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Coping with parental loss during young adult development:
The search for meaning and reconstruction of identity

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of requirements for the degree
Doctor of Psychology

City University, London
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September 2008

Supervised by Dr Heather Sequeira
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Motivation for English language learning: a study of Hong Kong vocational students

Thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Education

at the University of Leicester

by

Yeung Siu May Yvonne

September 2009
Abstract

The aim of the present study is to explore the motivational factors of Hong Kong vocational students in learning English. A qualitative case study approach was employed with a combination of surveys with self-completion questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and diary notes.

The research, which was carried out in two phases from September to June 2005-6 in one academic year, had the objective of examining whether there was any change of motivation for learning English. Ten students from a vocational institute were selected for the interviews, each were interviewed twice. They were also invited to write diaries, and to record their daily English activities. The data collected were used to triangulate with the interview findings when analyzing the results.

The study was initiated by students’ differences in learning attitudes and the variations in their standard of English. Research on motivation for, and attitudes towards learning English reveal that instrumental and intrinsic motivations often apply to secondary school and tertiary-level learners, but prior to this study the research did not extend to vocational students in Hong Kong.

The findings show that vocational students not only have strong instrumental motivation for learning English but also have intrinsic motivation. It was apparent that in the process of their learning English, participants regarded English as a functional language which was tied up with their career. This finding is the same as that of previous research on attitudes towards learning English of Hong Kong students. In addition, vocational students’ motivation for learning English was found to be influenced and encouraged by many factors, particularly significant others, such as parents. The present study will enable English teachers to have a greater understanding of vocational students’ motives for learning English. This could help to improve teaching strategies, teaching materials and language policies; and, thus, enhance more effective learning of English in the vocational setting of Hong Kong.
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I am deeply indebted to the two experienced English teachers who went through all the interview conversations to complete the task of verifying the scripts translated from Cantonese to English. This task took up a lot of their valuable time.

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Chapter 1  Introduction

1.1  Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to find out the motivational factors of vocational students who are in the process of learning the English language. Chapter 1 of the thesis first presents the background to current English language learning in Hong Kong, discussing it in terms of its historical, socio-political and educational context. The learning environment in a vocational setting is then explained. This is followed by an outline of the purpose and rationale of the study, the area of research interest, the main research questions and the methods of study adopted. The significance of the research is then examined, along with the issues that have emerged from the study and its limitations. Finally, there is a brief overview of the structure of the thesis and how each of the chapters is organized.

1.2  Hong Kong context of the research

1.2.1  Historical background

History has played an important role in English language learning in Hong Kong, a British colony from 1842 until the end of June, 1997. During this colonial period, most Hong Kong citizens communicated in both Chinese (Cantonese) and English. In the early decades of the last century, English was seen as the prestigious language, “a symbol of power more than a means of communication” (Cheung, 1984, p.278). It was an official language in Hong Kong and, as such, played an important role in society. Proficiency in English was not only a tool of study but also an asset in working life. The English language was used in trade and commerce and in communication with the outside world. Junior staff of the civil service who could upgrade their English standard
and pass the required English examination would have better career prospects and the likelihood of a higher salary.

1.2.2 Second language and foreign language learning environment

English has acquired an unusual status in Hong Kong throughout the region’s history. When Hong Kong was a British colony, the English language functioned in a way that was not strictly speaking a second language but similar to that of second language status. It is the researcher’s view that English does not function as a second language in cases where it is typically used as the medium of everyday communication for most people; as it is used, for example, in Singapore. Nor is there evidence that English has played an important role as a lingua franca for citizens in Hong Kong. Yet learners there have been learning English in an environment similar to that of a second language environment. “The learners of second language are surrounded by stimulation, both visual and auditory, in the target language, and thus have many motivational and instructional advantages” (Oxford & Shearin, 1994, p.14). In the above mentioned historical background and social situations, learners have been surrounded by different kinds of stimulations and, thus, motivated to learn the English language.

A foreign language is one that is learnt in a place where that language is not typically used as the medium of ordinary communication. For instance, if students are not living in an English-speaking community, they are learning English as a foreign language. Foreign language learners are surrounded by their own native language and have to go out of their way to find stimulation and input in the target language. While students in Hong Kong could learn English from the broadcast and print media, street signs, business documents, public transport, and other means of English language communication in the vicinity, the majority of students lives in homogeneous Chinese
neighborhoods and have limited contact with English outside their schools. These students typically receive input of the English language in the classroom.

1.2.3 Motivation for English language learning in the socio-political context

Hong Kong students begin learning to read and write the English language in their early childhood. As far as everyday life is concerned, the mother tongue, Cantonese (a spoken dialect in the southern province of Guangdong, China), is preferred to English, which is used only when necessary. English is not practiced at home, outside class or among friends; or within the Chinese community. Luke and Richards (1982) described English as an auxiliary language for specialized, academic and professional uses because its uses have traditionally been restricted to the institutionalized functions in society – government, law, education and commerce. Proficiency in the English language is regarded by most Hong Kong people as the “principal determinant of upward and outward mobility” (So, 1992, p.78). It has been commonly accepted that having a good English standard means a higher position and status in the job market.

With the signing of the Joint Declaration in 1984, Hong Kong became a Special Administrative Region of China (SAR) on July 1, 1997. This resulted in a perceived heightened status of the Chinese language and a diminution in the status of English. It seems likely that the status of English no longer stems from its associations as the language of the colonial administrators. It is now seen as the language of international communication and as a means to preserve Hong Kong’s international status, which is an important preoccupation for most Hong Kong people (Pennington, 1993). In this respect, there may have been a shift in how students view English in Hong Kong, from being a second language to being a foreign or international language. Learners’ motivation for learning the English language could be very different in a foreign
language environment in comparison with that in a second language environment.

1.2.4 Learning English in a foreign language environment

The language situation has become complicated since Hong Kong became a Special Administrative Region of China (Flowerdew, 1998). There are reasons to explain this situation. In the service sector of the economy, there is a demand for good English speakers. In education, there is a problem in attracting good English language teachers, who are interested in improving curriculum design and classroom practices to motivate students in the learning of English. Moreover, all primary and secondary schools of Hong Kong provide lessons in Putonghua (China’s official spoken language – Mandarin was the name previously used. It is the official form of spoken language of China) as well as English lessons for students. In addition, most secondary schools have changed their medium of instruction from English to Cantonese, although English is still the medium of instruction in all tertiary institutes. Students have less stimulation and input in the target language, English.

In the socio-political context, there is increasing influence from the Mother country, China, and its link language, Putonghua, on the citizens of Hong Kong. Most citizens find the need to communicate in Putonghua, and its importance has been recognized and its status has risen as a result of more and more business between China and Hong Kong. In order to achieve a better standard of language, many people devote their language learning efforts to Putonghua (Nunan, 1999, p.61). As a result, learners of the English language are surrounded in the society by their own dialects, Cantonese and Putonghua. The integration of economic and demographic factors between China and Hong Kong makes it likely that English in Hong Kong will increasingly take on the features of a foreign language in education and everyday life (Lai, 1999, p.284).
Despite the fact that English learners are surrounded by their own dialects and language, it is acknowledged that English language usage is essential to the society. Li (1999) considered referring to the status of English in Hong Kong as a value-added language. English was perceived by the majority of working adults as “possessing some mysterious added value, which is instrumental of many Hongkongers aspiring to move up the social ladder” (Li, 1999, p.99). In post-1997 Hong Kong, English continues to be regarded as “important symbolic capital for both upward and outward mobility” (Li, 1999, p.104). English continues to play an important role in the domains of government, law, education and commerce. In the eyes of parents, obtaining good English means having a better future.

1.2.5 Medium of instruction in education

In education, nearly all kindergartens and primary schools in Hong Kong use Chinese (Cantonese) as the medium of instruction (CMI). Some exposure to English is available in most kindergartens. Spoken and written English are taught in primary schools. Secondary schools are basically of two types: English medium and Chinese medium schools. These two types are referred to as Anglo-Chinese schools and Chinese middle schools. Anglo-Chinese schools use English as the medium of instruction (EMI) in all subjects except Chinese language, Chinese history and Chinese literature. Chinese middle schools use Cantonese as the medium of instruction (CMI) in all subjects except the subject of English language.

Although the official medium of instruction in the Anglo-Chinese schools remains English, with the exception of some prestigious schools of long tradition there is a growing trend for teachers to use both English and Cantonese in the classroom for better classroom management and easier communication. The distinction between
Anglo-Chinese (EMI) schools and Chinese (CMI) middle schools has become blurred since the introduction in 1978 of free, compulsory nine-year education (Poon, 2000, p.149). In some schools, English is used most of the time and mixed with some Cantonese explanation. While in other schools, Cantonese is used most of the time and mixed with some English terms. The language situation is confused in Hong Kong schools. Despite the fact that English language usage has been diminishing in the school environment, the Education Department has introduced a new policy promoting the mother tongue for all secondary schools in Hong Kong.

Since the start of the 1998 academic year, most schools have been required to use the mother tongue, Cantonese, as the medium of instruction while the English language has continued to be learnt at school. This is because “for education reasons, the appropriate MOI (Medium Of Instruction) for most students is their mother tongue” (Education Department, 1997, p.1, para. 2.1). As for schools that had been operating successfully with English as the medium of teaching and had good academic results, they were able to apply to continue to teach in English if they wished. These schools, however, needed to satisfy the requirements regarding students’ language ability, teachers’ capability and the availability of support strategies and programs for students (Education Department, 1997, p.1, para. 2.4).

The Education Department has turned more than 300 Anglo-Chinese (EMI) secondary schools into Chinese (CMI) middle schools, leaving only 114 EMI schools. In CMI schools, all subjects are taught in Cantonese except English language and English literature. There is much uncertainty and anxiety among students, parents and even teachers in the implementation of the new medium of instruction policy. Students and their parents, for pragmatic reasons, consistently value English over Cantonese as a
teaching medium, although they agree with the teachers that instruction in Cantonese is educationally more effective (Tung et al., 1997). This medium of instruction policy proved to be highly unpopular with parents who had increased pressure to put their children into a much smaller number of EMI schools (Choi, 2005, p.149). To enable children to have a better chance to get into EMI schools, many parents put them into English tutorial classes hoping to improve their English standard.

Given the above circumstances, the emergence of a deteriorating standard of English proficiency among students in Hong Kong is predictable. The issue of falling standards of English in Hong Kong has been a topic of debate in society. It is “the case that rarely a week goes by in Hong Kong without the local press running a story related to language standards; typically focusing on their decline” (Hamp-Lyons et al., 1999, p.61). Many students who undertake tertiary education do not possess the necessary standard of English proficiency to cope with their studies. “The past two decades have seen a deterioration of English standards which many sectors of the population find alarming” (Tong, 2007, Column E4). This was observed by an honorary professor of the English Department of a tertiary institute of Hong Kong.

In the tertiary institutes, English is the official medium of instruction for all tertiary education; yet, Cantonese is frequently the de facto language in tutorials. This is because, on the one hand, the students do not have the requisite standard of English to cope with solely English language teaching; and, on the other hand, the tutor’s first language is Cantonese. It appears that lectures are increasingly being given in Cantonese, even though most assignments and examination questions and answers are written in English.
1.2.6 Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination

The Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) is a public examination taken by the majority of secondary school students at the end of the fifth year of their secondary school. (Grade C or above in most HKCEE subjects including English language syllabus B is recognized as equivalent to an O-level pass in a British International GCE London Examination, 2008, p.1). To obtain a pass in the HKCEE is a proof of completing secondary school studies satisfactorily. A pass in the HKCEE means passing a minimum of five subjects including English language, Chinese language, Mathematics and two other subjects selected by individual students. A pass in this examination is the minimum qualification for further study or to be able to get a reasonable job. There are two different syllabi for testing students’ English standard in this examination. Syllabus B is for students of Anglo-Chinese (EMI) schools, who are taught in English. Syllabus A is for students of Chinese (CMI) middle schools, who are taught in Cantonese. Most Hong Kong universities and tertiary institutes would prefer student entrants who have passed the syllabus B English rather than syllabus A English because the level of syllabus B English is higher than that of syllabus A.

1.3 English learning in the vocational institute

The vocational institute offers two-year, three-year and four-year full-time and part-time Higher Diploma courses in the disciplines of Business Services and Management; Engineering; Construction; Information and Communications Technology; and Multimedia and Internet Technology disciplines. There are different entry requirements according to different Higher Diploma courses. The total number of full-time students of this institute is approximately 6,000.
The minimum entry requirement for the three-year Higher Diploma courses is a pass (Grade E) in five subjects including English language, syllabus B in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE). Students who pass English of syllabus A in the same examination are considered as getting only an F grade, which is a fail in the English subject. Students who fail the English language subject but obtain acceptable results in other subjects could be considered for a place in the four-year Higher Diploma courses in some disciplines. The annual tuition fee for this type of four-year Higher Diploma course is higher than that set for the two-year and three-year Higher Diploma courses. The 10 participants in the present study were studying year one of the four-year Higher Diploma course.

English language is a compulsory academic subject in all disciplines. Students need to pass English language in order to be promoted to year two. In theory, English is the medium of instruction in all courses. But as students’ English standard is generally not good, many courses are conducted in Cantonese. Students rarely use English language except in English lessons and to write their assignments.

As described in section 1.2.3, like most students in Hong Kong, students in the vocational institute began their early childhood education, in kindergarten, at the age of five. They started to write both English and Chinese languages, respectively, in kindergarten and both subjects continued to be taught in primary and secondary school, and at tertiary level. Students usually speak Cantonese among family members, classmates, friends and relatives. Most students who apply to study in the vocational institute are either unable to gain admission to university or, have left school for some time, decide to return to study in order to improve their prospects for re-entering the work force. Although they would have been learning the English language for more
than 10 years, on entering the vocational institute some students’ level of English does not meet the required standard. Most vocational students come from Chinese (CMI) secondary schools. Many students who study the four-year Higher Diploma courses have failed the English language subject of syllabus B in the HKCEE. Of the 10 participants in this study, only four passed English language syllabus B in the HKCEE.

Vocational education in Hong Kong is gaining in importance because of its emphasis on pre-employment training. Students completing the courses can enter the work force immediately. Much remains to be done in the study of language attitudes and motivation among students of this group, where language attitudes may be found to be quite different from the findings of studies done on secondary and tertiary students. This is the main reason why the researcher has carried out the present study on vocational students’ motivation for learning the English language.

1.4 Purpose and rationale of the study

The study on the motivation for English language learning of Hong Kong vocational students was initiated by students’ differences in learning attitudes towards English language learning and the variations in their standard of English. During years of teaching the English language in a vocational institute, the researcher has observed that students have different attitudes concerning English language learning. These differences in attitude could affect the learning outcome. Students who are motivated and inspired to learn would be more likely to be successful than those who are not. It is the concern of the researcher that vocational students are not motivated to learn the English language. As an English language teacher in a vocational institute, the researcher aims to achieve a better standard in this subject for vocational students. To
this end, it is the researcher’s intention to explore the following questions:

- Do students hold responsibility for their own English language learning?
- Could teachers motivate students to learn the English language? If ‘yes’: Are teachers the only agents that motivate students to learn the language?
- What motivates students to learn the English language?
- How could students be motivated to learn the English language?

The purpose of this study is to find out the motivational factors of vocational students in the process of English language learning. The participants’ English learning experiences in their primary and secondary schools are examined in order to have a better understanding of the initial motivating factors. The objective of this is to find out whether these factors are being carried on to a latter stage of English learning in the vocational institute. It is believed that by having a better understanding of students’ motivation, teachers can improve and modify the teaching strategies, thus motivating students to learn the language more effectively.

In Hong Kong, studies of how motivation operates in English language learning have been conducted mostly with secondary and tertiary students (Lin et al., 1991; Littlewood & Liu, 1996; Richards, 1998; Lai, 1999; Salili & Lai, 2003). The findings showed that both groups had instrumental motivation but not integrative motivation. Instrumental motivation refers to a learner’s wish to gain some social or economic rewards through the target language’s learning and achievement; while integrative motivation refers to a learner who has an open interest in the target language community and expresses a high degree of motivation to learn the language.

Some findings, however, from studies on tertiary students were different from the above.
Nunan (1999) found that most students have learned English throughout their secondary schooling, and are de-motivated by their perceptions of a lack of progress, by what many report as poor instructional methods, and by an increasing pressure, with the change of sovereignty, from Britain to China, to devote their language learning efforts to Putonghua. The second factor has to do with the limited amount of time that students are given to develop skills… (Nunan, 1999, p.61)

Participants in the above mentioned study had graduated from secondary schools and may have been disenchanted with the slow progress of their English and ascribed this to various causes, internal or external; or, they may have belonged to the group of students who had integrative and/or instrumental motivations. The researcher aims to find out whether vocational students’ attitudes and perspectives are the same as those determined from previous surveys on secondary school and tertiary students.

1.5 Research questions

The research questions of the present study are the following:

1. What are the factors that motivate students in a vocational institute to learn the English language?

2. What is the English language learning attitude of students in a vocational institute?

3. Do(es) integrative and/or instrumental motivation exist(s) among students of a vocational institute?
1.6 Methods of study

A qualitative case study approach was employed in this research to find out the motivational factors in the learning processes of the 10 participants, who are students in the Hong Kong vocational institute. These 10 participants are students of the researcher during the period of study. A pilot study employing the case study approach on the same topic was conducted in the year prior to the present study. Results showed that it was feasible to carry out the research using this method in combination with questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and diaries.

In this research the case study approach is selected because of its very uniqueness. It can reveal a phenomenon and knowledge that would not otherwise have been accessed (Merriam, 1998). The vocational institute is a unique place and the participants belong to a year one group of the four-year Higher Diploma course in the Business Service Management Department (BSM). The researcher “typically observed the characteristics of these individuals with the purpose of probing deeply and to analyzing intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle” (Cohen & Manion, 2000, p.185) of this group of students.

Merriam stated that the case study is a particularly suitable design if one is interested in process rather than outcomes (Merriam, 1998, p.18). This research on the motivation for English language learning is to understand individuals’ learning behavior over a prolonged period of time in order to find out their common characteristics. This is an extensive process. Case studies also help in understanding processes of events and programs, and in the discovery of context characteristics that will shed light on an issue or object (Sanders, 1981). The intention of this research is to focus attention on a case,
not the whole population of cases. It is for an understanding of the particular case, for “its idiosyncrasy and in its complexity” (Nunan, 1992, p.80).

The present research has undergone two main phases, covering the period from September to June in one academic year. The reason for having two phases is to examine whether there is any change of motivation for English language learning. Self-completion questionnaires written in English were given to 49 students in phase 1 of the survey and the same questionnaire was given to the same group of students in phase 2. The 10 participant students were interviewed using a semi-structured approach in both phases. The same group of 10 students was interviewed twice in this research. Participants were invited to keep diaries to write down their English language learning experiences during the research period. Informal talks were arranged with the participants twice a month.

1.7 Significance of the study

Since Hong Kong has become a Special Administrative Region of China, there has been an increased demand for good English speakers in the service sector of the society. Many people want to learn English well. Ironically, at the same time there has emerged a deteriorating standard of English proficiency among Hong Kong students, as mentioned in section 1.2.5. Students seem to have less and less motivation to learn English as demonstrated by the poor level of English proficiency in the examinations. A key factor in successful learning is the learner’s motivation; a student’s motivation is recognized as a factor contributing to their academic achievement. The poor standard of English proficiency of Hong Kong vocational students is recognized as an issue. It is essential to identify the motivational or de-motivational factors involved in order to
facilitate the English language learning of this group of students.

It is important for English teachers to clearly identify students’ motivational factors in order to resolve any impediments to their learning. This study may help English teachers understand their students’ motivation in learning the English language and, thus, enable them to improve the teaching methods. The researcher aims to strengthen students’ motivation for learning the English language so that they will have a clearer purpose, and find the meaning and engage in learning the target language. Furthermore, studies indicate that the more students understand about how they learn, the more likely that they will become independent, responsible and self-confident learners (Myers, 1992).

1.8 Limitations of the study

This study does not presume to represent the learning experience of all vocational students in Hong Kong. The number of participants in the research is 10. There is no intention to offer an explanation of the motivational factors that relate to the English language learning attitudes of all vocational students. The qualitative case study approach is to develop deeper understandings of participants’ attitudes relating to the English language learning experiences. The researcher conducted one-to-one interviews with the participants, organized informal talks with them and invited them to keep a diary during the research period. This methodology entails a number of constraints.

In sampling, the low achievers are excluded. The reasons for this are explained in chapter 3, the sample selection section. The English language learning experiences and motivational factors of this group are, thus, ignored.
A lack of time is another constraining issue. Although the participants were willing to talk about their learning experience in the two interviews, some of them guarded their time carefully. It was difficult to schedule informal talks regularly because these students were fully occupied with their lessons and tutorial classes.

The translation from Cantonese to English poses problems in the transcription of the interviews. First, the interview questions were in English. Although all questions were written in simple English, participants may not have fully understood the exact meaning of one or two of the questions. They relied on the researcher’s Cantonese translations in answering these questions. Second, some participants spoke in Cantonese because they could not fully express their ideas in English. The researcher transcribed the interview conversation to English in the data analysis stage. In transcribing the Cantonese conversation to written English language, it is possible that the English vocabulary might not be an exact translation of the Cantonese. Nevertheless, this limitation has been minimized with the verifications by two experienced English language teachers, which will be explained in chapter 3.

Data collection through the use of the interview approach depends on the informant’s ability and readiness to recall significant events and persons that had made an impact on their English learning experiences. It has to be acknowledged that in any retrospective data collection, there is a risk of a disparity between an informant’s later interpretation of an experience and what actually happened. The findings of this study, in recording the recollections of the respondents’ English language learning motivation, thus incorporate the potential limitations of any self-reported data.
1.9 Overview of the thesis

The thesis comprises six chapters. The content of each is summarized as follows.

The first, introductory chapter has outlined the background to the research by providing an overview of the English language learning environment in Hong Kong with respect to how English is used in the society, and to the educational settings in relation to the motivation of vocational students in Hong Kong. In addition, the chapter has discussed the aims and purposes of the study, the main research questions, the significance of the research, and certain limitations inherent in this type of qualitative research.

Chapter 2 is the literature review chapter and covers theories, models and empirical researches of motivation in relation to the present study. It comprises five major parts. The first presents a review of the literature on theories that relate to the motivation of learning. It focuses on learning in relation to needs, success and achievement. The second part presents theories and models of foreign/second language (L2) learning including the socio-educational models and the education-friendly approaches. The third major part discusses L2 learning motivation and the language learning contexts. This part, in turn, includes five areas. The first area details the influences on motivation of significant others, namely parents, teachers and peers. The second area focuses on the relationship between motivation and interest in learning L2. The third area describes motivational investment in relation to identity and community. The fourth area presents the process-oriented model of L2 learning. The fifth area discusses motivational autonomy and the L2 motivational self system. The fourth major part of this chapter presents five empirical researches on theories and models of motivation in L2 that have been discussed earlier, and of which relates to the present study. The fifth major part of
this chapter is a selected review of literature on motivational factors in the English language learning of Hong Kong students. This chapter ends with a summary of the theories and models being discussed.

Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology of this study. There are eight parts to the chapter. The first one is a discussion on the research approach of the qualitative case study. The second part provides information about the participants’ education background and the criteria of sample selection. The third part explains the data collection process, involving a questionnaire survey on motivation to learn the English language, semi-structured interviews and diary notes. The fourth part presents the means of transcribing the data and the stages of data analysis. The fifth and the sixth parts respectively discuss the validity and trustworthiness, and the ethical considerations of the present study. The seventh and eighth parts examine the limitations of the study and the researcher’s role, respectively.

Chapter 4 presents an overall picture of the data collected from Hong Kong vocational students; and, the findings on the motivation of 10 participants for learning the English language, discussing these in relation to the literature review in chapter 2. This chapter also attempts to answer the three main research questions of the thesis. It contains five major parts. The first part presents the results and discusses the findings of both phase 1 and phase 2 of the questionnaire survey. The second part explains how data are presented for the interviews and diaries. The third part describes and analyzes the findings from the semi-structured interviews and diary writings of the 10 participants in phase 1 and phase 2. The fourth part discusses the findings on attitudes of Hong Kong vocational students towards learning the English language. The fifth part provides an overall analysis of the motivation of Hong Kong vocational students in comparison with
other Hong Kong students as mentioned in the literature review chapter.

