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The subjective experience of resilience among divorced African women in Cradock, Eastern Cape, South Africa.

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that "**The subjective experience of resilience among divorced African women in Cradock, Eastern Cape"** is my own work and that all sources used in the study were quoted and acknowledged with complete references.

Nasiphi Faxi

Signature

……………….

Date

……………….

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my daughter Limi Faxi. Whenever I felt like giving up, you were there as a source of strength and you served as a motivation and inspiration to me. I love you!

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at investigating the resilience enhancement factors which promoted well-being among divorced African women in Cradock, the Eastern Cape, South Africa. A qualitative research design was used to investigate the factors which reinforced resilience and promoted well-being following divorce as studies have indicated the risk of not being able to cope following divorce trauma. Purposive sampling was used in recruiting twelve divorced participants (aged 25- 45) from a support group at a local church in Cradock. Data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews following the permission of the church and the divorced women who gave their consent to conduct the study. Furthermore, ethical principles were adhered to, throughout the data collection process.

Thirteen themes emerged in the study and they include; self-condemnation, self-blame and denial, loneliness depression, anger and embarrassment, stigma, personality change, sexual dissatisfaction, ambivalence, forgiveness, self-contentment and self-compassion, personal growth, religious coping, social support and positive relations and resilience enhancement factors. Despite the achievement of the research objectives, the sample might not be the true representation of the population of women who experienced divorce. Also, the results might have been different if the study was quantitative in nature. Based on the findings, psychological support is needed for women who underwent divorce. Finally, churches should play a vital role in restoration of resilience among divorced women while the families and communities shift away from cultural beliefs of subjugating women.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Green and Humphrey (2012) posit that in an increasingly complex and demanding world, lack of resilience leads women to become more vulnerable to stress. Dealing with the trauma of divorce, many divorced women exert resilient functioning in their lives as means of adjusting to the situation. According to Statistics S.A (2013), in terms of race, couples from the white population group dominated the number of divorces from 2003 to 2007 with 40% as compared to 23% of black's divorces up until 2013. By 2013, the divorce rate amongst black African population group was at 36.2% as compared to 31.7% from the white population group.

When exiting an unhappy, abusive and depressing marriage, the majority of women's psychological well-being gets impaired (Chan Lai Cheng & Pfeifer, 2015). Some remain vulnerable over a longer period of time and seem not to recover at all (Perrig-Chiello, Hutchison & Morselli, 2015). Steiner, Suarez, Sells, and Wykes (2011) argued that women become more exposed to depression, anxiety disorders, and discrimination from their communities as compared to men when going through a divorce. Boon (2009) perceived divorce as representing a significant failure in the important roles of being a wife and mother, as divorced women experience the loss of social identity, status, and self-image. When parents undergo dramatic changes and restructuring owing to a divorce, children involved often feel intense sadness, rejection, guilt, anger, loneliness and perhaps a sense of hopelessness, including the parents themselves (Tabassum, 2015).

However, literature found that resilient women with greater emotional support tend to recover quickly than male counterparts when it comes to dealing with divorce (Baloyi, 2011). Resilience, it is a term which defines the ability to encompass coping and recovering from adversities among women undergoing a divorce (Ungar, 2004; 2011). Krumrei, Mahoney and Pargament (2009) maintain that one of the most important factors that are essential to enhance resilience among divorced women with adjusting and living a positive life is a religion (spirituality), adaptive spiritual coping which decreases emotional distress and increases well-being over. Coupled with social support from friends and families, a new relationship and having children, research indicates that, divorced women may bounce back from adversities (Wallerstein, Lewis & Packer- Rosenthal, 2013).

1.2 Preliminary Literature Review

1.2.1 Resilience

There is controversy in literature as to whether resilience is a characteristic/personal quality, a process, or an outcome (Pooley & Cohen, 2010). Boon (2009) expounds on resilience as "the psychological and biological strengths required successfully for mastering change, resilient qualities explored within the field of positive psychology, include such a characteristic as optimism when facing adversities. Cazan and Dumitrescu (2016) make it out in the clear that psychological resilience can be understood from three different perspectives: as an outcome of effective coping to stress, as the process of successful adaptation despite adversity, or as a psychological ability to successful recovery from negative emotional experiences

1.2.2 Divorce

The term divorce is defined as the dissolution of marriage (Fine & Harvey, 2013). In this regard, divorce is one of the most life-threatening situations which may lead to more psychological and physical impacts on a human being and affects both adults and children. According to Emery (2013), women tend to grieve divorce long before it reaches the final stages as compared to men, although Arnell (2014) shares a different view that marital disruption is more debilitating for the psychological well-being and health of women than men. Personal interpretations of divorce may increase stress levels and lower self-esteem among women (Quinney & Fouts, 2009).

1.2.3 Factors enhancing resilience among divorced women.

1.2.3.1 Religion

Religion is ranked as the number one resilience enhancement factor that assists women who encountered divorce and it is a way of life with a set of beliefs embraced by people who share the same beliefs (Kalman, 2009; Weigl, O'Shea, Neergard, Burns-Lynch, Draine, Pizziketti & Salzer, 2017). Boon (2009); Krumrei et.al, (2009) and Lawson and Satti (2016) established that religion provides divorced women with the necessary comfort and support. Conversely, some divorcees feel oppressed by religion and may start to project their anger towards spirituality or religion, as the community might condemn and blame divorcees since religion does not permit divorce and remarrying (Mbatha, 2011; Simonič, 2014).

1.2.3.2 Hardiness (Trait resilience)

According to Boon (2009), a hardy personality could influence an individual to cope better with a stressful life event such as divorce by reducing stress levels,

increasing the perception of quality of life, and fostering more positive core personal beliefs. Similarly, Smith and Hollinger-Smith (2014) pointed out that such individuals with low scores in neuroticism and high scores in openness, optimism, affect intensity, low guilt and extraversion seem to be better able to adapt to the new situation of divorce.

1.2.3.3 Social support

Social support is associated with lower levels of depression resulting to better health; therefore social support from friends and family has positive effects on both psychological and physical well-being (Jenkins, 2014). Wilder (2016) draws attention to the importance of supportive interactions with family members, defining them as means of communication. Similarly, Lawson and Satti (2016) posit that divorced women are more likely to find satisfaction through family and friends as positive family relationships are said to play an important role when it comes to enhancing resilience.

1.2.3.4 Self-esteem and Internal locus of control

High self-esteem, self-efficacy, and resilience are highly correlated. When the self-perception of an individual increases, self-confidence, and self-worth also increase leading to higher levels of resilience and coping when adjusting to adversities (Cazan & Dumitrescu, 2016). Ungar (2011) also maintains that internal locus of control is also related to positive outcomes in resilience. Therefore, when divorced women master their environment, it is easy to reinforce resilience in their lives.

1.2.3.5 Purpose in life

According to Kreager, Felson, Warner and Wenger (2013) women who have a strong sense of purpose in life are more likely to leave violent marriages and reinforce good resilience qualities. Owing to being employed or having financial

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means, they are able to take care of themselves and most likely to move on and adapt in new subsequent relationships after divorce (Kulik & Heine-Cohen, 2011; Symoens, Van de Velde, Colman & Bracke, 2014) and to play a meaningful role in their children's lives (Perrig-Chiello, Hutchison & Morselli, 2015). In contrast, Gitterman, (2014) argued that many black women are less likely to have a tertiary education, own a home or have a stable income, therefore; it may be strenuous for them to apply resilient functioning.

1.3 Research Problem

Globally, there has been an increase of divorce in which about half of all marriages experience marital discord (Cherlin, 2010). For example, in Great Britain, U.S, and African countries, four out of every ten marriages ended in divorce (Wardle, 2016). The abuse of substances increases among women which makes alcohol-related mortality high among divorcees than married couples, gambling has also been identified as an issue divorced women resort to in order to cope with the divorce process (Salvatore, Lonn, Sundquist, Lichtenstein, Sundquist & Kendler, 2016). There is also an increase in levels of sexuality as a way of dealing with the grief as divorced women may resort to having multiple sexual partners, especially if they are younger (Gottman, 2014). Instead of focusing on those individuals who fail to cope with divorce, this study had focused on the women who are able to adjust and go through the experience with a view to teaching these strategies to other women as to enhance resilience in their lives. Moreover, in South African context, previous studies explored the effects that divorce has on children and the resilience of children and men and women in general (Amato, 2010; Baloyi, 2011; Boon, 2009).

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There is a dearth of research on the resilience among women who have experienced divorce, especially in the Eastern Cape.

1.4 Research Questions

Against this background, this study aimed to answer the following questions;

- What are the factors that enhance resilience following a divorce process among black African women?
- What are the strategies put in place by the government in assisting divorced women?

1.5 Objectives of the study

- To determine factors enhancing resilience following a divorce process among black South African women.
- To establish strategies that are put in place by the government to assist divorced women.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

This study was underpinned by Ungar's (2004) coping Resilience Theory. The Resilience Theory was also used in this study to underline the core principalities concerning coping with divorce. Ungar (2004) postulates that the three models of resilience consist of the compensatory model, the challenge model, and the protective factor of immunity versus vulnerability model.

Ledesma (2014) maintains that the compensatory resilience model is viewed as a factor that neutralizes exposures to risk. These factors among divorced women may refer to determination, perseverance, and optimism. Bonanno, (2004); Ungar, (2004) posit that the challenge model indicates that protective factors foster positive

outcomes and healthy personality characteristics despite aversive life circumstances. These protective factors include emotional management skills, intrapersonal reflective skills, academic and job skills, ability to restore self-esteem, planning skills, life skills, and problem-solving skills (Ungar, 2004). In terms of the general immunity model, it assumes that there is a conditional relationship between stress and personal attributes with respect to adaptation. In other words the relationship between stress and personal attributes dampen the impact of stress on the wellbeing of an individual, therefore certain personal attributes act as a protective factor which provide immunity against stress (Shastri, 2013).

1.7 Significance of the study

The focal point of the proposed study expounded on the significant role resilience provides amongst divorced African women. It gave competent information on the coping mechanisms that are available and were used by other women who had divorced who now have shown resilience and adjustment on being divorced.

1.8 Research Method

Research methodology describes the methods that were used in conducting the research study. The research methodology consisted of the research design, data collection, sampling procedure and data analysis methods that were used in the study to guide the researcher in meeting the objectives of the study.

1.8.1Research Design

According to Creswell (2014) qualitative research is an approach to exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to, a social or human problem. Khoza (2016) indicates that the purpose of qualitative research is to

provide the researcher with the perspective of target audience members through immersion in a culture or situation and direct interaction with the people under study. Worthen and Sanders (1987) characterize qualitative inquiry as a research approach that is generally conducted in natural settings, utilizing the researcher as the chief instrument in both data gathering and analysis. The benefits of qualitative inquiry are embedded in its emphasis on thick description, i.e. obtaining real, rich, deep data which ignite everyday patterns of action and meaning from the perspective of those being studied (Khoza, 2016). A qualitative research design was utilised in this study for exploratory research purposes and with this type of research design, one is able to gain an understanding of reasons and opinions to specific research questions. Another objective for the use of qualitative research in this study was used to promote better self-understanding and increase insight into the human condition of resilience among divorced women in Cradock the Eastern Cape.

1.8.2 Sampling and Population

A sample is a group of people, objects, or items that are taken from a larger population for measurement. The sample should be representative of the population to ensure that we can generalise the findings from the research sample to the population as a whole (Glasser & Strauss, 2017). The purpose of sampling for this study is to draw conclusions about populations from samples such will enable us to determine a population's characteristics by directly observing only a portion (or sample) of the population. Such a sample which fit best for the study is divorced women in Cradock.

According to Andrew, Pederson and Mc Evoy (2011) population refers to the group of cases, meeting particular criteria, to which the researcher intends to generalise

the study's results. The population for the study was divorced black African women form Cradock, Eastern Cape in South Africa, and for this study, non-probability sampling was used. Specifically, purposive sampling which refers to one where people from a pre-specified group are purposely sought out and sampled will be utilized (Gerrish & Lacey, 2010). A sample of 12 participants was drawn and only black African women between the age ranges of 25 to 45 (due to the high rates of divorce in this age range) who have been divorced were interviewed on divorce and the resilience enhancement factors which promoted positive wellbeing following divorce since there is a rise in statistics of divorce when it concerns black Africans in Cradock, the Eastern Cape.

1.5 Data collection and analysis

Data collection refers to the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic way which enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes, examples include interviews, questionnaires and surveys, observations, focus groups etc,(Lewis, 2015). The data collection method which was utilised in this study was the in-depth interview schedule and semi-structured interviews. In a semi-structured interview, the researcher provides some structure based on her research interests and interview guide but works flexibly with the guide and allows room for the respondent's more spontaneous descriptions and narratives (Brinkman, 2014). Data analysis is the process of systematically applying statistical or logical techniques to describe and illustrate, condense and recap, and evaluate data (Khoza, 2016) .To analyse data, data will be first broken up so as to analyse it in relevant ways, open coding will be utilized to identify themes from the data collected within the interviews.

According to Basit (2010) coding is one of the convincing steps taken during analysis to organize and make sense of textual data. The paradigm which will be used to approach the study is the ontology approach which relates to whether we believe there is one verifiable reality or whether there exist multiple, socially constructed realities (Patton, 2002). A paradigm is a shared world view that represents the beliefs and values in a discipline and that guides how problems are solved (Schwandt, 2001). In particular the constructivist/ interpretative paradigm method is used to underpin the research methods for the study, reason being is to understand and describe human nature (Lewis, 2015). The strategy for of enquiry which will be utilised in the study is the grounded theory constructivist (coding approach).

Table 1: Research methods, research question congruency table

Research Questions	Research Methods	Justification
How is resilience enhanced by black South African women who experience divorce?	Qualitative Method In-depth interviews with black African divorced women	This will enlighten the researcher on the coping mechanisms among the twelve (N=12) women use to overcome the trauma of divorce.
What are the available strategies implemented by the government which assists women in coping with divorce?	In-depth interviews with black African divorced women.	The researcher will be informed of the available coping strategies the government provides for divorced women.

1.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

The trustworthiness of a study is what persuades what are the findings of other researchers and to determine the reliability of the research methods. Following Guba and Lincoln (2001) model, the following criteria will be met, credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

1.6.1 Credibility

According to Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010) credibility ensures that the study measures or tests what is actually intended. The researcher will perform this by paying special attention to the research questions, data collection, and data analysis method so that replica researchers can find similar results.

1.6.2 Dependability

Dependability determines if the work were repeated, in the same context, with the same methods, and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained (Creswell & Poth, 2017). In this regard, the researcher will report on the responses given by the respondents as to answer the research question so that miniature researchers present the identical results.

1.11.3 Transferability

Equivalent to external validity or generalizability. Transferability refers to the applicability of the findings to other situations and other people (Scholar & Tappen, 2010). The researcher ensured sufficient information on the fieldwork sites to enable the reader or other researchers to make such a transfer to the broader population.

1.11.4 Conformability

Conformability means that the data and the interpretation are not figments of the researcher's imagination (Bergh, 2009).The researcher established this by being able to track the qualitative data back to its original source in the interviews, and by recording the details of what happened during the data collection procedure.

1.12 Ethical Measures

With respect to professional practice, ethical standards that provide guidelines form an integral part of the ethical standards of professional conduct against which a professional misconduct will be evaluated (Sarantakos, 2012). The fundamental ethical key measures were taken very much into consideration within the study as to protect the participants from harm are as follows. A letter was written for ethical clearance to the University of Fort Hare Ethical Committee in order for permission to be granted as to proceed with the study. A letter was also written to a local church to ask permission for interviewing participants. In terms of informed consent, after being informed of the objectives of the study the participants filled in forms as their consent to partake in the study. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained at all costs. Participants remained anonymous and their identity was protected by using pseudonyms. Once the data had been transcribed it was destroyed. Participants were be protected from harm in every way possible, including asking a question which did not make them feel uncomfortable.

