

“It’s just like a waiting room”: The experiences of psychology Honours students who are not accepted into any professional training programme for psychology in South Africa

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Abstract

Objective: This study explored the lived experiences of currently enrolled psychology Honours students, who are not in a professional training programme for psychology in South Africa.

Method: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight psychology Honours students at a South African university and analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

Findings: Findings revealed that participants perceived an Honours in psychology qualification as significant in personal capacity and insignificant in professional capacity. Additionally, findings showed that participants perceive the difficulty gaining entrance into a professional training programme and lack of employment in the field for Honours psychology graduates, as a contributing factor to several graduates being placed in a state of uncertainty, lacking professional progression in the field of psychology. Furthermore, findings revealed that several Honours psychology students battled to find employment in the field.

Conclusions: I critically reflect on the implications of the findings in relation to psychology as a profession in South Africa.

Keywords: Psychology Honours students, lived experiences, professional training, Master's in psychology, South Africa

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The manuscript should be arranged as follows:

1. Title containing important keywords (preferably <13).
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The profession of psychology in South Africa

Historically, the profession of psychology in South Africa is marked by many controversies, as it has perpetuated Apartheid ideologies (Cooper & Nicholas, 2012). In contemporary South Africa, several issues within the field of psychology require sustained attention. For example, for several years the relevance of psychological theories and practice in a South African context has been questioned. A situational analysis by Macleod (2004) revealed that quantitative approaches and topics of assessment, psychotherapy, counselling, psychopathology, and stress remain at the forefront of South African psychology research. This leaves pertinent social issues such as land reform, housing, development programmes, social inequalities, and water resources under-explored in the field (Macleod & Howell, 2013). Evidently, South African psychology needs to generate knowledge that applies to the socio-political concerns of the country and contributes to social justice and advocacy, by overcoming various psychological issues produced by social inequality (Macleod & Howell, 2013).

Another issue in the field is the lack of access to mental health care at a primary care level, as treatment for mental disorders remains limited (Kaminer et al., 2018). Mental health in South Africa is an issue of concern as it is generally underdiagnosed and untreated. According to Bateman (2015), South Africa was short of 646 psychiatrists and 466 psychologists in 2015, to sufficiently address the populations mental health needs. Thus, for every 100 000 South Africans there were 0.28 psychiatrists and 0.32 psychologists, indicating a large ongoing treatment gap between the burden of mental illness and the resources available to address treatment needs (De Kock & Pillay, 2017; Kaminer et al., 2018).

Addressing the treatment gap

The Mental Health Care Act, No. 17 of 2002, has contributed to enhancing access to mental health care, by decentralising mental health services from primarily hospital-based to community-based care within the primary health care level, thus responding to the call for a

more comprehensive health care system (Kaminer et al., 2018; Siyothula, 2019). Progress in improving access to mental health care is slow, as the treatment gap continues to be impacted by: the slow decentralisation of mental health services from hospital-based care, lack of infrastructure, scarcity of mental health professionals in rural parts of South Africa, stigma regarding mental illnesses, language barriers, affordability of transportation to health facilities and lack of funding (De Kock & Pillay, 2017; Kaminer et al., 2018; Siyothula, 2019).

South Africa's funding allocations for both mental health services and research is substantially less than higher income countries (Kaminer et al., 2018). There is strong justification for investing in effective treatment for mental health, as untreated mental illness results in a significant loss in national earnings, which has a major social and economic effect on South Africa (Bateman, 2015; Kaminer et al., 2018). Undoubtedly, the treatment gap ought to be urgently addressed through effective, relevant, culturally acceptable, accessible, and modifiable mental health interventions (Kaminer et al., 2018). This calls for continued efforts to assimilate mental health care into primary health care, combined with the use of brief interventions and group therapy by community health workers, (nurses, lay counsellors, and volunteers), in community-based settings (Kaminer et al., 2018). Additionally, introducing more mid-level workers (e.g., registered counsellors) could provide more human resources necessary to address the treatment gap (Siyothula, 2019).

The establishment of registration categories

To date, the field has made some progress with the development of professional psychology programmes and the establishment of registration categories through the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) (Health Professions Council of South Africa [HPCSA], 2008). These categories include: Clinical, Counselling, Educational, Industrial/Organisational, Research, Psychometrics, a Registered Counsellor (RC) category and a Neuropsychology category (Pillay, 2016, 2019). In response to the burgeoning issues in mental

health, the RC category was developed as an attempt to fill the treatment gap, by providing primary psychological services to broader South African communities (Abel & Louw, 2009).

The RC category

Registration as an RC requires completion of an accredited four-year Bachelor of Psychology degree (B-Psych) or B-Psych equivalent, which incorporates a six-month practicum (HPCSA, 2019). Difficulties with the development of this category include challenges with registration, lack of employment opportunities and employers', as well as society's, lack of knowledge regarding the registered counsellors' role (Abel & Louw, 2009). A study by Fisher (2017) found an imbalance between the number of RCs and the population's mental health needs. Additionally, findings showed that less than half of the study's RCs were employed and that most were employed in private practice. Moreover, most of the participants expressed that the RC role lacked professional and public recognition. This category appears to be in the process of discontinuation, as less universities are offering B-Psych programmes, due to, among other reasons, lack of employment for their graduates (Pillay, 2016). According to the HPCSA (2018), only six out of 23 accredited universities still offer the B-Psych programme.

The RC category was created to address the treatment gap within mental health in South Africa (Abel & Louw, 2009), and has provided some psychology Honours graduates with employment, as well as the opportunity to gain experience within the field of psychology (Sandison & Elkonin, 2010; van Eeden et al., 2016). However, the scope of intended positive impact has not been attained, as there is still a shortage of mental health services and employment for mid-level graduates (De Kock & Pillay, 2017; Mubiana, 2010). Consistent with the RC category, the Psychometry category has provided some psychology graduates with employment and experience in the field. However, limited training and employment

opportunities still contribute to a shortage of mental health services and employment for psychology graduates (van Eeden et al., 2016).

The Bachelor of Arts Honours degree in psychology

A Bachelor of Arts (BA) Honours degree in psychology differs from a B-Psych degree, as a B-Psych allows for practical exposure and leads directly to registration with the HPCSA (Abel & Louw, 2009). A BA Honours psychology degree is an academic degree, which aims to enhance students' theoretical and research knowledge in preparation for further postgraduate studies and professional training, that would lead to professional registration (Ngubo, 2018). A BA Honours psychology degree does not directly lead to professional registration, which requires further professional training. Additionally, the BA Honours psychology curriculum does not adequately equip students with skills required by employers in the field of psychology (Bonn et al., 2009). This limits graduates' employment prospects in the field, as practicing in the field of psychology is limited to professional registration (Bonn et al., 2009; Mubiana, 2010; Richter et al. 1998). Without clear employment prospects in the field of psychology, or entrance into professional training programmes, BA Honours psychology graduates are placed in limbo – a state of uncertainty lacking professional progression in the field of psychology.

Problem statement

A review of the dynamics of professional training in psychology highlights the question regarding what happens to BA Honours psychology graduates' employment prospects in the field, without entrance into, and completion of, a professional training programme. Evidently, access into the profession of psychology in South Africa remains complex and challenging, given that practicing in the field of psychology is limited to professional registration and that a small number of graduates are selected for professional training programmes each year (Booyesen & Naidoo, 2016; Richter et al., 1998). Seemingly, the career prospects for BA

Honours psychology graduates are bleak without entrance into a professional training programme (Mubiana, 2010; Pillay, 2016).

Research has primarily focussed on professional Master's level training programmes in psychology, such as the process of acceptance into Master's in psychology, experiences within completion, and research after completion (Mayekiso et al., 2004; Nel & Fouche, 2017; Pillay et al., 2006). To this end, research exploring the experiences of Honours psychology students is limited. Given the need to further develop the profession of psychology in South Africa and expand its responsiveness to the needs of South African society, there is a need to explore and understand the experiences of Honours in psychology students. The present study was guided by the following research question: What are the lived experiences of currently enrolled Honours in psychology students who are not accepted into any professional training programme for psychology in South Africa?

Method

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was the qualitative research method used in this study, to understand phenomena through the meanings that participants attach to them (Yilmaz, 2013). IPA is suitable for addressing the research question, as it allows for a more in-depth exploration and interpretation of psychology Honours students' thoughts and feelings, as well as how they make meaning of their experiences (Miller et al., 2018).

Participants

Purposive (non-probability) homogenous sampling was used in this study. Thus, participants were deliberately selected based on their shared experience, to provide information on their experience (Noon & Hallam, 2018). All participants were BA Honours psychology students (n = 8) who had not been accepted into any professional training programme for psychology in South Africa. The intent for all participants was to study further and work in the field of psychology after acceptance and completion of a Master's in psychology. Their other

relevant demographic details are provided in Table 1 below, along with pseudonyms to protect their identities:

Table 1

Participant Demographic Details

Name	Race	Age	Gender
Charmaine	Black	23	Female
Justine	White	47	Female
Portia	Black	23	Female
Sandra	White	22	Female
Tony	White	22	Female
Zara	White	23	Female
Zizipho	Black	22	Female
Emma	White	23	Female

Interview Guide

Semi-structured individual face-to-face interviews were conducted in a consultation room at a psychology clinic, within an IPA framework. The average length of the interviews were 30 minutes as questions within the interview schedule were designed to explore and understand participants' thoughts, feelings and lived experiences as Honours psychology students (see Appendix B). Participants were seen as the experts of their own experiences. Pertinent questions in the interview guide included collecting background information, exploring participants' experiences and feelings in studying for an Honours degree in psychology, enquiring into participants' thoughts concerning the value of an Honours in psychology, as well as participants' thoughts, feelings and expectations concerning post-Honours in psychology. For example, "What is it like studying psychology?", "What

expectations do you have for after you complete your Honours in psychology?” and “Have you applied for a Master’s in psychology before? If so, what was the experience like?”

Procedure

After ethical approval was granted, permission to conduct the study was obtained from the university Registrar. Subsequently, permission to contact currently enrolled Honours psychology students was obtained from the Head of the University Psychology Department. An invitation to participate in the study was emailed to University Honours psychology students (see Appendix A). Eight honours psychology students responded and consented to participate in the study. Primary data was collected from participants using an interview schedule (see Appendix B).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Rhodes University Ethical Standards Committee (RUESC) (Reference number 2019-0698-939). Data was gathered after ethical and departmental approval was obtained. Participant confidentiality was guaranteed, as their names were only disclosed to the researcher and supervisor. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they may withdraw from the study without penalty. To ensure that no harm transpired, participants were required to provide emergency contact details, for support in the event of becoming distressed. Data collected were stored electronically on the researcher’s password protected device. No adverse experiences occurred or were reported during interviews. Since no distress was evident, participants did not require debriefing.

Data Analysis

Data within this study were analysed using IPA. Thus, transcripts were analysed to understand how participants make meaning of significant experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Analysis of data involved six stages (Goldspink & Engward, 2019; Smith et al., 2009). Stage

one: I repeatedly read the transcript, to guarantee that the participant became the centre of analysis. Stage two: I made initial notes about the way a participant communicated, comprehended, and thought about their experiences. Stage three: I reviewed the notes to develop emerging themes. Stage four: I documented connections between emerging themes. Stage five: The previous stages were repeated with the next participant's transcript. Stage six: I then searched for connections across participants' cases (Smith et al., 2009) (see Appendix C).

A master table of themes was developed using IPA stages, with the requirement that a theme be present in at least a third of all the participants' interviews (Smith et al., 2009) (see Appendix D). Eleven superordinate themes were depicted in the eight transcripts. A first draft of analysis was sent to my supervisor to review the analysis and coding. Subsequently, a meeting was conducted to plan how results and discussion would be addressed. Four themes were chosen to be outlined in the results section. Results went through refinement to reach latent meaning in data.

Ensuring Quality of the Research

The quality of this research was ensured through enhancing trustworthiness, by ensuring credibility was maintained through employing an IPA theoretical framework. Within data analysis, credibility was ensured through certifying that interpretations of the participants' original understandings were correct. Additionally, emerging themes were rooted in the participants' actual responses in the interview (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Smith & Osborn, 2003).

To ensure that results can be transferred to other contexts, transferability was maintained through naturalistic generalisation, which occurs when findings coincided with various individuals' experiences and thus appear transferable through the eyes of the reader (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Treharne & Riggs, 2016). To safeguard the stability of the findings

over time should the study be replicated, dependability was guaranteed through detailed accounts of how the research was conducted (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Additionally, to allow for the findings to be confirmed by other researchers, confirmability was ensured by providing comprehensive justification for interpretations made during data analysis (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Lastly, trustworthiness was maintained through reflexivity, by continuously undergoing a process of self-reflection, to guard against researcher bias, preferences, and preconceptions (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Findings

The analysis detailed a total of 16 themes in participants transcripts. Four recurrent themes were selected based on the number of endorsements from participants. If a theme was not endorsed by most of the participants, it was then not considered. See appendix C for a detailed illustration of all the themes across the 8 participants.

Table 2

Recurrent Themes

-
1. Feeling stuck with nothing
 2. Self-awareness for personal growth
 3. “The wait” – The limbo period
 4. “You can’t do anything”
-

These themes relate directly to participants’ experiences, and the feelings evoked through the experience of being an enrolled Honours psychology student, who has not been accepted into a professional training programme for psychology.

Theme 1: “*Feeling stuck with nothing*”

This theme captures participants’ thoughts and feelings about the usefulness of an Honours in psychology, in a professional capacity. Several participants viewed an Honours in

psychology as possessing no significance in a professional capacity. Many held the shared perception that the purpose of an Honours in psychology is solely to academically position and prepare one for a Master's in psychology. For example, Charmaine (23 years) stated:

... like you have to get into Master's otherwise you might have just stuck with your undergrad.... So ya, that's how I feel about the Honours degree, it's just like a waiting room for you to get Master's basically and other than that there's nothing much you can actually do with it.

Charmaine's use of the word "stuck" speaks to the experience of being trapped, with liberation solely resting on acceptance into a Master's in psychology. This pervasive sense of helplessness is evident; for her Honours studies to mean something more, she must gain acceptance into Master's. Thus, without entrance into Master's, Honours in psychology appears to afford the same "qualification", in a professional capacity, as an undergraduate degree. For Honours in psychology to be compared to a "waiting room", speaks to Charmaine's apathetic perception of the significance of the degree. This idea of being placed in a "waiting room" suggests that there is a lot out of Charmaine's control and that her progression is dependent on the decisions of others. The distress from her lack of control and dependence on others is compounded by the lack of insight into the length of the wait. Evidently, Honours in psychology is perceived as useless, as stated by Justine (47 years):

An Honours degree means nothing unless you get into Master's ... my attitude is that it gives you a lot of academic learning and no practical learning and thus leaves you quite empty-handed, unless you get into a Master's programme for clinical or counselling psychology.

The perception of Honours in psychology as having no value outside of Master's in psychology is further substantiated by Justine. The word "nothing" suggests that despite gaining educational learning, her experience is still insufficient, due to her lack of practical learning. This pervasive sense of "not having enough" is apparent and appears to continue to entrap participants like Justine in the "waiting room". Additionally, Justine's reference to the word "empty-handed" suggests that Honours in psychology does not afford her anything and does not suffice in providing direction and progression in her career prospects, outside of a Master's in psychology. There emerged an underlying commonality in participants' transcripts of feeling stuck, expressed through describing this halted sense of progression.

Theme 2: *Self-awareness for personal growth*

Several of the participants perceived an Honours in psychology as significant in a personal capacity, as it sparked reflection, self-awareness and, consequently, personal growth. According to Zizipho (24 years):

I don't feel like I am just sitting there and not improving. I am able to unpack certain things in my life and apply it.

