a variety of patterns of causal attribution which are presented in table 9.

Table 9: Patterns of causal attribution

ATTRIBUTION PATTERN	N	%
Internal-stable-global	3	2.0
External-unstable-specific	3	2.0
Internal-unstable-global	9	5.9
Internal-unstable-specific	1	0.7
External-stable-specific	5	3.3
External-stable-global	23	15.0
External-unstable-global	41	26.8
Internal-undecided-global	3	2.0
Internal-undecided-specific	-	-
Internal-stable-undecided	2	1.3
Internal-unstable-undecided	-	-
Undecided-stable-global	2	1.3
Undecided-stable-specific	1	0.7
Undecided-unstable-global	3	2.0
Undecided-unstable-specific	-	-
external-undecided-global	22	14.4
external-undecided-specific	5	3.3
external-stable-undecided	2	1.3
external-unstable-undecided	2	1.3

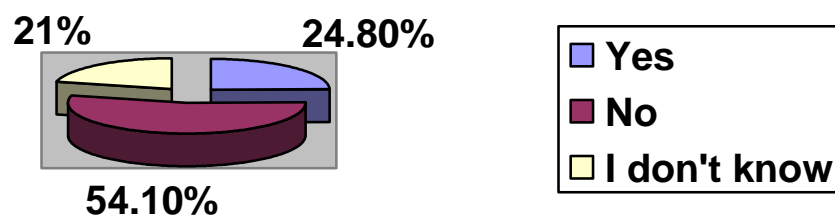
Undecided-undecided-global	16	10.5
Undecided-undecided-specific	1	0.7
Undecided-undecided-undecided	4	2.6
internal-undecided-undecided	-	-
external-undecided-undecided	3	2.0
Undecided-unstable-undecided	1	0.7
Undecided-stable-undecided	1	0.7

Table 9 shows that Namibia's "street unemployed" apparently do not show the classical attribution patterns toward their unemployment situation as would have been expected through the theoretical framework. Only 2% of the sample had an internal-stable-global attribution pattern which would make them prone to depression according to Seligman's reformulated theory. The attribution pattern of external-unstable-specific was also found to be true of only 2% of the sample. The attribution pattern which was found to be most prevalent in the sample was external-unstable-global (27.2%) followed by external-stable-global (15.2%). As becomes quite obvious from table 15, many of the unemployed were undecided with regard to the different dimensions of causal attribution. 14.6% for instance, had an external-global causal attribution but were undecided with regard to the stability of their unemployment situation. These results, which may appear as a surprise or even a disappointment (with regard to the assumptions made through the theoretical framework), will further be discussed in chapter 7.

Personal vs. universal helplessness

In chapter 4 it was explained that Abramson et al. (1978) included a dimension of *personal vs. universal helplessness* in explaining differences in the experience of loss of control. Personal helplessness refers to the expectation that a certain event (in this study unemployment) could be uncontrollable for some people, whilst universal helplessness includes the expectation that the event would be uncontrollable for all people. In this study the dimension of helplessness was operationalised by narrowing it down to the Namibian context through the question "Is government doing enough to solve unemployment?". A reason for using this question was an observation that whenever people are faced with certain socio-economic problems, they tend to blame their government. A common contention might be that this externalisation of their causal attribution helps them in coping with whatever they may be going through. In view of the extremely high unemployment rates in Namibia, the assumption behind this question was that an attribution of the causes of unemployment to the government could be an indication of universal helplessness (i.e. the individual Namibian can do very little to change the situation) whilst a denial of such an attribution would be an indication of personal helplessness. Graph 17 shows the results.

Graph 17: "Is government doing enough to solve unemployment?" (universal vs. personal helplessness)



The expectation that unemployed people would blame the government was proved correct in 54.1% of the cases. These respondents indicated that they believe that the Namibian government is not doing enough to solve the problem of unemployment. This result connotes universal helplessness. 24.8% of the "street unemployed" did, however, respond "yes," i.e. that they do believe that the Namibian government is doing enough to solve the problem of unemployment. They, therefore, can be assumed to be experiencing personal helplessness in terms of unemployment. An additional 21% indicated that they do not know whether the government is doing enough to solve the problem of unemployment in Namibia.

Crosstabulations

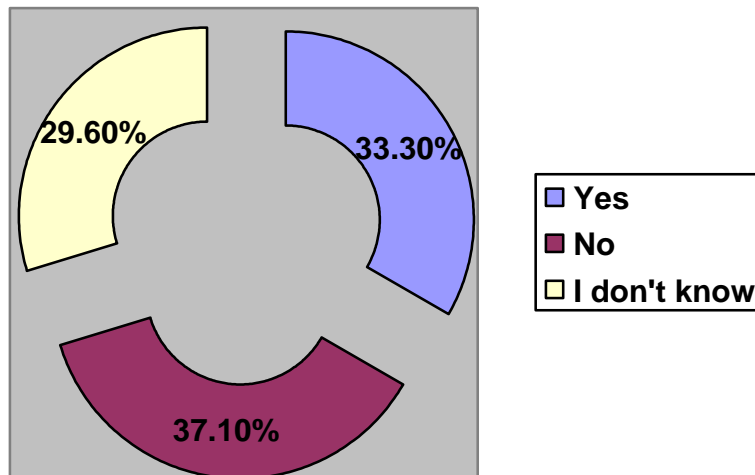
- Internal vs. external causal attribution correlated with universal vs. personal helplessness in the sense that those men who chose the category 'undecided' in the first variable were significantly more amongst those who also stayed 'undecided' in the second variable ($C = .33^{***}$).
- Stable vs. unstable causal attribution correlated with universal vs. personal helplessness in the sense that those men who chose the category 'undecided' in the first variable were significantly more amongst those who also stayed 'undecided' in the second variable ($C = .27^*$).
- No significant correlation was found between global vs. specific causal attribution and universal vs. personal helplessness.

Locus of control

As described in chapter 4, Abramson et al. (1978) also included the concept of "locus of control" (Rotter, 1966, 1975) in their reformulated theory of learned helplessness. This concept refers to the expectation of an individual to control outcomes. In this particular study, locus of control was operationalised with the question "Do you

think if you come to the streets every day there is a chance for you to find fulltime employment?" Graph 18 shows the results to this question.

Graph 18: "Do you think if you come to the streets every day there is a chance for you to find fulltime employment?"



As presented in graph 18, 37.1% of the respondents believe that coming to the streets everyday may not help them find fulltime employment and, therefore, can be assumed to have an external locus of control. Of interest is that an almost similar percentage of 33.3% replied "yes", i.e. they expect to find fulltime employment by coming to the streets every day which could be an indication of internal locus of control. 29.6% of the respondents, however, indicated that they did not know

whether coming to the streets would better their chances of fulltime employment or not.

Crosstabulations

- Locus of control correlated with universal vs. personal helplessness in the sense that those men with internal locus of control were significantly more amongst those with personal helplessness ($C = .27^*$).
- Locus of control correlated with internal vs. external causal attribution in the sense that those men who chose the category 'undecided' in the first variable were significantly more amongst those who also stayed 'undecided' in the second variable ($C = .32^{***}$).

6.7 Self-esteem

As mentioned previously, according to Abramson et al. (1978) causal attribution determines the generality and chronicity of helplessness deficits as well as the self-esteem of a person. In this study self-esteem was operationalised through a number of statements in the questionnaire which reflected what the "street unemployed" thought about the way they are perceived by others. Certain generalisations made by the interviewees in the qualitative part of the study were put as statements on a 5-

point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. It was assumed that these statements were indicators of self-esteem in the construct of G.H. Mead's "me" (as discussed earlier). The different statements and the results are presented in table 10.

