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Urban Adolescents' Experiences of Parental Unemployment

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URBAN ADOLESCENTS' EXPERIENCES OF PARENTAL UNEMPLOYMENT

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents- Timothy and Debra Quinn- who have supported me in every way possible throughout this journey.

This work is also dedicated to all children who were and are being raised by unemployed individuals.

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KEELAN QUINN

ABSTRACT

A substantial number of children in the United States are being raised in households with an unemployed parent. These individuals may have unknown and unmet needs, as they are the first generation since the Great Depression to be raised during a time characterized by economic hardship and high unemployment. The purpose of this study was to explore how urban adolescents of unemployed parents experience parental unemployment. This qualitative study was informed by phenomenology for data collection and consensual qualitative research (CQR) for data analysis. Participants included 13 urban adolescents from low socio-economic status areas, who have been raised by unemployed parent(s) or caregiver(s). Data were organized into eight domains that describe how parental unemployment has influenced the personal and social identity and career development of urban adolescents. Results suggested that participants perceive parental unemployment increased awareness, positively and negatively influenced social activities, and positively motivated participants for future success at school and/or work. Implications for clinicians working with this population are discussed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Great Depression marks the first period in United States history when the influence of parental unemployment on children was examined (Elder, 1974; Elder, Nguyen & Caspi, 1985). The most recent economic recession from December 2007 through June 2009, was the second longest recession after the Great Depression (National Bureau of Economic Research, 2010), the consequences of which are still evident today with high rates of adult unemployment. Throughout 2013, the United States unemployment rates remained in the 7% margin and stood at 6.3% in May 2014 (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014c). Historically, the highest rate of unemployment in the United States was 10.8% in November 1982 (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014c), which is within a reasonable proximity of relatively recent rates as unemployment rates peaked at 10.1% in October 2009 (Hederman, 2010).

Even though there has been a slow decline in unemployment rates in urban areas (United State Department of Agriculture, 2014), it is evident that a large number of individuals are still experiencing its impact with the majority of the United States population living in these areas. Most unemployment research does not have a focus on an urban population even though unemployment rates remain high in these areas.

The United States Census Bureau defines an urbanized, or urban, area as “densely developed residential, commercial, and other nonresidential areas” with a population of at least 50,000 (United States Census Bureau, 2012). As of 2012, urban areas accounted for 80.7% of entire population in the United States (United States Census Bureau, 2012). A metropolitan area is classified as a location with an urban core of 50,000 individuals (United States Census Bureau, 2013). The United States consists of 372 metropolitan areas (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014f). Though unemployment rates in the majority of these urban areas decreased from 2013 to 2014, 27 areas experienced increased rates of unemployment while four remained constant (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014f). Of these areas, 147 areas experienced rates of less than 5% while 12 had unemployment rates of 10% or higher (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014f), statistics that exceed that of the national unemployment rate.

Research suggests being raised in an urban setting is associated with increased exposure to aggression and violence, lower academic performance, fewer career aspirations and success, and increased economic hardship and rates of unemployment, (e.g., Cicchetti et al., 2014; Howard et al., 2011; Langevang & Gough, 2009; O’Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). Urban areas have some of the highest rates of racial and ethnic diversity (United States Census Bureau, 2012). African Americans experienced the highest rates of unemployment in 2013 with 13.1% (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014b). In that same year, 12.8% of Native Americans, 11% of individuals identifying as biracial, and 9.1% of Hispanic/Latinos were unemployed as well (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014b). Of all unemployed individuals in 2013, 11% never earned a high school diploma making this population most at risk to be

unemployed (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014b). High school graduates who did not attend college accounted for 7.5% of the unemployed population, those who attended college but did not receive a degree were at 7%, those who earned an associate's degree were at 5.4%, and those who earned a bachelor's degree or higher were at 3.7% (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014b).

Much evidence suggests unemployment is related to significant physical and mental health concerns (Clark & Oswald, 1994; Linn, Sandifer, & Stein, 1985; Paul & Moser, 2009), as well as disruptions in the development and behavior of children of unemployed persons (Dew, Penkower, & Bromet, 1991; Flanagan, 1990; Madge, 1983). It may also be correlated with family disruption, as it affects life activities, social status, and relationships among family members (Atkinson, Liem & Liem, 1986; Dew et al.; Liem & Liem, 1988; Linn et al., 1985; Vinokur, Price, & Caplan, 1996). In 2011, 10.5% of families in the United States included at least one unemployed parent (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012a). This percentage increased to 12.5% in 2012 (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014a), suggesting that a substantial number of children in the United States are being raised in households with an unemployed parent. Of these families, 30.4% had unemployed mothers, and 6.9% had unemployed fathers (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012b). Despite the large number of families affected by unemployment, very little research has been conducted on how adolescents experience the impact of their parent's unemployment on their personal and social identity, and career development (Bryant, Zvonkovic, & Reynolds, 2006; Cinamon, 2001; Zhao, Lim, & Teo, 2012). The lack of attention to adolescents in relation to parental unemployment is astounding (Dew et al., 1991). These individuals may have

unknown and unmet needs, as they are the first generation since the Great Depression to be raised during a time characterized by such economic hardship and high unemployment. Given that adolescence is a developmental period in which many are engaged in identity development and career exploration and decision making (Super, 1957), this is an area of research with much potential to impact the development and adjustment of adolescents in families affected by unemployment.

Adolescents with one or more parents who are unable to secure stable employment experience the effects of unemployment along with their parents (Gursoy & Bicakci, 2007; Murakami, 2012; Zhao, et al., 2012), which arguably effects their life experiences and development. The majority of the extant literature addressing unemployment and adolescence has examined the relationship between parental unemployment and adolescent academic achievement, behavior, physical health, and career aspirations (Siddiqi, Subramanian, Berkman, Hertzman, & Kawachi, 2007; Crosnoe & Elder, 2004; Hussainat, Ghnimat, & Al-dlaeens, 2013; Kalil & Wightman, 2011; Siddiqi, Subramanian, Berkman, Hertzman, & Kawachi, 2007). This study will examine how adolescents' perceive that their parent's unemployment has influenced their personal and social identity, and career development. Because adolescents seek comfort from others during life changes, those exposed to parental unemployment are more likely to create new relationships with peers, family, or teachers (Crosnoe & Elder, 2004). These new relationships may, in turn, may alter existing family relationships and academic behavior (Crosnoe & Elder, 2004), which are all related to the personal and social identity, and career development. As adolescents are the future of our society, it is

important to learn how experiencing parental unemployment during this developmental stage influences these areas.

Understanding how parental unemployment influences personal and social identities will point to implications for practice that can enhance future success and healthy development. Additionally, this age group will soon enter the adult workforce. Understanding how parental unemployment influences adolescent career development will help these adolescents prepare for and transition into this new role. Examining adolescent experiences with parental unemployment presents the most appropriate starting point in this area. By examining the impact of parental unemployment, this research will provide an in-depth understanding of the life experiences of this understudied population, and in turn inform preventive and developmental interventions to facilitate the personal, social, and career development of adolescents. For these reasons, experiences of parental unemployment and how adolescents perceive and make meaning of these experiences will be examined.

It is evident that urban youth face obstacles for experiencing a healthy transition into adulthood where they are expected to survive independently. Utilizing a phenomenological and consensual qualitative approach to examine this phenomenon will broaden existing literature by giving voice to this population. The context for this study is two high schools located in an urban area of a midsize Midwestern city. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine how adolescents' perceive that their parent's unemployment has influenced their personal and social identity, and career development. A phenomenological approach and consensual qualitative research (CQR) data analysis approaches will be utilized to address the following research question: How do children

experience parental unemployment? This research will specifically examine areas of personal identity, social identity, and childhood career development. Before reviewing these areas, it is important to define unemployment.

Unemployment Defined

In the early 1900's, the Census Bureau calculated unemployed individuals as the number of Americans who were "gainfully employed" (Hederman, 2010). It was not until the Great Depression was underway that United States government and politicians became interested in better defining labor activity in the country to better assist those without work; hence, the term unemployment (Hederman, 2010). Beginning in 1940, one national survey collected monthly statistics of unemployed individuals in the country resulting in the Monthly Report of Unemployment (Hederman, 2010; United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014e). In 1942, the task of distributing this survey shifted to the Census Bureau and the resulting report was renamed the Current Population Survey, which continues to this day (Hederman, 2010).

Unemployment and other work classifications in the United States today are defined by the Department of Labor. Employed individuals are defined as anyone who performs any type of work for pay or profit (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014e). Individuals are considered unemployed if they do not currently hold a job, have actively searched for work in the prior four weeks, and are available for work (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014e). Individuals who are actively seeking work are considered to be participating in at least one of the following, or similar, activities: making contact (e.g., with an employer, private employment agency, friends, relatives, a school or university employment center, etc.), filling out applications, submitting

resumes, checking profession or union registers, and/or placing or answering job advertisements (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014e). Workers who identify as temporarily laid off are considered unemployed no matter their level of job-seeking activities (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014e).

Employed and unemployed individuals make up the *labor force* in the United States, while anyone not in these categories is considered *not in the labor force* (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014e). Those in this latter group include individuals without jobs, who are not currently searching for work (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014e). Individuals in this category include students, retirees, institutionalized individuals, individuals whose family responsibilities keep them from joining the labor force (e.g., caregivers, stay-at-home parents), and individuals on disability (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014e). Volunteers are defined as individuals who perform unpaid work (except for expenses) for or through an organization (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014d). Therefore, volunteers are not considered members of either the labor force or not in the labor force.

Some believe that the Department of Labor's definition of unemployment described above is too restricted and may actually understate unemployment (Hederman, 2010; United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014e). For example, this definition excludes anyone with a desire to work who has not actively sought work in the prior four weeks for whatever reason (i.e., health condition do not permit job search, some individuals have given up hope) (Hederman, 2010). The definition also excludes individuals who are underemployed, or who desire full time work but are only able to sustain part time work (Hederman, 2010). To account for these issues, the Bureau of

Labor Statistics has developed alternative measures of labor underutilization (Hederman, 2010; United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). These measures are numbered from the most restrictive definition of unemployment (i.e., U-1) to the least (i.e., U-6) (Hederman, 2010; United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). U-1 is a measure of individuals who have been unemployed 15 weeks or longer; U-2 measures individuals who have lost their jobs involuntarily; U-3 accounts for the official unemployment rate measuring the number of individuals out of work who are actively searching; U-4 includes the individuals in the U-3 category as well as any “discouraged workers” (e.g., those who are not in the labor force and do not search for work due to the belief that it will not be found); U-5 includes individuals who desire to work who are either unavailable or not actively searching for reasons other than discouragement (e.g., caregiving); and U-6 accounts for everyone in the U-5 category as well as anyone underemployed (Hederman, 2010; United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). These U- measurements are thought to be accurate and complete measures of unemployment as they take the labor market into account (Hederman, 2010). However, it may be difficult to generalize these statistics to the United States as a whole because the proportion of individuals taking the Current Population Survey may or may not include individuals who are discouraged, underemployed, etc. (Hederman, 2010). Because the original definition of unemployment as described by the Department of Labor (i.e., individuals who do not currently hold a job, have actively searched for work in the prior four weeks, and are available for work) remains the most common definition used by the media, government, and population, it is this definition that will be used to identify

potential participants for this study. This definition is both specific and broad in that it can easily be described to a member of the general population.

Unemployment and the Family

Unemployment impacts the family in many ways – an area of research that was most prominent during the Great Depression and is again being researched due to the recent economic recession. It not only impacts the life of the unemployed individual, but all family members, which will be explored in the following section. Early research demonstrated the hardships and disruption experienced by families with unemployed parents and/or caregivers (e.g., Angell, 1936; Elder & Caspi, 1988; Komarovsky, 1940). These consequences of unemployment appear to depend on individual characteristics of the family such as flexibility, mutual support, family adaptation, and family integration (Angell, 1936; Komarovsky, 1940). When individual family members and the family unit both demonstrate these characteristics, the family is able to integrate and adapt more readily during hardships, such as unemployment (Angell, 1936; Komarovsky, 1940). For example, those families characterized by strong relationships and support tend to experience significantly fewer changes to family relationships and hierarchy when exposed to unemployment. Families without these characteristics tend to experience larger shifts from paternal to maternal power (in instances of paternal unemployment) and strained marital relationships, which then carry into the parent/child relationship (Komarovsky, 1940).

The accentuation principle has been used to explain a family's response to unemployment (Elder & Caspi, 1988). This principle refers to the process in which stress either accentuates or weakens distinguishing characteristics of individuals (e.g., one's

ability to take control of situations) and relationships (e.g., a family's ability to come together as a unit) under negative circumstances (Elder & Caspi, 1988). Families tend to depend on personal traits to help them sustain and overcome such hardships as unemployment. Through a process of elimination, the family as a whole learns to distinguish traits that help them through the life transition, which they come to depend on for success, and those traits that are unsuccessful, they eliminate (Elder & Caspi, 1988).

It has become apparent that familial unemployment not only influences unemployed individuals, but spouses and children as well (Atkinson, et al., 1986; Brennan & Stoten, 1976; Marcus, 2013). Paternal unemployment is associated with strains in the marital relationship (Atkinson et al., 1986; Liem & Liem, 1988), and increased rates of separation and divorce in certain cultures (Amato & Beattie, 2011; Kawata, 2008). Contemporary research indicates that unemployment in the family is also related to increased mental health symptoms for the spouse of an unemployed individual (Marcus, 2013). The majority of this research focuses on paternal unemployment, rather than maternal unemployment as there is little research regarding involuntary unemployment among mothers (Dew et al., 1991).

Research suggests that children in unemployed families experience more medical issues than do children from families with employed parents (Brennan & Stoten, 1976; Garfinkel, Froese, & Hood, 1982) ; although, these studies do not indicate causality. During the 1930's, young children in unemployed families demonstrated twice the risk of being admitted into hospitals compared to children in employed families (Brennan & Stoten, 1976). It has also been suggested that rates of unemployment and child mortality are related (Woolf & Waterhouse, 1945), although analyses did not control for all factors

of possible significance (Madge, 1983). Children ages seven and older with unemployed fathers are twice as likely to be admitted to pediatric emergency rooms for suicide attempts than children with employed fathers (Garfinkel, et al., 1982). The families of these children were more likely to have psychiatric illness (primarily drug or alcohol abuse), suicide, paternal unemployment, and paternal and maternal absence than the controls' families (Garfinkel et al., 1982).

A more recent study termed vicarious unemployment as how family and children experience the unemployment of family members (Thompson, Nitzarim, Her, & Dahling, 2013). Thompson and colleagues examined how college-age children perceived their parents' involuntary unemployment, which most often occurred after 2008. Participants in this study came from a combination of working class, lower class, middle class, and upper middle class backgrounds (Thompson et al., 2013). The majority of individuals experienced paternal unemployment, however maternal unemployment, unemployment by both parents, and caregiver unemployment were also experienced (Thompson et al., 2013). Participants described many themes about how they experienced parental unemployment including struggles related to unemployment, increased family stress, individual struggle with stigma (e.g., feeling judged or criticized), lessons learned from their experiences, increased financial awareness, and increased awareness of the job market (Thompson et al., 2013). In addition to the many negative experiences of parental unemployment, this study demonstrates that there are positive experiences with parental unemployment as well.

How unemployment interacts with the family environment and family members is likely to be significant in the development of younger family members. Adolescence is a

time when adolescents develop a personal identity, social identity, and career development, all of which are necessary to become successful, healthy adults. Experiencing such a life-altering experience as parental unemployment during the adolescent period may very well impact each of these significant developmental areas. These three topics will be individually defined in the following sections beginning with personal identity development.

Personal Identity Development

Adolescence is typically characterized by distinct changes in cognitive, physical, and social functioning (Teichman, Bar-Tal, & Abdolrazeq, 2007), as well as the development of a personal identity (Moshman, 1999). The self-system is sometimes used synonymously to personal identity as it is considered the system in which an individual's personality traits are developed (Sullivan, 1953). Significant changes in personality and physical development occur throughout adolescence, while changes in cognitive and social domains typically occur during mid and late adolescence when the shifts from self to social identity are thought to occur (Teichman et al., 2007). Developing personal identity is a significant life task for adolescents (Moshman, 1999). Doing so prepares adolescents for adulthood by producing a rational older adolescent who has reason, takes responsibility for both positive and negative actions, and provides explanations for his/her behavior (Moshman, 1999). When negative outcomes emerge during the adolescent period, the individual may appear shallow, directionless, and unprepared for the psychological challenges of adulthood (Berk, 2000).

Erik Erikson (1950, 1968) was the first to recognize identity formation as the major personality achievement of adolescence. He considered adolescence to be a crucial

step towards becoming a productive, happy adult and he believed identity formation begins in late adolescence and early adulthood when these adolescents become absorbed in the task of finding themselves (Erikson, 1968). The search to find identity is a process of inner soul-searching where the adolescent sifts through self-characteristics defined in childhood and combines them with emerging traits, capacities, and commitments (Erikson, 1950; 1968). This process of identity formation includes an identity crisis, or a temporary period of distress, when individuals experiment with different identities before developing their final set of values and goals (Erikson, 1950; 1968). Labeled Identity versus Role Confusion, it is during this period when individuals develop commitment to an occupation and ideology (Marcia, 1966). They must also fuse their identifications from childhood to establish a reciprocal relationship with society that also allows the individual to maintain an identity within the self as well (Marcia, 1966). This allows adolescents to function in society in a way that they do not lose their own personal identity.

Marcia (1966) expanded on Erikson's theory, labeling it the Self-Identity theory, by acknowledging the relationship between psychological identity development and one's explorations and commitments. Exploration is the examination of different choices by collecting information and participating in age-appropriate activities that will ultimately lead to a commitment to a specific belief, goal, or value in a life domain (Marcia, 1966). Commitment is considered a stable investment in a particular belief, goal and/or value by demonstrating knowledge and participating in activities that are consistent. It also involves continuing this choice into the future and acknowledging its impact on life domains (Marcia, 1966). Marcia considered identity to be self-structured,

or a self-constructed and dynamic organization of individual history, abilities, and drives (Marcia, 1980). The better-developed this structure, the more aware individuals are of their strengths and weaknesses in maneuvering in the world and of their own uniqueness and similarity to others (Marcia, 1980). When this structure is less developed, the individual tends to be confused about his or her distinctiveness from others and relies more heavily on external sources as a way to evaluate him or herself (Marcia, 1980). Marcia identified four identity statuses- identity achievement, identity-foreclosure, identity-moratorium, and identity-diffusion- that define one's progress in committing to a set of identity-defining values and goals (Marcia 1966; 1980). Identity-achieved individuals have committed to a set of values, moratorium individuals are in the process of searching for commitments, identity-foreclosed individuals have committed to a set of values that are not their own, and identity-diffused individuals have no commitments and are not seeking any (Marcia, 1966, 1980). The identity-achievement and identity-diffusion statuses are on either end of a continuum with identity moratorium and identity foreclosure in the middle (Marcia, 1966, Moshman, 1999). Individuals with a mature identity tend to have a self-conscious and strong commitment in various aspects of identity such as sexuality, politics, religion, and vocation (Moshman, 1999).

The individual who is in the identity-achievement status has already undergone a period of exploration concluding with a commitment to a clearly formulated set of self-chosen values, commitments, and goals (Kroger, 2000; Marcia, 1966, 1980). This individual feels a sense of stability (Moshman, 1999), psychological well-being, and has an understanding of where he or she is going in life (Marcia, 1980). Even though this individual may have committed to an identity that originated from others, this person has

seriously considered several occupational choices and come to a final decision based on his or her own terms (Marcia, 1966). Past beliefs have been reevaluated and resolution has been achieved to allow the individual to feel free to act on the decision (Marcia, 1966). The identity achieved individual is not likely to be overwhelmed by extreme shifts in the environment or unexpected responsibilities (Kroger, 2000; Marcia 1994).

The individual in the identity moratorium status does not have a current commitment to identity, but is currently in the process of exploring different identity-defining values and commitments (Kroger, 2000; Marcia, 1966, 1980). This individual is gathering information and trying out activities to discover goals and values that guide his or her life (Marcia, 1980). It is possible for individuals in other statuses to regress to the moratorium status when they begin questioning their current situation and commitments, which is sometimes referred to as identity crisis (Moshman, 1999). An example of moratorium status is an adolescent currently going through the process of making a career choice. He or she may have already decided to continue a father's career, but unemployment occurred, and the adolescent is now confused and debating whether this is a good choice.

Identity-foreclosed individuals have committed themselves to a set of identity-defining values and commitments without exploring other alternatives (Kroger, 2000; Marcia 1966; 1980). Rather than considering alternative, self-chosen commitments, these individuals instead select identity commitments that often belong to authority figures, most often those of parents (Kroger, 2000; Marcia 1966; 1980). They are unable to distinguish between their own goals and those of their parents, as they are so similar (Marcia, 1966). Identity-foreclosed individuals become what others have prepared them

to become since childhood, with college and other experiences only confirming these beliefs (Marcia, 1966). Foreclosed individuals tend to have rigid personality traits and beliefs to the point that if parental values were identified as nonfunctional, they would feel threatened (Kroger, 1996; Marcia, 1994). An example of the identity-foreclosure status would be an adolescent whose parents want him or her to continue the family business and have told the adolescent since childhood that this is what will occur. A career decision is made, yet the adolescent is unsure whether this is his or her choice or just a parent's dream.

The individual who is identity-diffused lacks clear direction and has no strong identity commitments, nor is he or she seeking any (Marcia, 1966, 1980). If this individual does attempt to explore alternative commitments, the process is likely to be deemed overwhelming or threatening, and he or she is likely unable or unwilling to make any identity-defining commitments (Marcia, 1966). Individuals in this status have yet to decide on an occupation, lack concern (Marcia, 1966), and tend to be satisfied living on a daily basis to go wherever life takes them (Moshman, 1999). If a preferred occupation has been mentioned, this individual likely has few realistic expectations about it, and is easily willing to abandon it should other opportunities arise (Kroger, 1996; Marcia, 1994). This individual may also be uninterested in ideological matters or sample many different beliefs simultaneously as they all appear to resonate with the individual (Kroger, 1996; Marcia, 1994). An example of an identity-diffused individual is one who has not yet put serious thought into his or her future occupation, and announces a choice based on the how he or she feels at a given time.

Even when the identity development process is complete, personal identity continues to be altered throughout adolescence and adulthood because individuals have the tendency to constantly re-evaluate earlier commitments and choices (Berk, 2000). Many theorists agree that the questioning of values, plans, and priorities is healthy and necessary for mature identity development (Grotevant, 1998). Identity development may be traumatic and disturbing for some adolescents, but the typical experience is generally one of exploration followed by commitment (Berk, 2000). As young individuals experiment with life possibilities, they gather important information about themselves and their environment and move toward making enduring decisions.

All individuals are thought to have both a personal identity and a social identity, which is how someone is identified in relation to group membership. People perceive themselves differently based on their social location at a specific moment in time in what is known as the personal-social identity continuum (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The personal identity side of the continuum refers to when individuals think of themselves primarily as individuals, while the social identity end refers to when individuals think of themselves as members of specific social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Those lacking a positive personal identity often seek higher self-esteem by identifying with a social group and developing a social identity (Myers, 2008). The following section will define social identity development and social identity theories.

Social Identity Development

People are social beings and greatly identify themselves through the social groups to which they belong. A social group is considered a set of individuals who share a common view and consider all members of the group to be in the same social category

(Burke & Stets, 2009). Therefore, social identity includes a perceived identification as a group member (Tanti, Stukas, Halloran, & Foddy, 2011). People distinguish between members of their in-group and out-group using social comparison and categorization processes (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Those who are considered similar to the self are categorized as members of the in-group while those who differ from the self are considered members of the out-group (Turner et al., 1987). The actions and thoughts of in-group members tend to be uniform and direct interaction with other in-group members is unnecessary because the similarity of their personal attributes already make them common with the group (Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994). Therefore, identifying with the group is enough to be perceived as a group member. Further evidence suggests that having strong group identification among adolescents promotes identity formation, the development of self-esteem, and the ability to cope with developmental problems (Palmonari, Pombeni, & Kirchler, 1989).

Social identity is created at the time an individual joins a social group, at which point the self-identity may become “depersonalized” (Abrams & Hogg, 2001; Onorato & Turner, 2002) because the individual is now being categorized as an interchangeable group member (Abrams & Hogg, 2001; Onorato & Turner, 2002). Depersonalization occurs when the individual identity meshes with the group identity making the two intertwined. The intensity with which depersonalization occurs depends on the degree to which the person identifies with the group and how this is perceived by the group (Tanti et al., 2011). It may be viewed as a type of self-stereotyping because the self is perceived in operational terms of characteristics of the group, rather than the individual (Biernat, Vesico, & Green, 1996; Simon, Pantaleo, & Mummendy, 1995). Intergroup behaviors,

such as in-group favoritism, occur because the group tends to discriminate against members of other groups and favor those who are part of the in-group (Brewer & Kramer, 1985; Messick & Mackie, 1989). Social identity as part of a group is important for healthy development, especially during the difficult phase of adolescence when identification is significant and bullying is common (Erikson, 1968; Palmonari et al., 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) suggests that individuals select a group to join that makes them feel positively about themselves. Researchers observed that people often evaluate themselves based on group membership because they categorize people and assign labels, identify with in-groups, and compare in-groups with out-groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). These processes promote positive feelings, instill pride in the group, and lead members to view their own social group as superior, thus strengthening the self-concept (Smith & Tyler, 1997; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). However, some groups are stigmatized by society and instead label themselves as inferior and act in ways against the norm. Because self-esteem is dependent on the identity with social groups (Oakes et al., 1994; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Tanti et al., 2011), an individual's sense of well-being can either increase or decrease based on the opinions of friends, family members, employers, and colleagues (Amundson & Borgen, 1987). When an individual goes from being employed to unemployed, his or her personal identity shifts, which, in turn, leads to a shift in social identity (Amundson, 1994). One's social group may offer support during this time, although social pressures are evident as questions are asked and others are kept silent, nonverbal behaviors are observed, and the structure within the social group shifts to account for this new identity and interpretations of it

(Amundson, 1994). Therefore, unemployed individuals experience not only a change in personal identity, but in social identity as well.

Race and ethnicity are significant types of social identity (Charmaraman & Grossman, 2010). Racial identity is referred to as a collective, or group, identity and is created when an individual shares a common heritage with a certain racial group (Helms, 1995). Racial identity often includes the manner in which people categorize others, which most often includes skin color (O’Hearn, 1998). Basing racial identity on physical appearance is why it is sometimes considered a surface identity; however, it has deeper meaning as it often involves how individuals are judged and treated by others (Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999). Ethnic identity involves an individual’s identification with a portion of society that is thought to have similar origins, who share a common culture, and participate in similar activities (Yinger, 1976). Most individuals identify themselves using their ethnic identity (Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999). Both racial and ethnic identities are developed through social construction (Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999). How much an individual considers race and ethnicity to impact the self-concept is termed racial-ethnic identity centrality (Charmaraman & Grossman, 2010).