Zizipho's use of the word "unpack" in describing the personal growth Honours in psychology afforded, suggests that much remained out of her awareness that still profoundly influenced her self-perception, resulting in distress:

For example, I struggled a lot with speaking in class and speaking a lot around a crowd and I was able to be like, "let me deal with this. Why am I struggling with this?"

In describing how Honours in psychology provided self-awareness and the capacity to challenge negative perceptions of self, Zizipho's mention of the word "struggle" speaks to lacking control and being disempowered. She continued:

And then I realised that I focus so much on being wrong, I focus so much on how someone looked at me.... So being able to take steps towards building yourself, I think it has helped me do all of that.

Evidently, Honours in psychology afforded Zizipho the capacity to be aware of her focus on "being wrong" and on how she is perceived by others. Thus, for Zizipho, the self-awareness Honours in psychology afforded was greatly empowering, stabilising and freeing.

As participants continued to reflect on the significance of an Honours psychology degree, to some participants, Honours afforded healing by breaking down defences and providing the capacity to confront childhood traumas. For example, Portia, (23 years) stated:

... actually, like I said, I had a lot of things going on from my childhood, which I kind of like suppressed.... I kind of understand my life better, it was like some sort of understanding into why I have been feeling the way I have been feeling ...

Portia described how Honours in psychology evoked unprocessed trauma. Her use of the word "suppressed" describes her capacity to avoid processing negative experiences from childhood, by managing to put them out of conscious awareness. Seemingly, this style of coping sufficed until she participated in community engagement programmes, which appeared to bring distressing negative experiences from her childhood to conscious awareness:

... so they have a lot of community engagement things going on here, when I started ... I got to a point where I had to like reflect on my own life and kind of had to deal with my life ...

Seemingly, being involved in various community programmes encouraged her to reflect on what she had been avoiding in her own lived experiences, and in developing insight she was better able to heal.

These themes highlighted how some participants perceived an Honours in psychology as insignificant in a professional capacity, yet useful in facilitating personal growth.

Theme 3: “*The wait*” – *The limbo period*

This theme explores participants’ experiences, perceptions and feelings about Honours psychology graduates being placed in limbo – a state of uncertainty, lacking professional progression in the field of psychology. Participants reflected on the need to improve training in the profession of psychology, subsequently providing skills in preparation for employment. Portia (23 years) reflected on her perception:

... well when I am talking about training uhm, I look at how like the difference between postgrad psych and undergrad psych; it’s like undergrad psych, “You guys just be there and chill and get to Master’s”.

Portia’s comparison of undergraduate and postgraduate studies suggests that Honours in psychology does not afford her more empowerment, progression or control in the field compared to undergraduate studies. It appears that Honours in psychology is perceived as an extension of undergraduate psychology and that outside of Master’s, Honours in psychology

facilitates a sense of limbo – a period of waiting, uncertainty and being left behind with no progress. She further states:

So, there is no training until you get to Master's. But then if you don't get to Master's what then? It means that you really have no skill to go and do something else.... So, it's a point where if you don't get to Master's it's ... "What now? Do I change a degree? Do I wait for the possibility of getting into Master's next year?"

Portia describes practical learning in the field being halted until acceptance into Master's in psychology is gained and that without acceptance, she is trapped in a space of nothingness; a place with more questions, indecisiveness, frustration, despondence and few choices or opportunities. It appears that powerlessness, lacking control and not knowing what to do is pervasive in this limbo period. In support of this sense of waiting and the implications that come with the limbo period, Emma (23 years) reflected on the impact of witnessing others wait and endure rejection:

... like one guy I met has applied for like eight years in a row to get into Master's and he still hasn't. And he told me like, "Don't even try, you're not going to get in, or it's not even like worth it." So, I had all these quite negative views about the process, uhm because of their experience ... And then another girl ... got into Master's for next year ... she's 29 now, so she's been waiting like how many years to get in now.

Emma describes having been negatively influenced by being privy to others' distressing experiences of the Master's selection process. There is a clear theme of waiting, rejection, and apathy that Emma appears to be apprehensive of, as she describes other's experiences. It

appears that waiting or witnessing waiting has the capacity to impact aspirations, hope and perceptions of what was desired professionally in the first place.

This theme highlighted participants' experiences whilst in an uncertain period of waiting – “Limbo”. A commonality of despondence and apathy that comes with having one's passion, interests and progression in the field placed on hold was apparent in this “limbo” period. That even despite having passion and interest in the field, “you can't do anything”.

Theme 4: “*You can't do anything*”

This theme captures participants' experiences, thoughts, and feelings about employment in the field of psychology for after the completion of their Honours. It appears that most of the participants have actively sought out post-Honours employment in the field to no avail. Several of the participants expressed the need for Honours in psychology to be more effective in aiding Honours graduates' viability for employment in the field. Tony (22 years) reflected on her experience in search of employment:

... it feels useless because uhm finding a job, I've actually gone looking for it in these ... specifically for psychology graduates. There's basically nothing I can do. Uhm, ya except go teach but then I have to study further for a year and do a PGCE.

In describing her thoughts concerning the value of an Honours in psychology, having used the word “useless” suggests that to Tony, what would give Honours in psychology purpose and value would be its ability to aid in employment. It appears that her struggle to find employment in the field with her Honours degree fuels apathy, frustration, and powerlessness, and validates the “uselessness” of Honours in psychology. That even despite achieving a postgraduate qualification, to gain any sort of employment in and outside of the field, she would have to achieve further qualifications.

In line with Tony's experience, Zara (23 years) reflected on her thoughts and feelings concerning the value of an Honours in psychology in relation to employment:

... like yes, I have learnt a lot and I have been able to explore like different subjects in psychology, but I still don't feel equipped to go and be employed under a psychology name, which is why there is no job availability for psych Honours students.

There is this sense of not having enough; that having been exposed to different subjects and community projects, the knowledge and experience gained is not enough to promote viability for employment in the field, without having to further studies. Zara's ability to understand the lack of employment for BA Honours psychology graduates, appears to stem from reflecting on her own lack of experience, because of the way the Honours in psychology curriculum is structured. She explains feeling incompetent and relays an understanding of the lack of employment for someone with her qualifications. She further stated:

So ya, I think it is tough, I think it is a bit of a grey area having a psych Honours degree, in terms of what I think employers can entrust you to do, especially when you are dealing with people. Because in reality we actually don't really have that much experience in dealing with people.

In explaining her lack of experience, Zara's reference to the words "grey area" suggests that the role of Honours in psychology graduates to employers and the public is still ill-defined and unclear. Seemingly, this "grey area" contributes to Zara's experience of uncertainty, tension, and perceived lack of employment in the field. This is further supported by Justine's statement in reflecting on how she feels about being an Honours psychology student:

I am very frustrated.... I don't think you're given the facts upfront, you know, about what you can do with an Honours in psychology, which is nothing, so that's a bit disillusioning.

It appears that Justine's reference to "disillusioning" speaks to being led to hope and aspire, while not being forewarned about future challenges with an Honours psychology degree. The remnants of this disillusionment results in unmet expectations about what the degree could afford, shock, confusion, and frustration. This appears to speak to most participants' experiences, in that like Justine, many of them appeared to demonstrate a lack of awareness about Honours in psychology being an academic degree, until they were met with resistance in their search for employment in the field.

This theme highlights the impact of perceived lack of employment for Honours psychology graduates in South Africa.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore the experiences of currently enrolled psychology Honours students, who have not been accepted into any professional training programme for psychology in South Africa. The personal accounts highlight four primary themes: (a) "Feeling stuck with nothing", (b) Self-awareness for personal growth, (c) "The wait" – the limbo period, and (d) "You can't do anything". These themes will be contextualised within current literature.

The findings revealed that participants perceived an Honours in psychology as significant regarding personal capacity, as it facilitated self-awareness, provided the capacity to challenge negative perceptions of self, as well as the capacity to heal from childhood trauma, thus aiding in overall personal growth. These findings are substantiated through research conducted by Allan (2011), as the study of 10 Honours students revealed that an Honours is

more than an intermediate academic course; students were transformed personally through self-discovery and the transformation of their identities, concurrent to the evolution of their academic abilities.

In contrast, participants perceived an Honours in psychology to have no professional value. To most participants, the professional value of an Honours in psychology – specifically expressed through the ability to work in the field of psychology – is dependent on having a Master's in psychology. Given that a BA Honours in psychology does not directly lead to professional registration, several psychology graduates are excluded from working in the field, without entrance into a professional training programme that would lead to professional registration (Richter et al., 1998). Several participants battled to find employment in the field with a BA Honours in psychology and were unsuccessful.

Participants expressed experiencing personal gains but not professional gains, due to how the Honours psychology curriculum is structured and how much access it affords to directly practicing in the field of psychology. In support of these findings regarding participants' challenges, research by Mubiana (2010) revealed difficulty obtaining employment with only a psychology undergraduate or postgraduate degree. Additionally, research by Moleke (2006) revealed that most employers are hesitant to employ Humanities and Bachelor of Arts graduates, due to the general nature of their degrees. Furthermore, participants' challenge in obtaining employment is substantiated by the difficulty translating skills introduced in an Honours psychology curriculum to the employment market (Akhurst, 2009; Bonn et al., 2009).

A BA Honours psychology degree in South Africa is an academically-based degree (Ngubo, 2018); thus it is undeniable that the skillset of BA Honours psychology graduates is limited and insufficient for them to administer psychological assessments, diagnose, formulate treatment plans and do psychotherapy. Evidently, the academic progression a BA Honours in

psychology affords does not directly lead to a specific employment track, resulting in psychology graduates working in general business and educational settings, rather than in specific health and welfare settings (Bonn et al., 2009). Seemingly, a BA Honours in psychology fails to contribute to employability in the field of psychology; a perception concurrent with the emphasis placed by Bonn et al. (2009), Richter et al. (1998) and Akhurst (2009) on the importance of improving the field of psychology to create adequate career and employment opportunities for psychology Honours graduates.

The findings of this study highlight that the role of BA Honours psychology graduates in relation to employers and the public is ill-defined and unclear, which could contribute to a lack of employment opportunities in the field (Moleke, 2006; Mubiana, 2010). Additionally, the findings demonstrated that some participants were able to relay an understanding regarding the lack of employment for BA Honours psychology graduates. The psychology curriculum places emphasis on health and clinical applications of psychological knowledge (Bonn et al., 2009). However, according to the findings of a study by Bonn et al. (2009), only 7.6% of students found employment in these sectors, revealing a discrepancy in understanding the role of psychology graduates in the workplace between universities, students, and graduates, as well as employers in the field of psychology. This is further substantiated in a study by Moleke (2006), who stated that South African psychology graduates are expected to have skills and perform duties in the workplace for which the Honours psychology curriculum does not prepare them. This highlights the persistent tension BA Honours psychology graduates experience regarding unsuccessful attempts to gain employment in the field, due to insufficient training and consequent incompetency. Furthermore, it emphasises the need for the curriculum to be revised to provide marketable skills, meet labour market needs, and concurrently address the treatment gap (Richter et al., 1998).

Participants demonstrated a sense of disillusionment, uncertainty, and unawareness about the aim of a BA Honours in psychology, what it can offer in the field and how it contributes to employability in the field. Additionally, participants appeared unaware about Honours in psychology being an academic degree, until they were met with resistance in their search for employment in the field. This is supported in a study by Mubiana (2010), demonstrating Honours psychology students' uncertainty about employment opportunities available to psychology graduates. Students highlighted the lack of adequate knowledge, regarding career opportunities, available to psychology Honours graduates. Additionally, Mubiana (2010) found that most psychology Honours students' prospective plans involved acquiring employment in the field of psychology directly after obtaining a BA Honours psychology degree.

Evidently, the disillusionment participants experienced concerning the BA Honours psychology degree was fuelled by expectations that it would directly lead to the ability to practice in the field. This expectation is not limited to participants in this study, as other BA Honours psychology students and graduates shared the same expectation regarding what the degree could offer professionally, demonstrating Honours psychology students' lack of awareness about what the Honours curriculum entails before pursuing a career in psychology (Mubiana, 2010; Ngubo, 2018). This raises the question of what information psychology students receive about the psychology curriculum and on what becoming a psychologist in South Africa entails. It is apparent that psychology Honours students and graduates desire a stronger connection between universities and the workplace, and for universities to respond to their expectations (Maharasoia & Hay, 2001).

Professional registration in psychology is necessary to protect the South African population, by selecting and training psychologists who can meet the psychological care requirements and service delivery needs of society (Mayekiso et al., 2004). However, it is

apparent that due to lack of professional practice skills provided in the BA Honours psychology curriculum and the restriction of psychological practice to professional registration, BA Honours psychology graduates experience challenges with concern to employment and recognition in the field. Subsequently, this has implications on the profession of psychology, as the exclusion of several psychology graduates from practicing in the field of psychology, arguably, contributes to the shortage of human resources necessary to address the treatment gap and the relevance debate in South Africa (De Kock & Pillay, 2017; Macleod & Howell, 2013; Richter et al., 1998). It is imperative that an appropriate form of professional training is provided at a graduate level and that the psychology undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum incorporate the skills required of graduates from employers in the field of psychology (Richter et al., 1998). More work is needed in assisting psychology graduates with employment in the field, which would inevitably address the country's mental health needs (Pillay, 2016).

Conclusion

In exploring experiences of currently enrolled Honours psychology students, the study found that Honours psychology students have a dual perception of the value of an Honours in psychology; they experienced personal growth gains but no professional gains. Additionally, the study found that in their search for employment post-Honours, Honours psychology students battled to find employment in the field, as well as gain acceptance into Master's in psychology; consequently experiencing Honours in psychology as contributing to an experience of limbo – a period of waiting and uncertainty, with no progression in the field of psychology.

The study highlights a continuous tension between the nature of the psychology profession (restricting practice in the field to professionally trained personnel), limited training capacity and limited access to mental health services (due to insufficient human resources,

infrastructure, and funding). These tensions will remain for some time to come, as skills training, professional training opportunities and employment for BA Honours psychology graduates in the field remain limited. It is evident that a government and industry supported mid-level position, integrated within a primary health care level, is imperative to address the mental health needs of the public, and to create employment for mid-level psychology graduates.

Recommendations

More research focusing on the experiences of Honours psychology students and graduates is needed, to ascertain how they can contribute to the societal needs of the public and to determine what can be provided for them, without compromising the integrity and ethical standards of the profession.

It appears crucial for psychology students to receive seminars on the requirements of becoming a psychologist in South Africa, inclusive of employment opportunities available for psychology graduates in the field. Additionally, the creation of government and industry supported mid-level positions for psychology graduates appears crucial.

Limitations

This study was limited to BA Honours psychology students, as graduates did not respond to the invitation. Due to time constraints, this limitation could not be overcome, which impacts the extent of the experiences and impact on graduates. The study was also limited to one specific university and a broader survey of experiences could possibly yield more diverse experiences and insights.

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Disclosure of interest

The author reports no conflict of interest.

Data availability statement

Data is available from the author upon reasonable request.

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Appendix A: Participants' Invitation to Participate**RHODES UNIVERSITY***Grahamstown ● 6140 ● South Africa*

RHODES PSYCHOLOGY CLINIC**Tel: [+27] 079 351 6122****E-mail: adelineduiker@gmail.com**

04 April 2019

To whom it may concern

Re: Invitation to participate in Master's Research

You are invited to take part in a study conducted by Adeline Duiker, (under the supervision of Duane Booysen), from the Psychology Department at Rhodes University. You are approached as a possible participant because you meet the inclusion criteria of the current study.

Adeline is a psychology postgraduate student completing her master's degree in Counselling Psychology and is carrying out research on the lived experiences of currently enrolled honours psychology students, who are not in any professional training program for psychology in South Africa?

1. TITLE OF RESEARCH

“it’s just like a waiting room”: The experiences of psychology Honours students who are not accepted into any professional training programme for psychology in South Africa

2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To explore the lived experiences of currently enrolled honours psychology students, who are not in any professional training program for psychology in South Africa.