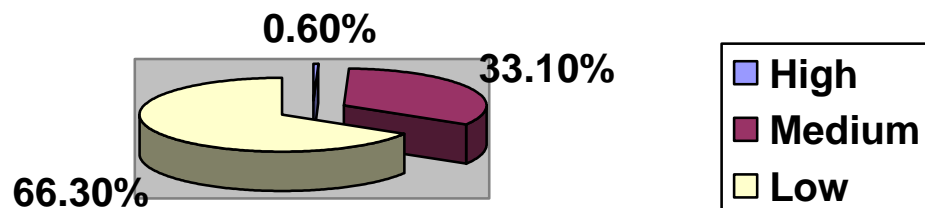
Table 10: What the "street unemployed" believe other people perceive of them

SELF-ESTEEM	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DIS-AGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Someone unemployed is unpopular	76.1%	11.9%	1.3%	5.7%	5.0%
Someone unemployed is living in poverty	79.9%	13.8%	0.6%	5.0%	0.6%
Someone unemployed is also a human being	82.4%	10.1%	1.9%	3.8%	1.9%
People passing by see you as an idiot	68.6%	15.7%	11.3%	3.8%	0.6%
People passing by see you as a stupid fool	65.4%	13.8%	14.5%	4.4%	1.9%
People passing by see you as someone dirty	68.1%	10.0%	11.9%	5.6%	4.4%
People passing by see you as a human being	31.3%	30.6%	16.3%	13.8%	8.1%
People passing by do not even look at you	53.8%	23.4%	10.8%	7.6%	4.4%
People passing by do not care about you	62.0%	19.6%	13.9%	2.5%	1.9%

Table 10 shows a clear picture that the respondents assume they are perceived extremely negatively by others in general. As can be seen from the table, most respondents marked the "strongly agree" category in response to the nine statements. This could be an indication of a low self-esteem.

The responses to all nine generalisations were then summarised into an index for the variable self-esteem. Some of the different items were recoded in order to bring them onto the same scoring level. In other words, the higher someone scored in negative perceptions, their lower the level of self-esteem was. Graph 19 shows the summarised results of self-esteem.

Graph 19: Level of self-esteem



Graph 19 shows that the majority of the sample apparently has a low self-esteem (66.3%) followed by 33.1% who fall into the category of medium level self-esteem. Only one person (0.6%) scored highly on levels of self-esteem.

Crosstabulations and hypotheses testing

A hypothesis was that those who blame themselves for being unemployed also have a low self-esteem. This hypothesis was, however, not confirmed as no significant correlation between internal causal attribution and self-esteem was found.

The three dimensions of causal attribution were also correlated with self-esteem. Here again, no significant correlations could be found between self-esteem and internal vs. external causal attribution, and also not between self-esteem and stable vs. unstable causal attribution. It was, however, found that those with a low self-esteem were significantly more amongst those with a global causal attribution ($C = .29^{**}$).

No significant correlation was found between self-esteem and universal vs. personal helplessness, length of unemployment, job seeking behaviour or stress about not having employment.

A slight correlation was found between self-esteem and social support. This result supports the hypothesis that those who received no social support at all were significantly more amongst those who had a low self-esteem ($\rho=.20^*$). Crosstabulations between self-esteem and the subjective experience of social support, however, did not lead to significant correlations.

With regard to job seeking behaviour no significant correlation was found between this variable and self-esteem.

No significant correlation was found between self-esteem and the stress about not having employment.

A significant correlation of $\rho=.31^{***}$ between self-esteem and financial stress was found in that those who experienced high financial stress showed a low self-esteem.

6.8 Depression

As also described in chapter 4, the feeling of helplessness comes along with cognitive, motivational and emotional deficits which could lead to depression. Depression has been known to be a major consequence of unemployment. In this

study the variable depression was investigated through a series of statements on an ordinal scale, ranging between often, sometimes and never. The statements were used as indicators for depression (DSM-IV, 1994) and the results are presented in table 11.

Table 11: Statements reflecting depression.

DEPRESSION	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
I feel dejected and overwhelmed	73.0%	21.0%	6.9%
I feel nervous and restless	62.9%	22.0%	15.1%
It is difficult for me to concentrate	35.4%	33.5%	31.0%
I do my chores very slowly	27.0%	33.3%	39.6%
I feel anxious	26.6%	24.1%	49.4%
It is difficult for me to make decisions	50.3%	28.3%	21.4%
I do not have much zest for life	31.2%	22.9%	45.9%
I brood a lot	74.4%	19.4%	6.3%
I have a passion for certain things/activities	66.0%	24.5%	9.4%
I have doubts about my capabilities	46.9%	26.3%	26.9%

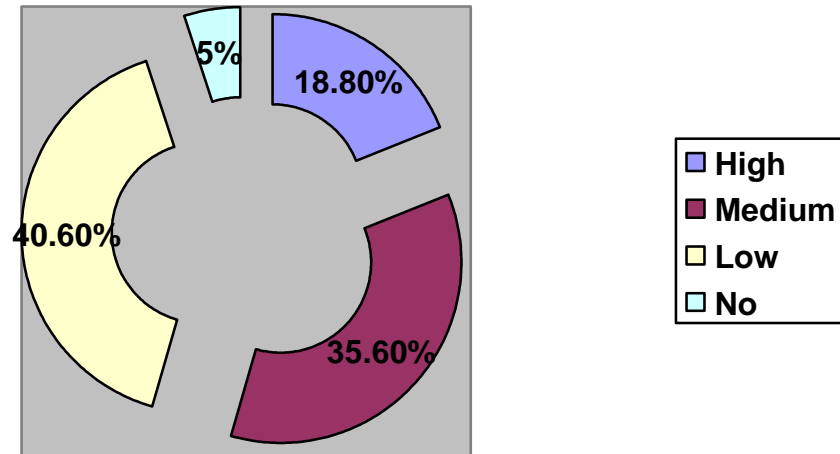
I have nightmares	53.1%	33.8%	13.1%
I feel limb and without energy	38.8%	41.3%	20.0%
I feel insecure	55.3%	18.9%	25.8%
I feel useless	51.3%	26.6%	22.2%

Table 11 shows that most of the respondents reported that they often experience the indicators for depression. For instance, it is obvious in table 11 that an extremely high percentage (73%) often feel dejected and overwhelmed. Similarly, another high figure of (62.9%) often feel nervous and restless. 74.4% of the respondents reported that they often brood a lot. More than half of respondents indicated that they often feel insecure (55.3%), have nightmares (53.1%), and feel useless (51.3%). However, against all these negative statements it was interesting to note that 66.% of the respondents reported often having a passion for certain things/activities.

The scores of the different depression statements were then summarised into a single variable representing depression, ranging from high depression to no depression.

Graph 23 shows the result.

Graph 20: Depression score



Graph 20 depicts that 18.8% of the respondents could be identified as highly depressed, 35.6% could be categorized as having medium depression values, and 40.6% with low depression values. Only 5% of the respondents could be classified as having 'no depression.' These results should be of major concern as 95% of the respondents can be said to have some form of depression.

Crosstabulations and hypotheses testing

The hypothesis formulated was that the lower the self-esteem, the higher the depression. A weak correlation between these two variables was found ($\rho = .27^{***}$). However, the hypothesis was not exactly confirmed as formulated. It was the group of

unemployed exhibiting low self-esteem which had significantly more high or medium depression scores whilst the group with medium levels of self-esteem had significantly lower depression.

Another hypothesis was that those unemployed men who felt very stressed about not having employment would also be found amongst those with a high level of depression. This hypothesis was confirmed, albeit with a low correlation ($\rho = .17^*$).

The hypothesis that the higher the financial stress, the higher the level of depression was also confirmed with a weak correlation of $\rho = .15^*$.

The hypothesis that the longer someone is unemployed, the higher the depression was not fully confirmed, although a slight correlation between the two variables was found ($\rho = .17^*$). Those men who were unemployed for three years were significantly more amongst those ones with high depression scores, followed by those who had been unemployed for more than three years.

The hypothesis that the higher the social support, the lower the depression, was not confirmed.