Social identity is likely to vary across cultures based on the diversity of context and experiences (Feitosa, Salas, & Salazar, 2012). The definition of social identity across cultures lies on the individualism-collectivism continuum, which refers to the extent to which individuals are integrated into groups (Hofstede, 1991; Triandis, 1995). This continuum is based on how individuals perceive themselves as independent from one another (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002). Individuals from individualist societies place importance on personal achievements and individuals’ rights, while those

from collectivist societies identify themselves through their society or those around them (Hofstede, 1991). Regardless of the culture, individuals constantly modify how they view social affiliations and make comparisons (Feitosa et al., 2012).

Recent research demonstrates the varying responses to economic distress individuals have across cultural contexts (Martella & Maass, 2006; Probst & Lawler, 2006). Research shows that individualism and collectivism positively influence psychological well-being (Diener, Diener & Diener, 1995; Triandis, 1995); however, unemployed individuals from individualist cultures experience stronger declines in life satisfaction than those from collectivist cultures (Martella & Maass, 2006). This demonstrates that individuals from collectivist cultures may feel as though they receive more social support when faced with unemployment, which helps limit the impact of unemployment.

Probst and Lawler (2006) completed two studies examining the relationship between cultural values and employee response to job insecurity. Study one included 141 employees who were laid off from a large food processing plant at the time of data collection. 51.8% of this sample was male and 18% identified as racial/ethnic minorities. The modal level of completed education was high school diploma/GED equivalency. This study measured responses on an individual level and included measures of job insecurity, cultural values (e.g., individualist or collectivist), job attitudes, negative affective reactions to the workplace, and job stress. Results indicated that cultural values were not significantly related to any other variables and did not predict job attitudes, affective reactions, or job stress levels (Probst & Lawler, 2006). Job security was found to be significantly related to job satisfaction, negative affective reactions, and job stress;

it was also a significant predictor of employee job attitudes, negative affective reactions, and job stress (Probst & Lawler, 2006). These results suggest all employees in the study were impacted negatively by the perception of job insecurity, but individuals with collectivist cultural values were more negatively impacted than those with individualistic cultural values (Probst & Lawler, 2006). Similar findings were found in Probst and Lawler's second study, which examined samples from the United States and China - separate individualist and collectivist cultures (Probst & Lawler, 2006). Data analysis indicated job security had a significantly stronger relationship on the job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and work withdrawal among Chinese individuals than did American counterparts (Probst & Lawler, 2006). Individuals among both groups who felt higher levels of job security had fewer turnover intentions and more job satisfaction (Probst & Lawler, 2006). These results suggest individuals from collectivist cultures tend to react more negatively to the threat of job insecurity than those from individualist cultures (Probst & Lawler, 2006). Collectivist cultures are also more positive about prospects of reemployment following job loss (Probst & Lawler, 2006). While Martella and Maas (2006) found that individuals from collectivist cultures experienced less severe declines in life satisfaction when faced with economic distress, Probst and Lawler (2006) found that individuals from collectivist cultures were actually more negatively impacted by tended react more negatively to job insecurity.

The previous sections have defined the development of personal and social identities for adolescents. Though these types of development are similar in nature, each is influenced differently by parental unemployment. The third variable being examined

in this study is adolescent career development, which will be defined in the following section.

Career Development Theory

Super's Life-Span, Life-Space theory of career development (1957, 1980) is the most well-known developmental career theory. Evolving over 60 years, Super described it as a “segmental theory” (Super, 1969, pp. 8-9) with a loosely unified set of theories dealing with career development; he did not consider it a comprehensive, integrated, and testable theory (Super, 1984). Life-Span, Life-Space theory combines life-stage psychology and social role theories to create a comprehensive picture of careers and their determinants and interactions (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996). The process of adolescent career development is considered a type of maturation because these young individuals develop and progress towards their career as they grow and overcome different career challenges (Super et al., 1996). Individuals progress through major life stages of career throughout their lives, beginning with Growth (birth through age 14) and followed by Exploration (age 15 through 24) (Super et al., 1996). Growth begins with occupational fantasies, which develop into career interests around age eight. Career interests allow younger individuals to develop a sense of their capacities, or skills, around age 11. Transitioning into the Exploration life stage, adolescents encounter such career development tasks as crystallizing, specifying, and implementing an occupational choice (Super et al., 1996). Crystallizing occurs when adolescents clarify a general goal for future vocation, which is then specified when they begin refining and developing details in their career preferences (Super, 1957). Implementing includes making plans that will fulfill career objectives (Super, 1957).

The process of adolescence includes career periods at the end of the Growth life stage and throughout the Exploration life stage (Super, 1955; Super et al., 1996). The Capacity period occurs from ages 11 to 14 (Super et al., 1996). During this period, adolescents understand that past career choices made during childhood are likely unrealistic; they are better able to assess their own capacities, and they realize that educational progress is important in the preparation for work (Super et al., 1996). Adolescents who do not yet understand their own capacities are more likely to make career choices based on other factors such as career interest, which varies, or what they have been told by parents (Super et al., 1996). The ability to assess one's own capacities during this period is important for progression to the next period and life stage, which may not occur.

Adolescents develop work values during the Tentative Stage, which is the next period of adolescent career development (Super 1955; Super et al., 1996). At ages 15 or 16, adolescents are able to make a choice as to what career to pursue (Super et al., 1996). Initially, they may only have an understanding of their personal goals and values, but they will eventually depend on career interests, capacities, and values to make a proper choice (Super et al., 1996). Those who have developed work values learn that career choice must fit into a complex society (Super et al., 1996). They also consider more complex work attributes such as job satisfaction, choosing whether to make money or help others, how they can best make a contribution to society, etc. (Super et al., 1996). Conceptualizing these different areas and values allows the adolescents to then continue into the next period labeled: Crystallizing a Vocational Preference Transitions.

An adolescent's progress through career development is described by career maturity (Super, 1955; Super et al., 1996). Super (1955; 1973) termed career maturity as having career knowledge including orientation to vocational choice, information about a preferred occupation, consistency of vocational preference, crystallization of traits, and wisdom of vocational preference. It also includes the adolescent's readiness to make educational and vocational decisions (Savickas, 1984; Super, 1955; Super et al., 1996). Seligman (1994) considered career maturity to consist of multiple lifelong processes that vary between individuals. Adolescents with high levels of career maturity tend to think more about alternative careers, possess high self-reliance, display more awareness of career decision-making processes, and relate their present behavior to future goals (Powell & Luzzo 1998; Savickas, 1990). Career maturity tends to develop over time as young individuals gain career attitude and knowledge (Patton & Creed, 2001). Career adaptability relates to age, gender, and work experience among high school and college students (Patton & Creed, 2001).

Career maturity is found to be influenced by family and its atmosphere (Pine & Innis, 1987). When a family experiences unemployment it experiences a change in family routine and decreased income, family cohesion, and self-appraisal (Briar, 1988; Radin & Harold-Goldsmith, 1989; Shamir, 1985), all of which impact the family atmosphere. Additionally, career maturity is higher for those raised in homes with higher socioeconomic statuses (Naidoo, 1993). These changes suggest differences in career maturity among those adolescents being raised by employed and unemployed fathers (Cinamon, 2001).

Savickas (1997) proposed that career maturity be replaced with career adaptability. Career adaptability includes the ability to easily change and/or adapt to changes in the career setting (Savickas, 1997) and includes the ability to apply different competencies when negotiating changes in event or role demands (Morrison & Hall, 2002). It measures one's readiness to cope with unpredictable tasks and adjustments related to preparing for and participating in work. In terms of career, this term is associated with adapting oneself to the ever-changing nature of work, which now characterizes the modern workforce (Blustein, 2006). Career adaptability is a significant skill children must develop to envision a successful future, make healthy vocational and educational decisions, explore different occupations and identities, and solve problems (Hartung, Porfeli, & Vondracek, 2008); however, career adaptability takes place throughout the lifecycle whenever an individual experiences a transition in occupation. Savickas (1997) termed four dimensions of career adaptability- concern, control, curiosity, and confidences - which all represent the individual's readiness to cope with current work demands and manage their developmental tasks. This concept accounts for how individuals resolve development tasks and job crises and helps implement self-concept as individuals deal with work and other demands (Savickas, 1997).

Recent research illustrated that career adaptability is related to positive youth development (Gore, Kadish & Aseltine, 2003; Skorikov & Vondracek, 2007). Adolescents gain career knowledge and attitude as they get older, which impacts both career maturity and career adaptability (Patton & Creed, 2001). Defining career adaptability as career decision self-efficacy and career choice commitment, intrinsic religiousness and spiritual awareness were found to be significant predictors of career

choice (Duffy & Blustein, 2005). Studying career adaptability among adolescents, Hirschi (2009) found that positive emotional dispositions, goal decidedness, capability beliefs, and social context beliefs were all found to be significant predictors of career adaptability. Adolescents with immigration background tend to have more difficulty preparing for a career due to difficulties with finding apprenticeships and having a lower average educational attainment (Hirschi, 2009). These differences may not have to with the adolescents themselves, but with contextual challenges related to language, culture, employment, and immigration policies.

This study examined adolescent experiences of parental unemployment through three variables previously described - adolescent personal identity, social identity, and career development. These experiences were conceptualized using Bronfenbrenner's *ecological systems theory of human development* (1979). This theoretical framework views individual development in terms of relationships within five different surrounding environments ranging from the intimate home environment, to relationships in the community and interactions with public society (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). An adolescent's interaction with each individual system is combined into one model to represent that individual's development. Given the relationship between family stress and the absence of work, it is likely that parental unemployment may reciprocally influence each of the environments accounted for in Bronfenbrenner's theory due to the resulting changes in family relationships, lifestyle, and economic status. The adolescent's adjustment to these changes may define his or her development. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is more fully described in the following section.

Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979) of human development views individual development in terms of relationships within the surrounding environment. Human development is considered a growing entity that progressively moves into and restructures the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The environment is not confined to a single setting but it includes interconnections with - and external influences from - larger surroundings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For example, the home environment affected by parental unemployment is part of a larger external context including the parent's place of employment; which in itself is then embedded within the society as a whole. The ecological systems theory includes four structures that are nested, or contained, within the next, which are micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The innermost structure of the theory is the microsystem, which is considered a setting that has a pattern of activities, relationships, and roles experienced by the developing individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). How an individual perceives these features within the environment make up this structure. Examples of common elements of adolescent microsystems include the immediate family, neighborhood/community, and school. The microsystem of an adolescent of an unemployed parent may include his or her family who are actively putting forth effort to limit their spending and eating habits, a new neighborhood where the family had to move to account for the reduced family income, and school where the adolescent may or may not tell friends about the difference in circumstances due to fear of embarrassment or isolation.

The mesosystem is the next level of the ecological structure and consists of interconnections between different microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This system forms whenever the developing person actively interacts with a setting outside the microsystem and may therefore be considered a system of microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). When microsystems consist of positive, supportive relationships, interactions between the environments will then be enhanced as well. This may not be the case for adolescents of unemployed parents due to the negative consequences of unemployment. The mesosystem of an adolescent with an unemployed parent may develop when the adolescent's teacher notices changes in the adolescent's behavior, attitude, grades, and appearance at school and asks for a parent-teacher conference. These changes are likely related to the family's new socioeconomic status and the parent may or may not attend this meeting as he or she is constantly searching for work. Two of this adolescent's microsystems have interconnected creating a mesosystem.

The third structure is the exosystem, which refers to one or more settings in which the developing person is not actively participating in but is still affected by (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Parental work status (i.e., employed, unemployment) is an example of an adolescent's exosystem. Other exosystems of an adolescent with an unemployed parent may include the parent's friends and other social connections (who are now caring for the adolescent while the parent searches for work and attends interviews on a daily basis) and the education and social obligations of younger siblings (whom the adolescent is now expected to babysit because the family can no longer afford daycare). In this final example, the adolescent sibling is unable to continue his or her

own after school activities because he or she is expected to collect younger siblings from school, assist them in completing homework, feed them dinner, and put them to bed while unemployed parents are searching for jobs and attending interviews.

The final and outermost level of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model is the macrosystem, which includes the cultural and belief systems within each of the other systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Evolving over time, each structure is part of a larger cultural context, the members of which share common ideologies and values (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). An adolescent's family, school, community, and beliefs all make up that individual's macrosystem, or culture (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Just as the macrosystem is created by the combination of micro-, meso-, and exosystems, each individual system is therefore altered when the overall macrosystem is altered. The macrosystem is greatly impacted by the socioeconomic status of the family, which is related to parental unemployment. When families experience parental unemployment, each individual system within the macrosystem is changed, greatly impacting the life and development of adolescents.

Human development is identified by how he or she interacts with each of these different environment types. As each level is ultimately altered by parental unemployment, how an adolescent reacts to these changes identifies how his or her development is affected by parental unemployment. Personal identity, social identity, and career development are components of human development and can therefore be examined within this context of human development using Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory of human development as well. Just as the influence of parental unemployment on overall human development can be examined by observing how an

adolescent interacts with environmental levels, his or her personal identity, social identity, and career development may be examined in the same way. This leads to the purpose of this study and specific research questions guiding it.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine how adolescents' perceive that their parent's unemployment has influenced their personal and social identity, and career development. By focusing on how the exosystem of parental unemployment influences the microsystem of personal and social identity and career development, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory informed this research. The overarching research question for this study is how do children experience parental unemployment?

The study was guided by the following more specific research questions:

1. How do adolescents experience the impact of their parent's unemployment on their personal identity development?
2. How do adolescents experience the impact of their parent's unemployment on their social identity development?
3. How do adolescents experience the impact of their parent's unemployment on their career development?

Each of these areas is influenced by the family and parental unemployment. All of these topics are individually discussed throughout in the following chapter.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Unemployment and the Family

Despite an extensive literature on the impact of unemployment on adults (e.g., Paul & Moser, 2009), the existing literature on how children and adolescents respond to paternal unemployment is mostly outdated and sparse (Cinamon, 2001; Elder et al., 1985; Flanagan, 1990; Garfinkel et al., 1982; Pritchard, Fielding, Choudry, Cox, & Diamond, 1986; Radin & Harold-Goldsmith, 1989; Siddiqi et al., 2007). Studies comparing children of unemployed fathers with those of consistently employed fathers indicate that children raised by those with unstable employment are more likely to abuse substances (Pritchard et al., 1986), and more likely to be distrustful of peers and avoid social interactions (Buss & Redburn, 1983). More recent literature demonstrates that these individuals were also less likely to expect success in their own future careers (Cinamon, 2001). These findings illustrate only a glimpse of how parental unemployment can influence younger family members. The impact of parental unemployment on such areas as personal and social development and career development may affect how adolescents develop independence and transition into adulthood (Erikson, 1968). Without a successful transition, these individuals may be at risk for not developing into successful,

independent, or healthy adults. The influence of parental unemployment on children, particularly paternal unemployment, became a focus in research during the Great Depression (Elder, 1974; Elder et al., 1985). This was a time when the United States witnessed extreme rates of unemployment within relatively short periods of time and families that previously experienced stable employment and finances were suddenly exposed to familial unemployment and poverty (Elder, 1974).

An analytic framework was created during the Great Depression utilizing a longitudinal study of 167 children born in Oakland, California (Elder et al., 1985). In what was referred to as the Oakland Growth Study, researchers collected physiological, psychological, and social data from children at the beginning of middle school and continued through the end of high school. A follow-up was conducted at age 40. When Elder joined the project, he soon shifted focus to the ways in which the Great Depression modified the lives of families and influenced the development of children (Elder et al., 1985). Utilizing data collected from individuals born between 1920 and 1921 and raised during the 1930s, the worst years of the Great Depression, Elder et al. (1985) found that fathers tended to alter their behavior more so than mothers in response to economic hardship. A major change in paternal behavior during this time was the increase of rejecting behaviors fathers directed towards their children. Children responded more to this change in paternal behavior than they did to the unchanged maternal behaviors, suggesting that the behavior of fathers may have been more influential to children than mothers (Elder et al., 1985). Researchers concluded that this rejection may have been associated with increased independence among adolescent boys (e.g., seeking support from peers), and increased moodiness, lower self-esteems, and decreased aspiration

toward high goals among adolescent girls (Elder et al., 1985). Because the rejecting behavior of fathers may be experienced differently by male and female children, it was purported that either adolescent girls were viewed as being easier targets, or that adolescent boys did not accept such treatment and instead turned to their social network for support (Elder et al., 1985). Therefore, it may be said that boys with unemployed fathers during this time had a tendency to strengthen their social network and broaden their social identities in response to paternal unemployment.

Further research regarding paternal unemployment examined the relationships between the changing work patterns of fathers and family decision making in three types of families with young adolescents in working- and middle-class communities- families that experienced a layoff or demotion and no reemployment, families experiencing a layoff or demotion followed by reemployment, and families that never experienced a layoff or demotion (Flanagan, 1990). Adolescents from families coping with job loss or demotion reported higher levels of conflict with parents than did peers with consistently employed parents (Flanagan, 1990). This latter group reported levels of family conflict that remained stable over time (Flanagan, 1990). Adolescent boys reported a higher sensitivity to this perceived conflict than did adolescent girls suggesting the conflict between boys and parents increases when parents become less available to them (Flanagan, 1990). As mothers in these households did not report increased conflict with sons, it may be assumed that increased conflict reported by boys is more closely associated with their fathers (Flanagan, 1990). The role and perception of fathers changed when they became the unemployed family member, so boys may be more likely to lose respect for their fathers and feel as though they could challenge their fathers’

authority when they experience unemployment (Flanagan, 1990). This may suggest that children in the family are more aware of a man's reaction to unemployment (Elder et al., 1985; Flanagan, 1990; Siddiqi et al., 2007). Adolescents from homes in which unemployed parents were reemployed reported a decline in levels of conflict once their parents returned to work (Flanagan, 1990), suggesting the associations of unemployment may be reduced after a period of economic hardship.

The way in which the relationship between paternal unemployment status and child reading literacy was modified by national unemployment protection (e.g., national policies in place to protect individuals from becoming unemployed) was examined by Siddiqi et al. (2007). This contemporary study utilized a database of 15-year-old students from 32 countries. Children with unemployed fathers across all countries had significantly lower reading literacy scores than those of employed fathers (Siddiqi et al., 2007). Unemployment protection in the country was not found to be significant, however, a significant negative interaction was found between this factor and paternal unemployment (Siddiqi et al., 2007). This suggests that children with unemployed fathers who live in countries with higher levels of protection from unemployment may have more difficulties when compared to children with employed fathers in similar countries and children with employed fathers living in countries with lower unemployment protection (Siddiqi et al., 2007).

Both historical and contemporary research has suggested that the health of children is greatly impacted by family unemployment (Fagin, 1981; Sleskova et al., 2006). Maternal and paternal unemployment were both found to be significant predictors of adolescent health (Sleskova et al., 2006). Long-term maternal unemployment was

negatively associated with long-standing illness among males and self-rated health of females, while long-term paternal unemployment was significantly related to lower long-term well-being and moderate self-rated health and among males and females (Sleskova et al., 2006). Fagin conducted a case study of 22 families with unemployed fathers who were considered the head of the household before becoming unemployed. Results suggest that young children who experienced longer periods of family unemployment often exhibited eating and sleep disturbances, as well as considerably more accidents and behavior problems and other ailments than other children (Fagin, 1981).

Younger family members are able to sense how satisfied their parents are with their work (Abramovitch & Johnson, 1992). Using a sample of 249 children in the third and fourth grades and their parents, all participants were asked questions related to parental work - such as its nature and individual attitudes towards it. Results suggested that child participants understood the nature of their parents work (e.g., what they did, when they worked, and the location of their jobs). They also had minimal awareness of how satisfied parents were with their work (Abramovitch & Johnson, 1992). Children with mothers who identified as homemakers often perceived their mothers as having lower job satisfaction than those with mothers in the workforce (Abramovitch & Johnson, 1992). This difference in perception is interesting because all child participants reported feeling equally satisfied with both of these types of work (Abramovitch & Johnson, 1992). Child participants' dissatisfaction with parent's work was higher when mothers were required to work evening hours or night shifts (Abramovitch & Johnson, 1992).

Just as younger family members sense a parent's level of satisfaction with their work (Abramovitch & Johnson, 1992), they are also aware of parental reactions to job

security and insecurity (Lim & Loo, 2003). The area of job insecurity has been studied since the early 1990's. Using a sample of undergraduate students and their mothers, Barling, Dupre, and Hepburn (1998) investigated whether and how parents' feelings toward their own job insecurity and job history affected their children's beliefs and attitudes about work. Data were collected regarding parental self-reported job insecurity, students' work beliefs and work attitudes, identification with parents, and students' perceptions of each parent's job insecurity (Barling et al., 1998). Results indicated that children who observed their parents' experience job insecurity and numerous layoffs, tended to develop negative work beliefs of their own (Barling et al., 1998). Children used these beliefs as a basis for predicting their own attitudes toward work (Barling et al., 1998), suggesting children raised by parents with increased job insecurity may tend to have negative work attitudes about future work.

Parental job insecurity was more recently investigated by Lim and Loo (2003). Data were collected from 178 undergraduate students and their parents regarding parental job insecurity, authoritarian parenting behaviors, youth self-efficacy, and work attitudes (Lim & Loo, 2003). After conducting structural equation modeling analysis, results indicated that paternal job insecurity was positively associated with authoritarian parenting behaviors, though a negative association was found regarding maternal job insecurity (Lim & Loo, 2003). Data supported the relationship between maternal authoritarian parental behaviors and youth self-efficacy, but not the relationship with paternal authoritarian parental behaviors (Lim & Loo, 2003). Finally, youth self-efficacy was found to be positively associated with work attitudes (Lim & Loo, 2003). Results suggested that parental job insecurity was associated with authoritarian parenting

behaviors and that parental job insecurity may be negatively related to the self-efficacy of youth (Lim & Loo, 2003).

Research over time also suggests a negative relationship with parental unemployment and spousal relationships (Atkinson et al., 1986; Broman, Hamilton, & Hoffman, 1996; Kawata, 2008; Marcus, 2013). Recent literature demonstrates the influence and stress of work on parents is not limited to the workplace environment, but is carried into the home (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). When these two domains interact negatively, work-family conflict, or negative spillover occurs (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Marcus (2013) examined the effect of negative spillover related to unemployment on the mental health of spouses using archival data collected from a population who experienced unemployment after a plant closure. Results suggested unemployment decreased the mental health of one's spouse almost as much as it was decreased in the individual experiencing unemployment (Marcus, 2013). Kawata (2008) examined the relationship between unemployment and divorce rates using archival data from all parts of Japan. This study found a positive correlation between unemployment and divorce rates suggesting the higher the unemployment rate in a country, the higher the divorce rates (Kawata, 2008).

Personal Identity

Personal identity includes the development of personality traits (Sullivan, 1953), which shift throughout adolescence due to extensive development, confusion, and identity exploration that occur during this period (Erikson, 1950; 1968; Marcia, 1966). Personality traits are formed early in life and are continually reinforced throughout the lifespan (Sullivan, 1953). These traits are reinforced through a process of security

operations that is developed as a way to avoid threats to the self-esteem and identity (Sullivan, 1953). Personality, or personal identity, is the result of this process. Some identity processes are thought to cause alterations in the personality of adolescents (Roberts, Wood, & Smith, 2005). For example, some adolescents are eager to be identified as adults, which they may use as a motivator to change their own personality traits (Roberts et al., 2005).

Self-perceptions shift as individuals age and develop as well (Jacobs, Bleeker, & Constantino, 2003). Adolescence begins with the development of abstract thinking, which is used to define the self by integrating separate traits and events (Santrock, 1998). Younger adolescents tend to have self-descriptions that are psychological as they focus more on emotions and characteristics (Peterson & Leffert, 1997), which are the main functions through which adolescents view the world. These individuals eventually realize that they often have contradictory traits because they tend to feel different in different environments; this is likely why adolescents are often considered “moody” (Jacobs et al., 2003). These contradicting emotions may result in feelings of distress leading to frustration or hopelessness if prolonged. Such feelings may result in symptoms of clinical depression and require therapeutic intervention (Gans, 1990), which is major concern among the adolescent population (Saluja et al., 2004). Furthermore, adolescents often feel pressure to socialize with or follow certain peer groups, parents and/or teachers that may contradict each other (Jacobs et al., 2003), causing further confusion regarding self-descriptions. Such contradictions and confusion occurring throughout adolescence contributes to a conflict among an individual’s different “selves,” resulting in fluctuating self-esteem throughout adolescence, especially among females

(Jacobs et al., 2003). Middle adolescence is the time when young individuals develop specific self-definitions that change when in different relationships and roles (Jacobs et al., 2003).

Difficulties in the development of personal identity have been examined in recent literature (e.g., Crocetti, Klimstra, Hale, Koot, & Meeus, 2013; Wiley & Berman, 2013) as it is possible for psychological distress to occur during this process (Erikson, 1968; Wiley & Berman, 2013). Wiley and Berman examined identity distress among 88 adolescents aged 11-20 who were receiving services at a community mental health agency. Researchers found that 22.7% of this sample met the criteria for an Identity Problem (Wiley & Berman, 2013). Among this sample, psychopathology symptoms were associated with identity commitment, identity exploration, and identity distress (Wiley & Berman, 2013). The study did not indicate environmental issues or other difficulties experienced by participants; however findings suggested that the process of identity development may be difficult for many adolescents. With these high statistics influencing a normal adolescent population, it is expected that they only increase among a population of adolescents experiencing the stress of unemployment in the family.

Adolescents experiencing problematic behaviors are especially at risk for experiencing difficulties in personal identity development (Crocetti et al., 2013). These researchers conducted a longitudinal study of 443 Dutch adolescents beginning at ages 11 and 12. Initially, teachers rated the individuals of a cohort as either externalizing problem behaviors or internalizing problem behaviors (Crocetti et al., 2013). Externalizing problem behaviors were defined as acting out negatively on external environments and including multiple behavior problems (e.g., delinquency, aggression)

that are expressed outwardly towards others, while internalizing problem behaviors were defined as the individual's psychological environment (e.g., depression, anxiety) (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1978). Of the original cohort, a sample fitting criteria for this study was selected. The identity formation of these individuals was studied from ages 14-17 by having participants complete self-report measures of identity commitment (i.e., making a relatively firm choice regarding identity and engaging in activities consistent to that identity allowing implementation of the identity), reconsideration of commitment (the comparison of present commitments with possible alternative commitments because the current ones are considered unsatisfactory), and in-depth exploration (Crocetti et al., 2013). At this point, participants were divided into four separate groups for comparison: boys at high risk for externalizing problem behaviors, girls at high risk for externalizing problem behaviors, boys at low risk for externalizing problem behaviors, and girls at low risk for externalizing problems (Crocetti et al., 2013). Results indicated individuals (of both genders) with a high risk for externalizing problems had a tendency to report identities that were less-structured, higher levels of reconsideration of commitment, and lower levels of commitment (Crocetti et al., 2013). Results suggest early intervention that fosters positive youth development is necessary for high-risk adolescents because the combination of such externalizing problematic behaviors and a coherent sense of identity reinforce each other, placing these individuals at higher risk for decreased personal identity development (Crocetti et al., 2013). Research suggests that financial stress contributes to parenting stress which is associated with less positive parenting and more negative control of adolescent behaviors (Ponnet, Van Leeuwen, & Wouters, 2014). Therefore, it can be assumed that adolescents from families facing unemployment, who

experience great financial stress, are at increased risk for exhibiting this type of externalizing behavior and resulting consequences.