Chapter 5 of this thesis discusses the themes that emerged both from the survey and the analysis of the motivation for English language learning of Hong Kong vocational students. The themes will be discussed in the context of Hong Kong. It is followed by an outline of the individual profiles of four students – Students B, C, I and J. These four students are, respectively, intrinsically motivated; instrumentally-oriented; goal-oriented and socially motivated. In addition, motivational change is one of the important features found in the data, of which a discussion is included in this chapter as well.

Chapter 6 provides an overview of the aims of the study; the methodology employed; the data collection and analysis; and the results of the research. It examines the implications of the research findings; the evaluations of the current study; and provides suggestions for future research; as well as presents a concluding section to this thesis.
Chapter 2  Literature review

2.1  Introduction

Chapter 2 of this thesis is the literature review chapter and covers theories and models of motivation in relation to the present study. The purpose of the study is to find out the motivational factors of vocational students in their process of learning the English language. Motivation in foreign/second language (L2) learning in this thesis refers to motivation in learning the English language. The theories and models on which the research is based are mostly from Dornyei’s (1998) model of seven dimensions of motivation because it has a comprehensive coverage of motivational factors that are related to the context of the study. This chapter contains five major parts. The first part presents a review of the literature on theories of motivation which focuses on learning in relation to needs, success and achievement. These theories lay the foundation to the motivational models and approaches described in the second part. The second part presents theories and models of L2 learning including the socio-educational models and the education-friendly approaches. The third major part discusses L2 learning motivation and the language learning contexts. This part is organized into five areas. The first area details the influences on motivation of significant others, namely parents, teachers and peers. The second area focuses on the relationship between motivation and interest in learning L2. The third area describes motivational investment in relation to identity and community. The fourth area presents the process-oriented model of L2 learning motivation. The fifth area discusses motivational autonomy and the L2 motivational sub-system. The fourth major part of this chapter presents five empirical researches on theories and models of motivation in L2 that have been discussed earlier, and of which relates to the present study. The fifth major part of this chapter is a
selected review of literature on motivational factors for Hong Kong students in learning the English language. This chapter ends with a summary of the theories and models being discussed.

2.2 Theories of motivation

Motivation has been found to significantly affect language learning success (Dornyei, 2005, p.65). Many researchers agree that it is one of the main elements directly related to success in developing a second or foreign language. It determines the extent of active and personal involvement in language learning (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). In the present study, motivation is defined as “the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained” (Schunk et al., 2008, p.4). It is a process inferred from behaviors and cannot be observed directly. Motivation is a desire to achieve a goal, combined with the energy to work towards that goal (Ames & Ames, 1989). The energy that works towards the goal not only involves desire but also the need to be persistent with it and expend the effort in it (Dornyei, 2001, p.8). The significance of motivation in language learning is summarized as follows:

It provides the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process; … Without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough on their own to ensure student achievement. On the other hand, high motivation can make up for considerable deficiencies both in one’s language aptitude and learning conditions. (Dornyei, 2005, p.65)

Although different theories of motivation have been perceived by researchers to have
played important roles in the field of education (Oxford & Shearin, 1996), nevertheless, motivation is a multifaceted factor and, therefore, “no available theory has yet managed to represent it in its total complexity” (Dornyei, 1998, p.131). The literature review chapter mainly focuses on theories and models of motivation in the area of the present study. The following three sections aim at reviewing the theories of general psychology of motivation relating to needs, success and achievement in relation to education and learning. The researcher thinks that these are the basic driving forces that sustain the learning process. The implications and applications of these theories in the English language teaching and learning contexts are discussed as applicable in the sections.

2.2.1 Motivation and needs

The theories discussed in this section emphasize learners’ potentialities and intrinsic motives that are associated with autonomy, capabilities and self-actualization. These fall within the area of the humanistic approach of motivation. The focus is on the natural desire of everyone to learn and the fact that individuals are capable of self-determination and eager to have control over their lives. The theory of hierarchy needs, self-determination theory, and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are the three important theories in this area.

Maslow’s theory of hierarchy needs

Maslow’s (1954) humanistic theory is one of the important historical perspectives of needs theory (Schunk et al., 2008). It puts forward that humans have five levels of needs, ranging from the lowest to the highest level of the hierarchy: physiological needs, security needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs. Table 2.1 shows Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.
Table 2.1  Maslow’s hierarchy of needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Higher needs (growth needs)</th>
<th>5. Self-actualization needs – growth through the realization of one’s potential and capacities; the need for comprehension and insight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Esteem needs – need to achieve, to gain approval and recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Needs for belongingness and love – need for love, affection, security, social acceptance; need for identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Safety needs – need for security and protection from pain, fear, anxiety, and disorganization; need for sheltering, dependency, order, lawfulness and rules of behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower needs (deficiency needs)</td>
<td>1. Physiological needs – hunger, thirst, sexuality, and so on, as homeostatic and organismic needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Schunk et al., 2008, p.173)

Self-actualization, the growth or higher needs at the top of the hierarchy, is the most important area for the development of personality. Not until the lower needs such as the physiological and safety needs are met, can the higher needs be satisfied. The lower need would dominate if two different needs were in conflict.

Maslow’s theory underscores normal human growth and development. It is human’s natural tendency towards growth that motivates behaviors. It has been recognized, however, that not all personalities follow this hierarchy. There is a variety of personality dimensions related to motivational needs, such as the introversion/extroversion dimension of personality. Alderfer (1972) reorganized Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and worked out three levels in the introverted and extroverted components. Table 2.2 shows
the introversion/extroversion dimension of personality.

Table 2.2 Introversion/extroversion dimension of personality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Introversion</th>
<th>Extroversion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>Self-actualization – development of competencies (knowledge, attitudes and skills) and character</td>
<td>Transcendence – assisting in the development of others’ competencies and character; relationships to the unknown, unknowable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (relatedness)</td>
<td>Personal identification with group, significant others (belongingness)</td>
<td>Value of person by group (esteem)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self (existence)</td>
<td>Physiological, biological (including basic emotional needs)</td>
<td>Connectedness, security</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(AbiSamra, 2003, p.18)

This table suggests two aspects of each level that differentiate how people relate to each set of needs. Different personalities might relate more to one dimension than the other. For instance, an introvert at the level of other/relatedness might be more concerned with his or her own perceptions of being included in a group whereas an extrovert at the same level would pay more attention to how others value that membership.

In Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory, the environment provides the opportunities for satisfaction of needs. Growth and development would not occur with the optimal result if the environment did not allow needs to be satisfied. In daily life, if a family environment did not provide for the basic physiological and safety needs of the children, it would not foster their most positive development. In the learning situation, students’
positive development could enhance their motivational behavior to learn. In addition, one of the growth needs, self-esteem, is regarded as a motivator for successful learning. Self-esteem is “the evaluation that the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself; it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval; and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy” (Coopersmith, 1967, pp.4-5). The hierarchy of needs theory lays the foundation for language learning theories in which variables like environment, self-esteem and self-actualization are apparent in L2 motivational theories and models such as those of Gardner’s or Dornyei’s, discussed in the later sections of this thesis. In the present study the data show the relationship of motivation with some of Maslow’s “needs”.

Self-determination theory

Self-determination refers to autonomy, individual choice and internal locus of control. It requires that learners accept their strengths and limitations; they make choices and determine ways to satisfy needs. There are three basic innate psychological needs that underlie behavior. These are the needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness. Students need to be competent in their interactions with others, with tasks and activities. The need for autonomy refers to the need to feel a sense of control, or autonomy in interactions in the environment or a perceived internal locus of causality (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Relatedness is the need to belong to a group. It is sometimes called a need for belongingness. Based on the self-determination theory, Ryan and Deci (2000) propose two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic motivations.

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations

Intrinsic motivation describes students’ engagement in actions “for their own sake and
without coercion such as satisfaction, as sense of competence, interest, learning and challenge” (Alderman, 2008, p.252). Extrinsic motivation occurs when “students engage in activities for external reasons (outside of themselves) such as praise, grades, special privileges, and certificates or material rewards. Pressure from someone and coercion are also forms of extrinsic motivation” (Alderman, 2008, p.252).

Intrinsically motivated students will engage in activities like rehearsing new information, organizing knowledge and applying skills and knowledge in different contexts. When students develop skills and apply them in appropriate learning situations, they will perceive their progress and feel more efficacious about learning. Heightened self-efficacy and positive outcome expectations will raise intrinsic motivation and lead to further learning (Bandura, 1986, 1993). In the language learning environment, intrinsically motivated learners learn the target language because they want to know more about the target language itself. They want to feel competence and self-determination through the learning process.

Fisher (1990) also suggests that intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are the two general sources of motivation. He proposes three major sources of motivation in learning. The first one is the learner’s natural interest, which relates to intrinsic satisfaction. The second one is the teacher/institution/employment, which relates to extrinsic reward. The third one is the success in the task, which relates to a combination of satisfaction and reward (Fisher, 1990). Littlejohn (2001) relates the three sources of motivation to English language teaching and learning situations:

Teachers and school systems have drawn on both the first two sources of motivations, the third source is perhaps under exploited in language teaching. This is the simple fact of
success, and the effect that this has on our view of what we do. As human beings, we generally like what we do well, and are therefore more likely to do it again, and put in more effort… In the classroom, this can mean that students who develop an image of themselves as ‘no good at English’ will simply avoid situations which tell them what they already know – that they aren’t any good at English. Feelings of failure, particularly early on in a student’s school career, can therefore lead to a downward spiral of a self-perception of low ability – low motivation – low effort – low achievement – low motivation – low achievement, and so on. (Littlejohn, 2001, pp.6-7)

The comment above shows that enhancing intrinsic motivation is one of the ways to diminish students’ feeling of “no good at English”. In order to do this, teachers could provide activities that meet the four sources: challenge, curiosity, control and fantasy (Lepper & Hodell, 1989). When students’ skills are challenged by the activities, they will be intrinsically motivated. If an activity can present students with ideas that appear surprising or incongruous, it might prompt curiosity. Activities that provide students with a sense of control over their academic outcomes could enhance intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1980). Fantasy motivation can be promoted with activities that involve learners in fantasy and make-believe through simulated situations and games. It is the challenge of teachers to raise students’ intrinsic motivation.

The notions of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations have aroused much attention and discussion among researchers. The concept of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations has been broadened and incorporated in many studies on the motivation of L2 learning which are discussed in the later sections of this thesis. Data from the interviews in the present study show that participants have intrinsic motivation and this will be examined in chapter 4.
2.2.2 Motivation and success

Success has been regarded as the ultimate effect of motivation. The ways to achieve it have been discussed in different theories. Expectancy-value theory and attribution theory of motivation are theories concerning success that have influenced the study of motivation for nearly twenty years between approximately the 1960s and the early 1980s (Weiner, 1992, p.161).

Expectancy-value theory

Expectancy refers to whether learners believe that they will do well on an upcoming test or some future event. A learner’s motivation is determined by how much he or she values the goal and whether he or she expects to succeed. According to the expectancy-value theory, the motivated behavior will be undertaken when a learner values the goal and when he or she believes that the goal can be accomplished. It is proposed that in order for motivation to occur, the three factors: expectancy, instrumentality and valence need to be multiplied by each other (AbiSamra, 2003, p.12). A low value in one of them will result in a low value of motivation. If a learner does not believe he or she can be successful at a task or the learner does not value the results of success, then the probability that the individual will engage in the required learning activity is lowered. Hence, the greater the belief that the goal will be attained, the greater the motivational tendency to engage in the behavior it would be. In addition, it is assumed that learners are faced with alternative goals and each goal has an assigned value. Then expectancies and values are combined to yield a motivational tendency; the strongest motivational value wins and is expressed in action (Weiner, 1992, p.161).

In the learning situation, the expectancy of future success is usually measured by asking students to predict how well they will do in the future on some task. For example, “Am
I able to do this task?” Expectancy of success is more future-oriented than simple self-perceptions of competence. Research on this theory shows that higher expectancies for success are positively related to other achievement behaviors like choice and persistence (Schunk et al., 2008). The implication of this theory for the school setting is that teachers could help students develop realistic expectancies for success. Teachers could motivate students to engage in tasks and to achieve if they believe they can accomplish them. Teachers could also provide accurate feedback to students in order to help them develop reasonable perceptions of their competence, and at the same time encourage them by telling them that their competence and skills will continue to develop and eventually lead to success.

**Attribution theory**

Attribution theory (Weiner, 1986) is concerned with the way in which people interpret the causes of their behavioral outcomes and the implications of those interpretations. In this theory, there are three dimensions: locus, stability and controllability. Locus denotes the orientation of a cause as internal or external to the actor. Stability means whether a cause is stable or unstable over time. Controllability signifies the degree to which a cause is under the actor’s control. According to Weiner (1986, 1992), effort is deemed internal to the actor, unstable over time and controllable; whereas the difficulty of a subject is regarded as external to the actor, stable over time and controllable only by others.

Weiner proposes that the locus dimension has an effect on self-esteem following success or failure. For internal attributions, self-esteem is augmented after success but diminished after failure. The stability dimension affects subjective expectancy of success. Future success will be expected if a positive outcome is attributed to a stable
cause, and future success will not be anticipated if a negative outcome is attributed to a stable cause. The controllability dimension is relevant to effects like anger, guilt and shame. Anger is felt if one is constrained from succeeding by factors that have been under others’ control; for example, teacher’s bias. Failures occur because of internally controllable causes such as laziness. Shame results from failures that are derived from internally uncontrollable causes such as lack of talent (Weiner, 1986; Graham, 1994).

In the teaching and learning environment, it is important for teachers to help students to formulate achievement beliefs that enhance motivation. Realizing the types of attributions and how these beliefs are formed, teachers could assist learners to develop a self-attribution explanation of effort that is internal and controlled. If a learner has an attribution of ability that is internal and not controllable, as soon as he or she experiences some difficulties in the learning process, they will experience a decrease in the appropriate learning motivation. It is the subjective reasons to which learners attribute their past successes and failures that considerably shape their motivational disposition (Dornyei, 2003, p.8). When students have feelings of failure, they will have a self-perception of low ability which leads to low motivation and results in low achievement, as mentioned by Littlejohn (2001) in the previous section. The findings of the present study reveal that some participants have feelings of failure in learning the English language. This will be discussed in chapter 4.

2.2.3 Motivation and achievement

Success and achievement are closely related to each other. An achievement-related action is associated with the possibility of success and the possibility of failure. When a learner succeeds, he or she will have the consequent emotion of pride; and if a learner fails, he or she will have the consequent emotion of shame. These emotions determine
whether a learner will approach or avoid achievement activities. Achievement behavior is viewed as the result of an emotional conflict between hopes for success and fears of failure (Weiner, 1992, p.181). Learners who have a high need for achievement are interested in excellence for its own sake. They tend to initiate achievement activities, work with heightened intensity on these tasks and persist in the face of failure. The main drive to do well comes from avoiding a negative outcome. This section discusses Atkinson’s theory of achievement motivation, self-efficacy theory and goal theories.

**Achievement motivation theory**

Atkinson’s (1964) theory of achievement motivation combines needs, expectancies and values. He proposes that behavior contains three components: motives, probability for success and incentive value. There are two basic achievement motives. The first is the motive to approach success and the second is the motive to avoid failure. If the motive for success is high, learners will likely approach and engage in the achievement tasks. The motive to avoid failure represents learners’ capacity to experience shame and humiliation when they fail. When this motive is high, learners avoid engaging in the achievement tasks. In Atkinson’s theory, the motives to approach success and to avoid failure represent the internal and personal contribution to motivation. The expectancy for success is the subjective belief in the probability of success. The incentive value of success concerns a positive feeling and pride in accomplishment. Tasks that are too easy usually do not generate much pride in accomplishment. Difficult butmanageable tasks, however, are more attractive and generate greater pride and self-worth when learners succeed.

**Self-efficacy theory**

Self-efficacy is “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses
of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Bandura, 1986, p.391). Self-efficacy theory holds that the motivational impact on learners whose self-efficacy perceptions are high is that they will engage in tasks that foster the development of their skills and capabilities. When self-efficacy perceptions are low, however, learners will not engage in new tasks that might help them learn new skills (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy is strongly related to effort and task persistence (Bandura & Cervone, 1986; Schunk, 1995). Learners with high self-efficacy beliefs are likely to exert effort in the face of difficulty and persist at a task when they have the requisite skills. Moreover, self-efficacy has been linked to the use of deeper processing strategies and general cognitive engagement of learning (Pintrich & Schrauben, 1992). In a learning situation, students who have efficacy will have judgment as to their capabilities, skills and knowledge to master school-related tasks. They will also have outcome expectations about what grades they might receive on the tasks.

**Goal theories**

Goals or goal orientations refer to a student’s purposes or reasons for engaging in academic work. Goal theories have emerged as one of the most prominent frameworks for studying motivation over recent decades. Among them, goal-setting theory and goal-orientation theory have become particularly influential in the past decade. Goal setting is an important motivational process. Learners who set goals and have a sense of self-efficacy for attaining them will engage in the activities. This notion has been stated in theories of motivation in section 2.2.

Goal setting refers to establishing quantitative or qualitative standards of performance in which goals have to be set and pursued by choice (Lock & Latham, 1990, 2002). Goals of moderate difficulty, which are more challenging but attainable, are more effective in
a motivational perspective. There are two aspects of goals in this theory. They are goal choice and goal commitment. Goal choice refers to the actual goal that learners are trying to obtain and the level at which they are trying to attain it. Goal commitment represents how strongly learners are attached to the goal, how enthusiastic they are about the goal and how determined they are to achieve it. Self-efficacy is one of the most important positive influences in personal goal-setting theory. Learners with higher self-efficacy set higher goals. Self-efficacy also bears a positive relation to goal commitment, with commitment being stronger when efficacy is high. In teaching and learning situations, teachers could encourage goal setting by specifying clear and unambiguous goals for all students. The goals that students set should be challenging and difficult but in the range of their capabilities.

Goal-orientation theory explains students’ learning performance in school settings. It describes learners’ achievement goals. They are important because they can influence motivational, cognitive and behavioral outcomes (Schunk et al., 2008). The theory highlights two achievement goal orientations. The first one is mastery orientation which focuses on learning the content. The second one is performance orientation which focuses on demonstrating ability, getting good grades or outperforming other students.

Under a mastery goal orientation, learners see a strong link between effort and outcome and make more effort attributions for success and failure. In addition, mastery goal students see effort linked positively with ability; more effort means more ability. In contrast, a performance goal orientation can lead to using ability attributions for success and failure. Ability attributions for failure are maladaptive and can result in learned helplessness (Weiner, 1986). Moreover, students with a performance goal tend to see effort and ability as inversely related. They tend to think that the harder they have to
work, the less ability they have. This belief can lead them to be a risk for avoiding effort in order to protect their ability and self-worth (Schunk et al., 2008).

In the context of school learning, students with mastery goals will aim at acquiring knowledge, developing new skills and improving their level of competence for task mastery. They will also focus on self-improvement using self-referenced standards like students who are intrinsically motivated. In contrast, students with performance goals will focus on demonstrating superior ability, outperforming others, and obtaining public recognition of excellence according to external norms. Learners with performance goals are more likely to select easy or difficult tasks, thereby either achieving success or having a good excuse for why failure occurred. Mastery goal oriented students used “more effective strategies, preferred challenging tasks, had a more positive attitude toward the class, and had a strong belief that success follows from one’s effort” (Ames & Archer, 1988, p.260).

There are different goals that learners set to learn L2. They may learn it for educational purposes: fulfilling school or university requirements; or learning the language could help to develop intercultural sensitivity and increase global understanding. It may also help to increase job opportunities and salary potential or to help gain social power or prestige. All these goals are found in the present study.

2.3 Theories and models of motivation in foreign/second language learning

The second part of the literature review starts by presenting socio-educational models of L2 motivation and theories with education-friendly approaches to this area. Recent
theories and modes of L2 learning motivation have often traced back to the work of Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) and their instrumental and integrative motivations. The two motivations have continued to inform empirical studies to the present day. There are attempts to re-define integrativeness in relation to English in the modern world, meaning that language is no longer necessarily associated with the respective cultures of its native speakers (Csizer & Dornyei, 2005; Gardner, 2005).

2.3.1 Socio-educational model

The basic assumption of the socio-educational model is that language is a significant part of one’s self-identity and that learning another language is much more complex than learning another school subject because it involves the acquisition of skills and behavior patterns of another cultural community (Gardner, 2005, p.305). Gardner and his associates, using the basic socio-educational model, revised it to comprise more updated variables in relation to L2 learning motivation. The following section first explains the basic socio-educational model, and this is then followed by a discussion of the key elements of the model: integrative and instrumental motivation theories. Finally, the revised socio-educational model is presented.

The socio-educational model’s (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993) main importance lies in its clear separation of four distinct aspects of the L2 learning process. The first one is antecedent factors which can be biological or experiential such as gender, age or learning history. The second one is individual difference; that is, learner variables. The third and fourth ones are, respectively, the language acquisition contexts and learning outcomes. There are six main learner variables covered by this model. They are intelligence, language aptitude, language learning strategies, language attitudes, motivation and language anxiety. These variables affect L2 attainment in the formal and
informal learning contexts, resulting in both linguistic and non-linguistic learning outcomes (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993).

In order to adopt a wider vision of motivation, Tremblay and Gardner (1995) incorporate expectancy-value and goal theories in the model. This model contains the following sequence: language attitudes – motivational behavior – achievement. It includes three mediating variables between attitudes and behavior. The first one is goal salience, which refers to the specificity of the learner’s goals and the frequency of goal-setting strategies used. The second one is valence, which subsumes the traditional scales of the desire to learn the L2, thus denoting an L2-learning–related value component. The last one is self-efficacy, which comprises anxiety and performance expectancy.

Gardner’s theory and research (see below) had been under criticism for failing to take adequate account of the classroom context of learner motivation (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991). There was a call for a more practitioner-validated, classroom-based concept of motivation (Ushioda, 2008, p.20); that is, the education-friendly approaches which will be presented in section 2.3.2.

**Integrative and instrumental motivations**

Gardner’s view of L2 learning motivation is that L2 achievement is related not only to the individual learner’s linguistic aptitude or general intelligence but also to the learner’s motivation and interest in learning the target language. According to Gardner (1985), motivation refers to “the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language” (Gardner, 1985, p.10). Motivation is concerned with the general reason for learning the target
language while the motive to learn a second language is “influenced by group related and context related attitudes, integrativeness and attitudes towards the learning situation” (Gardner, 1985, p.168).

Integrativeness is a motivation to learn a second language because of “positive feelings toward the community that speaks that language” (Gardner, 1985, pp.82-3). The integratively motivated learner is one “who has an open interest in the other language community and other ethnic communities in general, perceives the language learning context positively, and expresses a high degree of motivation to learn the language” (Gardner, 2005, p.351). Gardner also proposes that instrumental orientation is a powerful motivator in second language learning. Instrumental orientation emphasizes the “practical value and advantages of learning a new language” (Lambert, 1974, p.98). It is to pertain to the potential pragmatic gains of L2 proficiency, like getting a better job or a higher salary. The major distinction between orientations and motivation is that orientation refers to reasons or goals for learning L2 while motivation refers to the directed, reinforcing effort to learn the language (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991, p.58). The role of orientation is to help arouse motivation and direct it towards a set of goals, either with a strong interpersonal quality – integrative; or a strong practical quality – instrumental.

Revised socio-educational model

The revised model has a wider coverage of motivational variables. It is comprised of four sections: external influences, individual differences, language acquisition contexts, and outcomes. External influences include history and motivators. Individual differences include integrativeness (INT.); attitudes toward the learning situation (ALS.); motivation (MOT.); language aptitude (APT.); and other motivational and non-
motivational factors. Language acquisition contexts include formal and informal learning contexts; and the outcomes section includes linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes. Figure 1 shows the revised socio-educational model.

**Figure 1  Revised socio-educational model**

External influences refer to any factors that might influence language learning. There are two classes of influences: history and motivators. History is the social and personal variables that the learner brings with him or her that can influence L2 learning; for example, the socio-cultural milieu in which the individual lives, and the personal family background. An example of the other external influence, motivators, is teacher. These two classes of background have an effect on two of the variables under the category of
individual differences: integrativeness (INT.) and attitudes towards the learning situation (ALS.), respectively. The other four variables of individual differences are integrativeness, motivation, language aptitude, and other motivating and non-motivating factors.