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The current study is significant as honours psychology students and graduates are faced with challenges with concern to employment, as well as recognition within the profession in South Africa. Furthermore, there is lack of awareness concerning the lived experiences of honours psychology students and graduates as research exploring the experiences during and after the recent completion of an honours in psychology is limited. Therefore, by sharing your experiences as an honours psychology student, you will be greatly contributing to this gap in the research.

4. WHAT WILL BE ASKED OF ME?

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to share your experiences as a honours psychology student by completing one face-to-face or Skype interview with the researcher for a maximum time of an hour and a half. The interviews will also need to be audio taped.

5. PROTECTION OF YOUR INFORMATION, CONFIDENTIALITY, AND IDENTITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you as an individual will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of only allowing the researcher and her supervisor to access data. All information will remain anonymous. Participant data

and information (such as transcripts and audiotapes) will be stored electronically, and only the primary investigator and her supervisor, will have access to these electronic copies which will be secured/protected with a password. These electronic copies will be stored on a computer at the Rhodes Psychology Clinic. Informed consent forms or other forms of information that may be linked to participants will be kept separate from research data and will be password protected. If results are to be published from the study, confidentiality will be maintained by replacing participant names with pseudonyms.

6. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and will still remain in the study. The researcher may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise that warrant doing so.

7. RESEARCHERS' CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Adeline Duiker or Duane Booysen.

Researcher:

Adeline Duiker

Rhodes University

060 310 9666 / adelineduiker@gmail.com

Supervisor:

Duane Booysen

Rhodes University

0466038507 / d.booyesen@ru.ac.za

8. DEBRIEFING

You will be offered the opportunity following the end of the interview process and at the end of the study, to question the researcher and the study's findings and/or to express any thoughts surrounding the study.

Thus, the intention of this letter is to invite you to participate in this study. This invitation has been approved by the Department of Psychology's Research Project and Ethics Review Committee. Attached for your information is a copy of the participant's informed consent forms. If you would like to participate in this research, please complete and return the attached informed consent forms.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Adeline Duiker [Research Student]

Duane Booysen [Supervisor]

Appendix B: Interview Schedule

These questions were used to guide the interview process but were not followed in a strict format/limited to only these questions and were seen rather as a rough guide and to provide prompts.

Demographic Details

1. Date of Birth:
2. Age:

Contact Details

1. Phone Number:
2. Email address:

Year honours was obtained (if applicable):

Studies (Questions for honours in psychology students and graduates):

1. What made you choose psychology as a degree?
2. What is it like studying psychology?

Prompt: Were there any significant experiences during your study regarding psychology?

3. How do you feel about being an honours in psychology student or graduate?
4. What are your attitudes and thoughts concerning the value of an honours in psychology?

Expectations:

Honours in psychology student Questions:

1. Given your current experience of being an honours in psychology student, how do you feel about psychology as a profession?
2. How do you feel when thinking about post-honours?
3. What expectations do you have for after you complete your honours in psychology?

Honours in psychology graduate Questions:

1. What is it like being an honours in psychology graduate?
2. Given your current experience of being an honours in psychology graduate, how do you feel about psychology as a profession?
3. How do you feel when thinking about your career in psychology prospectively?

Master's in psychology applications (Questions for honours in psychology students and graduates):

Have you applied for a professional programme in master's before? If so, what was the experience like?

Contact information:

Researcher:

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Rhodes University Ethics Coordinator:

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Appendix C: Documented analysis

Title of research: Exploring the experiences of psychology Honours students and graduates, who are not accepted into any professional training programme for psychology: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Charmaine: Steps to Analysis

Step 1: Reading and re-reading the data	×
Step 2: Initial noting- see transcript scan	×
Step 3: Developing Emergent themes- see transcript and text below	×
Step 4: Searching for connections between emergent themes- see transcript and table below	×
Step 5: Graphic representation of the structure of emergent themes	×

Step 3: Developing Emergent themes:

1. Regretting choice of study
2. A source of concern: job security
3. Parental disapproval with degree
4. Interest in human behaviour
5. Undergraduate study in psychology, too general
6. Undergraduate course content described as repetitive
7. Psychology undergrad honours degree failing to contribute to employability
8. Undergraduate and postgraduate (honours) course content lacking exposure to practical application

9. The need for more exposure to community involvement as opposed to merely writing and research
10. Slow roll out of course content/ psychological training
11. Slow roll out of exposure to community involvement
12. Exposure to individuals working in various areas of psychology as beneficial
13. Exposure to individuals working in various areas of psychology increasing clarity and hope as well as decreasing doubt
14. Exposure to individuals working in various areas of psychology broadened knowledge of psychologist's role in service to the community
15. Narrow understanding of therapy
16. A lack of awareness about the different modalities in therapy
17. Slow roll out of course content resulting in uninformed decision making with concern to specialization in the field
18. Slow roll out of course content affecting learning and memory
19. Loss of prospective psychologists in the field due to lack of entry into a professional training programme and no employment opportunities in the field
20. Lack of practical exposure in studying psychology affecting self-confidence in professional capacity
21. Increase in self-doubt
22. Perception of honours as insignificant
23. Profession of psychology perceived useful in understanding others and self
24. A dual perception of life after honours: Uncertainty increasing anxiety and eagerness to acquire different skills
25. "The wait"- descriptive of a period after honours, before entry into masters
26. "The wait" perceived as a period for personal growth

27. “The wait” perceived as a period to develop different professional skills
28. Psychological training from undergraduate studies to honours failing to meet employment demands
29. Indifference and Apathy with concern to acceptance into professional training programme for psychology
30. Training from undergrad to honours in psychology perceived to be far removed from employers’ requirements
31. Psychology studies from undergrad to honours perceived to be too theoretical
32. Caution/ Awareness of time
33. “The wait” perceived to aggravate psychological distress for others
34. Course should be improved to assist with employability

Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes

- Emergent themes above reviewed and most important themes were highlighted
 - Highlighted themes were clustered together
 - Clustered themes were used to identify superordinate themes (see text below).
- *prospective superordinate themes listed in bold above emergent themes

Step 5: Searching for connections across emergent themes

- Emergent theme clusters utilized to develop superordinate themes
1. Undergraduate study in psychology too general, repetitive and lacking in practical exposure.
 2. Perception of honours as insignificant

3. Psychology undergrad and honours degree failing to contribute to employability
4. Slow roll out of course content and practical exposure
5. Exposure to individuals working in various areas of psychology as a motivating factor in the field
6. Loss of prospective psychologists in the field
7. Indifference and apathy with concern to acceptance into a professional training programme for psychology
8. “The wait”- descriptive of a period after honours before entry into master’s

Step 5: Graphic representation of the structure of the emergent themes

TABLE OF SUPERORDINATE THEMES AND EMERGENT THEMES FROM ONE PARTICIPANT		
THEMES	PAGE	KEY WORDS
Undergraduate study in psychology too general, repetitive and lacking in practical exposure / Perception of honours as insignificant		
• Regretting choice of study	3	Regret
• Undergraduate study in psychology too general	5	Too general
• Undergraduate course content described as repetitive	6	Repetitive
• Undergraduate and honours study in psychology lacking practical exposure	6	Lacks practicality
• Perception of honours as insignificant	9	Insignificant

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need for more exposure to community involvement as opposed to merely writing and research 	6	More exposure
Psychology undergrad and honours degree failing to contribute to employability		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job security- a source of concern 	5	Job security
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychology undergrad and honours degree failing to contribute to employability 	6	Employability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychological training from undergraduate to honours failing to meet employment demands 	13	Employment demands
Slow roll out of course content and practical exposure		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slow roll out of course content/ psychological training 	6	Course content/psychological training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slow roll out of exposure to community involvement 	6	Community involvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slow roll out of course content resulting in uninformed decision making with concern to specialization in the field 	7	Uninformed decision making
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slow roll out of course content affecting learning and memory 	8	Learning and memory
Exposure to individuals working in various areas of psychology as a motivating factor in the field		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposure to individuals working in various areas of psychology increasing clarity and hope as well as decreasing doubt 	7	Increasing clarity and hope
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposure to individuals working in various areas of psychology broadened knowledge of psychologists' role in service to the communities 	7	Broadening knowledge
Loss of prospective psychologists in the field		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of prospective psychologists in the field, due to lack of entry into a professional training programme- and no employment opportunities in the field 	9	Loss
Indifference and apathy with concern to acceptance into a professional training programme for psychology		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Indifference and apathy with concern to acceptance into a professional training programme for psychology 	13	Indifference and apathy with concern to master's acceptance
"The wait"- descriptive of a period after honours before entry into master's		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> "The wait"- descriptive of a period after honours before entry into master's 	11	After honours before masters
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> "The wait" perceived as a period of personal growth 	11	Personal growth
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> "The wait" perceived as a period to develop professional skills 	11	Develop professional skills

6. "The wait" perceived to aggravate psychological distress for others	14	Psychological Distress
7. Awareness of time	14	Time
8. A twofold perception of life after honours: uncertainty increasing anxiety and eagerness to acquire different skills	11	Dual perceptions

Justine: Steps to Analysis

Step 1: Reading and re-reading the data	×
Step 2: Initial noting- see transcript scan	×
Step 3: Developing Emergent themes- see transcript and text below	×
Step 4: Searching for connections between emergent themes- see transcript and table below	×
Step 5: Graphic representation of the structure of emergent themes	×

Step 3: Developing Emergent themes

1. Appears to be passionate about psychology
2. Apathy with concern to an honours in psychology
3. Motivated by family support; support of family keeping her in the field- determination to progress in the field birthed from family support.
4. Appears encouraged by seeing others overcome the difficulty of becoming a registered psychologist.
5. The idea of providing psychological help to people is somewhat therapeutic to her.
6. Appears to be an altruistic and empathetic person
7. Feels responsibility towards others experience of psychological distress
8. Studying psychology feels befitting to participant
9. Studying psychology appears to have simulated with the core of who the participant is
10. Studying psychology appears to be a lens the participant uses to view and experience life (Studying psychology as a lens)
11. Studying psychology appears to have contributed to the participants identity- Giving up psychology would be giving up a part of herself

12. Experience of qualified psychologists' character in academia/ personal capacity, as contrary to the values they're meant to uphold in a helping profession- psychologists character in personal capacity do not match the character expected of individuals in a helping profession
13. Positive experience of studying psychology, tied to positive interpersonal encounters with lecturers in the fields, specifically their ability to empathize, and motivate others as well as have their character match the values of psychology
14. Practical exposure in studying psychology perceived as a positive experience that aided in choice of speciality in the field
15. Practical exposure appeared to have motivated participant to meet community needs
16. Positive experiences within studying psychology outweigh the negative experiences
17. Acceptance into honours left participant feeling hopeful, self-confident and with a positive outlook on life.
18. Mater's application process, rejection, lack of job security perceived by participant as disheartening and shocking.
19. "Like trying to find water from a stone" -use of language in describing working in the field with an honours in psychology- alludes to the perception of difficulty/impossibility of working in the field with an honours in psychology
20. Appears to be a lot of misinformation and very little information around practicing with an honours in psychology
21. Frustration stemming from all the different requirements that come with working in the field.
22. Honours degree described and perceived as useless
23. Participant feels disillusioned from the lack of open and upfront discussions about honours in psychology being an academic degree

24. An assumption that the selection criteria from masters and the difficulty with becoming a qualified psychologist, leaves the country's psychological needs unmet.
25. No information about the usefulness of an honours in psychology provided.
26. Participant sounds hopeless
27. Honours degree too academic and not enough practical exposure in the course
28. Honours degree failing to add to participants employability in the field
29. No value in an honours in psychology- perceived as useless
30. Bachelor of Psychology (B-Psych) perceived to be superior
31. Psychology perceived to be a dire need in the South African context
32. Not being multilingual hampers one's ability to provide psychological services in a multilingual context
33. A lack of transparency with concern to the journey of becoming a psychologist
34. The lack of provision of knowledge with concern to becoming a well-rounded psychologist in a South African context
35. A mismatch of the psychological needs of the public and the turnover rate of professional psychologists.
36. There are not enough professionals going around to meet citizen's needs.
37. Not enough qualified psychologists to tackle psychological issues through a multidisciplinary approach
38. There are not enough psychologists to assist other professionals
39. The field of psychology is missing the public's psychological needs
40. Not knowing what to do next
41. The use of the words, "Vaguest chance" addressing acceptance into a professional training program in psychology reflects the perceived difficulty/impossibility of gaining acceptance

42. Life after honours: A need to take initiative and seek practical exposure in the field
43. It appears that time is an important factor to participant and is almost always described in conjunction to her age
44. Participant's goal is to become multilingual to ensure that she possesses the ability to provide psychological needs to a wider population
45. Feeling anxious about post honours
46. Life post-honours and pre-masters appears expensive- Studying further or volunteering after honours, before masters does not offer income that would cover living expenses
47. Those with financial means can afford to study further after honours and before masters- what happens to the many students that cannot find employment and that cannot afford to study further before masters either
48. Age according to interviewee appears to be an added factor to the pressure and anxiety she feels
49. The separation of different levels of education within psychology appears to be at students detriment
50. Uncertainty about anything outside of doing a master's in psychology
51. Frustration with concern to added studying expense to enrol in courses after honours
52. Summarized plans for life after honours: Getting animal assisted therapy certification, becoming a qualified registered counsellor, becoming a registered psychometrist, volunteering at a psychiatric hospital, volunteering at a school program
53. It appears that getting a master's in psychology would require one to be open to travelling to any province- a possible influence of already established relationships (i.e. marriage and relationship with children)

54. Marriage restricts where participant can study- university acceptance for masters would possibly negatively influence her marriage
55. Participant had a negative experience of applying for master's in psychology- on top of being rejected, she was informed late about the rejection
56. Negative experience of applying for a master's in psychology caused significant psychological distress and affected participants self-esteem
57. Description of master's application as unpleasant and disheartening
58. Negative master's application process affected participants motivation to finish honours
59. Participants presents with a misconceptions/ lack of awareness of what all the different registration categories in the field of psychology are and how they differ from each other (i.e. clinical psychology, counselling psychology, educational psychology etc.)

Step 3: Searching for connections across emergent themes

- Emergent themes above reviewed and most important themes were highlighted
- Highlighted themes were clustered together
- Clustered themes were used to identify superordinate themes (see text below).

Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes

- Emergent theme clusters utilized to develop superordinate themes
1. Honours degree described and perceived as useless/ too academic- this in turn influences employability in the field between honours and master's in psychology

2. Positive experience of studying psychology linked to interpersonal encounters with lecturers in the field- specifically their ability to have their character match the values of psychology.
3. Practical exposure in studying psychology aided in choice of speciality in the field.
4. Participant encouraged by other's ability to overcome the difficulty of becoming a registered psychologist.
5. Studying psychology/ becoming a psychologist as a form of identity.
6. Masters application process described as unpleasant, disheartening and a process that causes psychological distress as well as affects self-esteem.
7. Feeling frustrated and disillusioned with concern to misinformation and the lack of information about the usefulness of an honours in psychology
8. A mismatch between the psychological needs of the public and the turnover rate of professional psychologists.
9. Feeling uncertain, undecided and anxious with concern to life after honours
10. Time and age appears to be an added pressure, aggravating participants anxiety.
11. Frustration with concern to the added studying expense to enrol in courses after honours
12. Misconceptions/ lack of awareness of the different registration categories in the field of psychology and how they differ from each other.