1.13 Statement of Intellectual Property

The information contained in this study is efficient for the improvement of students who might want to pursue a study in the same field or students who might be going through the same ordeal.

1.14   Chapter Outline

Chapter 1: Introduction and background on the study. This chapter consists of the background and introduction on the topic at hand.

Chapter 2: Preliminary Literature Review and theoretical framework. In this chapter literature reviewed by other researchers on the same topic is explored and the theories reviewed are linked to the research topic.

Chapter 3: Research methodology. This chapter discusses the methodology and sampling techniques utilized in the study.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretation. The results found in the study is analyzed and structured.

Chapter 5: Discussions, conclusions and recommendations. In this chapter, all the findings of the study are presented and conclusions are drawn and lastly, recommendations on the conclusion were provided.

CHAPTER 2

RESILIENCE IN DIVORCED WOMEN

2.1 Introduction

In the last chapter, the focus was on the important parts of the study, such as the problem statement, research objectives and the aim of the study. The focal point of this chapter will comprise of the theoretical aspects of resilience and the factors which play a significant role in the lives of women. The description of the theories which underpin the study specifically, Lazarus and Folkman's Coping Theory and Resilience Theory by Ungar, will be discussed. In addition, terms will be expanded on concerning the factors which enhance resilience among women.

2.2 Divorce

According to Murray, Peter and Tshotsho (2013) divorce refer to a phenomenon which comprises of negative effects on social, emotional and physical well-being on the divorcees and those close to them. Symoens et al., (2014) maintain that the divorced women generally face more mental health problems than the married. Research indicates that divorce involves a painful process which brings about change often resulting in psychological and social impairment (Baloyi, 2011; Boon, 2009). For this reason, divorce often leaves children to be raised by single parents, which may have a negative effect on them (Boon, 2009). Scholars rate divorce as the second most stressful life event (Du Plooy & van Rensburg, 2016). On the contrary, Ntimo-Makara (2009) rejects these ideas by maintaining that divorce itself should be seen as a strategy that assists women to get out of an unhealthy marriage as it empowers women to take major decisions that affect the development of one's life. In countries like Ireland, it is not easy to be granted a divorce request, divorce

can only be permitted only after long periods of living apart and after a couple of attempts of reconciliation and counselling (McKnight, Monfort, Kashalan, Blalock & Calton, 2015).

In England, divorce is based on evidence of unreasonable behaviour, and the divorce process is only quick and easier when one has connections to more than one Member State (Emery, 2013; Lampard, 2013). Nevertheless, in countries like Sweden it is easy for both parties to just end their marriage by agreement of both parties instantly (Lampard, 2013). Women are more sensitive to divorce culture than men (Furtado, Marcen & Sevilla, 2013). Also, the divorce rates have increased over time, but they have risen significantly for individuals between the ages of 20 to 29 (Konstam, Karwin, Curran, Lyons & Celen-Demirtas, 2016). Some studies confirmed that the divorce process can also possess positive benefits for children and their developmental outcomes such as cognitive and emotional maturity due to conflict exposure (Borst, 2015). It is only in countries like Malta and the Philippines is divorce still not legally recognized, though Maltese couples can obtain a "foreign divorce" from another country if one or both partners are habitually residents there (Abanyam, Sambe & Moses, 2014).

The divorce process indicates changes to a family's relational dynamics and can have a negative impact such as disorganization in the parental-child relationship (Amato & Anthony, 2014). In a recent South African study on attachment and divorce, Rawatlal, Pillay and Kliewer (2015) confirm that women experiencing a divorce tend to have problems when it comes to adjusting to being single again. They often feel insecure when the partner is no longer inaccessible, due to them feeling safe and secure when the partner was still nearby as they may be emotionally attached to them (Borst, 2015). Drawing from John Bowlby's (1960

attachment theory, studies revealed that insecure attachment often leads women to remarry to avoid loneliness (Fraley & Heffernan, 2013).

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The most renowned theory and model which will give a better clarification on the link between coping, resilience and positive mental and physical health outcome which will guide this study is the Resilience Theory by Ungar.

2.3.1 Resilience Theory Model

The Resilience theory focused on positive youth and children development in the face of risk and provided a conceptual framework for studying and understanding why some youths grow up to be healthy adults despite exposure to risk (Garmezy, 1991; Masten, 1994; Rutter, 1987; Werner & Smith, 1992). The resilience theory, regards active coping as a constructive strategy and in fact a protective factor that could reduce the negative effects of the divorce experience on the development of mental distress on divorced women (Hemphill, Tollit & Herenkohl, 2014). Exposure to negative experiences and stress may either increase vulnerability which often has a negative impact on health more especially if divorced women cannot cope (Prot & Gentile, 2014). Divorced women who choose active coping including positive refocusing or positive reappraisal might be more resilient than those using such styles as self-blame (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2014). Mediators and moderators in resilience are different because the effects of the moderators are different as they exist prior the effects of stress exposure which increase or decrease depending on the effects of the stressor (Wang, Zhang & Zimmerman (2015).

2.3.1.1 Compensatory factor model

The compensatory model describes a process in which promotive factors prevent exposure to risk through an opposite, direct, and independent effect on outcomes. This can be assessed by examining the main effects of the promotive factor in a regression situation (Ungar, 2011). For instance, divorced women who could not cope with divorce process and opted to alcohol abuse and risky sexual behaviour as a mean of coping (risk factor) were more likely to be depressed, have poor physical and mental health. However, social support from family and friends or support groups compensated for this risk factor because it predicted less risky behaviour. Therefore, the compensatory model indicates that the direct effects of resilience prevent the direct negative effects of risk factors such as stress (Ungar, 2011) Wang, et al, (2015) postulate that in the resilience theory, both compensatory and protective factors are promotive factors that can assist divorced women avoid the negative effects of risk exposure.

2.3.1.2 Protective factor model

The protective factor model refers to a process in which promotive factors moderate the negative effects of risks which predict negative outcomes. In this model, promotive factors are called protective factors in order to distinguish them from promotive factors that only compensate for risk exposure (Rutter, 1987). Masten, Garmezy and Rutter (1990) suggest that protective factors of resilience cushion for the negative outcomes of risk exposure and adversity, this could mean that divorced women who score higher on resilience have a lower risk of adverse outcomes. Even when faced with adversities such as divorce, these women are able to cope and adjust due to the protective factors which play an immense role. In an Australian and

Norwegian study on anxiety symptoms that mediate relationship between exposure to stressful negative life events, Anyan, Worsley and Hjemdal (2017) established that resilience moderated the relationship between anxiety symptoms and depressive symptoms, the protective factors measured by resilience were based on the overall categories of positive personal dispositions, family cohesion and external social support. Resilience protective factors play a significant role of protecting against indirect negative effects of stress (Ungar, 2011).

The protective factors, unlike compensatory factors, improve the effects of risks in an interactive fashion (Rutter, 1987). For example, the association between divorcing and stress may be reduced for women who report active coping and resiliency. Therefore, active coping serves as a protective factor for physiological stress associated with the divorce trauma. Protective factors, for example, self-acceptance, personality traits, self-esteem, self-awareness etc. may also operate to enhance other factors which promote resilience including religion, social support, having a purpose in life, being physically active. Researchers have identified social support as a vital protective factor against mental health problems in divorced women (Wright, Masten & Narayan, 2013). The resilience protective factors play a role of either mediating or moderating the effects of stress, resilience protective resources protect against direct and indirect negative effects such as anxiety and depressive symptoms in divorced women (Anyan, et al, 2017). Moderators of stressors and depressive explain an increase or decreased likelihood of depressive symptoms as a result of the moderator variable which may be a protective or vulnerability factor (Anyan, et al, 2017).

2.3.1.3 Challenge model

The challenge model operates as a vaccine when one is exposed to average levels of risk, by actually assisting an individual to overcome the following exposure (Mc Connel & Savage, 2014). The initial exposure to risk must be challenging enough to help divorced women develop the coping mechanisms to overcome its effects, yet it must not so emotionally draining that it overwhelms their efforts to cope (Zimmerman, Stoddard, Eisman, Caldwell, Aiyer & Miller, 2013). In other words, divorced women should see this as a challenge that they can face and overcome. For example, if interpersonal conflict such as denial is resolved in a friendly manner, it can help divorced women overcome social tensions to avoid psychological distress later. Masten (2014) concluded that adversity levels increased where adaptation improved at lower levels of challenge and then fell at higher levels regarding this as the challenge model.

2.4 A view on divorce from a cultural perspective

Culture entails a wholeness of traits and characteristics that are distinctive to a group of people to the extent that it marks them out from other people or societies (Idang, 2015). Culture is categorised by social norms, taboos, and values. According to Mbatha (2011), since in Zulu culture divorce is not acceptable, when a woman leaves her father's house because of marriage, she is expected to remain married because rituals such as slaughtering of a cow or sheep signifies a new covenant with the new family. Slaughtering or the spilling of blood is a sacrifice made which signifies a salient bond between the bride and the groom's ancestors (Meyer, 2014). However, Ackerman (2014) found that with an increase in the ideas of individual self-actualisation and self-fulfilment, divorce has become more accepted and not considered a disgrace as it used to be in the past in culturally embedded societies.

In South Africa and all African countries, the bride price/wealth/lobola is very salient. In the Zulu and Xhosa culture when lobola is paid there is a great connection between the bride and the ancestors, therefore breaking such a bond due to divorce is regarded as an insult to the ancestors (Rudwick & Posel, 2015). Some of the expectations include procreation and being the loyal daughter-in-law who will support her husband and the in-laws regardless of the challenges she may encounter (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010; Radcliffe-Brown & Forde, 2015). In line with the Zulu adage, *"umuntu wesifazane ufela emshadweni"* she is not expected to divorce but stay until she dies, as women who walk out of marriage are regarded as having disrespected their culture. As noted above, such cultural norms and beliefs on cultural disapproval of divorce may increase psychological distress among divorced women (Yip, Yousuf, Chan, Yung & Wu, 2015) as in countries like South Korea, women were not even allowed to file for divorce until recently (Kerr, 2012). In countries like South Africa, Ethiopia, and Nigeria, divorced women are often stigmatised by being ostracised considering that divorce represents the loss of a partner and identity (Hunter, 2010) as a married couple and it also shows that the wife has failed in playing her wifely duties (Maubane & Langa, 2015). Konstam, et al., (2016) defined stigmatization as a condition whereby one is being denied full social acceptance and is being blocked to access resources and support. Moreover, in many other parts of the world divorce is still considered a threat to social unity, a form of social integration, a familial adversity and a decision that often leads to discrimination(social exclusion) (Emery, 2013; Konstam, et al, 2016). Research has shown that the reason for discrimination is based on how marriage is valued and the role it plays in the society, therefore divorce may be treated as deviating against the norms of society (Oakley, 2015). As a result, women tend to be blamed and

stigmatized by the communities (Emery, 2013). Regarding issues of stigma, research shows that Black women demonstrate significantly higher self-esteem than white women. This could be a result in the connection to their views on divorce because a few black women than white feel as if divorce is a stigma (Hiyoshi, Fall, Netuveli & Montgomery, 2015).

2.5 A religious perspective on divorce

According to Emery (2013) marriage is viewed as a religious ceremony. Marriage is also seen as a lifetime commitment, more important than the freedom of the individual's spouse (Hortsman, 2016). Marriage is supposed to be sacred, thus ending a marriage in divorce can be a devastating incident as divorce symbolises a religious offense (Shearin, 2016). Hawkins and Fackrell (2016) provide evidence on how God has commanded married people to remain together and keep marriages strong and holy. In the Christian bible, Mark 10:6-9, it is written *"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife…What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder".* This illustrates that the Lord does not permit divorce and remarriage. Furthermore, some evangelical churches do not even allow divorced or remarried congregants to hold key leadership posts in the USA, African and Latin countries (Ellison, Wolfinger & Ramos-Wada, 2012). On the basis of such teachings, many evangelicals conclude that divorce is a sin and only permissible if a spouse is unfaithful, via adultery or abuse (Stokes & Ellison, 2010). In South Africa, there have been changes in the way that religious organisations view divorce and treat those who have been divorced many Christian denominations do not object to a person marrying someone who has previously been divorced and also does not reject a member who has divorced (Ackerman, 2014). Finally, the

divorce and remarriage of high-profile ministers all point to an increased acceptance of divorce within certain religious spheres (Holmes, 2015).

2.6 Feminists perspective on divorce

If there's one thing feminist's love, it is divorce – as they consider it liberating for women (Basch, 2001). Scott-Hunt and Lim (2013) postulate that feminists writing reveal that divorced women sought liberation from home, husband, family, childbirth, children, and the role of a fulltime homemaker. They strive to achieve independence from men and liberation from the duties of marriage and motherhood. Feminists degraded marriage and motherhood even though most women want marriage and motherhood (Carbone, 1994). Feminism strives to show that women are not as happy now as they were in the 1950s. Different kinds of feminists who are anti-marriage such as liberal feminists believe that women's domestic responsibilities inevitably place them at a disadvantage and favour policies encourage men to assume a proportionate share of family responsibilities. Cultural feminists, or feminists of difference, believe that it is not the fact that women care for children but that child rearing is so undervalued which is the source of the problem (Lund, 1990). Radical feminists believe that it is impossible to know whether women's involvement in child rearing would differ from men's in a different society and focus on the ways in which marriage and work force policies perpetuate male dominance (Sydie, 2014). All agree, however, that existing law contributes to the relative impoverishment of many women and children and that, even when the rules appear to be gender-neutral, they are administered in systematically biased ways. Basch (1994) maintains that feminist writing also suggest that marriage and intimate relationships are more central, women's identity and more consequential for their overall wellbeing relative to men because women typically specialise in emotion works and nurturing.

2.7 Resilience

Resilience entails more than merely surviving, getting through, or escaping a harrowing ordeal. In the context of divorce, resilience might refer to the ability to "bounce back" to a former state of positive adjustment (Carr, 2014). The American Psychological Association (2014) defines resilience as the process of adapting well to the face of adversity, trauma, threats or even significant sources of stress.

In Vaquero, Urrea and Mundet's (2014) view, resilience is an easy concept to understand but difficult to define. According to Windle (2011), its complexity is due in part, to the fact that resilience is studied in different scientific disciplines such diverse as psychology, economy, ecology or medicine. Baloyi, (2011) and Taruvinga, (2011) distinguished the process of resilience to be characterised by four common outcomes following the divorce: (i) succumbing (giving up; e.g., alcoholism, suicide), (ii) survival with impairment (long-term negative psychological effects), (iii) recovery (return to the previous level of positive adjustment) and (iv) thriving (experiencing growth beyond the previous level of adjustment).

Kheswa and Shwempe (2016) share the same idea that resilience is the emotional and cognitive components that protect and enable exposed individuals to survive trauma and to proceed when faced with hardships. Thus it would appear that the resilience process is a necessity as it enables individuals to heal from painful experiences, take charge of their lives, and go on to live and love well (Walsh, 2015).

Survivors of divorce may not be necessarily resilient; as most may remain impaired psychologically and interpersonally by posttraumatic stress symptoms, depression or anxiety (McKnight, et al., 2015).

According to Boon (2009), the theoretical assumptions of resiliency theory are divided such as resilience factors into internal (such as attitude, intelligence, a sense of mastery, and so on) and external factors (such as family support, role models, community). Resilience theory posits that people develop individual strengths and resources that enable them to grow following stressful life events such as divorce (Boon, 2009; Fritz, de Graaff, Caisley, Van Harmelen & Wilkinson, 2017). Resilience is not only an outcome of extreme stress or trauma, but it is bound to operate in people's daily lives in response to the smallest changes, each time their view of the world is challenged (Sivilli & Pace, 2014). So whether people are confronted with major life changes, such as divorce or whether one is challenged by a minor event, such as extending a child's bedtime, people need resilience to reintegrate and grow (Gluckman, 2016).