Much contemporary research has defined identity formation among adolescents using Marcia's Identity Status Theory (Crocetti, Rubini, Luycek, & Meeus, 2008; Yip, 2014). Crocetti and colleagues (2008) applied Marcia's theory to an adolescent population to empirically support the presence of different identity statuses among younger individuals. A sample of 1,952 Dutch adolescents was divided into early and middle adolescent groups to collect quantitative data regarding commitment, in-depth exploration, reconsideration of commitment, symptoms of school anxiety and generalized anxiety, parent and peer attachment, and personality traits (Crocetti et al., 2008). Using items related to commitment, in-depth exploration, and reconsideration to assign participants into identity statuses, results indicated not four identity statuses, but five: achievement, foreclosure, moratorium, searching moratorium, and diffusion (Crocetti et al., 2008). Four of the statuses had similar definitions to those originated by Marcia (1966), except searching moratorium, which was not included in Marcia's original theory. Searching moratorium was considered the positive side of moratorium as this status included adolescents who were revising their identity using their current secured commitments as starting points and searching outward for new choices (Crocetti et al., 2008). The identity statuses to which adolescents were assigned were then validated using information regarding personality, psychosocial problems, and parent-adolescent relationships (Crocetti et al., 2008). Results indicated that Marcia's theory may be applied to early and middle adolescents of different ethnicities.

A similar study was conducted by Yip (2014) using a sample of 354 diverse adolescents. Participants completed demographic surveys and measures of ethnic identity at the beginning of the study and then completed five daily surveys at random times for seven days (Yip, 2014). Questions measured situation-level salience by asking about their immediate experiences with ethnic identity in the environments they were in at that specific time (e.g., “How aware are you of your race/ethnicity/age/gender/national identity/friend/student right now”), situation-level private regard (e.g., how participants felt about being in that specific situation), and situation-level mood (e.g., positive emotions and feelings felt in the moment) (Yip, 2014). Cluster analysis identified four identity statuses: diffuse, foreclosed, moratorium, and achieved. Results indicated achieved and moratorium adolescents reported the highest ratings for identity salience and a positive association between identity salience and private regard (Yip, 2014). This suggests these individuals are more aware of their ethnic situations, and are more likely to experience positive feelings as their awareness increases (Yip, 2014). Those individuals classified as either achieved or moratorium tended to report a positive relationship between identity salience and private regard indicating the more aware of ethnic situation, the more positive they felt about it (Yip, 2014). However, foreclosed and achieved individuals who reported low levels of centrality and identity salience had a tendency to have lower private regard (Yip, 2014). Individuals with less awareness of their ethnic situation at any given time are more likely to experience negative feelings and emotions (Yip, 2014).

Another topic of recent research is racial-ethnic identity, which is important to address for individuals in a diverse urban population. Racial-ethnic identity is a part of

the personal identity that has significant meaning to individuals, especially among members with minority status (Charmaraman & Grossman, 2010; Webber, McKinley, & Hattie, 2013). Racial-ethnic centrality is considered the importance of ethnicity and race to one's identity (Charmaraman & Grossman, 2010). Minority youth tend to have higher racial-ethnic centrality than Caucasian adolescents (Charmaraman & Grossman, 2008) and it is also higher for African American adults when compared to Caucasian and Multiracial counterparts (Jaret & Reitzes, 1999). This concept was measured among a sample of 923 Black, Asian, Multiracial, and Latino students in the ninth through twelfth grades (Charmaraman & Grossman, 2010). Participants were asked to rate the importance of race-ethnicity in their lives and describe reasons for their ratings (Charmaraman & Grossman, 2010). Quantitative analysis indicated that Black and Latino students experience the highest levels of racial-ethnic identity centrality among the represented groups (Charmaraman & Grossman, 2010). Ratings provided by Asian students were significantly lower than those reported by Black participants, while adolescents who identified as multiracial reported the lowest levels of racial-ethnic centrality (Charmaraman & Grossman, 2010). These latter ratings were significantly lower than ratings by both Black and Latino students (Charmaraman & Grossman, 2010). These results suggest minority youth consider their racial-ethnic background important in their personal identity. Several themes emerged during analysis of qualitative responses, which characterized a wide range of racial-ethnic identity engagement - Positive Regard (appreciative and prideful appreciation towards one's own racial and ethnic background), Ambivalent Regard (reflections about racial-ethnic heritage that were not entirely positive), Acceptance of Diversity (the appreciation and value of other cultures),

Awareness of Inequities (inequities among minority youth such as stereotypes and discrimination), and Disengaged Positive Regard (appreciative and prideful appreciation towards one's own racial and ethnic background) (Charmaraman & Grossman, 2010). These results suggest participants' perceptions of ethnic-racial identity are generally positive with minimal racism or shame (Charmaraman & Grossman, 2010).

A similar study was conducted utilizing Pākehā, Māori, Samoan and Chinese adolescents in New Zealand (Webber et al., 2013). The study included data from the ninth year of a longitudinal study consisting of 695 adolescents aged 13 through 14 (Webber et al., 2013). Researchers examined the content of adolescents' racial-ethnic identity, feelings of connectedness, and self-identifications using various measures (Webber et al., 2013). First, a racial-ethnic identity questionnaire was developed to measure Commitment, Exploration, Connectedness, Embedded Achievement, and Awareness of Racism. Phinney and Ong's (2007) Revised Multi-Dimensional Ethnic Identity Model (MEIM-R) was also used to measure adolescent levels of Commitment and Exploration, and Oyserman, Gant, and Ager's (1995) Tripartite Interactive Model (TIM) was also used to measure adolescent Connectedness, Awareness of Racism, and Embedded Achievement (Webber et al., 2013). Finally, self-identifications were measured by asking adolescents to which ethnic groups do you belong and to identify the main ethnic group should there be more than one (Webber et al., 2013).

Quantitative analysis indicated higher mean scores for Commitment and Connectedness, suggesting participants generally tend to view their racial-ethnic group memberships as significant aspects of their identities and they have positive feelings about the group memberships they have (Webber et al., 2013). Relationships between

variables were measured and all variables except Awareness of Racism (e.g., Exploration, Commitment, Connectedness, and Embedded Achievement) were statistically significant and positively correlated (Webber et al., 2013). A Multivariate Analysis of Variance was utilized to identify differences between ethnic groups and revealed significant differences for all variables, which univariate analysis indicated was contributed to by all five variables (Webber et al., 2013). Results indicated Pakeha and Chinese groups were most similar to each other while Maori and Samoan groups were most similar to each other, forming two larger groups (Webber et al., 2013). This latter large group had higher rates of Exploration, Commitment, and Connectedness when compared to the other combined group (Webber et al., 2013). Individually, Chinese, Samoan, and Maori groups received higher means than Pakeha on Awareness of Racism, but no differences were found for Embedded Achievement (Webber et al., 2013). Qualitative analysis indicated six common themes across groups: Belonging, Difference, Religion, Culture, Look, and Language (Webber et al., 2013). Results support the view that racial-ethnic group membership provides an identity for adolescents, indicates how they belong, and what they are attempting to achieve (Webber et al., 2013).

It has been suggested that personal identity is created through a relational process (Burke, 1980) because it can be influenced by different contexts including culture, the community, the family, peers, professional, and social environments (Bosma & Kunnen, 2001; Erikson, 1950; Grotevant, 1998; Jones, Vaterlaus, Jackson, & Morrill, 2014). A recent study illustrates that younger individuals are spending less time with parents and siblings than previous generations and more time with social influences (Fox, Han, Rhum, & Waldfogel, 2011). This tendency makes friends and social networks essential

to identity development during older adolescence (Jones et al., 2014). For example, the role of friendships in adolescent identity formation was examined by Jones and colleagues. Using quantitative data from 702 older adolescents regarding psychosocial development, identity status, and friendship, results indicated some gender differences in psychosocial development and identity (Jones et al., 2014). Females reported higher levels of trust and lower levels of autonomy within their friendships than did males (Jones et al., 2014). A direct relation was indicated between identity status development and friendship qualities. For example, supportive friendships were positively associated with industry and initiative. Support was also positively associated with the achievement identity status and negatively associated with the diffusion identity status. Conflict within friendships was negatively associated with autonomy, trust, and initiative, and positively related moratorium, achievement, and diffusion identity statuses. These results suggest friendships characterized by greater support tend to result in higher levels of achievement and lower levels of diffusion (Jones et al., 2014). Even though parents remain important attachment figures, this research suggests friends become the ultimate attachment-related function for this population (Fraley & Davis, 1997). These characteristics support the idea that personal identity is thought to be rooted within a social structure (Burke, 1980).

Social Identity

Social identity refers to one's identity as part of a social group. Earlier studies utilizing adolescent samples have demonstrated in-group favoritism (Billig & Tajfel, 1973; Moghaddam & Stringer, 1986; Turner, Sachdev, & Hogg, 1983) and self-stereotyping effects (Verkuyten, 1991; Widdicombe, 1988) that contribute to the

assumption that social identity processes experienced by adolescents are consistent across adolescence and continue into adulthood (Tanti et al., 2011). A more recent study investigated whether social identity changed based on shifts in cognitive capacities and social contexts. Adolescent participants in Australia were randomly placed in two separate groups - one that primed the peer group identity and another that primed gender identity (Tanti et al., 2011). To prime participants, they were asked to identify various members and characteristics in their peer social group or gender depending on the group to which they were assigned (Tanti et al., 2011). Participants were then given the Similarities subtest of the Multidimensional Aptitude Battery (MAB-II) to measure cognitive abstract reasoning. Findings showed significant differences in social identity as individuals advance through adolescence. Social identity was shown to be stronger among early- and late- adolescents, especially when the peer group was more obvious than gender identity (Tanti et al., 2011). Results indicated that differences in cognitive styles were weaker when in-group favoritism was prominent (Tanti et al., 2011). For example, early adolescents who received lower cognitive ability scores had a tendency to demonstrate higher intergroup biases than did late-adolescents (Tanti et al., 2011). A possible explanation may be that early- adolescents are not as capable at processing changes in social context as late-adolescents (Tanti et al., 2011). These results indicate that social identity shifts as adolescence progresses with stronger identities forming later in adolescence (Tanti et al., 2011). This suggests older adolescents have a strong relation with a peer group that may be able to provide support and influence in times of need (Tanti et al., 2011). Because adolescents tend to view peers as significant in their lives (Jones et al., 2014) and are more likely to turn to these individuals for support during

times of need (Elder et al., 1986), it is expected that an adolescent's social identity may become more significant in the case of parental unemployment.

Social identity theory was applied to a sample of male adolescents to investigate the effects of social categorization on intergroup behavior (Tarrant et al., 2001). Participants were given a list of statements regarding adolescent activities and interests, which represented both in-groups and out-groups (Tarrant et al., 2001). Adolescents were asked to rate how well each statement identified the in-group and out-group, how desirable or undesirable their in-group would judge each activity or interest, and to indicate their level of agreement and disagreement with 11 items from a collective self-esteem scale (Tarrant et al., 2001). This final task represented the individual's identification with the in-group (Tarrant et al., 2001). Results indicated that adolescents tended to associate more positively valued dimensions and fewer negatively valued dimensions to their own in-group (Tarrant et al., 2001). Individuals who indicated more discrimination tended to report higher rates of in-group identification as well (Tarrant et al., 2001). These results suggest adolescents tend to perceive in-groups more positively than out-groups (Tarrant et al., 2001). Therefore, it may be assumed that an individual would also be perceived negatively by the social group should he or she leave it. Being perceived negatively by friends is likely a fear for this age group and may be used as motivation to remain in one social group. It is possible that parental unemployment will impact one's social identity given a change of finances, family relationships, and behaviors (Elder et al., 1985; Flanagan, 1990; Jones et al., 2014), which likely influence an adolescent's social connections.

Social identity complexity is a more recent term that refers to how an individual subjectively represents the interrelationships among multiple group identities (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). It accounts for the overlap between memberships across multiple social groups. High overlap occurs when an individual is a member of many social groups that are similar in nature (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). For example, an adolescent who excels at two completely different sports (e.g., basketball and swimming) may be perceived by peers as a member of both these social groups resulting in social identity complexity. In this instance, the individual is not required to greatly alter the identity across groups because the two groups are similar, but require different athletic skills. A low overlap between groups occurs when the groups are not similar in nature leading the individual to develop more complex identities when among the individual groups (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). For example, an adolescent may excel at and be perceived as an athlete and a scholar. Members in these social groups tend to be dissimilar as their memberships require different characteristics and skills. This may result in the adolescent acting one way in one group and completely differently in the other.

The concept of social identity complexity was first applied to an adolescent sample by Knifsend and Juvonen (2013). They examined the relationship between social identity complexity and ethnic identity inter-group attitudes among young adolescents aged 12-14 in the seventh and eighth grades (Knifsend & Juvonen, 2013). The majority of students were of relatively high socioeconomic status as only 11% of the student body received reduced or free lunch during the year of study (Knifsend & Juvonen, 2013). A measure of social identity complexity was adapted from an adult version and adolescents were also asked to identify their ethnicity, list three groups or activities that defined who

they each were, and to rate the importance of each of these groups (Knifsend & Juvonen, 2013). To measure out-group attitudes, participants also completed measures of other-group orientation (i.e., the openness to interaction with individuals in other ethnic groups), ethnic apprehensions (i.e., anxieties and concerns about interacting with ethnic out-groups), and ethnic benefits (i.e., perceived benefits received from interacting with ethnic out-groups). Results indicated that gender and ethnic groups did not significantly differ in inter-group attitudes or social identity complexity among eighth graders.

Regarding social identity complexity, results suggest adolescents more often participated in social groups that were either out-of-school sports or school related extracurricular activities (Knifsend & Juvonen, 2013). They tended to report a moderate degree of overlap between social groups and those with high social identity complexity tended to have more positive inter-group attitudes (Knifsend & Juvonen, 2013). These results suggest school based activities may promote inter-group attitudes (Knifsend & Juvonen, 2013). Results pertaining to out-group attitudes indicated that positive attitudes toward ethnic inter-groups tended to improve over time; however, no change in apprehension or social identity complexity was identified.

Analysis also examined longitudinal links between social identity complexity of seventh graders and inter-group attitudes of eighth graders (Knifsend & Juvonen, 2013). Results indicated that rates of social identity complexity among seventh graders were associated with stronger other-group orientation and less apprehension when compared to eighth graders (Knifsend & Juvonen, 2013). These results suggest that experiencing social identity complexity can be used to predict ethnic inter-group attitudes later on

(Knifsend & Juvonen, 2013). These findings provide implications for how school-based activity groups are structured as a way to promote inter-group attitudes.

Earlier literature suggests self-esteem is dependent on the identification with social groups (Oakes et al., 1994; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Tanti et al., 2011) and the comparison of oneself to others (Festinger, 1954). Based on the social comparison theory, individuals have a tendency to compare themselves with others to determine whether their view of social reality is accurate (Festinger, 1954). If an individual's views, ideas, and/or attitudes agree with those of the social group, then the individual concludes that his or her view is accurate and this belief system is continued (Festinger, 1954). Should these sets of beliefs disagree, individuals are likely to feel a need to change who they are in order to agree with those in the social world (Festinger, 1954). This is not synonymous with peer pressure in that other individuals are not even aware that the comparison is taking place, but the self is making the comparison and causing the resulting change or lack thereof. Uncertainty about the self is the leading reason individuals participate in social comparison (Wood, 1989). The desire to relate to a social group is more powerful than displaying one's true self or belief system (Sedikides & Gregg, 2003). Festinger (1954) suggested that people gauge their abilities most accurately when they are compared with someone in a similar social group (Goethals & Darley, 1977; Wood, 1989), which often leads to more positive comparisons (Baron, Byrne, & Branscombe, 2006). Self-judgments also tend to be more positive when comparing oneself with in-group members (Biernat, Eidelman, & Fuegen, 2002). In a way, this can be viewed as a means to protect members of disadvantaged groups from negative and painful social comparisons with members of more advantaged groups

(Crocker & Major, 1989; Major, 1994). Therefore, one's sense of well-being can either increase or decrease based on the opinions of friends, family members, employers, and colleagues (Amundson & Borgen, 1987).

Literature from the same era indicated economic hardship can both increase and decrease peer affiliation, more so for boys than girls (Elder et al., 1985). How much a child depended on peers can be related to how much he or she is influenced by negative peer pressure (McLoyd, 1989). Children of families with economic loss, defined as paternal job loss, reported a higher frequency of rule violations at school and socially disapproving acts when compared to those from more financially stable families (Flanagan, 1990). This suggests adolescents with unemployed parents may be more at risk for experiencing behavioral and academic problems than others, which may ultimately impact academic success and future career options.

Career Development

Career development has been studied throughout the years and continues to be a significant topic in research. Although career development is believed to be a lifelong process (Super, 1957; Whiston & Kellar, 2004), researchers have concentrated on the vocational behavior and development of adolescents rather than children (Savickas, 1997). It is during the middle school years when youth begin to explore different occupations and develop occupational expectations and aspirations (Hartung, et al., 2005), strengthen their interests (Tracey, 2002), and create self-efficacy expectations (Turner & Lapan, 2005). Occupational expectations are occupations individuals believe they have the highest chances of entering and being successful at (Whiston & Keller, 2004). Adolescents use these occupational expectations, along with career aspirations

(i.e., goals, desired outcomes), to make an occupational choice (Whiston & Keller, 2004). Younger individuals who have low aspirations tend to have fewer occupational choices than those with higher aspirations (Whiston & Keller, 2004). Vocational interests tend to play a major role in childhood career development as well (Betsworth & Fouad, 1997).

As children and adolescents progress through the process of career development, different occupations are considered, and these individuals judge if further exploration is necessary for specific occupations (Super, 1957). Occupational aspirations are realistic or likely career goals (Rojewski, 2005) or occupations that individuals would ideally like to pursue (Whiston & Keller, 2004). Schoon and Parsons (2002) suggest younger individuals with high aspirations may have a better likelihood of entering occupations that are higher in status. This is likely because their counterparts, low-aspiring peers, are less likely to seek training, education, and other experiences required to enter higher-status occupations (Rojewski, 1997). An individual's career aspirations are important predictors for occupational attainment later in life (Holland & Lutz, 1953).

Occupational aspirations differ across gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (Howard et al., 2011). Howard et al. recently examined the influence of socioeconomic status, gender, and ethnicity on career aspirations utilizing a sample of 22,000 students in the eighth and tenth grades. 49% of this population were female and 51% were males with the following breakdown of ethnic background: 88.2% of females and 78.4% of males identified as White, 5.1% of females and 10.4% of males as African American, 4.3% of females and 5.8% of males as Latina/o, 2.2% of females and 3.5% of males as Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1.4% of both females and males identified as Native Americans (Howard et al., 2011). 24% of total participants were classified as low

socioeconomic status as defined by their qualification for free or reduced lunch (Howard et al., 2011). Youth identified the top five occupational aspirations as artist, lawyer, musician, FBI agent, and actor/actress (Howard et al., 2011). Analysis of results indicated significant main effects and interactions for ethnicity and socioeconomic status, significant gender main effects, and a significant ethnicity and gender interaction for occupational prestige and educational requirements (Howard et al., 2011). Specifically, results suggested females were more likely to aspire towards careers requiring education than did boys (Howard et al., 2011). Socioeconomic status was found to be related to occupational aspirations, but only within the Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American groups (Howard et al., 2011). Among these groups, youth from high socioeconomic families tended to aspire to occupations with more prestige, education, and higher income than did youth from lower socioeconomic families (Howard et al., 2011). Additionally, lower-income Native Americans had a tendency to report lower occupational aspirations than lower income youth in other groups (Howard et al., 2011). These results demonstrate that youth from lower socio-economic families, which include those experiencing parental unemployment, are more likely to have lower career expectations and aspirations (Howard et al., 2011).

According to Gottfredson (1981; 2002), compromise is significant in adolescent career development because adolescents gain insight and understanding of different occupations as they mature. Careers that once seemed ideal now become realistic and complex, leading these individuals to compromise if aspirations are perceived as unattainable or unrealistic (Armstrong & Crombie, 2000). Occupational aspirations and expectations were reported among 502 students in the eighth, ninth, and tenth grades, and

coded for gender traditionality and socioeconomic status. Participants came from a mixture of urban, suburban, and rural schools (Armstrong & Crombie, 2000). Of the data collected from participants' parents, 47% of fathers were employed and 17% of mothers identified as "professional" (Armstrong & Crombie, 2000). Those who reported discrepancies in aspiration-expectations in gender traditionality or socioeconomic status in eighth or ninth grades, altered their aspirations in tenth grade to reflect aspirations they had as younger individuals (Armstrong & Crombie, 2000).

Walls (2000) examined the accuracy of vocational knowledge among a sample of 189 students in the third, sixth, ninth, and twelfth grades. The majority of participants were Caucasian and all attended regular education class in public schools located in and around a university town (Walls, 2000). Six occupational dimensions were examined including preparation time, earnings, mental requirements, physical requirements, availability, and status. Student accuracy for each dimension increased as the student became older (Walls, 2000). Vocational knowledge of students was found to be the most accurate for earnings, while the judgment of occupation availability was found to be least accurate (Walls, 2000). Students' vocational knowledge was most inaccurate regarding occupations with the least and lowest prestige (Walls, 2000). The preferred occupations reported by students correlated with high status, earnings, mental requirements (e.g., thinking speed and knowledge), and preparation time, while students in older grades were more likely to reflect professional preparation than students in lower grades (Walls, 2000).

The influence of family on adolescent career development is another area studied throughout the years. Literature considers family to have more influence on adolescent

career development than does social and school networks (Hartung et al., 2005.; Schulenberg, Vondracek, & Crouter, 1984). Parents are a major source that their children turn to for information regarding occupation knowledge and beliefs (Bryant et al., 2006; Otto, 2000), and many adolescents actually believe their own vocational development is their parents' responsibility and not their own (Farnill, 1986). The majority of research focuses on the impact parents have on childhood and adolescent career development (Bryant et al., 2006; Diemer, 2007; Whiston & Keller, 2004). Because younger family members lack direct exposure to the world of adult work, they tend to have an understanding of work based on the adults in their lives who most often include parents (Galinsky, 2000). Most children and adolescents gain knowledge of adult work by overhearing conversations about work and quickly learn that income is one of the primary reasons why adults work (Galinsky, 2000). Even though traditional career theories have addressed the fundamental influence of parents on adolescent career development (Roe 1956; Super 1957), little empirical work has focused on the effects of unemployment on adolescent career development (Cinamon, 2001). The exact nature of the family's influence is not completely understood (Otto, 2000; Santos & Coimbra 2000), especially because research does not typically view the family as a functional whole (Santos & Coimbra, 2000; Schulenberg et al., 1984).

There is also a relationship between paternal unemployment and child career development (Cinamon, 2001; Galinsky, 2000; Isralowitz & Singer, 1987). Cinamon examined the effect of paternal unemployment on adolescent career maturity, expectations, and values. Participants included 91 adolescents from a low-middle class neighborhood in Israel, whose unemployment rate was greater than 9% (Cinamon, 2001).

She found that adolescents who were raised by unemployed fathers were more likely to exhibit lower levels of career achievement, lower expectations of success in their future careers, and they may place a higher value on jobs with managerial opportunity (Cinamon, 2001). These results suggest a possibility that paternal unemployment influences career development, as children of unemployed fathers tend to be less confident and motivated workers (Cinamon, 2001). These individuals are also less likely to experience encouragement in their education (Galinsky, 2000).

The presence of entrepreneurial characteristics (e.g., authority, autonomy, the coordination of resources, and decision-making responsibilities) among low socioeconomic status black youth was examined by Isralowitz and Singer (1987) in the late 1980s. Those children being raised in a household where the head of the family was unemployed had a tendency to consider work involving independence (i.e., working at one's own pace and completing tasks in the most preferred way) less important (Isralowitz & Singer, 1987). When controlling for gender, boys of unemployed fathers put a high value on altruism (helping others) and their work surroundings (working in places with pleasant conditions), while girls put less value on both working with other workers and working independently (Isralowitz & Singer, 1987). This research demonstrates that parental unemployment may influence children's career paths in both positive and negative ways as they experience different career expectations, aspirations, and motivations when compared to children with employed parents.

One area of study related to parental unemployment is parents' job insecurity, which has been studied since the 1990s (Abramovitch & Johnson, 1992; Barling et al., 1998; Lim & Loo, 2003; Ryu & Mortimer, 1996; Stern, Stone, Hopkins, & McMillon,

1990). The association between parental job insecurity and work beliefs among children in the family is especially alarming because children learn how to perceive work based on the perceptions of their parents (Abramovitch & Johnson, 1992; Lim & Loo, 2003). For example, undergraduate students who witnessed their parents excel in work and ultimately lose their jobs, believed good performance in their own work was meaningless (Barling et al., 1998). These older adolescents also became more cynical about work in general, as they tended to view it as unrewarding and oppressive after witnessing their parents' layoffs (Stern et al., 1990). This relationship suggests that family socialization is associated with work value formation (Ryu & Mortimer, 1996). Parental job insecurity also impacts work values (Barling et al., 1998; Cheung & Tang, 2012; Isralowitz & Singer, 1987), work attitudes (Abramovitch & Johnson; Barling et al., 1998; Lim & Loo, 2003), and children's perceptions and worldview of money (Lim & Sng, 2006).

Zhao and colleagues (2012) recently examined the effect of career-specific parenting behaviors on the relationship between paternal job insecurity and youths' career self-efficacy. Parenting behaviors included support, lack of engagement, and interference (i.e., parents' control over their youth's career development and aspirations) (Zhao et al. 2012). Using a sample of undergraduate students, results indicated that paternal job insecurity was negatively associated with support, and positively associated with a lack of engagement (Zhao et al., 2012). No significant relationship was found between paternal job insecurity and interference (Zhao et al., 2012). Overall, the career self-efficacy of daughters was mediated by the amount of support they received from parents while the self-efficacy of sons was mediated by the amount of parental engagement (Zhao et al., 2012).

A future orientation and clarifying a vocational identity are significant for adolescent career development and career adaptability (Super, 1974; 1980) - however - these characteristics may be difficult for urban youth to develop. Older literature suggests the environment in which urban adolescents are raised make it difficult for them to develop a future orientation of career, thereby, leading to a disconnect in the development of future educational and vocational plans and goals (Ogbu, 1989). Additionally, urban adolescents experience multiple structural barriers such as racism, classism, and an inequality of school funding (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1995). Therefore, the environment in which urban youth are raised automatically set this population at a disadvantage for successful career development.