Step 5: Graphic representation of the structure of the emergent themes

TABLE OF SUPERORDINATE THEMES AND EMERGENT THEMES FROM ONE PARTICIPANT		
THEMES	PAGE	KEY WORDS

Honours degree described and perceived as useless/ too academic- this in turn influences employability in the field between honours and master's in psychology		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apathy with concern to an honours in psychology 	16	Apathy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honours degree described and perceived as useless 	18	Honours is useless
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of qualified psychologists' character in academia/ personal capacity, as contrary to the values they're meant to uphold in a helping profession 	17	Upholding the values of psychology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honours degree too academic and not enough practical exposure in the course 	19	Minimal practical exposure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honours degree failing to add to participants employability in the field 	19	Employability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor of Psychology (B-Psych) perceived to be superior 	19	B-Psych superior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Like trying to find water from a stone" -use of language in describing working in the field with an honours in psychology- alludes to the perception of difficulty/impossibility of working in the field with an honours in psychology 	18	Working in the field with an honours in psychology
Positive experience of studying psychology linked to interpersonal encounters with lecturers in the field- specifically their ability to have their character match the values of psychology.		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive experience of studying psychology, tied to positive interpersonal encounters with lecturers in the fields, specifically their ability to empathize, and motivate others as well as have their character match the values of psychology 	17	Positive interpersonal encounters
Practical exposure in studying psychology aided in choice of speciality in the field.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practical exposure in studying psychology perceived as a positive experience that aided in choice of speciality in the field 	18	Practical exposure
Participant encouraged by other's ability to overcome the difficulty of becoming a registered psychologist.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appears encouraged by seeing others overcome the difficulty of becoming a registered psychologist. 	16	Witnessing others overcome
Studying psychology/ becoming a psychologist as a form of identity.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The idea of providing psychological help to people is somewhat therapeutic to her. 	16	Psychological help as therapeutic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studying psychology appears to be a lens the participant uses to view and experience life (Studying psychology as a lens) 	17	Psychology as a lens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studying psychology appears to have contributed to the participants identity- Giving up psychology would be giving up a part of herself 	17	Psychology as an identity

Masters application process described as unpleasant, disheartening and a process that causes psychological distress and affects self-esteem.		
Mater's application process, rejection, lack of job security perceived by participant as disheartening and shocking.	22	Masters application process
The use of the words, "Vaguest chance" addressing acceptance into a professional training program in psychology reflects the perceived difficulty/impossibility of gaining acceptance	20	Difficulty of gaining acceptance
Participant had a negative experience of applying for master's in psychology- on top of being rejected, she was informed late about the rejection	22	Negative experience of application process
Negative experience of applying for a master's in psychology caused significant psychological distress and affected participants self-esteem	22	Psychological distress and self-esteem
Description of master's application as unpleasant and disheartening	22	Disheartened
Feeling frustrated and disillusioned with concern to misinformation and the lack of information about the usefulness of an honours in psychology		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appears to be a lot of misinformation and very little information around practicing with an honours in psychology 	18	Practicing with an honours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frustration stemming from all the different requirements that come with working in the field 	18	Requirements for working

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant feels disillusioned from the lack of open and upfront discussions about honours in psychology being an academic degree 	18	Disillusioned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No information about the usefulness of an honours in psychology provided 	19	Usefulness of honours in psychology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lack of transparency with concern to the journey of becoming a psychologist 	19	Becoming a psychologist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lack of provision of knowledge with concern to becoming a well-rounded psychologist in a South African context 	19	Provision of knowledge
A mismatch between the psychological needs of the public and the turnover rate of professional psychologists.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An assumption that the selection criteria from masters and the difficulty with becoming a qualified psychologist, leaves the country's psychological needs unmet 	18	Country's psychological needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A mismatch of the psychological needs of the public and the turnover rate of professional psychologists. 	20	Mismatch
Feeling uncertain, undecided and anxious with concern to life after honours		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not knowing what to do next 	20	Not knowing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life after honours: A need to take initiative and seek practical exposure in the field 	20	Initiative

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling anxious about post honours 	21	Anxiety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty about anything outside of doing a master's in psychology 	21	Uncertainty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarized plans for life after honours: Getting animal assisted therapy certification, becoming a qualified registered counsellor, becoming a registered psychometrist, volunteering at a psychiatric hospital, volunteering at a school program 	21	Summary of plans
Time and age appear to be an added pressure, aggravating participants anxiety		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It appears that time is an important factor to participant and is almost always described in conjunction to her age 	20	Time and age
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age according to interviewee appears to be an added factor to the pressure and anxiety she feels 	21	Age and anxiety
Frustration with concern to the added studying expense to enrol in courses after honours		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life post-honours and pre-masters appears expensive- Studying further or volunteering after honours, before masters does not offer income that would cover living expenses 	21	No income post honours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those with financial means can afford to study further after honours and before master's acceptance- what happens to the many students 	21	Studying further

that cannot find employment and that cannot afford to study further before masters either?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frustration with concern to added studying expense to enrol in courses after honours 	21	Studying expense
Misconceptions/ lack of awareness of the different registration categories in the field of psychology and how they differ from each other.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant presents with a misconceptions/ lack of awareness of what all the different registration categories in the field of psychology are and how they differ from each other (i.e. clinical psychology, counselling psychology, educational psychology etc.) 	22	Misunderstanding registration categories

Portia: Steps to Analysis

Step 1: Reading and re-reading the data	×
Step 2: Initial noting- see transcript scan	×
Step 3: Developing Emergent themes- see transcript and text below	×
Step 4: Searching for connections between emergent themes- see transcript and table below	×
Step 5: Graphic representation of the structure of emergent themes	×

Step 3: Developing Emergent themes:

1. Family disapproval with concern to participants choice of study
2. Perception that psychology does not provide income with as much surety and as rapidly as other professions
3. Decision to further psychological studies based on interest in neuropsychology, which participant plans to pursue through a master's in psychology
4. Apathy and indifference with concern to studying psychology
5. Perception that studying psychology is a waste of time
6. An excessive focus on theory and a lack of practical exposure in undergraduate and honours studies
7. A self-consciousness when participant compares their degree to other degree's in the field (i.e. B-Psych)
8. Lack of adequate practical experience generates loss of interest in the field
9. Disheartened by lack of adequate practical exposure in the field
10. Practical exposure aided in self-awareness and contributed to personal as well as professional growth

11. “Did I make the right choice?”- Telling of how practical exposure contributed to specifying professional interests
12. Practical exposure brought about clarity with concern to the field of psychology and its usefulness to the community
13. “What next”- descriptive of lack of plans post-honours degree
14. A pervasive comparison and competition between Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of psychology (B-Psych) degree
15. B-Psych students treated more positively and perceived as superior by lecturers than BA students
16. A sense of resentment within participants statement that BA students are limited to theory
17. “Purposeless/ directionless studying”- participants description of studying a BA in psychology
18. “Waiting room for master’s”- descriptive of undergraduate, post-graduate and post-honours period- comprising of no psychological training
19. A sense of resentment within participants statement that BA students must do more in contributing to their employability
20. No provision of skills in undergraduate and postgraduate honours in psychology- disadvantages participant with concern to employability
21. Results of participants lengthy job search: No employment for individuals with a BA honours in psychology in the field
22. Participant feeling disadvantaged by the lack of information from lecturers with concern to what to expect with a psychology degree
23. Insinuation that the turnover of professionally trained psychologists too low for rapidly growing psychological needs of the population

24. Field of psychology lacking relevance with concern to population psychological needs
25. Perception that universities accept far too many undergraduate and honours students and far too few master's students
26. A sense of resentment towards the profession of psychology
27. Back-up plan: Participant finds solace or comfort in the fact that she has an educational background in criminal justice
28. Master's selection process described as traumatic, discouraging and unfair
29. Different experiences at different universities with concern to the selection process
30. Frustration and anxiety with concern to investing time and money when there is no assurance of return on investment
31. The financial implications of a master's selection process described as an overwhelming inconvenience
32. "A waste of money"- descriptive of a master's selection process
33. Financial status appears to limit what universities an individual can afford to apply to
34. Confusion with concern to a choice of speciality
35. Universities cancelling master's selection aggravates anxiety and frustration participants chances of being accepted

Step 3: Searching for connections across emergent themes

- Emergent themes above reviewed and most important themes were highlighted
- Highlighted themes were clustered together
- Clustered themes were used to identify superordinate themes (see text below).

Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes

- Emergent theme clusters utilized to develop superordinate themes

1. Perception that psychology does not provide income with as much safety and as rapidly as other professions.
2. Apathy and indifference with concern to studying psychology
3. “Waiting room for masters”- descriptive of undergraduate, post-graduate and post-honours period, comprising of insufficient skills development
4. Lack of information with concern to what to expect with a psychology degree
5. An excessive focus on theory and a lack of practical exposure in undergraduate and honours studies
6. Experiences of practical exposure aided in self-awareness and contributed to personal as well as professional growth
7. A comparison and competition between BA and B-Psych resulting in self-consciousness by participant studying BA – B-Psych students treated as superior by lecturers
8. “What next”- theme telling of the lack of concrete plans post-honours degree
Insufficient provision of skills in undergraduate and postgraduate honours in psychology
9. A sense of resentment in participants expression of how BA psychology influences employability and towards the profession of psychology as a whole
10. Suggestion that the turnover of professionally trained psychologists too low for rapidly growing psychological needs of the population
11. Master’s selection process described as traumatic, discouraging and unfair
12. Frustration and anxiety with concern to investing time and money when there is no assurance of return on investment
13. Financial status appears to limit what universities and individuals can apply to

Step 5: Graphic representation of the structure of the emergent themes

TABLE OF SUPERORDINATE THEMES AND EMERGENT THEMES FROM PARTICIPANT		
THEMES	PAGE	KEY WORDS
Perception that psychology does not provide income with as much safety and as rapidly as other professions.		
*same as superordinate theme	25	Income
Apathy and indifference with concern to studying psychology		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception that studying psychology is a waste of time 	25	Wasting time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Purposeless/ directionless studying”- participants description of studying a BA in psychology 	27	Purposeless and directionless studying
“Waiting room for masters”- descriptive of undergraduate, post-graduate and post-honours period, comprising of insufficient skills development		
*same as superordinate theme	28	Waiting room
Lack of information with concern to what to expect with a psychology degree		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant feeling disadvantaged by the lack of information from lecturers with concern to what to expect with a psychology degree 	27	Lack of information
An excessive focus on theory and a lack of practical exposure in undergraduate and honours studies		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disheartened by lack of adequate practical exposure in the field 	26	Disheartened
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practical exposure brought about clarity with concern to the field of psychology and its usefulness to the community 	26	Usefulness of psychology
Experiences of practical exposure aided in self-awareness and contributed to personal as well as professional growth		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of adequate practical experience generates loss of interest in the field 	26	Interests
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Did I make the right choice?”- Telling of how practical exposure contributed to specifying professional interests 	26	Specifying professional interests
A comparison and competition between BA and B-Psych resulting in self-consciousness by participant studying BA – B-Psych students treated as superior by lecturers		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A self-consciousness when participant compares their degree to other degree’s in the field (i.e. B-Psych) 	25	Self-consciousness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A pervasive comparison and competition between Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of psychology (B-Psych) degree 	25	Comparison
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> B-Psych students treated more positively and perceived as superior by lecturers than BA students 	27	Superiority
“What next”- theme telling of the lack of concrete plans post-honours degree		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What next”- descriptive of lack of plans post-honours degree 	26	“What next”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back-up plan: Participant finds solace or comfort in the fact that she has an educational background in criminal justice 	28	Back-up plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion with concern to a choice of speciality 	30	Choice of speciality
Insufficient provision of skills in undergraduate and postgraduate honours in psychology		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No provision of skills in undergraduate and postgraduate honours in psychology- disadvantages participant with concern to employability 	28	No provision of skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of participants lengthy job search: No employment for individuals with a BA honours in psychology in the field 	27	No employment
A sense of resentment in participants expression of how BA psychology influences employability and towards the profession of psychology as a whole		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sense of resentment within participants statement that BA students are limited to theory 	27	Limited to theory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sense of resentment within participants statement that BA students must do more in contributing to their employability 	27	Employability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sense of resentment towards the profession of psychology 	28	Profession of psychology

Suggestion that the turnover of professionally trained psychologists too low for rapidly growing psychological needs of the population		
*same as superordinate theme	27	Slow turnover
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field of psychology lacking relevance with concern to population psychological needs 	28	Lacking relevance
Master's selection process described as traumatic, discouraging and unfair		
*same as superordinate theme	30	Psychological distress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception that universities accept far too many undergraduate and honours students and far too few master's students 	27	University acceptance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universities cancelling master's selection aggravates anxiety and frustration participants chances of being accepted 	31	Chances of acceptance
Frustration and anxiety with concern to investing time and money when there is no assurance of return on investment		
*same as superordinate theme	29	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The financial implications of a master's selection process described as an overwhelming inconvenience 	30	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "A waste of money"- descriptive of a master's selection process 	30	
Financial status appears to limit what universities and individuals can apply to		

*same as superordinate theme	30	Limited options for application
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Sandra: Steps to Analysis

Step 1: Reading and re-reading the data	×
Step 2: Initial noting- see transcript scan	×
Step 3: Developing Emergent themes- see transcript and text below	×
Step 4: Searching for connections between emergent themes- see transcript and table below	×
Step 5: Graphic representation of the structure of emergent themes	×

Step 3: Developing Emergent themes

- Participant supported by family- indicative of the freedom to follow professional interests
- Advocacy for the marginalized appears important to participant
- Undergraduate perceived as uninteresting and underwhelming
- Honours described as intellectually arousing
- Interpersonal encounters with individuals in the field appears to have a profound impact on participants experience of studying
- Positive interpersonal encounters with lecturers appears to have encouraged authenticity and courage
- Negative experience of studying tied to interpersonal interaction that contradicts the values of psychologists
- Appeared that being placed on the waiting list for honours fuelled participants initiative and professional creativity
- Perception that psychology is too Westernized and needs to be more inclusive of context and culture to improve in value

- Ability to practice within the field being restricted to master's students perceived to limit the value of psychology to the South African population
- A misunderstanding of qualified psychologists' scope of practice
- Perceived need for the creation of more employment for honours students- perhaps in research or community psychology- in attempts to improve the value of the field to the country
- Psychology perceived as a demanding profession in personal capacity in that it requires resilience and strength
- "Psychologists try to change people and not society" -descriptive of psychology lacking advocacy
- Advocacy not perceived as a necessity in the scope of practice
- Extreme anxiety with concern to post-honours
- Attempts to gain entrance into masters rousing self-consciousness, doubt in competency and insecurity
- Pervasive "imposter syndrome" influencing acceptance of affirmation and praise
- Perception that post-graduate psychology is hard to get into as well as a financial inconvenience
- Few spaces of master's acceptance contribute to psychological distress
- Participant feeling overwhelmed by her attempts to secure the progression of her career post-honours
- "Just let me help please!"- descriptive of how stifling the quest for experience feels for participant
- Master's applications described as effortful, slow and time-consuming
- The pressure to state academic interests prematurely in master's applications
- Perception that honours has added nothing significant to participant

- Expectation of employment in any field to, “Survive”- indicative of participants desperation
- Participant considering employment in recruitment, lecturing, volunteering and dog-therapy
- Appears that life post-honours will be used to identify and refine knowledge about research interests
- Added difficulty and frustration of having marginalized groups considered for master’s acceptance first
- Further frustration of not having enough spaces available to strike a balance between assisting marginalized groups and offering acceptance based on merit
- Master’s application outside of South Africa considered to be more hopeful as it appears more inclusive- acceptance appears to be solely based on merit
- Privilege negatively influences master’s acceptance- underprivilege negatively influences master’s selection- descriptive of how the system/ process of selection puts a lot of people in limbo
- Rate of master’s acceptance widens the treatment gap
- Being an honours student perceived as challenging- lack of employment with degree adds to challenge
- Perception that master’s applications requires balance between vulnerability and self-confidence- descriptive of the difficulty treading the line between self-confidence and humility
- Apprehensive of master’s selection process

Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes

- Emergent theme clusters utilized to develop superordinate themes
 1. Family support contributing to freedom to explore professional interests
 2. Undergraduate perceived as uninteresting and underwhelming
 3. Honours experienced as intellectually arousing but insignificant with concern to fostering employability
 4. Interpersonal encounters with individuals in the field appears to have a profound impact on participants experience of studying
 5. Psychology as Westernized- influencing its value
 6. Restrictions with concern to employment for honours psychology students perceived to limit the value of psychology
 7. Lack of employment for honours students perceived as stifling and results in desperation for employment in any field to survive
 8. Rate of masters acceptance widening treatment gap
 9. A misunderstanding of qualified psychologists' scope of practice
 10. Psychology perceived to lack advocacy
 11. Anxiety with concern to post honours
 12. Contempt for master's selection process
 13. Privilege negatively influences master's acceptance- underprivilege negatively influences master's selection- descriptive of how the system/ process of selection places a lot of people in limbo

Step 5: Graphic representation of the structure of the emergent themes

TABLE OF SUPERORDINATE THEMES AND EMERGENT THEMES FROM PARTICIPANT		
THEMES	PAGE	KEY WORDS
Family support contributing to freedom to explore professional interests		
*same as superordinate theme	33	Support
Undergraduate perceived as uninteresting and underwhelming		
*same as superordinate theme	34	Undergraduate as insignificant
Honours experienced as intellectually arousing but insignificant with concern to fostering employability		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honours described as intellectually arousing 	34	Intellectually arousing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appeared that being placed on the waiting list for honours fuelled participants initiative and professional creativity 	36	Honours waiting list
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being an honours student perceived as challenging- lack of employment with degree adds to challenge 	42	Lack of employment
Interpersonal encounters with individuals in the field appears to have a profound impact on participants experience of studying		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive interpersonal encounters with lecturers appears to have encouraged authenticity and courage 	35	Positive Interpersonal Encounters

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative experience of studying tied to interpersonal interaction that contradicts the values of psychologists 	35	Negative experience
Psychology as Westernized- influencing its value		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception that psychology is too Westernized and needs to be more inclusive of context and culture to improve in value 	36	Psychology as Westernized
Restrictions with concern to employment for honours psychology students perceived to limit the value of psychology		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to practice within the field being restricted to master's students perceived to limit the value of psychology to the South African population 	36	Restrictions for practice
Lack of employment for honours students perceived as stifling and results in desperation for employment in any field to survive		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived need for the creation of more employment for honours students- perhaps in research or community psychology- in attempts to improve the value of the field to the country 	37	Creation of employment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Just let me help please!"- descriptive of how stifling the quest for experience feels for participant 	39	Stifling quest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expectation of employment in any field to, "Survive"- indicative of participants desperation 	39	Desperation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant considering employment in recruitment, lecturing, volunteering and dog-therapy 	40	Employment considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appears that life post-honours will be used to identify and refine knowledge about research interests 	40	Life Post-Honours
Rate of matters acceptance widening treatment gap		
*same as superordinate theme	42	Treatment Gap
A misunderstanding of qualified psychologists' scope of practice		
*same as superordinate theme	36	Scope of Practice
Psychology perceived to lack advocacy		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Psychologists try to change people and not society" -descriptive of psychology lacking advocacy 	37	Lacking advocacy
Anxiety with concern to post honours		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extreme anxiety with concern to post-honours 	38	Anxiety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant feeling overwhelmed by her attempts to secure the progression of her career post-honours 	39	Overwhelmed
Contempt for master's selection process		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempts to gain entrance into masters rousing self-consciousness, doubt in competency and insecurity 	38	Gaining entrance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception that post-graduate psychology is hard to get into as well as a financial inconvenience 	38	Post-graduate psychology

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few spaces of master's acceptance contribute to psychological distress 	38	Psychological distress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's applications described as effortful, slow and time-consuming 	39	Master's applications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pressure to state academic interests prematurely in master's applications 	39	Academic interests
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception that master's applications requires balance between vulnerability and self-confidence- descriptive of the difficulty treading the line between self-confidence and humility 	41	Balance
Privilege negatively influences master's acceptance- underprivilege negatively influences master's selection- descriptive of how the system/ process of selection places a lot of people in limbo		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added difficulty and frustration of having marginalized groups considered for master's acceptance first 	42	Marginalized groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further frustration of not having enough spaces available to strike a balance between assisting marginalized groups and offering acceptance based on merit 	42	Spaces available

Tony: Steps to Analysis

Step 1: Reading and re-reading the data	×
Step 2: Initial noting- see transcript scan	×
Step 3: Developing Emergent themes- see transcript and text below	×
Step 4: Searching for connections between emergent themes- see transcript and table below	×
Step 5: Graphic representation of the structure of emergent themes	×

Step 3: Developing Emergent themes

- Family supports choice of study
- Participants' sister forewarned participant not to major only in psychology- should have a "back-up"
- Participant regrets choice to only major in psychology- regrets choice of study
- The financial demands of studying and applying to no avail, appear to be most distressing to participant
- Participant feels like having studied psychology for four years feels like a waste of time and a waste of resources
- Having no "fall-back plan" contributes to participants psychological distress- alludes to studying psychology lacking security and stability
- Participant appears apathetic with concern to choice of study
- Having often been depended on for comfort, sparked participants interest in psychology, as well as being passionate about witnessing healing
- Perception that psychology undergrad was too general- knowledge was too broad and lacked focus

- Appeared that participants disappointment stemmed from the fact that psychological knowledge concerning practice is provided at a master's level
- Participant took organisational psychology to "fall-back" on
- Positive experience of studying was focussed on gaining understanding and psychological knowledge of people's differences as well as similarities in their differences
- Dual perception of honours acceptance
 - Participant feels privileged and proud
 - Participant feels disappointed about the lack of direction, employability/ career advancement honours fails to provide- "Okay now what? I've come here but still can't do anything."
- Perception of being an honours student: It has not been challenging, it's manageable- participant approved of course content
- Perception that the value of an honours in psychology lies in its ability to aid in personal development and in understanding others
- Either than personal growth, participant finds no value in an honours in psychology- "It's sort of useless"
- Participant appears to feel discouraged that there is no employment for honours psychology graduates in the field- as well as disappointed that honours does nothing to assist with employability
- "I try not to be dismayed now"- Indicative of the effort to continue to fuel her passion in the face of resistance and rejection
- Perception that honours students have the capacity to make a difference and provide psychological resources to address the treatment gap

- Perception that lack of employment in the field for honours students limits potential and effective capacity of the field as a whole
- Ambivalent perception of post-honours
 - Extreme anxiety
 - Excitement
- Anxiety centred on having to settle in terms of employment and to gain experience- lack of control
- The expectation that post-honours will be a struggle
- “How am I going to make sure that I don’t screw the people up that I am working with?” -Alludes to the perception that honours psychology fails at equipping students to practice- honours in psychology is an academic degree-
- Appears that post-honours plans will be centred on trying to find ways to gain therapeutic experience and exposure to community work
- Having no set plans post-honours appears to make participant feel inadequate
- People inquiring about participants plans post-honours and having no response to their questions increases participants anxiety- “There’s also people asking me okay what’s your plans for next year, just makes it 300 times worse.”
- A dual reaction from people to participants lived experiences from honours to post-honours: Sympathy and judgement
- The fact that lay person does not understand the difficulty of becoming a qualified psychologist and that appears to add to participants distress
- “Now you’ve wasted all your time.” “You’re just like one of those drop-out’s”- Use of language alludes to a perceived sense of failure, that although participant has completed honours there is the perception that resistance and rejection experienced in the field of psychology equates to failure

- Expectations post-honours appears to be centred on personal growth rather than attempting to further her career in the field
- Plans post-honours
 - Volunteering
 - School counselling in Dubai
 - Become a registered counsellor
 - Teach in China
 - Personal Growth
- Participants found the completion master's applications as confusing since different universities have different standards- Participant subsequently experienced pressure in attempts to meet all these different standards- This calls the ability to remain authentic into question
- Application process experienced as effortful and time consuming
 - Participant appeared to experience challenges with concern to remaining authentic
- "Just to have the experience so that when I re-apply in the future then interviews won't be that intimidating." -Speaks to the need to gain experience in being interviewed, to nurse one's anxieties
- Selection experience was more negative than positive:
 - Selection experience was positive in the sense that participant was afforded the opportunity to witness and be encouraged by other people's passions and resilience
 - Selection experience was negative because of other people's motives for selections had participant question selection criteria
 - Selection experience was negative because activities participants were required to do in the process had participant question the selection criteria: "How does this tell them anything about who we are?"

- Perception that selection process is unfair
- Selection experience was negative as it appeared that participant had a hyper-awareness of how she was received
- Perception that those implementing selection criteria are ageist and judge as well as exclude younger applicants last- “I think that was the hardest thing for me to accept it that people would judge me merely on age.”
- Participant feels disrespected and wronged by the selection process as the amount of effort and financial sacrifice participant invested appeared to not amount to anything
- The lack of personalized feedback from individuals conducting the selections appears to add to participants’ distress- Left participant wondering what their areas of growth are
- Perception that doing an honours in psychology at Rhodes University increased significance of honours as academic staff are perceived by participant to be quite involved and supportive
- Participant considers being exposed to community engagement to be more valuable than exposure to theory

Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes

- Emergent theme clusters utilized to develop superordinate themes
 1. Family supports choice of study
 2. The lack of a “fall-back plan” as a contributing factor to distress
 3. The financial demands of studying and applying for master’s in psychology perceived as most distressing

4. Regret: Perception that having studied psychology for four years appears to be a waste of time and resources
5. Perception that undergraduate psychology course content was too broad and theoretical
6. Ambivalent emotions with concern to honours acceptance: Gratitude, pride, indifference and curiosity
7. Exposure to community engagement perceived as more valuable than theoretical knowledge
8. Either than contributing to personal growth, honours in psychology perceived as useless
9. Distress stemming from honours in psychology failing to contribute to employability
10. Perception that lack of employment for honours students limits the capacity for the field to respond to psychological needs- lack of employment in the field limits ability to address the treatment gap
11. Effort required to continue to fuel passion for the field in the face of rejection
12. Ambivalent perception of post-honours: Extreme anxiety and excitement
13. Honours in psychology- An academic degree perceived as failing to equip for practice
14. Shared perception that resistance and rejection experienced in the field of psychology equates to failure
15. The lack of understanding by lay people with concern to the difficulty of becoming a psychologist contributes to distress
16. Pressure in attempts to meet different universities standards within selection criteria appeared to have called authenticity into question
17. Master's in psychology selection experience was more negative than positive

18. Positive experience in completing honours at Rhodes University, as academic staff are perceived by participant to be quite involved and supportive

Step 5: Graphic representation of the structure of the emergent themes

TABLE OF SUPERORDINATE THEMES AND EMERGENT THEMES FROM PARTICIPANT		
THEMES	PAGE	KEY WORDS
Family supports choice of study		
*same as superordinate theme	44	Support
The lack of a “fall-back plan” as a contributing factor to distress		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants’ sister forewarned participant not to major only in psychology- should have a “back-up” 	44	Forewarning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having no “fall-back plan” contributes to participants psychological distress- alludes to studying psychology lacking security and stability 	45	Fall-Back Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having no set plans post-honours appears to make participant feel inadequate 	47	Inadequate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People inquiring about participants plans post-honours and having no response to their questions increases participants anxiety- “There’s also people asking me okay what’s your plans for next year, just makes it 300 times worse.” 	47	enquiries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed plans post-honours 	48	Proposed plans

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • -Volunteering • -School counselling in Dubai • -Become a registered counsellor • -Teach in China • -Personal Growth 		
The financial demands of studying and applying for master's in psychology perceived as most distressing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The financial demands of studying and applying to no avail, appear to be most distressing to participant 	44	Financial demands
Regret: Perception that having studied psychology for four years appears to be a waste of time and resources		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant regrets choice to only major in psychology- regrets choice of study 	44	Regret
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant feels like having studied psychology for four years feels like a waste of time and a waste of resources 	44	Waste
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant appears apathetic with concern to choice of study 	45	Apathy
Perception that undergraduate psychology course content was too broad and theoretical		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception that psychology undergrad was too general- knowledge was too broad and lacked focus 	45	Too general

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeared that participants disappointment stemmed from the fact that psychological knowledge concerning practice is provided at a master's level 	45	Psychological knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive experience of studying was focussed on gaining understanding and psychological knowledge of people's differences as well as similarities in their differences 	45	Gaining understanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative experience of studying tied to interpersonal interaction that contradicts the values of psychologists 	35	Negative experience
Ambivalent emotions with concern to honours acceptance: Gratitude, pride, indifference and curiosity		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of honours acceptance: Participant feels privileged and proud 	46	Privileged
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of being an honours student: It has not been challenging, it's manageable- participant approved of course content 	46	Unchallenging
Exposure to community engagement perceived as more valuable than theoretical knowledge		
*same as superordinate theme	50	Community Engagement
Either than contributing to personal growth, honours in psychology perceived as useless		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception that the value of an honours in psychology lies in its ability to aid in personal development and in understanding others 	46	Personal development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Either than personal growth, participant finds no value in an honours in psychology- "It's sort of useless" 	46	Useless
Distress stemming from honours in psychology failing to contribute to employability		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception of honours acceptance: Participant feels disappointed about the lack of direction, employability/ career advancement honours fails to provide- "Okay now what? I've come here but still can't do anything." 	46	Employability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant appears to feel discouraged that there is no employment for honours psychology graduates in the field- as well as disappointed that honours does nothing to assist with employability 	46	No employment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception that lack of employment in the field for honours students limits potential and effective capacity of the field as a whole 	47	Capacity of the field
Perception that lack of employment for honours students limits the capacity for the field to respond to psychological needs- lack of employment in the field limits ability to address the treatment gap		
*same as superordinate theme	46	Treatment gap
Effort required to continue to fuel passion for the field in the face of rejection		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I try not to be dismayed now”- Indicative of the effort to continue to fuel her passion in the face of resistance and rejection 	46	Resistance and rejection
Ambivalent perception of post-honours: Extreme anxiety and excitement		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety centred on having to settle in terms of employment and to gain experience- lack of control 	47	Settling
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appears that post-honours plans will be centred on trying to find ways to gain therapeutic experience and exposure to community work 	47	Therapeutic experience
Honours in psychology- An academic degree perceived as failing to equip for practice		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “How am I going to make sure that I don’t screw the people up that I am working with?” -Alludes to the perception that honours psychology fails at equipping students to practice- honours in psychology is an academic degree 	47	Academic degree
Shared perception that resistance and rejection experienced in the field of psychology equates to failure		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dual reaction from people to participants lived experiences from honours to post-honours: Sympathy and judgement 	47	Sympathy and judgement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Now you’ve wasted all your time.” “You’re just like one of those drop-out’s”- Use of language alludes to a perceived sense of failure, that 	47	Failure

<p>although participant has completed honours there is the perception that resistance and rejection experienced in the field of psychology equates to failure</p>		
<p>The lack of understanding by lay people with concern to the difficulty of becoming a psychologist contributes to distress</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The fact that lay person does not understand the difficulty of becoming a qualified psychologist and that appears to add to participants distress 	47	Becoming a psychologist
<p>Pressure in attempts to meet different universities standards within selection criteria appeared to have called authenticity into question</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants found the completion master's applications as confusing since different universities have different standards- Participant subsequently experienced pressure in attempts to meet all these different standards- This calls the ability to remain authentic into question 	48	Different standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application process experienced as effortful and time consuming- Participant appeared to experience challenges with concern to remaining authentic 	49	Effortful and time-consuming
<p>Master's in psychology selection experience was more negative than positive</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selection experience was positive in the sense that participant was afforded the opportunity to witness 	49	Encouraged by other's

and be encouraged by other people's passions and resilience		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection experience was negative because of other people's motives for selections had participant question selection criteria 	49	Other's motives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection experience was negative because activities participants were required to do in the process had participant question the selection criteria: "How does this tell them anything about who we are?" 	49	Questioning selection criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception that selection process is unfair 	49	Unfair
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection experience was negative as it appeared that participant had a hyper-awareness of how she was received 	49	Hyper-awareness of reception
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Just to have the experience so that when I re-apply in the future then interviews won't be that intimidating." -Speaks to the need to gain experience in being interviewed, to nurse one's anxieties 	49	Interview experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception that those implementing selection criteria are ageist and judge as well as exclude younger applicants last- "I think that was the hardest thing for me to accept it that people would judge me merely on age 	50	Ageism