With regard to the theoretical framework, the hypothesis was that an internal-stable-global causal attribution would lead to depression. In view of the fact that only three respondents reflected this pattern of causal attribution, this hypothesis could not be tested. Interesting to note, however, is that of the three men with the above mentioned causal attribution only one had a high level of depression, another exhibited a low level of depression, and the other showed no signs of depression at all.

Another hypothesis was that an external-unstable-specific pattern of causal attribution would lead to no depression. This hypothesis could also not be tested as only three respondents showed this pattern. Interesting to note was that two of the respondents scored on a medium level of depression and the other on a low level of depression.

None of the three dimensions of causal attribution correlated significantly with depression. These results will be further discussed in chapter 7.

No significant correlation was found between depression and universal vs. personal helplessness.

6.9 Alcohol consumption

It is well documented that depression can lead to the abuse of alcohol. In Namibia it is common to hear people accusing the "street unemployed" of being "just drunkards". With this view in mind, the questionnaire asked the respondents how often they drink alcohol (if at all), when they usually drink alcohol, and what kind of beer they usually drink. Table 12 shows the results to the first question:

Table 12: Frequency of alcohol consumption

"HOW OFTEN DO YOU USUALLY DRINK ALCOHOL?"	
Everyday	20.8%
Only on weekends	22.6%
Three to five times a week	4.4%
Once a month or less	10.1%
I do not drink alcohol	42.1%

As is visibly clear from the table 12, 42.1% of the respondents indicated that they do not drink alcohol at all. A fifth (20.8%) of the respondents drink some form of alcohol everyday whilst 22.6% drink only on weekends. 4.4% drink three to five times a week whilst 10.1% drink once a month or even less. The respondents were also asked "When do you usually drink alcohol?" The results showed that 19.5% of the sample could be regarded as social drinkers as they usually drink when they are with friends. This was followed by 18.2% who drink only when they have money, and 8.2% who said that they drank whenever it was available. What was of considerable interest to me, however, was that 10.1% of the respondents said that

they drank whenever they were thirsty, whilst 3.8% whenever they were hungry and one respondent (0.6%) whenever they felt bad.

Another question: "What type of alcoholic beverage do you drink?", was used partly as a control question and partly as a question to assess whether the alcoholic beverages that these respondents consume pose any health risks to themselves or not. Amongst those who drink, the most common alcoholic beverage was epwaka, a traditional opaque alcoholic beverage widely available in shebeens and rural homes. This brew can easily have an alcohol content of 15% (only about 5 times that of a normal clear beer!) on average. Of even more concern should be that the next most popular alcoholic drink was tombo (13.1%). Tombo, although still largely opaque, has been known to have well over 60% alcohol content (over 20 times the alcohol content of a clear beer!). Not only is there a concern that the alcohol percentages in both brews are high, but in addition there is the added concern of the conditions under which these above mentioned beverages are brewed. Added to this, brewers of these concoctions gain their reputations according to the potency of their brews. Consequently, all sorts of inconceivable items, objects and substances are often thrown in at some stages of the brewing process as catalysts to the process. All of these which could pose a serious health risk to the consumer, especially considering that the price of both substances are below a tenth of a pint of normal beer. Following these two beverages, another 11.7% of the respondents drink the bottled beer lagers.

Imperative to note is that a number of those who do not drink alcohol wrote down their responses in the category 'other' and therefore neglected to respond that they do not drink alcohol. This is also clear from the non-alcoholic beverages they wrote down such as coca-cola, oshikundu and water, when asked to specify the beverage they usually drink. In other words, these respondents misconstrued the question to mean that they were meant to specify the beverage of their choice.

Crosstabulations

No significant correlations were found between alcohol consumption and length of unemployment, stress about not having employment, financial stress, depression or self-esteem.

6.10 Psychosomatic disorders

Research has also highlighted the prevalence of psychosomatic disorders amongst the unemployed (cf. chapter 3.2). Some of the psychosomatic disorders usually noticeable are insomnia, dermatitis, bronchitis, headaches, stomach aches, tonsillitis, and indigestion. Thus, in the questionnaire, a few questions investigating

psychosomatic symptoms were presented to the respondents on an ordinal scale. The results are summarised in table 13.

Table 13: Psychosomatic symptoms

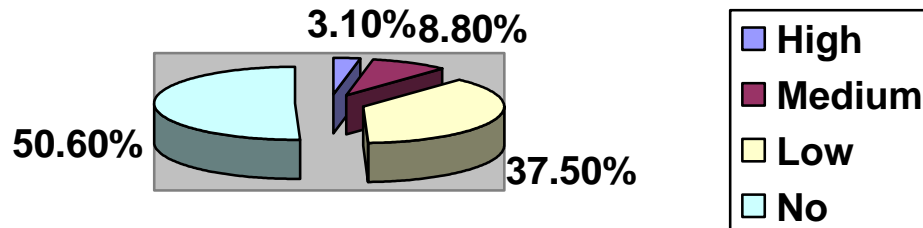
PSYCHOSOMATIC DISORDERS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
Headaches	12.5%	18.1%	69.4%
Stomach aches	17.6%	23.3%	59.1%
Bronchitis	7.5%	13.1%	79.4%
Throat problems/ Tonsillitis	8.1%	25.6%	66.3%
Indigestion	9.6%	32.5%	58.0%
Sleeping difficulties	34.2%	25.3%	40.5%
Heart aches	3.8%	5.7%	90.4%

Table 13 shows that apart from sleeping disorders, the majority of the sample reported never experiencing any of the other disorders. Sleeping difficulties were, however, often experienced by 34.2% and sometimes experienced by 25.3% of the respondents.

In the interviews of the qualitative part of this research psychosomatic disorders were also reported. For example, one interviewee elaborated as follows: "*I think a lot, so I do not sleep well. In most cases when I sleep I will wake up and not get back to sleep. Stomach pain is frequent and even my heart pain is frequent because of all the problems, an indication that you do a lot of thinking*" (case 9:8). Insomnia due to nagging thoughts was also identified as another psychosomatic disorder by other interviewees : "*Sometimes I sleep quite peacefully, while at other nights I lie awake thinking what I should do in order to get a job, or where to get money whenever there is no food in the house*" (case 1:7). Nagging thoughts were also identified as a cause of headaches, as in the following case: "*... I don't suffer from headaches everyday, but only on those days that I have been thinking a lot for a long time*" (case 6:9).

An index for psychosomatic disorders was built on the basis of the questionnaire results and aggregate scores for each respondent (cf. graph 21).

Graph 21: Index psychosomatic disorders



As can be observed from graph 21, the prevalence of psychosomatic disorders amongst the respondents was much lower than expected. 50.6% of respondents reported suffering no psychosomatic disorders at all whilst 37.5% reportedly suffer low psychosomatic disorders, 8.8% scored on a medium level and only 3.1% apparently suffer from high psychosomatic disorders.

Hence, in comparison to other unemployment studies, these figures seem relatively low but clearly show that psychosomatic disorders are by no means completely absent from the Namibian "street unemployed".

Crosstabulations and hypotheses testing

No significant correlation was found between psychosomatic disorders and self-esteem.

No significant correlation was found between psychosomatic disorders and universal vs. personal helplessness.

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

1. The higher the level of depression, the higher the level of psychosomatic disorders. This hypothesis was confirmed, and those unemployed men who had no depression were significantly more often amongst those who had no psychosomatic disorders ($\rho = .28^{**}$).
2. The longer someone is unemployed, the higher his level of psychosomatic disorders. This hypothesis was not confirmed.
3. The more stress one experiences about not having employment, the higher his level of psychosomatic disorders. This hypothesis was not totally confirmed. However, those men who were unemployed for three years were significantly more amongst those with a high level of depression, followed by those men unemployed for more than three years ($\rho = .24^*$).

4. The higher the level of social support, the lower the level of psychosomatic disorders. This hypothesis was not confirmed.
5. The more sleeping disorders experienced, the higher the alcohol consumption. This hypothesis was not confirmed.