Furthermore, resilient individuals may be more or less resilient at different stages in their lives and in response to different types of stressors (Tedeschi & Moore, 2016). According to Chesla and Leonard (2017), the elements of resilience include the noble human attributes such as faith, morality, and creativity. In addition, Walsh (2016) maintains that resilience enables women to be optimistic and focus on searching for strengths, finding stories and role models that inspire and motivate them in the midst of the divorce. Resilience also plays a significant role when it comes to the teaching of skills that can learn, and not focus on the unchangeable factor such as divorce but of unlimited human potential (Walsh, 2016). Resilient women, compared to less resilient women, often show a greater ability to successfully adapt to stressors and maintain their psychological well-being in the face of adversity such as divorce (Asanjarani, Galehdarpour, Estalkhi, Neghabi, Shahverdi, & Rajamand, 2017; World Health Organization, 2014)

2.7.1 Cognitive resilience skills

Neenan (2017) argues that the level of resilience depends on one's thinking style as it is closely related to emotional intelligence the ability to adapt to ones thinking processes enables women to better regulate their emotional lives. Luthra, Norman, Riddel (2017) describe seven skills to increase resilience through cognition which are learning the ABC's, avoiding thinking traps, detecting icebergs, avoiding challenging beliefs, putting things into perspective, being calm and focusing and practicing real-time resilience.

2.7.2 Ego resiliency

Ego-resiliency is defined as the ability to adapt to one's level of control temporarily or down as circumstances impose (Saklofske, Nordstokke, Prince-Embury, Crumpler, Nugent, Vesely & Hindes, 2013). Ego-resiliency is influenced by the ability to monitor one's behaviour, emotions and thoughts, therefore it is expected to be influenced by temperamental and other personality characteristics (e.g., effortful control, emotionality), learning (e.g., the acquisition of coping skills), and the nature of the stressors in a particular context (Alessandri, Eisenberg, Vecchione, Caprara & Milioni, 2016).

2.7.3 Socio-ecological resilience

According to Ungar (2011), there are four principles presented as a basis for an ecological interpretation of the resilience construct, these are represented as decentrality, complexity, atypicality, and cultural relativity. They all inform a definition of resilience that emphasizes the environmental factors promoting positive growth. These four key principles: decentrality, complexity, atypicality, and cultural relativity

can resolve the trait-process debate, and potentially explain the phenomenon of resilience (Ungar, 2013).

2.7.3.1 Decentrality

In the principle of decentralism, resilience often depends on the availability and accessibility of culturally relevant resources and the capacity of informal and formal social networks which will aid in facilitating positive developments (Berger, 2015). According to Ungar (2011) for resilience to be reinforced, socioecological considerations come first, then they are followed by interactions between person and environment and lastly by the characteristics of the individual.

2.7.3.2 Complexity

Complexity suggests that resilience is dynamic and the path to achieve it varies, it may require models to be contextually and temporally specific (Deal, Pan, Pallathucheril & Fulton, 2017). Rather, one should expect complex processes as well as recognize that resilient divorced women will not do well all the time in all circumstances, sometimes the process to resilience may be prolonged (Masten, 2014).

2.7.3.3 Atypicality

Atypicality is the idea that a population experiencing increased exposure to risk may develop alternative functional though sometimes it may be culturally non-normative coping strategies (Ungar, 2011). Ungar (2004) calls this 'hidden resilience'. In the principle of atypicality, not all solutions of coping may be equally created for divorced women, here the focus is shifted from individual focus and rather challenges are faced as a family. Maercker, Hilpert and Burri (2016) define that the focus of atypicality is on alternative coping strategies or "hidden resilience" whilst social

support and self-efficacy may be coping styles for adversities these variables from a trauma-specific socio-interpersonal model serve as atypical coping style.

2.7.3.4 Cultural Relativity

Cultural relativity refers to the notion that positive growth is cultural, temporally, and historically embedded in individuals (Ungar, 2011). What is normative in one context may be non-normative in another culture. In this regard, divorce may be non-normative or unaccepted in most cultures. With this re-conceptualisation, the concept of rethinking and reconstructing the way that individuals make sense of divorce is made possible (Masten & Garmezy, 2013).

2.8 Factors that reinforce resilience of coping with divorce

There are certain factors which reinforce resilience among divorced women. These are proven to play a significant role in assisting women to cope and adjust to the divorce trauma.

2.8.1 Social support

Social support has been conceptualized as emotional, informational, and instrumental assistance provided by significant others to promote personal and social well-being (Lovell, Moss, & Wetherell, 2012). According to Thoits, (2011), social support can be activated through family and close friends or larger, more formalized groups such as support groups or work colleagues to enhance resilience among divorced women. In a recent study by Wilder (2016) on the link between social support and positive adjustment, studies continue to prove that social support from family, friends and social network provides a significant role in mediating healing in the process of divorce. Social support from family members is often associated with resilience. It is also regarded as one of the most important sources

of support and coping. According to a Californian study on close social ties and health following a divorce (Rook & Charles, 2017), it was established that social support from friends and family is related to better physical and mental health and often results in divorced women to be less likely to engage in risk factors such as substance abuse and risky sexual behaviour.

Globally, scholars found that such support reduces depression, enhances self-esteem and brings about the satisfaction of life among divorced women (Kwon, 2013; Zimmerman,Darnell, Rhew, Lee & Kaysen, 2015). Israel-Cohen, Kaplan, Noy and Kashy-Rosenbaum (2016) claim that social support possesses the capacity of leading an individual to feel cared for, esteemed, valued, and an integral part of a network. For example, in Europe, United Kingdom, Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya, siblings and parents often play a salient role when it comes to supporting for one another in the face of divorce. The other siblings increase contact and provide emotional and other kinds of support (Emery, 2013).

2.8.2 Social networking

Rennie and Morrison (2013) defined social network sites as web-based applications that allow their users to construct a profile that other users can see and it also lists connections with other users. Social networking has been identified to play a notable role when it comes to adapting to adversities and is regarded as one of the most popular activities on the internet (Oh, Ozkaya & La Rose. 2014). Whilst having a confidant also plays a significant role in reducing the effects of stress on physical and psychological outcomes. Lacoviello and Charney (2014) argue that having effective social support protects against hopelessness and negative psychological

outcomes while encouraging adaptive and active coping and reinforcing positive thinking about oneself.

Social networking provides positive psychological outcomes and social support to individuals experiencing a divorce (Emery, 2013; Symoens, et al., 2014; Taylor, Forsythe-Brown, Taylor & Chatters, 2014). Although too much use of social networking sites can be the root to professional performance loss at work, social isolation, time distortion, breakdown of daily life routines, increased depression, loneliness, lying, decreased quality of life, increased anxiety, and psychiatric disorders many divorced women still resort to it as a protective factor (Caron & Light, 2016). Research has shown that the number of friends could be the main source of social support in online social networking such as providing texts which are motivational and stress-relieving (Oh, et al., 2014). In another Californian study on exploring Social Network Site use and perceptions of social support, stress, and well-being (Nabi, Prestin & So, 2013), studies maintain that the number of Facebook friends is associated with psychological well-being following a divorce. The number of friends from the social media emerges as a strong predictor of social support for individuals who have experienced a divorce because through sharing their ordeals, some derive hardiness (Wilson, Gosling & Graham, 2012).

2.8.3 Remarriage and re-partnering

In the view of Cherlin (2017); Boon (2009); and Baloyi (2011), about two-thirds of divorced women give marriage another try although they may divorce again as remarriage may be less stable and complex due to economic factors, and the issue of children (Hiyoshi, Fall, Netuveli & Montogomery, 2015; Greeff & Cloete, 2015).

Several scholars have considered dating after divorce as beneficial for mothers wellbeing, nevertheless, evidence also shows that some mothers may be uninterested in dating after divorce (Langlais, Anderson & Greene, 2015). In an American study on consequences of dating for post-divorce maternal well-being (Langlais, Anderson & Greene, 2016), studies have indicated that re-partnering after divorce is linked to better psychological and physical health outcomes for mothers. It has also been established that the re-partnering of women after divorce helps to alleviate the negative effects associated with post-divorce stress (Anderson & Greene, 2011).

Conversely, Price, Price and McKenry (2010) maintain that divorced women who remarry or are involved in relationships with new partners tend to adjust better psychologically and emotionally, as having a new romantic relationship serves as a protective factor. However, Lamborn (2017) maintains that individuals who suffer from borderline personality disorder are unable to develop stable relationships, and have extremely impaired abilities when it comes to handling adult responsibilities. Langlais, Anderson and Greene (2015) are also of the idea that re-partnering after divorce offers positive effects which diminish negative effects associated with post-divorce stress often resulting in better psychological and physical health outcomes. Additionally, McNamee, Amato and King (2014), assert that black women are less likely to remarry than white women after a divorce more especially those who are poor and conceived prior marriage. The cause for the black-white marriage gap is due to constraints on the availability of partners for black women. For instance, women tend to marry partners who have accumulated at least as much schooling as they have, as a result, young black women tend to be more educated than young black men (Raley, Sweeney & Wondra, 2015).

The several predictors which promote remarriage among divorced women include being young at the time of divorce, having a college education (Sabour Esmaeili & Schoebi (2017), is employed, and living in the rich areas.

2.8.4 Religion

Religious coping plays a unique and significant role among women who are going through a divorce. Johnson, Williams and Pickard (2016) claim that religious/spiritual coping deals stressful life events through beliefs and practices that are based around religion or are spiritual in nature, for example praying and believing in God with the challenges one is faced with. Handal and Lace (2017) postulate that prayer, alter call and gospel music are seen as coping mechanisms which promote spiritual and emotional wellness. According to Bent-Goodley (2014); Dageid and Gronlie (2015); Johnson and Cohen (2015), religion is important to most Africans as African women are more likely to use religious or spiritual coping practices than White women in similar situations such as divorce, and are often more likely to turn to them for support first. Studies have indicated that most African women seek help from church leaders, as they are often the gateway to more positive mental health care services (Handal and Lace, 2017). In United States study on religion as a resilience enhancement factor, Lawson and Satti (2016) established that divorced women often seek religious support to reduce post-divorce distress.

Additionally, Marx-Wolf and Upson-Saia (2015), established that religion facilitates peace during the divorce process while Ivtzan, Chan, Gardner and Prashar, 2013 and, Raban-Motounu and Vitalia, (2014) emphasized that it provides a sense of identity, a network of social support, and a reasonable framework for

responding to existing everyday stresses more especially where divorce is concerned.

However, Pickard and Nelson-Becker, (2011) reject the idea that religious/spiritual coping has only positive effects on individuals by stating that some individuals start to feel that they are being punished by God or they feel that they have not lived up to the expectations of their fellow members when they experience adversities. More especially now that religion prohibits divorce and remarriage as this could be seen as some form of repression on women to stay in unhealthy marriages (Mbatha, 2011). However, Drabble, Trocki and Kingler, (2016) and Johnson, Williams and Pickard, (2016); Kemer and Johnson, (2014) demonstrated that religion for many black African divorced women provides comfort and security and it still continues to be a protective factor in the face of adversity, thus religious involvement in a community may enhance one's access to social support networks, thereby lessening the amount of stress one may be subdued to (Israel-Cohen, Kaplan, Noy & Kashy-Rosenbaum, 2016). During a period of chronic illnesses, social support and religion functions as a protective factor against a decline in physical/mental health (Uchino, 2009; Uchino, Carlisle, Birmingham, & Vaughn, 2011) as religion also serves as a protective factor against the development of alcohol and drug use.

Research indicates that alcohol use and alcohol-related problems are generally more pronounced among women than men (Drabble, et al., 2016; World Health Organization, 2014;). Nevertheless, religious coping is regarded as one of the most powerful coping mechanisms that has the potential to diminish the damaging effects negative life events have on psychological functioning which often leads to

alcohol-related problems (Ivtzan, et al., 2013,Kidwai, Mancha, Brown & Eaton, 2013; Lacoviello & Charney, 2014).

Scholars have indicated that after a traumatic experience such as a divorce, religious beliefs and practices often provide support and comfort, as individuals retain the belief such as that God will provide support and comfort in their time of hardship (Kuile & Ehring, 2014). Intriguingly, a number of studies reveal positive relations between religion and marital well-being, i.e. religion plays a significant role in marriage satisfaction, and therefore this decreases the divorce rate (Olson, Marshall, Goddard & Schramm, 2015). Religion is an often overlooked but an important resource when it comes to moderating effects of stress and a source of self-worth among individuals (Harris, 2016). Harris (2016) also argues that religion tends to be an aiding resource when one is faced with adversities, as it plays a role in offering psychological resources that enhance self-esteem and self-mastery. In an American study on the role religion plays when it comes to marriage and divorce among black American men and women Gilum and Dodd (2016) established that religion plays a significant role in marriage as well as with divorce, as studies indicate that among black African women and men, there is a less chance of binge drinking, having multiple sexual partners and having multi-partner fertility.

2.8.4.1 Hope and forgiveness

Additionally, forgiveness and hope are to be regarded as potential resilience factors (Cheavens, Cukrowicz, Hansen & Mitchell, 2016). Forgiveness is often associated with happiness, psychological and subjective well-being, and it is a significant physiological indicator of resilience and positive interpersonal outcomes (Norman, 2017). It is also regarded as a desirable outcome of psychological

interventions for people of all ages and in a wide line-up of interpersonal situations (Yarnoz-Yaben, et al., 2015). Greeson, et al. (2015); Riek and Mania (2012) posit that forgiveness is often anticipated as an interpersonal process after being wronged as it includes a reduction in vengeful emotions, thus increasing positive thoughts and behaviour and reduced mental health problems among divorced women. In an Iranian study that explored the effects of hope- and forgiveness-focused interventions on couples filing for divorce (Navidian & Bahari, 2014) found that spirituality-related interventions such as hope and forgiveness play a significant role in reducing the level and amount of conflict during the divorce process.

Remarkably, older adults and females seem to be more willing to forgive than younger adults and males (Miller, Worthington & McDaniel, (2010); Root & Exline, 2011). For example, divorced women who were resilient and forgave their ex-partners were likely to be healed in a short space of time often resulting in a restored peaceful heart (Sheldon, Gilchrist-Petty & Lessley). In a study in Spain, Yarnoz-Yaben (2015) found that many women showed resilience by forgiving their partners, as continued anger towards the former spouse also affects the relationship between the child and the other parent.

Research has also emphasized the importance of hope when faced with challenges by declaring that living without hope is regarded as no living (Baloyi, 2011). Studies have consistently focused on the role of resource that hope plays on divorced individuals and that God is found among them as the powerless and suffering. Therefore, hope plays a significant role when it comes to divorce, as scholars demonstrate that hope is associated with greater psychological well-being, physical health, and mental functioning including self-regulation (Baloyi, 2011; Wisman & Heflick, 2016;).

2.8.4.2 Hope theory

Hope Theory has been influential in showing how hopefulness equips people to effectively respond to adversities in life by setting goals and planning on how to overcome these challenges (Rosenstreich, Feldman, Davidson, Maza & Margalit, 2015). In Snyder's model, hope is conceptualized around three main components: goals, pathways, and agency (Snyder, 2002). The concept is defined as the process of thinking about one's goals, along with the motivation to move toward those goals (agency), and the ways to achieve those goals (pathways) Carretta, Ridner & Dietrich, 2014). Sprenkle (2014) established that the loss of a partner, whether through death or divorce, can result in diminished hope. When the support from the relationship has been removed the individual must face goal pursuits alone, thus the loss due to divorce compromises an individual's determination of achieving a goal (Krantzler, 2014; Snyder, 2007).