Much recent research has focused on how urban youth conceptualize work (Chaves et al., 2004; Diemer & Blustein, 2007). Chaves and colleagues (2004) examined how poor and working-class urban adolescents conceive work and what types of messages they receive from families about work. Following a pilot study, these researchers conducted a main study collecting qualitative data from 80 ninth grade students (Chaves et al., 2004). Participants completed a demographics survey and a worksheet consisting of three open-ended questions about how each individual conceives work (Chaves et al., 2004). Of the 80 participants, 37 identified as African American/Black Caribbean, 25 as Hispanic, 12 as White, and six as Asian (Chaves et al., 2004). The following categories and subcategories were developed from responses to three questions related to the definition of work (outcomes of work, dimensions of work, attitude of work, and personal development), purpose of work (reasons for working, reasons for not working), and the lessons learned from family about work (attributes of

adaptive workers, outcomes of work, familial experience of work, positive aspirations, nothing) (Chaves et al., 2004).

When defining work, the majority of participants defined it as a way to obtain money or accomplish a goal (Chaves et al., 2004). It was also identified in terms of psychological dimensions (e.g., physical, mental action), as a manner to keep oneself occupied, and was often identified in subordinate terms (Chaves et al., 2004).

Descriptions were often identified in a positive manner, in simplistic terms, and associated with effort and energy (Chaves et al., 2004). Finally, work was identified as a sense of personal identity (Chaves et al., 2004). Regarding work's purpose, the majority of participants indicated that they would continue working, even if there was no need, out of fear of the inability to meet basic needs (Chaves et al., 2004). Some participants identified intrinsic reasons for working (e.g., satisfaction, staying occupied) (Chaves et al., 2004). Few reasons were provided for not working since the majority of participants indicated they would continue working even if they were financially stable (Chaves et al., 2004).

Multiple lessons were learned from family regarding work (Chaves et al., 2004). Different attributes for work success were passed from families to participants, including work ethics, attitudes, perseverance, a work-school connection, and general work skills and habits (e.g., being punctual, efficiency) (Chaves et al., 2004). Many participants indicated external outcomes of working (e.g., obtaining financial gain for survival, the accomplishments of goals, building a better life) (Chaves et al., 2004). Regarding family experience of work, some participant responses suggested negative parental work experiences (e.g., work is a requirement, it is hard and difficult), while others reported

positive experiences (e.g., it provides a learning experience, male family members tends to have more positive work experiences than do family members) (Chaves et al., 2004). Finally, few participants indicated that their families transmit positive future aspirations to their children (e.g., if jobs do not provide happiness, a new job should be found) (Chaves et al., 2004). Others indicated that they have learned nothing about work from their families (Chaves et al., 2004).

Utilizing data from a large study, Diemer and Blustein (2007) selected data from a sample of 220 urban high school students from the ninth and tenth grades in poor and working-class neighborhoods. Of the participants, 26.8% identified as Latino/a, 24.1% as Black/African American/African/Cape Verdean, 24.1% as Black/Caribbean, 10.0% as multiethnic and/or multiracial, 8.9% as White, European, or European American, 4.1% as Asian, 1.8% as Middle Eastern and/or Arab, and .5% as Native American and/or American Indian (Diemer & Blustein, 2007). They collected data regarding vocational identity, career commitment, and work salience (defined as the importance of work to an individual's life and commitment to work role) (Diemer & Blustein, 2007). When compared with a sample of college freshman, urban adolescents reported slightly lower vocational identity, slightly higher career commitment, and levels of work salience that were equal for males and larger than females (Diemer & Blustein, 2007). Work salience was significantly correlated with career commitment as was vocational identity and work salience (Diemer & Blustein, 2007). Researchers conducted exploratory factor analysis to create a four-component (connection to work, vocational identity, commitment to chosen career, and salience of chosen career) solution to illustrate the structure of urban adolescent career development (Diemer & Blustein, 2007). This research suggests that

urban youth experience difficulties in career development that are unique to their population as these individuals tends to view work differently and are at risk for vocational failure (Chaves et al., 2004; Diemer & Blustein, 2007).

Theory (Brofenbrunner, 1979; Erikson 1950; 1968; Grotevant, 1998 Marcia, 1966; Super; 1957, 1980; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and preliminary evidence (Amundson, 1994; Atkinson, et al., 1986; Cinamon, 2001; Elder et al., 1985; Thompson et al., 2013) suggest that a relationship exists between parental unemployment and adolescent personal identity, social identity, and career development. However, the nature of this relationship is unknown. To better understand this relatively unexamined phenomenon, it is important to first gain a richer understanding of adolescents' perceptions of this experience and the impact of this experience on their development. Qualitative research methods offer an effective means by which this knowledge can be gained. This research will subsequently inform the development of programmatic quantitative research to clarify further the relationship between parental unemployment and adolescent development. Due to increased rates of unemployment found in urban areas (Johnson, Schaefer, Lichter, & Rogers, 2014), it is timely to explore adolescents' perceptions of the impact of parental unemployment on their personal and social identity and career development.

Purpose of this Study

Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine how adolescents' perceive that their parent's unemployment has influenced their personal and social identity, and career development. While there is much empirical research about unemployment in general, very little focuses on the experiences of adolescents within the unemployed family.

Therefore, a phenomenological research design guides this research (Husserl, 1962).

Specifically, the study is guided by the following specific research questions:

1. How do adolescents experience the impact of their parent's unemployment on their personal identity development?
2. How do adolescents experience the impact of their parent's unemployment on their social identity development?
3. How do adolescents experience the impact of their parent's unemployment on their career development?

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Paradigm

A paradigm is a “set of interrelated assumptions about the social world which provides a philosophical and conceptual framework for the organized study of that world” (Filstead, 1979, p. 34). The purpose of a paradigm is to identify a puzzle needing to be solved and to provide tools for the solution (Kuhn, 1962). As all puzzles can have many solutions, different theories are explored to identify the best process to reach the ultimate solution (Kuhn, 1962). The paradigm selected to guide research specifies the philosophical assumptions, instruments, participants and methods used (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Social constructionism is a paradigm that seeks to describe, explain, and understand the world in which people live (Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1985). It includes the idea that for each event, there may exist an infinite number of alternative perceptions assigned to it (Burr, 1998). These perceptions are constructed based on knowledge that is socially derived, and should, therefore, be considered subjective (Burr, 1995). Therefore, social constructionism assumes what exists is what is perceived to exist (Burr, 1995). The goal of social constructionism is to rely predominantly on participant views and collected subjective meanings of experiences (Creswell, 2012). These meanings

cannot be observed, but must be defined by participants and then interpreted by researchers (Haverkamp & Young, 2007).

Each paradigm is associated with specific philosophical assumptions that shape the problem and research questions, are rooted and explored in the scholarly community, and assist in the evaluation of research (Huff, 2009). Because social constructionism assumes that multiple constructions of each event are possible, individuals are expected to challenge their perceptions and observations, which are not objective (Burr, 1995; Burr, 1998). Therefore, the ways in which individuals observe and understand the world and the self are considered subjective (Burr, 1995). One's understanding of the world is not dependent on life experiences, but how the individual perceives them (Gergen, 1995), which results in a definition of complex experiences that is able to be examined as a whole (Creswell, 2012).

According to social constructionism, individuals use social interactions and processes to develop knowledge, which is then used to construct their perceptions (Burr, 1995). Examples of social interactions include negotiation, communication, rhetoric, and conflict, which each provide a different perception and meaning of the world (Gergen, 1985). It is possible for an individual to have numerous "social constructions" simultaneously, with each construction providing a different human action and a pattern of social action (Burr, 1995). Therefore, how one understands the world may be connected to the activities in which people engage (Gergen, 1985).

The categories and concepts in which individuals understand the world is dependent on history and culture (Burr, 1995), suggesting these worldviews are generational. In a way, one's understanding of the world may be viewed as a product of

that specific time and culture given that social and economic situations vary (Burr, 1995). Therefore, the constructionist paradigm is consistent with the assumption that multiple realities exist (Havervamp & Young, 2007). Every individual has lived experiences that are unique to him or her which hold different meanings even when lived experiences are similar to others.

A social constructionism paradigm is consistent with the purpose of this study as it depends on the personal interpretation of adolescents being raised by unemployed caregivers. Participants had the opportunity to describe their personal experiences of their parents' unemployment and how their personal identity, social identity, and career development have been impacted. Learning these unique experiences helped to identify treatment areas to enhance future success and how identity is developed. This also helps other adolescents of unemployed parents understand how their career development is different from peers with employed parents, and better prepare them for the transition into adult work. Using the participants' own words and descriptions of experiences provided a personal perspective and voice.

Research Design/Qualitative Approach

Phenomenology is a qualitative research approach that describes what an experience means to the individual, or group of individuals, having the experience (Moustakas, 1994). This approach describes the common meaning of specific lived experiences of a particular concept or phenomenon to develop a description of the essence of possible human experiences (Creswell, 2012). Beginning with the first-person perspective of an experience, not an explanation, phenomenology expands the one meaning by adding first-person perspectives of others (Husserl, 1970) and deriving

descriptive meanings (Moustakas, 1994). The goal of phenomenological research is to understand the experience, or phenomenon, using original descriptions in the context of a particular situation (Moustakas, 1994). It is important that researchers conducting phenomenology research view data with an unbiased description and suspend their own experiences in order to not influence the participants' views (Wertz, 2005). Researchers must be prepared to imagine the described essence through many lenses to distinguish actual aspects from those that may have unconsciously been added through analysis (Wertz, 2005). Finally, it is important that phenomenologists always acknowledge their intent in research and bracket beliefs, natural knowledge, and any psychological descriptions so they can gain insight into their own essences (Wertz, 2005). In these ways, phenomenology increases the likelihood that the resulting collective description of a phenomenon has no influence from researchers and is actually that of the studied population.

The phenomenon experienced by participants in this particular study was being raised by an unemployed parent or caregiver. Using this approach for the purpose of describing how children explore parental unemployment, this investigation looked at the commonalities across the lives of different individuals being raised by an unemployed parent. Each individual story was combined with the others to form a description of parental unemployment, which ultimately created a description that has a universal essence (Creswell, 2012; van Manen, 1990). Hermeneutical phenomenology, a type of phenomenology, was used. This includes researchers interpreting the meanings participants have of lived experience and finding essential themes for that sample through data analysis (Creswell, 2012; van Manen, 1990).

It is helpful to understand adolescents' experiences with parental unemployment because it better prepares others who are either currently living with or at risk of living with an unemployed parent. Using this approach also helps describe developmental areas of social, identity, and career development and how they have changed since experiencing parental unemployment. By gaining this knowledge, counseling psychologists are able to identify and prevent specific negative situations and experiences from happening such as identity confusion, experiencing negative shifts in social identity, and missing out on important career development processes.

Research Team

Qualitative researchers are advised to acknowledge their observations, past experiences, and current biases prior to conducting qualitative research (Creswell, 2012; Ponterotto, 2005), thus allowing the researcher to concentrate on participants' perspectives without interference (Creswell, 2012). All researchers have biases, or personal issues that may make it difficult to respond objectively to data (Hill et al., 1997). Qualitative researchers are also expected to record their expectations for findings (Hill et al., 2005). Expectations are defined as the beliefs one has formed based on life and professional experience, reading literature, and developing research questions (Hill et al., 1997). The research team engaged in recommended procedures (Hill et al., 2005; Morrow, 2005; Creswell, 2012), to be aware of existing biases so as to remain open to participants' words and experiences throughout data collection and analysis, and to limit the influence of pre-existing biases.

The primary researcher for this study is a Caucasian, female student in a counseling psychology doctoral program. She was never directly exposed to

unemployment until beginning her doctoral study. This researcher worked as a practicum therapist at a state mental health hospital. Patients in this hospital tended to have low socioeconomic status, no insurance, and were most often unemployed. Through the process of conducting therapy with these individuals, the researcher gained first-hand perspectives of short- and long-term unemployment. Most of these individuals began the job search when first becoming unemployed and continued for lengthy periods without success that they eventually gave up the search and decided to survive on governmental aid. The majority of individuals were veterans experiencing such severe mental illness they were unable to work, while others were older individuals who lost jobs to younger individuals who were paid lower salaries. No matter the circumstance of unemployment, the effects on the mental health and family members were evident. Many patients spoke of how they no longer had relationships with their children either because of the mental illness, or because they turned to crime to resolve the family's poverty level, or the children did not want to be associated with the patient any longer. Having these experiences has made this researcher more empathic towards unemployed individuals, especially those with children, and shifting assumptions about the causes of unemployment as more complicated and not solely the responsibility of the individual. It is now understandable that many different factors are associated with unemployment.

The primary researcher has also conducted participatory action research with middle and high students in a local urban Kindergarten through eighth grade school. With limited funding, the research team attempted to provide snacks in the after-school sessions so child participants were able to better concentrate after a full school day. Daily, children were told multiple times to only take one of each snack, as there had to be

enough snacks for the entire group. However, on a daily basis the snacks were gone even though they were meant to last over multiple sessions on different days. After questioning a student who was taking additional snacks and putting them in her book bag instead of eating them, this researcher learned that some students were taking additional food so they could eat it for dinner or so their younger siblings would have food later, since there was no food in the home. Witnessing this direct effect of poverty and unemployment on children helped the primary researcher learn the lesson that children have no control over their home circumstances. They are bystanders in a household where they do not have power to change circumstances, but must rely on adults. Working in this environment also fueled the motivation for this research study.

This researcher has been trained, and has worked, as a mental health counselor for four years. She possesses such clinical skills as observation, empathy, and open-mindedness, which helped with the collection of strong, unbiased data. Working as a clinician, this researcher has worked with people from diverse populations in terms of all ages, gender, race, socioeconomic status, and mental illness. She has also worked with unemployed parents and children being raised in poverty, who may have similar experiences to participants in this study. Working with both of these populations on separate accounts has provided this researcher with two different perspectives of how unemployment is experienced, as well as an insider's perspective that may help build rapport with the participants, leading to rich information.

Furthermore, the primary researcher has a strong foundation in qualitative research. She completed a Masters-level qualitative methods course during which she created and completed a qualitative study utilizing Grounded Theory. She also

completed doctoral-level qualitative methods courses, received training in CQR provided by the research advisor, and participated in the research advisor's qualitative research team utilizing CQR. She has more than twenty presentations of various methods and topics at multiple conferences locally, nationally, and internationally.

All researchers have biases, or personal issues that may make it difficult to respond objectively to data (Hill et al., 1997). Prior to working clinically with the unemployed population, this researcher considered unemployment to be an individual's choice or result of his or her actions, which is similar to an individualist culture's mainstream view. It was easy to believe unemployed individuals lacked a work ethic and dedication; and that they chose, and preferred, to survive on free governmental aid. However, these biases quickly changed after clinically working directly with those who have experienced unemployment. That experience led this researcher to consider that unemployment is, for the most part, involuntary and unwanted. Through her experiences, she realized that unemployed individuals have oftentimes attempted to navigate the sometimes impossible task of searching for a job, but have been rejected more often than not due to circumstances out of their control. Even though the primary researcher of this study developed a more realistic understanding of the barriers faced by many unemployed individuals, she did not believe that the participants in this study had the same realizations. At the initiation of this study, the primary researcher believed that participants may hold their own negative biases towards their unemployed parents and caregivers and blame them for the unemployment and resulting altered lifestyles. The researcher was sure to be aware of and cognizant of any tendency to defend the unemployed parent or caregiver, provide advocacy, or to be overly compassionate if the

situation were to arise. She was also sure to recognize any tendency to provide solutions and/or aide to participants regarding their exposed issues and was sure to instead remain neutral. All participants were encouraged to seek guidance from their school guidance counselors, should they require specific assistance beyond this study.

Prior to this study, this researcher expected all participants to come from an individualist culture and to each have a macrosystem that perceived unemployment negatively. Parental unemployment was thought to influence an adolescent's entire worldview since younger individuals remain dependent on parents and families. Therefore, this researcher expected parental unemployment to influence the personal and social identity and career development of urban adolescents. Before this study took place, it was expected that participants' self-perceptions would change after experiencing parental unemployment and they would likely think less of themselves. It was this researcher's opinion that participants would attempt to hide the unemployment from friends due to embarrassment or pride in a way to not alter their social identity and status. Participants were also expected to participate in fewer activities (e.g., extracurricular, social, family) due to a decrease in family income, further interfering with social identity. This researcher expected participants to observe parental unemployment and use the experience to strengthen their own career development or use the experience as examples of what not to do. Finally, the primary researcher expected this study to initiate a string of future research projects that would provide advocacy and awareness for children and adolescence of unemployed parents, who are not typically considered directly affected by unemployment.

First of all, she depended on previously discussed clinical skills to collect data from participants and remain empathic. She closely attended to all biases, thoughts, and difficulties by journaling throughout the entirety of the study (before, during, and after data collection). Finally, the primary researcher participated in discussion with the research team to identify and set aside biases to focus on the perceptions of adolescent participants.

In addition to the primary researcher, the student research member on this team is a Caucasian, female student in a counseling psychology doctoral program. Born and raised in Bosnia, she moved to the United States more than 10 years ago and she studied mental health. She has a Masters of Arts in Clinical Psychology and doctorate in Counseling Psychology. She has worked in the field with urban children, adolescents, adults, and families for more than two years. She has also worked with mentally ill adults in an inpatient setting, many of which were homeless and within the lower socioeconomic status. This student completed one qualitative methods course at the doctorate level, received training in CQR provided by the research advisor, and participated in the research advisor's qualitative research team utilizing CQR. She also participated in other research teams using qualitative methods, has more than twenty presentations at various conferences, and completed her own dissertation using CQR.

This student research member has had personal and professional experience with unemployment. Such personal experience involves witnessing family members be laid off or terminated from their jobs. She has also worked professionally with the chronically unemployed population through a non-profit community agency that facilitates reentrance into the work field. Through this job, the student research member

worked closely and built relationships with unemployed individuals experiencing various mental, physical, and environmental barriers. This student research team member is of the belief that unemployment is involuntary in most cases. Additionally, it is believed that unemployment can affect an individual's well-being as it further complicates reentrance into the work field due to numerous factors including loss of marketable skills.

Regarding children of unemployed individuals, this student researcher believes the effects of unemployment permeate into every aspect of children's lives, including their identities. This student research member believes parental unemployment can impact their children both positively and negatively. As parents are perceived as role models, they are able to model positive skills such as resume writing, motivation, persistence, and teamwork within the family, as they navigate through the difficulties of unemployment. On the other hand, unemployed parents may display and model negative practices, such as lack of motivation, persistence, and helplessness. When it comes to career planning and career choice of children of unemployed individuals, children may want to strive for better in order not to find themselves in the same position as their parents. The student research member in this study believes that children of unemployed individual are more likely to enter into the same field as their parents and to not go beyond the educational level of their parents. Reasons for this include their lack of awareness of the career and work options and possibilities available to them and because these individuals are uncomfortable with the unknown. Of course, these are only some of the beliefs of the student research member and do not in any way encompass all beliefs related to parental unemployment and its effects on children of unemployed individuals.

The research advisor and auditor for this study is a European American female currently a professor and co-director of training for an American Psychological Association (APA) accredited Counseling Psychology doctoral program. She has research interests in vocational psychology, including childhood and adolescent career development and the role of family relationships in career development. She has had extensive training and experience conducting and qualitative research, including Consensual Qualitative Research.

Sites of Data Collection

Data were collected from two urban high schools in a midsize Midwestern city in the United States. Site A was a small urban private high school for students from low socioeconomic status families. In order to enroll at this school, all students must prove financial disadvantage based on information provided to the Private School Aid Service (PSAS). Site A consists of 426 students, 69% of which identify as African-American, 10% as Latino, 3% as multiracial, 6% as Caucasian, and 13% as Other. Of the school's population, 84% receives free or reduced lunch and the expenditure per pupil is \$15,870. The attendance rate at Site A is 94.9% and the four-year graduation rate is 48%.

Site B is an urban public high school in a school district with approximately 38,555 students, 100% of which are labeled as economically disadvantaged; therefore, all 640 students are classified as economically disadvantaged. Of the student population, 40.1% identifies as Black/Non-Hispanic, 33.0% as Hispanic, 24.0% as White/Non-Hispanic, and 2.6% as Multiracial. The expenditure per pupil is \$12,271. The attendance rate at Site B is 52.6%, the four-year graduation rate is 60.5%, and the five-year graduation rate is 72.1%.

Participants

Participants in this study consisted of 13 students from the two sites described above. Sample demographics varied by age (14-18; $M = 15.46$ years, $SD = 1.13$), racial background (nine identified as Black/African American, two as White/Caucasian, one as Hispanic, and one as Biracial), gender (10 identified as female and three as male), and grade level (eight were in the ninth grade, one was in the tenth grade, three were in the eleventh grade, and one was in the twelfth grade). The length of interviews ranges from 17:53 to 1:05 ($M=27.46$ minutes; $SD=12.09$).

A comparison of schools showed that nine participants were enrolled at Site A and four were enrolled at Site B. The ages of participants from Site A ranged from 14 through 16 ($M=15.00$ years; $SD= 0.71$). Eight of the participants identified as female and one as male, and eight participants identified as Black/African American and one as White/Caucasian. Six of the nine participants were in the ninth grade, one was in the tenth grade, and one was in the eleventh grade.

The ages of participants from Site B ranged from 15 through 18 ($M=16.50$ years; $SD=1.29$). Two participants identified as female and two as male, and one identified as Black/African American, one as White/Caucasian, one as Hispanic, and one as Biracial. One of the participants was in the ninth grade, two were in the eleventh grade, and one was in the twelfth grade. Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Table 1.

Participant Demographics

Participant	School	Gender	Age	Race	Grade	Interview Length
1	A	Female	15	African American	9	22:42
2	A	Female	15	African American	9	21:12
3	A	Female	14	African American	9	31:42
4	A	Female	16	Caucasian	11	21:11
5	A	Female	16	African American	10	19:56
6	A	Female	15	African American	9	24:18
7	A	Female	15	African American	9	30:44
8	A	Male	15	African American	9	26:59
9	A	Female	14	African American	9	29:45
10	B	Female	18	Caucasian	12	17:53
11	B	Female	16	Hispanic	11	1:05:10
12	B	Male	15	Biracial	9	23:59
13	B	Male	17	African American	11	33:29

Caregivers demographics varied by age (31-69; $M = 44.31$, $SD = 10.37$), racial background (nine identified as Black/African American, three identified as White/Caucasian, and one identified as Hispanic), relationship to participant (eight identified as mothers, three identified as fathers, and two identified as grandmothers), level of education (one indicated he attended school through the ninth grade, one received a General Education Development (GED), three attended through the twelfth grade, two

identified as high school graduates, three identified as attending college but not finishing, one indicated he received an Associate's degree, and two indicated they received Bachelor's degrees), current employment status (eight indicated they were currently unemployed, four indicated they were employed, and one indicated she was retired), and length of unemployment in the previous five years (three months-approximately 41 months). Four participant caregivers failed to complete the portion of the demographic survey listing periods of unemployment time the previous five years; therefore, their statistics were not included in range listed above.

During the interview process, some participants offered details of their experiences with parental unemployment and explanations for why their caregiver or caregivers were unemployed. Almost all participants described being exposed to parental unemployment at young ages (as young as seven, and as old as age 13). Five participants described how their caregiver or caregivers work "on and off" (mostly through temporary work agencies) and are constantly in the process of searching for work. Two participants reported that their caregivers work side-jobs or under-the-table jobs while searching for steady employment, and another stated her mother went back to college after being unable to find work. Of the nine participants who offered information about why their caregiver or caregivers were unemployed, three reported their caregivers experienced medical issues, two reported their parents had children and were laid off or voluntarily left their job, one was fired, one quit, one was laid off, one retired, one went to jail, and one parent chose to stop working at a job to become a foster parent.

When considering caregiver data by site, the ages of caregivers of participants from Site A ranged from 31 to 69 years ($M=45.11$ years; $SD=12.28$). Eight caregivers of

the participants at Site A identified as female and one as male while eight identified as Black/African American, and one identified as White/Caucasian. Five of these caregivers indicated that they either graduated from or attended college, three indicated they received a twelfth grade education, and one indicated he received a ninth grade education. At the time of the interview, five of these individuals were unemployed, three were employed, and one was retired (however, this individual was unemployed from May 2013 through May 2014, thus meeting criteria for this study). When examining the periods of unemployment in the previous five years for caregivers of participants at Site A, two individuals failed to complete the parent/caregiver demographic questionnaire. The range of unemployment (in months) of the seven individuals who appropriately provided this information was three months to 69 months ($M=42.50$ months; $SD=22.88$).

The ages of caregivers of participants from Site B ranged from 38 to 47 years ($M=42.50$ years; $SD=4.65$). Two caregivers of the participants at Site A identified as female and two as male while two identified as White/Caucasian, one as Black/African American, and one as Hispanic. One of these caregivers indicated he had an Associated degree, two indicated they had graduated high school, and one indicated she had received a General Education Development (GED). At the time of the interview, three of these individuals were unemployed and one was employed. Two of the caregivers of participants from Site B failed to complete the parent/caregiver demographic questionnaire. The range of unemployment (in months) of the two remaining caregivers who appropriately provided this information was five months to 21 months ($M=13.00$ months; $SD=11.31$). Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of the participant caregivers.

Table 2.

Participant Caregiver Demographics and Length of Unemployment in Previous 5 Years

Participant	Related Participant	Relationship	Age	Education	Current Status	Months of Unemployment
1		Grandmother	54	Some college	Unemployed	3
2		Mother	31	Bachelor's degree	Employed	13
3		Mother	35	Bachelor's degree	Unemployed	69
4		Father	41	Ninth grade	Employed	22
5		Mother	35	Some college	Unemployed	8
6		Mother	53	Twelfth grade	Retired	12
7		Mother	50	Some College	Unemployed	6
8		Mother	38	Twelfth grade	Employed	NA
9		Grandmother	69	Twelfth grade	Unemployed	NA
10		Father	47	High school graduate	Unemployed	5
11		Father	6	Associate's degree	Unemployed	NA
12		Mother	8	General Education Development (GED)	Unemployed	21
13		Mother	9	High school graduate	Employed	NA

Note: NA = not available because the caregivers did not complete the questionnaire. Retired caregiver was unemployed for twelve months in the previous five years before retiring last year.

Sources of Data

Demographic survey. A demographic information questionnaire (Appendix A) was used to collect demographic information about age, gender, race/ethnicity, academic achievement (i.e., GPA), and family information (i.e., individuals living in the home with and without jobs, caregiver information). Parents were asked to complete a few items (Appendix B) about their age and the family's socio-economic status (e.g., highest level of education, work status, and work history). Of all parent participants, four did not complete questionnaire items on the back of their sheet resulting in inconclusive data regarding their length of unemployment.

Semi-structured interview questionnaire. All participants participated in a semi-structured interview (Appendix C) ranging from approximately 17 to 65 minutes in length. One possible explanation for this range is the developmental age of the population being interviewed. It can be difficult for adolescents to discuss themselves and tell adults about their personal lives, especially when conversing with someone they had not previously met. Not having a personal connection with the primary researcher may have made it difficult for participants to be open and descriptive. Personality differences may also explain the range in interview lengths. Some participants had shy and introverted personalities and required more introductory questions to increase comfort. These individuals were also asked more questions to gain additional information and seek clarity when they provide one-worded or simple responses. Finally, it is possible that this range in interview lengths may be explained by cultural reasons. Some cultures naturally tend to be more open and talkative, are comfortable volunteering personal information, and find it easy to discuss their personal lives, all of which resulted

in longer interviews. Other cultures are naturally raised to be more private and may not be as trusting about their personal information and details about their daily lives. As a result, these interviews tended to be shorter.