6.11 Time experience and future orientation

As mentioned in 3.2.5, the availability of time can become a problem to unemployed people and a decline in pro-active planning behaviour was observed in several studies. In the questionnaire of this study, the "street unemployed" were asked whether they wear a watch (as an indicator of awareness of time), whether they plan their day and whether they feel bored. Table 14 shows the result.

Table 14: Dealing with time

ARE YOU	WEARING A WATCH?	PLANNING YOUR DAY?	FEELING BORED?
Often	31.4%	59.1%	43.4%
Sometimes	23.3%	28.3%	35.2%
Never	45.3%	12.6%	21.4%

Table 14 shows that 31.4% "often" wear a watch, while 23.3% only sometimes wear a watch. However, the bigger percentage of 45.3% of the respondents never wear watches. Admittedly one cannot read too much into this variable's results, especially because the latter may not wear a watch simply because they do not have one and/or cannot afford one.

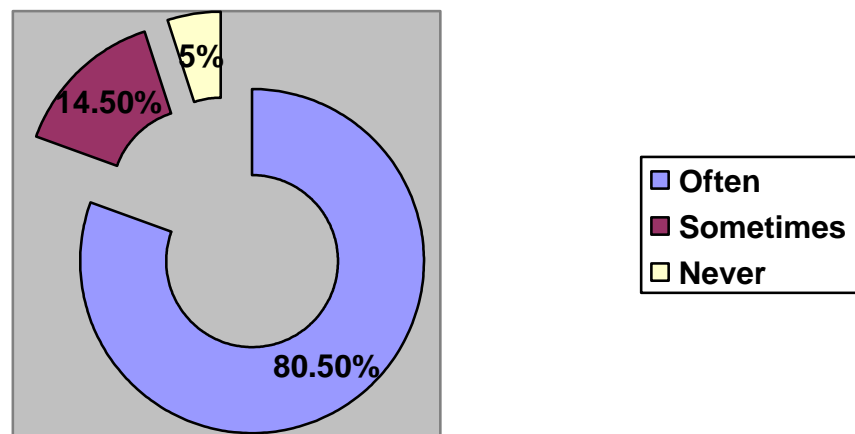
59.1% indicated that they "often" plan their day and 28.3% do so only "sometimes." However, only 12.6% responded that they "never" plan their day. This result contradicts the expectation mainly brought by western literature that, due to unemployment people, stop planning their day. The contradiction was already obvious from the results concerning job seeking behaviour. These results made it clear that the "street unemployed" follow a certain time structure.

In view of the fact that the "street unemployed" sometimes get a job only once per week or even less and therefore have to spend the majority of their time sitting at waiting points, the results about boredom are rather surprising. Only 43.4% feel bored "often," whilst 35.2% feel bored only "sometimes." Also a surprising figure of 21.4% of respondents indicated that they "never" feel bored.

Unemployment research has shown that the future perspective of unemployed people often declines and that hopelessness increases with long-term unemployment (Argyle 1990). A decline in future orientation and hopelessness can be a result of depression. In this study the respondents were asked whether they think about their future and

also whether they have dreams about their future. Graph 22 shows the result concerning the first question.

Graph 22: "Do you think about your future?"

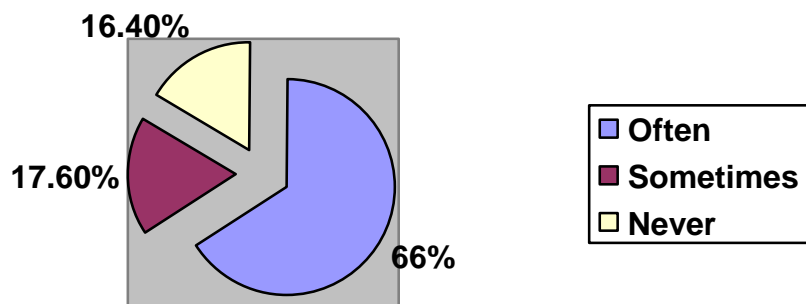


In fact, 80.5% of respondents think about their future "often", whilst an additional 14.5% at least "sometimes" think about their future. Only 5% indicated that they "never" think about their future. These results show that an overwhelming majority of the respondents often think about their future, contrary to the reported lack of future orientation amongst the unemployed in literature. The interviews in the qualitative part of this research revealed, however, that many of the "street unemployed's" thoughts are negatively inclined and linked to their unemployment situation. Several interviewees for example expressed doubts about ever getting a job, others expressed fears concerning the development of their offspring. The following are quotations from some interviewees revealing both doubt and hopelessness concerning whether they think about their future: *"Yes, whenever I see*

someone with his own house ... then I think to myself would there ever come a day when I will also be like that" (case 1:9). Another interviewee said: "I'm wasting my time, there will never come a day that I too for example will drive past in a nice car like other men" (case 2:10). Case 10 expressed his feeling of hopelessness as follows: "Even if I were to think about it <the future>, it does not help. I have no work" (10:9). Significantly only one of the ten interviewees had a positive idea concerning his future: "Yes, to get a job and to help my sisters who are still in school, this will enable them to make good progress" (case 3:7.).

Regarding the question of whether the "street unemployed" have dreams about their future, graph 23 shows the results for the questionnaire respondents.

Graph 23: "Do you have dreams about your future?"



With specific reference to the results on depression, one may not expect the "street unemployed" to have dreams about their future. Surprisingly enough, 66% of the respondents indicated that they "often" dream about their future whilst 17.6% reportedly dream about their future "sometimes." Imperative to note, however, is that 16.4% responded that they "never" have dreams about their future.

In the qualitative part of the study, only one of the ten interviewees said he had no dreams about his future. Especially interesting were the following four responses. Case 2 stated: *"I want to wed my wife"* (2:11). Case 5 said *"I dream of the day I can tell my friends that I have got myself a good job"* (5:12). Case 3, who expressed serious doubts as to whether he would ever get a job, responded to the same question as follows: *"No I never dream about anything ... No. Only a job"* (3:10). Most of the respondents' dreams, however, referred to buying things, as expressed by case 8: *"Yes I dream of buying a very nice pair of shoes which will cost N\$ 500 or trousers for N\$ 400"* (8:9).

In the qualitative study the respondents were also asked: "What would you like to do or be if you had no limitations?" Interestingly enough, all responses concentrated mainly around job issues. Some respondents had specific ideas as expressed in the following quotations: *"I just want to work, a job, anything would be fine"* (case 3:11). Case 2 further elaborated: *"I would like to have a house, my house where I would be staying together with my wife and children. So that I do not see my children only whenever and if ever I can find a bit of money. That is very difficult for me"* (2:10).

One other respondent expressed his singular desire, just to have money as follows (Case 8): *"I only want to get money, even when there is a problem then I would be able to help"* (8:9).

Crosstabulations and hypotheses testing

The hypothesis that the longer someone is unemployed, the less he would plan his day, was not confirmed.

The hypothesis that the longer someone is unemployed, the less he would feel bored, was also not confirmed. Contrary to this expectation it was found that those men unemployed for three years were significantly more amongst those who 'often' experienced boredom. Those unemployed for more than three years were significantly more amongst those who 'sometimes' feel bored ($\rho = .19^*$).

Future orientation did not correlate significantly with length of unemployment, age, number of children or locus of control. However, it was found that the unemployed men with a high level of depression were significantly more amongst those who 'often' think about their future ($\rho = .15^*$).

6.12 Perceptions about education

In view of the fact that most of the "street unemployed" have a low level of education, the questionnaire respondents were asked whether they would have liked to continue with school education. 77.7% of the respondents replied with "Yes", whilst 17.2% answered with "No." The remaining 5.1% indicated that they did not know whether or not they would have liked to continue with school.