Hope theory is said to be rooted in positive psychology, as hope can ensure treatment or change and exists in almost all professions related to hope to improve the wellbeing of divorced individuals (Sprenkle, 2014; Snyder 2002). Hope and forgiveness-based therapies/theories are two modern approaches employed in resolving marital conflicts. Nahividian and Bahari (2014) postulate that forgiveness causes total segregation between the individual and the negative behaviour, leading to unconditional acceptance of divorce (Nahividian & Bahari, 2014). From Snyder's (2000) view, hope is an emotional lookout based on optimism and a positive view of the future. Hope is similar to optimism but is associated with a more active effort for positive future results. Hope is a multidimensional cognitive structure and is an active concept which includes three elements (purposefulness, planning power and will to achieve the goal) while considering the barriers and methods of overcoming them

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(Skrzypińska, 2014). Navidian and Bahari (2014) reported that hope and forgiveness could improve a person's communication skills with others following divorce. In a suicidal thoughts scenario of divorced women, hope was positively associated with intentions to seek both informal and formal psychological help (McDermott, Cheng, Wong, Booth, Jones & Sevig, 2017).

2.9 Personality traits

Boyce, Wood and Powdthavee (2012) posit that personality comprises of the psychological aspects of one situation to another, and it is regarded as one of the strongest consistent predictors of subjective well-being. Personality is also regarded as a notable factor when it comes to stressful events as it can influence the reaction to a stressful event (Roohafza, et al., 2016).

2.9.1 Resilience of women in low quality marriages following divorce

Studies suggest that leaving a highly stressful, low quality marriage can lead to positive outcomes. In line with this perspective Bourassa, Sbarra and Whisman (2015) posit that women who ended highly distressed marriages perceived improvement and happiness after divorce as compared to those who divorced from higher quality marriages evidenced lower happiness. According to Ye, De Maris and Longmore (2018) lower marital quality decreases the likelihood of depression after divorce. Women in low quality marriages who receive social support from the surrounding social environment following divorce are more likely to be resilient; this is often linked to high-quality co-parenting (Gürmen, Huff, Brown, Orbuch & Birditt, 2017). However, Tsirigotis and Tsirigotis (2015) maintain that resilience of women suffering domestic violence was lower than resilience of the general population, not experiencing domestic violence. When individuals experience a life event that is

significantly challenging, adverse, or traumatic, it has the potential to cause a disruption in previous ways of coping with stress. Disruptive events often lead to emotions such as hurt, loss, guilt, fear, anger, sadness, and confusion (Karr & Kellis, 2018).

2.9.2 Personality of women in low quality marriages and personality change following divorce

Many women are said to experience drastic personality change due to the amount of stress which they may be subdued following a divorce and such my affect them negatively (Xu, Lin, Yang, Zhou, Tao, Chen, Chai & Wang, 2016). Allemand, Hill and Lehman (2015) postulate that divorced women are often associated with a decrease in orderliness, and tend to have a difficulty maintaining friendships. Motevaliyan, Yaacob, Juhari, Mansor and Baratvand (2014) also maintain that neuroticism personality trait was a significant predictor of minor and severe total abuse of divorced women. Many divorced women often show different forms of abuse such as physical, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse often committed by their ex-partners (Stacker & Scourfield, 2015). The negative effects of such abuse result in a negative attitude towards marriage, leaving a scar which often affects women's personality (Rani, 2014). Neuroticism is also associated with attachment anxiety; many divorced women showed such traits due to the attachment that they might have had with their ex-spouses (Boertien, von Scheve & Park, 2017). From the view of Karen Horney (1945) neurosis developed from anxiety often caused by interpersonal relationships, she also maintained that women who were victims of abuse tend to harbour hatred and be neurotic especially if they don't receive the necessary support.

Adaptive mechanisms which are believed to be essential for positive mental health, as they reduce conflict and cognitive dissonance in situations of sudden change such as divorce (Cohen & Finzi-Dottan, 2014). However, defense mechanisms such as sublimation assist individuals in the period of distress surrounding the divorce and allow them to distance themselves from the spousal conflict. If their spiritual wellbeing is not robust, they are most likely to apply defense mechanisms such as regression and denial. Studies have also indicated that most custodial mothers reported more hostility than divorced custodial fathers. According to Mehryar and Golafrooz (2017) some personality traits such as neuroticism creates vulnerabilities in marriage and increases the probability of abuse and divorce. However, it is also interesting to note that there some positive personality traits such as decreased levels in dependability, openness to experience and for some even an increase in extraversion that divorced women develop, as compared to those who are non-divorced (Allemand, et al. 2015; Bleidorn, Hopwood & Lucas, 2016).

However, resilience also plays a significant role when it comes to personality after divorce, as it may affect personality in a more positive form (Roohafza, et al., 2016). Below mentioned are some of the necessary personality traits which were quite salient for many women when it came to resilience following divorce:

2.9.3 Hardiness

Hardiness is a combination of beliefs about oneself and the world that makes a person immune against external and internal pressures, this feature is the ability to process these pressures (Ghorbani & Asadi, 2017). Shifren, Bauserman, Blackwood, Coles and Hillman (2015) also claim that hardiness is a multidimensional construct represented by three distinct personality features such as commitment, control and

challenge. Puri (2016) suggested that there is a positive relationship between hardiness and resilience as hardiness alleviates stressful life events. Wade, Hardy, Howell and Mythen (2013) maintain that hardiness can be learned as it brings better results as far as resilience is concerned. A hardiness attitude brings more resources at someone's disposal to cope with life changes (Puri, 2016). Gerber, et al., (2013) postulate that hardiness emerged as a pattern of attitudes and strategies that together make possible turning stressful circumstances from potential disasters into growth opportunities. Hardiness has also been considered as the pathway to resilience under stress in divorced women (Hetherington, 2014).

Personality characteristics continue to play a significant role in controlling variables with a negative effect such neuroticism and one such as hardiness is regarded as one of the best predictors of well-being (Furtado, et al., 2013; Shifren, et al, 2015). Women who possess higher amounts of hardiness are able to resist the damaging effects of stress such as divorce (Shifren, et al, 2015). A hardy personality is likely to perceive a divorce as a challenge rather than a threat, often leading to effective coping and adjustment (Shifren, et al., 2015). Rather than languishing and being hopeless, resilient women tend to display high self-esteem and a positive approach towards life (Hirani, Lasiuk & Hegadoren, 2016).

2.9.4 Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions, based on the idea that emotions and reasoning interact resulting in thought enhancement (Argyriou, Bakoyannis & Tantaros, 2016). Research has also indicated a link between emotional intelligence and positive health outcomes such as lower levels of

stress when faced with adversities (Zeidner, Mathews & Roberts, 2016). According to Ranasinghe, Wathurapatha, Mathangasinghe and Ponnamperuma (2017), emotional intelligence also plays a vital role in coping as it involves skills such as motivation and determination. Emotionally intelligent divorced women are reported to be competent at understanding themselves and others, in relations with others, as well as at adapting and coping in their environments (Tsirigotis & Łuczak, 2016). Emotional intelligence is associated with direct functioning, in other words, emotional intelligence is a process- rather than result-oriented (Tsirigotis, 2016). Emotional intelligence tends to have a favourable influence on the life, psychological and social functioning of divorced women (Slanbekova, et al., 2017).

2.9.5 Big five personality factor

Where the Big Five personality scale is involved an individual who scores high on neuroticism is often associated with vulnerability to both mental and physical disorders and they may be prone to complaining about health illnesses and often surviving a divorce process may be strenuous for them (Zeidner, et al., 2016); Douglas & Polleti, 2016). Studies also indicate that factors such as extraversion and openness to experience are positively related to posttraumatic growth and adjustment following a divorce (Shigemoto, et al., 2016). Nonetheless, individuals with a high score on perseverance tend to show good signs of psychological well-being during the divorce process, as there is a good relationship between psychological wellbeing and perseverance (Lamela, et al., (2016).

An individual considered high in extraversion is often happy and they are obvious by their talkative, high energy behaviour and acquire problem-solving skills, whilst one who is lower in extraversion may be considered an introvert, a person who

prefers solitary activities (Shams, Kajbaf & Iranpanah, 2014). Thus it would appear that extroverts may heal rapidly with the divorce process due to them being able to talk about the situation, as talking about a problem is perceived as an assisting coping and adjusting strategy. In the view of Scholte-Stalenhoef, et al. (2016) high neuroticism and low extraversion are suggested to be risk factors for the onset and course of psychotic (psychological) illnesses more especially when such individuals are faced with adverse situations and they are not able to cope with them.

2.9.6 Internal locus of control versus external locus of control

Locus of control represents a person's generalized attitude, belief, or expectancy regarding the nature of the causal relationship between one's behaviour and its consequences (Lefcourt, 2014) and is it regarded as one of the protective factors concerning divorce. Women with an internal locus of control tend to live a healthier lifestyle through healthier diets and exercise, the evidence is emerging that people who have an internal locus of control tend to continue with work following a health shock such as divorce (Buddelmeyer & Powdthavee, 2016). Research has shown that individuals with an internal locus of control tend to react to a problem in a more positive manner, for instance in adverse situations they may actively look for other solutions which might be of aid to them rather than relying only on emotional supports (Kahler, 2017). Divorced women who have an internal locus of control tend to use less restrictive coping and report low levels of negative affect, depression, anxiety, and psychological distress (Shigemoto, et al., 2016).

2.9.7 Self-esteem, self-awareness (emotional intelligence) and emotion-focused coping

Opayemi (2011) defines self-esteem as a concept of personality and the experience of being capable to cope with the basic challenges of life and for it to grow further, self-worth is a necessity. Self-esteem and self-efficacy are very much interrelated as they both focus on one's belief about themselves. Drawing from Albert Bandura's (1977) Self-Efficacy Theory, Self-efficacy is defined as a belief in one's ability to organize and implement actions required to manage particular situations (Bandura, 1977). In other words, divorced women are most likely to perform better when they believe they have the requisite skills to succeed. At the same, time self-efficacy influences intentions and performance and is itself influenced by individual traits and experiences (Bandura, 1977; Barling and Beattie, 1983). Scholars reveal that divorce is not only related feelings of depression but also to lower levels of self-esteem and competence (Symoens, et al., 2014). Israel-Cohen, et al., 2016) posit that self-efficacy is likely to instil positive thoughts regarding the belief in one's ability to persevere and has been theoretically tied to increase resilience in the face of trauma, including divorce.

As noted above, self-esteem is very much regarded as a coping style, high self-esteem is related to emotion-focused coping, therefore such are very much likely to manage and cope with adverse situations (Luo, Wang, Zhang, Chen & Quan, 2016). Personality traits such as self-awareness have the potential to create hope within one when it comes to coping and reassuring a feeling that future desired outcomes will occur, whilst on the other hand hopelessness is associated with higher levels of death-related thoughts such as suicide (Wisman & Heflick, 2016). According to Boon (2009), self-awareness is at the core of emotional intelligence,

and it refers to how one manages their emotions, more especially in a time of divorce.

2.10 Physical activities

Attending to one's own physical well-being before, during, and after facing stress is a sign of resilience. Physical exercise improves physical hardiness, which results in the chances of survival from certain traumatic situations. Physical exercise contributes to positive effects on mood and self-esteem leading to mental toughness and the ability to endure and survive adversities (Iacoviello & Charney, 2014). When it comes to adjusting to divorce, the following are regarded as protective factors when it comes to positive health outcomes, these include being involved in new activities, physical exercises, spending time with family and friends, acquiring new skills, and getting a new job or relocating (Baloyi, 2011). Lewis and Bonner (2016), also refer to the following as protective factors when it comes to keeping the divorce stress at bay these include aromatherapy, art therapy (such as painting or drawing), social support, exercise, humour, listening to music, a massage and the writing down of feelings.

2.11 Gender and age differences in post-divorce adjustment

By age, Baloyi (2011) found that midlife adults possess more psychological resilience and have the capacity to recover more quickly from divorce than younger adults do. In contrast, Lamela, et al., 2014) maintain that younger adults adapt quickly and easily to divorce unlike midlife adults who are set to experience higher levels of psychological distress including depression, anxiety symptomatology, physiological stress, and greater risk of suicide and physical health problems

Some researchers have found support for the idea that women suffer more from divorce than men (Symoens, et al., 2014). This could be a result of women tend to devote significantly more time and energy and condition themselves to family member's needs and marital problems than men even after divorce (Price, et al., 2010)

2.12 Employment status of women after divorce

Of 25 260 divorces registered in South African in 2015, 51. 6% of the divorcees were from the black population and only 20.1% constituted employed women (Statistics S.A, 2015). Kreager, et al., (2013) conclude that educated women are more likely than uneducated women to leave violent marriages, due to them being able to take care of themselves financially. Literature shows that highly educated women who are married to less educated men often experience the smallest effect of divorce on their equivalent household income (Fagan & Churchill, 2012). Intriguingly, studies reveal that for many black women, the divorce rate increases for those who have a post-graduate education (Chiappori, Salanie & Weiss, 2015). Furthermore, women who were in high paid jobs and those who had just retired form good paying jobs, divorce is considered therapeutic, as these women are often comfortable with their status (Makara, 2009).

In a Californian study, Wallerstein, Lewis and Parker-Rosenthal (2013) inquired on how the divorced mother's financial and emotional resources and changing roles impact her parenting over the post-divorce years, the consequences for her own life, as well as her attachment to and relationship with her children. The consequences found reported that many divorced mothers live in reduced economic circumstances and that there was consequent suffering in many female-headed

households due to most women being unemployed and dependant on their ex-husbands. This can be drawn back to Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory (1979), whereby he maintains that an individual's development is affected by everything in their surrounding environment and that they need all the other systems like family, job, church etc. to cope. On the other hand, McNamee, et al., (2014) point out that most custodial mother's tend to remarry because their new husbands can assist with the economic support and supervision of children.

However, some studies have revealed that women are more likely to be economically dependent on their spouses when they have accumulated less work experience (Goldin, 2015). Economic independence also depends on other aspects of women's earnings potential, such as education and occupation, as well as factors such as child support policies or government support to low-income families (Killewald, 2016). Women who experience the largest income losses are the "low education" mothers who were married to "high education" man.

2.13 Parenting styles of resilient divorced women

Drawing from Diana Baumrind's (1971) types of parenting styles, positive parenting entails beliefs about parental efficacy, such as the degree to which one believes that parents can shape the development of children, and it is regarded as one of the most central beliefs about parenting (Schofield, et al., 2016). Authoritative parenting makes an important contribution to childhood adversities and mental health as authoritative parents tend to support and be warm towards their children even after divorce (Nielson, 2016). Such women have been found to provide an adequate balance between affection and discipline (Sangawi, Adams & Reissland, (2015).

Research on paternal parenting after divorce indicated that children benefit from authoritative parenting and that most fathers are less likely to be authoritative after a divorce (Bastaits, et al., 2014). Among many other factors, the educational level of the mother was measured as an indicator which plays a significant role when it comes to parenting after a divorce, and also if the mother was considered to be living with a new partner, if so then mothers were more likely to be authoritative (Bastaits, et.al, 2015).

Usually divorced parents are said to employ uninvolved parenting styles in their children's lives (Bastaits, et.al, 2015), however those parents who are more resilient show authoritative parenting styles which are considered the most advantageous parenting style. Smetana (2017) describes authoritative parenting, as parents who are highly responsive to their children's needs but also set reasonable limits and demand mature behaviour from them.

2.14 Psychological well-being of resilient women following the divorce.

Ryf and Singer (2013) define psychological wellbeing as the happiness associated with well-being, feeling good, contentment and life satisfaction

2.14.1 Self- acceptance

Afshar, Roohafza, Keshteli, Mazaheri, Feizi & Adibi (2015) posit that positive coping begins with acceptance. The most repeated criterion of well-being evident perspectives is the individual's sense of self-acceptance. This is recommended as a central feature of mental health as well as a characteristic of self-actualization, optimal functioning, and maturity (Sagone & Caroli, 2014; Ryff, 2014). Embracing optimism entails self-acceptance, personal responsibility and working on changing one's thought patterns and actions, therefore resulting in living a much more positive

life following divorce (Paulson, 2010). Drawing from the work of Carl Rogers (1974), divorced women with self-acceptance are able to live for the moment (including their feelings and reactions), more specifically, they are not bound by the structure of the divorce experience, they focus on the present experiences and are often functioning well due to acceptance. As a result, feelings such as enjoyment, playfulness, contentment, job satisfaction, love, and affection contribute to the increase of mental abilities among divorced women (Mazzucchelli, 2010).