Interview questions were constructed by consulting existing literature (e.g., Cinamon, 2001; Elder, 1974; Erikson, 1950, 1968; Festinger, 1954; Super, 1955), with a particular focus on how the adolescent's personal, social, and career development have been influenced by parental unemployment. Questions focused on the participant's experience with parental unemployment, as well as how parental unemployment has influenced the personal and social identity, and career development of participants.

Sampling Plan

The population of interest for this study was urban adolescents aged 14-18 years, from low socio-economic status areas, who were raised by unemployed parent(s) or caregiver(s). Upon initiation of this study, unemployed was defined using the definition provided by the United States Department of Labor (i.e., individuals who do not currently hold a job, have actively searched for work in the prior four weeks, and are available for work). However, this proved to be very limiting, so the definition was extended to include any unemployed individual who has not had a paying job for a minimum of three months in the previous five years. This represents criterion sampling, which is defined as a process of selecting participants that meet certain criterion (Patton, 2001). The criterion met by these participants was being raised by unemployed parents or caregivers in this study.

Procedures

After receiving permission to conduct this study from the primary researcher's Institutional Review Board (IRB), various urban high schools were contacted to request meetings with principals and/or school guidance counselors. A meeting was held with the Dean of Students at Site A to briefly discuss the research and gain support. Site A granted permission to conduct research with a sample of their students and provided a letter of permission, which was accepted by the IRB. The Dean of Students presented the study to various students and in different classrooms and identified students meeting criteria. Nine students individually returned all necessary documents (e.g., signed informed consent forms for minor participant participation, signed informed consent forms for parent participation, and completed demographic questionnaires for parents/caregivers) to the Dean of Students in an unmarked confidential envelope, who then immediately scheduled individual confidential interviews with the primary researcher on school grounds during school hours.

When meeting for the interview, students were first asked to sign informed assent forms for their own participation and complete demographic questionnaires (Appendix A). Data collected from all questionnaires' was used to provide context for understanding each participant's unique experience with parental unemployment and to also describe the sample for data analysis. After the proper forms were signed and completed, all participants were interviewed using the same group of questions with prompts and follow-up questions based on the participant and interview responses. Interviews at Site A ranged in length from approximately 20 to 32 minutes. As previously stated, the interview questions were based on literature and research questions that guided this

study. Once all nine interviews at Site A were completed, \$10 incentive gift cards to a local fast food restaurant were given to the Dean of Student to distribute confidentially to each of the participants for their participation.

Similar procedures occurred at Site B, though one of the guidance counselors volunteered as the liaison between the primary researcher and students. An initial meeting was held at Site B and written permission was provided, which was again submitted to IRB. In order to find a larger sample, the guidance counselor and primary researcher both individually presented the study to various classrooms on various days and distributed packets of information to interested students. Criterion sampling again took place with the same criteria as Site A. Interviews were scheduled during school hours on school premises where students signed informed assent forms and completed demographic questionnaires (Appendix A). Interviews at Site B ranged in length from approximately 17:53 to 65:10 minutes. Once all four interviews at Site B were completed, \$10 incentive gift cards to a local fast food restaurant were given to the guidance counselor to distribute confidentially to each of the participants for their participation.

As interviews were completed, they were transcribed verbatim for analysis and verified for accuracy. Each transcription remained confidential as all identifying information was removed and participants were given pseudonyms (e.g., Case 1).

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed following procedures outlined by Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005), which is consistent with Grounded Theory (Glaser & Straus, 1967; Straus & Corbin, 1990). Data analysis in CQR includes a

team approach consisting of research members, who conduct the analysis, and auditor(s), who reviews findings and provides feedback (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005). This approach allows data to be processed from multiple perspectives to ensure that the complexity of all data are captured (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005; Marshall & Rossman, 1989) and helps address biases of individual members, and helps capture the complexity of data (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005). Researchers for this study included the primary researcher and a second student research member, while the research advisor served as the auditor.

Researchers independently examined the literature (Amundson, 1994; Atkinson, et al., 1986; Cinamon, 2001; Elder et al., 1985; Thompson et al., 2013) and interview protocol to determine an initial list of topic areas, or domains (Hill et al., 1997; Thompson, Vivino, & Hill, 2012). This initial list is considered a start list and is used as a conceptual framework to refer to throughout analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Topic areas are considered domains, which are used to group data on similar topics (Hill et al., 1997; Thompson et al., 2012). Some domains may be redefined or combined with others, while others may be deleted or added (Hill et al., 1997; Thompson et al., 2012). This process continues until the team believes the domains best represent the data (Hill et al., 1997; Thompson et al., 2012). The original start list of domains for this study consisted of 18 domains.

After the start list was developed, team members independently read through individual transcripts and assigned, or coded, sections of data into domains that best described them (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005; Thompson et al., 2012). Though, it is preferable for data to be coded into only one domain, some data fit into the definition of

more than one domain. Data that is coded into two domains is called double-coding (Hill et al., 1997; Thompson et al., 2012). This occurrence was kept to a minimum to avoid domains needing to be redefined or combined (Hill et al., 1997; Thompson et al., 2012).

Once each individual team member coded all data into domains independently, the team met and discussed the codings (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005; Landany, Thompson, & Hill, 2012). As the team reviewed each transcript individually, discussion focused on why different sections were coded into certain domains (Hill et al., 1997; Landany et al., 2012). There is no “right” decision and not all data fit perfectly into domains, but the goal was to come to a consensus, or agreement, so data was classified in the best possible way (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005; Landany et al., 2012). After a consensus was reached for domains, team members individually returned to the remaining transcripts and coded the rest of the data accordingly (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005; Landany et al., 2012). By the end of analysis, the original start list went through approximately eight revisions.

After consensus was reached regarding final domains of all transcripts, a consensus version was created, which included the domain title and all raw data that had been assigned to it. This copy of the consensus version and all transcripts were given to the auditor to audit domains and provide feedback. The auditor is expected to be involved throughout data collection and analysis, but outside the consensual process so she is able to give a different perspective to help researchers maintain their initial focus (Hill et al., 1997; Schlosser, Dewey, & Hill, 2012). Having so many different perspectives allows the essence of the data to be captured, which is the goal of CQR (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005; Schlosser et al., 2012). For this study, the auditor reviewed

all coded raw data assigned to domains and provided feedback for the research team to review (Hill et al., 1997; Schlosser et al., 2012). After receiving feedback from the auditor, the research team met to review and discuss each of the comments until consensus was reached again (Hill et al., 1997; Schlosser et al.). Feedback was provided to the auditor and a finalized list of domains was made (Hill et al., 1997; Schlosser et al., 2012).

The feedback provided by the auditor in the process described above involved the titles of domains and whether the domains should be combined or separated from others. The auditor suggested that the domain initially labeled Self-Perception be renamed as Self-Descriptions. She also suggested the Social Perception domain be divided into two domains- Social and Group Activities and Social Interactions and Relationships. These suggestions were discussed and agreed upon by the research team and the changes were made in the final domain list. The auditor also suggested that a Financial Hardship domain be added to the domain list that includes all descriptions of financial difficulties, struggles, and hardships. However, after the researcher team discussed this and again reviewed the data, they realized the occurrence of financial hardship was never coded independently as its own domain because participants typically used examples of financial hardship to describe their experiences with parental unemployment. This data was always double-coded with other domains, most often with the Personal Understanding and Experience of Parental Unemployment domain. Because of this, the research team decided to combine these two domains and change the name to Personal Understanding and Experience of Parental Unemployment/Financial Hardship, which is reflected in the final domain list, and add Financial Hardship as a category.

The auditor's review of domains also revealed minor departures in the differentiation between the domains describing personal experiences and those describing how parental unemployment has impacted those experiences. For example, data originally coded into the Self-Perception domain (currently named Self-Descriptions) was sometimes coded into the Impact of Parental Unemployment on Self-Perception domain (currently named Impact of Parental Unemployment on Self) and vice versa. The auditor also identified that all data relating to current education and career development, even data describing the impact of parental unemployment onto current education and career development, was coded into the Current Education/Career Development domain. The research team was careful to re-review all raw data to edit and/or verify that it was appropriately coded into domains. Particularly, all data pertaining to how parental unemployment has influenced current education and career development was recoded into the Impact of the Parental Unemployment on Education/Career Development domain. Once each comment was addressed, the research team returned the final list of domains and raw data to the auditor, who agreed with the changes.

Using this updated consensus domain version, all data were entered into a table format to allow easy sorting from domains into categories (Thompson et al., 2012), which are topics that further describe the domains (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005). The purpose of categories is to capture the essence of what each participant says about that particular domain in as few words as possible (Hill et al., 1997). When naming categories, it is important to remain as close to participant words as possible, and to always consider the focus of the domain, as that is what the categories are describing (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005). Each team member independently summarized the

content in each domain and identified categories in the category column. Then they came together as a team and discussed them until a consensus was reached (Hill et al., 1997). Team members were careful to always refer back to the original transcript when disagreements arose to ensure the context of data was not misinterpreted, as is suggested by Hill and colleagues (1997). After consensus was reached on categories, they were included in the consensus version and given to the auditor, along with all transcripts, for review of categories (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005; Schlosser et al., 2012).

Similar to the auditing process for finalizing the domain list, the auditor read through all coded raw data (Hill et al., 1997; Schlosser et al., 2012). Her comments were returned to the research team, who again individually reviewed and collectively discussed them until consensus was reached whether to accept or reject them (Hill et al., 1997). The auditor's feedback provided many suggestions for condensing and highlighting data. She identified an overlap between the Impact on Home Life and Impact on Home Responsibilities categories and suggested combining them into one Impact on Home Life category, with which the research team agreed. The auditor also identified overlap between the Individual Activities and Interests categories and suggested combining them into an Individual Interests and Activities category. The research team also agreed with this feedback.

The auditor suggested combining additional categories together, though the research team disagreed at the time of consensus. For example, the auditor suggested combining Financial Hardship and Overcoming Financial Hardship categories; however, the research team viewed these as two different concepts with valuable information in each that would be lost if they were combined. Therefore, the name of the latter category

was changed to Coping and Compromising with Financial Hardship to further distinguish between the two categories. A similar suggestion was made for Extracurricular Groups and Past and Current Extracurricular Groups, but the team again thought combining them would lose information. It was decided that it was important to know whether or not students were participating in groups at the time of the interview and the circumstances around those decisions.

Another comment the auditor had in the first round of auditing of categories was to highlight the commonality of “uncertainty” and “lack of impact” that was reported by many participants in one area or another. After re-reviewing data, uncertainty was found most prevalent in the Post High School Plans/Ambitions and Impact of Parental Unemployment on Education/Career Development domains, where it was already included in the respective Indecision and Anticipation Regarding Future Outcomes categories. It did not occur in enough interviews (e.g., more than two) in other domains to be significant and there was not enough data to support the creation of a category labeled lack of impact in every domain. Finally, the auditor observed that the Current Education/Work Experience domain was ambiguous. She suggested that a Part-Time Work descriptor be added, which was changed as well.

The research team returned their comments to the auditor for another review of domains and categories. After stepping back and reviewing the purpose of this study, it was decided that domains one, two, and three (e.g., Self-Descriptions, Social and Group Activities, and Social Interactions and Relationships) included mostly descriptive data and did not significantly contribute new knowledge. Therefore, these domains were removed and reported as demographic information instead. Similarly, the Narrative and

Reasons for Unemployment categories within the Personal Understanding and Experience of Parental Unemployment/Financial Hardship domain were also removed as they included descriptive data as well.

The auditor also observed that the domain titled Family Life/Role/Responsibility only included two categories that were not congruent with the three descriptors in the domain's name. The research team then re-coded this domain and changed the name to Family Contributions with the following categories: household chores, childcare, and financial provider. The auditor observed additional overlap and suggested combining the Impact on Schooling category within the Personal Understanding and Experience of Parental Unemployment/Financial Hardship domain with the Impact on Current Education category under the Impact of Parental Unemployment on Education/Career Development domain. The research team agreed with all of these comments and completed the changes.

Finally, the auditor suggested changing the names of categories to better describe the data within them. Therefore, the Inspiration category was renamed as Motivation, the Indecision category as Uncertainty, and the Coping and Compromising with Financial Hardship category as Coping with Financial Hardship.

There were few suggestions by the auditor in the final round of category and domain review. She suggested changing the following names of categories: the Impact on Social Free Time category name to Impact on Leisure Time and Anticipation Regarding Future Outcomes to Anticipation of Future Education/Career/Work Outcomes. The research team agreed with these comments and made the changes. She also suggested combining the Motivation and Self-Confidence categories under the Impact of

Parental Unemployment on Education/Career Development; however, the research team viewed these as two separate categories. For example, Motivation included descriptions of how parental unemployment was motivating participants to either attend school or enter a certain job field at the time of the interview. The Self-Confidence category focused on how confident participants were about their future job performance or ability to get a job in the future. Therefore, these two categories remained separate.

After reaching final consensus version of the data, a list of eight domains, categories, and definitions was created. This information was added to the consensus version and table, which was organized by domain and definition (Hill et al., 1997). Within each domain, raw data was organized by category (Hill et al., 1997). This allowed all data and findings to be clearly visible and easy to read for findings to be presented.

Trustworthiness. Trustworthiness in qualitative research involves research being valid and dependable (Morrow, 2005). Triangulation occurred between members of the research team throughout the entirety of data analysis. This included constant communication and discussion of findings to provide corroborating evidence. Data analysis included an external audit where the auditor examines the process and products of analysis to ensure all findings are supported by data. The auditor provided feedback which was discussed among the research team, who collectively decided how to incorporate suggestions. This process was repeated for each step of data analysis.

The primary researcher kept a personal journal throughout the entire process of data collection and analysis to remain as objective as possible throughout the study. The journal included a chronological list of communications she had with each sites, observation notes from meetings and interviews, and any thoughts, feelings, or opinions

that arose. This journal allowed the primary researcher to bracket any personal subjectivity or biases that may have occurred throughout the process and influence analysis of participants' reports. The journal entries also support the validity of the research.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Data were organized into eight primary domains, or topic areas: current education/part-time work experience, family contributions, post high school plans/ambitions, personal understanding and experience of parental unemployment/financial hardship, impact of parental unemployment on self, impact of parental unemployment on social and group activities, impact of parental unemployment on social interactions and relationships, and impact of parental unemployment on education/career development. Domains are considered topic areas in which data are grouped together into similar topics (Hill et al., 1997). Categories, or themes, emerged within these eight domains. Utilizing Hill et al.'s (1997) method of categorizing the representativeness of results, the category was given the name general if it applied to all cases (e.g., 13), typical if it applied to at least 50% of the cases (e.g., 7 to 12), and variant if applied to less than half, but at least two cases (e.g., 2-6). The domains, categories, number of cases, and representativeness are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3.

Research Results Summary

Domains/Categories	Cases	Representativeness
Current Education/Part-Time Work Experience		
School	13	General
Part-time Work	10	Typical
Job seeking	4	Variant
Family Contributions		
Household Chores	10	Typical
Childcare	6	Variant
Financial provider	2	Variant
Post High School Plans/Ambitions		
Higher education	13	General
Job/career	13	General
Simultaneous work and school	8	Typical
Uncertainty	7	Typical
Motivation	6	Variant
Personal Understanding and Experience of Parental		
Unemployment/Financial Hardship		
Impact on home life	13	General
Coping with financial hardship	10	Typical
Financial hardships	9	Typical
Emotional reactions	5	Variant
Impact of Parental Unemployment on Self		
Lessons learned	13	General
Impact on self-descriptions	13	General

Impact on self-perception in social situation	5	Variant
Impact of Parental Unemployment on Social and Group Activities		
Lack of impact	9	Typical
Impact on extracurricular groups	8	Typical
Impact on leisure time	8	Typical
Impact of Parental Unemployment on Social Interactions and Relationships		
Impact on social interactions	13	General
Informing others of unemployment	12	Typical
Relating to peers with employed parents	12	Typical
Relating to peers with unemployed parents	12	Typical
Impact of Parental Unemployment on Education/Career Development		
Motivation	13	General
Anticipation of future education/career/work	13	General
Outcomes		
Exploration of future career/work	13	General
Exploration of future education	11	Typical
Impact on current education	10	Typical
Impact on current work	6	Variant
Self-confidence	5	Variant

Current Education/Part-Time Work Experience

The current education/work experience domain included responses that describe participants' current schooling and current work experience without the influence of

parental unemployment. Within the domain of current education/work experience, there were three categories: school (*general*), part-time work (*typical*), and job seeking (*variant*).

School. The first category, school (*general*), described participants' current education and academic experiences. When discussing school, most participants described their school, grade, classes, and grade point average. In this Midwestern urban city, many high school students have more than one option as to what high school to attend. With Site A being a private school, those students had to apply and qualify economically to gain admission. Participant 7, a 15-year-old African American female freshman described her experience and specifically why she preferred to attend that particular school.

I'm in the ninth grade. ...I love my grades, they're okay but they could be better. Um... I would- I like [Site A], because they have teachers that care about their education and the students and they're on a personal level with their students. And their work study program that helps you develop into a mature person.

Not only did this participant explain why she enjoys attending Site A, but she also recognized that the academic experience positively influenced her personal development. Not all high schools in this Midwestern urban city provide opportunities for work study or have teachers that may teach beyond the classroom curriculum, and these may be two characteristics that help Participant 7 decide to continue her attendance there.

As with any private high school, Site A seems to have high standards for performance and high expectations for student success. With a large workload,

Participant 6, a 15-year-old African American female freshman, described how she attempted to use the allotted classroom time to her academic advantage.

Getting my work done on time. Um, like, when we're in the classroom and we get- have a certain amount of time to talk and do our work- I'm good at that, not talking as much and getting my work done. I'm good at- I'm really good at anything if I just try and do it.

Similar expectations appear at Site B, which is a vocational high school.

Participant 9, a 14-year-old African American female freshman, described her school experience and how she is able to perform academically even with additional obligations and activities in the school. "So, being in a lot of activities, and my... my grades are very you know high, I stay focused, I study, so I get good grades. I'm really not worried."

Both students described the dedication to and effort they put toward schoolwork, which illustrates the importance of succeeding academically at both schools.

Part-time work. Part-time work (*typical*) described the participants' current work experiences and job. With Site A incorporating work-study into their curriculum for all students and Site B incorporating trade studies for lower-level students and work-study for higher-level students, all students interviewed participated in some sort of training or actual work experience through their schools. Participant 2 is a 15-year-old African American female freshman describing additional benefits to the work-study program at Site A.

Because at this school we have- we have work jo- we have jobs that we work at that they pay us at. And... it's- work it seems fine and then to get paid, too. That's fun-but... like over the summer and stuff and when we

have breaks our jo- some of our jobs give us opportunities to work for pay so we get paid and we just work for them and it's fun to work.

Many students from both schools work part-time jobs in addition to their work-study programs. Participant 9 described how she had been working since before she even entered high school and began the work-study program there. "So... I mean cause I've been working- my auntie when um... she used to let me work at her daycare - I've been working since I was 12, I'm 14 now."

Participant 10, an 18-year-old Caucasian female senior described a similar experience of part-time work. "Um, well right now, I've been working with my aunt doing like a cleaning service, but... I don't like it."

Both individuals described working part-time with family members, which was common among participant responses. Other participants described part-time work in the field of food service as well.

Job seeking. The job seeking category (*variant*) was the final category in this domain. It illustrated the job search process that some participants were undertaking at the time to find and/or apply to part time jobs outside of the work-study program through school. Participant 7 described the purpose she was searching for additional work:

...well currently I am searching for a summer job, but I know some places that hire at 15. So I signed up for some places like Arby's and McDonalds, signed up for those, and um... I would just like to get a job that pays a decent amount of money so I can [save] go to college.

Searching for work with a goal to save for college was reported by multiple participants as was contributing to the family income. Participant 13, a 17-year-old African American male junior, was also in the process of seeking outside work at the time of his interview. He described his preferences for work and potential options that may be available to him once he turns 18.

No fast food restaurants at all, no. Uh either like Dave's market, supermarket, or something like that. But yeah when I- that's what I'm saying, when I turn 18, then I can get a like a job, more like the trade. ...And then we've got a summer program too [for anybody].

Participant 13 specifically described difficulty deciding what to do for work when there were multiple options available to him. For example, he could continue searching independently for outside part-time work, wait until turning 18 when additional jobs would become available to him as a legal adult, or possibly apply for the summer work-program through school that would allow him to potentially work in a trade that may or may not lead to a future career post high school.

Family Contributions

The Family Contributions domain included descriptions of the participants' household responsibilities and contributions in the household and home environment. Participants described a variety of expectations on them as household members, no matter their age, that included household chores (*typical*), childcare (*variant*), and financial provider (*variant*). These were the three categories of this domain.

Household chores. The primary contribution of participants to the household was to perform household chores (*typical*), which was the name of the first category.

This included any task or responsibility participants performed in the home environment.

Participant 6 provided a description of tasks she typically completed at home.

Chores, of course. Um, making sure the house is locked up, so just in case, because we live in kind of a rough neighborhood... Washing dishes, vacuuming, um cleaning the tables or the windows, keeping my room clean.

Though this participant later stated that her mother performed most of the other household obligations, those chores she described above were her primary responsibility. She identified that these actions were her main contributions to the household and how she performed them daily when needed.

Participant 13 described household chores that take place inside and outside of his house:

At home- chores, doing the dishes, taking out the trash, cleaning my room, cleaning the living room, and stuff like that. And when, obviously, like yard work. Yeah when it get that time, but right now, that's pretty much it. ...Uh, dishes, mop, sweep, clean the room, vacuuming, and like... organization and stuff in the house period.

He goes on to describe that he and his brother either take turns performing these chores or complete them together to save time.

Both Participant 6 and 13, and many others, described household chores that had a personal benefit (e.g., cleaning their own rooms and personal spaces) as well as chores that all family members would benefit from (e.g., locking the house, taking out the trash, cleaning the family room). This illustrated that all household chores are a contribution to

the family unit as a whole whether one person (e.g., the participant) or the entire family benefits from the action.

Childcare. The second category in this domain was childcare (*variant*). This illustrated how participants help parents and/or family by caring for and assisting younger individuals in the home. Participant 11, a 16-year-old Hispanic female junior described how she is expected to care for the children at home whenever she is there.

And then there's - now that my sister and her kids moved in again, so I'm always watching them, I'm always helping out around the house... Well, most of the time, like I said, when I'm at the house, I'm always either taking care of my niece or nephew, helping her with her homework, cause [my sister] goes to school too.

Participant 3, a 14-year-old African American female freshman, described herself as another caregiver in the home.

Um, well... when my mom decided to finish her foster parenting classes, now I'm like the second helper- I help her with the children get their homework done and bath time and all of that. So yeah... I help everybody.

Both Participant 3 and 11 described and accepted these caretaking responsibilities without negativity. Childcare is expected of them given their ages and roles in their perspective families.

Financial provider. The final category in this domain was financial provider (*variant*). This category described how participants financially assist the family with their individually earned paychecks from work-study programs, part-time jobs, or a

combination of the two. Participant 11, who described caring for her niece and nephew above, described how all working family members contribute money towards the home's bills but how her family is sometimes most dependent on her paycheck.

...Um, then I have to pay bills sometimes, cause you know our family kind of struggles. So, uh, not everybody's check comes at the same time. So my check might be depended on more, and I'm also kind of give it to my mom because I don't really need the money. I'm always helping her like pay the bills once in a while. And this, cause you know, the struggles sometimes... so I just help her around with that, like even if she doesn't need it, I'll still give it to her, because I know at some point she's going to end up needing it. ...I give my mom the money, like whatever she needs. Like most of the time it will be like 200, 250, and I just give it to her. And that will pay for like one of the bills, and then like everybody pays one part of the bill.

Participant 6 described how she had been hired for a summer job and expected to become a financial provider for her family as soon as school dismissed for the summer.

Hmmm, I would say, a partial provider cause I'm starting a summer job this summer, and I will be bringing home an income and helping my mom out with some of the bills. I started me a bank account with a savings and checkings. I'll put some in there and give some to my mom.

Post High School Plans/Ambitions

Post high school plans/ambitions included those responses that concern the participants' plans and expectations for after high school. Within this domain, there were three categories: higher education (*general*), job/career (*general*), simultaneous work and school (*typical*), uncertainty (*typical*), and motivation (*variant*).

Higher education. The first category, higher education (*general*), described participants' educational plans and expectations for after high school. All participants identified a preference to continue education beyond high school and discussed a variety of potential options. One common option for participants was to attend a local community college. Participant 11 described this as her post high school educational plan and why.

I plan to go to college. ...For right now, [Community College].

Financially and just because I'm not sure where I actually want to go, so [Community College] is for right now, to finish all of the basic and then to actually figure out what I want to do after that.

Participant 4, a 16-year-old Caucasian female junior, also described a plan to attend a local community college; however, she hopes to eventually transfer to a different university or vocational program.

I plan to go to [Community College] for two years to do my main classes, and then go to [cosmetology school in the city] for a year to do cosmetology, and then either go back to [Community College] or another college to do registered nursing.

Participant 10 described a plan to attend higher education, but was having difficulty deciding between attending a local community college or a two-year program elsewhere.

I said I want to go for at least two years, but then if I if I feel like I can stay and like make it more than that, then that's what I'll do. ...I was looking at uh [college], I want to say. Yeah, or [Community College], but I want to try [college] first. It's a school for ultrasound radiology... it's like family-oriented and stuff like that. ...it's like... it's like small capacity, it's not too many students so it's like, I think I'd be better there. ...It's a four-year program, but you can finish it in two years if you're a fulltime- fulltime student.

Another option discussed by some participants was to go straight to a university or college after high school. This was the plan for Participant 1, who was a 15-year-old African American female freshman. "After high school, I plan to go to [a university in the Southern United States] for college and to get my doctor's degree in um... psychology. ...It's an all-female HBCU."

Job/career. The job/career (*general*) category included descriptions of career and work plans as well as career and work expectations for after high school. Participants largely used "job" and "career" interchangeably and had difficulty differentiating between the two. Participant 2 described different options she will have for work as a young person post high school. "Uh to start off since I'm younger I can get a fast food place or a store... Or a daycare center."

Participant 12, a 15-year-old biracial male freshman, described a desire to work rather than find a career after high school.

Um, I need a side job, I need a car... so I'll probably got to work at like a phone store or something like that. ...Cause my brother works there and if I work at a phone store there's a better chance I can get a phone and keep it on.

When later asked about his career, Participant 12 stated: "A veterinarian and engineer. If I end up losing track of those... I'll have to think of something else."

Participant 1 provided detail for her preferred "job" after high school which turned out to be descriptions of her ultimate career.

Um for a job I want to be able to go into schools and be like a counselor or social worker and be able to talk to different kids and just learn more about them and help them because I could possibly help them in certain situations by my own personal situations.

Simultaneous work and school. The next category in this domain was simultaneous work and school (*typical*). This category described participants' plans and expectations to attend school and work at the same time after high school. Participant 4 had already created a plan for balancing these tasks simultaneously:

For [Community College], I'm a try to work nights out by the college, cause there's a whole bunch of- the [Community College] I want is [Community College on the eastside], over there? Um, it's a whole bunch of like uh... like stores and stuff over there. Yeah and then the 15 [bus] will take me right home.