Integrativeness, as mentioned earlier in this section, reflects a genuine interest in learning the second language in order to come closer psychologically to the other language community. It involves emotional identification with another cultural group (Gardner, 2001, p.8). Attitude toward the learning situation involves attitudes toward any aspect of the situation in which the language is learnt. Examples are as follows: the attitude toward the teacher; the attitude toward the extra-curricular activities, in a school context. Motivation is the driving force in any situation. In this socio-educational model, there are three elements required to learn L2: expends effort, wants and enjoys. The motivated learner would expend effort that is persistent and consistent in learning; he or she wants to achieve the goal and enjoy the task of learning the target language. Integrative motivation is an attitudinal, goal-directed and motivational attribute. The integratively motivated individual is one who is motivated to learn the language, has a desire or willingness to identify with the other language community, and tends to evaluate the learning situation positively. In this model, integrativeness and attitudes toward the learning situation are two correlated supports of motivation, but it is motivation that is responsible for achievement in L2. Motivation and language aptitude are two variables that can have direct effects in both formal and informal contexts; the direct effects are indicated by the solid arrows in figure 1.

Examples of a formal context are the language classroom and the language laboratory; and examples of informal learning contexts are the setting where learners learn, and the
language materials like radio, movies, and language clubs. Both formal and informal language learning contexts have linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes. Linguistic outcomes refer to various aspects of proficiency in the language like vocabulary and grammar. The non-linguistic outcomes refer to consequences of language learning such as language anxiety, various attitudes, motivation and willingness to make use of the language. This model also shows two variables which are not related directly to the learning contexts: other motivational and other non-motivational factors, indicated by the broken arrows in figure 1. An example of the other motivational factor is the instrumental factor contributing to motivation (Dornyei, 1994, 2001). An example of the other non-motivational factor is language learning strategies. The use of such strategies can influence achievement by providing schema and techniques to help in learning the material; for example, by role-playing in language learning; and this is expected to be used by the motivated learner. So, there is a possible link between motivation and the other non-motivating factors. The revised socio-educational model has built-in variables which are similar to those of the education-friendly approaches outlined in the following section.

2.3.2 Education-friendly approaches

The education-specific aspect of L2 motivation research entails a major shift in thinking which took place at the beginning of the 1990s. The common feature of these approaches is the increasing attention paid to motivational processes underlying classroom learning. The reasons for putting emphasis on classroom learning are that researchers seek to “encourage a program of research that will develop from, and be congruent with the concept of motivation that teachers are convinced” (Crooke & Schmidt, 1991, p.502), which is critical for L2 success. The discussion below includes approaches developed by Crookes and Schmidt, Oxford and Shearin, Dornyei, as well
as theories of self-confidence and linguistic self-confidence theories. At the end of this section is a model that is a summary of education-friendly approaches by Dornyei.

**Crookes and Schmidt’s framework**

Crookes and Schmidt (1991) propose that the L2 learner plays an active role at many levels of the learning process. They explain the relationship between motivation and second language learning at four different levels. The first one is the micro level, which deals with motivational effects on the cognitive processing of stimuli. The second one is the classroom level, dealing with techniques and activities in motivational terms. The third one is the syllabus level, at which content decisions come into play; and the fourth level entails the considerations relevant to informal, out-of-class and long-term factors (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991, p.483). At the micro level, the learner’s motivation is evidenced by the amount of attention given to the input. The classroom level includes the techniques and activities employed in the classroom. The syllabus level refers to the choice of content presented and can influence motivation by the level of curiosity and interest aroused in the students. Finally, factors from outside the classroom involve informal interaction in the L2 and long-term factors.

Crookes and Schmidt (1991) also suggested that motivation to learn a language has both internal and external features. There are four internal or attitudinal factors: interest, relevance, expectancy of success or failure, and outcomes. The interest in L2 is based on attitudes, experience and background knowledge. Relevance refers to the perception that personal needs, for example, achievement, affiliation and power, are being met by learning the L2. The outcomes refer to extrinsic or intrinsic rewards gained by the learner. The external or the behavioral factors are the decision to choose, pay attention to and engage in L2 learning; persistence; and high activity level (Scarcella, 1992, p.52).
These factors are similar to that of Gardner’s socio-educational models with a wider coverage of variables emphasizing the individual’s motivations and the classroom’s learning environment.

**Oxford and Shearin’s approach**

Oxford and Shearin’s study (1994 and extended in 1996) covers 12 motivational theories and six factors that impact on the motivation of language learning. The theories are personal needs theory; job satisfaction needs theory; need for achievement theory; expectancy-value theories; valence/instrumentality/expectancy (VIE) theory; goal-setting theory; equity theories; reinforcement theories; social cognition theories; achievement goal theory; Piaget’s cognitive developmental theory; and Vygotsky’s socio-cultural theory.

The six factors that Oxford and Shearin put forward impact on the motivation of language learning. The first one is attitudes – the sentiments toward the learning community and the target language. The second one is belief about self – the expectancies arising from one’s attitudes to succeed, self-efficacy and anxiety. The third one is the goal – perceived with clarity and the relevance of learning goals as reasons for learning. The fourth one is involvement – the extent to which the learner actively and consciously participates in the language learning process. The fifth one is environmental support – the extent of teacher and peer support, and the integration of cultural and outside-of-class support into learning experience. The last one is personal attributes – aptitude, age, sex and previous language learning experience (AbiSamra, 2003). These theories and factors could be recognized as the combination of the theories of needs, achievement and success presented in section 2.2, together with some others.
Clement et al.’s theory of self-confidence and linguistic self-confidence

Self-confidence is defined as “low anxious affect and high perceptions of L2 competence” (Clement et al., 1994, pp.422-3). Language learning in the case of English, which is considered as the world language, may involve little direct contact with members of the L2 community but considerable indirect contact with the L2 culture through the media (Clement et al., 1994). Having a positive attitude will encourage the individual in a multi-ethnic context to seek contact with members of the L2 community. When the contact is relatively frequent and pleasant, self-confidence in using the L2 is likely to develop. The availability of extracurricular contact provides the conditions for the development of a motivational process of L2 learning.

Linguistic self-confidence is a mediating process in multi-ethnic settings that affects a person’s motivation to learn and use the language of the ‘other speech’ community. Clement and his associates provided evidence that in contexts where different language communities live together, the quality and quantity of the contact between the members become a major motivational factor in learning the other community’s language, determining future desire for intercultural communication and the extent of identification with the L2 group. The concept of self-confidence and linguistic self-confidence is close to the integrativeness motivation proposed by Gardner. Data from interviews of the present study also reflect this kind of behavior.

Dornyei’s models

Dornyei (1994) proposes a general framework of L2 learning motivation. Based on his survey of the literature in both L2 learning motivation and psychology and on the findings of Clement, Dornyei, and Noels’ (1994) study, Dornyei defines motivation in terms of three levels: the language level, the learner level and the learning situation
level. Each of these levels can supplement or cancel the motivation generated at the other levels. The language level focuses on motivation associated with the language itself; for example, the community or the value of knowing the language. The learner level refers to characteristics of the student. The learning situation level focuses on motivation that is derived from the curriculum, the teacher and the classroom. These three levels reflect the three aspects of language: the social dimension, the personal dimension and the educational subject matter dimension. Compared to Gardner’s L2 learning motivation, this model has added both the ‘internal’ and ‘external’ motivational factors (Dornyei, 2001, p.108). This framework of motivation integrates language-related and learner’s internal factors with learning situation factors like teacher socialization of motivation and classroom group processes (Ushioda, 2008, p.23).

Dornyei’s (1994) and Crookes and Schmidt’s (1991) respective models both imply the two-class framework of motivational factors, internal and external. Crookes and Schmidt, however, attempt to capture the notion that motivation can be related to language learning actions and situations at different levels.

Dornyei (1998) summarized the main motivational domains described in the 1990s research by identifying seven main dimensions. The first one is the affective/integrative dimension, which includes integrative motives; affective motives; language attitudes; intrinsic motives/attitudes towards L2; and learning/enjoyment/interest. The second one is the instrumental/pragmatic dimension. The third one is the macro-context–related dimension, which has multi-cultural/inter-group/ethno-linguistic relations. The fourth one is the self-concept–related dimension (generalized/trait-like personality factors), which includes the self-concept; confidence/self-efficacy; anxiety/inhibitions;
success/failure-related (attributional) factors; expectancy; and need for achievement. The fifth one is the goal-related dimension. The sixth one is the educational context–related dimension (learning/classroom/school environment). The seventh one is the significant others–related dimension (parents, family, and friends) (Dornyei, 1998, p.128). This summary gives a comprehensive coverage of education-friendly approaches. It includes, on the one hand, the focuses of classroom, teachers and learners; and, on the other, the variables of Gardners’ socio-educational models, together with the constructs of theories of needs, success and attributions which have been described in section 2.2. Findings from the present study reveal most of these dimensions and will be discussed in chapter 4.

2.4 Motivational factors and language learning contexts

It is found that foreign/second languages (L2) are learnt in diverse contexts. It is an important motivational issue to study the degree to which the social environment supports the learning of L2 (McGroarty, 1998). Learners have a range of situational factors associated with different contexts in learning the target language. In one context, learners may wish to learn a language and develop skill in that language to gain practical benefits like that of motivational investment; or learners may like to pursue the learning of L2 primarily for enjoyment and as an engaging hobby or as an interest. In another context, learning L2 may serve as a touchstone for the learner’s identity and sense of belonging to an esteemed community. Another important context of learning is the student’s network of interpersonal contacts, the opportunities for direct contact with the language community and the background of the learner (Noels, 2009, p.299).

The focus of the following discussion is on five areas. The first one describes the
motivational influences of significant others, which includes parents, teachers and peers. The second area focuses on the interest in learning L2. The third area mainly describes motivation and the investment of gaining practical benefits, as well as the relationship of L2 learning with identity and a sense of belongingness to the community. The fourth area focuses on the process-oriented model of L2 learning to trace the ongoing changes of motivation over time. The fifth area discusses motivational autonomy and ends with the L2 motivational self system.

2.4.1 Influences of significant others on motivation

The motivation to learn is a competence acquired through experience and stimulated most directly through modeling, communication of expectations, and direct instruction or socialization by significant others, especially parents and teachers (Brophy, 1987). The seventh dimension of Dornyei’s (1998) summary is the significant others–related dimension, which includes parents, family and friends. The following section discusses the role of parents, teachers and peers in the motivation of language learning and explains the different ways that these significant others could motivate the learners.

Parents

Parental influence on L2 motivation was a major component of Gardner’s model (1985) because parents were seen to “act as the major intermediary between the cultural milieu and the student” (Gardner, 1985, p.109). Parents play an important role in children’s attitude and development and they influence their children’s attempts to learn L2.

There are two main roles that parents play in their children’s learning process (Gardner, 1985). The first one is an active role. Gardner suggests that parents play an active role when they encourage their children to do well, when they monitor their language
learning performance and when they reinforce any successes identified by the school. The mother who teaches additional words or phrases, or comments on some aspect of pronunciation displays an active role. Parents’ second main role is the passive role, which involves indirect modeling and communicating attitudes related to L2 learning and the community. Gardner (1985) suggests that when parents have positive attitudes towards the community, they would serve to support an integrative motive in the student.

Milner (1981) proposes that ethnic attitudes develop in children as a consequence of three overlapping processes. First, some attitudinal development occurs in children as a result of direct tuition from their parents. “Parents undoubtedly do make explicit statements about their beliefs and attitudes on a variety of social issues, and there is usually an implicit encouragement for the child to feel likewise” (Milner, 1981, p.124). This process corresponds to Gardner’s active role in L2 learning. Second, attitudes develop through indirect tuition, “where attitudes are not consciously taught, but are implicit in what the parents say or do” (Milner, 1981, p.126). In the process of identifying with the parents, children incorporate much of their value system. Milner proposes that “identification promotes the desire to emulate the parents, to appear grown-up by spouting adult ideas, and simply to gain approval by being like them” (Milner, 1981, p.125). This process refers to Gardner’s passive role in L2 learning. The final process is role-learning. As they grow and mature, children learn to behave, feel and see the world in a manner similar to other persons occupying the same position (Milner, 1981).

In addition to the above mentioned parental influences in the learning process, parenting
styles can make a difference in children’s academic motivation. In general, motivations are enhanced when parents allow children to make decisions, to state suggestions; when they acknowledge children’s feelings and needs, and provide children with choices (Dornbusch et al., 1987). Parents who give children hints and prompts rather than automatically supplying answers will encourage children’s questioning and critical thinking (Newman, 2000). Verbalization and feedback is commonly used by family members, especially parents, in encouraging children to learn (Alderman, 2008, p.76). Parents who make adaptive attributions for their children’s performance, have high confidence in the children’s abilities, and value school work may be encouraging their children’s positive motivational beliefs such as attributions and self-efficacy. Recent evidence suggests that parental expectations for achievement formed in one’s early adolescence can predict one’s educational plans and career choices some years later (Jacobs & Bleeker, 2004). Parental influence in the motivation of learning the English language is obvious in the present study.

**Teachers**

Teachers involved in L2 learning act not only as teachers but also as motivators. This dual role has been described in Gardner’s and Dornyei’s respective theories and models in the previous sections. Teachers can affect student motivation in many ways. This section focuses on three areas in which teachers could influence the motivation of language learning: teachers’ teaching ability; teachers as encouragers and motivators using praise, criticism and rewards; and teachers creating an active learning environment.

Firstly, the way that teachers perform in teaching has an influential impact not only on how well students learn but also on how motivated they are. Teaching ability
encompasses the strategies required to transmit knowledge, skills and attitudes from the teacher to the student including the ability to develop an atmosphere that encourages student learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 1983). To enhance students’ motivation for learning, teachers should strive to meet students’ personal, emotional and cognitive needs as different students have different needs (Stipek, 2002). In addition, teachers should “help students with learning and behavior problems, identify and use appropriate internal evaluative standards by teaching them to set goals that are specific, proximal, and challenging” (Taylors, 2002, p.86).

Secondly, teachers are encouragers and motivators. Praise, criticism and rewards can be used as tools to encourage students to learn. Recognition of student contributions motivates them to continue doing well. Teachers can use verbal praise to encourage students when they make progress. In another form of encouragement, praise conveys information to students of the teacher’s beliefs about their ability (Pintrich & Blumenfeld, 1985). Praise given for success and progress in learning substantiates students’ beliefs that they are learning and raises their self-efficacy for learning. Effective praise is contingent on successful performances. It can also boost students’ perceived competencies and motivation for learning. Criticism can also result in enhancing students’ motivation to learn. It refers to teacher’s disapproval of student behavior through verbal feedback or gestures. Criticism can be used to motivate students when it conveys that they are competent and can perform better with more effort or better use of strategies; when it informs students about the value of the learning; and when it provides information on progress toward goals. The reward is used by teachers to foster motivation to link with outcomes like students’ progress, skill improvement, learning and competence. When rewards are contingent on these outcomes, they convey to students that they are learning which builds self-efficacy and
sustains motivation. If rewards are used, that should be linked with the development of students’ competencies to enhance intrinsic motivation (Schunk, 1995).

Thirdly, teachers should have the ability to create an active learning environment and, as a result, shift from passive learning to students taking responsibility for their own learning. It requires that teachers transfer to students some of their control over the curriculum, teaching and learning (Chapman & Aspin, 1997). The data from the present study reveal that some participants’ teachers are motivators as described here.

The ultimate aim of teaching is to encourage students’ autonomy in learning. A study aimed at examining the motivational impact of encouraging learners’ autonomy showed that the degree of the teachers’ support of student autonomy and the amount of informative feedback teachers provided was in a significant positive relationship with the students’ sense of self-determination and enjoyment (Noels et al., 1999). On the same line, Dornyei’s (1994) model of L2 motivation also includes the teacher-specific motivational component of which autonomy is one of the major variables. Ushioda (1996) highlights the importance of learners’ autonomy, which will be discussed in a later section. Teachers’ influence on motivation to learn the English language is shown in the present study, and will be discussed in chapter 4 and 5.

Peers

The peer influences discussed in this section include those of friends and the learner group. There are five peer influences. The first influence is modeling; peers can act as a model. Observers’ beliefs can be affected by their observation of models. Observing similar others’ success can raise observers’ self-efficacy and help them believe that they can do the same. The second influence is on the goals and achievement motivation of
students: observation of peers can lead students to adopt comparable goals (Bandura, 1988) because peer-oriented goals are highly valued by students. The third one is peer network, which can heavily influence members’ academic motivation in several ways. Networks help to define students’ opportunities for interactions, for observing others, interactions and access to activities (Ryan, 2000). Over time, network members become more similar to one another. Researchers have found that discussions among friends influence their choices of activities and that friends often make similar choices (Berndt, 1999).

The fourth influence of peers is through the quality of student’s relationships with peers which is a powerful motivator. Friendships support students in the school environment and assist with their adjustment (Newman, 2000). Peers in the classroom can act as a source of support to deal with problems. Friends show consistent similarities on many motivational measures including perceptions of competence, importance of meeting academic standards and preference for challenges (Altermatt & Pomerantz, 2003). Friends influence one another by their attitudes, behaviors and by their quality of friendship (Berndt, 1999). Both positive friend characteristics and intimate relationships affect school adjustment in a constructive fashion. The fifth influence of peers is through peer pressure which often discourages negative behavior and encourages pro-social behavior, good studying behaviors and academic motivation (Berndt & Keefe, 1996).

Similar to peer influences, a learner’s group also contributes to the motivation of learning. It is found that perceived group cohesiveness greatly contributed to learners’ overall motivation construct and correlated significantly with various language criterion measures (Clement et al., 1994). This finding formed the empirical basis for including a
set of group-specific motivational components consisting of goal-orientedness, the norm and reward system, group cohesion and classroom goal structures in Dornyei’s (1994) framework of L2 motivation.

2.4.2 Interest

A common belief is that people will learn or do well if they are interested and will not learn or perform well if they are uninterested. Interest can be a major motivation source that arises as individuals interact with the environment (Krapp et al., 1992). Interest refers to the liking and intentional engagement in an activity. It is suggested that students’ low motivation and poor performance in school are due to a lack of interest and that interest is an important aspect of motivation that influences attention, learning, thinking and performance.

There are two types of interest: personal interest and situational interest. According to Krapp (1992a), personal interest is developed over time during a person’s constant and consistent interaction with certain activities in a particular environment. Personal interest is a more stable personal disposition toward a specific topic (Urdan & Turner, 2005). It is based on increased knowledge, positive emotions and increased perception of value in the subject. If students lose motivation, they might think that the subject is boring because they cannot see the connection between the subject and real life; or perhaps they feel that it is too difficult or they are afraid of failure. Negative thoughts like the above factors will lower their personal interest in learning.

Situational interest is generated by certain stimulus characteristics in an activity (interest) and tends to be shared among individuals (Hidi & Anderson, 1992). It represents a more temporary, situation-specific attention to a topic (Urdan & Turner, 2005). In the
learning context, situational interest results from students’ recognition of appealing features associated with a specific learning task (Mitchell, 1993). For example, the teacher can use real-life contexts to build on students’ prior knowledge and interests to motivate them. In addition, the teacher can design appropriate learning activities to stimulate students’ interest. When both personal and situational interest influence and interact with each other, students will maintain high engagement and motivation in learning. In the teaching and learning situation, it is sometimes difficult for learners to adapt instruction designed for a range of diverse personal interests. It may be easier for teachers to attempt to create situational interest, which in turn may stimulate personal interest. Situational interest can be increased through the use of interesting text, media and presentations in classrooms (Schunk et al., 2008).

2.4.3 Motivational investment and identity
The concept of motivational investment describes the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their ambivalent desire to learn and practice it (Norton, 2000, p.10). The investment concept is introduced because various theoretical approaches in the past were unable to capture the dynamic processes involved in motivation. Norton suggests that learners invest in a language because they understand that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources which will enhance their cultural capital, their identity and their desires for the future. The main drive behind learning is the expectation or hope to have a good return on that investment. This concept is very similar to instrumental motivation, yet there is a distinction between investment and instrumental motivation. Instrumental motivation presupposes a unitary, fixed and an historical language learner who desires access to material resources that are the privilege of target language speakers. Norton’s “investment”, however, conceives the language learner as having a complex social
Norton also thinks that learning the target language is an investment in a learner’s identity and this identity is constantly changing across time and space. She states that when learners speak, they are not just exchanging information with the target language speakers, they are “constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world” (Norton, 2000, pp.10-11). In this way, an investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner’s identity. This notion of investment is similar to that of Williams' (1994) idea of social identity.

Williams suggests that learning a foreign language is different to learning other subjects mainly because of the social nature of it. Language belongs to a person’s whole social being. It is part of one’s identity and is used to convey this identity to other people. The learning of a foreign language involves far more than simply learning skills, or a system of rules or grammar. It involves “an alteration in self-image, the adoption of new social and cultural behaviors and ways of being, and therefore has a significant impact on the social nature of the learner” (Williams, 1994, p.77). In the same vein, Clement and Noels’ (1992) social identity theory proposes that learners seek to view themselves positively and that a positive image is determined socially. Learners’ desire to maintain a positive social identity is strongly linked to the motivation of pursuing the language in settings where it serves as an important dimension of group identity (Clement & Noels, 1992; Noels & Clement, 1996).

### 2.4.4 Process-oriented approach

The process-oriented approach focuses on the task of language learning to trace the ongoing changes of motivation over time. Motivation is a constantly changing facet
which cannot be measured at a static time. The learning and mastery of L2 could take several years to be successfully accomplished. To portray motivational processes as they happen in time is a major challenge for motivation theorists. It is suggested that people will learn or do well if they are interested in the activity; nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that motivation is more than sparking an initial interest. It also involves “sustaining interest and investing time and energy into putting the necessary effort to achieve certain goals” (Williams & Burden, 1997, p.121). This is to assume that “motivation is dynamic in nature; it is not something that a learner has or does not have but rather something that varies from one moment to the next depending on the learning context or task” (Ellis, 1997, p.76).

The process-oriented model (Dornyei, 2003) was developed with two assumptions. The first one is that learners may have a fluctuating level of commitment within a single lesson. The second one is that the variation in learners’ motivation over a longer period (for example, a whole academic term) can be dramatic. It is a process model of L2 motivation that breaks down the overall motivational processes into small temporal segments. These segments are organized along the progression that describes how “initial wishes and desires are first transformed into goals and into operationalized intentions, and how these intentions are enacted, leading (hopefully) to the accomplishment of the goal and concluded by the final evaluation of the process” (Dornyei, 2003, p.18). The model consists of three phases: preactional, actional and postactional.

The preactional stage is a phase of choice motivation for learners to select goals. The actional stage is a phase of executive motivation; that is, to perform acts and sustain activities such as studying an L2 and learning in a classroom setting. The postactional
stage is a phase of motivational retrospection in which learners experience their outcomes and will determine the kind of activities they will be motivated to pursue in the future. These three stages are associated with different motives. Learners will be influenced when they are performing an action (Dornyei, 2003, p.20). This model is “an informative analysis of what takes place at specific stages of learning which provides useful perspectives for individuals concerned with explaining specific behaviors in language learning” (Gardner, 2001, p.30).

The process-oriented model is a significant approach in L2 learning motivation. This is because in an L2 learning environment, L2 achievement is influenced not only by the type and degree of motivation, but also its fluctuations over time. A learner might be motivated to learn a second language for a functional reason such as getting a job. He or she may be very highly motivated because they desperately need a job for a living and cannot get one without a high score on a certain L2 test for example, English. His or her achievement, however, might be influenced by motivational fluctuations over time. For instance, if he or she does not like a particular teacher or classroom activity, or if he or she gets a low score in a practice test, their motivation might be negatively affected. On the contrary, if this learner likes his or her teacher’s style in the classroom, the teaching materials and activities, or gets a higher score in a practice test than he or she expected, their motivation might be positively affected. In the long run this type of motivational orientation might change; for example, moving from an extrinsic to an intrinsic orientation. It is therefore essential to apply this model to examine the interrelationship between the overall macro levels of motivation and the micro-level fluctuations.