2.14.2 Environmental Mastery

Garcia, Al Nima and Kjell (2014) defined the individual's ability to choose or create environments suitable for his/her psychic conditions as a key characteristic of mental health. Meanwhile, Montpetit & Tiberio (2016) postulate that environmental mastery is the ability to love, work and play, to have to capacity to adjust and to have interpersonal relations even in the adversity of getting a divorce. In addition, Garcia and Siddiqui (2009) established that environmental mastery was higher among divorced self-fulfilling individuals as compared to all other profiles. Although this area of well-being appears to have parallels with other psychological constructs, such as the sense of control and self-efficacy, the emphasis on finding or creating a surrounding context that suits one's personal needs and capacities is unique to environmental mastery (Ryf & Singer, 2013).

When divorced women fail to master their environment they are more likely to binge drink and be involved in risky sexual behavior (Gustavsson & Stångberg, 2017). Yip, Yousuf, Chan, Yung and Wu (2015) argued that divorced women who fail at mastering their environment are at a higher risk of committing suicide, especially when they are younger than 40 years.

2.14.3 Sense of autonomy

Autonomy is regarded as a fundamental need for all human beings, it is defined as the sense of the power of using ones will, the desire to self-organize experience and behaviour, and to have consistency with one's integrated sense of self (Inguglia, Ingoglia, Liga, Lo Coco & Lo Cricchio, 2015). Scholars have shown that sense of autonomy after a divorce process has positive effects on cognitive performance, emotional and behavioural balance (McCraty & Nila, 2016). In line with the above statement, Ehteshamzadeh, Dashtbozorgi, Homaii, Zarei and Hamid (2016) maintain that efficacy of autonomy when it comes to managing one's behaviour reduces mental pressure and anxiety, and improves everyday life involvements leading to a higher level of satisfaction and being content with being divorced. Also in line with this view, Neff, (2016) also points out that stress management often results in increasing self-efficacy and the quality of life among divorced women. However, women do not use their free will to cope and accept the divorce process tend to experience acute-trauma, showing extreme anxiety, sleep problems, stress and unwanted thoughts (Baloyi, 2011).

2.14.4 Purpose in life

Firm social networks, a job, a new partner, a high educational degree, having a child and sufficient income can protect divorcees from getting too distressed by allowing support and lowering financial worries (Symoens, et al., 2014). These are regarded as having a purpose in life According to Kurz (2013) other mothers may simply not date after divorce because the presence of their alone is enough to provide the necessary comfort and support that might be essential to them. Hill and Turiano, (2014) maintain that divorced women who score high on purpose often

have goals in life and a sense of directedness, they may feel that there is meaning to present and past life, therefore, leading to positive life adjustment. In a recent study on internet-based self-intervention after marital bereavement and divorce in Switzerland, Brodbeck, et al., (2017), divorced women indicated that internet-based interventions have advantages over face-to-face therapy and that internet-based interventions played the significant role when it comes to having a purpose in life.

2.14.5 Personal growth

Personal growth is concerned with the self-realisation and developing ones potential as it also entails responsibility towards self and others, spiritual development, education level and social status (Ryff & Singer, 2013). In a Portuguese study on \personal growth after divorce for women, Lamela, et al., (2014) established that there is a great variety of psychological and personal growth for adult women after divorce. Conversely, Amato (2010) maintains that the severity and duration of the adaptation process depend on a variety of protective factors including personal growth. Within the divorce-stress-adjustment perspective are two contrary models. The first includes the crisis model which assumes that the negative consequences of divorce represent a temporary phenomenon which promotes personal growth to which most individuals adapt over time (Clark & Georgellis, 2013). The other one, the chronic strain model, contrastingly concludes that being divorced entails chronic stress (Perrig-Chiello, Hutchison & Morselli, 2015). According to Allen and Hawkins (2017), there are new conceptual perspectives that have been explored such as framing divorce as a multiple-family transition rather than a single event or crisis but as an opportunity for personal growth.

2.14.6 Positive relations

Although divorce compasses the final conclusion of a marriage, life does continue after divorce and it is indeed a necessity for women to be able to adjust and cope to avoid negative health outcomes (Smart, 2013). In countries like Malawi, a study reported that individuals who are divorced are more likely to be HIV-positive than individuals who never married as divorcees are more likely to have a higher number of sexual partners throughout life as a way of coping (Fedor, et al,. 2015). Secondly, in an Iranian study Navidian and Bahari, (2014) posit that substance use is a coping response to stress for many divorced women as they tend to use alcohol and drugs to cope with discrimination. Studies also indicate that using alcohol and drugs to cope with discrimination leads to substance abuse as individuals learn to alleviate negative feelings and improve positive feelings from using alcohol and drugs (Back, Foa, Killeen, Teesson & Mills, 2014).

The inability of coping is also associated with a number of negative effects such as the development of disease and illnesses that claim lives (Karp, 2016). In the views of Seaward, (2013) and Ye, (2014) stress among divorced women is linked to all the leading causes of death as it weakens the body's physiological systems thereby advancing the disease process, including suicide. Although divorce is regarded as one of the most stressful life events, it has more weighty consequences on those individuals who are working, rather coping initiates positive outcomes (Amato & Anthony, 2014). In an effort to achieve low conflict and positive relations after divorce in countries like America, Britain and England, the state requires that at least one parent (in situations where the parties have shared minor children) attend a divorce education course prior to obtaining a divorce (Ferraro, Malespin, Oehme, Bruker & Opel, 2016). Murray, et al., (2013) posit that divorced women who are not

able to cope with the divorce process are bound to experience difficulties at work, often leading to a negative impact on their level of performance. Men are believed to be more likely to have excellent health, whereas women were more likely to have fair or poor health due to most black women being overweight and men being strong physically (Holmes & Rinaman, 2015; Mitchell, 2017), therefore women not coping with divorce is bound to have severe implications on their health.

2.15 Conclusion

In this chapter substantial literature was gathered and reviewed, outlining the factors which play a salient role when it comes to reinforcing resilience among divorced women. This chapter also reviewed theoretical framework when it came to such, the theoretical framework consisted of the Stress and Coping theory and Resilience theory by Ungar. In the next chapter (chapter 3) research methodology will be reviewed in a deeper context.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the focus was on the factors which reinforce resilience in divorced women and the significance of psychological well-being, also covered was the theoretical framework. In this chapter, an overview of the methodology used in this study is provided. The discussions in this chapter are also assembled around the research design, data collection and data analysis, trustworthiness and population sampling. The chapter will also provide the ethical considerations of the study.

3.2 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aimed at exploring resilience among divorced black women and answering the following research questions:

1. What are the factors that enhance resilience following a divorce process among black African women?
2. What are the strategies put in place by the government in assisting divorced women?

3.3 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design refers to the overall strategy that one chooses to integrate the different components of the study in a reasonable and logical way, thereby, ensuring effective addressing of the research problem; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

3.3.1 Qualitative research design

For this study a qualitative research design was employed, below are the three key elements that define a qualitative research study and the applied forms which were utilized during the investigation of the research problem. Halloway and Galvin (2016) postulate that the design which is qualitative in nature should consist of the following characteristics:

Naturalistic - refers to studying real-world situations as they unfold naturally; non-manipulative and non-controlling; the researcher is open to whatever emerges [i.e., there is a lack of predetermined constraints on findings]. In this study the researcher applied this characteristic by studying real world events such as the resilience of divorced women, all the findings which came up in the study unfolded naturally and were non-manipulated or non-controlled.

Emergent -- acceptance of adapting inquiry as understanding deepens and/or situations change; the researcher avoids rigid designs that eliminate responding to opportunities to pursue new paths of discovery as they emerge. The researcher avoided any rigid designs that put the participants in a position which eliminated responding to opportunities.

Purposeful -- cases for study [e.g., people, organizations, communities, cultures, events, critical incidences] are selected because they are "information rich" and illuminative. That is, they offer useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest; sampling is aimed at insight about the phenomenon, not empirical generalization derived from a sample and applied to a population. This was applied by using a sample of African divorced women, as they were regarded as 'information rich' when it comes to the topic at hand.

A qualitative approach was used for its exploratory purpose of capturing thoughts, feelings, emotions, behaviours, and experiences in this study (Babbie, 2010). With this type of research design, one was able to gain understanding, reasoning, and opinions to specific research questions. Owing to the nature of the study on resilience among divorced women and exploration as to whether there are any strategies implied by the government when it comes to assisting divorced women with coping, a qualitative research design was necessary to explore such experiences and perspectives. In the view of Dahlberg and McCraig (2010), in a qualitative research design, the researcher tends to have a small scale sample size, enabling concentration on producing in-depth data that focuses on the real experience of individuals. With regards to the study there were 12 candidates who met the criteria were utilised to further investigate resilience among divorced women in Cradock. In line with this view, Lyons and Coyle (2016) postulate qualitative research sets to achieve an understanding of the issues involved within a subject rather than being able to quantify the extent to which findings are applicable. Throughout the interviews detailed information gave rise when it came to understanding the issues revolving divorce.

3.3.2 Sampling techniques

Robinson (2014) defines a sample as a population which refers to the totality of persons from which cases may legitimately be sampled in an interview. In this study, the researcher made use of a non-probability sampling technique which assists researchers to personally select a unit that represents the population under study (Etikan, Alkassim & Abubakar, 2016). Rea and Parker (2014) defined a sample as a subset of the population. Specifically, convenience/purposive sampling was used in the study for participants' selection. According to Bernard, Wutich and Ryan (2016)

convenience/purposive sampling technique is a type of non-probability sampling that is often used when one needs to study a certain cultural area with knowledgeable experts within. The researcher implemented this sampling method because it was quite adequate for the research purpose since the study was not generalising the findings to the target population. The advantage of using convenience/purposive sampling is because it is most commonly used, less expensive and there is no need for a list of all the population elements (Acharya & Prakash, Saxena & Niqam, 2013).

For this study, the sample which is a subset of the population, selected so as to be representative of the larger population Creswell and Poth (2017), consisted of 12 participants. The inclusion criteria for the study consisted of divorced black African women from Cradock a small town in the Eastern Cape, the age range of the participants was 25-45 years old. The inclusion criteria also consisted of women who had children included and those who were both employed and unemployed.

3.3.3 Site of data collection

The purpose of selecting a site for research in research is regarded as being crucial; such assists the researcher so that they can consider who can provide the information that they need in order to help determine the appropriate method to use (Lewis, 2015). The study consisted of data which had been collected in Cradock, located in the Eastern Cape South Africa. Specifically, the study was conducted at a local church that consisted of a group of divorced women who often held workshops on educating the youth about marriage and divorce. The divorced women at this church were interviewed for the purpose of the study.

3.3.4 Data collection method

The role of the researcher when the study was conducted was considered to be an instrument of data collection this means that data is mediated through them as human instrument rather than through inventories, questionnaires or machines (Creswell, 2007). Therefore the researcher needed to describe relevant aspects of self, including any biases, assumptions, and expectations and experiences that qualified their ability to conduct the research (Khoza, 2016). Semi-structured interviews were used in order to gain information from the participants involved in the study. Semi-structured interviews were used as they combine the flexibility of the unstructured, open-ended interview with the directionality and agenda of survey instruments which produces focused, qualitative textual data (Gray & Malius, 2016). Doody and Noonan (2013) posit that semi-structured interviews are used to make use of predetermined questions, whereby the researcher is free to seek clarity/clarification. An interview guide was also developed to collect similar types of data from all participants and create a sense of order (Hancock & Algozzine, 2016). It also had an added advantage of enabling the participants to provide views and opinions on resilience after a divorce and with interviews the researcher has an advantage of probing. When it comes to the data collection procedure, the researcher's interview guide was approved by the Ethical research committee at the University of Fort Hare to ensure relevance of the study and the protection of the

participants from harm. However, semi-structured interviews also have disadvantages which include them being time consuming and resource intensive and the ability to ensure confidentiality (Creswell, 2007). Here the researcher adhered to the time limit at all costs, all the interviews took time within the stated framework, as it first was highlighted to the participants how long the interviews would take therefore the participants adhered to the time limit due to other commitments that they also had. Confidentiality was maintained at all costs as the interviews were conducted separately either than focused groups.

Conducting the semi-structured interviews

Subsequent to this, a letter which permitted the researcher to proceed with conducting the study was granted by the church within which the divorced participants were found (See Appendix B). Data was therefore collected within a period of 2 weeks, the researcher conducted 2 interviews a day, each of the interviews took 30-45 minutes each and the researcher made an appointment to meet the participants when they had the chance to. All the interviews took place in the afternoons. With regards to conducting the semi-structured interviews, all the participants during their interviews were asked questions which were based on the interview schedule, it was highlighted to the participants that it would be highly appreciated that they tried to answer all the questions, however it was also highlighted that once they felt uncomfortable they should alert the researcher.

The interviews took place at the church as the environment was conducive for the interviews due to its quietness and it secluded the presence of others in the

afternoons. Before the interviews commenced ethical considerations were put into practice and the respondents were assured of confidentiality, their anonymity, and informed consent. Participants were made aware of the fact that they were free to pull out of the study if they felt uncomfortable or if they did not feel answering comfortable answering a question, and they also signed a consent form to partaking in the study (See Appendix D). A tape-recorder was also part of data collection to record the interviews in consent of the participants. Observation and note-taking were also considered as a data collection method and special attention was paid on non-verbal cues made by the participants during the time of the interview.

3.3.5 Data analysis

Data Analysis is the process of systematically applying statistical and/or logical techniques to describe and illustrate, condense and recap, and evaluate data (Lewis, 2015). The approach that was used for the study is the inductive approach to research, as it is concerned with the generation of new theory emerging the data. Derived from the Grounded Theory, open coding was used as a data collection method in this study. This includes labelling concepts, defining and developing categories based on their properties and dimensions (Urquhart, Lehmann & Myers, 2010). In this instance Grounded coding refers to allowing notable themes and patterns emerge from the document themselves, here coding methods were applied across various texts, the researcher was able to apply axial coding, which is the process of selecting core thematic categories present in several documents to discover common patterns and relations. Then after, assembling codes they were organized into broader themes and categories. The process generally involved identifying themes from the existing codes, reducing the themes to a manageable number, creating hierarchies within the themes and then linking themes together

through theoretical modelling (Creswell, 2007). Now, Grounded Theory is said to refer to a method of inductively generating theory from data, such studies often focus on unstructured text (e.g. interview transcripts, documents, field notes); however, they may also include structured text, diagrams and images, and even quantitative data (Stol, et al., 2016). The process of coding which was followed to analyse data in the study is called line-by-line coding that which is important to build concepts and categories. To code, the data words were sorted into categories and then organized into themes. This was done by writing notes and headings in the text when transcribing the interview scripts, thereafter themes emerged on resilience among divorced black African women. One of the many advantages that coding consists of include, organising the data so that underlying messages portrayed by the data may become clearer to the researcher and it also contributes to making data more easily to work with (Theron, 2015). Wickham (2016) describes coding as a crucial link between data collection and explaining the meaning of the data. According to Ganapathy (2016), a code refers to a descriptive construct designed by the researcher to capture the primary content or essence of the data.

The context in which the research is done, the nature of the research and the personality and interest of the researcher will influence which codes the researcher attributes to the data (Creswell, 2014). Coding is not only labelling, but also linking, that is, linking data to an idea. By incorporating more cycles into the coding process, richer meanings, categories, themes, and concepts can be generated from the data (Welman, Kruger, & Mitchell, 2015). The researcher took 2 hours for listening to the audio tapes. They were then transcribed for the identification of the themes. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym and this was done by giving the participants alphabetical terms since the interviews were arranged in alphabetical order.