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant feels disrespected and wronged by the selection process as the amount of effort and financial sacrifice participant invested appeared to not amount to anything 	50	Investing in vain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lack of personalized feedback from individuals conducting the selections appears to add to participants' distress- Left participant wondering what their areas of growth are 	50	Personalized feedback
Positive experience in completing honours at Rhodes University, as academic staff are perceived by participant to be quite involved and supportive		
Perception that doing an honours in psychology at Rhodes University increased significance of honours as academic staff are perceived by participant to be quite involved and supportive	50	Rhodes University

Zara: Steps to Analysis

Step 1: Reading and re-reading the data	×
Step 2: Initial noting- see transcript scan	×
Step 3: Developing Emergent themes- see transcript and text below	×
Step 4: Searching for connections between emergent themes- see transcript and table below	×
Step 5: Graphic representation of the structure of emergent themes	×

Step 3: Developing Emergent themes

- Supported by family
- Appears that having both parents that have studied psychology and seemingly understand the difficulty that comes with qualifying, contributes to participants lack of severe distress with concern to post-honours
- Choice of study influenced by parental experiences and support
- An awareness of the difficulty of studying psychology
- Exposure to community psychology module refined interests in the field
- Studying psychology broadened participants perspective and understanding of various kinds of people
- Positive perception of undergraduate studies as it provided a general idea of psychological theories
- Positive experience of studying psychology, especially with concern to course content
- Ambivalent feelings with concern to being an honours in psychology student
- Excitement about honours on psychology acceptance birthed from others perception of acceptance as a privilege

- Uncertainty, anxiety and pressure about being an honours in psychology student, evidenced by, “What now?”
- The value of an honours in psychology perceived the same as the value of an undergraduate degree in psychology- “I feel like my undergrad has almost been extended”
- Perception that honours does nothing to contribute to employability
- “Grey area”- uncertainty concerning what employers can trust honours students to do/ what role honours students can play
- Perception that the value of an honours in psychology is limited when the focus is solely on individual interventions
- Perception that psychology could be more valuable if interventions are more about empowering, begin at grassroots levels and are considerate of context
- Participant very apprehensive, nervous, excited and intimidated with concern to post-honours
- “if you want to continue in the psychology field you need experience...That’s all we know.”- Speaks to the lack of transparency/ openness about becoming a qualified psychologist, the challenges involved and how to overcome them
- Honours has provided participant with affirmation and direction
- “Knowledge is never wasted”-Speaks to participants perception that psychological knowledge is applicable to different fields
- Participant intends to earn an income outside of the field to supplement the progression of her career as she volunteers for experience
- Interplay between participants perception of her knowledge as valuable and the hope that employers share the same perception
- Participant hopes to work in a team to foster learning

- “Finger’s crossed”- approaching post-honours with lots of hope for positive reception
- Participant unsure with concern to how she will be received in the face of her expectations
- Participants prospective plans:
 - teach English online
 - coach sports
 - au pairing
 - volunteering
- “I don’t know if employers see me as an asset... they wouldn’t see me as an asset”- Indicative of doubt and self-consciousness
- Perception that there is not enough emphasis on the need to be multilingual in the field of psychology to be more helpful and to learn
- The frustration of feeling as though you could be of use but not being given the platform
- Participant did not apply for a master’s in psychology:
 - Was encouraged by lecturer’s not to apply as chances of acceptance straight out of honours without experience is minimal
 - participant desired a break from academia

Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes

- Emergent theme clusters utilized to develop superordinate themes
 1. Family influence support as a contributor to resilience in the face of resistance
 2. Positive experience of studying psychology

3. Ambivalent with being a psychology honours student: Anxiety, Uncertainty, Apprehension, Pressure and Excitement
4. The value and usefulness of an honours in psychology perceived the same as an undergraduate degree in psychology
5. Perception that honours fails to contribute to employability
6. “Grey area”- uncertainty concerning what employers can trust honours graduates to do/ what role honours graduate can play
7. The call to move emphasis beyond individual interventions to increase the value of the field of psychology
8. Exposure to community psychology module refined interests in the field
9. The lack of transparency/ openness about becoming a qualified psychologist, the challenges involved and how to overcome them
10. Plans post honours involves prioritizing gaining income and experience in the field
11. Perception that there is not enough emphasis on the need to be multilingual in the field of psychology to be more helpful and to learn
12. Participant did not apply for a master’s in psychology

Step 5: Graphic representation of the structure of the emergent themes

TABLE OF SUPERORDINATE THEMES AND EMERGENT THEMES FROM PARTICIPANT		
THEMES	PAGE	KEY WORDS
Family influence support as a contributor to resilience in the face of resistance		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported by family 	53	Support

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appears that having both parents that have studied psychology and seemingly understand the difficulty that comes with qualifying, contributes to participants lack of severe distress with concern to post-honours 	53	Parent's psychology degree's
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice of study influenced by parental experiences and support 	53	Parental Influence
2. Positive experience of studying psychology		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studying psychology broadened participants perspective and understanding of various kinds of people 	54	Broadening perspective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive experience of studying psychology, especially with concern to course content 	55	Course content
Ambivalent with being a psychology honours student: Anxiety, Uncertainty, Apprehension, Pressure, Affirmation and Excitement		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excitement about honours on psychology acceptance birthed from others perception of acceptance as a privilege 	55	Perception of acceptance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty, anxiety and pressure about being an honours in psychology student, evidenced by, "What now?" 	56	"What now?"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant very apprehensive, nervous, excited and intimidated with concern to post-honours 	58	Post-honours

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honours has provided participant with affirmation and direction 	58	Affirmation
The value and usefulness of an honours in psychology perceived the same as an undergraduate degree in psychology		
*same as superordinate theme	57	Value of an honours
Perception that honours fails to contribute to employability		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception that honours does nothing to contribute to employability 	57	Employability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interplay between participants perception of her knowledge as valuable and the hope that employers share the same perception 	59	Employer's perception
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Finger's crossed"- approaching post-honours with lots of hope for positive reception 	60	Hope
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant unsure with concern to how she will be received in the face of her expectations 	60	Unsure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I don't know if employers see me as an asset... they wouldn't see me as an asset"- Indicative of doubt and self-consciousness 	60	Doubt and self-consciousness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The frustration of feeling as though you could be of use but not being given the platform 	62	Frustration
"Grey area"- uncertainty concerning what employers can trust honours graduates to do/ what role honours graduate can play		
*same as superordinate theme	57	"Grey area"

The call to move emphasis beyond individual interventions to increase the value of the field of psychology		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception that the value of an honours is psychology is limited when the focus is solely on individual interventions 	57	Individual interventions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception that psychology could be more valuable if interventions are more about empowering, begin at grassroots levels and are considerate of context 	58	More valuable
Exposure to community psychology module refined interests in the field		
*same as superordinate theme	53	Community Psychology
The lack of transparency/ openness about becoming a qualified psychologist, the challenges involved and how to overcome them		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “if you want to continue in the psychology field you need experience...That’s all we know.”- Speaks to the lack of transparency/ openness about becoming a qualified psychologist, the challenges involved and how to overcome them 	58	Need experience
Plans post honours involves prioritizing gaining income and experience in the field		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant intends to earn an income outside of the field to supplement the progression of her career as she volunteers for experience 	59	Income and Volunteering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant hopes to work in a team to foster learning 	59	Teamwork

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants prospective plans: • -teach English online • -coach sports • -au pairing • -volunteering 	60	Prospective plans
Perception that there is not enough emphasis on the need to be multilingual in the field of psychology to be more helpful and to learn		
*same as superordinate theme	62	Multilingual
Participant did not apply for a master's in psychology		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant did not apply for a master's in psychology: -Was encouraged by lecturer's not to apply as chances of acceptance straight out of honours without experience is minimal -participant desired a break from academia 	61	Master's applications

Zizipho: Steps to Analysis

Step 1: Reading and re-reading the data	×
Step 2: Initial noting- see transcript scan	×
Step 3: Developing Emergent themes- see transcript and text below	×
Step 4: Searching for connections between emergent themes- see transcript and table below	×
Step 5: Graphic representation of the structure of emergent themes	×

Step 3: Developing Emergent themes

- Family not supportive of choice of study
- Mother questioned participants choice of study as she is aware of a lot of individuals struggling in the profession
- Psychology narrated as a form of identity- "...this is more of who I am"
- Law as a "back-up" plan- participant chose to study at a university that will allow for two majors to guard against being left stranded
- Choice of study based on emotional awareness, altruism and interpersonal interests
- Negative perception of undergraduate study in psychology- too much focus on theory and no exposure to practice
- Undergrad perceived at failing to provide skills
- Undergrad perceived as failing to provide direction with regards to employability- contributed to participants confusion- "Am I really going to get there?... Like I can't really see it."
- Undergrad lacked exposure to individuals already qualified in the field

- “Am I really going to get there?”- Indicative of how discouraging/ demotivating lack of practical exposure is experienced
- Studies failed to ingrain an awareness of the different specialities in the field and how they differ from one another
- Positive experiences of Honours in psychology
 - affords the ability to think critically
 - aids in the ability to apply psychological knowledge personally in personal capacity
 - affords personal growth and increases self-awareness
- Negative experience of honours in psychology
 - no guidance in terms of becoming a psychologist and what it takes to become one
 - no guidance with concern to refining interests in the field and how to specialize in these interests
 - no guidance/conversation with concern to what happens after honours/ what one can do with an honours in psychology
 - academic staff lack of awareness with concern to how to overcome challenges
 - honours graduates face with concern to employment- “...and it also feels like even our lecturers don’t know”
- Appears that participant feels alone, uncomfortable, overwhelmed, confused, inadequate and disappointed as an honours student about to graduate
- The wonder of, “what’s next” appears most distressing to participant
- Perception that honours in psychology is only valuable if one is going to specialize in research psychology
- Perception that honours in psychology fails to provide skills that would be useful for specialities like clinical or counselling psychology- speaks to a need for more exposure to practice

- Perception that exposure to practice would provide clarity with concern to what to specialize in
- Perception that community psychology does not suffice in providing practical exposure in the field
- No counselling skills in honours program
- Psychology- a valuable profession and a challenging one to be in
- Apathetic about post-honours
- Appears that part of participants lack distress with concern to masters rejection is tied to the availability of a “back-up” plan- Law
- Negative experience of applying for masters:
 - most distressing -lack of feedback in the face of rejection left participant confused about areas of growth
 - Master’s experience described as emotionally draining
 - Master’s experience described as financially draining
 - Lack of awareness with concern to selection criteria roused uncertainty with concern to completing master’s applications
 - Rejection roused insecurity and self-doubt
 - Saddened that it appears that high marks aren’t part of the selection criteria
- Shame as a theme: Master’s rejection appeared shameful
- Post-honours plans:
 - To study Law- participant desired a profession that could provide more direction and certainty
 - Looking for organisations that have a combined interest in Law and Psychology to volunteer at

- Perception that the field of psychology needs more qualified professionals mentoring and supporting individuals attempting to enter the profession
- Perception that the field of psychology need more transparency about the qualification process weaved in the curriculum
- A pervasive lack of awareness about what jobs honours students are qualified to do-
“You don’t know what you can do.”

Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes

- Emergent theme clusters utilized to develop superordinate themes
 1. Family not supportive of choice of study, given their awareness of the challenges of qualifying in the field
 2. Psychology as a form of identity
 3. Law as a “back-up plan” eases distress in the face of rejection
 4. Undergraduate study in psychology too focussed on theory and fails to contribute to employability
 5. Lack of sufficient practical exposure in psychological studies appears discouraging and demotivating
 6. Studies failed to provide an awareness of the different specialities in the field and how they differ from one another
 7. Positive experience of honours in psychology: Refines ability to think critically, apply psychological knowledge in personal capacity and contributes to personal growth
 8. Negative experience of honours in psychology: No career guidance and forewarning concerning challenges to be expected in the field
 9. A pervasive lack of awareness about what jobs honours graduates can do
 10. Perception that honours in psychology is only valuable if one is going to specialize in research psychology

11. The lack of certainty about “what’s next” appears most distressing to participant
12. Negative experience of applying for masters
13. Post-honours plans: pursuing career paths that afford more security and surety as well as volunteering to gain interpersonal experience
14. Perception that the field of psychology needs more qualified professionals mentoring and supporting individuals attempting to enter the profession

Step 5: Graphic representation of the structure of the emergent themes

TABLE OF SUPERORDINATE THEMES AND EMERGENT THEMES FROM PARTICIPANT		
THEMES	PAGE	KEY WORDS
Family not supportive of choice of study, given their awareness of the challenges of qualifying in the field		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family not supportive of choice of study 	66	Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mother questioned participants choice of study as she is aware of a lot of individuals struggling in the profession 	66	Struggling in the profession
Psychology as a form of identity		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychology narrated as a form of identity- “...this is more of who I am” 	66	Identity
Law as a “back-up plan” easing distress in the face of rejection		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law as a “back-up” plan- participant chose to study at a university that will allow for two majors to guard against being left stranded 	66	Back-up plan

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appears that part of what eased participants distress with concern to master's rejection is tied to the availability of a "back-up" plan- Law 	66	Lack of distress
Undergraduate study in psychology too focussed on theory and fails to contribute to employability		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative perception of undergraduate study in psychology- too much focus on theory and no exposure to practice 	67	Theory, no practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undergrad perceived at failing to provide skills 	67	Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undergrad perceived as failing to provide direction with regards to employability- contributed to participants confusion- "Am I really going to get there?... Like I can't really see it." 	67	Direction and employability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undergrad lacked exposure to individuals already qualified in the field 	67	Qualified individuals
Lack of sufficient practical exposure in psychological studies appears discouraging and demotivating		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Am I really going to get there?"- Indicative of how discouraging/ demotivating lack of practical exposure is experienced 	67	Discouraged and demotivated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception that exposure to practice would provide clarity with concern to what to specialize in 	70	Specializing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception that community engagement does not suffice in providing practical exposure in the field 	70	Community engagement

Studies failed to provide an awareness of the different specialities in the field and how they differ from one another		
*same as superordinate theme	67	Different specialities
Positive experience of honours in psychology: Refines ability to think critically, apply psychological knowledge in personal capacity and contributes to personal growth		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive experiences of Honours in psychology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -affords the ability to think critically -aids in the ability to apply psychological knowledge personally in personal capacity -affords personal growth and increases self-awareness 	68	Positive experience of psychology
Negative experience of honours in psychology: No career guidance and forewarning concerning challenges to be expected in the field		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative experience of honours in psychology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -no guidance in terms of becoming a psychologist and what it takes to become one -no guidance with concern to refining interests in the field and how to specialize in these interests -no guidance/conversation with concern to what happens after honours/ what one can do with an honours in psychology -academic staff lack of awareness with concern to how to overcome challenges honours graduates face with concern to employment- "...and it also feels like even our lecturers don't know" 		