Participant 5, a 16-year-old African American female sophomore, compared her expectation to go to school and work simultaneously to her current high school work-study experience: “I think I can juggle working and going to college because here we have to work and go to school so I think it’s I’ll be able to do that.” This illustrated that Participant 5’s work-study experience at the time of her interview was preparing her to do the same in the future and attend work and school simultaneously.

Participant 6, who described above how she is expecting to become a financial provider over the summer, described the reasoning behind wanting to go to work and school at the same time. “Mmm... maybe have a job on the side. Taking care of my family, just keep working hard so I can get what I want.” This suggested that Participant 6 may plan to continue supporting her family financially, which may be motivation to attend work and school simultaneously after high school.

Uncertainty. Uncertainty (*typical*) described participants’ uncertainty of what they wanted to do after high school in terms of education, career, and/or work. These descriptions pertained to uncertainty in any one of these areas or include descriptions of uncertainty in a combination of them.

Participant 8, a 15-year-old African American male freshman, was still in the process of deciding whether he even wanted to attend school after high school or to just enter the work field. “Uh, I wanted to go to college but I just don’t... when I’m in school, I want to be done with school. So I was thinking about like going into like... I wanted to be a nurse, like a CRNA.”

Participant 2 described indecision between multiple potential jobs and careers she may want to enter after high school.

I wanna do... I wanna be a hair stylist. Or either like make... make shampoo and stuff to like yeah. Or be a daycare teacher to like work with kids or be a supervisor the head of it and have my own daycare like as a business and like go all around the world like that.

Both of these individuals were uncertain about what to do after high school in terms of education for Participant 8 and career/work for participant 2.

Some participants described having post high school plans (i.e., attending college), but expressed uncertainty for how to attain them. For example, Participant 12 described a desire to attend college, but did not know which college to attend:

Um, well, I have to go to college 'cause I wanted to be either a veterinarian or engineer. So... go to college and... I don't know what I'll do... get a job... Um, I don't really know the colleges yet. I wasn't really looking into colleges; I'm just trying to get out of high school first. There's a college out there that teaches you about uh how to be a vet so, probably that one.

Similarly, Participant 10 described wanting to work after high school, but she was having difficulty deciding between different careers and how to gain find additional information to make her decision.

Well, I ain't make it clear yet, but I'm in between medical assisting and ultrasound radiology. But, I don't know which one I want to do yet 'cause I want a job shadow. Like, where you follow somebody around see what they do, like their everyday schedule and stuff it's like.

Motivation. The final category in this domain was motivation (*variant*). This described anything that drove or influenced participants' decisions regarding post high school education, career, and/or job plans. Participant 2 described her mother as motivation for wanting to enter a certain career: "Um... cause [my mother] was a... she was a supervisor for a daycare -- and like... I wanna do something- I wanna d- I always said I wanted to do that. I gotta see her do that and... I just- I don't know.

Similarly, Participant 12 stated: "I've always wanted to uh be a vet, 'cause my cat died. And I didn't know what to do, so I just want to be a vet. And I wanted to be an engineer 'cause they work with their hands and I'm a hands-on person."

Both Participants 2 and 12 described experiences and/or personal stories from their childhoods that motivated them to want to enter certain fields in the future.

Participant 6 described being motivated by passion to become a pediatrician:

I love working with kids. I absolutely love them. And just to cure another one in need of help just feels awesome. Thinking of neurologist because my mom has a heart problem and I thought maybe if I could fix people's heart, then maybe it wouldn't be a problem. So, I'm kind of torn between the two.

Participant 9 described being motivated financially to enter the military post high school: "Go to the military to pay off my grandmother."

Personal Understanding and Experience of Parental Unemployment/Financial Hardship

Personal Understanding and Experience of Parental Unemployment/Financial Hardship included descriptions and narrative of participants' personal experience and

understanding with parental unemployment. It included descriptions of how the unemployment has influenced the home life as well as family relationships. Within the domain were four categories: impact on home life (*general*), coping with financial hardships (*typical*), financial hardship (*typical*), and emotional reactions (*variant*).

Impact on home life. Impact on home life described how parental unemployment had influenced participants' home life, family functioning, and living situations. It also described how parental unemployment had influenced roles and daily responsibilities in the home. For example, Participant 4 described how parental unemployment had impacted her relationship and interactions with her unemployed father.

[Dad's] just... cause he just sits there at home. He used to drink, so he would just sit there and drink like that. Yeah, like... arguing with him when he's drunk, arguing about everything ju- yeah, just the arguing, it just feel like it pushes me back.

Participant 11 described changes in her home environment following the family's second eviction notice and having multiple appliances turned off:

So, from there, my mom was panicking, my dad was panicking and everybody was panicking... Cause like we went from being everything fine, all of the bills paid, all the car payments are done- you know everything being perfectly fine, to just everything went down. And you know everybody got into arguments and everything was about money this and money that- we need this and... And like... it just- everybody- like my mom and my dad got into like really bad arguments- my mom got

depressed at some point. So, it was down for after... probably a good year, and then... it definitely started getting comfortable.

This participant described how parental unemployment lead to an increase in tension in the home environment, an increase in the frequency of arguments between her parents, and negatively impacted the functioning of many individual family members.

On the other hand, Participant 6 described a positive impact of parental unemployment on the home: “Actually it’s been helpful a lot because I have [my mom] around more... She just likes to hang with me a lot. We go everywhere together.”

The contrast between the descriptions of Participants 11 and 6 demonstrate how parental unemployment has different impacts and effects each household in a unique way.

Coping with financial hardship. Coping with financial hardship (*typical*) described how participants and their families managed the challenges associated with financial hardship. Participant 11 goes into great detail about how she and her family coped with the financial stresses associated with parental unemployment.

Yeah. And uh it was so bad, that like- I remember one time, it was in the summer. We had a pool. So in order for us to wash dishes, what we did, we grabbed the pool water, put soap in there and started washing dishes in there... And uh... I didn’t do it, but my sister and my brother did. They grabbed the pool water, warmed it up and just took a shower like that. I mean, it’s nasty but... we- we had to find like take a shower one way or another. And like, me because I was so tiny I was short and everything, my mom just got regular water and boiled it up, and that’s how we got our

hot water. And so instead of taking like cold showers, we took hot water and just warmed it up and everything[.]

Even though her family experienced difficult times, she also described how coping with financial hardship also created fond memories.

It's actually kind of fun when we [were at] that stage because like... that's the point where we get to be creative. So it's like... you do like the most dumbest thing like (laugh)... I remember um... I don't know what we put on the windows, but it was really cold outside, so uh we put little plastic things all over the windows, inside and outside. And (chuckle) like I don't know what we put under the door, so it won't be cold, because you know how like sometimes under the door, like the wind come in? ...And then the food, was the most creative thing ever. Like we put the most nastiest things together and just made it into food and it was... I mean... looking back at like... it was kind of just funny and fun how everything happened and it's like... even though we didn't have money, we'd still go out somewhere like... cause like before that, my mom actually take us out ... and you know like do fun things. And it's like, just because we didn't have money didn't mean that we still couldn't have fun. ... Like we'll go to the park or like, we'll go somewhere like- ... and it's like- or we'll just all build up money to actually go somewhere. And uh, I remember one time, we filled up the gas tank all the way up and we uh just drove around. We drove to New York I think. ...And even though we had unemployment, we still managed to do that. I mean we had help, yeah...

but it was just something like- we seen everything for like three days, and then we came back and like- even though we're unemployed, nothing really changed cause it's just like- it just made us more together. ...And it's like we enjoyed- like it was bad at first, like broke or whatever... but it's like, the things that you do (laugh)... like uh- [make you stronger.]

Many participants described coping with financial hardship by delaying their wants until a later time when the family was able to afford it. For example, Participant 1 described how parental unemployment was an obstacle for her:

Ummm... it got in- it got in my way by like me going through something really badly and I couldn't get it. Um... Like this past birthday I wanted the iPhone 6 ... and I couldn't get it as soon as I wanted it. But I did eventually get it so I was okay with that.

Participant 2 provided a similar description of waiting to receive her wants:

It's like I wanted something that costed a lot like shoes. She'll say no you have to wait till I find a job or you gotta wait till next week when she get more money then she can buy them for me or she'll just say no you can pick something else... instead of just getting one pair of shoes that cost a hundred dollars and you could get more stuff for a hundred dollars.

Financial hardships. The financial hardships (*typical*) category described the financial challenges and difficulties related to parental unemployment. Participant 11 described financial hardship in her household.

everything went downhill. And like... it got really bad when we lost our car. We had to walk and then my school's kinda far from where I lived, and like the bills weren't getting paid, we almost got evicted, ... And it was kind of a struggle, and it's like... it went all the way down because we didn't know how to deal with it.

She later described:

We had a lot of bill issues... and it's probably why they just- money-wise, and it's like... like I said, we went from being fine to a complete drop. So, it's like we show a lot of things like either the water was cut off or the um... the heat? The... was cut off or something- like one of the things was always cut off. Like always one thing that shuts off, like every month. And if it wasn't one thing, it was the other.

Participant 11 described multiple times how sudden parental unemployment occurred and resulting financial hardship. She stated she and family just “didn't know how to deal with it” making it even more difficult for them to know how to cope.

Similar to Participant 11, and others, Participant 4 described how her family almost lost their home due to financial hardship.

It's hard because I see my mother struggle like with the bills and knowing there's nothing I can do about it because I have to be at school full time. And like... we almost... we was almost without a home because of him. Cause she couldn't pay the bills.

Emotional reactions. The final category in this domain was emotional reactions (*variant*) and it described how participants' responded emotionally to parental unemployment. Participant 11 described her emotions and behaviors when her parents became unemployed when she was a younger child.

You know, me being young, like I was the spoiled one, so it's like when I didn't get my way, I threw tantrums and- you know, I mean, now, what's happening now I would like understood, but I was young so I didn't understand what was happening.

Participant 6 described her how her emotions and emotional response were impacted by how her mother responded to being unemployed.

She doesn't really show her struggles- she just keeps a smile on our faces no matter what- she finds a way for whatever we want or need. So, it it's really been kind of good, but since I know the truth inside, it's kind of heart breaking to know that I can't do anything about it.

Even though Participant 6's mother attempts to shelter her from the struggles of parental unemployment, Participant 6 is still aware that they are present and experiences stress because she is unsure as to how to help.

Impact of Parental Unemployment on Self

Impact of Parental Unemployment on Self consisted of participants' descriptions of how parental unemployment has influenced their self-descriptions, self-thoughts, interests, and individual activities. It also included lessons that participants had learned about themselves as a result of the parental unemployment. There were three categories

in this domain: lessons learned (*general*), impact on self-descriptions (*general*), and impact on self-perceptions in social situations (*variant*).

Lessons learned. Lessons learned (*general*) described any type of personal lesson learned by participants as a result of parental unemployment. Participant 5, a 16-year-old African American female sophomore, described what parental unemployment taught her. “But, it helped us- well me, it helped me learn like sometimes you have to like work hard actually to actually get what you want like everything is not going to be easy, it’s going to be hard times and stuff.”

Participant 1 described a positive lesson she learned from experiencing parental unemployment. “Mmmmm... it made me realize that I can adjust to certain environments... and still have a positive outlook on it.” Similarly, Participant 4 described the following: “It has taught me that I can be more independent and not depend, like... I don’t even have to depend on them for money or nothing, I can just try to go out and get it on my own by working.”

Participant 11 also reported learning about herself:

That- it had actually helped me learn how to appreciate things more than actually taking everything for granted. Cause- it actually has- way more grateful for what it was before- cause back then- you know I was young actually, and you know I was you called spoiled, so everything I needed, I had. And like if I didn’t get it I’d throw like a tantrum you know act like a little kid. But now, it’s just... I realize that I should have been more grateful for everything. I actually said thank you, because like if I didn’t get it, I would have... I was like... when I was younger, I never said thank

you or anything or like show how much I appreciated. And it's like now, like... I take whatever I can and be grateful for it. So, taking everything for granted or whatever... so I appreciate more now because I realized how it felt to have nothing. Like when you start to get things, you be like... being like... never had it before, and... it was like it's more grateful.

All four participants above described learning personal lessons about themselves and their personal development as a result of parental unemployment. Whether it had to do with work ethic, resiliency, or independence, each individual learned new characteristics about themselves that they may not have learned until later in their lives, or ever, had they had different experiences with parental unemployment.

Many participants also described learning lessons about how to improve their own financial lessons. For example, Participant 2 stated she learned: "Um... to save up cuz you never know what could happen with your job." Later in the interview, she added: "Mmm... just save up and... um... don't spend your money on a lot of expensive stuff."

Participant 2, as well as many others, reported they had learned that it is important to start saving money and open savings funds earlier in life. They provided multiple reasons such as saving for college, being ready for emergencies that may occur, and being financially prepared if they themselves eventually became unemployed one day.

Impact on self-descriptions. The second category in this domain was impact on self-descriptions (*general*). This described how parental unemployment had influenced the way that participants describe themselves. For example, Participant 13 stated:

It made me describe my influence and describe myself as a stronger and... responsible person. ...It make me want to do better. School, sports, around the house, and as a person, just overall. ... It made me put my priorities first, and my wants second, and what I need first, too. Priorities first, and my needs and my wants second. ... It it has taught me that I'm... more responsible and more stronger emotionally and physically than I really thought I was. And it opened me up to being more able to handle more things at once and balance my schedule.

Participant 11 compared her current self and behaviors to those prior to her experience with parental unemployment.

And... the other people that were making fun of me had employed parents and got whatever they wanted when they wanted. It's not like they worked for it their selves. So, it's like that's how I was before we went down, and it's like... I probably would have been in the same state as them, but it's like, I'm happy that we went through that stage cause now I appreciate everything more. And, I feel like they don't understand how to be grateful like for what they have. Cause they were me, when I had got everything that I wanted, Like I was ungrateful, so...

Both of these responses describe personal growth in the ways these participants view and describe themselves. Participant 13 described himself as growing stronger and

more responsible and being better able to prioritize his needs while Participant 11 described an increase in appreciation and gratefulness in her life. These changes in self-descriptions and self-perceptions were identified as direct results of their experiences with parental unemployment.

Impact on self-perception in social situations. The final category, impact on self-perception in social situations (*variant*) described how parental unemployment had influenced the way participants' acted or believed they were perceived by others in social situations. Responses described either a change in their social functioning and behaviors or a denial of any change at change at all. Participant 9 described how she altered her social function by attempting to behave the same way socially even though her internal dialogue had changed. "Umm... I still be me, even though I know inside of me, I wish I could do those things, or go here and there."

In contrast, Participant 6 denied any alteration in social behaviors at all. "It hasn't really changed - I've always been the same goofy person with my friends, no matter if my mom was unemployed or not."

Impact of Parental Unemployment on Social and Group Activities

Impact of Parent Unemployment on Social and Group Activities included descriptions of how parental unemployment influenced participants' participation in social and group activities. Within this domain were three categories: lack of impact (*typical*), impact on extracurricular groups (*typical*), and impact on leisure time (*typical*).

Lack of impact. The first category, lack of impact (*typical*) included participants' responses that denied an influence of parental unemployment on their social and/or group activities. For example, Participant 2 described:

No they like... we- people still come over to my house and my mom still buy us snacks and stuff and rent movies for us. And we still went places it's just not, we didn't go- we didn't use our money on expensive things. If it was that I didn't go to something, it wasn't because of her unemployment. It was because I had other things to do.

This participant reported that her social and group activities were not influenced by parental unemployment; however, she did describe how she does not use her money on expensive things. Although Participant 2 stated she sometimes did not attend social activities, she stated it was due to her own personal preference rather than to parental unemployment.

Multiple participants reported being able to continue participation in extracurricular activities even though their families were experiencing parental unemployment. For Participant 5 stated: "Uh, it really hasn't changed for real, I'm still able to do what I want to do. My sisters are still able to do what they want to do." Participant 11 made a similar statement as well:

No. Everything kind of just stayed the same. Cause even- at that time, I was uh doing basketball. So I was still able to you know like get everything and still play a sport. ... But But other than that, nothing really changed.

Participation in extracurricular activities remained unchanged for these two individuals even though their families were experiencing the financial hardships of parental unemployment. This further illustrates a lack of impact of parental unemployment on social and group activities.

Impact on extracurricular groups. Impact on extracurricular groups (*typical*) described how parental unemployment impacted participants' participation in organized social groups or activities. Some examples of extracurricular groups were community groups, sports, and social clubs.

Participant 11 described how parental unemployment influenced her to join a specific after school program in order to receive food.

And I used uh- at that time, when the unemployment first happened, I was at [Local School]. And that was- I can't remember what it was, I just went because I knew who the teacher was, I just used to go after school all the time. And... uh I used to go to this program actually, I think two years after that, one of the churches, where they'll give you free food, and that's where I used to go sometimes. It would be like Saturday school, and it actually used to be fun. It was part of kid church. And it was every Saturday, and we'd learn about God or whatever and from there we'll get hot meals. And that's when the family would come in and that's when like they'll serve everybody. And then I mean, that's some of the things that we actually had to go through.

This participant joined this activity after learning it provided meals for her and her family if they also attended. It turned out to be a positive experience for her, though she would have never considered joining it if she had not been experience parental unemployment and its related hardships.

Some participants were unable to join extracurricular groups because of parental unemployment. This was the case for Participants 1, who wanted to join an outside club

(gymnastics) in order to help improve her skills for a competitive school club (cheerleading). “Mmhmm. Yeah I wanted to do gymnastics... um to boost my cheerleading. Um but... I couldn't do it because like that payments and stuff didn't work out.” In this example, the participant missed out on an opportunity that could have helped her in other areas of development.

Participant 4 provided a description of how parental unemployment impacted his emotions and academic functioning, which then negatively impacted his participation in extracurricular activities.

Um it did, it, I tired- I tried to do softball. But my grades was bad and I think from him being unemployed and it stressing me out and harder to focus on my work, my grades dropped, which made it to where I couldn't do softball.

Because this participant was unable to function academically, he did not meet requirements for participation in extracurricular groups and had to miss out.

In contrast, Participant 3 described how parental unemployment positively impacted her participation in extracurricular groups.

I have more time to do extracurricular activities which is good. I played saxophone for three years. Um... and she would take me to and from my recitals and my teachings and stuff. So basically I have more time to do stuff like we have more time after- we used to have more time after school the unemployment.

In this case, parental unemployment provided an increase in parental availability. As a result Participant 3 was able to attend additional practices and events related to her extracurricular activity.

Impact on leisure time. Impact on leisure time (*typical*) described how parental unemployment impacted the social activities participants performed during their free time. These activities were not associated with any organized or extracurricular groups, and were instead performed during leisure time. For example, Participant 7 described having to change social plans she made with friends because of her family's financial situation.

Um, it has affected me in some situations where my friends want to hang out one weekend- like sometimes, like we'll do like a double thing- like Saturday we'll do something and then Sunday we also want to do something. But like I know sometimes I can't do both, so it's like I try to incorporate in like, "well, maybe we should do this next weekend..." or something like that. So it still works out.

She specifically had to limit the frequency of social outings she attended with friends and she also attempted to reschedule some events for a time when she would be more financially available.

Participant 9 described how her leisure time was also impacted by parental unemployment:

Or it's - sometimes when I want to go somewhere, movies, bowling, or something- it's you have to pay money, so she's like, [Participant 9], you know I don't have it. So, you - I'm like, okay, tell my friends I can't go.

Or if I, my grandma would go ask my uncle or anybody that's close in my family, do you have \$20 for [Participant 9], I'll pay you back next week, when I get my check or something like that so I mean it don't bother me.

It don't bother my grandmother.

When asked how that made her feel, Participant 9 stated: "I... don't like it. I mean, but my grandmother, she'll go ask them, but then sometimes like, no granny, don't worry about it. She's like, no [Participant 9] you really want to go so then I feel bad then, I don't."

This response illustrates the effort Participant 9's grandmother took in order for the participant's social activities not to be impacted by financial stresses. Even though Participant 9 was willing to stay home rather than attend social activities, her grandmother often found ways to get financial assistance by asking others.

Participant 11 described an attempt to keep peers from coming to her home for fear she would be judged about her poor living situation.

And it's like... at that time, I didn't have people come over, cause like, you didn't want people like- oh look how she's living or... I don't want to be friends with her, but so I just kept people away from my house at that time.

Specifically, this participant did not want peers to witness her family's financial struggles (i.e., cut off utilities, lack of food, broken objects, etc.).

Impact of Parental Unemployment on Social Interactions and Relationships

Impact of Parental Unemployment on Social Interactions and Relationships included the participants' descriptions of how they perceived parental unemployment to

influence their social interactions and relationships with peers. There were four categories within domain: impact on social interactions (*general*), informing others of parental unemployment (*typical*), relating to peers with employed parents (*typical*), and relating to peers with unemployment parents (*typical*).

Impact on social interactions. Impact on social interactions (*general*) described how participants' perceived parental unemployment to have influenced their general social interactions with others. Participant 8 provided a primary example of how his social performance with peers was negatively impacted by parental unemployment. "Um...I said before, I got quiet- I used to like separate myself- but I still act the same but I used to just be like quiet a little bit more. ...Like not as jokey as I was." He later stated:

...Like I was friendly be- like I was friendly before it and then now I'm like- I was less friendly, like I didn't talk- outta the friends that I had, those were the only people I talked to. I didn't try to talk to new people. But, after she became employed again, I started talking to people again, was friendly again and stuff like that.

When asked why he thought this was, he stated: "I don't know- it was probably like stress like... what friends going to do?... Like... I was focused that much like at home, that I would only talk to people who I normally talk to."

This example described how the stresses at home were impacting Participant 8's focus and social functioning at school. He ended up withdrawing from peers and isolating himself as he preferred not to interact with new people.

In contrast, multiple participants denied that parental unemployment had any impact on the way they interacted socially with others. For example, when asked how their interactions have been altered, Participant 1 stated “Mmm... I’m trying to think, uh... it hasn’t,” Participant 2 stated “No it didn’t change,” and Participant 5 responded “Um, I don’t think they changed because I’m like- no matter what’s going on, I’m always still the same person I am.” These participants, as well as others perceived no change in their social interactions with peers as a result of parental unemployment.

Informing others of unemployment. The second category was informing others of unemployment (*typical*), which described the participants’ process of deciding whether or not to tell peers about parental unemployment and, if so, how they did it. Participant 7 described how those closest to her already knew about the unemployment making it unnecessary for her to have a conversation about it.

Um, I don’t really tell nobody unless like - like some of my close, close friends know, but um... I don’t tell nobody. Cause like... why would you need to know that? Like you know what I mean? ...Um, my close friends, it was just like... it wasn’t like I straight told them, it was just like, like they- like my best friend, she knew me sin- you know we’ve been knowing each other for eight years, so it’s like, she um... like she already- you know that stuff that like you already know when you’re best friends with somebody. So it’s like you know she’s always around me and all of that, so she knows all of that type of stuff already. And it’s just like a quick question, like does your mom still work (mumble19:07). And I’m like, no, she’s not.

When asking Participant 9 whether she discussed parental unemployment with peers or close friends, she responded: “No. ... You don’t tell nobody what happens at our house.”

This illustrates a boundary Participant 9 has that separates her home and social identities. She prefers to leave home information and worries at home and not discuss those issues at school or with peers.

Participant 11 described how parental unemployment is not a common topic spoken among her peers.

But other than that, like I don’t really- like if somebody was to ask me like oh does your mom work, you know I’ll be honest with them, cause it’s nothing bad, it’s just... as long as I’m okay, there’s nothing really bad about it.

She admits that she would discuss and be honest about her experience with parental unemployment; however, no one has ever directly asked her.

Relating to peers with employed parents. The third category in this domain was relating to peers with employed parents (*typical*). It described how participants’ perceive their interactions with peers who have employed parents. Participant 3 acknowledged a change in how she perceived children of employed parents. “Mmm. I mean sometimes I be like oh they have more money than me but then sometimes I just be like okay they have less time with their parents. So it’s it’s really it’s always pros and cons...”

Participant 9 also described a change in perception of how she related with peers who have employed parents.

Um, I just see the greater things that they have. It really don't bother me.

I mean I feel like I'm just like them but I'm just struggling right now, but I know that there's going to be a time and chance I'm going to have it so it really don't matter to me.

Both individuals applied neutral meaning to the differences between themselves and their peers with employed parents by identifying how they benefit from parental unemployment. Participant 3 acknowledged that even though she may not have as much money as them, she has more time with her parents, while Participant 9 acknowledged that parental unemployment is just a period in her life that will eventually end and turn into success.

Participant 11 illustrated interactions between herself and children of employed parents.

It's completely different there cause they don't know how it feels to be completely down like I said, you know? Like whatever they want, they get handed to them. And with us, it was more of a struggle. So, like- like I said, I got made fun of cause I didn't have what they had. And... the other people that were making fun of me had employed parents and got whatever they wanted when they wanted. It's not like they worked for it their selves. So, it's like that's how I was before we went down, and it's like... I probably would have been in the same state as them, but it's like, I'm happy that we went through that stage cause now I appreciate

everything more. And, I feel like they don't understand how to be grateful like for what they have. Cause they were me, when I had got everything that I wanted, Like I I was ungrateful, so... And then so like, looking at them, they're still ungrateful. And like, I have some- like I had a friend that got everything handed to her. Like she was the youngest also, she didn't have to work, she didn't have to learn how to drive a car, she didn't- she didn't have to learn how to cook. Like she still doesn't know how to cook I'm like so like she gets everything handed to her. And even like, back when we were younger, and now she still has everything handed to her. Now her mom bought her a car for her birthday so it's like... So, it's like... she doesn't understand the process of actually working for what you have. And it's like, she's gets things handed to her, while I have to work and save up and... you know force myself and everything to actually get what I need or what I want. And... I mean, some of them are understandable, but other people that haven't like employed uh parents, I feel like don't understand as much of how it actually was to be broken. You know had to go through all of that struggle and everything. You know, they always have running water, they always had heat, or they always had something that we didn't have. So, it's like they made fun of us without knowing what we were going through. And it's like... we've never clicked at that point- I mean we're cool like outside with them, being friends with them, but when it came to like, oh my mom gives me

this, my mom gives me that, that's where we like parted and we didn't click.

Though she did not imply that these interactions were positive or negative, Participant 11 indicated that her experience with parental unemployment had changed the way she relates with peers, especially peers with employed parents. She was also able to acknowledge that she would likely be exhibiting actions similar to peer with employed parents had she had never experienced parental unemployment.

In contrast, Participant 10 reported that there was no difference in how she related to peers with employed or unemployed parents. When asked how she related to others with employed parents she responded: "Um I relate to them also- like with them because... I've been- my grandmother's been employed before so I mean... it wasn't... there really wasn't no big change for me like. It was just like okay, like ya know?"

Relating to peers with unemployed parents. The final category was relating to peers with unemployed parents (*typical*). This category described how participants' perceived their interactions with peers who had unemployed parents. Participant 1 described how she was better able to understand peers with similar experiences with parental unemployment.