2.4.5 Motivation and autonomy

Learners’ autonomy means that the learners have the ability to make their own decisions
about what to do. In an educational context, learners take their first step towards autonomy when they recognize that they are responsible for their own learning. They will fully engage in all aspects of the learning process like planning, implementation and evaluation (Little et al., 2003, p.4).

The ultimate aim of teaching is to encourage students’ autonomy in learning. As learning is a process of constructing knowledge, the learners should be the agents who contribute actively in the process of learning. To become an autonomic learner, it is suggested that he or she should be actively involved and the motivation must come from within the learner. In learning a new language (for example, English)

the growth of motivation within the learner enables them to relate the development of language skills to their own personal life and interests outside the classroom, and to express their own meanings in the language they are learning. Otherwise, it seems unlikely that they will want to invest in the pursuit of competent in this domain, since the language will remain to them somebody else’s (the teacher’s, the textbook’s, the target language speaker’s), rather than an integral developing part of their own behavioral repertoire. (Ushioda, 2003, p. 97)

In order to enhance a learner’s capacity for autonomy, it is important that the learner’s motivation must be of intrinsic nature. The learner also needs supportive interpersonal interactions and an optimal learning environment to facilitate the growth in positive ways (McCombs, 1994).

There have been studies on the motivational impact of encouraging learners’ autonomy (Dornyei, 1994; Noels et al., 1999). The study of Noels et al. (1999) shows that the degree of the teachers’ support of student autonomy and the amount of informative
feedback teachers provided was in a significant positive relationship with the students’ sense of self-determination and enjoyment. Dornyei’s (1994) model of L2 motivation also includes the teacher-specific motivational component of which autonomy is one of the major variables. The study on learning autonomy is associated with theories presented in section 2.2 about needs which emphasize people’s potentialities and intrinsic motives. The L2 motivational self system, which is the next topic, also falls into the same area of motivation.

L2 motivational self system

This model assumes that the language learner’s initial motivation to learn a language does not come from internally or externally generated self images but from successful engagement with the actual language learning process because they discover that they are good at it. In 2005, Dornyei proposed the L2 motivational self system, which contained three components: ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self and L2 learning experience. The first component, ideal L2 self is the L2-specific facet of one’s ideal self. When the learner wants to speak L2, the ideal L2 self is a powerful motivator to learn the L2 because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between the actual and ideal selves. Integrative and internalized instrumental motives described in section 2.3.1 belong to this component. The second component, ought-to L2 self, reflects that one ought to strive to meet expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes. The dimension is a more extrinsic, that is less internalized, type of instrumental motive. The third component, L2 learning experience concerns situated, executive motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience; that is the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group or the experience of success (Dornyei, 2009, p.29).

The idea of self is to understand the foundations of action and it is centered round
identity and identification. There are similarities with the L2 motivational self system in Gardner’s (2001) revised socio-educational model which holds that motivated behavior is determined by three major motivational dimensions: integrativeness, instrumentality and attitudes toward the learning situation. This corresponds closely with the proposed L2 motivational self system. This self perspective also corresponds with the motivational constructs suggested by Noels (2003) and Ushioda (2001). Noels conceives L2 motivation as being made up of three interrelated orientations: intrinsic reasons inherent in the language learning process; extrinsic reasons for language learning; and integrative reasons. These three components are closely matched with the L2 learning experience, the ought-to L2 self and the ideal L2 self, respectively.

2.5 Empirical research on motivation

This section presents firstly, a synopsis of five empirical studies on motivation and models of motivation in L2 that have been discussed in relation to the present study of motivation in learning English as a foreign/second language (L2) secondly, it will discuss the dominance of quantitative approaches in the field of L2 motivation. The five studies described are variously based on or are the work of Gardner (1985), Clement, Dornyei and Noels (1994) and Dornyei (1998), four of them employ a quantitative approach and only one study takes a qualitative approach to the research.

2.5.1 Empirical studies

The first study is that of Clement, Dornyei and Noels’ (1994), which focused on the role of motivation in foreign language learning. The survey aimed to examine 301 grade eleven Hungarian students in terms of their attitude, anxiety and motivation towards learning English; and their perception of classroom atmosphere and cohesion. There
were three elements in the research. First, it considered the role of orientations and attitudes (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1985) as effective correlates of L2 behavior and proficiency. Second, it assessed the role of linguistic self-confidence and language anxiety (Clement 1980; 1986) in learning L2. The third element was group dynamics in the classroom setting (Clement et al., 1994, p.419).

The participants were 17 to 18-year-old students who studied English as part of their official school curriculum. There were two questionnaires used in this survey. The first was a student questionnaire titled “Orientations, attitudes, motivation and anxiety”. Students indicated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement using a 6-point Likert-type scale. The second questionnaire was for the teachers. The teachers used a four 7-point scale to evaluate the quality of each student’s homework; how active and how motivated the student was in class; the student’s status among his/her fellow students’ current level of achievement in active communication and in the passive, theoretical knowledge of English. The teachers also provided the students’ English grade from the previous term (Clement et al., 1994, p.425 & p.428).

The findings of this research could be summarized into three areas. Firstly, instrumental orientation existed based on the acquisition of knowledge and media usage rather than on the achievement of pragmatic outcomes. Secondly, achievement in English was significantly related to self-confidence and the evaluation of the learning environment. Thirdly, group cohesion was associated with a positive perception of the learning environment. The result suggested that a good classroom atmosphere and extracurricular contact activities might jointly affect a student’s language self-confidence. It underlined the presence of a learning environment and its relationship to student behavior and achievement (Clement et al., 1994, pp.440-2). This
research serves as a basis for the following studies on motivation of learning L2 in China.

The next study, which was conducted by Liu (2007), drew on the model and theories of Clement et al. (1994). The participants were 202 Chinese third-year undergraduates from Xiamen University of south China. The survey questionnaire was adapted from Gardner (1985) and Clement et al. (1994). The aims of this study were to investigate Chinese students’ attitudes toward learning English; the relationship between students’ attitudes and motivation types; and their achievement in English. The participants began studying English in junior high schools but they had stopped taking English courses at the time the study was conducted.

Data were collected through a motivation survey, including an open-ended question; and an English proficiency test. The survey contained two main parts. The first part involved students’ attitudes towards learning English and the English-learning motivation scale. The motivation scale consisted of three subcomponents: integrative orientation; instrumental orientation; and the travel orientation designed by Clement et al. (1994). A 5-point Likert-scale was assigned to each alternative in this part of the survey. The second part of the survey was an open-ended question: “Are you more or less motivated to learn English than when you were a first-year or second-year student? Why?”, which was included at the end of the questionnaire survey. The third part was a 2-hour English proficiency test.

The findings of the survey could be summarized into three areas. Firstly, students had positive attitudes towards learning English and they were highly motivated to learn the language. Secondly, the participants were found to be more instrumentally than
integratively motivated to learn English. Thirdly, students who had more positiveattitudes towards learning English tended to score higher in the proficiency test; andstudents who were more instrumentally and/or travel motivated tended to perform betterin the test (Liu, 2007). According to the researcher, these findings could be attributedto the rapid development of China’s economy in recent years which had yielded anincreasingly high demand for university graduates with high English competency ineducation, market, business, science and technology. The fact that participants weremore instrumentally motivated to learn English is the same finding as that of the presentresearch on vocational students in the Hong Kong context.

The third empirical research sought to test the motivational dimensions of Dornyei(1998, p.128). Dornyei conducted two surveys, respectively, with Clement (reported in2001) and with Csizer (reported in 2002). The aim of these two studies was to identifythe orientations of students towards five different target languages when choosing aforeign language to learn at school. A 37-item questionnaire was designed for thesurveys. They were carried out in 1993 and 1999 with over 4000 Hungarian schoolchildren aged 13 to 14 years old. The languages included: English, German, French,Italian and Russian. The status of each of these five languages in Hungary was asfollows: English was the ‘indisputable world language’; German was the traditionallingua franca of the region, and widely accessible through the regional mass media;French was the language formerly used by the Hungarian aristocracy, in addition toGerman, and still widely taught in Hungarian secondary schools; Russian was thelanguage imposed as a compulsory second language for 40 years, but never popular orwidely used; and Italian was a control for the four ‘socio-culturally important’languages (Dornyei & Csizer, 2002, p.425). The findings revealed that “Hungarianteenage language learners appraise different target languages through the same mental
framework or schema, in terms of five broad and interrelated dimensions: Integrativeness, Instrumentality, Direct contact, Media-usage (or indirect contact) and Vitality” (Dornyei & Clement, 2001, p. 410).

The results also showed that different languages obtained different profiles along and across the dimensions, which were significantly influenced by macro-contextual and geopolitical factors. Languages were ranked differently in terms of their popularity among participants. There seemed to be a declining interest in the ‘non-world’ languages; but they were interested in English – the world language – which maintained a high popularity. It was also noted that geographical factors played a role in that students living closer to a bordering country generally appraised more highly the language of that country than students living further away. The Hungarian study’s finding that English maintained a high level of popularity in that country is also applicable to some parts of Asia, as shown in the following study.

Empirical research on the motivation for learning English has also been conducted in Japan. The fourth study described in this section was conducted by Nakata (2006) and aimed to investigate how the learning experiences of school and university affected motivation (Nakata, 2006, p.272). The participants were 288 Japanese English learners who had just entered university. A closed questionnaire was used to obtain general patterns of motivation among these learners (Nakata, 2006, p.203). The 50 questionnaire items included self-developed items; and items modified from studies of Tremblay and Gardner (1995), Schmidt et al. (1996) and Little et al. (2002) (Nakata, 2006, p.204). The participants were asked to answer each item on a 6-point rating scale from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’.

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The results could be summarized into two areas. Firstly, the students liked learning the language in general, but suffered from anxiety in oral activities. Nonetheless, they wished to communicate with foreigners. Secondly, the students’ motivation was an intrinsic one which appeared to be related to self-determination theory. The intrinsic motivation, according to the researcher, might be because the students had successfully passed the entrance examination of the university, so that they had confidence in learning the English language (Nakata, 2006, p.212). Data also revealed that the participants had five motivational components: autonomy/intrinsic motivation, instrumental motivation, language learning beliefs, language use anxiety and international orientation (Nakata, 2006, p.213). The first two components are also amongst the findings of the present Hong Kong research.

The last of the five studies examined here is a qualitative study by Wu (2006) on the motivation of students in Taiwan. The aim of this study was to examine the motivational factors of College students’ learning the English language and their learning strategies (Wu, 2006, p.170). The research tools included observations and dialogic interviews. Seven students in this study provided their perspectives and experiences regarding their motivation to learn English and the learning strategies they used while participating in English courses. Data revealed that students’ motivations for learning L2 were influenced by some of the motivational dimensions of Dornyei (1998).

The findings could be grouped into seven areas. First, participants’ prior learning experiences affected their attitudes towards learning English and established a good English foundation. This resulted in participants having a higher self-efficacy for learning and for performance in learning English. Second, all participants had interest and an intrinsic motivation, and these are the keys to learning English (Wu, 2006,
p.230). Third, English was considered as an important and valuable language by all participants because good English proficiency increased job competitiveness. Fourth, students needed English language skills for college schoolwork. Fifth, English was considered as an international language for communication. Sixth, teachers played a significant role in affecting and encouraging a students’ learning. Students liked teachers to interact with them and liked studying authentic materials in class. Personal characteristics of teachers, such as being easy-going, humorous, patient and friendly – in addition to teaching styles or strategies – affected students’ learning motivation. Seventh, factors of goal-orientation, the influences of western culture and the media; a great interest in English or technology also influenced student’s learning motivation and learning strategies. The researcher concluded that the best learning came from intrinsic motivation (Wu, 2006, pp.231-2). These results were very close to the findings of the present study.

2.5.2 Approach to empirical research in L2 motivation

Most of the previous L2 motivation literature tended to use large-scale numerical data based on questionnaire surveys collected from participants (Dörnyei, 2003b). Empirical studies in L2 motivation were largely based on the social psychological perspective following the work of Gardner and Lambert (1972, Gardner, 1985) in using quantitative, statistical methods which had been dominant in the educational psychology field. (McGroarty, p.71, 2001) The first four studies presented in the previous section are typical examples showing the dominance of quantitative research paradigm in the L2 motivation field. Questionnaires and Likert-type scale were used in these four studies: Dornyei and Noels’ study (1994) on the role of motivation in foreign language learning; Liu’s survey (2007) on the attitudes towards learning English; Dornyei, Clement and Csizers’ research (2001 & 2002) on the exploration of motivational processes overtime
and Nakata’s study (2006) on the investigation of how learning experiences of school and university affected learners’ English learning motivation.

Within the dominant quantitative research paradigm, using large-scale statistical approaches above offered foundational insights into individuals’ L2 learning motivation. (McGroarty, p.71, 2001) However, it did not accommodate the analysis and exploration aspect of motivation (Ushioda, 2001) which is the purpose of the present study in employing the qualitative research approach. The present study aimed to uncover participants’ patterns of thinking and beliefs which shape their engagement in the learning process and affect their English learning motivations.

Data from qualitative research in the present study could show individuals’ differences and changes in motivational profiles; it could also help distinguish the relative importance of family background and perceived usefulness as rationales for L2 study. Such an in-depth investigation into L2 motivation could not be achieved solely through a quantitative orientation (Ushioda, 1994 & 1997; Dörnyei, 2001).

Motivational theories for a long time were focused mainly on integrative and instrumental orientations. The focus, however, has broadened as is evident from the studies that have followed. Based on different L2 motivational theories and models, research has produced evidence of the relationship of motivation to better proficiency and higher achievement (Dörnyei, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Dörnyei, 2001) and has shown that students’ learning attitudes vary depending upon the socio-cultural setting in which the data are gathered (Clement et al., 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Noels, Clement & Pelletier, 2001). It has also found that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation orientations that emerged for reasons of travel are considered specific types
of orientations for learning L2 (Clement et al., 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Noels, Cement & Pelletier, 2001) and that intrinsically motivated students who learned L2 because of the inherent pleasure in doing so are expected to maintain their effort and engagement in the L2 learning process even when no external rewards are provided (Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Noels et al., 2001) (Liu, 2007, pp.128-9).

The motivation involved in learning L2 is not confined to one or two factors as it may have appeared in the empirical studies discussed above. Students in different contexts may be motivated to learn L2 by different orientations. There is a need for more qualitatively based research to further explore relevant factors and the dynamic nature of L2 motivation, especially in the Hong Kong vocational context.

2.6 Motivational factors of Hong Kong students in English language learning

The literature on motivation for English language learning in the Hong Kong context is sparse. The references to motivational orientations are mostly found in reports on language attitude surveys. The following section presents a selective review of literature related to the present study. The review is grouped into six sections which include: instrumental/practical orientation; extrinsic and intrinsic motivations; motivational influences of parents and community; medium of instruction; academic results; and English as an international language.

2.6.1 Instrumental/practical orientations

An early study of language attitudes in Hong Kong was conducted in the 1970s. It was during the time when English was the only official language (until 1974, when Chinese
was recognized as the other official language) and the *lingua franca* for international businesses. In a survey of 561 students from EMI and CMI secondary schools (Fu, 1976), most participants agreed that English was necessary for securing a good job and was important for their future. The majority also agreed that it would be valuable for their future spouses and children to know English (Pennington, 1993, p.5). There were three other surveys carried out by Lai in 1980, 1992 and 1995, respectively, to solicit junior secondary students’ attitudes (Lai, 1996) towards learning the English language. Although the students’ ages ranged from 10 to 15 years old, about a quarter of them related English learning to future careers. Only about 10 per cent reported that they learnt English because of their own interest (Lai, 1999).

Similar findings were shown in a survey carried out by Wu (2004) of a Band 1 secondary boys’ school with ages ranging from 12 to 18. Students are arranged in Band 1, Band 2 or Band 3 when they enter secondary schools. Band 1 students usually have the best academic results; and Band 2 students normally have poorer results than those of Band 1; and Band 3 students have poorer results than those of Band 2 students. The findings of this study provide a consistent picture that instrumental goals, especially with career-related purposes, are more important than integrative goals. This confirmed previous findings that Hong Kong students tend to be more instrumental in their motivation toward learning English (Pierson *et al.*, 1980; Pennington & Yue, 1994; Richards, 1994; Lai, 1999; Hyland, 1997).

Practical orientation was revealed from the tertiary students. In a survey of 200 undergraduates (Lai, 1999), seventy percent of the participants had taken an English language elective course to improve their English skills for career preparation. This finding was similar to a previous survey on 2156 tertiary students (Littlewood & Liu,
Participants showed strong pragmatic motivation and a sense of social concern for Hong Kong’s future with regard to proficiency in English. (Littlewood & Liu, 1996, p.76)

Proficiency in English was also one of the motivational factors of learning L2 in Richards’ (1998) survey. Semi-structured interview was conducted to 27 senior secondary school students. Seven students gave two main reasons for learning the English language. Firstly, proficiency in English would be useful when studying and working in order to better understand university lectures and to do business with native speakers of English. Secondly, proficiency in English allowed one to interact with native speakers of the language. The first reason combines practical academic and employment motives, while the second one is a communicative orientation with a more centrally social motive. Students with this type of orientation indicate that they have secondary motives for learning the English language. The secondary motives described in this survey are intrinsic interest in the language; a desire to do as well as or better than one’s peers; a competitive or achievement motive; and a desire to acquire knowledge. These students’ intrinsic interest will be discussed in the following section. The motive related to public examinations is also rated as being very important. Nine students of this survey emphasized the importance of gaining English qualifications in securing a good job or getting accepted into universities, rather than the usefulness of having English skills when working or studying. This is not surprising because examinations are important in determining educational options and opportunities. There are other orientations such as students are motivated primarily by a desire to do as well as their peers (Richards, 1998, p.319).
2.6.2 Extrinsic and intrinsic motivations

Extrinsic motivation was found to be stronger than intrinsic motivation to learn the English language for 524 tertiary students (Lin et al., 1991) in a questionnaire survey which correlated responses with language proficiency levels. A close relationship was affirmed between intrinsic motivation and high achievement of English, in the same study. The same result was obtained from Walters and Balla (1992) who carried out a survey of 1237 tertiary students, using questionnaires. The findings showed that many Hong Kong students lacked intrinsic motivation. Although the demand for extra-curricular English courses was high, students were found to be reluctant to engage in independent and self-directed learning behavior.

Intrinsic motivation was found in the same survey conducted by Richards (1998) with senior secondary-school students. Ten participants out of 27 indicated that they were motivated primarily by an intrinsic interest in English, in foreign languages and in learning in general. Seven of these 10 students were motivated by a desire or perceived need to communicate with native speakers of the language. Two of the other three students stated that they already had considerable contacts with native English speakers. They also acknowledged the practical value of learning English like the students in the same survey stated in the previous section, they stressed the importance of having an intrinsic interest in the language. These findings suggest that the intrinsically oriented students are motivated by a broad range of factors: a desire to master the language for its own sake; a desire to interact with native speakers; an intrinsic interest in the language; and an appreciation for the practical uses of English (Richards, 1998).

2.6.3 Motivational influences of parents and community

Parents are eager for their children to get into schools that use English as the medium of
instruction (EMI). After the policy of mother tongue (Cantonese) teaching was implemented in 1998, the secondary schools that were not exempted appealed to the Hong Kong Education Department because the parents were very unhappy (Ming Pao Daily News, 1998). In a survey based on interviews with 189 principals, 50 per cent of the subjects reported that better students had asked to be transferred to EMI schools and that over 30 per cent of the new students seemed to be weaker in every aspect. There seemed to be a stigma attached to the Chinese (Cantonese) medium of instruction (CMI) schools and parents were reluctant to send their children to these schools (Ming Pao Daily News, 1999).

In addition to the concern with EMI which affects students’ motivation, parents’ knowledge of English also influences students’ attitude towards learning English. In Richards’ (1998) survey (described previously in section 2.6.2) of seven senior secondary schools, almost all the students who reported that their parents knew English were from either the intrinsic group or the practical/communicative group. One of the secondary Form seven students commented that if their parents knew English, local students would feel that they should also know it. “It becomes a part of their life to have that ability” (Richards, 1998, p.319).

The socio-cultural influence is shown in Lin’s (2002) survey of secondary-school students’ motivation for learning English. In the open forum of a Hong Kong English newspaper, Lin wrote down what she had heard from a 14-year-old boy, “it’s so boring and difficult and I could never master it. But society wants you to learn English. If you’re no good in English, you’re no good at finding a job” (Lin, 2002). The student’s remark reflected that a junior secondary-school boy had pragmatic motives in learning English. The ‘society’ to which he referred could be parents, teachers, relatives and/or
his friends in the community. The data showed that this boy and his classmates were fully aware about the socio-economic importance of English, yet he found learning English boring. One of the reasons for this may refer to the comment that English does not play any authentic socio-cultural role in learners’ daily lives. Tien, M., the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) said in the same Hong Kong English newspaper that Hong Kong had become very Cantonese driven since the 1980s because of Canto-pop music and films. Students had problems with motivation for learning English. He also said that students were motivated for the wrong reasons: by examination, parental and career pressure. He suggested that English lessons could be more interesting (Forestier, 2002).

2.6.4 Medium of instruction

As mentioned in the introductory chapter (section 1.2.5), since the 1998 academic year, most schools have been required to use Cantonese as the medium of instruction (CMI) while English has continued to be learnt at school (Education Department, 1997, p.1, para. 2.1). Many parents have reacted strongly to this policy, as mentioned in the previous paragraph. The parents’ opposition may have arisen for the following reasons. This policy directly diminished the exposure of learners to learning the English language. The medium of instruction (MOI) is an important factor that influences student daily usage, learning attitude and achievement of English language proficiency. Putting students into Band 1, Band 2 and Band 3 groups, according to their ability and achievement, is another policy that could affect the motivation for learning L2. Based on the last three terms of their examinations results, students are arranged in Band 1, Band 2 and Band 3 streams. They enter secondary schools according to their bands. Band 1 students usually have the best academic results and Band 3 students normally obtain the poorest academic results.
A survey on a significant effect of medium of instruction (MOI) indicated that students in EMI schools had higher levels of motivation in learning English than students in CMI schools. The 1807 participants were drawn from the Form one students of seven Hong Kong secondary schools of various ability bands. Results also showed that Band 1 students were more motivated to learn English than Band 3 students (Salili & Lai, 2003). Data indicated that students in Bands 1 and 2 had higher levels of motivation in learning the English language, and got higher scores in performance goal and learning goal orientations. They also had higher levels of self-efficacy. The present study underscored the unfavorable outcomes obtained for the students in the lower-ability band schools. The inference drawn was that these students were subject to learning environments with negative peer influences and, probably, an inferior quality of instruction. Moreover, it was argued that the situation was particularly detrimental to late developers who underachieved in the late primary school years, and were then allocated to lower-ability band schools where the learning environments were unfavorable for them to achieve their full potential.

2.6.5 Academic results

In Richards’ (1998) survey of seven senior secondary schools (section 2.6.2), the majority of the students stated that they considered their experiences of learning English in relation to achievement. They were motivated because they needed to sit for public examinations, they were competing with classmates or they were receiving good grades. In the interview, two secondary Form seven students stated that the local students accepted examination pressure as an unavoidable fact of life and, consequently, did not view it as something that would diminish motivation. With regard to de-motivating experiences, only receiving poor grades and having difficulty learning were reported by more than two students. Although several interviewees mentioned that local students
were forced to learn English because of Hong Kong’s colonial status, only one cited this requirement to learn English as a de-motivating factor (Richards, 1998, p.319).

2.6.6 English as an international language

In Littlewood & Liu’s (1996) study of 2156 tertiary students, 90 per cent of students agreed that English is an important world language. Eleven per cent of students thought that they would lose Chinese identity if they were good at English. This underlines that, while young Hong Kong university students recognize the importance of English as a world language and would like to be proficient users of it, at the same time they are comfortable with their Chinese identity and feel little threat to it from the English language. This finding is the same as Hyland’s (1997) study of the changing attitudes of undergraduates brought about by the handover which found that most respondents thought that English would continue to perform a gate-keeping role after the handover.