A pervasive lack of awareness about what jobs honours graduates can do		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A pervasive lack of awareness about what jobs honours graduate's are qualified to do- "You don't know what you can do." 	74	Honours graduate's employment
Perception that honours in psychology is only valuable if one is going to specialize in research psychology		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception that honours in psychology fails to provide skills that would be useful for specialities like clinical or counselling psychology- speaks to a need for more exposure to practice 	70	Honours in psychology usefulness
The lack of certainty about "what's next" appears most distressing to participant		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appears that participant feels alone, uncomfortable, overwhelmed, confused, inadequate and disappointed as an honours student about to graduate 	67 & 69	Participants feelings
Negative experience of applying for masters		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative experience of applying for masters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -most distressing -lack of feedback in the face of rejection left participant confused about areas of growth -Master's experience described as emotionally draining -Master's experience described as financially draining 	72	Applying for master's

<p>-Lack of awareness with concern to selection criteria roused uncertainty with concern to completing master's applications</p> <p>-Rejection roused insecurity and self-doubt</p> <p>-Saddened that it appears that high marks aren't part of the selection criteria</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shame as a theme: Master's rejection appeared shameful 	73	Shame
<p>Post-honours plans: pursuing career paths that afford more security and surety as well as volunteering to gain interpersonal experience</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post-honours plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To study Law- participant desired a profession that could provide more direction and certainty -Looking for organisations that have a combined interest in Law and Psychology to volunteer at 	73	Post-honours plans
<p>Perception that the field of psychology needs more qualified professionals mentoring and supporting individuals attempting to enter the profession</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception that the field of psychology need more transparency about the qualification process weaved in the curriculum 	74	Qualification process

Emma: Steps to Analysis

Step 1: Reading and re-reading the data	×
Step 2: Initial noting- see transcript scan	×
Step 3: Developing Emergent themes- see transcript and text below	×
Step 4: Searching for connections between emergent themes- see transcript and table below	×
Step 5: Graphic representation of the structure of emergent themes	×

Step 3: Developing Emergent themes:

- Chose psychology to be equipped to help children in distress
- Positive perception to studying psychology
- Studying psychology perceived as challenging in personal capacity, increases self-awareness and aid's in understanding others
- Interpersonal encounters with individuals qualified in the field (academic staff members) contributed to positive experience of studying
- Feel's grateful and proud of being accepted into honours in psychology
- Perception that what makes being an honours student stressful, is the pressure to get into masters
- Lack of awareness and uncertainty with concern to employment for honours graduates- described as stressful
- Psychology as a valuable profession to the needs of South Africa
- Perception that psychology is beneficial if interventions are more long term
- Perception that honours graduate's knowledge and experience can be useful in helping more South African citizens

- Awareness that employment opportunities with an honours in psychology are limited
- Plans post honours:
 - Animal assisted therapy course to aid in her research when she gets accepted into masters
 - get a puppy and train it for dog therapy
 - Long-term goal: to contribute to animal assisted therapy research and broaden the field of psychology
- Ambivalent feelings about post-honours: excited, content, anxious and uncertain
- Perception that young people aren't accepted into master's
- "Back-up plan" in the face of master's rejection: Master's by thesis
- Interest in Animal assisted therapy and master's by thesis back-up plan appears to be contributing to participants ease/ lack of severe distress
- Hold's a very negative view of the master's selection process- based on other people's experience of the selection process
- Reflecting on the hopelessness witnessed in other honours students- participant expressed identifying with this feeling in the beginning of her honours
- Regrets not applying for master's to experience the process of it- speaks to participants belief that they wouldn't get accepted the first try
- What was negative for participant is having to witness other's hopelessness in their difficulty accepting the circumstances that come with challenges in the profession and learning to work around those challenges
- Appears that participant interprets challenges in the field as motivation to create new spaces in the field and to broaden her thinking

Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes

- Emergent theme clusters utilized to develop superordinate themes
1. Positive perception of studying psychology: Increases self-awareness and aid's in understanding other's
 2. Gratitude and pride- remnants of acceptance into honours in psychology
 3. Ambivalent feelings about post-honours: excited, content, anxious and uncertain
 4. Lack of awareness and uncertainty with concern to employment opportunities for honours graduates and the pressure to get into master's contributing to distress
 5. Perception that honours graduate's knowledge and experience can be useful in helping more South African citizens, increasing the overall value of psychology
 6. Identifying with the feeling of hopelessness
 7. Appears that participant interprets challenges in the field as motivation to create new spaces in the field and to broaden her thinking
 8. "Back-up plan" appears to contribute to participant's ease
 9. Negative view the master's selection process- based on another individual's experience
 10. Only regret: Not applying for master's and gaining experience from the selection process

Step 5: Graphic representation of the structure of the emergent themes

TABLE OF SUPERORDINATE THEMES AND EMERGENT THEMES FROM PARTICIPANT		
THEMES	PAGE	KEY WORDS
Positive perception of studying psychology: Increases self-awareness and aid's in understanding other's		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studying psychology perceived as challenging in personal capacity, increases self-awareness and aid's in understanding others 	76	Personal Capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpersonal encounters with individuals qualified in the field (academic staff members) contributed to positive experience of studying 	77	Interpersonal encounters
Gratitude and pride- remnants of acceptance into honours in psychology		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feel's grateful and proud of being accepted into honours in psychology 	77	Gratitude
Ambivalent feelings about post-honours: excited, content, anxious and uncertain		
*same as superordinate theme	80	Ambivalence
Lack of awareness and uncertainty with concern to employment opportunities for honours graduates and the pressure to get into master's contributing to distress		
Perception that what makes being an honours student stressful, is the pressure to get into masters	78	Pressure
Lack of awareness and uncertainty with concern to employment for honours graduates- described as stressful	78	Employment
Awareness that employment opportunities with an honours in psychology are limited	78	Awareness
Perception that honours graduate's knowledge and experience can be useful in helping more South African citizens, increasing the overall value of psychology		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychology as a valuable profession to the needs of South Africa 	78	Value of profession

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception that psychology is beneficial if interventions are more long term 	79	Long-Term interventions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception that honours graduate's knowledge and experience can be useful in helping more South African citizens 	78	Honour's graduate's usefulness
Identifying with the feeling of hopelessness		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflecting on the hopelessness witnessed in other honours students- participant expressed identifying with this feeling in the beginning of her honours 		
Appears that participant interprets challenges in the field as motivation to create new spaces in the field and to broaden her thinking		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans post honours: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Animal assisted therapy course to aid in her research when she gets accepted into masters -get a puppy and train it for dog therapy -Long-term goal: to contribute to animal assisted therapy research and broaden the field of psychology 	79	Post-honours plans
"Back-up plan" appears to contribute to participant's ease		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Back-up plan" in the face of master's rejection: Master's by thesis 	81	"Back-up" plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interest in Animal assisted therapy and master's by thesis back-up plan appears to be contributing to participants ease/ lack of severe distress 	81	Interests

Negative view the master's selection process- based on another individual's experience		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holds a very negative view of the master's selection process- based on other people's experience of the selection process 	81	Master's selection process
Only regret: Not applying for master's and gaining experience from the selection process		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regrets not applying for master's to experience the process of it- speaks to participants belief that they wouldn't get accepted the first try 	82	Regrets

Appendix D: Table of final themes

Analysis- Looking for patterns across cases (Master table of themes)

Master table of themes for the group of 8 participants	
A. The role of support in choice of study	
Parental disapproval with concern to choice of study	<p>Charmaine: So, she was not very for psychology, like she wanted a career that was more...stable but that are more guaranteed to get a job." (pg. 4-5)</p> <p>Portia: Truly speaking, they never wanted me to do psychology in the first place... (pg. 26)</p> <p>Zizopho: At first my mom was not supportive of my choice of doing psychology from the beginning, she was just</p>

	<p>like “No what are you going to eat, how are you going to survive, how are you going to make it? A lot of people struggle in the profession why do you want to do it? (pg. 67)</p>
<p>Family approval and support as a contributor to resilience in the midst of rejection</p>	<p>Justine: Well, my mom just says it’s about time. She kept saying, “You do one day have to do what you like.” So, I’m very supported. (pg. 17)</p> <p>Sandra: Uh, they very very supportive, always have been. (pg. 34)</p> <p>Zara: My parents are very much like do what you enjoy, do what you love. (pg. 54)</p>
<p>B. Undergraduate experience of theory and practice</p>	
<p>Undergraduate study in psychology experienced as too general and repetitive with insufficient practical exposure</p>	<p>Charmaine: I feel like it was too general for three years and you can’t really be hired then because you’ve just been doing general things for three years and nothing specific. (pg. 5)</p> <p>Portia: It was kind of a waste of time because number 1 we do not have any practical experience with psych, it was just</p>

	<p>the theory in class, and you get confused at some point. (pg. 26)</p> <p>Sandra: I mean undergrad, I am not going to lie, it was a bit shit... Yho, the lectures were just not interesting and it just seemed like an easy credit and I didn't want it to be an easy credit (pg. 35)</p> <p>Tony: okay I can tell you what I didn't like. I didn't like having to know stuff from other subjects that not necessarily is only psychology. (pg. 46)</p> <p>Zizopho: From undergrad, I didn't really enjoy it because I felt like we are just learning theories and I was like I can't see where I am going and how I am going to acquire the necessary skills. I can't see examples of psychologist and people who have made it. I am not exposed to people in the field, so it really felt like, "What am I doing? Am I really going to get there?" (pg. 68)</p>
<p>C. Ambivalent perception of the significance of an honours in psychology</p>	

<p>Honours in psychology perceived as lacking professional significance</p>	<p>Charmaine: ...like you have to get into master's otherwise you might have just stuck with your undergrad because there's nothing much you can do with that. So ya, that's how I feel about the honours degree, it's just like a waiting room for you to get masters basically and other than that there's nothing much you can actually do with it. (pg. 9)</p> <p>...but the honours psychology degree I'm like okay, you might as well just have your undergrad, there's nothing special about it except the fact that it leads you to masters I think..." (pg. 10)</p> <p>...honours could be more meaningful in actually helping us get work." (pg. 6)</p> <p>There is not much of a value to it. It's the literal equivalent to undergrad unless you have your masters." (pg. 9)</p> <p>Justine: When you go into honours that an honours degree means nothing unless you</p>
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get into masters... what you can do with an honours in psychology which is nothing...

(pg. 19, 20)

...my attitude is that it gives you a lot of academic learning and no practical learning and thus leaves you quite empty handed unless you get into a master's program for clinical or counselling psychology. So, I think they need to re-think it actually. So, you know, more like in line of changing it to a B-Psych. (pg. 20)

And honours in psychology is like as useful as honours in English and Classics, so it's not going to get me anywhere. (Laughs.) (pg. 20)

Portia: it's like discouraging because it's like you feel like you have wasted four years of studying with no direction in life. (pg. 28)

...it was kind of a waste of time because number 1 we do not have any practical

	<p>experience with psych, it was just the theory in class and you get confused at some point. (pg. 26)</p> <p>Tony: ...but I also feel sort of disappointed that it's been something that, "Now what?" Sort of thing. "Okay now what, I've come here but still can't do anything. (pg. 47)</p> <p>...it feels useless because uhm finding a job, I've actually gone looking for it in these... specifically for psychology graduates. There's basically nothing I can do. Uhm, ya accept go touch but then I have to study further for a year and do a PGCE. (pg. 47)</p> <p>Zara: But then like having an honours in psychology, ya it doesn't really feel like... I feel like my undergrad has almost been extended, like yes I have learnt a lot and I have been able to explore like different subjects in psychology, but I still don't feel equipped to go and be employed under a psychology name, which is why there is no</p>
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	<p>job availability for psych honours student. (pg. 58)</p>
<p>Honours in psychology perceived as significant in personal capacity</p>	<p>Portia: actually like I said I had a lot of things going on from my childhood, which I kind of like suppressed, so when I started the... they have a lot of community engagement things going on here, when I started the Ithemba counselling and the Fort England the (Buddy Programme); I got to a point where I had to like reflect on my own life and kind of had to deal with my life... I kind of understand my life better, it was like some sort of understanding into why I have been feeling the way I have been feeling” (pg. 27)</p> <p>Sandra: And the honours year has been incredible, I’ve never had a better year in like school or university , I think this has been my best year, just everything we have been able to learn, talk about and you know ponder on is very very interesting. So ya.</p>

(pg. 35)

So what makes this year your best year is what you're exposed to academically? Like the content is what stimulates you more this year than any other year... Ya the content and the personal relationship with the lecturers... I really love the impersonal relationships we have with the lecturer's here, uhm the impersonal paths situations where I have never been afraid to speak out and say something even if it's like an unpopular opinion or something like that. It's been very very nice that way as well, including the content. (pg. 36)

Tony: it's a very helpful degree, uhm it helps you in terms of even with personal development and with growth. Uhm it sort of makes you reflect a little bit more when you start to know more about yourself and others. And my attitudes towards it if I can be brutally honest?... Uhm, it sort of feels useless aside from personal growth, it feels useless because uhm finding a job (pg. 47)

Zizopho: ...okay very positive experiences in honours... in terms of applying it to my life and how I think, uhm being... okay how do I say this like... I don't feel like I am just sitting there and not improving. I am able to unpack certain things in my life and apply it. For example, I struggled a lot with speaking in class and speaking a lot around a crowd and I was able to be like, "let me deal with this. Why am I struggling with this?" And then I realised that I focus so much on being wrong, I focus so much on how someone looked at me and you know... Whereas there might not be any meaning in what they were doing. So being able to take steps towards building yourself, think it has helped me do all of that. (pg. 69)

Emma: I've had the best year; it was the best decision that I could've made to study it. What it's like? It's challenging, it's challenging because you so... the things you learning, you can so easily like break down your own... like yourself to be like,

	<p>“Hectic, maybe I am like that.” Or like “that sounds familiar...” (pg. 77)</p>
<p>D. The power of interpersonal encounter’s in line with the values of psychology</p>	
<p>Positive experience of studying psychology linked to interpersonal encounter’s with already qualified individuals in the field that manifest the values of psychology in their interactions</p>	<p>Charmaine: The most positive thing, I think it is meeting lecturers that I admire and seeing that, oh my gosh this is what I would like to do or this is the kind of combination of work and degrees I would like (pg. 7)</p> <p>Justine: Highlight’s uhm other lecturers in my undergrad were phenomenal and uhm were so encouraging and were so... uhm I learnt so much. Uhm and really quite inspiring (pg. 18)</p> <p>Sandra: So I really love the impersonal relationships we have with the lecturer’s here, uhm the impersonal paths situations where I have never been afraid to speak out and say something even if it’s like an unpopular opinion or something like that. It’s been very very nice that way as well” (pg. 36)</p> <p>Tony: I just actually like to maybe add that doing an honours at Rhodes was truly</p>

	<p>something that I regard as significant. If I compared it to uhm my previous place of study, it's just on another level, it's more tangible, if that makes sense and the staff actually really sort of guide you into being a competent psychologist. Especially the community engagement part of it, I think I learnt more sort of in that field of community engagement thank I learnt on a piece of paper. (pg. 51)</p> <p>Emma: ...what I found played a big role in my enjoyment of it was the actual department and the staff member's there. I found they were very welcoming and approachable. In that way I always felt comfortable in that space. (pg. 78)</p>
E. The benefit of practical exposure	
<p>Practical Exposure through community engagement aided in personal growth and refining professional interests</p>	<p>Charmaine: The thing that I came across in third year that was interesting was community psychology which was like, couldn't I have done this in first year?</p> <p>Because I only figured out then that, Oh my gosh, like I enjoy doing this, this could</p>