Um I relate to [peers with unemployed parents] by understanding where they come from in situations like... um some may feel... disappointed or sad because they... they were once something and now they're not what they used to- what they used to- they don't have what they used to.

Participant 5 described a similar experience:

I think I'm still the same person because we all like have parents that's either unemployed or not working at the moment. So, it's like we all are able to relate to each other and we all understand and we don't judge each other because of it, so...

Both individuals were using their personal experiences with parental unemployment to relate better with peers who had similar experiences.

Participant 3 reported having difficulty knowing when she is interacting with peers who experience parental unemployment because it is not a topic discussed socially.

Um it's not really come up so I don't really just go and oh your mom's unemployed. I mean we don't really talk about family and stuff so. I wouldn't know if the family's unemp- unemployed or not. It wouldn't really affect me like oh your mom's unemployed haha- no it it really doesn't really affect me.

She continued on and reported she does not even discuss these topics with close friends. Participant 3 inferred that parent's employment status, or lack thereof, does not impact how she relates to peers, but if she were interacting with peers with unemployed parents, she would be affected.

Impact of Parental Unemployment on Education/Career Development

The final domain was Impact of Parental Unemployment on Education/Career Development. This domain included participants' descriptions of how parental unemployment had influenced their current education and work, future education explorations, career development, and plans for future work. Within this domain were seven categories: motivation (*general*), anticipation of future education/career/work

outcomes (*general*), exploration of future career/work (*general*), exploration of future education (*typical*), impact on current education (*typical*), impact on current work (*variant*), and self-confidence (*variant*).

Motivation. The first category was motivation (*general*). It described how parental unemployment had influenced participants' motivation in terms of future education and career. In many cases, participants used their experiences with parental unemployment to motivate their decisions regarding future education, career, and work choices.

Many participants described how parental unemployment had positively motivated them to work harder at school or receive a higher education after high school. For example, Participant 5 described a correlation between going to college and not being unemployed in the future.

And it's... I wanna say it's hard because like... he has like- he unemployed but he works on houses, too, so it's kinda like he's unemployed but he's not but I don't I wanna say it's hard it's just it just shows us like we have to go to college and finish doing what we doing so we won't have to be unemployed

Similarly, Participant 10 described how parental unemployment motivated her in terms of education exploration.

Uh, it makes me want to go to college, so that like... you know cause like most jobs you'll just need like a high school diploma or whatever, but like college degrees, they're going to want that more. So, it's like I want that.

Both of these individuals used their experiences with parental unemployment as motivation to attend college and receive education in the future.

Participant 4 described how parental unemployment had motivated her in terms of future work or career. “It used to make me think that I couldn’t... do- like I couldn’t work, I wouldn’t be able to keep a job. But now it pushes me to know that I have to keep a job to support myself.” More specifically, she was motivated to find a job with the intent to support herself financially.

Anticipation of future education/career/work outcomes. Anticipation of future education/career/work outcomes (*general*) was the next category. It described participants’ expectations and beliefs regarding what will happen as a result of future education, career, and/or work. For example, Participant 11 described a fear of being unemployed herself someday.

I think about that all the time actually. Cause uh... my mom has... cause like my arms are weak too. Cause I remember I was at work and I was trying to carry something and it was actually kinda light. But I couldn’t do it cause I messed, like... I have a broken arm and I have a cracked... I cracked my leg. My tibia. And I broke this arm twice. So, it’s like this arm is kind of weak already, so it’s like... one thing can happen while I’m cooking or like while I’m doing nursing or one of the two jobs and it’s like... either I’m like moving something out the way, and boom, my arm messes up, you know? And it’s like... it’s scary to think of it, cause I don’t want to go into that stage where like I have my kids- like if at the time I do have any, where like out of nowhere I come up like unemployed.

I don't want them to go what I went through, like I want them to have everything and more. So, it's like... it's scary to think of it- cause I don't want to depend on checks. Like I want to depend on myself. And I want my kids to depend on me and not the money that comes every single month. You know, it's like, it's scary to think about it because it can possibly happen to me, but... it's just I hope that it happens like when my kids are old enough, more like where I don't have to worry about anything at that point. It's like, I think about it all the time cause you know, I feel like I'm going to have the same things that my mom went through. And like I have asthma, so what happens if I'm like cooking or baking or something and my asthma acts up. Or you know, my bones get weak or something, like how my mom's is. And it's like, it could happen and it's like it's scary to think about it, but... it just- I hope like it's not at a bad timing,

Because her parents both experienced medical issues resulting in unemployment, Participant 11 worried she would inherit the same issues and fate no matter how hard she worked or what future decisions she makes in terms of education, career, or work. She stated she worries about these future outcomes on a regular basis.

In contrast, Participant 13 denied any influence of parental unemployment on his future outcomes.

When I'm working in the future, I think it will be... uh laid out and exactly how I want it because if I strive for it right now, and follow

through, and stay on top of my stuff in school and... it's going it's all going to come out for the better.

When asked if she worries about being unemployed himself in the future, Participant 13 responded: "As of right now, I have, yes... as of right now, but once I finish my resume, like I said, then I'm not even worries about it." He continued to describe how he had put forth great effort to participate in many extracurricular activities with the goal to build his resume. It was his belief that his strong resume would result in a consistent, high-paying job.

Participant 12 denied ever thinking about whether he will one day be unemployed, but expressed a desire to get a job. "I can't- it doesn't cross my mind if I'm going to be employed or unemployed. I just know I'm going to get a job."

Exploration of future career/work. Exploration of future career/work (*general*) included descriptions of how parental unemployment had influenced the options participants' were exploring or considering for future career and work. For example, Participant 7 described how her initial choice for career and work in the future had changed as a result of parental unemployment.

Um, well before she was employed, I never really thought about jobs.

Well, yes I did, I always thought I was going to do hair when I got older.

But um since she became unemployed, you know it was like- that put me in a situation where I wanted to make more money than hair would be able- that you would be making with hair... that you would make doing

hair. So it changed my perspective of the situations where I might not make enough money doing hair.

After experiencing parental unemployment Participant 7 identified that she began using wage and salary as considering factors to help her decide on future careers and jobs.

When discussing future career and work option with Participant 13, he described the different fields he was considering.

Financially... it made me think- I- first... I wanted to do forensics, but then after a while, I'm like, no. And then I wanted to do like accountants- that's what the main three when I was... this year, I was narrowing down to my last choice. It was going to be between accountant and uh engineering. And I have made up my decision.

When asked about how parental unemployment influenced those decisions, Participant 13 stated:

Because like, dealing with financial and jobs... engineering, like I like hands-on stuff. So... it influenced me to get a job that I like because also... like during her work experience like- often she would be working but she wouldn't like she wouldn't like the job- she was just doing it because she had a family to support and she needed the money. So, it made me think like, I'm a make sure that I get a job that I love doing and that makes enough money so I can support me and my family.

After observing his mother work at a job she disliked, yet remained at primarily for monetary reasons, Participant 13 decided to take his passion into account when deciding upon a future career or work field.

Exploration of future education. Exploration of future education (*typical*) described how parental unemployment had influenced the different options participants' were exploring or considering for future education. The following participants had difficulty deciding about their future education due to financial reasons. For example, Participant 7 described:

Um, well before when she was employed, I said I wanted to go to college um right after high school- I always thought like that was the process that I always thought that that's how you did it. But um when she was unemployed, and um... I thought about it like I don't really want to have to be doing student loans and worrying about that, so I would wait a year and then go to college.

Similarly, Participant 1 described:

It did like a little thought in my mind like I wondered um... will she be able to help me for college if not should I start applying for scholarships and grants and loans and... I don't want to be in debt though. And so then I started thinking about should I be working to like put up for college? So yeah.

Whether the decision was to attend college directly or whether to apply for financial aid, both of the these individuals described how parental unemployment made them begin thinking about how to pay for higher education in the future.

Some participants described how parental unemployment was a deciding factor that helped them decide to attend college after high school. For example, Participant 4 reported: “Um, it made me realize that since [my dad] didn’t finish high school, that it was harder to keep ano- a good- or get a good job, so it made me want to go to school, so I could finish it, turn out with a good job.”

Similarly, Participant 10 described:

Uh, it makes me want to go to college, so that like... you know cause like most jobs you’ll just need like a high school diploma or whatever, but like college degrees, they’re going to want that more. So, it’s like I want that.

Participant 4 described: “Um, it made me want to go to college so I know that I will- when I do work more, I will have better money coming in.” All three of these individuals made the decision to attend college in the future to become successful. They expressed opinions that in order to get better jobs and receive more money, they would first have to receive a higher education and attend college.

Participant 5 described a direct relationship between attending college and future employment status.

And it’s... I wanna say it’s hard because like... he has like- he unemployed but he works on houses, too, so it’s kinda like he’s unemployed but he’s not but I don’t I wanna say it’s hard it’s just it just shows us like we have to go to college and finish doing what we doing so we won’t have to be unemployed

It is her opinion that she will not be unemployed one day if she attended college.

In conclusion, it was determined that parental unemployment influenced participants' exploration of future education in terms of finances, motivation, and their view that future schooling will not result in their own unemployment.

Impact on current education. Impact on current education (*typical*) described how parental unemployment influenced participants' schooling and academics. It included descriptions of how parental unemployment earlier in life impacted participants' education at the time, as well as how parental unemployment impacted participants' current education as the time of the interview.

Some participants reported experiencing parental unemployment when they were younger and described how it impacted their academic choices. For example, Participant 11 described how parental unemployment influenced her decision to change schools.

...in sixth grade cause I was still in uh private school. You know at private school you used to have to pay to go? So, in order for my mom to be easier, I said I wanted to go to a public school, so she didn't have to pay all of that extra stuff, and you know worry about bills and stuff. See that's just another bill added on. So, I just switched schools. Yeah... so, also I wanted to switch to a different school anyways 'cause I had too many problems where I got bullied and everything

She decided to make a personal sacrifice and transfer from a private school to a public school that did not require enrollment fees or tuition.

Some participants described how parental unemployment negatively impacted his academic functioning and behaviors at school in the past and present:

I had like basically stopped caring about school, I just was like... what's school going to do? ...I was like in fifth or sixth grade and I just said I don't care about school any more I guess, so I started messing up in school.

Participant 4 made a similar report:

It puts... seeing my mother stressed, it puts stress on me. So it makes it harder for me to do my school work... it don't change like the environment I live in because I've been living there... all my life. It's just- yeah, it just affects school work.

Both of these individuals described how their approach and effort towards school is directly impacted by stress associated with parental unemployment and financial hardship.

Impact on current work. Impact on current work (*variant*) described how parental unemployment influenced participants' work experience at the time of the interview. Participant 11 described how she only considered getting a job as a high school student because of parental unemployment.

Um, at that point, I wasn't really thinking about it, cause I wasn't thinking about working at this age. I was thinking about you know like I'm going to just wait and finish high school, finish college and everything that's when I'll start getting a job. But, I kind of do it- had to do it earlier than I actually originally wanted to.

...it changed the fact that I like... I wanted to start working after high school and college, and everything, but I had to work during high

school. I mean that's the only thing that really changed since unemployment.

It was Participant 11's initial plan to wait until after high school to find part-time work, but she decided to add this responsibility to her role as a high school student because her family was experiencing such financial hardship.

Other participants described how parental unemployment motivates them at work. For example, Participant 4 reported: "Yeah just... uh when I'm at work, it's just goes through my head that I have to make more money and try to work harder."

Participant 13 described having a desire to get a job and being in the process of searching, even though his mother would instead prefer him to focus on school.

So, that made me, like I said, want to get a job to help her out, but I was so involved in like other things and school and stuff like that, but I would still try to fit it in my schedule. But, I put in applications, and no call, no call, and I'm still putting in applications today. So, it's just like I said, it's a waiting process. Like I told her, like if I get a job- she don't want me to work really, because I'm already got a lot on my plate, but I told her I can handle it, and I wanted to help out. Yeah, I'm still looking for jobs.

This illustrates that even though Participant 13 is experiencing parental unemployment, they still value education and would prefer him to attend school rather than find a job and contribute to the family financially.

Self-confidence. The final category in this domain was self-confidence (*variant*). This category described participants' confidence and the expectation of succeeding in their future education and careers. For example, Participant 1 described how parental

unemployment had increased her confidence for working with children of unemployed parents in the future.

Um... I think it boosts my confidence cuz... if I have a student or... a client that may be... suffering from unemployment or something like that?

Um that may be their their situation, I can probably help them out by letting them know like it's gonna be better like it's just it's not... all sore ya know?

She believed her personal experience with parental unemployment will help her in her future career, which, in turn, increased her confidence for success.

Participant 4 expressed having confidence that she will be more successful than her unemployed father in the future. “[My dad’s unemployment] made me more confident because I would want to see myself do better than he did.” She actually associated confidence with being more successful and is using her experience to motivate her to succeed and be more confident in her future choices.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this was to examine how adolescents' perceive that their parent's unemployment has influenced their personal and social identity, and career development. By focusing on how the exosystem of parental unemployment influences the microsystem of personal and social identity and career development, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory informed this research.

A qualitative analysis of interviews conducted with 13 diverse urban high school students from two urban high schools in a midsize Midwestern city using a social constructionism paradigm (Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1985) and consensual qualitative research analysis (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005) revealed eight primary domains: current education/part-time work experience, family contributions, post high school plans/ambitions, personal understanding and experience of parental unemployment/financial hardship, impact of parental unemployment on self, impact of parental unemployment on social and group activities, impact of parental unemployment on social interactions and relationships, and impact of parental unemployment on education/career development.

Research Questions

The overarching research question for this study was how do adolescents experience parental unemployment? The study was guided by the following more specific research questions:

1. How do adolescents experience the impact of their parent's unemployment on their personal identity development?
2. How do adolescents experience the impact of their parent's unemployment on their social identity development?
3. How do adolescents experience the impact of their parent's unemployment on their career development?

Research question 1.

How do adolescents experience the impact of their parent's unemployment on their personal identity development?

The findings from this study illustrated growth in participants' personal identity development as indicated by changes in their self-thoughts and self-descriptions and an increase in awareness of life circumstances, which supports theoretical research (Teichman, et al., 2007). . Many participants in this study identified valuable lessons they learned about themselves which they would have never learned, or learned so soon, had they not experienced parental unemployment. These lessons go beyond gaining knowledge about life changes and include learning about themselves and identifying changes in their personal growth. For example, one participant identified that parental unemployment allowed her to become more resilient to unexpected life changes. Another participant learned how to re-prioritize his wants and needs, demonstrating

increased maturity and reflection about his desires. These findings directly support the research findings of Thompson et al. (2013), which suggest children raised by unemployed parents learn lessons from their experience.

In addition to learning lessons of personal growth, all participants described an increase in awareness and personal understanding of parental unemployment and financial hardships that then influenced family functioning. All participants gained awareness of parental unemployment and learned about their caregivers' unique perspectives leading up to it. Some participants observed how their families were influenced by parental unemployment and coped with financial hardship, while others learned a lesson that parental unemployment does not change family circumstances. No matter the participant's background, all learned how to better balance their personal, social, academic, and (for many) work identities to succeed the best they could. Learning how to maneuver these life obstacles, which all participants did whether they acknowledged influence of parental unemployment and financial hardships or not, suggests growth in personal development.

Research (Jacobs et al., 2003) suggests self-perceptions develop throughout adolescence, which is evident in these findings. Not only are self-thoughts, self-descriptions, and awareness all examples of self-perceptions, but they are also cognitive thoughts (Teichman, et al., 2007). Shifts and changes in cognitive thoughts (such as those just described) represent personal identity development according to Teichman, et al. These changes occur throughout mid and late adolescence (Teichman, et al., 2007) and bring adolescents one step closer to reaching adulthood (Moshman, 1999). The idea that no participant identified him- or herself as a child of parental unemployment also

reflects positive growth in personal development in that it differentiates from Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The shift away from identifying oneself according to the family's socioeconomic and/or employment statuses shows individuality rather than identification with the social group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This lack of identification with a social group, therefore, represents growth in personal identity development.

Research question 2.

How do adolescents experience the impact of their parent's unemployment on their social identity development?

The findings from this study indicated that some, but not all, participants experience parental unemployment as influential in their social identity development. In terms of extracurricular activities, some participants indicated that they were unable to participate in different activities due to the family's financial struggles, while others identified that parental unemployment did not change their participation. Similar findings emerged regarding how participants interacted socially while spending leisure time with peers. Some participants denied any relationship between their parent's employment status and their participation in extracurricular and leisure group activities while others identified that they were more likely to withdraw, not attend social activities, or hide their family's financial and work situation; thus demonstrating a decrease in self-esteem. This supports research that suggests self-esteem is influenced by one's identity with social groups (Oakes et al., 1994; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Tanti et al., 2011). Participating in extracurricular activities and spending social leisure time with peers are prominent areas of social development for adolescents (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Tanti et

al., 2011). According to Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), those participants who identified being unable to participate in extracurricular and/or leisure activities may have experienced a decrease in social identity because they were separated from members of their in-group and unable to identify with them.

Having personal experience with parental unemployment increased the social identity development for some participants. Results suggest that some adolescents chose to seek social support from peers while others preferred to separate their home and social lives from each other. For example, some participants chose to create a boundary and refused to inform anyone about their family's hardships, no matter how socially close they were to friends. These individuals choose not to engage in any conversation regarding personal matters with peers. Other participants had friends who were so involved in their personal and family lives that informing them about the parental unemployment was unnecessary because the peer already seemed to know through observation. This inconsistency in results supports research that suggests an individual's sense of well-being can either increase or decrease based on the opinions of friends (Amundson & Borgen, 1987). It is possible that some participants chose to withhold information from their social peers for fear of how it would influence their opinion and relationship. Further research (Amundson, 1994) demonstrates that one's social group may offer support during shifts in social standing, which is evident in the behavior of current participants who sought social support from peers. Even though participants' sense of social support is unique to each individual, Palmonari et al. (1989) suggested that adolescents who seek support from peers in their in-groups exhibit a stronger influence in their social identity development. This suggests that those participants who

chose to seek social support were likely to experience an increase in social identity development.

It is interesting to note that even when participants denied that parental unemployment had influenced their social identity and social identity development, they often later provided descriptions of how it actually had been influential. For example, one participant responded “no” when asked whether parental unemployment affected her participation in social activities, extracurricular groups, or social group activities. Later in the interview, however, this participant described how she wanted to join gymnastics to help improve her cheerleading skills, but she was unable to do so because her family did not have the money to pay for gymnastics. This is only one example of how participants acknowledged and described experiences of parental unemployment, but did not originally identify it as being influenced by parental unemployment. This may suggest that participants were either unaware of how their lives were influenced by parental unemployment, that they do not wish to disclose such information, or that they do not attribute many life obstacles to parental unemployment when, in fact, there may actually be some.

Research question 3.

How do adolescents experience the impact of their parent’s unemployment on their career development?

Findings indicated that participants perceived an influence of parental unemployment on their career development starting as early as high school. Many participants identified a desire to start their exploration of potential careers and to actually start working as high school students with the intention of helping to financially

support their family or to be able to purchase personal items that their families were unable to afford. This supports research that suggests urban adolescents have high career commitment (Diemer & Blustein, , 2007). The act of deciding to enter the workforce, exploring different jobs to apply to, and being hired are all included in the Exploration life stage according to Super's Life-Span, Life-Space theory (Super 1957; 1980). Though it is difficult to determine whether participants would express these same desires had they never experienced parental unemployment, those who identified a wish to contribute to the family financially specifically stated they were motivated to do so because of their experiences with parental unemployment. Therefore, these participants described a relationship between familial unemployment and their own career development.

Part of the Exploration stage of Super's Life-Span, Life-Space theory (Super 1957; 1980) is to clarify general goals for future vocation, which are then specified when individuals begin refining and developing details in their career preferences (Super, 1957). Many participants identified parental unemployment as a motivating factor that was helping them explore different areas of work and decide to further their career development in one way or another. Using parental unemployment as motivation exemplifies how some participants chose to use their experiences with parental unemployment in their own career development. Most participants identified that they wanted to attend higher education because they believed that it would eliminate their chances of being unemployed. Most participants described plans to first attend a local community college before transferring to a public university. Other participants described a desire to use school as a stepping stone into a specific career or into a certain vocational program that they believed would not result in unemployment in the future. Finally,

participants used parental unemployment to decide what job to apply for. Some expressed decisions to enter a completely different field than their unemployed parent, in hopes that they would not have the same unemployment experience. Others chose to apply to certain jobs only because they paid well to make sure they would be able to financially provide for themselves. No matter their future plans, all participants described desires to make choices that would further their own career development while also keeping in mind their experiences of parental unemployment. These findings are consistent with other research that suggests parents are a major source for children to turn to for information regarding occupation knowledge and beliefs (Bryant et al., 2006; Otto, 2000). It also supports findings that suggests parental job insecurity positively influence children's work attitudes (Lim & Loo, 2003).

Summary. Despite the large number of families affected by unemployment, very little research has been conducted on how adolescents experience the impact of their parent's unemployment on their personal and social identity, and career development (Bryant, Zvonkovic, Reynolds, 2006; Cinamon, 2001; Zhao, Lim, & Teo, 2012). The majority of the extant literature addressing unemployment and adolescence has examined the impact of parental unemployment on adolescent academic achievement, behavior, physical health, and family relationships (Siddiqi, et al., 2007; Crosnoe & Elder, 2004; Flanagan, 1990; Hussainat et al., 2013; Kalil & Wightman, 2011; Siddiqi et al., 2007), which were not examined in the current study. Because of the lack of previous research regarding how adolescent personal and social identity development and career development, the current study contributes to the field building awareness of this population and the lack of research.

Research suggests that one major outcome of unemployment is family disruption, as it affects life activities, social status, and relationships among family members (Atkinson et al., 1986; Dew et al., 1991; Liem & Liem, 1988; Linn et al., 1985; Vinokur et al., 1996). The current study substantiates these results as it described how parental unemployment influenced the personal identity and social identity development of adolescents. All participants discussed an increase in awareness of unemployment and how it influenced themselves as well as how it influenced the family unit and individual family members. Many participants identified changes in the family structure and family interactions as their own responsibilities and contributions to the household increased after the family experienced unemployment. Some participants described stepping up into the role as financial provider as other described becoming a primary caregiver while their unemployed parent(s) searched for work. Some participants also identified how parental unemployment influenced their social activities. Others were unable to participate in certain social and extracurricular activities, thus impacting their social identity and social status.

The findings of the current study also substantiate the research findings of Thompson et al. (2013), who described many themes related to how college students experienced parental unemployment, such as: struggles related to unemployment, increased family stress, individual struggle with stigma (e.g., feeling judged or criticized), lessons learned from their experiences, increased financial awareness, and increased awareness of the job market. Many of these themes were also identified by adolescent participants in this study. For example, almost all participants described an increase in awareness of parental unemployment and financial hardships. Some described their

experiences with parental unemployment as “stressful” while others denied such a significant impact on their lives. Also all participants in this study identified different lessons they learned that may otherwise never have been learned had they not lived with parental unemployment. In contrast to the findings of Thompson et al., participants in the current study did not identify an increased awareness of the job market or any stigma related to their experiences with parental unemployment. Even though all participants identified a desire to work and/or have careers in the future, they did not describe a process of gaining specific work or career information or having any knowledge about the work force. They also reported being motivated by their experiences with parental unemployment and not ashamed, as was suggested by Thompson et al.

Many parents of the participants in the current study experienced long term job insecurity, which was evidenced in demographic data that described parents as having been “in and out of work” for many years. Existing research focusing on parental job insecurity has indicated that it is positively associated with paternal authoritarian parenting behaviors and work attitudes of Asian youths and negatively associated with maternal authoritarian parenting behaviors and self-efficacy (Lim & Loo, 2003).

Although parenting behaviors were not examined in the current study, results of the current study contrast the finding that parental job insecurity is negatively related to self-efficacy and supports the finding that it is positively associated with work attitudes. Most participants discussed the positive influences of parental unemployment such as learning lessons about themselves, gaining awareness, and being motivated by those experiences. Regarding their work attitudes, participants actually described an increase in self-efficacy and the expectation of succeeding in their own future education and

careers. These inconsistent findings may reflect the cultural contexts of the samples. Specifically, Lim and Loo's study was conducted in Singapore, and the current sample was obtained in the United States.

Another study on job insecurity indicated that children who observed their fathers' experience job insecurity and numerous layoffs, tended to develop negative work beliefs of their own (Barling et al., 1998). The study also examined maternal job insecurity, but it was not found to be significant. Children used these beliefs as a basis for predicting their own attitudes toward work (Barling et al., 1998), suggesting children raised by fathers with increased job insecurity were more likely to have negative work attitudes about future work. Results in the current study also differentiate from these previous findings because all participants in the current study (whether they experienced paternal unemployment, maternal unemployment, or another type of familial unemployment) reported a desire to find career and/or work in the future. Most described that their experiences with parental unemployment and parental job insecurity actually increased their motivation to succeed at work, their confidence that they would succeed, and the skills they learned that they may later apply in their future careers, jobs, and/or work. Possible explanations for these discrepancies in results between studies may be the socioeconomic and contextual background factors. For example, Barling et al. used an undergraduate student population and the current study worked to urban adolescence. Another explanation may be the fact that only four participants in the current study experienced paternal unemployment while the others experience maternal unemployment, which was found not to be significant in the previous study. To examine the differences between different types of parental unemployment, future studies might

examine differences between experiences of paternal, maternal, and familial unemployment.

Implications for Theory

Many theories are used to describe adolescents' development of personal identity, social identity, and career development. Marcia's Self-Identity Theory (1966) acknowledges the relationship between psychological identity development and one's exploration and commitment (Marcia, 1966). Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) suggests that individuals join social groups that make them feel positively about themselves. Super's Life-Span, Life-Space theory of career development (1957, 1980) describes stages of career development that individuals recycle through at various ages. Finally, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979) of human development views individual development in terms of relationships within the surrounding environment. Findings of the current study contribute to each of these theories in unique ways.

Findings of the current study support Marcia's Self-Identity Theory (1966). Marcia considered identity to be self-structured, or a self-constructed and dynamic organization of individual history, abilities, and drives (Marcia, 1980). The better-developed this structure, the more aware individuals are of their strengths and weaknesses in maneuvering in the world and of their own uniqueness and similarity to others (Marcia, 1980). When this structure is less developed, the individual tends to be confused about his or her distinctiveness from others and rely more heavily on external sources as a way to evaluate themselves (Marcia, 1980). Based on results from the current study, parental unemployment does not greatly influence the personal identity development of urban adolescence. Participants in this study were easily able to

recognize areas in which they excelled, identify distinct terms with which to describe themselves, understand their uniqueness that separated themselves from peers, and they had realistic awareness of their weaknesses. All of these characteristics describe a well-constructed self-identity according to Marcia's Self-Identity Theory.