2.7 Chapter summary

Learning motivation theories emphasize the psychology of motivating factors of needs, achievement and success. These theories lay the foundation for L2 motivational models and approaches. L2 learning motivation research was initiated by Gardner and Lambert in the 1950s and their influential theories were developed and remained dominant for about three decades. It has been commented that Gardner’s theories in the socio-educational models fail to take adequate account of the classroom context of learners’ motivation. L2 learning motivation theories and research were then extended to a more education-friendly approach encompassing L2 learners and teachers, as represented by Dornyei’s models. Current theories and models help to understand L2 learning motivation in different contexts. There are discussions on motivational
influences from the interaction between the learner and more significant others like parents, teachers and peers. Contexts like learners’ wishes to pursue L2 learning as an interest and the notion of motivational investment and identity are being focused on by researchers like Norton and William. There are also the process-oriented model to trace the ongoing changes of motivation over time; the relationship between motivation and autonomy; and the L2 self system, which emphasizes learners’ potentialities and intrinsic motives. Some of the theories and models above were tested in the empirical studies conducted in Hungary, China, Japan and Taiwan. In Hong Kong, similar theories and models were also employed to investigate the students’ motivation and attitudes involved in English language learning.

Literature on the motivation and attitudes of Hong Kong students learning the English language infers that students generally believe that English skills and qualifications are vital to their future employment prospects. This sentiment may have its roots in the community’s colonial heritage. With the shift in the local economy, however, towards international finance and trade, combined with the growing importance of English as an international language, learners’ motives for learning the English language is not just instrumental or intrinsic but a combination of factors in relation to education and society. Over the years, the research on attitudes and motivation involved in language and English language learning in Hong Kong has been done in secondary and tertiary educational settings. No literature of similar kind has been published on learners at vocational institutes.

Vocational education in Hong Kong is gaining in importance because students completing the courses can enter the work force immediately. The number of students in the vocational institutes is increasing. These students are usually from lower-band
schools who are unable to gain admission to universities; or are students who, having been left school for some time, decide to return to study again. Much remains to be done in the study of language attitudes and motivation among students of this group, where language attitudes may be markedly different from those of secondary and tertiary students. This is the main reason why the researcher is carrying out the present study on the motivation of vocational students for learning the English language.
Chapter 3 Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 of this thesis describes the research methodology of the topic: Motivation for English language learning: a study of Hong Kong vocational students. This chapter comprises eight parts. The first is a discussion on the research approach of the qualitative case study. The second part provides information about the participants’ education background and the criteria for the sample selection. The third part explains the data collection process, focusing on the survey questionnaire on motivation to learn the English language, the semi-structured interviews and the diary notes. The fourth part explains how data are being transcribed and the different stages of data analysis. The fifth and the sixth parts discuss the validity and trustworthiness, and the ethical considerations of the present study, respectively. The seventh and the eighth parts examine the limitations of the study and the researcher’s role, respectively.

3.2 Research approach

The aim of this study is to find out the motivational factors in the English language learning of Hong Kong vocational students. The qualitative case study is employed for this purpose because qualitative research focuses on the process, meaning and understanding (Maxwell, 1996; Eisner, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). It also attempts to get into the participants’ lives and represent their voices within particular contexts. By learning the perspectives of the participants, qualitative researchers seek to illuminate the inner dynamics of the situations. As Patton says, “what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what’s
going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting” (Patton, 1985, p.1, quoted in Merriam, 1998, p.6).

The researcher wishes to understand the processes of the 10 vocational student participants undergoing English language learning and the motivational factors involved in English learning in the context of Hong Kong. Qualitative research serves this study’s purpose. Like any qualitative researcher who believes that “reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social world” (Merriam, 1998, p.6), the researcher is interested in understanding from the 10 students’ perspectives the meanings they have constructed, the sense they have made of the world and their experiences as they have been lived, felt or undergone.

The qualitative case study was used in this research to examine and understand the motivational factors in the learning processes of the 10 participants studying in a Hong Kong vocational institution, and to answer the main research questions:

1. What are the factors that motivate students in a vocational institute to learn the English language?
2. What is the English language learning attitude of students in a vocational institute?
3. Do(es) integrative and/or instrumental motivation exist(s) among students of a vocational institute?

A case study design is employed to “gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and the meaning for those involved. The interest lies “in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation” (Merriam, 1998, p.19). The case study method is an “inquiry for promoting experiential
understanding” (Stake, 1995, p.37). Case-based incidents can help examine people’s belief, knowledge, personality and pedagogical reasoning shaping a particular event. The participants in this study are studying in a Hong Kong vocational institute and they have been learning English for more than 10 years. In the process of learning the English language, each of them has different attitudes and motivational factors involved in learning English. The researcher explores when and why they start to enjoy learning English and how these students feel about learning English in the Hong Kong educational, social and economic environments. The participants’ cases reveal both uniqueness and commonalities.

This study presents a holistic view of the learning experiences of 10 English language learners. The attention is on the uniqueness of each individual case in terms of what it can reveal about the particular situation that each student is in and what it may represent. In presenting a holistic view, the cases give the insider’s perspective, penetrating the surface and revealing the interpretations of the people most knowledgeable about each case (Stake, 1995). The study also provides a rich and “thick description” (Geertz, 1973, p.6) of the cases under study and allows the discovery of new meanings and insights, illuminating our understanding of the development of each student being studied. The overall picture of 10 participants will be discussed in chapter 4 and an indepth analysis of 4 individual cases will be presented in chapter 5.

### 3.2.1 Pilot study

A pilot case study on the same topic was carried out in the year prior to the main study. The purpose of the pilot study was to find out how English language learning behavior was affected by the factors of intrinsic motivation; instrumental and integrative motivation; using a self-completion questionnaire; and in-depth semi-structured
In this pilot study, a self-completion questionnaire was given to 65 students of the four-year Higher Diploma course in a vocational institute. The model in Schmidt and Watanabes’ study (2001, p.313) was adapted and modified for constructing the questions for this questionnaire because the factors are closely related to that of Hong Kong’s vocational students’ English language learning attitude. Also, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with two students. Data collected from both methods were compared and contrasted. The students were invited to write a diary for four months to triangulate the findings with the interviews.

Another important purpose of this pilot study was to examine the effectiveness of adopting the qualitative case study in combination with interviews and diary writing as a method of research. The results showed that it was feasible to adopt this approach.

### 3.3 Participants

A vocational institute in Hong Kong was selected to be the site of the study. The researcher e-mailed the Principal of the vocational institute to seek permission to conduct the study with 10 participants who are students at the institute. It was clearly spelt out that this study was purely for academic research with an aim to enhance teaching and learning activities. The Principal wrote back in support of the research and wishing its success.

#### 3.3.1 Participants’ background

Students A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I and J participated in the present study. The age of the
participants ranged from 18 to 21 years. Five of them were male and five were female. They studied different streams, Arts, Commerce and Science in secondary school. Among them, Students B, C and G came from EMI schools and all the others came from CMI schools. Only Students A, F and H took syllabus A in the HKCEE; the others all took syllabus B in the same examination. Two participants, A and D, attempted the English subject examination two times and both of them gained a better result the second time. Four students, B, D, E and G passed (grade E) the English subject in syllabus B. The others either failed in syllabus B English or sat for syllabus A with grade D or E results. They chose to study the four-year Higher Diploma course because the entry requirement of English can be as low as grade F in syllabus B English and grade E in syllabus A English in the HKCEE. This group of students had different attitudes and perspectives in learning the English language. It is the researcher’s goal to find out the motivating factors that govern their attitudes with the aim of helping students to learn the English language effectively. Table 3.1 shows participants’ background of study.
Table 3.1  Participants’ background of study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Age/Sex – Male (M) Female (F)</th>
<th>Medium of Instruction in secondary school (F.1-5)</th>
<th>Stream of study in secondary school</th>
<th>HKCEE result/Syllabus A or B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>18/F</td>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>E (1st attempt)/Syll. A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D (2nd attempt)/Syll. A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>18/F</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>E/Syll. B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>19/F</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>F/Syll. B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>18/F</td>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>F (1st attempt)/Syll. B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E (2nd attempt)/Syll. B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>18/F</td>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>E/Syll. B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>18/M</td>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>D/Syll. A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>19/M</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>E/Syll. B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>18/M</td>
<td>Cantonese (F.1-3)</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>D/Syll. A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>English (F.4-5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>21/M</td>
<td>English (F.1-3)</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>F/Syll. B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cantonese (F.4-5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>19/M</td>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>F/Syll. B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The 10 participants were studying year one of the four-year Higher Diploma course in the discipline of Business Services and Management during the research period. This was the second year that the institute had run this four-year Higher Diploma course. English language is a compulsory subject in the institute. Students must pass it in order to be promoted to year two. There are six hours of English lessons per week and a total of 180 hours in one academic year. Although some students met the minimum requirement of passing the English subject in the HKCEE, the majority of students in this four-year Higher Diploma course failed this subject. Since students’ English ability is generally low, many courses in this kind of four-year Higher Diploma are conducted in Cantonese. Students rarely use English except during English lessons and for doing their assignments.

3.3.2 Sample selection

In the selection of participants, the researcher sought a representative sample of students enrolled in a Hong Kong vocational institute. The participants in the surveys are studying a four-year Higher Diploma course in the discipline of Business Services and Management (BSM). The 10 case studies’ individuals were among the participants in the surveys. The reason for selecting this group of students is that they are more approachable and more willing to communicate with others compared with students studying in other disciplines in the institute. The researcher had this observation because she was the teacher of this group of students during the research period.

Before the selection, the researcher observed a total of 97 students from two classes of BSM for one month at the beginning of the academic year during their English lessons. In this month, the researcher had friendly conversations with students to find out their accessibility and who might be the good informants. This was because
…a good informant is one who has the necessary knowledge, information and experience of the issue being researched, is capable of reflecting on that knowledge and experience, has time to be involved in the project, is willing to be involved in the project and indeed, can provide access to other informants. (Cohen et al., 2007, p.180)

The following two paragraphs describe the process and the guidelines for subject selection for this study. Firstly, students in the same course within one class would ensure more reliability in explaining the relationship between the results of the subsequent factor analysis. Secondly, it is easier to arrange interview slots and slot in after-class informal talks to fit the time-table of one class. Thirdly, in the light of her teaching experience, the researcher feels that the 10 learners have some thoughts about learning the English language and have the ability to record their feelings of language learning. Fourthly, they are more capable of using both English and Cantonese to communicate in the interviews and they are willing to tell their own experiences of learning.

It is the researcher’s choice not to select participants that belong to the group of low achievers. The first reason is time constraints. There is a danger that the low achievers might not necessarily exhibit their motivational development explicitly during the time of this research. The second reason is that the participants are chosen from a group of students who agreed to take part in the interviews voluntarily. It is also the researcher’s choice to select an equal number of male and female participants in order to have a balanced view of both sexes. This kind of selection is based on “criterion-based selection” (LeCompte et al., 1992, p.69). In Patton’s terms (2002), this is “purposeful sampling”, sometimes known as purposive sampling. The aim of purposeful sampling is “to select information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study”
enabling the researcher to “learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry” (Patton, 2002, p.230).

3.4 Data collection

3.4.1 Survey on motivation to learn the English language

The data of the 10 participants were collected in the course of one academic year, a span of around eight months. The tools for data collection included a survey by self-completion questionnaire, semi-structured in-depth interviews, diary notes of the participants and informal post-lesson conversations. The procedures of data collection are divided and described in two parts. Both parts’ activities were carried out nearly at the same time. Table 3.2 shows the procedures of the first part of the data collection.

Table 3.2 Procedures of the first part of the data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey questionnaire with 12 checking items and 1 open question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>→</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find out popular answers from the survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>→</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work out semi-structured interview schedule (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>→</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1 in-depth semi-structured interviews with the 10 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>→</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modify interview schedule (1) and work out interview schedule (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>→</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2 in-depth semi-structured interview with the same 10 participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The self-completion questionnaire was modified from that of the pilot case study which was carried out in the previous year, as mentioned in the pilot study section 3.2.1. This questionnaire was written in English and designed with the purpose of gathering the
popular motivational factors of English language learning. References were made from Schmidt and Watanabes’ study (2001, pp.357-8) on motivation with substantial modifications and changes. The topic of this questionnaire is “I am motivated to learn the English language because:”. Students were asked to put a tick in the box(es) that described their English learning motives and write down answers in the open questions. This self-completion questionnaire includes areas on: intrinsic motivation, instrumental motivation, and motivational factors concerned with parents, teachers and schools. There are 12 statements and one open question. The open question invites students to add motivational factors that are not covered in the statements above. Table 3.3 shows a copy of the self-completion questionnaire.

Table 3.3  Self-completion questionnaire

| Please put a tick in the box or boxes which describe/s your English learning motives. Please tick all that apply |
| I am motivated to learn the English language because: |
| □ I wish to improve my English reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. |
| □ I would like to watch English movies. |
| □ I like to communicate and make friends with foreigners who speak English. |
| □ I like to learn about a foreign culture. |
| □ I want to pass the examinations. |
| □ It is useful to find a good job. |
| □ I would like to find a job in a government department. |
| □ English is an international language. |
| □ My parents (mother/father) encourage me to learn English. |
| □ The teaching materials are useful. |
| □ I like the classroom atmosphere during English lessons. |
| □ English is a compulsory subject. |
| Please add any other motivations for learning English if they are not covered above. |

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
The research was carried out in two phases in one academic year, from October to June. The aim of phase 2 of the survey was to examine whether there was any change of motivation for learning the English language. Students filled in the questionnaires voluntarily and anonymously in both phases. The self-completion questionnaires were given to 49 students in phase 1. In phase 2, the same questionnaire was given to the same group of students but the number then was 48 because one student had de-registered from the course. Both phases’ results will be summarized in chapter 4 in the findings. Based on the top five popular statements and statistics from other statements of phase 1 survey, the researcher worked out a schedule of semi-structured interviews which will be discussed in the following section.

3.4.2 Semi-structured interviews

Ten students were interviewed using semi-structured interviews in phase 1 and phase 2. Interview schedule 2 was used in the phase 2 interviews. All the questions were the same as those for interview schedule 1 except adding “why/why not” at the back of interview question 1. The same group of students was interviewed twice in this research to look for motivational changes. Altogether, 20 interviews were conducted. The time-table of semi-structured interview is attached in Appendix 1.

It was one month after the start of the academic year, October, that the researcher approached the 10 participants and obtained their consent to participate in the study. The researcher explained to them that there would be two interviews of 20 minutes each in the same academic year. Interviews would be audio-taped if they had no objection. The interview questions were shown to the participants before the interviews started. The purpose of this was to give them a general idea of what kind of questions they were going to answer so that the interviews could run smoothly. They could choose to speak
in English or Cantonese in the interviews. The researcher wanted to make sure that there was no language barrier for the participants and no misunderstanding between the interviewer and interviewees. In addition, the interviewees could express their feelings freely. Of all the interviews, only two interviewees spoke in English and two spoke in both Cantonese and English; the rest of the interviews were conducted in Cantonese.

Open questioning was adopted for the interview schedule because it puts a minimum of restraint on the answers and the expressions. Based on the results of the phase 1 self-completion questionnaire survey (Table 3.3), the researcher worked out the interview schedule. The aim of these questions was to collect data on the areas of motivation. The interview schedule consisted of two parts. The first part of the questioning aimed to capture some general ideas of the participants’ motivation and their backgrounds. These questions were designed to trace their English and/or other language’s learning experience and their previous motivation. This part enquired about participants’ own motivations for learning English during the primary and secondary school period, whether they liked learning English and when they started to like learning English. What were most important factors for them? What made them like or dislike learning English? And what did they find to be motivating/de-motivating in their English learning experience? The second part asked about their present views on English learning: whether they think that English is a useful language; whether they think that they enjoy learning English and if they could choose, would they still want to learn English. The phase 1 interview questions are listed below.

**Phase 1 interview questions**

1. Do you like learning English?
2. When did you start to like learning English, at primary school, secondary school
or at the college?

3. What are the most important factors that make you like or dislike learning English?

4. What do you find to be motivating/de-motivating in your English learning experience?

5. Do you think English is a useful language? Why/why not?

6. Do you think you enjoy learning English? Why/why not?

7. If you could choose, would you still want to learn English? Why/why not?

The interview is a good way of gathering information, having direct bearing on the research objectives, as Tuckman (1994) described it:

…by providing access to what is ‘inside a person’s head’, these approaches make it possible to measure what a person knows (knowledge or information), what a person likes and dislikes (values and preferences) and what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs). (Tuckman, 1994, p.216)

These points are exactly what the present study on motivation wants to find out. In-depth interviewing seeks deep information and understanding (Johnson, 2002). This is what the researcher was seeking. The interview questions were structured around the three research questions stated in section 3.2.

The interviews were kept semi-structured because the interviewer could set up a general structure by deciding in advance what ground was to be covered and what main questions were to be asked. The researcher did not want to confine herself and the participants to asking and answering, respectively, only the specific questions and to
discussing only issues that were prepared in the list. This type of iterative interview technique has been favored by many researchers working in a qualitative research tradition because of its flexibility in use and richness in producing data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Woods, 1996; Holstein & Gubrium, 2004; Nunan, 2009).

Questions in qualitative studies depend on the interviewee’s responses and how the interviewer follows up on these responses (Kvale, 1996, pp.132-3). The interviewer can gather factual information about people’s circumstances; collect statements of their preferences and opinions; and explore in some depth their experiences, motivations and reasoning (Drever, 1997). In the interviews, a variety of questioning tactics may be used, such as probing, interpretive and follow-up questions (Kvale, 1996, pp.133-4). Through these tactics, it is hoped that the research issues can be pursued. The researcher can probe deeper into the participants’ remarks and allow for the emergence of new themes or issues. While keeping the interviews semi-structured and being prepared to depart from the questions that were set beforehand, the researcher has taken care that she returned the interviews to their anticipated courses when necessary but not in so rigid a way as to preclude her learning unexpected information (Johnson, 2002).

Establishing rapport is important in interviews and the interviewing relationship must be marked by “respect, interest, attention and good manners on the part of the interviewer” (Seidman, 2006, p.97). The researcher maintained a friendly relationship with the 10 participants throughout the interviews and throughout the research period. Among the participants, seven out of the 10 were very friendly and talked freely during the interviews while one male, Student J, and two females, Students E and F, were more formal in the interviews. In phase 2 of the interviews, these three participants became more relaxed.
Most participants spoke Cantonese in the interviews. The translation process will be described in the data analysis section 3.5. Originally, the researcher had hoped to use solely English in the interviews because it would have saved time by precluding the need to translate the interviews from Cantonese into English. But some of the participants rarely communicated in English in their daily lives. In order to build up a friendly interviewing atmosphere and relationship with the 10 participants so as to engage in open-hearted conversations with them, using Cantonese in the interviews would have the desirable result. In addition, using English to communicate could be a barrier, hindering the participants from expressing exactly what they mean. As non-native speakers of English, some of them would feel more comfortable conversing in their daily dialect, Cantonese.

3.4.3 Diary notes and informal talks

The second part of the data collection includes diary notes and information talks, which were carried out nearly at the same time as the first part. In order to collect information on the participants’ desire for and attitude towards learning English, the 10 participants were asked to write diaries on a voluntary basis throughout the research period. They were asked to record their daily English activities for four months. Informal talks about their classroom learning and outside-classroom learning were also scheduled. Table 3.4 shows the procedures of the second part of the data collection.
Table 3.4 Procedures of the second part of the data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diary notes</th>
<th>Informal talks</th>
<th>Interviews (Phase 1 &amp; Phase 2)</th>
<th>Diary notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Diaries are tantalizingly attractive because they appear, on the surface, to provide the means of generating substantial amounts of data with a minimal amount of effort on the part of the enquirer (Robson, 2002, p.258). The researcher makes use of diaries to collect, compare, conflate and analyze the experiences of the participants to produce a general picture of what things mean to groups as well as individuals.

The researcher explained clearly to the participants that the purpose of writing diary was to reveal more about the English language activities that they had undertaken in their free time. This information was used for correlation with the interview data. Participants were advised to record their activities twice a week for four months. From time to time, the researcher chatted with them to learn about their progress in writing the diary. They could write in either English or Chinese language. All participants wrote in English. The researcher provided the format and an example to them for the purpose of standardization. A copy of the diary notes is attached in Appendix 2.

Informal talks were arranged with the 10 participants. They were usually scheduled after English lessons on a bi-weekly basis in the belief that there would be a much greater chance to capture the moment-to-moment or day-to-day fluctuations and
changes in motivation. Two or three participants were invited to talk with the researcher at one time on their feelings about classroom learning and outside the classroom’s self-learning English activities. Questions were asked generating participants’ voluntary comments on changes, fluctuations in interests, persistence in learning and learning strategies. These questions included discussions with the participants on topics like “how the week went”, “what went well and what didn’t”, “what have you learnt”, and “what activities you liked”. The goal was to elicit anecdotes on what happened in their learning experience in and out of the classroom for the week. In addition, on-going questions were asked about what the participants attended to and pursued, and what they did not attend to and pursue on a variety of different levels. The researcher kept a “reflective field log” (Glesne, 2006, p.148) during the informal talks in getting the thoughts down as they occurred. With the notes, a more detailed record was produced immediately after the talk so that important information would not be left out. A record of informal talk is attached in Appendix 6.

The following section focuses on the data analysis of the semi-structured interviews. The data analysis of the diary notes will be presented in chapter 4.

3.5 Data analysis

3.5.1 Transcription and translation of interview data
To obtain data from the semi-structured in-depth interviews, the researcher listened to the tapes and transcribed each phase 1 interview as soon as it was finished. In this way, she could easily and conveniently get back to the participants and seek clarification for further information where necessary. But in reality, it was not always possible to complete all the transcription right after the interviews because this was a long process
and involved translation from spoken Cantonese into written English. During the process of transcription and translation, the researcher explored the data that emerged from the interview questions. The researcher was aware of some of the questions raised by Rossman and Rallis (2003) such as “If you have translated from another language into English, what constitutes direct quotes? Can you use translated words as a direct quote? How do you signal that a translation is accurate and captures the subtle meanings of the original language?” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p.260). The major difficulty that the researcher encountered when transcribing and translating the data was that she could not at times find the most appropriate English words to express an idea. In such cases, the researcher did her best and translated the ideas as closely to the original Cantonese expressions as possible. In order to verify the translated transcripts, the researcher took several measures to establish validity and trustworthiness. As the researcher was doing the transcription and translation, she, at the same time, wrote down issues that emerged from the interviews. There were, for example, difficulties in correctly transcribing some of the statements from Cantonese to English; and some other topics evolved from motivations in learning the English language. This written record helped in the data analysis at the later stage.

3.5.2 Stages of data analysis

The data analysis in the present study was done simultaneously with the data collection. This enabled the researcher to focus and shape the study as it proceeded. As Glesne (2006) suggests, this procedure is a kind of “early data analysis” (Glesne, 2006, p.148) and facilitates meaning-finding interpretations which will gradually emerge from the study. Taking Glesne’s suggestion, the researcher consistently reflected on the data, organized them and tried to discover what they were revealing to the researcher. Through this kind of early data analysis, the researcher hoped to avoid the common
difficulty faced by qualitative researchers of getting a sheer volume of material that can be unfocused, repetitious and overwhelming and that needs to be processed (Merriam, 1998).

The data analysis was done by the researcher in three stages. In the first stage, an attempt was made to identify a wide variety of factors which seemed to be related to participants’ motivational orientations. Based on the literature review, the researcher recognized that there were a number of motivational factors identified; that is, this earlier stage of the data analysis was not restricted to any seemingly significant factors expected to influence learner motivation. Rather, it was concerned with a broader conception of motivational factors within the participants. In this process, microanalysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), which often refers to line-by-line analysis (Strauss, 1987), was employed. The aim of this method was, at the beginning of the study, to conceptualize and categorize events, acts and outcomes from the data collected. This procedure was focused so that the researcher could examine the specifics of the data. For example, each specific event that the participants stated during the interviews was initially labeled with relevant motivational concepts, and categorized based on similarities and differences. In doing so, each statement of the participants from the interviews was checked line by line so as not to lose any specifics of the data. (An example of line-by-line analysis is shown in the transcript of semi-structured interview in Appendix 3) At the same time, the method of memoing was used as well (Punch, 1998, pp.205-6). The data analysis of the diary notes was also done line by line to identify similarities and/or contrasting factors which were emerging from the interviews at all stages. A summary on diary notes analysis is shown in Appendix 4.