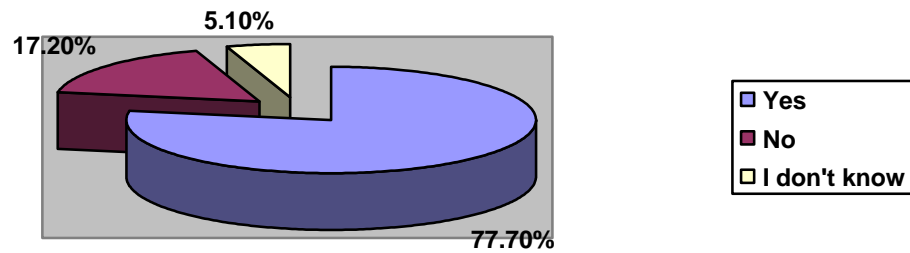
The low level of education amongst the respondents, despite the fact that a large majority of them would have liked to continue with education, may raise the question of why they did not. To better understand this result one could make use of the interviews conducted in the qualitative part of the study. There, lack of money or financial support were mentioned by most of the interviewees as reasons for not having continued with school. One interviewee expressed these sentiments as follows: *"My plan was to continue with school, but I could not do that since there was no-one to help me to pay money for the school"* (case 9:3). Other reasons mentioned for not having continued with school were linked to the disadvantageous political situation of the pre-independence era that also negatively affected education in Namibia. Age ("too old") as well as family responsibilities (e.g. providing for parents or younger siblings) were other reasons mentioned for not having continued with school. Others reported that they had to leave school to look after their parents' cattle. One interviewee disclosed that he had been expelled from school for

disciplinary reasons. He said: "*...I tried to be disciplined but sometimes I just can't. I don't really know ... why I couldn't obey my teacher's rules*"(case 6:3).

The respondents were further asked whether they thought that their lack of education had something to do with their unemployment situation. 58.5% of the respondents attributed their unemployment to their lack of education. 20.1% did not link their educational level to their unemployment situation. 12.6% replied "I do not know" to the same question. However, 8.8% of the respondents did not feel they had a lack of education. In the qualitative part of this research the interviewees were also asked whether they thought that their lack of school education had something to do with their being without a job. The majority of them gave rather indifferent replies, such as "*Maybe. I cannot really say it is because of that or not because I don't really know why I do not have a job up until now*" (case 1:3) or "*No, I have not yet analysed it <the reason for being unemployed>, I will still analyse it*" (case 6:3).

Concerning education the questionnaire respondents were also asked whether they would be willing to study further now if they were afforded the opportunity. Graph 24 shows the results.

Graph 24: Would the "street unemployed" like to continue with education if they had the opportunity?



The majority of the sample (77.7%), would be interested in further education. These respondents can be assumed to expect that further education would better their chances in the labour market (as was also expressed in the interviews). Another 5.1% did "not know" whether they would want to continue with education or not. A few respondents (17.20%), however, indicated no interest at all in continuing with education.

Crosstabulations

Crosstabulations with other variables did not reveal any significant correlations.

7. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

It was the objective of this study to investigate the psychological repercussions of unemployment on people unemployed in an African country, more specifically the "street unemployed" in Namibia's capital city of Windhoek. The study aimed to answer the research question: What does the situation of Namibia's "street unemployed" entail and what are the psychological repercussions of it?

The results of this study make it clear that Namibia's unemployment situation is characterised by a number of constraints for the "street unemployed" which are of specific relevance to the psychological well-being of the unemployed as well as to society in general.

This study makes it clear that unemployment in Namibia, and particularly street unemployment, is multi-faceted. Firstly, it comprises of mainly young people. Secondly, most of these young people have never worked before. Thirdly, most of them cannot be said to have a reasonable education, and further, there are also older people who may have worked before but have been out of work for a long time.

The life situation of the "street unemployed" is characterised by lack of money and dependency on relatives and friends. With the vast majority of the respondents reporting that they only get less than N\$30 per job of which they get about once per week, sometimes even less, it is clear that they are living in abject poverty when taking into consideration that Windhoek is one of the most expensive cities in the continent to live in. It is therefore not surprising that most of the respondents reported feeling stressed about their financial and social situation. This was further enhanced by the psychological strain that the respondents felt about not having employment.

Contrary to western literature which reports a paralysing effect of long-term unemployment on job-seeking behaviour as well as a decrease in planning behaviour and time structures, Namibia's "street unemployed" maintain not only a rather strict time structure but also put large amounts of effort into their job seeking behaviour. The results have shown that almost all of the respondents walk distances of 15 to 20 km to their waiting points in town. Unexpectedly, most of the "street unemployed" showed a time pattern very similar to that of employed people in the sense that they wake up at a certain time everyday, try to be at their waiting point at a certain time (between 7 and 8 am), wait for a job for a specific amount of time before returning home at a specific time in the afternoon. One would expect that the "street unemployed" would become demoralised in their coming to the streets with such low frequency of getting a job, and such poor payment per job as mentioned before. However, it is quite the contrary. Most of them look for a job with such rigid tenacity as six to seven days a week.

One major concern is the young age of the "street unemployed" (the average age of the sample was 25,6 years). In a world that is so bent on measuring the worth of a man by what he does for a living and with regard to the results of this study, the question arises: How does a young man in the prime of his youth feel about being unemployed? As already shown in chapter 2, paid employment fulfils a number of important functions in one's life. These functions include opportunities for gaining recognition and developing competence, personal independence, a sense of purpose and value, friendships and social contacts, all of which are important to a person's identity and self-esteem (Jahoda, 1982; Feather, 1990; Argyle, 1990; Statt, 1994). Hence, for the young Namibian "street unemployed" of whom 39.2% in this sample have never had employment in their lives, it could be assumed that they cannot fulfill what they and their society expect of them, which could further be assumed to have adverse effects on a young man's self-esteem and general well-being.

Developmental psychology teaches us that as one reaches an age of young adulthood, one feels the need to "do something with one's life." This is usually in the form of some kind of work which fulfils the need to be useful in one way or another. If this need is not fulfilled it could become a major source of stress experience. Indeed within the results of this study an overwhelming number of respondents (80.6%) reported feeling very stressed about not having employment. Their stress experience was further exacerbated by the negative self-perceptions they hold of themselves, which in this study, were regarded as indicators for low self-esteem. This was illustrated by the fact that many of the investigated "street unemployed" believe that other people perceive them in an extremely negative light. Not only could this be a subjective belief but it may indeed reflect an objectively true situation, since a negative perception of the "street unemployed" is often expressed through the media, such as in readers' letters, on radio "chatshow" and on TV programmes. Such a negative public perception can be assumed to affect the self-esteem of the people concerned. It is therefore not surprising that 66.3% of the sample was categorised as having a low self-esteem.

A negative sense of self and a low self-esteem may also have an effect on the identity development of the young "street unemployed". As is also clear from developmental psychology, one's identity could be influenced by a severe social life trajectory such as unemployment. As can be imagined, for a young man trying his best to find employment and failing on a daily basis, as is the reality for many of the investigated "street unemployed", the constant disappointment may eventually affect the identity formation. As already mentioned in the chapter on youth unemployment (chapter 3.2.4), studies have shown the negative impact of unemployment on identity formation as a result of the lack of opportunities provided by work experience (Hess et al., 1994). This could also be assumed for the young generation of Namibia's "street unemployed."

The results regarding the financial situation of the "street unemployed" are characterised by exploitation, poverty and hunger. The result that 72.5% of the sample always feels hungry could also be an expression of a certain psychological 'hunger'. One could speculate that an unemployed individual may always feel 'hungry' even when he may have had a satisfying meal because the 'hunger' is a physiological response of the body to what is essentially a psychological need for fulfillment.

Literature reports that living in poverty can reduce the future perspective of the people concerned as they have to concentrate on the present in order to survive (Argyle, 1990). A lack of future perspective was not confirmed in the present study. In fact, the results showed that 80.5% of the "street unemployed" think often about their future. However, it should be noted that the "street unemployed's" future perspectives are negatively inclined. This became clear during the interviews when a sense of hopelessness was expressed through talking about the future. Having a negative future perspective, and this already at a young age, can again be assumed as a negative attributor to identity formation.