According to this theory, there is a relationship between psychological identity development and one's explorations and commitments (Marcia, 1966). Exploration is the examination of different choices by collecting information and participating in age-appropriate activities that will ultimately lead to a commitment to a specific belief, goal, or value in a life domain, while commitment is considered a stable investment in a particular belief, goal and/or value by demonstrating knowledge and participating in activities that are consistent (Marcia, 1966). Although parental unemployment did not influence participants' overall structure of self-identity, it did impact their commitment and exploration. Because of their experiences with parental unemployment, almost all participants were committed to the belief that they would be successful and have their own future career and/or job and not be unemployed. This commitment, in turn, influenced participants' exploration taking place in the present as they were already taking steps to ensure their own future success. For example, all participants identified the importance of receiving post-high school education in order to find a career and/or job in the future, they all attended high schools with vocational work-study programs to build their vocational skills at a younger age than typical adolescents, and many discussed participation in extracurricular activities that would assist with entrance into college (e.g., sports that may lead to scholarships, community service opportunities that colleges would be interested in, boys and girls clubs to learn healthy and positive values).

This combination of commitment to future success and investment of current exploration to ensure future employment describes how parental unemployment influences the process of self-identity development according to Marcia's Self-Identity Theory (1966).

According to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), people often evaluate themselves based on group membership because they categorize people and assign labels, identify with in-groups, and compare in-groups with out-groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). These processes promote positive feelings, instill pride in the group, and lead members to view their own social group as superior, thus strengthening the self-concept (Smith & Tyler, 1997; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The results of the current study do not support social identity theory as most participants denied that parental unemployment influence social activities or social identity. In an attempt to identify one possible group identity, all participants were asked whether they identified themselves through their parent's unemployment and all responded no. Many participants described a separation between their home lives and social lives and rarely discussed home situations at school. They did not attempt to hide their parents' unemployment status, but did not see a need to disclose it to peers. Even though research suggests that a person's social identity shifts when going from being employed to unemployed (Amundson, 1994), this was not the case for participants in the current study. Although many participants could have turned to their social group for support, no one did because they did not view their parent's change in employment status as significant or having a major effect on their lives.

According to social identity theory, it is possible that participants created this boundary between their home and social identities for fear of being identified as an out-group and negatively compared. For example, if all members of a social group were part

of the same socioeconomic status and financially able to attend most social events and purchase the newest items, that would be their social identity. If an individual in that group was suddenly unable to participate in those regular activities because of the family's financial situation and parental unemployment, the social group's view of him/her would change and he/she may be considered an out-group member. The social identity theory indicates that this individual would then evaluate him/herself negatively because the group membership has changed. This scenario may have been similar to any one of the participants; however, their lack of identification with a social group makes it difficult to know for sure.

The majority of participants in this study were within the early period of the Exploration stage of Super's Life-Span, Life-Space theory of career development (1957, 1980). During this stage, individuals crystallize, or clarify what they wanted to do in the future and narrow their choices. The career development of many participants was greatly influenced by their experiences with parental unemployment because they all desired to have careers and/or jobs in the future so as not to be unemployed themselves. Their experiences impacted their exploration of different careers they considered because they were more likely to choose to enter areas of work that were more successful and had fewer chances of resulting in unemployment (e.g., engineering, law, construction). Participants' experiences with parental unemployment also motivated most participants to accelerate their career development and enter the workforce directly after high school graduation and either work with the goal to earn money to eventually pay for college without having to apply for loans, or work and attend college simultaneously. Almost all participants identified that parental unemployment motivated them to attend college

and/or receive some type of post high school education, which they associated with future work and career success. Finally, some participants reported fear about possibly being unemployed themselves in the future, just like their parents, and were presently taking steps to stop that from happening. For example, they were all attending high school with vocational work-study programs, finding programs to further develop skills that would benefit them in the workforce, and attempting to find work as adolescents. All of these examples describe how parental unemployment influences the Exploration stage of Super's Life-Span, Life-Space theory of career development (1957, 1980) for children being raised by unemployed parents.

The findings of this study also support the multisystemic levels of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory of human development. This theory views individual development in terms of relationships within the surrounding environment, which is separated into the following four structures that are nested, or contained, within the next: micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). All participants in this study were asked to describe their different microsystems, or environment in which they functioned within, and how they functioned within them. They included their descriptions of their homes, schools, communities, and, for some, part-time jobs. The interactions between these microsystems created a mesosystem. The primary mesosystem described in this study included the interactions between the home and school microsystems. Many participants described that their experiences with parental unemployment in the home microsystem negatively influenced their academic functioning by causing additional stress, withdrawal, and fewer participation in extracurricular activities. Other participants described a positive influence as parents

were more available to assist with schoolwork and still others described little to no influence between these two microsystems. The mesosystem is unique for each individual and these are only a few examples of those described within this study. The primary exosystem described in this study was parental unemployment. Even though participants' themselves were not actively going through the unemployment process themselves, they still experienced the influences of it as evidenced by the findings of this study. For example, parental unemployment influenced the participants' awareness of how the world works, their social interactions and activities, current education, as well as their thoughts about and plans for future education, career, and work.

The combination of these systems creates the macrosystem, which makes up participants' individual cultures. Many participants described similar experiences and challenges within their individual macrosystems that are common within the Midwestern city in which the study took place. Not only did the city face segregation, but it was also a large manufacturer of steel and was negatively impacted by the national decline in steel mills in the late 21st century. The population continues to be influenced by inconsistent access to social networks, transportation, and work among the minority populations. With these challenges, it is not surprising that unemployment remained high at 7.1% in April 2015 (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). Many of the descriptions of familial unemployment and low socioeconomic status living provided by participants are the result of many of these historical events in the city. Even though many of the participants' parents sought work at the time this study took place, many continued to have difficulty finding any type of stable employment and were confined within a lower socioeconomic status. Many participants illustrated these living circumstances by

describing difficulties managing financial hardships impacting the household including paying bills, purchasing items, fixing appliances, finding transportation, and caring for children.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study included interviews with urban adolescents. Future research might include parent/caregiver interviews regarding their beliefs about how their unemployment influenced their adolescent children. Interviewing unemployed parents and caregivers would provide an additional perspective on adolescent life experiences. Alternatively, adolescents and parents could be coached to have a conversation about the adolescent perception, a method used extensively in the career development literature (e.g., Marshall et al., 2011; Young, Paseluikho, & Valach, 1997; Young, Valach, Dillabough, Dover, & Matthes, 1994).

A longitudinal study would need to be conducted to examine the long term influence of parental unemployment on adolescents. Revisiting these thirteen participants when they are further along in their high school careers, or have actually entered their post high school lives, would provide a broader view of how they were functioning across life domains. This future study would ask follow up questions examining personal identity, social identity, and career development. Additionally, potential research questions may examine employment status, socioeconomic status, and the family situations of participants as well as their parents. Current and past educational, career, and work achievements and general beliefs about education, career, and work would also be important questions to ask in this future study.

Even though this study was conducted with an urban adolescent population, parental unemployment occurs in all types of settlements and communities. One future study should repeat the current study with rural and suburban adolescent populations. Each of these studies would describe the perceptions and influences of parental unemployment unique to each environment. The experiences of these populations are unknown because there is little, if any, previous research focusing on how adolescents experience parental unemployment. Therefore, these studies would act as a baseline for unexamined research.

The current study did not address contextual factors such as family history of unemployment. It is possible that some families in this study have experienced generations of unemployment, while others experienced short-term sudden and unexpected unemployment; no matter the circumstance of the unemployment, the background of each participant influences his or her current perceptions. Identifying such contextual factors should be incorporated into a future study. Factors to be measured include length of family unemployment, whether the unemployment was voluntary or involuntary, and whether the unemployment was sudden or expected. Identifying these contextual factors will help identify potential patterns of parental and family unemployment and their relationship with adolescent development.

One final recommendation would be to use quantitative methods to examine the factors associated with future work success for those individuals raised by unemployed parents. As many participants in the current study worried about their own future employment statuses, it may be fruitful to identify barriers and other vulnerabilities, as well as effective coping strategies to gain knowledge that might be useful in intervening

with this population. Future studies might also be conducted with college undergraduate populations at community colleges, where there are generally nontraditional students who work and attend school simultaneously. It is hypothesized that there will be a significant differences in career satisfaction and job insecurity scores between individuals who experiences parental unemployment while growing up and those who did not. It is expected that those with personal experiences of being raised by parental unemployment will have lower levels are career satisfaction and higher levels of job insecurity as adults. This quantitative study would include a much larger sample than would a qualitative study and allow for generalization of results. Other studies might facilitate comparison between different genders, cultures, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and environments (e.g., urban, suburban, rural).

Implications for Practice

This study suggests that urban adolescents being raised by unemployed individuals perceive that they are influenced by their parents' unemployment and financial hardships. No matter the extent of the influence, participants repeated that their experiences with parental unemployment altered their personal identity, social identity, and career development. It is important to keep these thoughts in mind when working clinically with any child being raised by unemployed parents or caregivers. Each of these areas should be explored to identify the extent of the influence and how it has impacted them in positive and negative ways. For many adolescents, their experiences of parental unemployment have actually motivated them to succeed in the future and to also find ways to contribute toward their family's needs. These can all be potential areas of focus and exploration in a clinical setting.

Unemployed individuals and their families experience a multitude of challenges and hardships. When working clinically with these individuals, it is important to provide psychoeducation, validation, and support to help them through these difficulties. It is also important to have access to a multitude of resources when working with unemployed individuals or their children. It would be helpful to have knowledge of local classes that may increase education or advance skills, provide volunteer opportunities to explore potential areas of growth, and resources to assist client in creating competitive resumes in an electronic era.

Another implication for practice when working with adolescents experiencing familial unemployment is to process their perceived roles and responsibilities in the household. The current study suggests that some adolescents are expected to take on additional household chores and responsibilities because the time of the previously employed parent became focused on attending interviews, networking, or working longer hours resulting in lower pay. If working with these individuals in a therapeutic setting, it would be important to use a person-centered approach and validate their feelings and experiences. Learning healthy communication and assertiveness may help these individuals discuss their needs with their family, create compromise, and strengthen relationships. Other adolescents in this study expedited their own career development by entering the workforce at a younger age than previously expected. Working with these individuals in a clinical setting would require exploration and validation, but also psychoeducation and skill-building. It is possible adolescents in similar situations would require career counseling or coaching to learn basic skills about searching for, applying to, and the act of working. Using an online work search database, creating a resume,

interview skills, time management, money management, improving work ethic, and balancing responsibilities would be helpful for many individuals in this situation.

Familial unemployment can be life-altering and negatively impact the life of any individual experiencing it. However, results of the current study suggest that adolescents may actually learn valuable lessons about themselves and gain positive attributes as a result of their experiences with parental unemployment. For example, many participants identified that experiencing parental unemployment taught them valuable lessons about themselves and about money management, increased their resiliency when faced with obstacles, and increased their motivation to succeed in their own future education, career, and work. All of these positive attributes resulting from parental unemployment can help guide treatment when working with adolescents of unemployed individuals using a positive psychology approach and contribute to the belief that individuals focus on the positive and want to lead the most meaningful and fulfilling lives as possible.

Limitations

A potential limitation in this study involves the racial identity of the primary researcher. It is possible that being an educated, Caucasian, female conducting research in predominantly African American high schools may have influenced the data collection process. The power differential in age and ethnicity between the primary researcher and participants may have made it difficult for participants to provide descriptions of their experiences and to be as open as they may have been had the primary researcher been African American. It may have been helpful to address racial identity and the differences between researcher and participants at the initiation of the interview. Had that discussion taken place, it is possible that participants may have been more comfortable telling their

stories and provided more personal and expansive details. Another suggestion for future research would be to include an African American researcher on the research team to assist in data collection to help participants feel more comfortable providing personal information.

A limitation common to qualitative studies is having a small sample size that makes the generalization of findings difficult. The findings of this study may not be generalizable to all urban adolescents of unemployed parents and caregivers, but the reported experiences of these 13 participants contributes to the literature in understanding how urban adolescents are influenced by parental unemployment. Having such a small sample size also allowed there to be in-depth interviews resulting in rich and informational data. Each participant was given individualized attention during which they were able to provide as many or as few details as they were comfortable sharing about their experiences with parental unemployment. This would not have been possible had a quantitative approach to research been used.

A primary limitation for this study relates to the way in which interview questions were phrased. Some of the questions used vocabulary that was difficult for many participants to understand. The following three questions required rephrasing and clarification for almost all participants:

1. *How has it influenced your decision-making about your education and work (i.e., how you make decisions)?*
2. *How has it influenced the outcomes you anticipate regarding your future work?*

3. *How has it influenced your confidence in exploring and deciding upon a future job or career?*

Many participants questioned the meaning of “outcomes” and “anticipation.” Even though the latter question focuses on the individual’s current confidence in exploring and finding future jobs or careers, almost all participants provided responses regarding their current confidence in general (often not related to jobs or career at all). This difficulty in comprehension resulted in responses that were irrelevant to original interview questions, as well as missing data for questions that remain unanswered. It is also possible that these participants had difficulty expressing their thoughts, feelings, and experiences in complex, rich ways. Another limitation was, therefore, that the interviewer could have provided more explanation to aid in participant understanding. To overcome this confusion, the researcher rephrased the questions and explained their meaning using words participants were more likely to understand. This provided clarification for many participants and helped them provide more relevant explanations.

Another limitation in this study is that the primary researcher was talkative throughout the interviews and had a tendency to ask leading questions or make leading statements. For example, there were times when the primary researcher summarized the participant’s response for clarification to which the participant verbally agreed. At others, the primary researcher provided reflection, which was also agreed upon by participants. Both of these behaviors reflect the researcher’s interpretation of data and limit the examples and types of explanations participants may have otherwise provided had she followed up with open-ended questions instead. However, these strategies may

have facilitated the adolescent's understanding of their experience by helping them to put words to their experiences.

The large discrepancy in the lengths of participant interviews (e.g., range of 17 to 65 minutes in length) is an additional limitation. One possible explanation for this range is the developmental age of the population being interviewed. It can be difficult for adolescents to talk about themselves and tell adults about their personal lives, especially when conversing with someone they had not previously met. Not having a personal connection with the primary researcher may have made it difficult for participants to be open and descriptive. Individual differences may also explain the range in interview lengths. Some participants were shy, more introverted and private, and not as trusting about their personal information. As a result, their interviews may have tended to be shorter even though they were asked more questions to gain additional information and seek clarity when they provide one-worded or simple responses. Other participants tended to be more open and talkative and were more comfortable volunteering personal information. These individuals found it easier to discuss their personal lives, all of which resulted in longer interviews.

Conclusions

This study is one of the first to bring awareness to a population often unnoticed and unrecognized when considering unemployment and financial hardships among families. It suggests that the personal and social identity development and career development of urban adolescents is influenced by their experiences with parental unemployment. These individuals experience changes in their self-thoughts and self-descriptions, learn valuable lessons about themselves and the world of work, and increase

their personal understanding of parental unemployment and financial hardships that influenced family functioning. Some, but not all, adolescents of unemployed parents consider their experiences to influence their social identity development. For example, parental unemployment influenced the types of extracurricular and leisure activities in which some individuals participated, and also how they interacted socially with peers (i.e., their tendencies to withdraw, not attend social activities, and be discreet about their family's financial and work experiences). Some individuals were also more likely to seek social support from peers, while others preferred to separate their home and social lives from each other. The findings of the current study also indicate that some adolescents with unemployed parents have the desire to expedite their own career development as they seek work as high school students with the intention of helping their family financially. Many individuals are likely to perceive their experiences with parental unemployment as a motivating factor that will help them decide how to further their own career development (i.e., attend college, select certain careers, choose some types of work over others).

In sum, this study suggests that urban adolescents who are being raised by unemployed individuals are influenced by parental unemployment, as well as the financial hardships present in the family. Thus, the child and adolescent population should be considered when discussing how unemployment influences or impacts the family unit. Having this knowledge will help guide future clinical work and research with this overlooked population.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PARENTAL INFORMED CONSENT FOR MINOR PARTICIPATION



Cleveland State University

Parental Informed Consent for Minor Participation in a Research Study

URBAN ADOLESCENTS' EXPERIENCES OF PARENTAL UNEMPLOYMENT

Dear Parent,

Our names are Dr. Schultheiss and Ms. Keelan Quinn and we are from Cleveland State University. We are conducting research on how teenagers experience their parents' unemployment. Someone who is unemployed does not have a job, has searched for work in the past four weeks, and is available for work. We hope to work with teenagers whose parent/caregiver has been unemployed for at least six months in the past five years.

We are asking you to help us by allowing your child to participate in the study. He/she will sign his/her own informed assent/consent form, answer questions on a brief paper survey, and participate in an interview, which will be recorded. These tasks should take about 45 minutes to complete. Survey questions will be about your child's school and your family. Interview questions will be about his/her identity, family, social activities, and thoughts about career. To keep all information safe, any information provided will be given a fake name or assigned number (i.e. Case 1). There is no way to know that you or your child filled out an individual survey or answered interview questions. Each student participant will receive a \$10 Chipotle gift card, which will be confidentially distributed to the student by the Dean of Students after all interviews have been completed.

We have taken steps to minimize the risks of this study. However, it may be difficult or uncomfortable for your child to remember negative memories of parents' unemployment. You can call the guidance counselor at school if you would like your child to talk to someone professionally. Your child's participation is voluntary, which means he/she does not have to take part if he/she does not want to. Nothing will happen if your child decides not to participate. If you have questions, you can email or call Keelan Quinn at k.a.quinn77@csuohio.edu or 216-687-4697. You may also contact Dr. Schultheiss d.schultheiss@cusohio.edu or (216) 687-9387.

By signing your name below, you agree to your child's participation in this study. You may contact the researcher(s) at any time if you have a question. You understand you

can also contact the Cleveland State University Institutional Review Board at (216) 687-3630 if you have any questions about the rights of your child as a research subject.

There are two copies of this letter. After signing them, keep one copy for your records and return the other one to the original packet for your child to return to school. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support.

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

Date

Name of Child

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT INFORMED ASSEST TO PARTICIPATE



Cleveland State University

Participant Informed Assent to Participate in a Research Study

URBAN ADOLESCENTS' EXPERIENCES OF PARENTAL UNEMPLOYMENT

Dear Student,

Our names are Dr. Schultheiss and Ms. Keelan Quinn and we are from Cleveland State University. We are asking you to help us by completing a short survey and answering some questions in an interview. We are doing this because we want to learn about how teenagers experience their parents' unemployment. Someone who is unemployed does not have a job, has searched for work in the past four weeks, and is available for work. We hope to work with teenagers whose parent/caregiver has been unemployed for at least six months in the past five years.

If you agree to participate you will answer questions on a brief paper survey and then be interviewed, which will be recorded. These tasks should take about 45 minutes to complete. Survey questions will be about yourself, your school, and your family. Interview questions will be about yourself, your family, your social activities, and your thoughts about career. To keep your information safe, any information you provide will be given a fake name or assigned number (i.e. Case 1). There is no way to know that you filled out an individual survey or answered interview questions. Each student participant will receive a \$10 Chipotle gift card, which will be confidentially distributed to the student by the Dean of Students after all interviews have been completed.

We have taken steps to minimize the risks of this study. However, it may be difficult and uncomfortable for you to remember negative memories of parents' unemployment. You can talk to the guidance counselor at school if you ever feel the need to talk to someone professionally. Your participation is voluntary, which means you do not have to take part if you do not want to. Nothing will happen to you if you decide not to participate. If you have questions, you can email or call Keelan Quinn at k.a.quinn77@csuohio.edu or 216-687-4697. You may also contact Dr. Schultheiss d.schultheiss@cusohio.edu or (216) 687-9387.

By signing your name below, you certify that you have an unemployed parent/caregiver as defined by the definition above and agree to participate in this study. You may contact

the researcher(s) at any time if you have a question. You understand that you can also contact the Cleveland State University Institutional Review Board at (216) 687-3630 if you have any questions about your rights as a research subject.

There are two copies of this letter. After signing them, keep one copy for your records and return the other one. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support.

Signature of Child

Date

Name of Child (Print)

APPENDIX C

INFORMED ASSENT FOR ADULT PARTICIPATION



Cleveland State University

Participant Assent for Adult Participation in a Research Study

URBAN ADOLESCENTS' EXPERIENCES OF PARENTAL UNEMPLOYMENT

Dear Student,

Our names are Dr. Schultheiss and Ms. Keelan Quinn and we are from Cleveland State University. We are asking you to help us by completing a short survey and answering some questions in an interview. We are doing this because we want to learn about how teenagers experience their parents' unemployment. Someone who is unemployed does not have a job, has searched for work in the past four weeks, and is available for work. We hope to work with teenagers whose parent/caregiver has been unemployed for at least six months in the past five years.

If you agree to participate you will answer questions on a paper survey and then be interviewed, which will be recorded. These tasks should take about 45 minutes to complete. Survey questions will be about yourself, your school, and your family. Interview questions will be about yourself, your family, your social activities, and your thoughts about career. To keep your information safe, any information you provide will be given a fake name or assigned number (i.e. Case 1). There is no way to know that you filled out an individual survey or answered interview questions. Each student participant will receive a \$10 Chipotle gift card, which will be confidentially distributed to the student by the Dean of Students after all interviews have been completed.

We have taken steps to minimize the risks of this study. However, it may be difficult and uncomfortable for you to remember negative memories of parents' unemployment. You can talk to the guidance counselor at school if you ever feel the need to talk to someone professionally. Your participation is voluntary, which means you do not have to take part if you do not want to. Nothing will happen to you if you decide not to participate. If you have questions, you can email or call Keelan Quinn at k.a.quinn77@csuohio.edu or 216-687-4697. You may also contact Dr. Schultheiss d.schultheiss@cusohio.edu or (216) 687-9387.

By signing your name below, you certify that you are at least 18 years of age, have an unemployed parent/caregiver as defined by the definition above, and you agree to

participate in this study. You may contact the researcher(s) at any time if you have a question. You understand that you can also contact the Cleveland State University Institutional Review Board at (216) 687-3630 if you have any questions about your rights as a research subject.

There are two copies of this letter. After signing them, keep one copy for your records and return the other one. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support.

Signature of Adult Participant

Date

Name of Participant (Print)

APPENDIX D

PARENTAL INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARENTAL PARTICIPATION



Cleveland State University

Parental Informed Consent for Parental Participation in a Research Study

URBAN ADOLESCENTS' EXPERIENCES OF PARENTAL UNEMPLOYMENT

Dear Parent,

Our names are Dr. Schultheiss and Ms. Keelan Quinn and we are from Cleveland State University. We are conducting research on how teenagers experience their parents' unemployment. Someone who is unemployed does not have a job, has searched for work in the past four weeks, and is available for work. We hope to work with teenagers whose parent/caregiver has been unemployed for at least six months in the past five years.

We are asking you to help us by completing a short paper survey about yourself, your family, school, and work history. It takes about 10 minutes to finish this survey. To keep all information safe, any information provided will be given a fake name or assigned number (i.e. Case 1). There is no way to know that you filled out this individual survey.

Participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without penalty. There is no reward for participating or consequence for not participating. Any risks associated with this research do not exceed those of daily living. If you have questions, you can email or call Keelan Quinn at k.a.quinn77@csuohio.edu or 216-687-4697. You may also contact Dr. Schultheiss d.schultheiss@csuohio.edu or (216) 687-9387.

By signing your name below, you certify that you are an unemployed parent/caregiver as defined by the definition above and you agree to participate in this study. You may contact the researcher(s) at any time if you have a question. You understand that you can also contact the Cleveland State University Institutional Review Board at (216) 687-3630 if you have any questions about your rights as a research subject or the rights of your child as a research subject.

There are two copies of this letter. After signing them, keep one copy for your records and return the other one to the original packet for your child to return to school. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support.

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

Date

Name of Child

APPENDIX E

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ADOLESCENTS

Participant ID:

Please circle or write in the appropriate responses to the following questions.

1.) How old are you? _____

2.) What is your gender?

Male Female

3.) Which race/ethnicities do you identify as?

White/Caucasian Black/African American Asian

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Biracial

Other: _____

4.) What grade are you in?

9 10 11 12

5.) What is your GPA?

6.) Please indicate who lives in the home with you. Please do not include the name of these individuals, just the number of people and their relationship to you. (For example, 2 brothers, mother, 1 friend).

7.) What job(s) has your parent(s)/caregiver(s) had?

8.) Of everyone in your household, who is employed and has a job with an income?

9.) What kind of work does he/she do?

APPENDIX F

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENT/CAREGIVER

Participant ID:

Please or write in the appropriate responses to the following question(s).

1.) How old are you? _____

2.) What is your gender?

Male Female

3.) What race/ethnicities do you identify as?

White/Caucasian Black/African American Asian

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Biracial

Other: _____

4.) What is your relationship to the student?

Mother Father Grandmother Grandfather

Sister Brother Aunt Uncle

Cousin Friend of the Family

Other (please specify): _____

5.) What is your highest level of education?

6.) Are you currently employed?

Yes No

If yes, what is your current occupation? _____

7.) List your periods of unemployment in the past 5 years.

From _____ (month, year) to _____ (month, year)

From _____ (month, year) to _____ (month, year)

From _____ (month, year) to _____ (month, year)

From _____ (month, year) to _____ (month, year)

From _____ (month, year) to _____ (month, year)

From _____ (month, year) to _____ (month, year)

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR ADOLESCENTS

1. Tell me about yourself.
 - a. How would you describe yourself?
 - b. How would others describe you?
 - c. What do you like to do?
 - d. What are you good at?
 - e. Tell me about what role you have in your family.
2. How would you describe yourself socially, what you are like when you are with your friends?
 - a. How would your friends describe you?
 - b. How do you spend your free time?
 - c. Tell me about the activities/groups you are part of, and what you do with them.
3. Tell me about your plans for after high school.
 - a. What are your plans for college? Work?
 - b. What do you want to do for a job or career?
4. Tell me about your experiences having a parent/caregiver who is unemployed.
 - a. What has it been like for you? How has it affected you?
 - b. How has your lifestyle changed (what you do at home, school, neighborhood, etc.)?
 - c. How have your family roles/responsibilities changed?

- d. How have your extracurricular or out-of-school activities changed (e.g., sports, job, babysitting, etc.)?
 - e. How has your parent/caregiver's unemployment been helpful and/or how has it gotten in the way?
5. How have your experiences with your parent/caregiver being unemployed influenced how you think about yourself?
- a. How has it influenced the way in which you describe yourself? Do you now think of yourself as a child of unemployment?
 - b. Describe what you have learned about yourself since your parent/caregiver became unemployed. (What it has taught you about yourself).
6. How have your experiences with your parent/caregiver being unemployed influenced how you think about yourself socially with others (how you describe yourself when you are with your peers)?
- a. Tell me about the process of deciding who to tell about the unemployment and how you told them.
 - b. How has it affected your interactions with others and vice versa?
 - c. How has it affected your participation in social activities?
 - d. How do you relate to other children with employed parents? Unemployed parents?
7. How has your parent/caregiver's unemployment influenced how you think about your own future work or career?
- a. How has it influenced your exploration of work? Education?

- b. How has it influenced your decision-making about your education and work (i.e., how you make decisions)?
- c. How has it influenced your confidence in exploring and deciding upon a future job or career?
- d. How has it influenced the outcomes you anticipate regarding your future work?
- e. How has what job or career you want to have changed since your parent/caregiver became unemployed? (Has it changed whether you want to go to college or work right after high school?)