3.4 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

A trustworthiness criterion was first developed by Lincoln and Guba (1981); this criterion was created in order to test if any study or line of research was methodologically sound in qualitative research. Guba and Lincoln's (1981) criterion consisted of four factors; credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

3.4.1 Credibility

Credibility is preserved by a researcher describing their experiences and verifying the research findings with the participants (Smith & Noble, 2015). For instance, a qualitative study is considered credible if the descriptions of human experience are immediately recognised by individuals that share the same experience (Cope, 2014). To ensure that credibility was gained within the study it was important to make sure that the data that was reported matched the experiences of the participants. This was done by a process called member checking (informant feedback), transcriptions were sent to participants to be checked and verified. The researcher performed this by paying special attention to the research questions, data collection, and data analysis method so that replica researchers can find similar results

3.4.2 Dependability

Dependability, similar to reliability refers to the consistency of findings across time and researchers. Thus, similar findings would be expected among researchers within and across studies (Creswell, 2014). The dependability of the study was ensured by maintaining consistency throughout the data collection process, this was done by using a semi-structured interview guide for each interview that was conducted. In this regard, the researcher has reported on the responses given by the respondents as

to answer the research question so that miniature researchers present the identical results. This can be achieved when another researcher concurs with the decision trails at each stage of the research process. Through the researcher's process and descriptions, a study would be deemed dependable if the study findings were replicated with similar participants in similar conditions (Connelly, 2016).

3.4.3 Transferability

Transferability refers to the potential for hypothesising, it relies on the reasoning that findings can be generalised or transferred to other settings or groups (Elo, et al., 2014). In this study, transferability was confirmed by the data collection method being rigorously drawn out and implemented so as to find the same information which can be transferred to other groups. The researcher ensured that sufficient information or data found from participants enabled the reader or other researchers to make such a transfer.

3.4.4 Conformability

Cope (2014) refers to confirmability as the researcher's ability to demonstrate that the data represents the participant's responses and not the researcher's biases or viewpoints. In this study confirmability was created by having the findings resulting from the raw data, this was done by links between the raw data such as quotes being included in the discussion of findings section of the research. The researcher established this by being able to track the qualitative data back to its original source in the interviews. The researcher demonstrated confirmability by describing how conclusions and interpretations were established, and exemplifying that the findings were derived directly from the data by coming up with themes. This was made use in

the data analysis part whereby it was exhibited by providing rich quotes from the participants that each depicted an emerging theme.

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical measures are concerned with the protection of the rights and interests of research participants, including their right to privacy, informed consent, confidentiality and the right to withdraw from the study at any given time. Prior commencing this study ethical approval was required. An ethical approval form was completed and considered by the University of Fort Hare Ethical Clearance Committee who ultimately granted ethical approval for the study (Please refer to Appendix C)

3.5.1 Informed consent

Hardicre (2014) maintains that the process of informed consent is at the heart of ethical research practice, and it is essential for protecting the rights and safety of participants in research and is the major consideration when ethical clearance is granted prior studies taking place. Before the interview process commenced, participants were required to complete an informed consent form which highlighted that their identity would remain anonymous throughout the study ensuring all information they presented would remain confidential. All participants asked to take part in the study were informed that at all times they had the right to withdraw from the study. All data that was gathered was stored in a secure location which was only accessible via password and all unnecessary data was destroyed. None of the participants withdrew from the study.

3.5.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality in research is defined as treating the information, samples or data that is disclosed by participants with utter privacy and to protect the dignity and rights of the participants thus minimising the risk of harm (Gibson, Benson & Brand, 2012). Confidentiality was reassured to the participants during the interview process and it was made clear that all the information which they presented would remain confidential.

3.5.3 Anonymity

Anonymity is often viewed as a component part of confidentiality, which is regarded as protecting confidential information (Creswell, 2014). Anonymity was maintained at all costs in the study by using pseudonyms in order to protect the participant's identity.

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the research methods, processes, and procedures employed which were involved in the collection of data and adhering to the application of ethics. The following chapter will focus on the data analysis and interpretation.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the analysis of data and its interpretation that was acquired from interviews which were conducted from divorced women in Cradock. After the data was collected, open coding was used to analyse the data as themes regarding divorce emerged. Below discussed are the results of the descriptive data.

Table 4.1.1 Characteristics of divorced women

Biographical information of divorced women	Frequency
Age (years)	
20's	2
30's	6
40's	4
Level of education	
Matric (Grade 12)	6
Bachelor's degree	5
Diploma	1
Duration of divorce	
1-5	7

6-10	5
Divorced women with children	
0 Children	2
1 Child	4
2 Children	5
3 Children	1

4.2 Biographical information of the participants

Within this thesis, a total of 12 divorced women from a local church in Cradock were interviewed or participated in this study. The sample which participated was purposively selected. All the participants (n=12) were divorced females. Of the (n=12) women, only (n=9) indicated to be the initiators of divorce. Women who usually initiate the divorce tend to be more emotionally stable, this results in an improvement on the mental health after divorce (Steiner, Durand, Groves & Rozzelli, 2015). Among the participants only (n=1) participant was unemployed and the rest (n=11) were employed. Only (n=6) which constitute of fifty percent of the participants indicated that they had matric certificate qualifications, whilst (n=5) indicated that they had bachelor's degrees and only (n=1) participant indicated they had a diploma. The level of education and employment status has served to be an important factor concerning resilience of divorced women. Furthermore, of the (n=12) participants only (n=1) of them illustrated that they were not employed, and the rest (n=11) were employed and only (n=9) were middle-class government working officials whilst the remaining (n=2) were working for private companies.

Table 4.2.1 below clearly displays that (n=7) of the divorced women have
..been divorced for a duration of 1-5 years and it is quite interesting to note that (n=6)
almost half of the participants were in their thirties. Comparatively, only (n=2) who
were divorced were in their 20's. It is also quite interesting to know that studies have
indicated that the first 5 years of marriage is a high-risk period for divorces (Arkes &
Shen, 2014). Furthermore, the sample consisted of women of different ages as (n=2)
of the participants indicated they were around their 20's, with ages 28 and 29. About
half of the respondents (fifty percent) (n=6) were in their thirties. The remaining (n=4)
participants indicated they were in their forties. Many studies have indicated that the
age is a salient issue concerning divorce, as age can play a determining factor for
divorce purposes.

4.3 THEMES

The researcher first represented the biographical details of the participants, which
comprised of the age, education level, number of children and number of years they
have been divorced for. Thereafter, the analysis that resulted in the development of
key themes, namely self-condemnation, self-blame and denial, loneliness
depression, anger and embarrassment, stigma, personality change, sexual
dissatisfaction, ambivalence, forgiveness, self-contented and self-compassion,
personal growth, religious coping, social support and positive relations and resilience
enhancement factors.

4.3.1 Self-condemnation, self-blame and denial

Many people, perceive divorce as the failure of a relationship. Intense emotions are
said to take over during the time of divorce more especially denial, self-blame, and
self- condemnation. This could be that these feelings resulted from the feeling of

failure as they may have felt as if they could not play a simple role of being a wife or mother, and may blame themselves for the divorce. Studies have showed the negative effects that abuse of alcohol has on children. Such as, most school-aged children in South Africa tend to be more aggressive, have fewer friends and experience more peer conflict due to parental substance abuse following divorce (Neger & Prinz, 2015). Below mentioned are some of the respondent's responses:

"I resorted to drinking and everything was just too much for me. I felt like a failure, I was so disappointed in myself." [Participant F, 45 years old].

"I started to believe that no one would ever love me since I was a divorcee, I started to date different married men because I believed that all the single men my age were already taken. It was my way of "coping". [Participant A, 35 years old]

"I started to act like a teenager now, I would go clubbing and come back in the early hours of the following day, I had just given up on life" [Participant E, 28 years old].

Denial is one of the most common reactions in the midst of a divorce. Most of the time if not dealt with, denial prolongs the healing process. The ability to cope plays a vital role when it comes to managing stress in order to maintain a state of positive mental health outcome. Here within are some of the respondents on denial:

"I kept on telling myself that my husband uthakathiwe [bewitched] and that if I continued to pray about it and not question him, he would come and we would fix our marriage." [Participant L, 33 years old],

"I always thought perhaps uzotshintsha [would change] and stop cheating on me, just that I needed to be patient with him, indoda ayibuzwa [you don't ask a man about his whereabouts]". [Participant D, 40 years old]

"During the time of divorce to me, it was still as if ndiyaphupha [dreaming] and I would soon wake up from it and my husband and I would be okay again, up until one day I hit rock bottom" [Participant C, 35 years old].

"After finding out about my ex-husband's affairs, he issued divorce papers but I refused to sign them, for a year I kept on hoping he would change and come back to me, but he never did…" [Participant H, 29 years old]

Studies have illustrated that a lot of divorcing women undergo the process of painful feelings such as sadness or self-blame (Cunningham and Waldock, 2016). Self-blame proved to be a recurrent feeling for many of the respondents, they kept on blaming themselves for everything that happened in their marriages, even though sometimes it really isn't their fault, but with resilience, they are able to comprehend this.

"I kept asking myself why I could not see it coming, and why did I not do something about it at that time, I continued to ask myself if I wasn't good enough for him and these kind of questions break you." [Participant F, 45 years old]

"I felt as if I was to blame for everything, I felt powerless, guilty, I felt as if I had failed him by being unable to play the role of a wife, I started hating myself, and even tried committing suicide, to me there was no reason to live for without my husband" [Participant A, 35 years old]

"During the divorce process, I was blaming myself for everything because my ex-husband started with the affairs after his mom had passed on, I believed that instead of supporting him and playing the role of a mother, I demanded my own time and attention" [Participant B, 35 years old]

4.3.2 Loneliness and depression

A state of helplessness, emotional emptiness and low self-esteem were depicted during the interview, which nearly led the divorced women to develop bipolar disorder. Drawing from the DSM V-TR (American Psychological Association, 2013), patients with bipolar I disorder often suffer from severe major depressive episodes and the symptoms include depressed mood most of the day (e.g. feels sad or empty) feelings of worthlessness or excessive or inappropriate guilt (which may be

delusional) nearly every day (not merely self-reproach or guilt about being sick) The symptoms cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning, recurrent thoughts of death (not just fear of dying), recurrent suicidal ideation without a specific plan, or a suicide attempt or a specific plan for committing suicide, markedly diminished interest or pleasure in all, or almost all, activities most of the day, nearly every day and significant weight loss when not dieting or weight gain

Steptoe, Shankar, Demakakos and Wardle (2012) maintain that both social isolation and loneliness are factors which are likely to increase mortality among older divorced women. A result of loneliness and social isolation could be the fact that women may be embarrassed to show themselves in public all over again, instead, they may prefer to be alone another contributing factor to such could the stigmatisation they are given. Many of the women interviewed mentioned being lonely and depressed during or after the divorce process. Indeed for the majority of divorcing women, divorce appears to decrease symptoms of depression and these are emotions which might be hazardous if not dealt with in time. When it comes to loneliness and depression, this is what the participants had to say:

"Following the divorce, I was always on anti-depressants, I was suicidal, I felt as if was the end of the world for me, I kept on asking myself who was going to fall in love with a divorcee and the worst part is that my husband even left me with HIV." , I couldn't be happier with my decision. [Participant E, 28 years old]

"I felt hopeless and defeated I didn't know what to do next I had always been dependant on my ex-husband with everything I felt as if my life was over, I even tried to commit suicide by overdosing on pills but luckily my mom found me on time" [Participant F, 45 years old]

"During the divorce process, I was diagnosed with depression and I was admitted to Hunters Craig (psychiatric hospital) for three full months and I had to undergo surgery for that too."[Participant L, 33 years old]

"During the divorce process I was diagnosed with depression, I felt as if my life had come to an end because I could not imagine my life without him and I had lost a lot of weight due to stress". [Participant D, 40 years old]

This is regarded as one of the most common reactions of any individual undergoing or those who have experienced divorce. However, with the necessary aid, these women were able to overcome this obstacle which has been proved to be life-threatening.

4.3.3 Anger and embarrassment

It is important to note that anger, is said to manifest in threats of all kinds and is often a secondary emotion following divorce. That is, it is a feeling that covers up more primary feelings of hurt, fear, humiliation, loss, abandonment, and powerlessness. Moreover, anger can also serve a functional use of protecting the self from the severe psychological trauma of separation from a husband (Tarba, 2015). Many of the divorced women indicated anger as one of the emotions they had to encounter to:

"During the time of divorce I was bitter and I was always angry at everyone, crying all the time even at work, I would go to the bathroom for hours just to sit there and cry I knew I would carry the divorce stigma forever" [Participant F, 45 years old]

"I was always frustrated and angry, and I hated any male I came in contact with" [Participant A, 35 years old]

4.3.4 Stigma

Stigma is one of the many challenges that often come with divorce. Stigma could be a huge contributor to negative focused coping as it may prolong the healing process

of many divorcing women. According to Konstam et al., (2016) divorced women are often stigmatised because they may somehow be viewed as failures and social outcasts. Stigma tends to contribute negatively when it comes to healing as it delays the process, as it always a constant reminder of what would or should have been and it is more likely to resuscitate the feeling of self-blame all over again. With stigma impacting negatively in their lives, the women had the following to say:

"My friends decided to side-line me after the divorce they decided to cut all ties with me since now I was the only divorcee, to them it seemed as if I would take their husbands". [Participant D, 40 years old]

"There are some members of my family, who discriminated me and who would often gossip about me and they would often make jokes about me being a divorcee when I am around" [Participant K, 36 years old]

"I was laughing stock to my colleagues and they often had this negative perception about divorcees it was so bad that I decided to apply for a transfer" [Participant C, 35 years old]

4.3.5 Personality change

Women who went through a divorce often indicated undergoing a personality change due to everything they have encountered during the process and sometimes they may even become introverts. An explanation for this could be that since some may have lost friends and other relationships they shared with their spouses, this could possibly mean a less chance to socialise. With other personality change may be contributed by other factors. For instance:

"My personality changed a lot, I started having this resentment towards men. I hated all kinds of men." [Participant F, 45 years old]

"My personality changed to a point whereby I never ever trust any man again, and I often isolated myself."[Participant G, 33 years old]

"After getting a divorce my personality changed a lot, I started being insecure, lost confidence in myself, and worst part of it all was that I stopped trusting my friends when it comes to any man who is a lover to me, since my ex-husband had left me for a friend of mine" [Participant A, 35 years old]

"With my new partner, I am always cautious, I am scared he may cheat on me again, I am always looking out for infidelity signs" [Participant I, 34 years old]

From this finding, it is clear that divorce had negatively impacted on their cognition. From the DSM IV-TR (American Psychological Association, 2013) they could be classified as paranoid. An individual with paranoia tend to exemplify the following symptoms; suspects, without sufficient basis, that others are exploiting, harming, or deceiving him or her, is preoccupied with unjustified doubts about the loyalty or trustworthiness of friends or associates, is reluctant to confide in others because of unwarranted fear that the information will be used maliciously against him or her, has recurrent suspicions, without justification, regarding fidelity of spouse or sexual partner, persistently bears grudges, i.e., is unforgiving of insults, injuries, or slights and reads hidden demeaning or threatening meanings into benign remarks or events.

Moreover, their personality also shifted to being schizoid because of being sceptical. Schizoid personality type individuals tend to show the following symptoms take pleasure in few if any activities, do not desire or enjoy close relationships, including family, appear aloof and detached, avoid social activities that involve significant contact with other people, almost always chooses solitary activities, little or no interest in sexual experiences with another person, lacks close relationships other than with immediate relatives, show emotional coldness and detachment or flattened affect.