With such negative effects on the individual, it is not surprising that unemployment would also affect the unemployed in their relationship with family and friends. This especially because of the way the world views money and the materialism that emanates from having this prized commodity. In this world one needs money to be able to obtain just the basic needs for a decent life. Not having employment means one has no money, which was illustrated by the results on the financial situation of the "street unemployed". Hence, his value to himself, family, friends and society at large is diminished. This was aptly described by one of the interviewees who said about his status within his family home: "... *even in discussions you are always excluded*" (5:7).

It is clear from the results of this study, Windhoek's "street unemployed" feel quite stressed about their unemployment situation in general, and their financial and social network situation in particular. What also became clear through the results of this study is that the "African social support network" is seriously under strain, at least for Windhoek's "street unemployed". Apparently the relatives and friends in somewhat more privileged positions are willing to help their unemployed counterparts but only to a limited extent. The results pointed out that whilst relatives and friends are willing to help with accommodation, they are certainly a lot less willing to help out with food and money. This result clearly shows a sharp erosion of the perceived African tradition of 'Ubuntu' according to which, amongst other things, it would not be the norm not to share food with a relation who stays within the household. Hence, probably due to economic strains in families, the African social network support is under threat and one would expect that in future an unemployed youth can no longer anticipate much help from relatives and friends.

Although most of the investigated "street unemployed" were not married, nearly 60% had children (58.3%). This not only means some form of parental responsibility on them but can also be assumed to add more strain to the "street unemployed's" already meager resources. The question arises what it does to a father who cannot take care of his children because of a lack of financial income, no matter how hard he tries. Many of the "street unemployed" reported that they could only see their children once a year or even less. The same applies to those who are married and who see their wives only once a year or less. One can only imagine the strain on parental and marital relations. In this sense unemployment may be a contributing factor to a changing social order with young mothers raising children in the absence of fathers. In Namibia's colonial past it was the contract labour system which kept the men and fathers away from their families and which led to serious social-psychological effects (Hishongwa, 1992), in these days it is unemployment.

Unemployment in Namibia: a loss of control situation

In view of the high unemployment rates in Namibia, the fledgling economy, the lack of job opportunities and the lack of education due to the past Apartheid regime and its concept of "Bantu education", one can safely argue that for many of the unemployed, the unemployment situation is out of their personal control and therefore necessarily stressful. The results of this study have proven that the Namibian "street unemployed" experience multiple stresses: stress due to the lack of employment, financial stress, and stress within their social support system. This study has also shown that Namibia's "street unemployed" are seriously prone to depression (95% of the sample showed signs of depression).

It was the assumption of this study that loss of control would lead a person to an experience of helplessness which could result in depression, particularly in cases of long-term unemployment and in combination with certain patterns of causal attribution. This assumption was based on Seligman's reformulated Theory of Learned Helplessness which constituted the theoretical framework for this study.

However, the results of this study have shown that the classical patterns of internal-stable-global attribution vs. external-unstable-specific causal attribution were only established in 4% of the cases (2% each per attribution pattern). Instead the attribution pattern found most often in the sample was external-unstable-global (26.8%) followed by external-stable-global (15%). These results pose questions as to how they could be understood.

It could perhaps be argued that the operationalisation of the variables meant to measure the different dimensions of causal attribution could make the validity of the dimensions questionable. However, it could also be equally argued that the results as found in this regard could make sense as they are.

The results of the three dimensions of causal attribution showed that the majority of the "street unemployed" had an external causal attribution (68.8%). In view of the high unemployment rates in Namibia, an external causal attribution could be regarded as a realistic attribution: when unemployment figures are high and job opportunities low, then it is less dependent on the individual whether he can find work or not. With regard to the stable-unstable dimension of causal attribution a relatively high number of respondents (37.2%) were undecided as to their attribution whilst 38.5% had an unstable causal attribution. Both the undecided as well as the unstable attribution in principal reveal a sense of hope that the situation could still change in the future. In the same vein, to be undecided in this regard also makes sense because when unemployment is perceived as being caused by external factors one therefore cannot really predict whether the situation could ever be stable or unstable. In regard to the global-specific dimension, most of the respondents clearly showed a global attribution (80.3%). In other words they attribute the reason for their being unemployed as the cause of other problems in their lives. Such a causal attribution by the "street unemployed" also makes sense in view of the fact that financial, family and other social problems of the "street unemployed" are indeed inextricably linked to their current status of being unemployed.

Viewing the dimensions of causal attribution from the perspective of the Namibian "street unemployed," the question arises as to whether the assumed patterns of internal-stable-global and external-unstable-specific are indeed part of a holistic reality, or whether they just present the problem of dichotomy. The implicit assertion of the latter is that one necessarily needs to ascribe to a certain causal attribution, never a combination nor bordering on the other attributions but necessarily a clear case of either/or. As clearly shown by the Namibian "street unemployed, this dichotomic approach may be erroneous and misleading. It is indeed possible to have various combinations and even at times indecision for causal attribution.

Although the patterns of causal attribution held by the "street unemployed" could be said to make sense, the question still remains as to why so many of them score on the depression index. In view of the fact that none of the three dimensions (treated as individual variables) correlated significantly with depression and also not with the dimension universal vs. personal helplessness, a direct link between causal attribution and/or helplessness to depression cannot be made, at least not for the sample of the Namibian "street unemployed" investigated in this study. It was, however, interesting to see that locus of control significantly correlated with helplessness in the sense that those of the "street unemployed" with an internal locus of control were significantly more those with personal helplessness. As there was no significant correlation between helplessness and depression, it could perhaps be that it is locus of control which plays a bigger part in determining depression than causal attribution. This would, however, require further investigation.

The high incidence of depression amongst the Namibian "street unemployed" could perhaps be confirmation of the assumption that it is not helplessness which makes people depressed, but rather the stress experienced when confronted with loss of control that makes one prone to depression (cf. chapter 4; Holmes, 2000). This assumption could, to a certain extent, also be regarded as having been confirmed, as those of the "street unemployed" who experienced high levels of psychological strain due to lack of employment and financial stress were significantly more amongst those with a high level of depression.

The findings in this study are by no means conclusive. Rather, they show a clear need for further research on unemployment in general, causal attribution, locus of control, stress experience in connection with locus of control, and in particular, experiences of personal helplessness.

8. CONCLUSION

As has been discussed in this thesis, unemployment is a global phenomenon that is escalating worldwide. In response to this ever growing threat, this thesis aimed to explore the specific situation of people unemployed in an African country from a psychological perspective.

As has been illustrated in this thesis, psychological research on unemployment contains a variety of results referring to the effects of unemployment on psychological well-being, self-esteem, job seeking behaviour, and even physical health. Such results, however, are mainly based on studies conducted in the western world. I tried, with the assistance of various libraries, to find psychologically relevant unemployment research conducted in African countries. It seems that unemployment in Africa is mainly viewed from an economic perspective but not from a psychological one. One could conclude that the psychological burden which unemployment carries for the African individual is not receiving the attention it deserves.

It was the objective of this thesis to empirically investigate the psychological effects of unemployed people in an African country, specifically in Namibia. Namibia has high unemployment rates, amongst which youth unemployment is perhaps the most prevalent. The country's economy cannot sustain unemployment or other benefits for the unemployed and therefore does not offer them. Although the Namibian government is trying valiantly to boost the employment sector, it is still the responsibility of the individual to fend for himself in this regard.

The study focused on a specific group of the country's unemployed which could be said to be characteristic of the Namibian context, i.e. the "street unemployed" (men who attempt to find work by waiting along the road sides of Namibia's capital city Windhoek). The general research question was: What does the situation of Namibia's

"street unemployed" entail and what are the psychological repercussions of it? To answer these two subquestions a qualitative-quantitative research approach was applied.

The results of this study illustrate that the majority of the "street unemployed" do not stand a good chance to succeed on the country's job market owing to their lack of education and vocational training. Most of the respondents are, however, aware of this disadvantage and would be willing to take up further education if given the opportunity.