The second stage of data analysis focused on pattern. As the data analysis procedure
evolved, the data were broken apart and reconstructed in an analytic and interpretive way. The data then began to cluster into themes related to motivational issues like learning environment, teacher effect, relationship with classmates, self-confidence and social effects. They were associated with intrinsic motivation and/or instrumental motivation in learning English to which, in turn, the participants contributed their particular learning outcomes. Once these major factors were identified, the analysis became more focused on exploring the interplay between the motivational factors, learning behaviors and learning outcomes. In doing so, a number of steps were taken to identify the patterns and the relationships operating among the themes. A copy showing the levels of data analysis is attached in Appendix 5.

One way of identifying patterns is through the on-going evolution of questioning and answering. One might view asking questions as part of the data collection process only. In this study, however, questions were used not just to generate data but also to generate ideas or ways of looking at the data. The procedure of asking both theoretical and practical questions and pursuing their answers led the researcher to more relevant questions. At the beginning, the researcher was more concerned with questions that would lead her to the proper focus of the inquiry. For example, in the earlier stage of data collection and analysis, the researcher kept questioning the proper focus of interview questions she asked during interviews with the participants, looking for more relevant questions that would potentially lead to more anecdotes from the participants. Afterwards, the researcher brought more detailed questions about what she had interpreted from the data already collected, and reinterpreted the central phenomena and also raised further questions about them by pursuing the answers given by the participants. For instance, as the data collection and analysis evolved, the researcher kept raising questions about the significance of motivational factors of the participants.
within a set of events, and the relationship of the effect and subsequent effects identified later.

In the third stage, the major issue was how to integrate into a coherent formulation all the ideas questioned and answered regarding the issues of concern in this study. Each interview was reinterpreted by cross-checking data through the diary writing and informal talks. This interpretation was fundamentally based on comparative analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). There were two major types of comparisons. The first one was to compare incident to incident or concept to concept, attempting to categorize them by means of clear relationships among their properties; that is, each specific event identified with a certain factor or combination of factors was compared with other events to examine the clear effects of the factors within each event. The second type consisted of the comparison of each relationship identified as the analysis of the data progressed. This procedure focused on comparing a set of events in which a factor affected micro-level motivation, which in turn led to changes in learning behaviors to which subsequently the learner attributed learning outcomes. These steps were initially carried out separately for each case, and subsequently among the different cases.

3.6 Validity and trustworthiness

In this qualitative study, the researcher was deeply concerned with its validity and trustworthiness. How accurate and reliable are the data? Interviewers usually have their own perspectives and biases which are caused by their background characteristics, psychological factors and behavioural factors. The interviewer’s age, education, perceptions, expectations, motives and the inadequate conduct of an interview (Powney,
1987), like incorrect reading, are the causes of the above factors. It is believed that a qualitative study has validity and trustworthiness, provided that care has been taken to address these issues during the research process. Merriam (1998) also noted that ensuring validity in qualitative research involved conducting the investigation in an ethical manner. In addressing the validity of this research, the researcher considered how carefully the study was designed, conducted and presented and how sensitively the writer treated the participants. A number of measures were employed to address the issues of validity and trustworthiness.

Firstly, multiple data collection methods and resources were employed. There were two surveys and two phases of semi-structured interviews conducted. There were also reflections of diary notes and conversations. This triangulation of findings (Stake, 1995; Patton, 2002; Glesne, 2006) helped to build up and contribute to the credibility of the study. Secondly, all participants were informed about the aim of this study, which was to find out the motivational factors in English language learning of Hong Kong vocational students. It was clearly spelt out that it had nothing to do with examinations or any form of assessments. Thirdly, all interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed and then organized; and data were documented systematically to provide an accurate report.

Finally, in the transcription and translation of the in-depth interviews, the researcher took care to translate the interviews as closely to the original ideas as possible. Although a completely error-free version of the translated transcripts could not be guaranteed, the researcher used two ways to establish the trustworthiness of the transcription and translation. In the first place, the researcher gave the participants each a copy of his/her interview transcripts for checking. Although some participants’ English was not good, all of them were capable of checking whether the transcription was a true reflection of
what they had said in the interviews. The researcher shared the interpretive proofs with them, as a form of member checking (Stake, 1995; Merriam, 1998; Glesne, 2006). In this way, the researcher was able to verify that she had reflected their perspectives; to clarify problematic sections; and to develop new ideas and interpretations. All participants agreed that the translated transcriptions were the true reflection of what they had said in the interviews. There were no changes requested from any of the 10 participants.

In addition to this member checking procedure, the researcher invited two professional teachers to proof-read the transcriptions and translation. The first one is a former lecturer who has taught English in the same vocational institute for 10 years. The second one is a secondary-school teacher who has been teaching English for 20 years. Both of them listened to all the audio-taped interviews and checked with the researchers’ scripts separately. The lecturer found little discrepancy. She sent an email to ask the researcher to check Line 68 of Student A1’s and Line 94 of Student B2’s transcriptions again. The e-mail that she wrote was recorded for proof of evidence of member checking.

The secondary-school teacher found a few translations unclear and there were word choice differences. She wrote the suggested choice of words next to the original translated scripts and told the researcher to have a second thought about the words. The scripts on which she wrote were kept as a proof for the second member checking document. Other than these, there were no significant or notable differences among the three of our interpretations of the interviews. The researcher listened and went through the scripts again and agreed to what both of them had mentioned. While taking care to verify the data, the researcher also tried constantly to be aware of the limitations of the
3.7 Ethical considerations

Ethical issues permeate the whole process of research work. “Qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world. Their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict” (Stake, 2005, p.459). In the present research, the researcher took steps to attend to ethical considerations before the study and during the research process. Prior to the start of data collection, once the participants had been identified and selected for the study, the researcher obtained their informed consent to commit themselves to the study. At the same time the researcher wrote an e-mail to the Principal of the institute telling him about this research and was granted permission for access to the collection of data in this institution. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality of the identity of the 10 participants and the name of the institute, the researcher used capital letters A to J for the 10 participants and referred to the institute without naming it at all. The researcher took care that any information that might personally identify the 10 participants or that might characterize the institute was not used in the write-up of the research. The 10 participants, however, did not care too much about whether their identity would be disclosed. The participants all agreed to whatever names the researcher might use in the write-up. Apart from preserving their anonymity, the researcher also ensured that the 10 participants would have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without the need to provide explanations and that they would be offered a summary of the study on its completion. Although the researcher aimed to take the role of a researcher in the field, she did not want to ask intrusive questions and listened only. She also sought their critique of her work, gave them small tokens of appreciation and acknowledged their
commitment and patience.

Finally, special care were taken to store the collected data, audio-tapes, field notes and participants’ diary writings in a safe place and confidentiality was ensured at all times. The same procedures were also taken by the two verifiers who undertook the verification of translations and transcriptions for ensuring reliability. When the researcher explained the procedures to them, both of them were very understanding and promised to adhere to the same ethical stance as the researcher. The computer files that contained the data were all locked in a cabinet when they were not in use. The researcher only discussed the data with her thesis supervisor and no one else outside the study.

Throughout the research process, the researcher found herself negotiating between presenting the 10 participants’ learning motivations as their English language teacher and trying to keep them “unpolluted” by her presence. The researcher hoped that the ethics of the study were realized in mutual help and growth, avoidance of exploitation in order to depict a true picture of the participants’ experiences and present their voices. The true picture was ensured in the selection period that the researcher had observed the participants’ behavior and found that they had open and honest character; they were likely to answer the interview questions openly and honestly. Furthermore, the data obtained were verified by the triangulating of different tools mentioned in section 3.4.

3.8 Limitations of the study

Regarding the difficulties the researcher encountered during data collection, the main limitation of the present study lies in the fact that the interviews and discussions with
the 10 participants were conducted in a language other than that of the language of this thesis. Even though much care has been taken and much cross-checking has been done to maintain the original wording and meaning of the conversations, some essence of the conversations might have been lost in translation. During the interpretive process of the data, as a form of member checking for this study, the researcher sought approval individually from the 10 participants of all the transcriptions and translations of their respective interviews.

Diary completion is quite a sophisticated task. The researcher needs to ensure that respondents know what they have to do, why and when they have to do it (Robson, 2002). It is difficult to make participants start doing it. When they were asked to write diaries at the beginning, they all said that they didn’t know how to do it. The researcher explained in detail and showed a sample to them. Though they promised to do it, some were not disciplined or organized in handing in their diaries. As a result of frequent encouragements and reminders, they were able to produce records of daily English activities. It was found that, in general, girls were more conscientious in writing diaries than boys in the present study. Another issue was that the information gathered may not be typical or true. There might be inadequate recalls, and sample selection bias on the activities that they recorded. Participants always entered records of watching TV programs and some did not have complete records of what they had done. Moreover, participants generally are not willing to complete diaries for more than a limited period, which was the case for some of this study’s participants. Nevertheless, there were sufficient diary notes for the purpose of triangulation.
3.9 Researcher’s role

As the English teacher of the 10 participants and a researcher, it is sometimes difficult to convince readers that the participants provided answers openly and honestly. As students of the teacher, participants may give answers to please the teacher, so that they will give a better impression and this may result in the teacher giving them higher marks in the test or examination. This is also related to teacher’s bias. In the structure of this Level 1 (year 1) English language course, however, none of the tests are marked by the subject teacher. There is no grace mark, either. So for the participants in this study, there was no advantage in pleasing the researcher. The researcher believes that all data from the participants are trustworthy.

The role as a researcher was sometimes blended with other roles such as a friend and a teacher. It was sometimes difficult to keep the role as purely a researcher throughout the whole academic year of study, though the researcher had no intention of adding her suggestions or giving advice to the participants concerning their motivation for learning English. The researcher believed that this would have distorted her understanding of their developmental processes. The researcher also had to remind herself that she was not a teacher in front of the participants when doing the informal talks and during the interview periods. This, again, would have affected the understanding of how these participants reacted in the above situations. As Merriam (1998) pointed out, some participants gained valuable self-knowledge through the interviews but for some others the interviews might be therapeutic. Throughout the interviews, the researcher reminded herself that the interviewer’s task “is first and foremost to gather data, not change people” (Patton, 2002, p.405). The researcher had to constantly remind herself that she was neither a judge nor a therapist.
3.10 Chapter summary

The rationalistic research paradigm has been prevalent in applied linguistics including the study of L2 learning motivation. Within the field, however, there have recently been some calls for methodological alternatives for the sake of a balanced view and a better understanding. The fundamental rationale behind the calls is that of different paradigms for different purposes.

Motivation is a complex and multifaceted concept. Recent researcher in the field, like Dornyei (1998), asserts that no single theory can possibly explain the complexity of foreign/second language learning motivation in different contexts. Likewise, the researcher believes that no single methodological framework can possibly capture this complexity, the research design, therefore, does not fix to one specific framework. However, the grounded theory’s means of data collection and data analysis were adapted selectively to suit the nature of this research. The analysis of findings was both theory driven and data driven. This study employed the qualitative research approach of case study with self-completion questionnaire, semi-structured interview, diary notes and informal talk as research tools. The research was carried out in one academic year between October and June. With a longer time span of research, a better understanding of the actual factors of the motivation could be gained. The present study is small scale and qualitative in nature; it does not aim at making generalizations about all students who study in vocational institutes in Hong Kong. Yet, it should be noted that the 10 participants’ cases are representative of a larger population of the same group of students. The overall picture of these 10 participants is presented in chapter 4 and four individual profiles are analyzed in chapter 5.
Chapter 4  The overall picture

4.1  Introduction

Chapter 4 of this thesis presents, firstly, an overall picture of the data collected from Hong Kong vocational students; and, secondly, the findings on the motivation of 10 participants for learning the English language, discussing these in relation to the literature review in chapter 2. The present chapter also attempts to answer the three main research questions of the thesis. The aim of this study is to find out the motivational factors in the English language learning of Hong Kong vocational students. The data reflect the motivational factors in the English language learning, since primary school, of 10 participants and what causes them to like or dislike learning the English language. The tools for data collection include a self-completion questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and diary notes. The research was carried out in two phases, from October to June, over about eight months in one academic year. The purpose of phase 2 of the survey is to examine whether there is any change of motivation for learning English.

This chapter contains five major parts. The first part presents the results and discusses the findings of both phase 1 and phase 2 of the questionnaire survey. The second part explains how data are presented for the interviews and diaries. The third major part describes and analyzes the findings from the semi-structured interviews and diary notes of the 10 participants in phase 1 and phase 2. It includes five subsections on the motivational factors involved in learning the English language, namely: instrumental motivation; intrinsic motivation; influences of significant others on motivation; educational influences on motivation; and self-achievement and self-esteem. The fourth
major part, which discusses the findings on attitudes of Hong Kong vocational students towards learning the English language, focuses on four areas: practical/communicative orientation; a tool for study; daily use; and social status. The fifth major part of this chapter provides an overall analysis of the motivation of Hong Kong vocational students in comparison with other Hong Kong students as mentioned in the literature review chapter.

4.2 Data from self-completion questionnaire survey

The self-completion questionnaire was modified from that of the pilot case study. The model in Schmidt and Watanabes’ study (2001, p.357) was adapted with substantial modifications and changes as mentioned in section 3.2.1. Participants filled in the questionnaires voluntarily and anonymously in both phases. The survey by self-completion questionnaire was given to 49 students in phase 1. In phase 2, the same questionnaire was given to the same group of students, which by then numbered 48 because one student had de-registered from the course.

The topic of this questionnaire is “I am motivated to learn the English language because:”. Students were asked to put a tick in the box(es) that described their English learning motives and to answer the open question. The 12 statements in the questionnaire cover areas of intrinsic motivation; instrumental motivation; and motivational factors concerned with parents, teachers and schools. The open question at the end is designed to invite students to add motivational factors that are not covered in the statements above or to add opinions that are related to the motivation for learning the English language. Only two participants in phase 1 and five participants in phase 2 wrote answers to the open question. Since the data from the open question were limited,
they were excluded in the findings section. Table 4.1 shows the results of the questionnaire surveys for phase 1 and phase 2.

Table 4.1  Results of phase 1 and phase 2 of the questionnaire survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Total Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phase 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wish to improve my English reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to watch English movies.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to communicate and make friends with foreigners who speak English.</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to learn about a foreign culture.</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to pass the examinations.</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is useful to find a good job.</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to find a job in a government department.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English is an international language.</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents (mother/father) encourage me to learn English.</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teaching materials are useful.</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like the classroom atmosphere during English lessons.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English is a compulsory subject.</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The five most popular statements were identified in phase 1 of the survey. Forty-five
students out of 49 chose as the first top sentence: “I wish to improve my English reading, writing, speaking and listening skills”. Forty-four students ticked as the second top statement: “It is useful to find a good job”. The third most popular statement, “English is an international language”, was chosen by 43 students. Thirty-three students ticked as the fourth top statement: “I want to pass the examinations”. Ranked as the fifth top statement, “I would like to watch English movies” was ticked by 30 students.

The top three statements were chosen by the same number of students, 46 out of 48 in phase 2 of the survey. The first statement was “I wish to improve my English reading, writing, speaking and listening skills”. The second was “It is useful to find a good job”. The third was “I want to pass the examinations”. Compared with phase 1, one more student chose the first statement and two more students chose the second one. For the third statement, 13 more students chose it in phase 2 in comparison to phase 1 of the survey. It ranked as the fourth top statement in phase 1 of the survey. Forty-two students chose as the fourth top statement of phase 2: “English is an international language”. This statement was the third top one in phase 1. There was one student less who chose it in phase 2 than in phase 1. Thirty-five students chose the fifth top statement: “The teaching materials are useful”. Compared with phase 1, 17 more students chose this statement in phase 2 of the survey.

Based on the five most popular statements and on statistics from other statements in the questionnaire of both phases, a schedule of semi-structured interviews was worked out for both phases. The phase 1 interview schedule was presented in section 3.4.2. The interview questions are designed to answer the three main research questions:

1. What are the factors that motivate students in a vocational institute to learn the
English language?

2. What is the English language learning attitude of students in a vocational institute?

3. Do(es) integrative and/or instrumental motivation exist(s) among students of a vocational institute?

4.2.1 Findings of phase 1 and phase 2 of the questionnaire survey

The 12 statements of phase 1 and phase 2 of the survey can be categorized into three general areas. The first four statements focus on intrinsic motivation. The fifth to eighth statements relate to instrumental/practical motivations. The last four statements explore the areas of educational influence and influence of significant others.

For intrinsic motivation, in comparison to phase 1, phase 2 of the survey found: one more student “wish[es] to improve my English reading, writing, speaking and listening skills”; four more students “would like to watch English movies”; five more students “like to communicate and make friends with foreigners who speak English”; and six more students “like to learn about a foreign culture”.

In the area of instrumental/practical motivations, when compared with phase 1 of the survey, phase 2 saw a great increase in the number of students ticking these statements. Thirteen more students “want to pass the examinations” and 11 more students “would like to find a job in a government department”. One more student found that learning English is “useful to find a good job”.

The number of students who ticked statements in the last area, that of educational influence, greatly increased in phase 2 of the survey in comparison to phase 1.
Seventeen more students found “the teaching materials are useful”; 20 more students “like the classroom atmosphere during English lessons” and 10 more students believe that “English is a compulsory subject”. For influences of significant others, six more students ticked “My parents (mother/father) encourage me to learn English”.

The increasing number of students choosing the statements in the above three areas shows that, over time, students experience some degree of motivational change in learning the English language. The biggest change of motivation in phase 2 lies in the influence of significant others and educational factors on the motivation for learning English. Instrumental/practical motivation ranks as the next big change while intrinsic motivation shows the least change. Not only do the questionnaire findings reveal that students’ motivation for learning English can change over a period of time, but also the data from the semi-structured interviews indicate changes in motivation. These will be highlighted in the individual students’ profiles in chapter 5.

4.3 Data presentation of interviews and diaries

The primary source of data for the present study is from the two phases of face-to-face interviews with the 10 students participating: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I and J. Their ages range from 18 to 21 years. Five of them, Students A, B, E, F and G are female; and the other five, Students C, D, H, I and J are male. They studied different streams in secondary school. The participants’ background of study is shown in Table 3.1. The time-table and language used in the interviews are shown in Appendix 1. Participants were asked to write diaries to record their daily English activities throughout the research period. Data from the semi-structured interviews of phase 1 and phase 2 are triangulated with data from the participants’ diary notes. A total of six participants
handed in their diary writings on a monthly basis.

The major data used for the findings are based on the responses to questions from the two interview schedules and on the diary writings. The interview schedule of phase 2 is almost the same as that of phase 1 except for a variation to the first question in that “why/why not” was added at the end of question 1 in the phase 2 interview schedule. All participants have been interviewed twice, using the following system of identification. The first participant of the phase 1 interviews is labeled A1 and the same participant who takes part in the phase 2 interviews is labeled A2. In the transcription process, all interview conversations are labeled with numbers, with (1) as the starting dialogue, which is usually the first interview question. The response to (1) is labeled (2). For example, the response of Student A in the phase 1 interview to the first interview question is labeled A1 (2) in the findings sections. These labels record what has been done in the transcriptions to facilitate cross-checking and easy referencing. Appendix 3 shows a sample of the transcription of the semi-structured interview. Only dialogues of the interviews and entries of diary notes that best illustrate the motivational factors are quoted in the following findings sections.

Data from the diary notes are used for correlation with the findings from the semi-structured interviews. The findings from the diary notes are based on the entries of Students A, B, E, F, G and H. All entries of the same participant are marked with the small letter “d” to represent “diary notes” and the sequence starts with 1. For example, Student A has 18 entries: the first entry is A (d1) and her last one is A (d18). In the analysis stage, the researcher reads all the entries and correlates their notes with the themes of the semi-structured interviews. A table has been drawn up to facilitate the description and analysis of the results. As for the frequency of recording their English
activities: Student A has 18 entries; Student B, 12 entries; Student E, 16 entries; Student F, 9 entries; Student G, 3 entries; and Student H, 11 entries. Among these six participants, the first five students are female and the sixth is male. Appendix 4 shows the summary on data of the diary notes analysis.

4.4 Motivation for learning the English language: interview findings and analysis

This section answers the first research question: What are the factors that motivate students in a vocational institute to learn the English language? Data are obtained from the first four interview questions.

1. Do you like learning English?
2. When did you start to like learning English, at primary school, secondary school or at the college?
3. What are the most important factors that make you like or dislike learning English?
4. What do you find to be motivating/de-motivating in your English learning experience?

Participants’ motivational factors are presented under the following five headings: instrumental motivation; intrinsic motivation; influences of significant others on motivation; educational influences on motivation; and self-achievement and self-esteem.

4.4.1 Instrumental motivation

All 10 participants like learning the English language, but they started to like learning the language at different stages. All except Student A and Student I started to like
learning English at junior secondary school. Student A and Student I respectively started to like learning English when Student A was at primary school and Student I was working. Eight students have the same instrumental reason of wishing to have a better career.

Instrumental motivation is one of the seven dimensions in Dornyei’s (1998) summary of the education-friendly approaches. It is also one of the motivational variables in Gardner’s (2001) socio-educational model. It emphasizes the practical value and advantages of foreign/second language (L2) learning. In the process of learning, the participants set up goals and have expectancy values in mind. Their goals and value of the importance of learning the English language form the instrumental motive to find a job in the future.

Goal setting (Locke & Latham, 1990, 2002) is an important instrumental motivational form of behavior for Student C and Student I in their learning process. In a competitive society like Hong Kong, having a better standard of English means that it is easier to get a job. Participants realize that English is a necessary qualification and a basic criterion for companies in the selection of applicants to fill job vacancies. It also enables them to get a targeted job. To be a policeman is Student C’s goal choice: “Most importantly, I wish to be a policeman but I only got grade F for English in HKCEE.” [Student C1 (4)] He is committed to this goal because he re-states the same goal several times in the interviews. “I aspire to be a policeman, but I failed English in HKCEE.” [Student C2 (36)] He strongly believes that only after he has obtained the necessary qualification can he apply for this particular job. “Now I hope to use this certificate to apply for the post.” [Student C2 (36)] His goal of being a policeman will engage him in English learning activities, expending effort and persisting in it. “I want to find a job, so I need to study
seriously.” [Student C2 (22)] He has a goal commitment that is strongly attached to his goal and he is determined to achieve it.

Like Student C, Student I is committed to his goal. He is a self-efficacy learner. Self-efficacy is one of the most important positive influences on personal goal setting in goal setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990, 2002). “In comparison with my colleagues, my working ability was not low. But my promotion prospect was not as good as them because of my qualifications. The biggest problem was that my English was poor. ... So, poor English was an obstacle to my career.” [Student I1 (42)] Student I has formed an efficacy judgment of his capability “to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Bandura, 1986, p.391). Confident in his belief that his working ability is not low, he wants to exert effort and persist in learning English with the expectation of performing well in his future career. “As I am an adult now, I need to think of my future. I treat English as a skill. I also have interest in it. Since I have interest in it and it can also help me with my career, I want to learn English.” [Student I1 (42)] He is a learner with a higher level of self-efficacy. He will set higher goals and with a stronger commitment.

In addition to goal setting, the participants exhibit the behavior of expectancy and valence. Expectancy, instrumentality and valence are the three factors required for motivation to occur (AbiSamra, 2003). The value of the importance of learning English for Students D and H is reflected in the following comments: “English … I believe that it is very important to my future, for my living, or for work. … It can help me to prepare for the future work or study.” [Student D1 (42)] “In fact, I think nowadays people do not learn English for their own interest. They do it for their future, for jobs, for competition. … They do it for monetary reasons.” [Student H1 (63)] The value of
learning English is deeply rooted in the student’s mind that it is for future work, in particular, for money. Student D says, “I think English is quite important, especially in a society like Hong Kong; we need to know English in order to work in a company or do certain jobs.” [Student A1 (56)]

Expectancy is another type of behavior that leads to increased motivation. During a visit to the courts, Student F found that the barristers were very fluent in English. This experience inspired her – and she decided that she would become a lawyer in the future. She wrote in her diary:

Our group visited the High Court and District Court. This is my first time to see the judges, barristers, solicitors and jury. There are three cases including conspired cheat, murder and breach contract. It’s really different from what’s in TV. I thought that the barristers were smart because they spoke English fluently. I have a desire to be a lawyer. [Student F (d4)]

The expectancy of becoming a lawyer increases Student F’s motivation to learn and improve her English.