4.3.6 Sexual dissatisfaction

Studies have indicated that sexual satisfaction in marriage is a fundamental aspect in evaluating a person in proportion to life quality generally and quality and continuation of marriage (Nader, Nemati, Esmaeili, Ghasemi & Ghanbari, 2016). Many of the divorced women indicated that the sexual life was no longer healthy whether after or prior the divorce process a possible result of this could be the trust which was lost due to their ex-husbands infidelity. They were quoted saying this:

"Our sexual life was dead, my ex-husband and I had stopped being intimate a long time ago, and I guess that was one of the many reasons that led to his affairs." *[Participant K, 36 years old]*

"There was no spark in our sex life anymore for a very long time after I had found out about his infidelity, it was dead" *[Participant E, 28 years old]*

"Intimacy between my husband and I just didn't exist anymore, I just did not understand what was going on, and I guess he was interested in younger girls now" *[Participant J, 44 years old]*

The respondents even mentioned that they possibly think that sexual dissatisfaction could be one of the many reasons why their husbands left them. The reason for this is that ever since their ex-husbands started with extra-marital affairs, the sexual drive was no longer there. Since trust was gone, things were no longer the same and they might even be scared of contracting sexually transmitted diseases. However, studies also indicate that women are more likely to feel a decrease in sexual urges when they hit menopause this could be a result of woman's oestrogen hormone levels changing. Menopause also causes dyspareunia, or painful intercourse which could one of the reasons of sexual dissatisfaction among the

women (Mirer, et al., 2017). Although the participants were never asked to mention the age of their spouses or employment status, research indicates that alcohol abuse, unhealthy diet, stress, age and body weight all contributed to low sexual libido.

4.3.7 Ambivalence

Having doubts about a divorce may be a common feeling. Many of the women indicated having doubts about their decision to divorce during the whole divorce process. A major cause for this could be fear, as they may be uncertain about how their lives are going to be now that they are no longer with their partners. This is what they had to say concerning this feeling:

"I started doubting my decision of divorcing him; I was scared of raising my kids alone. I didn't know what was awaiting me in the future ahead" [Participant K, 36 years old]

"I started having doubts about my decision, I was overwhelmed by feelings of anger, denial, frustration and hurt, since I was raised by a single parent I didn't want my son to go through the same ordeal again"[Participant H, 29 years old]

4.3.8 Forgiveness

It is concluded that unforgiving toward the ex-spouse is associated with less reported well-being of divorced women (Kluwer, 2016). It is also predicted that unforgiving incentives are associated with more reported conflict with the ex-partner and can have negative effects for divorced parents. Forgiving played a crucial role when it comes to the healing process, as it eliminates all the unnecessary stress and they start being at ease with their decision to divorce, the whole forgiving process starts with forgiving oneself. In order to support the power of this statement some of the respondents who were interviewed mentioned the following:

"One day I woke up and started to stop blaming myself for the divorce, I forgave myself and I forgave my ex-husband too, that's when I started to heal emotionally." [Participant I, 34 years old]

"The power of forgiveness has opened a lot of doors for me, I even got the opportunity of being engaged soon after I forgave and let go, forgiving also helps with ukulibala ngayo yonke into [forgetting about the pain]" [Participant J, 44 years old]

"I decided to forgive my ex-husband for the sake of my children because I wanted to maintain a healthy relationship between him and them, and that made me to forgive him wholeheartedly" [Participant B, 35 years old]

In congruent with this statement Visser, et al., (2017), maintains that forgiveness has intense consequences for the forgiving individual, such as beneficial effects for psychological and physical health, greater life satisfaction, and lower levels of psychological distress.

4.3.9 Self-contented and self-compassion

In the view of Wilder (2016) some women are more likely to feel positive emotions following the decision to divorce. Positive emotions towards divorce play a significant role which contributes to their healing. Acceptance is often regarded as the last stage of grieving, acceptance means being content with the fact that one has divorced and focusing on a bright new start as it has a number of positive impacts on an individual. Acceptance also means making peace with the fact that they were now divorced, when it comes to positive emotions respondents were quoted saying:

"Now I am very much happy and satisfied with the decision that I took, because my ex-husband never did change, I have accepted my past and moved on." [Participant B, 35 years old]

"I am still happy regarding my decision to leave him, finally I am free from every abuse that I had to encounter, I couldn't be happier with my decision". [Participant F, 45 years old]

"Going for therapy helps a lot when it comes to you accepting that it is over, ever since I started therapy ndaxola [am content] with everything that has happened, accepting is the first step to healing".[Participant A, 35 years old]

Women who show this positive attribute proved that they had accepted that their marriage never worked out and there is more to life than holding on to the past. This could imply that they are at peace as opposed to being neurotic. Drawing from the Big Five Factor Model by Robert McCrae and Paul Costa (1986) neurotic women are often helpless, self-pitying, emotionally unstable, and impulsive and often view every situation pessimistically. The participants had the following to say:

"But after some time started being kind towards myself, loved myself like never before and I made it a point that I spoilt myself in every way possible, by going shopping, trips etc. and I stopped with the self-blame". [Participant D, 40 years old]

"I stopped with the self-criticism and blame and I told myself that after all there comes a time in life whereby we can't always win or get what we want"[Participant A, 35 years old]

4.3.10 Personal growth

Amato and Anthony (2014) illustrated that many divorced mothers reported improvements in career opportunities, social lives, and happiness following divorce. Some women always reported divorce to be beneficial for them more especially if the marriage itself was strenuous on them. With divorce they learn to be dependent and do things that they couldn't even their self-confidence, self-esteem and learning to

take charge of their lives, etc. tend to improve as a result of such. This was illustrated by the following responses:

"Divorce has helped me grow spiritually and emotionally there's an improvement with every part of my life. I have learnt to be independent because all these years I have always been dependant on my husband with anything and everything" [Participant E, 28 years old]

"Divorce was an experience yokhula [growth] and change, I have learnt to do things on my own. After the divorce process, I registered for a degree in social work which I am doing part-time if I hadn't divorced I would never have found myself" [Participant I, 34 years old]

"As a nurse after, divorcing I dedicated myself to helping abused women and children be it sexually, physically and emotionally. At work I run a campaign which I assist all those who admitted in hospital due to such and it has helped me and them a lot"[Participant B, 35 years old]

As much as it may have negative consequences, divorce also improves social lives and offers freedom to many women out there. Either than them being stuck in abusive whether emotionally, physically or verbally marriages they were now free from all oppression.

4.3.11 Religious Coping

In the process of coping with divorce, women mostly use positive forms of religious coping this form of coping is linked with higher levels of personality and spiritual growth after the stress brought up by divorce (Simonic & Klobucar, 2015). With many divorcees who experience the burden of divorce, the relationship with God manifests as a source of positive support in coping with divorce Simonic, Mandelj &

Novsak (2013). Simonic and Klobucar (2015) maintains that positive forms of religious coping are associated with lower effects of stress, resulting in positive forms of adapting to adversities such as divorce. Every respondent indicated that support from church shielded them and was some form of a resilience enhancement factor which contributed to them coping with divorce. The respondents were quoted saying:

"The church was like a second family to me during the time of my divorce process, the pastors and congregants were there for me every step of the way, they encouraged and motivated me, and it's at the church where I found another husband, I still pray to God for strength to make it." [Participant K, 36 years old]

"The church was the only place from which I could draw strength from, the church pastor and other church members who have gone through the same ordeal helped me pick up the pieces." [Participant D, 40 years old]

"With the church supporting me throughout the process, I never felt alone I always knew that there were people whom I could count on, they were not once judgemental" [Participant C, 35 years old]

"The church was always there for me the support has always been immense, sometimes they can so supportive more than your own blood can" [Participant E, 28 years old]

When coping with the stressfulness of divorce, participants who cultivated a personal relationship with God experienced security and support, as one of main functions of religion for an individual is to provide the feeling of safety. Drawing from Bronfenbrenner's (1986) ecological systems theory at the micro-system level, bi-directional influences are strongest and have the greatest impact on an individual, these may refer to immediate family members, friends and neighbours etc. However,

interactions at outer levels such as the church can still impact the inner structures and play a salient role. The micro-system encompasses the relationships and interactions a child has with her immediate surroundings (Ryan, 2001). According to the ecological theory, if the relationships in the immediate micro-system break down, an individual will not have the necessary tools to explore other parts of his environment. In this instance, an unhealthy relationship or insufficient support from family members may contribute negatively to divorced women leading the inability to provide self-direction, thus prolonging the healing process.

However, some even indicated that some people from church were quick to judge concerning their divorce. The divorced women were quoted saying:

"In my previous church some women would gossip about me, saying they feared I would take away their husbands from them, and somehow they discriminated me since I was still young and educated." [Participant D, 40 years old]

"Even though some people are Christians they will never stop judging, it is in their nature it took time for some people to accept my decision'" [Participant C, 35 years old]

4.3.12 Social support

Social support is proven to play a vital role when it comes to assisting with adjusting and coping when faced with the adversity of divorce. With the women interviewed the support from family members, relatives, in-laws, and friends played a unique role of being protective factors, which improved their attitude towards the trauma of divorce they were facing. These protective factors are sure to play a major role in promoting resilience in many divorced women:

"My in-laws were supportive of my decision, they even encouraged me by saying gone are those days whereby women had to endure everything that men did to them" [Participant D, 40 years old]

"During the divorce process, my family and in-laws were always supportive, as a result the burden was somehow lighter and to this day we still keep in contact" [Participant A, 35 years old]

"My family and friends supported me in every way possible, even the whole community was on my side because they knew of my ex-husbands" [Participant L, 33 years old]

However some of the respondents responded by stating that their in-laws or family members were not so supportive during the whole divorce process, instead, they kept on blaming them for their failed marriages. Below mentioned are some of the responses which were recorded during the interviews:

"Unfortunately, my ex-husband's father took his son's side and blamed me for everything, it was only his uncle who was on my side and told me that I was too young to endure all that". [Participant B, 35 years old]

"My in-laws never intervened, not even once because they believed that I was never the perfect wife for their son, after all, they kept on blaming me for his infidelity by saying I don't know how to keep a man" [Participant J, 44 years old]

"The people from church are the only people who never judged me during the time of my divorce they supported me in all kinds of ways. It was only my family and my in-laws who did at first but they have come to except it now." [Participant I, 34 years old].

4.3.13 Positive relations/Resilience enhancement factors

Positive relations are of utter importance for any women undergoing divorce as they determine one's health outcomes. An example would be instead of women being at risk of having multiple sexual partners or resorting to alcohol or drug abuse this model neutralizes the impact stress might have on them. These below mentioned are the promotive factors which instilled resilience in the lives of the divorced women. They were quoted saying the following:

" I spent most of the time reading books, so got inspired and also started writing down everything in a journal and I hope to publish it one day" [Participant L, 33 years old]

"The support group which we formed as divorced women here at church improved my life at all levels, that was the one thing which assisted me and made me strong so I could move on with my life"[Participant K, 36 years old]

The divorced women indicated different factors which contributed to their wellbeing. Instead of just concentrating on them, some were determined to make a difference in other people's lives an example of this is as follows:

"As a nurse at work I started a campaign against women and child abuse, as a result I am now a divorce motivational speaker, whenever there are women events most of the time I get invited to talk about divorce, that is how I was able to cope and move on" [Participant A, 35 years old]

"As a way of coping and forgetting about the whole divorce trauma, I decided to register for a degree part-time and that helped me with moving on and keeping busy" [Participant B, 35 years old]

Children served as a resilience factor for many of the women as people who live with children are more likely to be happier and healthier, all of which have positive associations concerning the well-being of divorced women (Deaton & Stone (2014). Respondent with more children proved to be more resilient in comparisons

with those who only have one child, as having more children demanded more of their attention and time. The respondents were quoted saying the following:

"The only thing which kept me going were my children, I have two children and just being round them kept me going I had to be strong for them. Our relationship since the divorce has improved and as a way of coping with it, my children and I go to trips and vacations regularly and that's how I regained my strength" [Participant H, 29 years old]

Surrounding oneself with the people who matter the most, who are positive about life without any judging may have positive results on divorced women. It beneficial for divorced women to surround themselves with individuals whom they will able to talk so that the burden can lighten off their shoulders, as talking helps ease the pain. The following was illustrated by the women on surrounding oneself with optimistic people in life following divorce:

"It's funny but the stokvel helped me forget about the divorce, our regular meetings, the trips we took, I just never felt alone because I was always surrounded by people"[Participant C, 35 years old]

"I surrounded myself with people who loved me, my family, friends and supportive colleagues we would arrange sleepovers, we started to live our lives and for once we put ourselves first because we realised that no one can create happiness for you" [Participant G, 33 years old]

Many studies have indicated the importance of a new partner to women who have undergone a divorce. Some divorced women tend to remarry following a divorce this has proved to be beneficial for women and their children. Some of the women who had remarried following also proved to be more resilient than the rest this could be linked to them finding comfort and necessary support from their new partners and children. However, it is important to grieve for one to grieve and allow

one space after divorce as to process everything accordingly. This is what some had to say about moving on:

"Soon after my divorce, I met a guy who showed his love for me and as we speak we are engaged and the good think about it is that we met at church. He was there for me every step of the way he helped through the divorce process, my children also played an important role when it came to supporting me throughout the entire process " [Participant A, 35 years old]

"My personality played an immense role when it comes to my well-being after divorce, I have a hardy personality, even though I was going through that ordeal I was still in control of myself not once did I give up on life, I always see a positive side on life" [Participant G, 33 years old]

Talking about a problem is always recognised as an assisting strategy for any problem one may be facing, as the bottling of emotions has negative consequences or may likely add more pressure or stress. According to McCrae and Costa (1986), within the five-factor personality model individuals with extraversion personality tend to be outspoken, expressive, talkative and gesturally expressive. When it comes to factors promoting resilience among divorce women, opening up and talking came of aid to many women:

"Talking to someone helps because bottling up feelings could be dangerous. I started counselling sessions with a psychologist and ever since then I never looked back I'm stronger than ever" [Participant B, 35 years old]

"Since I've got a bubbly personality, I always talked about my situation whether it was friends whoever I felt like talking to I would, and soon it started to be more of a joke to me because I never let it consume me" [Participant L, 33 years old]

"Talking about the situation and receiving different kinds of advice and emotional support from different people, engaging in sports at work, optimism (positive attitude towards life) helped me get over divorce, these kept me going up until this day" [Participant J, 44 years old]

Religion proved to be a number one resilience factor, as it offered support, sense of belonging and comfort. The church even became more like a second family to those who were going through a divorce as the support kept them going, strengthens their faith and hope so they could make it as it also brings closure when it comes to acceptance. The church plays an important part when it comes to assisting the women with forgiving as it is the first step to healing (Yarnoz-Yaben, Garmendia & Comino, 2016) this is what the participants had to say:

"Praying, reading the word of God and listening to gospel music kept me going that's where I got my strength and courage to make it from" [Participant F, 45 years old]

"Engaging in church activities made me forget about the pain up until this day, being the Sunday school teacher made me fall in love with life all over again" [Participant I, 34 years old]

Keeping busy became identified as a resilience factor when one is preoccupied they have less time on their hands, which means that they have less to be thinking about a stressful event such as divorce. Such can keep the divorce stress at bay resulting in healthy or positive lifestyle:

"Keeping myself busy, whether it was with work-related issues, going out, watching a movie, but I always made sure that I was busy I never sat down and mope over my divorce and eventually I ended up forgetting" [Participant D, 40 years old]

"I thought of something that would keep my mind busy and that's how I thought of working as a volunteer at some orphanage every Saturdays" [Participant E, 28 years old]

Having fun was also indicated by the divorced women on resilience enhancement factors, having fun may assist divorced women with forgetting about the divorce stress, whilst one may learn to accept and be content with the divorce trauma. However, all of this depended on their financial stability, since they were

working they were able to live life without being depended on their ex partners financially. Here is what the respondents had to say about this:

"Ever since I decided to be self-contented with everything that's going in my life, I decided to spoil myself and my kids, we would go for shopping sprees, trips, and vacations and soon my sorrows were gone, I totally forgot about the pain and realised there's more to life" [Participant C, 35 years old]

"The method of coping which I used was making sure that I felt good and looked good all the time and it made me feel happy, 4 times a month I would go to a spa, I pleased myself in every way possible with the good things of course"[Participant A, 35 years old]

"Since I was working and I had a stable financial income, it was easy for me to take care of me and my child, we were still able to do anything and everything we wanted to make ourselves happy" [Participant B, 35 years old]

Other factors which contributed to positive outcomes following divorce are relocating, social networks and counselling. Women who were educated also seemed to be more resilient as most of them had stable jobs, and they practically knew more about getting assistants from psychologists, therapy etc. and this played an important role when it comes to alleviating the pain following divorce for many educated women (Poladian, Rossi, Rudd & Holtzworth-Munroe, 2017). Even relocating has proved to be beneficial for divorced women more especially those who are able to get a transfer from work. It may simply mean starting with a clean new slate and it may be a way of seeing things from a different perspective as a new start brings about new opportunities. The respondents were quoted saying:

"I considered relocating and asking for a transfer at work this meant a new start for as I made new friends and I put all energy towards myself and not ex, that's how I overcame everything up until this day life is good for me"[Participant H, 29 years old]

"In terms of counselling, at the court after signing the divorce papers, someone there suggested I went to see FAMSA social workers for counselling and yes they helped me somehow"[Participant L, 33 years old]

"Social networks played a role in keeping me busy when I felt lonely sometimes before I knew it there was a circle of friends which made me see life from another perspective" [Participant K, 36 years old]

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter explored different themes which came up after the analysis of data. Each theme signified salient information on the divorce process and the resilience factors which were of utter importance when it came to assisting the divorced women to live a positive life thereafter.