In Namibia, education especially needs to play a central role in combatting unemployment. Not only does the education sector have the responsibility to prepare young minds for employment, but also the duty to infuse the same young minds with the necessary skills to become entrepreneurs and employers unto themselves. As is done in many countries, perhaps more emphasis on practical subjects such as woodwork, metalwork, building, agriculture, fashion and fabrics, home economics and even the arts, sport and culture should be given in all schools from early stages of education. These are subjects that practically show the pupil how to use his/her hands in order to make a living so that when they leave school they have at least some know-how of how to help themselves and others, and thus stay off the streets. The same pupils could also be easier trained through vocational centres to better make use of these skills learnt in schools.

Although the job seeking behaviour patterns of the "street unemployed" could be regarded as commendable owing to the effort that they make to reach their waiting posts, their chances of finding fulltime employment on the streets are more or less non-existent. The result that so many of the investigated "street unemployed" were youth or young adults who had never been employed, clearly shows that the Namibian economy and the formal and informal employment sectors are not growing fast enough to absorb the majority of Namibian school leavers. Even those who have

previously been employed and therefore have some form of work experience and maybe expertise, also stand very little chance of being re-employed whilst on the streets. The results concerning reasons for being unemployed (referring to those who had previously been employed), could be regarded as an indication of instability in the employment sector. Nearly three quarters of the "street unemployed," who had previously been employed, had been dismissed for reasons not of their own doing (mainly due to retrenchments or the closing down of the companies that they had worked for). Such reasons are clear examples of a situation of loss of control for these former employees. The question therefore arises as to whether the labour rights of particularly the low income employees are being sufficiently catered for.

Most of Namibia's "street unemployed", could probably be classified as long-term unemployed, as was the case in this study. Literature has shown that such people are at high risk of developing both psychological and physiological health problems (cf. chapter 3). What should be of considerable concern are the high scores of depression and clear signs of very low self-esteem amongst the "street unemployed" found in this study. It cannot be expected of a person with a low self-esteem to become a successful entrepreneur nor a productive employee. The prognosis of a nation with vast numbers of its young people not only unemployed, but also showing signs of depression and low self esteem cannot be good. Hence, the burden on Namibia's national health budget could be assumed to be escalating unabated owing to unemployment. A multi-faceted approach, involving amongst others the health sector, is needed in order to seriously address the problem of unemployment in this country. It could be recommended that Namibia urgently looks to individual experiences, as expressed throughout this thesis, from a national point of view in order to ensure healthy individuals in its society.

Africans place much emphasis on the social support network which usually comprises of the nuclear family, extended family relations and friends. From the results of this study it is clear that although somewhat still in existence, this support

system is, however, under very serious threat. Although many relatives and friends were willing to help with accommodation, most of them were not as willing to help with food and money. It could be understood that money is a commodity hard to come by in any society, but in an African setting providing food for every soul under your roof is taken almost as a given. Therefore, when such common courtesies as sharing food with a guest or a relation are being forgone, this can only point to an erosion of the entire concept of the African social support network.

In addition to the above mentioned results this study also made clear that the chosen theoretical framework "Learned Helplessness," as reformulated by Abramson et al (1978) inclusive of causal attribution and locus of control, would need further research. It became apparent that Namibia's "street unemployed" do not ascribe to the classical attribution patterns regarding their unemployment situation as would have been expected through the reformulated theory. The results of this study indicate support for the notion that it is rather the stress experienced when confronted with a situation of loss of control, such as unemployment in Namibia, which makes people prone to depression, than a certain pattern of causal attribution. However, further research in this regard would be necessary. It would also be interesting to conduct further unemployment research with other target groups such as unemployed women, unemployed university graduates and qualified job seekers within the unique Namibian constellation.

7. REFERENCES

Abramson, L.Y., Seligman, M.E.P. & Teasdale, J.D. (1978). Learned helplessness in humans: critique and reformulation. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 87, 49-74.

Amundson, N.E. (1996). Supporting clients through a change in perspective. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 33, 155-163.

Argyle, M. (1990). *The Social Psychology of Work*. London: Penguin.

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, 84, 191-215.

Banks, M. & Ullah, M.H. (1988). *Youth Unemployment in the 1980s. Its Psychological Effects*. London: Croom Helm.

Berry, L.M. (1998). *Psychology at Work*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Blaxter, L., Hughes, C. & Tight, M (1996). *How to Research*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Brenner, M.H. (1987). Economic change, alcohol consumption and heart disease mortality in nine industrialised countries. *Social Science Medicine*, 25, 153-162.

Brown, K.W. (1995). The indignities of unemployment. *Essence*, 26, 5, 56-57.

Bryman, A., & Cramer, D. (1997). *Quantitative Data Analysis with SPSS for Windows. A guide for social scientists*. London: Routledge.

Burchell, B. (1992). Towards a social psychology of the labour market: or why we need to understand the labour market before we can understand unemployment. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*. 65, 1, 245-251.

Burnett, J. (1994). *Idle hands: The experience of unemployment*. London: Routledge.

Central Statistics Office, National Planning Commission (1994). *1991 Population and Housing Census. Basic Analysis with Highlights*. Windhoek.

Cobb, S. (1976). Social Support as a Moderator of Life Stress, *Psychosomatic Medicine* 3, 5, 300-314.

Committee on Psychiatry in Industry, Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry (1982). *Job Loss - A Psychiatric Perspective*. New York: Mental Health Materials Center.

Cooper, C & Straw, A. (1998). *Successful Stress Management in a week*. 2nd Edition, Hodder & Stroughton, UK.

Creed, P.A., Hicks, R.E., & Machin, M.A. (1998). Behavioural plasticity and mental health outcomes for long-term unemployed attending occupational training programmes. *Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology*, 71, 171-192.

Darity, W. (1999). Who loses from unemployment. *Journal of Economic Issues*.33, 2, 491-497.

Davies, G. (1996). The Employment Support Network - an intervention to assist displaced workers. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 33, 146-155.

Diagnostic And Statistical Manual Of Mental Disorders- Fourth Edition. DSM-IV. (1994). American Psychological Association, Washington DC.

Dodey, D. (1992). *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*. 65,1, 277-286

Dunkerly, M. (1996). *The Jobless Economy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Epstein, B. (1989). The psychological effects of retrenchment: Implications for counselling. *Human Sciences Research Council*, Pretoria.

Everitt, B. & Hay, (1992). *Talking about Statistics*. London: Arnold.

Fagin, L. & Little, M. (1984). *The Forsaken Families*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Feather, N.T. (1990). *The Psychological Impact of Unemployment*. New York: Springer.

Feather, N.T. (1992). Expectancy-value theory and unemployment effects. *Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology*, 65, 315-331.

Feather, N.T. (1985). Protestant ethic, conservatism, and values. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 48, 876-889.

Feather, N.T. & Bond, M. (1983). Time structure and purposeful activity among employed and unemployed university graduates. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 56, 241-254.

Feather, N.T. & O'Brien, G.E. (1986). A longitudinal study of the effects of employment and unemployment on school-leavers. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 59, 121-144.

Folkman, S. (1984). Personal control and stress and coping processes: A theoretical analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46, 839-852.

Forrester, V. (1999). *The Economic Horror*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Fryer, D. (1992). Introduction to Marienthal and Beyond. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 65,1,257-259.

Fryer, D.M. (1988). The experience of unemployment in social context. In S. Fisher & J. Reason (Eds), *Handbook of Life Stress, Cognition and Health*, 211-238, Chichester: Wiley.

Fryer, D. (1986). Employment deprivation and personal agency during unemployment. *Social Behaviour*, 1, 3-23.

Furnham, A. (1996). *The Protestant Work Ethic*. London: Whurr.

Furnham, A. (1985). The determinants of attitudes towards social security benefits. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 24, 19-27.

Furnham, A. (1983). Attitudes towards the unemployed receiving social security benefits. *Human Relations*, 36, 135-150.