Students with instrumental motivation will set goals and have value and expectancy in mind. Strong instrumental motivation is apparent from the interviews and the diary writings of participants. They wish to have a better career and, thus, seeking a job is an important motivator for them to learn English. In Hong Kong, having a better standard of English would facilitate obtaining a job, especially the job that is targeted, like the situation of Student C. Conversely, a poor standard of English language is an obstacle in the career path. It is a hindrance to promotion in the business sectors even if one has the work capability. From these students’ expectancy and value, one can predict in their
achievement behavior that they will do well in learning English (Schunk et al., 2008).

4.4.2 Intrinsic motivation

One of the reasons why the participants like learning English stems from their own interest in it and the fact that they find English language an interesting subject. This is shown from nine participants’ conversations in the interviews, and particularly seven of them who really like the language. These students engage in actions “for their own sake and without coercion such as satisfaction, as sense of competence, interest, learning and challenge” (Alderman, 2008, p.252). Interest, enjoyment and intrinsic motives are the first dimension: the affective/integrative dimension of Dornyei’s (1998) summary of the education-friendly approaches. Interest is also one of the important variables of an integratively motivated learner (Gardner, 2001). This learner “has an open interest in the other language community … , perceives the language learning context positively, and expresses a high degree of motivation to learn the language” (Gardner, 2005, p.351).

Student A is intrinsically motivated. She finds English interesting and special. Her preferred skill is spoken English and she likes to communicate with others. She learns English because she wants to know more about the language itself. She feels competent and displays self-determination throughout the learning process. Her interest has developed over time with constant interaction through spoken activities. She said:

I found that when I learnt more, I spoke more. Sometimes, I didn’t know how to say something and this would block communication. I began to regain my interest and wanted to learn more English. … [A1 (28)] The greatest motivator is to acquire a better English standard. [A1 (32)] I like to establish a better foundation for my future but actually I have an interest in learning. So my interest is a greater motivator. [Student A1 (34)]
Student A engages in activities, rehearses new information, and applies skills and knowledge in different contexts (Bandura, 1986, 1993). In her diary notes, she expresses her interest in foreign cultures and traveling to foreign countries. She also writes about enjoying watching TV programs on topics like traveling, foreign countries’ culture and environments, and clearly enjoys these programs very much. She wrote:

I love this TV program very much. It is about traveling. I know more about …other countries’ cultures, such as the Indian people, how to cook local food for their dinner with fire. Although I cannot understand what they talk about, I enjoy watching it! (d1) This TV program is very nice. Today, the show is about the most beautiful hotel in the world. I have never seen this big hotel on the island. It is very expensive. It is very big and beautiful. (d4) This time the program is about Canada. The park of Canada looks very relaxed and beautiful. Canada’s government puts lots of money towards the local people having a comfortable environment. I think Hong Kong needs to build more parks to make our city more comfortable. (d7)

Student A’s interest in learning the English language stems from her personal interest (Krapp et al., 1992). It has developed through her constant and consistent interaction with English learning activities. Personal interest is a more stable personal disposition toward a specific subject (Urdan & Turner, 2005). This is based on the increased knowledge, positive emotions and increased perception of value in the English language.

Personal interest develops over time in the learning process. Student D reported that since he had been at secondary school, he had watched foreign movies. The reason that he liked to watch them so much was because “I read the subtitles, and I started to want
to learn their meanings and how to read the words.” [Student D1 (8)] He realized that his English was not adequate, so in addition to watching movies he also tried his best to read English newspapers. He describes the way that he learns from the newspaper: “I will guess the meanings of words in the articles first. After guessing, I will then find the meanings of the words in a dictionary. If my guessing is correct, I will be happy. I also try my best to remember the meanings and the pronunciations of the words.” [Student D1 (50)] This shows that Student D has a real interest in learning English, like Student A.

Five participants, Students B, C, F, G and H want to travel to foreign countries. They think that knowing English will help in situations like reading road signs and maps, or bargaining with prices. They have a situational interest in learning the English language. Situational interest represents a more temporary, situation-specific attention to a topic (Urdan & Turner, 2005). It is generated by certain stimulus characteristics in an activity (interest) and tends to be shared among individuals (Hidi & Anderson, 1992).

While Student B was traveling in Thailand with her parents, she could not speak English well enough to bargain down prices as they were shopping. She realized the importance of being able to communicate in English. The fact that her weak English did not allow her to bargain stimulated her to improve her knowledge of the language. She would observe her own progress and feel more efficacious about learning. Student H likes to travel and wishes to communicate with others. He says, “If I don’t know English… I can’t communicate with others. When I am in other countries, it is difficult to communicate with others.” [Student H1 (16)] With heightened self-efficacy and positive outcome expectations, Students B’s and H’s respective intrinsic motivation is raised and this will lead to further learning (Bandura, 1986, 1993).
4.4.3 Influences of significant others

This section discusses the study’s findings in relation to the literature review on the influences of significant others, which include family members, teachers and peers. These influences are the seventh dimension: the significant others–related dimension in Dornyei’s (1998) summary of the education-friendly approaches. Family members, teachers and peers are elements of external influences, which is one of the four important sections in Gardner’s socio-educational model (2001).

Family members

The motivation for learning the English language of seven of the study’s participants can be attributed to family members. This includes respective parents’ active and passive roles; direct and indirect tuition that enhance children’s attitudinal development; parental style; and family environment.

The mother, in particular, plays a key role in children’s learning process. Student J’s mother plays an active role (Gardner, 1985) because she encourages her son to do well and monitors his language learning performance. She also teaches additional words, phrases and pronunciation to her son. Student J’s mother guided him to study English when he was young, buying him a lot of English books and urging him to watch English programs. She read books and watched the programs together with her son. When there were some words that he didn’t know, his mother read the words to him. “My mother talks in English with me and often teaches me English. …When I learn some words, she’ll praise me.” [Student J2 (56)] Student J’s mother encourages him by using praise as a kind of reward. She links the reward to progress and achievement when she praises Student J for his improvement. On receiving his mother’s praise – a recognition of his progress – this in itself can build self-efficacy and motivation (Schunk et al., 2008).
Furthermore, Student J’s mother makes adaptive attributions for her son’s performance and is confident in his abilities, all of which is encouraging for her son’s positive motivational beliefs like attributions and task values (Newman, 2000). “My mother tells me the importance of English. I, therefore, sometimes take the initiative to learn English and join some English classes.” [Student J1 (109)] The major factor for Student J in learning the English language is obvious: “… motivating factors are from my mother”. [Student J1 (107)]

The direct tuition by Student J’s mother would contribute to that student’s attitudinal development (Milner, 1981). Milner proposes that attitudinal development occurs in children as a result of direct tuition by their parents. “Parents undoubtedly do make explicit statements about their beliefs and attitudes on a variety of social issues, and there is usually an implicit encouragement for the child to feel likewise” (Milner, 1981, p.124). Parents also play a passive role, which involves indirect modeling and communicating attitudes related to second language learning and the community (Gardner, 1985). The use of verbalization is one way to encourage children in learning (Alderman, 2008).

The respective family members of Students F and G play a passive role in that they verbally state the importance of the English language. Student F mentions that “if I do not study well, I couldn’t find a good job and then I couldn’t support myself” [Student F1 (58)] and that her family members “all think that if your English is better, you can perhaps find a better job and have a better life.” [Student F1 (60)] Student G’s family members have the same verbal message as those of Student F. “My family members always say that I can’t do much if I don’t know English. And English is used in many situations. If I want to read a manual, I have to know English.” [Student G2 (60)]
addition to direct tuition, parents can also influence their children’s attitudinal development through indirect tuition. Milner suggests that attitudes develop through indirect tuition, “attitudes are not consciously taught, but are implicit in what the parents say or do” (Milner, 1981, p.126). Student G’ reveals that her father’s academic result was not good and that he studied at night school when he started to work full time. He felt that it would be better if his daughter had a better foundation before she started working.

Moreover, parenting styles can make a difference in children’s learning motivation. Motivations are enhanced when parents allow children to have input into decisions; state expectations as suggestions; acknowledge children’s feelings and needs; and provide children with alternatives and choices (Dornbusch et al., 1987). Student A’s parents give her a lot of freedom. There is no pressure from her family members; they let her choose what she likes to do. They remind her to study hard but without putting her under a lot of pressure.

In a family, it is not only the parental roles and style that influence the learning process; providing a good environment can enhance children’s learning activities, too. In Maslow’s (1954) theory, the environment provides opportunities for satisfaction of needs. If the environment does not allow needs to be satisfied, optimal growth and development will not be realized. Student J’s family financially supports him to learn English overseas as an exchange student. Student H’s family members spend time with him watching English movies and programs, providing a good environment – a relaxed atmosphere – to encourage him to learn English. His parents do not force him to speak English. They take a more relaxed attitude, simply encouraging him to watch English television programs or to write in English. In a similar fashion to Student H’s family, all
the families mentioned above, particularly that of Student J, provide a very good environment for the participants to learn English.

**Teachers**

The teachers’ teaching methods, skills, ability and strategies for meeting students’ needs can motivate students to learn. Five participants said that their teachers motivated them to learn English. They think that their teachers encompass both the skills of transmitting knowledge and the ability to develop an atmosphere that encourages them to learn (Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 1983).

Student A had a good English teacher who encouraged her to overcome difficulties, so that she was interested in learning. “The teacher taught quite well and I was interested as I was going to be promoted to secondary four. …” [Student A1 (18)] “I think learning English is hard. But at that moment when I have a problem, my English teacher always encourages me to overcome difficulties and she gives me the courage and encourages me to try my best to learn English.” [Student A2 (12)] Student E’s teacher has the ability to understand students’ needs and has the experience to deal with different learning styles and progress. Student E says that the teacher “taught me many things …, so I started to like learning English at that time.” [Student E1 (10)] “What she said would attract us to listen to her … She used some simple methods.” [Student E2 (16)] These are reasons the students give to explain why they have the urge to learn English.

When teachers have the ability of creating an active learning environment, it results in a shift from passive learning to students taking responsibility for their own learning (Chapman & Aspin, 1997). Student H has had an interest in English since primary school because one of his English teachers taught well. “Perhaps she was not so rigid
and did not just write notes in class. … She played games and would hold activities like singing, story telling and watching videos. The activities were all in English, and she was very kind and friendly.” [Student H1 (8)] His teacher created an active learning environment, trying to meet the student’s personal, emotional and cognitive needs to enhance the student’s motivation for learning (Stipek, 2002).

Peers

Eight participants found that peers were an influence on each other to improve, work hard and to achieve (Alderman, 2008, p.208). The discussion of peer influences presented in this section includes peers as models and as teachers; and focuses on the friendship quality and peer network that motivate students to learn English.

Peers can act as a model. Observers’ beliefs can be affected by observing models. Observing similar others’ successes can raise the observers’ self-efficacy and motivate them to perform the task (Schunk et al., 2008, p.274). Students believe that if their models can succeed, they can succeed as well. When Student I was working in a company, he met some friends whose qualifications were higher than his. This observation raised his sense of self-efficacy. In addition, his friends were always motivating him to learn more English. After he had learnt more English, he found that his horizons broadened. This further aroused his interest in learning English.

Observing peers’ success can enhance learning. On the other hand, observing peers’ failure can also motivate students to learn. Student F’s classmate is a repeater. During English lessons, while practising speaking, this classmate could not pronounce common English words. He was always falling asleep. The situation concerned Student F, as she thought that the repeater student must be suffering a great deal of tension over his study.
This experience stimulated her motivation to improve her English standard and made her determined to pass her exam. “I must get a pass to level 2 because I don’t want to be a repeater like this classmate.” [Student F (d3)] Student F did not want to repeat and follow in the step of this classmate. Thus, observing similar others’ failure can raise observers’ self-efficacy and motivate them to perform the task.

The observation of peers can lead students to adopt comparable goals because peer-oriented goals are highly valued by students (Bandura, 1986, 1988). Students want to be liked and approved by others; to develop social or intimate relationships and to cooperate with others, or to win favor from others. Student B has some friends older than herself who talk in English, which she does not understand. She finds that she does not get along well with her friends. One of them, who has come back from Canada, speaks very good English. “I sometimes speak English with her because she doesn’t speak Cantonese. I want to be able to communicate with her. So, I’ll push myself to improve my English.” [Student B1 (16)] Student B wants to develop a close relationship with, and to be viewed favorably by this friend. This pushes her to improve her standard of English.

Peers can act as teachers if they have a good English standard and qualifications (Alderman, 2008). One of Student G’s friends speaks very good English and teaches her how to pronounce sentences in English. “I have a friend whose English is better than mine. Wherever we go, she’ll teach me how to say something in English. She will later check whether I remember the English sayings.” [Student G2 (126)] Similarly, Student I has a friend who acts as a teacher to him. All his friends are university graduates. If he has any questions about English, he can ask these friends and they will teach him. “If I make some mistakes while talking with them, they will teach me to rephrase the
sentences and the effect will be different. I find it quite interesting. … We started to practise speaking English together.” [Student I2 (73 &79)] Peers who act as teachers like the respective friends of Student G and Student I demonstrate the positive quality of students’ friendship.

The quality of peer relationship is a powerful motivator. Friendships support students in the school environment and assist with their adjustment (Newman, 2000). In school, Student B’s friend passed a book to her saying that it was worth reading. Student B found that there were many difficult words in it that she did not understand. When she had to look up their meanings, she realized the importance of understanding English. Similarly, Student H’s friends introduce books and songs; and communicate in English with each other. “My friends, they give me many English songs to listen to. And, there is something called video conferencing. We speak English and talk in this conference. We take it as practice or simply use it for communication.” [Student H2 (144)] This demonstrates how school friends support each other in learning.

Members of peer groups easily form networks. Peer networks can heavily influence the members’ academic motivations. Networks help to define students’ opportunities for interactions, for observing others; for interactions and access to activities (Ryan, 2000). Over time, network members become more similar to one another (Berndt, 1999). This is how Student I perceives peer motivation in learning the English language. He thinks that people who know English and those who do not know English are of different levels. Students have a wider of choice of friends if they can communicate with people of different levels. “In fact, if I know one more language, I will make more friends. This is also a motivational factor for me to learn English because I am the one who takes the initiative in making friends with others.” [Student I2 (44)] Student D wishes to be close
to his friends, “Because after secondary school, some of them went to another country to study. … They come back to Hong Kong after a few months. And they always speak English. Yes, I feel that they are stronger and cleverer. … I want to be near them.” [Student D2 (63, 65 & 71)] Student D’s motive for improving his knowledge of English is the wish to join the peer network.

4.4.4 Educational influences on motivation

Academic results

Seven participants, in particular, expressed determination to pass and obtain good results in their study, especially in examinations. This strength of purpose is influenced by the policy of the local education system, which has an impact on classroom teaching and learning. This is also the sixth dimension: the educational context–related dimension in Dornyei’s (1998) summary of the education-friendly approaches. The desire to obtain good results comes from the motives of achievement, attribution and goal setting.

Atkinson’s theory (1964) of achievement motivation proposes that behavior contains three components: motives, probability for success and incentive value. There are two basic achievement motives. The first is the motive to approach success and the second is to avoid failure. Student A’s motive for success was strong. “Maybe, I have the result. Oh, it’s encouragement to me”. [Student A2 (98)] Student A would approach and engage in the achievement tasks because getting a good result encourages her to learn English. This is one of the three components: probability for success. As for Student G, she has the incentive value in learning English because she “got better results in the English subject”. [Student G1 (22)]
When Student G gets poor academic results, however, she hates learning the English language. This is the second achievement motive suggested by Atkinson: to avoid failure. The motive to avoid failure reflects learners’ capacity to experience shame and humiliation when they fail. When Student A did not work hard and the result was not good, she gave up. It is the same for Student H: “My results have become very poor. So I resisted learning English.” [Student H1 (4)] The behavior of Students A, G and H is related to the controllability dimension in attribution theory, which is relevant to effects. Failures occur because of internally controllable causes such as being lazy. In addition, shame results from failures that are derived from internally uncontrollable causes such as lack of talent (Weiner, 1986; Graham, 1994).

Goal setting (Locke & Latham, 1990, 2002) has been discussed in relation to instrumental motivation in section 4.4.1. It is also an important motivational process in obtaining good results in academic studies and examinations. Learners with a goal and a sense of self-efficacy for attaining it are willing to engage more intensively in activities. This will lead to attainment by means of expending effort and persisting in doing the task. The motivational benefits of goals depend on learners making a commitment to attain the goals. Student E had the goal of doing better in examinations. So, starting from secondary Form three, she dedicated her effort to this and persisted in reading English books, which resulted in her starting to like English.

The study goal for participants C, D, E, F and H, respectively, is to obtain good results and to pass the English subject in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) in order either to be promoted to higher forms or to graduate from secondary school. This goal is explicitly stated in the semi-structured interviews. “Motivating forces … I want to have a better standard of English, do better in exams, find a better
job and support my family.” [Student F1 (18)] Student H declares his commitment to attain the same goal as Student F: “It’s a must to learn English in order to pass the examinations. … In secondary schools, it’s for examinations and further studies that you must study English well.” [Student H1 (36 & 34)] “The purpose of learning English in secondary school is to prepare for the CE (HKCEE).” [Student H2 (22)] This goal of success in examinations can also be related to the fourth dimension: the self-concept–related dimension, which includes success/failure-related (attributional) factors in Dornyei’s (1998) summary of education-friendly approaches.

Teaching medium

Students are motivated to learn English because they have the goal of getting good results in their studies and in examinations. They could be de-motivated, however, by the education policy of changing the teaching medium from Cantonese to English.

There are two points of time of change in the teaching medium in the Hong Kong education system. The first is from primary six to secondary Form one. The experience of Student H was that he resisted learning English at school because he was unable to adapt to the transition from being taught in Cantonese when he went from primary to secondary school. Student I recalled his experience:

My teacher taught in Chinese in primary school. In secondary school, all of a sudden, all subjects were taught in English. My foundation of English at primary school was not good, so I found it difficult to adapt to it. My results at primary school were very good. But in secondary school, I was put originally in the top class and then dropped to the bottom one. It was a serious setback to me. [Student I1 (6)]
The second point of time of change is from secondary Form three to Form four. Student D found difficulty adapting to this change. The lessons were conducted in Cantonese before Form three. In Form four and afterwards, English was used. It was difficult for him to cope with most of the subjects, especially with the English terms used in Physics and Biology, because he had a poor memory. He would easily forget the meanings of the words after a few days. “It’s a bit more difficult for me. I often need to look up the meaning of the words in a dictionary. … I had to use the words frequently and say them frequently before I could remember the words.” [Student D2 (125)] The adverse effect of the teaching medium in relation to motivation for learning the English language is the same as described in some of the studies on Hong Kong students presented in section 2.6.

4.4.5 Self-achievement and self-esteem

Self-achievement and self-esteem are regarded as motivators for successful learning. This is another aspect of the fourth dimension: the self-concept–related dimension in Dornyei’s (1998) summary of education-friendly approaches. Esteem need is one of the growth needs in Maslow’s (1954) hierarchy needs theory. It reflects the need to achieve, to gain approval and recognition (Schunk et al., 2008, p.173). This need is shown in Students D’s and H’s respective processes of learning the English language. 

Student D feels pleased when he can answer the teacher’s questions in English; he gains approval and recognition. He admits that he learns English “in order to achieve a goal”. [Student D1 (74)] Adding to his need to achieve, Student D is proud of his achievement. He feels superior to others if he can communicate in English. “When using English I will feel that I’m superior to others. … If you speak English, people will think that you are smarter. … Yes, I am filled with pride.” [Student D1 (54)] If, however, he felt unable
to communicate in English, he would feel ashamed and embarrassed. “While shopping or when I talk with others, say my previous schoolmates, they will, during our conversation, suddenly speak English, I need to understand what they say. I will be very embarrassed if I ask them the meanings of the English words.” [Student D1 (28)]

Student D’s behavior reflects his self-esteem. Self-esteem is “…the evaluation that the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself; it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval; and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy” (Coopersmith, 1967, pp.4-5).

This kind of successful feeling occurs with Student H, too. He thinks that English is his worst subject at school. But when he can make use of the language to do some work, he feels successful. “If I can use English to present something, I have successful feelings. … When I speak English with others, I have a great sense of achievement, and I’m very happy. So speaking has become an interest. That means using English has become an interest.” [Student H2 (68 & 136)] With the evidence that he is capable and successful in performing activities in English, Student H is interested in learning English.

The learning of L2 (foreign/second language) can happen in both a formal and an informal context (Gardner, 2001). The informal learning context could be in a street. In a multi-national society like Hong Kong, where different language communities live together, it is quite common for L2 learners to encounter English speakers in the street. Student A wrote in her dairy: “On that day, my friend and I were shopping in Tsimshatsui. A tourist asked me some questions about the places that he needed to go. And I tell him how to get there. After that I was very happy because I can clearly talk to
a foreigner!” [Student A (d16)] The same experiences are also reported by Student D about his conversation with foreign visitors. He feels happy that he can help them. Both students have successfully communicated with foreigners. This is a major motivational factor for them to learn English. Student G, however, has different feelings when she is in the same situation as Students A and D. Student G also meets a foreigner in an area where English is commonly spoken. “Once when I was in Tsimshatsui, a foreigner asked me the way. I didn’t know how to answer him. … My friend helped me to answer him. … I was shamed! I don’t want this to happen again and make people feel that college students don’t know how to speak English.” [Student G1 (90, 94, 98 & 100)] The experience of being unable to communicate with foreigners stimulates Student G’s motivation to learn and improve her language skills.

When the students are capable of using English in communication, they have a sense of achievement. This is because they have as their source of motivation “the success in the task which related to the combination of satisfaction and reward” (Fisher, 1990). They succeed in doing the task, so they get satisfaction. Students like what they do well; and are therefore more likely to do it again, and put in more effort. For students, however, who think that they are weak in English, they will simply avoid situations that they cannot accomplish. “Feelings of failure, particularly early on in a student’s school career, can therefore lead to a downward spiral of a self-perception of low ability – low motivation, low effort – low achievement …” (Littlejohn, 2001, p.7). As Student A came across difficulties, for example, when she did not understand a word or the meaning of a paragraph, she stopped learning it. Even though she liked English, she gave up because she did not want to face the difficulties. Student F exhibits similar behavior when she has difficulty in learning: “I feel under pressure”. [Student F1 (68)] The fact that Student A gives up learning when facing difficulties has a relationship with
her self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy is about people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances (Bandura, 1986, p.391). It affects choice of activities, effort and persistence. Learners who hold a view of low self-efficacy of themselves for accomplishing a task may avoid the task, like Student A. Other students who believe that they are capable, are likely to participate, especially when they encounter difficulties, because efficacious learners work harder and persist longer than those with doubts. Though Student F “…felt under pressure”, when facing difficulties, she carried on with the task. She loves watching a TV program about love magic stories. Sometimes, the TV program has no English or Chinese subtitles, and she cannot understand the meaning of the story. But she carries on watching the program. “Although it is difficult to me, I will continue.” [Student F (d1)] Student H has the same attitude as Student F. When facing difficulties, Student H persisted in doing the task:

I see the MP3 user manual. It teaches me how to use the MP3 player. The manual has many difficult words so I need more time to read it. … I practise the past examination paper of the Certificate exam, English paper 2. The proofreading section and the vocabulary exercises are difficult. But it is useful for me. [Student H (d5)]

4.5 Attitudes towards learning English

This section discusses the results of the study in relation to the literature; in particular, the motivational and attitude literature review of Hong Kong studies explored in chapter 2. It also aims at answering the second research question: What is the English language
learning attitude of students in a vocational institute? It discusses the findings from the last three interview questions:

5. Do you think English is a useful language? Why/why not?
6. Do you think you enjoy learning English? Why/why not?
7. If you could choose, would you still want to learn English? Why/why not?

4.5.1 Practical/communicative orientation

Of the 10 participants, eight think that they are learning English for practical reasons because it is a skill and a tool for present and future studies. This relates to one of Dornyei’s (1998) seven main motivational dimensions – the pragmatic dimension. English is useful because it is an international language. It is used not only for communication in Hong Kong but also in many other countries. The participants feel that English has worldwide status because it is the only language commonly used when people travel to other countries. Students A, H and I have very strong views on this, saying that English is absolutely a useful language based on the above reasons. This view is the same as that drawn from Littlewood and Liu’s (1996) survey. Ninety-six per cent of the students in this survey agreed that English is an important world language.