In the next chapter, the summary, limitations and recommendations of the study will follow.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The motive of this study was to conduct an inquiry on the resilience factors that divorced women reinforce in their lives following a divorce. In the former chapters, resilience enhancement factors, the psychological well-being of divorced women and divorce and resilience were discussed. Furthermore, the methodology utilised to gather data was described, followed by data. In this chapter, the summary of findings of the study will be summarised and further explained. The limitations and implications of the study and the recommendations for future research will be provided.

5.2 Findings from literature

Within the research questions, the literature reviewed was relevant in exploring the factors associated with resilience among divorced women, these include stigma which had a contribution to prolonging the healing process, religious coping, depressive symptoms which contributed negatively to their personalities and the fear of raising children on their own.

Regarding stigma and discrimination experienced by the divorced participants, self-condemnation, self-blame and denial, were amongst the self-destructive thoughts and behaviours reported. Literature indicated denial to be one of the feelings they were subjected to at the time of divorce. Often divorced women are usually in denial and may tend to use negative emotion-focused coping as they suppress the feelings instead of dealing with them. Therefore this means that the use the avoidance protective factor instead of the acceptance coping strategy which results in feelings being un-dealt with and this often makes the path to healing much

difficult. Feelings of guilt, defeat, powerlessness, and resistance are some of the emotions which were perceived during the time of divorce. Some of these emotions including resistance were part of the denial process whereby they were reluctant regarding divorcing their ex-husbands when it came to those whose ex-husbands were the initiators of divorce.

As a result of stigma, within the findings, divorced women resorted to dating married men since no single men were pursuing them due to their divorce status. Subsequently, within the findings, some of the women resorted to drinking and as a way of coping even with stigma. With such stigma, these women start having negative thoughts about themselves by believing that they could never be loved by any man.

The aftermaths of divorce observed through literature included psychological stress and depressive symptoms. Thus, some exemplified signs of resentment, pain, hurt and they also harboured anger. These emotions were accompanied by negative thinking such as the women believing that no one would ever want to marry them again as they believe they have been labelled as divorcees in society. Therefore, cognition (mental process) or how one thinks plays an important role in behaviour change and negative thoughts or beliefs can make it particularly difficult for a client to make positive behaviour change. Therefore positive thinking is an essential tool when it comes to wellbeing and behaviour change.

Another finding which was consistent was depression this was one of the negative impacts which were brought upon by divorce. Many of the the women mentioned that they suffered a lot form Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) due to them blaming themselves for their failed marriages due to the demands of society

whereby it is actually believed that it is a woman who's supposed to hold or 'glue' her family together. Such coping mechanism could be classified under negative emotion-focused coping as many divorced women who use negative emotion-focused coping often have not mastered their environment.

Some studies also indicated that they were terrified of raising their children or were scared of being single parents. A further finding was that these women had a belief that men needed to be breadwinners and take care of their families. For them to come to terms with the term of taking care of their children seemed as an alarming responsibility which they may not be used to. Society also has this misconception that being a single parent does not make one a complete family, in order for a family to be complete there has to be a father figure involved.

However, times have changed and many women are coping just fine being single parents, they also specified that after healing they had accepted this and were moving on forward with their lives. One other important resilience factor among divorced women is religion as it served as a cushion against any risks which the women were faced with, often providing the necessary support, comfort and love which was essential during the time of divorce.

5.3 Findings from the empirical research

Among these women, resilience emerged as a significant role in promoting their psychological wellbeing following the traumatic divorce experience. There are quite a handful resilience enhancement factors which were mentioned by these women, from church support to being a parent, family, and friends and keeping one busy as means of keeping negative emotions at bay. Economic factors such as having a steady job and stable income were one of the factors which were quite crucial in

connection to the wellbeing of the divorced women. As a result of such, these women were able to take care of themselves and their children following divorce, and they were able to enjoy themselves by going to trips as means of alleviating stress.

Furthermore, forgiveness was ranked as a number one contributor to the road to recovery following divorce. Forgiveness was associated with greater life satisfaction and often associated with emotion-focused coping and it provided these women with strength to live an optimistic life, they also indicated forgiving their ex-partners for the sake of maintaining a positive relationship. Drawing from the resilience theory by Ungar, forgiveness serves as a protective factor, as resilience protective factors play a role in either mediating or moderating effect of divorce. Letting go and forgiving has played a significant role in assisting these respondents to recover much quicker from the traumatic experience of divorce.

Personality followed by positive emotions such as acceptance following divorce showed to have positive benefits when it comes to the health of the women.. Within the findings, a positive attitude towards life has proved to be one of the principal keys when it comes to coping and adjusting after a divorce. However, some women also indicated to their personalities being changed following divorce. Also within the findings, being self-content and self-compassionate were the positive emotions which contributed positively to their well-being. These emotions are associated with acceptance which is also a salient stage when it comes to divorce. Such emotions prove to assist women with coping as they tend to assist women to stop with self-criticism, self-blame and other negative emotions which may include feeling like a failure. It is of utter importance to note these women had realised that

they were imperfect and anyone is capable of failing, and experiencing life difficulties is inevitable.

Another crucial finding was how pain and hurt had resulted from them to perceiving that all men are the same, as they had projected all their hurt and anger and stereotyped towards all men. The participants recalled how cultural beliefs oppressed and robbed them of their reproductive rights and freedom of expression as they would be afraid to ask about the whereabouts of their husbands while they were married.

Findings from the study indicate that most of the women went to psychologists for therapy since the government does not offer any kind of support for the divorced and their children. One or two of the respondents indicated that they may sometimes advice one to go to their nearest FAMSA officers if they needed any kind of counselling. These offices are NGO's which comprises of social workers from social development. They had indicated a disadvantage for such by stating that these social workers were not qualified for the specific field of divorce, as it was not their area of specialisation, as they needed someone who knew what they were on about. The FAMSA services main focus areas were violence and trauma, HIV/AIDS, abusive relationships, poverty, women and children abuse and relationship breakdown and apart from this, there aren't any other support services offered by the government i.e. the Home Affairs Department or the Department of Justice. However, one of the respondents had indicated they had decided to try out the services and she received the necessary help which she needed.

5.4 Recommendations for the study

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations should be considered:

- There appears to be lack of support offered by the government when it comes to offering counselling services to divorcees and their children. Therefore, the government should implement more services or strategies which will aim at assisting the divorced and their children more especially in the Eastern Cape.

- The one service which is available from FAMSA does not specifically aim at assisting the divorced, therefore counselling therapists who specialise in divorce cases should be available in this organisation.

- More churches and government policies should be implemented on offering pre-marital counselling and post marriage counselling for couples who are about to marry and those who already are, as to try lessening the divorce rate.

- Even in school curricula with subjects such as Life Orientation, divorce should be included in the syllabus so as to teach children from a very young age on divorce, on the impacts that it has on children and what the necessary measures are, should they be affected by it.

- Suggestions for future research studies could be explored with other races and cultural backgrounds so as to establish other resilience enhancement factors which contribute towards well-being. As much as divorce is a prominent topic, more literature should focus on resilience as there is a dearth of literature when it comes to such, more especially in South Africa.

5.5. Limitations of the study

Although the objectives of the study were met, there are a couple of limitations which were established in this study. Firstly, the study was conducted only among black Xhosa speaking divorced women, and only (n=12) were interviewed so the results cannot be made a generalisation of all the women and the resilience strategies which they utilise. Therefore the sample was not a representative of every resilience factor reinforced by every divorced woman out there, the findings could have been different with other races and provinces. Secondly, the age gap was another factor. There is a possibility that some older women were shy to talk openly regarding the questions which involved their sexuality. Nevertheless, satisfying responses were given by the participants. Another, issue which was regarded a limitation for the study was the dearth of South African literature when it came to the topic of divorce, most relevant information was extracted from international studies.

5.3 Conclusion

In this chapter findings on the relevant themes and literature were further discussed. Strategies which are implemented by the government for divorcees were highlighted also recommendations and limitations were discussed as well. Recommendations for miniature researchers were also highlighted.

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APPENDIX A

11September 2017

The Pastors/Elders/Deacons

Gospel Ambassadors Ministries

4 Siyabulela Street

Cradock

5880

Dear Sir

Request to conduct Research

I Nasiphi Faxi, am hereby requesting permission to conduct research at the above mentioned church as part of my Master's degree by dissertation in Psychology at the above mentioned university. My research topic is based on a **"Qualitative study on resilience among African divorced women in Cradock, Eastern Cape."**

My supervisor for the study is Dr. J. G. Kheswa, and the aim of the research study is to investigate how African women enhance resilience in their lives after experiencing a divorce.

The research will require African divorced women (N= 12) who have shown resilience characteristics after going through a divorce ordeal to agree to being interviewed. Each interview will take approximately 45 – 60 mins. The intended date for these interviews to take is 18th-22nd September 2017.

Ethics will be adhered to. The participant's human dignity and their informed consent will be respected. Participation is voluntary and the participants have the right to

withdraw at any given time should they wish to, without being penalised. None of the other church members will have access to their responses. Also, there are no wrong or right answers in the questionnaires. We simply ask for their opinions.

If our request is approved, please provide us a letter to this effect. We are looking forward to your positive response.

 Yours sincerely.

J.G. Kheswa (Supervisor)

……………………………..

N.Faxi (Researcher)

APPENDIX B

Gospel Ambassador's Ministries

University of Fort Hare   15 September 2017

Doctor J. G Kheswa

1 King Williamstown Road

Alice

5700

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

The pastors, deacons of the above mentioned church hereby give permission to Nasiphi Faxi to conduct a study on the topic " A qualitative study on resilience among divorced women" on the female members of the church who have underwent the divorce process. A total number of 12 women have indicated to agreeing on the interviews.

The members have agreed on the following dates and timeslots, 18th- 22nd September 2017, at 17:00.

Yours in Christ

……………………

Mrs., B Dulwana (Secretary)

……………………..

Pastor S.S Faxi (Senior Pastor, Cradock Branch)

APPENDIX C

Ethics Clearance Form

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE
REC-270710-028-RA Level 01

Certificate Reference Number: KHE081SFAX01

Project title: **A qualitative study of resilience among divorced African Women in Cradock, Eastern Cape.**

Nature of Project   Masters in Psychology

Principal Researcher: Nasiphi Faxi

Supervisor: Dr J.G Kheswa
Co-supervisor: N/A

On behalf of the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC) I hereby give ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project and research instrument(s). Should any other instruments be used, these require separate authorization. The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this certificate, using the reference number indicated above.

Please note that the UREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the document
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research

The Principal Researcher must report to the UREC in the prescribed format, where applicable, annually, and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.

The Principal Researcher must report to the UREC in the prescribed format, where applicable, annually, and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.

Special conditions: Research that includes children as per the official regulations of the act must take the following into account:

Note: The UREC is aware of the provisions of s71 of the National Health Act 61 of 2003 and that matters pertaining to obtaining the Minister's consent are under discussion and remain unresolved. Nonetheless, as was decided at a meeting between the National Health Research Ethics Committee and stakeholders on 6 June 2013, university ethics committees may continue to grant ethical clearance for research involving children without the Minister's consent, provided that the prescripts of the previous rules have been met. This certificate is granted in terms of this agreement.

The UREC retains the right to

- Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance Certificate if
    - Any unethical principal or practices are revealed or suspected
    - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented
    - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require
    - The conditions contained in the Certificate have not been adhered to

- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.

- In addition to the need to comply with the highest level of ethical conduct principle investigators must report back annually as an evaluation and monitoring mechanism on the progress being made by the research. Such a report must be sent to the Dean of Research's office

The Ethics Committee wished you well in your research.

Yours sincerely

Professor Lindelwa Majova-Songca
Acting Dean of Research

10 November 2017

University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Ethics Research Confidentiality and Informed Consent Form

As a requirement for the degree of Master of Social Science in Psychology at the University of Fort Hare, candidates are expected to conduct a study on the basis of which they will compile a dissertation. I am one of such candidates and my research topic is on the subjective experience of divorced African women, Cradock, Eastern Cape. I am interested in finding out more about resilience among divorced African women so as to publicise such information for the benefit of those who are going through the same ordeal. A total of 12 respondents will be asked to partake in this research.

Please understand that you are not being forced to take part in this study and the choice whether to participate or not is yours alone. However, I would really appreciate it if you do share your thoughts with us. If you choose not take part in answering these questions, you will not be affected in any way. If you agree to participate, you may stop me at any time and tell me that you don't want to go on with the interview. If you do this there will also be no penalties and you will NOT be prejudiced in ANY way. Confidentiality will be observed professionally.

 I will not be recording your name anywhere on the questionnaire and no one will be able to link you to the answers you give. Only the researcher will have access to the unlinked

information. The information will remain confidential and there will be no feedback from the answers you give.

The interview will last around (45) minutes each. I will be asking you a questions and ask that you are as open and honest as possible in answering these questions. Some questions may be of a personal and/or sensitive nature. I will be asking some questions that you may not have thought about before, and which also involve thinking about the past or the future. I know that you cannot be absolutely certain about the answers to these questions but I ask that you try to think about these questions. When it comes to answering questions there are no right and wrong answers. When I ask questions about the future I are not interested in what you think the best thing would be to do, but what you think would actually happen. If possible I would like to come back to this area once we have completed our study to inform you and your community of what the results are and discuss our findings and proposals around the research and what this means for people in this area.

INFORMED CONSENT

I hereby agree to participate in research a subjective experience of divorced African women, Cradock, Eastern Cape I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop this interview at any point should I not want to continue and that this decision will not in any way affect me negatively.

I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally.

I have received the telephone number of a person to contact should I need to speak about any issues which may arise in this interview.

I understand that this consent form will not be linked to the questionnaire, and that my answers will remain confidential.

I understand that if at all possible, feedback will be given to my community on the results of

the completed research.

……………………………..

Signature of participant Date:…………………..

I hereby agree to the tape recording of my participation in the study

……………………………..

Signature of participant Date:…………………..