	<p>make sense with career psychology.” (pg. 6)</p> <p>“honours could be more meaningful in actually helping us get work. (pg. 6)</p> <p>it’s like how do we choose and especially for honours in this general third year thing we supposed to choose from things that we did in third year and okay undergrad in general and if you didn’t have more of a better picture of what you had to choose, like how would you know what you wanted to actually do? So ya, I think undergrad should actually go deeper into the practical side even of psychology by then. (pg. 8)</p> <p>Justine: ...and I think that practical-ness uhm was basically what made me... I always thought I would follow academia and go into research and that sort of thing. I thought that that’s where I would end up but that is what made me see that actually if you want to do something you actually have to get your hands dirty and be practical. (pg. 19)</p>
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	<p>Tony: Especially the community engagement part of it, I think I learnt more sort of in that field of community engagement than I learnt on a piece of paper. Ya so that was a great experience. (pg. 51)</p> <p>Portia: ...they have a lot of community engagement things going on here, when I started the Ithemba counselling and the Fort England the (Buddy Programme); I got to a point where I had to like reflect on my own life and kind of had to deal with my life and I think that's when I got more confused, although it was a positive thing, I kind of got more confused as to, "Do I really want to continue with psychology?" Although it was a good thing, I kind of understand my life better, it was like some sort of understanding into why I have been feeling the way I have been feeling, but it's also a matter of, "Did I make the right choice?" But ya. (pg. 27)</p>
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	<p>Zara: Uhm I really enjoyed the community psych module that we did in undergrad with Jacqui. So I knew that there was more to be explored in those kinds of fields. So this year I have kept to very much that kind of theme of like doing those kind of topics I enjoy of like community psychology... I could unravel psychology in like my interests (pg. 55)</p>
<p>F. No career guidance throughout psychological studies</p>	
<p>Feelings of frustration and disillusionment stemming from lack of career guidance and lack of information about the usefulness of an honours in psychology outside of acceptance into a professional training program</p>	<p>Justine: I am very frustrated... I don't think you given the facts upfront, you know about what you can do with an honours in psychology which is nothing, so that's a bit disillusioning. (pg. 19)</p> <p>Portia: I feel like maybe if we got more information doing psych degree, it was going to be much better, knowing what we are getting ourselves into, ya. (pg. 28)</p> <p>Charmaine: So I am thinking even in this general view we don't really get the proper information about it to decide for this</p>

	<p>honours degree, “Okay, this is what I really want to be doing for my electives. (pg. 7-8)</p> <p>Zizopho: Uhm Negative experiences, hmmm</p> <p>I will still say that there isn’t much guidance... in terms of what do we want, we never get asked what we want, how do we get there, what alternatives are there. Like how do we actively... because we going to pass and we going to... but what do we do after that and what do we do with that knowledge? So there isn’t guidance in terms of that and it also feels like even our lecturer’s don’t know, so that also makes us feel uncomfortable because like you on your own. (pg. 70)</p> <p>...well not even honours students, we need to do more mentoring for like people who are getting into the profession because... no one knows what is going to happen next... people need to be more open and be more supportive within psychology itself. (pg. 75)</p>
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<p>Pervasive lack of awareness about what honours graduates can work as- “Grey Area”</p>	<p>Zizopho: ...And even like we don't know about jobs that take you with an honours degree. You don't know what you can do. (pg. 75)</p> <p>Zara: I think it is tough, I think it is a bit of a grey area having a psych honours degree, in terms of what I think employers can entrust you to do especially when you are dealing with people. (pg. 58)</p> <p>I don't know because I kind of feel like I don't know if employers see me as an asset... they wouldn't see me as an asset.. (pg. 63)</p> <p>Emma: it is also stressful because if you don't get into master's you can't practice, so what do you do? (pg. 79)</p> <p>Charmaine: I was even looking at applications and I'm like, there's nothing that's for specifically if you have an honours degree. They like specify for organisational psychology for the HR</p>
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	<p>positions, that's all, but the honours psychology degree I'm like okay, you might as well just have your undergrad, there's nothing special about it except the fact that it leads you to masters I think... (pg. 9-10)</p>
G. Feelings post-honours	
<p>Ambivalent feelings with concern to post-honours in psychology- Excitement gratitude and pride vs anxiety, uncertainty and apathy</p>	<p>Charmaine: I feel like it's a big hustle." (pg. 11) "It's a negative feeling and it's a positive feeling. (pg. 11)</p> <p>Justine: Uhm, most of the time I get quite teary and cry (Laughs) (pg. 21)</p> <p>(I)Okay, so would you say that you feel anxious about next year? (J) Ya, I am. (pg. 21-22)</p> <p>Sandra: Fucken scared. (Laughs) (pg. 39)</p> <p>Overwhelmed. Completely and utterly overwhelmed. (pg. 40)</p> <p>Tony: Scared as hell (laughs). Ya, uhm but also in a sense excited because for the first time in my life I don't have a plan and I always have a plan. (pg. 48)</p>

	<p>Zara: Uhm ya like very apprehensive... I am feeling a bit nervous, but I am also feeling a bit excited... (pg. 59)</p> <p>Emma: Sure, it's at the moment very exciting, at the moment I am very excited. (pg. 81)</p>
H. Master's selection process experience	
<p>Master's selection process experienced as distressing</p>	<p>Justine: Uhm my experience was absolutely diabolical because Rhodes did not inform me of the fact that my application had been rejected. So, you sort of left hanging for a month. And I received my rejection letter two days after the interviews, so it was quite dramatic. So, I didn't even get an interview and I was quite disappointed in that... So ya, it's been an unpleasant and quite disheartening process. So I was quite, I was going to give up, I was actually going to fag my honours at some point, I wasn't going to finish. (pg. 83)</p> <p>Portia: that was trauma, just going there to be like traumatized. Like the questions they asked, it was more of they would want you</p>

to share your background life, but at the same time use that against you... (pg. 30)

it was not fair at all... And money and travelling, we wasted a lot of money doing this. I think they should giving us money or travelling, one of them at least. (pg. 31)

Sandra: Experience of it, it's like wailing through cement, it's like walking through cement, it's very slow and effortful and you really want to have to like do it to get through it because all of people will get to like the second page and be like, "Ah no actually fuck this, I can't." A lot of personal questions, you have got to kind of put yourself on a pedestal, you have to advertise yourself, which I don't like doing... I don't like not being humble I suppose, it's a bit weird. (pg. 42)

I've found overseas ones to be a lot easier and a lot more promising. Because in South Africa I am of privileged background, I am white, it's just you know I don't have a

	<p>huge chance of getting into masters where... and rightfully so... I completely agree with the system, it's just they could make more spaces available so that people including me or her and him can get the space... (pg. 43)</p> <p>Tony: I feel like they... I think it's disrespectful, uhm because you go through a lot of trouble to sort of get all these different things for different universities, that each want a different thing. You pay their application fees which all together probably cost me about R3000, just the application fees, okay maybe a little bit less, say R2000. Uhm but ya, it's something that you work hard on because it's your future and then just nothing, "We regret to inform you that you did not get in." And no personalised feedback (pg. 51)</p> <p>Filling in the applications were in a sense confusing because they seem to have different standards at each University... (pg. 49)</p>
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Statement of motivation, some of them asked for that as well, was sort of difficult for me because how do you profoundly or adequately explain that you really want something and it's not because of a why or "I will be good at it." You just really want it and you'll be whatever you have to be to be good enough... (pg. 50)

I feel like they didn't actually go through the trouble to meet who I am as a person. (pg. 50)

... I think that was the hardest thing for me to accept it that people would judge me merely on age. They see a 20 year old girl, "Okay, what do you know about life?" and I don't think age should be a factor at all, especially if you are not going through the trouble to meet someone. (pg. 51)

Zizopho: That experience was very tiring for me... it was also financially draining because you have to apply to so many other

	<p>universities because you know that they only take few people... Ya it was stressful and it made me very anxious and also not knowing what to write (pg. 73)</p>
<p>“The wait”/ “What’s next?”- perception that master’s selection process places a lot of people in limbo</p>	<p>Justine: Uhm, my attitude is that it gives you a lot of academic learning and no practical learning and thus leaves you quite empty handed unless you get into a master’s program for clinical or counselling psychology... (pg. 20)</p> <p>Charmaine: I feel like our degree is just a Segway into masters literally... like you have to get into master’s otherwise you might have just stuck with your undergrad because there’s nothing much you can do with that. So ya, that’s how I feel about the honours degree, it’s just like a waiting room for you to get masters basically and other than that there’s nothing much you can actually do with it. (pg. 9)</p> <p>Portia: So it’s a point where if you don’t get to masters it’s also a point of, “What now? Do I chance a degree? Do I wait for the</p>

	<p>possibility of getting into master's next year?" (pg. 28)</p> <p>I look at how like the difference between postgrad psych and undergrad psych it's like undergrad psych, "You guys just be there and chill and get to master's." So there is no training until you get to masters. But then if don't get to master's what then? It means that you really have no skill to go and do something else which might not be clinical or counselling. (pg. 29)</p> <p>Sandra: like what I understand about being a psychologist in South Africa, is you can't do anything in the field until you have a master's degree and then maybe you can do some stuff but you are going to have to be very very qualified before you can do a whisk, "The hectic stuff." In colloquial terms (laughs) (pg. 37-38)</p> <p>Zara: Ya I feel like I am just kind of floating on a bit of a steppingstone right now. (pg. 58)</p>
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	<p>Emma: like one guy I met has applied for like 8 years in a row to get into master's and he still hasn't. And he told me like, "Don't even try, you're not going to get in, or it's not even like worth it." So I had all these quite negative, like a lot of people have quite negative view about the process, uhm because of their experience. And then another girl, she now got into master's for next year but she's been... she's 29 now, so she's been waiting like how many years to get in now. (pg. 82)</p>
<p>I. The effects of lack of employment for honours psychology graduates</p>	
<p>Lack of employment in the field for honours in psychology graduates</p>	<p>Portia: "What now?" Because ya you're an honours student, I think I spent like... for the last few months I was just like going through this uhm job search websites and you can't get anything for psychology honours, unless it's like organisational or industrial (pg. 28)</p>

	<p>Sandra: ...because finding a job now is like, you either do masters or you drop your entire psychology dream (laughs). (pg. 38)</p> <p>Zara: there is no job availability for psych honours student. (pg. 58)</p> <p>Charmaine: I was even looking at applications and I'm like, there's nothing that's for specifically if you have an honours degree. They like specify for organisational psychology for the HR positions, that's all, but the honours psychology degree I'm like okay, you might as well just have your undergrad... (pg. 10)</p> <p>Tony:...it feels useless because uhm finding a job, I've actually gone looking for it in these... specifically for psychology graduates. There's basically nothing I can do. (pg. 47)</p>
<p>Perception that honours student's knowledge and experience can be useful to South African citizens</p>	<p>Sandra: Uhm so maybe there needs to be some sort of space where honours students can get work doing research, doing contextual research, going into the nitty</p>

	<p>gritty of communities and helping in that way. There could be some sort of credit system for that some sort of internship that's offered after the honours year because finding a job now is like, you either do masters or you drop your entire psychology dream (laughs). (pg. 38)</p> <p>Tony: uhm apart from NGO's psychology honours students can actually make a huge difference. So the profession is definitely... there is a great need for it and it has the possibility or the potential to do much more and I sort of feel like its limited now. (pg. 48)</p> <p>Charmaine: It would be great if getting an honours degree was, especially the psych assessments part, if it was equivalent to being able to even help out with a counsellor or someone else with their assessments, that would be nice, but yea. (pg. 9)</p>
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	<p>Emma: I think it's incredibly beneficial though, uhm in South Africa to have people who even just have an honours degree, and can work in not private practice with master's or something, but reach more people through different ways of using their psychology honours degree... what you learn throughout your honours degree, so that experience you get and the knowledge that you get, definitely has a place that you can take out and use somewhere else. (pg. 79)</p> <p>Zara: but I would like to think that people could view my knowledge as being valuable, because I do feel like I have valuable knowledge and kind of insights to kind of give and to learn as well so... (pg. 60)</p>
J. The role of a back-up plan	
Finding solace in a "Back-up plan"-Lack of a "Back-up plan as a contributor to distress	<p>Zizipho: when I decided I was going to do psychology I chose a university that was going to allow me to major in like two things to open up like a safety net for me. So I also had this back up that I was going</p>

to take law. So when they heard that I am also going to major in law they were also like okay at least. (pg. 67)

Portia: ...oh okay for me I think it's better because I have criminal justice backup in a way, so I have been applying for posts in criminology than psych because I see psych is not working out. So I am even thinking of going to law next year (laughs) ya... (pg. 29)

Emma: So through the year I found that animal therapy is something I really want to do. But at the beginning, I was like, "Oh my gosh, what if I don't get into master's what am I going to do?" But ya, I think there's like uhm I don't know how to describe it but very draining feeling of post-grad psych, almost like hopeless. Uhm ya, I'm just very lucky to be one of those people that has found a different route well at least for now. (pg. 81)

	<p>Tony: She actually brought to my attention in first year, and I should've listened, not to study purely psychology because of this situation I am in now. (pg. 45)</p> <p>...it actually feels like it's a waste of time and it's a waste of resources that I should have maybe... put into something else just to fall back on which now eh, don't know. (pg. 45)</p>
K. Financial consequences	
<p>Distressed by financial implications of pursuing qualifications in the field</p>	<p>Justine: You know it's another year of not earning, uhm and I am sure people that are of the normal age group being in my position would feel the same way. Uhm, you know my... it's... I am not earning; I am going to have to spend a year now after I've spent a year doing my honours. (pg. 22)</p> <p>Ya, so that's on the cards for next year. So I am going to do... it's a batch of three courses, now that's another R30 000 on top of my honours... (pg. 22)</p>

Portia: And money and travelling, we wasted a lot of money doing this. I think they should giving us money or travelling, one of them at least. (pg. 31)

Tony: ...and it's a waste of resources that I should have maybe... could have maybe put into something else (pg. 45)

You pay their application fees which all together probably cost me about R3000, just the application fees, okay maybe a little bit less, say R2000. Uhm but ya, it's something that you work hard on because it's your future and then just nothing, "We regret to inform you that you did not get in." (pg. 51)

Zizipho: So ya, didn't enjoy that part of it and it was also financially draining because you have to apply to so many other universities because you know that they only take few people. So I didn't... Ya it was stressful and it made me very anxious (pg. 73)

Master table of superordinate themes was identified using recurrent superordinate themes (Inclusion of superordinate theme in master table requires that theme be present in at least a three (a third) of all the participant interviews)

Identifying recurrent themes								
Superordinate themes	Participants presenting superordinate theme							
	C	J	P	S	T	Z	Zu	E
Parental disapproval with concern to choice of study	✓		✓				✓	
Family approval and support as a contributor to resilience in the midst of rejection		✓		✓		✓		
Undergraduate study in psychology experienced as too general and repetitive with insufficient practical exposure	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	
Honours in psychology perceived as lacking professional significance	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Honours in psychology perceived as significant in personal capacity			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Positive experience of studying psychology linked to interpersonal encounter's with already qualified individuals in the field that manifest the	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓

values of psychology in their interactions								
Practical Exposure through community engagement aided in personal growth and refining professional interests	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Feelings of frustration and disillusionment stemming from lack of information about the usefulness of an honours in psychology outside of acceptance into a professional training program	✓	✓	✓				✓	
Pervasive lack of awareness about what honours graduates can work as- “Grey Area”	✓					✓	✓	✓
Ambivalent feelings with concern to post-honours in psychology- Excitement gratitude and pride vs anxiety, uncertainty and apathy	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Master’s selection process experienced as distressing		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
“The wait”/ “What’s next?”- perception that master’s selection process places a lot of people in limbo	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Lack of employment in the field for honours in psychology graduates	✓		✓		✓	✓		

Perception that honours students knowledge and experience can be useful to South African citizens	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
Finding solace through a “Back-up plan”- Lack of a “Back-up plan as a contributor to distress			✓		✓		✓	✓
Distressed by financial implications of pursuing qualifications in the field		✓	✓		✓		✓	

Appendix E: Turnitin similarity report

ORIGINALITY REPORT

8%	5%	2%	6%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT
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