Gaffikin F & Morrissey M (1992). *The New Unemployed. Joblessness and Poverty in the Market Economy*, New Jersey: Zed Books.

Goamab, M. (1994). Fiscal Policy and Employment in Namibia. *NEPRU Working Paper*, No. 43.

Goldsmith, A.H. & Veum, J.R. (1997). Unemployment, joblessness, psychological well-being and self-esteem: theory and evidence. *Journal of Socio-Economics*, 26, 2, 133-159.

Harding, L. & Sewel, J. (1992)., Psychological health and employment status in an island community. *Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology*, 65, 269-276.

Headley, S. (1997). Adolescent research. *Youth Studies*, 16, 58-59.

Hess, L.E., Petersen, A.C. & Mortimer J.T. (1994). Youth, unemployment and marginality: The problem and the solution. In A.C. Petersen & J.T. Mortimer (Eds.), *Youth unemployment and society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Holmes, D.S. (2000). *Abnormal Psychology*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Holmes, T.H. & Rahe, R.H. (1967) The social readjustment rating scale. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 11, (2), 213-218.

House J.S. (1981). *Work stress and social support*. Reading: Addison-Wesley.

Irvine, B. (1984). The psychological effects of unemployment - An exploratory study. *Carnegie Conference Paper*, 126, Cape Town.

Jaffray, T.W. (1989). *An empirical, phenomenological investigation of the experience of being unemployed: a critical study in the South African context*. Masters thesis presented to Rhodes University, South Africa.

Jahoda, M. (1982). *Employment and unemployment. A social-psychological analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jahoda, M., Lazarsfeld, P.F. & Zeisel, H. (1971). *Marienthal. The sociography of an unemployed community*. Chicago: Aldine.

Jones, L. (1992). His unemployment and her reaction: The effect of husband's unemployment on wives. *Journal of Women & Social Work*, 7, 59-74.

Juke, J. & Rosenberg, R. (1993). *Surviving your parents job loss*. National Press Books, Washington.

Kaplan, P.S. (1998). *The Human Odyssey. Life-Span Development*. Brooks/Cole, Pacific Grove.

Kates, N., Greiff, B.S. & Hagen, D.Q. (1990). *The Psychosocial Impact of Job Loss*. American Psychiatric Press, Washington.

Landy, F.J. (1989). *Psychology of Work Behavior*. Brooks/Cole, Pacific Grove.

Lane, R.E. (1991). *The market experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lang, S. (1995). People unemployed, on welfare are at risk for depression. *Human Ecology Forum*, 23, 23-24.

Lefcourt, H.M. (1982). *Locus of control: current trends in theory and research*. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum.

McClelland, G.H. (1997). Optimal Design in Psychological Research. *Psychological Methods*, 1, 115-129.

Mead, G.H. (1934). *Mind, Self and Society*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Miles, I. (1987). Some observations on "unemployment and health" research, *Social Science Medicine*, 25, 223-226.

Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development (1995). Population growth and issues of employment, unemployment and underemployment. Position paper for the National Conference on Population Policy. Considerations for Namibia. Held in Swakopmund, 17-21 July.

Ministry of Labour and Central Bureau of Statistics of the National Planning Commission (1998). *The Namibia Labour Force Survey 1997: An Interim Report of Analysis*. Windhoek.

Moser, K., Fox, A., & Goldblatt, P. (1986). Stress and heart disease: evidence of associations between unemployment and heart disease from the OPCS Longitudinal Study. *Postgraduate Medicine Journal*, 62, p. 797-799.

Mouton, H. C. & Marais, J. (1996). *Basic concepts in the methodology of the social sciences*. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.

Murphy, G.C. & Athanasou, J.A. (1999). The effect of unemployment on mental health. *Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology*, 72, 1, 83-100.

O'Brien, G. (1986). *Psychology of Work and Unemployment*. Chichester: Wiley.

Odada, J.E., Nhuleipo, O. & Mumangeni, J., 2000, *Factor substitution possibilities and the unemployment problem in Namibia*. Multi-disciplinary Research & Consultancy Centre, University of Namibia, Windhoek.

Offe, C. & Heinze, R.G. (1992). *Beyond Employment*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1996). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pendelton, W., & Frayne, B. (1998). *Report of the results from the Namibian migration project*. Multidisciplinary Research Centre, University of Namibia, Windhoek.

Petersen, A.C. & Mortimer, J.T. (1994). *Youth Unemployment and Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Plattner, I.E., (2001). Philipp Mayring's Qualitative Content Analysis. An explication in terms of Namibian examples. *Papers from the Department of Psychology*, University of Namibia, 1/01.

Plattner, I.E. (1999). *New challenges for education in view of the future of work*. Paper presented at the 8th BOLESWA International Research Symposium in Lesotho, 26-30 July.

Proudfoot, J. & Guest, D. (1996). Effect of cognitive-behavioural training on job-finding among long-term unemployed people. *The Lancet*, 350, 96-104.

Rowley, K. & Feather, N. (1987). The impact of unemployment in relation to age and length of unemployment. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 60, 323-332.

Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Sarason, I.G. & Sarason, B.R. (1985). *Social support: Theory, research, and application*. Dordrecht: Nijhoff.

Schmidt, F.L. (1996). Statistical Significance Testing and Cumulative Knowledge in Psychology: Implications for Training of Researchers. *Psychological Methods*, 1, 15-129.

Seligman, M.E.P. (1975). *Helplessness: On depression, development, and death*. San Francisco: Freeman.

Shaughnessy, J.J., Zechmeiser, E.B. & Zechmeister, J.S. (2000). *Research Methods in Psychology*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Silverman, D.(2000). *Doing Qualitative Research*. London: SAGE

Silverman, D. (1995). *Interpreting Qualitative Data. Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction*. London: SAGE.

Snower, D.J. & de la Dehesa, G. (1997). *Unemployment Policy. Government Options For The Labour Market*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Solow, R.M. (1990). *The Labor Market as a Social Institution*. Cambridge: Basil Blackwell.

Stabile, D.R. (1996). *Work and Welfare. The Social Costs of Labor in the History of Economic Thought*. Westport: Greenwood Press.

Statt, D.A. (1994). *Psychology and the World of Work*. London: Macmillan.

Thompson, E.P. (1967). Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism. *Past and Present*, 38, 55-97.

Ullah, M.H. (1990). The association between income, financial strain and psychological well-being among unemployed youths. *Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology*, 63, 317-331.

Warr, P.B. (1987). *Work, unemployment and mental health*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Warr, P.B. (1984). Work and unemployment. In P.J.D. Drenth et al. (Eds), *Handbook of Work and Organizational Psychology*, Chichester: Wiley.

Warr, P.B, Jackson, P. & Banks, M. (1988). Unemployment and mental health: Some British studies. *Journal of Social Issues*, 44, 47-68.

Weiner, B. (1986). *An Attributional Theory of Motivation and Emotion*. New York: Springer.

Wentworth, D.K. & Chell, R.M. (1997). American college students and the protestant work ethic. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 137, 3, 284-293.

Westcott, G., Svensson, P.-G. & Zöllner, H.F.K. (1985). *Health policy implications of unemployment*. Copenhagen: World Health Organisation.

Winefield, A.H. (1997) The psychological effects of youth unemployment: International Perspectives. *Journal of Adolescence*, 20, 237-241.

Winefield, A.H. & Tiggemann, M. (1991). The psychological impact of unemployment and unsatisfactory outcome employment in young men and women: Longitudinal and cross-sectional data. *British Journal of Psychology*, 82, 473-487.

Winefield, A.H. & Tiggemann, M. (1992). Spare time use and psychological well-being in employed and unemployed young people. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 65, 1, 307-314.

Winefield, A.H., Tiggemann, M., Winefield, H.R. & Goldney, R.D. (1993), *Growing Up With Unemployment. A Longitudinal Study of its Psychological Impact*. London: Routledge.

APPENDIX I
Interview guideline

APPENDIX II
Questionnaire