Student A declares that English is an important international language. As English is common in many countries where people do not know the Chinese language, English is regarded as useful in that it makes communication easier. Student H said, “If we don’t know English, we cannot communicate with others and we’ll lose our competitiveness”.

[Student H1 (40)] The proof of English as an international or worldwide language is demonstrated when participants travel abroad: “You can communicate with foreigners. For example, when traveling you can read the words, the road signs and maps. Otherwise, you won’t know where to go”. [Student C1 (56)] Student F also thinks of
English as an international language, and as one that she will need to know if she wants to work in a big company. If she Student F learns the language well, when she is older, she can move to live in a foreign country and be able to use the language.

In addition to the recognition of the international status of English in Littlewood and Liu’s (1996) survey, pragmatic orientation was found in Richards’ (1998) survey. Nine students emphasized the importance of gaining English qualifications in terms of securing a good job or getting accepted into university. In the present survey, it was found that proficiency in English would be useful when studying and working in order to better understand university lectures and to do business with native speakers of English (Richards, 1998, p.319). The present study also finds that participants regard English as valuable for daily use and as a tool for study.

4.5.2 Daily use and a tool for study

Daily use

Six participants found that English was in practical use daily in society. Student A’s greatest motivator for learning English is to use it socially among teachers and classmates, relatives and friends. Teachers, classmates, relatives and friends are the motivators mentioned in Gardner’s socio-educational model (2001) in the class of external influence. External influences refer to any factor that might influence language learning. Student A said:

The greatest motivator is to acquire a better English standard. This facilitates communication with others, socially. … Sometimes, when I see that the teachers communicate fluently with the foreigners, I have a desire to do the same. … I have some foreign friends. It’s easier to communicate, to talk with them in English. So it motivates me to learn English and try to
speak English. [Student A1 (32)]

Student G also said, “I use English to talk to my friends and my family members. … Yes, some of my friends live overseas. They don’t quite know how to speak Chinese now.” [Student G1 (40)] In addition, there are practical uses of English in daily situations. These situations are informal language learning contexts (Gardner, 2001). Some examples of informal language learning contexts in the present study are as follows: giving directions, telephone conversations, reading books, surfing the internet and going shopping. Student E finds that doing English exercises in class is helpful preparation for future practical use. “I do the exercises in class. It is about the telephone call. I listen to the call and write down some messages. I think that it is very useful for me. In the future, I may need to take some calls in English at the office. Now I can learn it.” [Student E (d13)] Student H emphasizes the practical value of English in daily life as follows:

It was not until recently when I came to this institute or after Form five did I start to realize that English is not only a subject. It can be many different things. For example, in reading, there are English books; in listening, there are English songs; and even for surfing the internet, many websites are in English. So it’s practical, more than just for examinations. … It’s being practical. If you use it at work, it is practical. So I think being practical is the greatest motivator. [Student H2 (104 & 134)]

A tool for study

Students B, E, G, H and I in this study reported that learning English would help in their present and future studies. They all realized that they had to use English to study all the subjects. “I often need to use English at school now and my English is not good enough,
so I need to learn it.” [Student G1 (28)] “I need to use English when going to school. In
the lessons, all notes are written in English.” [Student G2 (108)] Student H also said,
“When we study further, English is used in all subjects. If I don’t know English, or I
don’t have interest in it, like what happened in secondary school, then I don’t have the
motivation to study. It will affect my results.” [Student H2 (116)] The participants
agreed that it is “a must” to learn English. The prevalence of this attitude is further
supported in the diary writings of the participants. In her diary writings, Student B
reflects that English is a skill and a tool for study. Her English activities include reading
books, and listening to songs and music. Student E also writes in her diary that English
is a tool and a skill for carrying out such activities as reading and listening. Student H
has seven entries in this area. His English learning activities include reading books and
newspapers, doing English grammar exercises, watching English TV programs and
listening to English songs.

The above mentioned informal language learning contexts will bring about linguistic
and non-linguistic outcomes (Gardner, 2001). “Sometimes, when I go shopping, like in
Tsimshatsui, the visitors usually ask me the way to some places. … Actually this kind of
communication will help me with my communication skills. … I read many newspapers,
magazines and web pages. Sometimes I look at information about new products like
electronic games and clothes.” [Student D1 (34)] The more the participants come in
contact with these informal learning situations, the more they find that English is used
and the more they will learn from them. Student D says, “Most web pages are from
overseas. … There’s more information in English than in Chinese… .” [Student D1 (139
&143)] “It is very useful. For example, every day you will read the English newspapers
and magazines, TV programs and use the internet.” [Student D2 (4)] The importance of
the use of English in society is also shown in the respective diaries of Students A and G.
They write about using English for communication with foreigners as in writing e-mails; sending MSN messages from Hong Kong to Germany; and watching English programs and reading books.

4.5.3 Social status

The use of English enjoys a high status in Hong Kong society, and this status is obvious to the study’s participants. Many of the participants reiterate this using different terms; for example, “English is useful”, “it is an international language” or “it is a worldwide language”. “Social status” is included in Gardner’s socio-educational model (2001), where it is associated with history in the class of external influences. History is the social and personal variables that the learner brings with him or her that can influence L2 learning; for example, the socio-cultural milieu in which the individual lives, i.e. the society in which the learner lives.

Two participants believe that learning English would affect their social status. “Important” is another term participants use to show the high status of the English language in Hong Kong society and in the world. Student A thinks that English is essential in present-day society. “I think English is important in the world. … English can help me to find a good job, easily to communicate to the client and to my boss in the future.” [Student A2 (60)] Student D declares that learning English could help to improve the social status of the learners. “Actually, in this society, English is the most important, I can say that it is sometimes more important than Cantonese in Hong Kong.” [Student D1 (119)] Without a knowledge of English, he feels inferior to others within the society. “I want to learn more English for future work or daily use. As English is widely used in Hong Kong, I want to learn more and improve myself so that I won’t be inferior to others.” [Student D2 (119)]
All the participants have a positive attitude toward learning the English language. They enjoy learning English and they would like to continue doing so. They think that English is a useful language and an important tool for communication in the world.

4.6 Motivation of Hong Kong vocational students: a comparative analysis

The fifth part of this chapter answers the last main research question: Do(es) integrative and/or instrumental motivation exist(s) among students of a vocational institute? This section also analyzes the overall motivation of Hong Kong vocational students in comparison with other Hong Kong students in the literature mentioned in section 2.6.

The existence of instrumental motivation is apparent from the findings both of the interviews with the participants and of the diary writings. Pragmatic reasoning or motivation is one of the instrumental factors, which can be grouped into two areas. The first area relates to increasing job opportunities and salary potential. The second area relates to further study and communications. This finding is the same as that of the research on attitudes of Hong Kong students towards learning English.

The findings indicate that the participants are career oriented. They all say that seeking a job is a motivator to learn the English language. Motivation and attitude surveys undertaken in Hong Kong since the 1970s have shown the same result. Instrumental/pragmatic motivation of different ages of students is consistent in the periods both before and after the return of Hong Kong’s sovereignty to China. The present study shows that this is a typical view held by students not only in the primary and secondary schools, tertiary and university settings, but also in the vocational
Most secondary school students from EMI and CMI schools agreed that English was necessary for securing a good job (Fu, 1976). Band 1 secondary boys’ school students aged from 12 to 18 provided a consistent picture that instrumental goals, especially with career-related purposes, were more important than integrative goals (Wu, 2004). Moreover, 70 per cent of university students in the 1998 survey took an English language elective course to improve their English for career preparation (Lai, 1999). Most Hong Kong undergraduates (Hyland, 1997) responded in the questionnaires about the instrumental importance of English. English would continue to perform a gate-keeping role after the handover and it would still be the dominant language in the employment context.

In terms of pragmatic reasons, students in the vocational institute agree that a determination to obtain good examination results is one of the motivating factors to learn English. This finding is the same as that for tertiary students in the attitude research of Hong Kong students. The survey of 2156 tertiary students on pragmatic attitudes, focusing on the practical values of English for personal success, showed that pragmatic motivation is the strongest motivation (Littlewood & Liu, 1996). The result is similar to that of a survey conducted in seven senior secondary schools (Richards, 1998). Nine students of that survey emphasized the importance of gaining English qualifications in securing a good job or getting accepted into universities. Their motivation stems from the need to sit for public examinations, compete with classmates or receive good grades. In the interview, two secondary Form seven students stated that the local students accept examination pressure as an unavoidable fact of life. This is not surprising because examinations are important in determining educational options and opportunities (Richards, 1998, p.319).
The vocational institute students participating in the present study have as their motivation for learning English that it is a tool for further study and for communication purposes. They all realize that they need the knowledge of English in formal and informal learning contexts. In formal contexts, such as at school, English is used in all subject areas. In informal contexts, English is used in movies and newspapers; and between friends, relatives, local citizens and visitors. Participants’ experiences of communicating with foreign visitors in the street further enhance their motivation to learn English.

Another finding from the present study is that vocational students enjoy learning English. Nine participants out of 10 are interested in learning the language, find English an interesting language and enjoy the learning process. Some participants particularly like the English language and some of them reinforce what they have learnt by practising it in daily activities. The interest that these participants show is more of an intrinsic nature than integrative. Some participants in the present study demonstrate that they are intrinsically motivated by engaging in language activities, organizing their knowledge and applying their skills and knowledge in different contexts. When they can actually use English to speak with others, they have a sense of achievement. Perceiving their progress, the participants feel more efficacious about learning (Bandura, 1986, 1993).

Many participants are interested in foreign cultures and wish to travel to foreign countries. This kind of interest, however, is different from that of integratively motivated learners. The integratively motivated learner is one “who has an open interest in the other language community and other ethnic communities in general, perceives the language learning context positively, and expresses a high degree of motivation to learn
the language” (Gardner, 2005, p.31). The findings of the present study do not show that participants have an open interest in other ethnic communities, and the degree of motivation to learn the target language is not exceptionally high. Their interest is at the stage of feelings or beliefs but is not actually deeply engaged with the target language community. Intrinsic motivation has also been found in a survey of senior secondary school students from Form four to Form seven students, with 18 male and nine female students taking part (Richards, 1998). Ten participants indicated that they were motivated primarily by an intrinsic interest in English, in foreign languages and in learning in general. Seven of these 10 students were motivated by a desire or perceived need to communicate with native speakers of the language.

The fact that instrumental and intrinsic motivations are factors operating with the vocational students, as shown in the present study, does not imply that this will not change. Data shows that some vocational students have a motivational change over a period of time. Students A and F started learning English to fulfill school requirements. Since then, they have become intellectually engaged with the language and foreign culture, and they say that they want later to live and work in an English-speaking country and use the language. These examples show that initial participation can lead to interest, which can then lead to further involvement and changes in the reasons for the language learning. Motivation, thus, follows developmental paths that may change over time and may not remain in a definite framework of instrumental or intrinsic motivation (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Similar to Students A and F, Student I exhibits motivational change in language learning. The specific language learning behavior of Student I together with that of three other participants will be compared and contrasted in the individual profiles in chapter 5.
The answer to the last research question is that vocational students display instrumental and intrinsic motivations but not integrative motivation. The practical value of learning English is heavily stressed and an intrinsic interest in learning the language is also shown. These findings suggest that the participants in this study are motivated by a range of factors: the dual desires to master the language and interact with native speakers; an interest in the language; and the instrumental and practical uses of English in Hong Kong society.

4.7 Chapter summary

Instrumental and intrinsic motivations are found among the vocational students participating in the present study. These two motivations were documented in the literature on the motivation and attitudes of Hong Kong students that was reviewed in chapter 2. Data show that all the participants like learning English. Most of them started to enjoy learning the English language when they were studying at secondary school. The participants have a strong instrumental motivation. The major reason for learning English lies in seeking a job – a job either to fulfill a dream or to get a higher salary to support family members on a better living standard. Intrinsic motivation is an important finding from the data, showing that the participants’ motivation for learning the language is not only out of self-interest, but also for traveling and enjoying the culture of foreign countries.

There are discussions on other motivational influences that occur from the interaction between the learner and more significant others. This shows that learners’ L2 learning motives are not just instrumental and intrinsic but a combination of factors in relation to education and society. Family, teachers and peers play important roles in motivating
participants to learn English. Supportive family members, especially the mother; good teachers with appropriate teaching strategies; and peers who act as teachers and mentors are the significant others who influence participants’ motivation for learning. There are also educational influences on the participants’ learning motivation. The prime concern of students in learning the English language is to obtain good results in examinations. Schools promoting English activities enhance students’ motivation. The participants also learn English for self-achievement and self-esteem, gaining a sense of achievement and pride in themselves when they can use the language successfully. On the other hand, they feel embarrassed and inferior to others when they cannot use the language properly. English is perceived by the participants as a useful language, for communicating locally and internationally. It is regarded as a tool and a skill used for study and for daily activities.

All the participants in this study are motivated to learn the English language. There have been times, however, when some participants found that they were discouraged in their learning. They could not adapt to the transition period of changing the medium of instruction from Cantonese to English and, when facing difficulties, felt they would like to give up learning. Nevertheless, English is important in society and essential for daily use; and knowing more English is a symbol of higher social status. All these factors contribute to the motivation for learning the English language. All the participants enjoy learning the English language and, if they could choose, all would like to continue to learn it.

In the process of writing the analysis, it has been found that vocational students have instrumental motivation but not motivational investment. Participants wish to pursue L2 learning as an interest but not as an investment, which involves the idea of identifying
themselves with the target language community. Motivation and autonomy and the L2 sub-system, which examined learners’ potentialities, are not obvious in the present study. Nevertheless data show that three participants have experienced changes of motivation from instrumental to intrinsic over a period of time. This reveals that motivation is a dynamic and ever-changing process.

Over the years, the research on attitudes and motivation for L2 learning and English language learning in Hong Kong has been done mainly in secondary and tertiary educational settings. The present study has provided data showing that vocational students have the same motivations and can add to the list of L2 learning motivation literature.
Chapter 5  Emerging themes and individual profiles

5.1  Introduction

Chapter 5 of this thesis discusses the themes that emerged both from the survey and the analysis of the motivation for English language learning of Hong Kong vocational students. Data reveal that the participants have intrinsic and strong instrumental motivations. Some learn English for their own interest and others for pragmatic reasons. The learning motivation of some students is particularly influenced by parents, teachers and peers. These themes will be discussed in the context of Hong Kong. The discussion is followed by an outline of the individual profiles of four students – Students B, C, I and J. These four students are, respectively, intrinsically motivated; instrumentally-oriented; goal-oriented and socially motivated. It is believed that the above terms best describe the motivational behavior of each of the four students. In addition, motivational change is one of the important features found in the data, of which a discussion is included in this chapter as well.

5.2  Interest in learning

Vocational students are interested in learning the English language. In the two surveys undertaken, more than half the students ticked the first three statements, which relate to interest in learning. They want to improve their English reading, writing, speaking and listening skills; and they would like to watch English movies. They would also like to communicate and make friends with foreigners who speak English. In addition, nearly half the students like learning about foreign cultures.
In the interviews, nine participants said that the English language is an interesting subject and seven of them really like the language. The students’ interests fall into three different types. The first type of interest is innate to the learner (Ushioda, 2003), meaning that the learner likes the language for its own sake and has a personal interest in it (Krapp, 1992a). Student A and Student F are examples of this type. In their interviews and diaries, they clearly indicate their interest in learning English by using different resources such as TV programs, songs and their respective schools’ English activities. They practice their language skills whenever there is an opportunity. The second type of interest, exemplified by Students B and J, is that which develops under the influence of significant others. Student B’s interest in learning English is initiated by her English teacher while Student J’s interest comes directly from his mother. The third type of interest is pragmatic – it is generated from a practical use of the language. Student H and I are examples of this type. Student H finds out while traveling that he needs a knowledge of English to communicate – he has a situational interest in learning English. Student I’s interest develops while he is working in Japan because he finds that English serves as a tool of communication.

5.3 Practicality in learning

Nearly all courses offered by the vocational institutes are practical in nature. Students are studying in the institute to prepare for entry into the job market immediately on graduation. Their attitude towards learning English is similar – it is for practical use. In the surveys, nearly all the students think that English is useful in helping them to find a good job; and about half of them would like to work in a government department. In the interviews, eight participants said that the reason they learn English is to have a better career. The pragmatic and instrumental motivation of these participants can be grouped
into three categories. The first category is defined by career goals –with a view to finding a better job, with a higher salary as in a government position, as is the case of Student C. This attitude stems from the demand in many jobs for English-speaking skills and the social recognition of English status in Hong Kong. Most jobs, especially government positions, require a pass in the English subject in HKCEE. Many people think that by achieving a good English standard they are likely to position themselves better for a career with good promotional prospects. This issue will be discussed further in Student I’s profile, presented later in this chapter. In Hong Kong, many foreign business companies require employees to speak and write fluent English. Students, therefore, are keen to improve their language skills. There is also a feeling in Hong Kong society that English enjoys a high social status. If an individual has a good English standard, he or she is regarded as superior to the others.

The second category is defined by the need to pass examinations. In the survey, over half of the students ticked the statement that English is a compulsory subject. Seven participants in the interviews said that they wanted not only to pass but to obtain good results in the examinations. These motives are linked to the education policy. English language is set in the syllabus as a subject that must be learnt every year in all primary and secondary school. Moreover, obtaining a pass in the English subject in HKCEE is a requirement for continuing their studies in tertiary institutes. Almost without exception, the students in this study want a pass in the English language subject.

The third category is defined by communication needs. Participants in the survey find that English is a tool for communication in different Hong Kong situations. It is used in work situations; in communicating with local visitors, and with foreigners while traveling; in speaking with friends who come back from foreign countries; as well as
being used as a tool for further study. These are all practical uses of English in daily life.

5.4 Parent, teacher and peer influence in learning

Parents figure prominently amongst the influences motivating participants in learning English. In the self-completion questionnaire survey, more than half of the students ticked the statement that their parents encourage them to learn English. In the interviews, seven participants indicated that their motivation for learning the English language comes from family members. In addition, five participants said that their teachers motivate them to learn English. Parents and teachers are considered as two of the most important influences in students’ English learning process in Hong Kong. Peer influence, although not as strong as that of parents and teachers, also plays a role in encouraging participants to learn English.

The encouragement of participants’ English learning by family members is apparent from the participants’ responses. Members of Student F’s and G’s respective families remind them verbally of the importance and usefulness of English in society. Student G’s father sets a role model for his daughter by joining English night class after work. Family members of Student H watch English movies together with him at home. Student C’s parents opt to save money by quitting bad habits such as gambling and smoking so that their son can further his study. The close monitoring of Student J’s English learning progress by his mother is a good example of the deep involvement of parents in children’s education in Hong Kong. The successfulness of their English learning has a great impact on the study options of Hong Kong children. Students with good academic results plus a good English standard have a greater chance of gaining entry to the EMI (English as medium of instruction) schools. Hong Kong has only just
over 100 EMI schools and more than 300 CMI (Chinese as medium of instruction) schools. Both these types of school are either government funded or subsidized. As mentioned in the literature review on motivational influences of parents and community (section 2.5.4), parents generally endeavor to get a place for their children in an EMI school. The EMI school is the symbol of a good school in Hong Kong – with more resources, enthusiastic teachers, hard-working classmates and, most important of all, students with higher academic achievements.

Student J’s case suggests that parental influence and the home environment combine to serve as a significant factor in motivating students to learn the English language. The data show that this family has the resources to enable their son to learn English overseas. Student J’s background as an exchange student in Australia suggests that the family can financially support him in learning English outside the school environment. Moreover, some participants’ families are also aware that if their children get a good education, they increase their chances of securing college acceptance, good jobs and financial stability (Schunk et. al., 2008).

The second major influence of significant others can be attributed to English teachers. The participants mention various teachers whose special qualities and employment of particular strategies motivate the students to learn English. Student A has a skilled teacher who helps her to overcome difficulties. Student C’s teacher stays on after school to give him extra tutoring in English. Student E’s teacher understands the students’ needs and can deal with their varying style and pace of learning. Student H’s teacher creates active English learning environments. In Student B’s case, the teacher uses punishment as a means of enforcement, while gradually developing the students’ motivation to learn English. The strategy of using on-going punishment together with
enforcing compulsory memorizing of new English words every day is, in fact, quite commonly employed in Hong Kong’s primary and secondary schools. This particular way of teaching may arouse comment and debate in the education field; however, the improvement is evident in Student B’s class. All the above examples show that the enthusiasm of English language teachers and the adoption of appropriate teaching strategies contribute to effective English teaching that can motivate students in learning English.

Peer influence in learning English is common among the participants. Eight students reported that they felt peer influence. The range of influences can be grouped into three types. The first is from friends and colleagues, who help the weaker students improve their speaking skills and vocabulary, as they practice English together. Students A, B and F joined the activities on the English Speaking Day held at the institute and encouraged each other to participate. The second type of peer influence lies in observing others to enhance one’s own self-motivation. On witnessing the negative attitude of a repeater in her class, Student F decided that she must work harder to ensure her promotion to year 2. In another example, Student C and his friends had become friends with triad members until they realized the implications of these “bad influences” and ended the relationship. These “bad” peers had a “good” impact on Student C’s choice of study in that they inspired him to be a policeman. The case of Student C raises the issue of the disruptions caused in Hong Kong schools by members of the triad society. Triad members often disguise themselves as students to attract junior secondary students to join them. They generally get into schools where there are proportionately greater numbers of students who are de-motivated in learning and get poor academic results. Triad members pretend to be their friends, offering them free drugs, inviting them to parties and telling them to run away from school. This is an additional reason
why parents are keen to get their children into EMI schools where most students are motivated to learn and triad members are unable to exert a bad influence on them.

5.5 Motivational change

In comparison to phase 1 of the survey, the data from phase 2 show an increasing number of students choosing the statements in the areas of intrinsic and instrumental/practical motivations. There is also a great increase in the number of students acknowledging the area of educational influence. For the influences of significant others, six more students tick “My parents (mother/father) encourage me to learn English”. The comparatively greater number of students who chose the statements in these three areas in phase 2 of the survey shows a change of motivation in learning the English language. The biggest change in phase 2 is in the influences of significant others and educational influences. Instrumental/practical motivation is the next big change while intrinsic motivation has the least change. This shows that students’ motivation could change over a period of time. Data in the interviews also indicate the changes. Student C’s motivation moves from being purely instrumental to instrumental plus intrinsic and Student I’s motivation moves from instrumental to intrinsic. These changes will be highlighted in the following individual profiles.

5.6 Individual profiles

The respective motivations of Students B, C, I and J for learning the English language show distinctive individual characteristics and some common features. The aim of presenting the profiles is, on the one hand, to gain an understanding of the particular learning behavior exhibited in each of the four respective cases for “its idiosyncrasy and
in its complexity” (Nunan, 1992, p.80); and on the other hand, to discover the context characteristics that shed light on issues (Sanders, 1981).

Student B is a typical intrinsically motivated learner and social factors are also significant to her. Student C is an instrumentally-oriented learner and he has motivation for further study as well. Student I is a goal-directed learner, he also has intrinsic motivation and his motivation is a process-oriented type. Student J is a socially motivated learner with strong parental influence which stimulates his interest in learning the English language.

Table 5.1 shows a summary of similarities and contrasting features of each of the students.
Table 5.1  Comparison and contrasts of learning motivation – Students B, C, I and J

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students/Themes</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>J</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Type</strong></td>
<td>Intrinsically motivated</td>
<td>Instrumentally-oriented</td>
<td>Goal-oriented</td>
<td>Socially motivated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Start liking English</strong></td>
<td>Form 1</td>
<td>Form 1</td>
<td>At work</td>
<td>Primary 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Major influence/ factor</strong></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>For career</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other factors:-</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Job</strong></td>
<td>A better job</td>
<td>Be a policeman; For promotion</td>
<td>Work in Japan</td>
<td>A job with higher salary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Good Teacher</strong></td>
<td>Punishment</td>
<td>Extra tutorials</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Mother as teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Parents/ Mother/ Brother</strong></td>
<td>Mother states importance of English</td>
<td>Parents save money for son’s study / Brother’s impact</td>
<td>Family’s encouragement</td>
<td>Mother as tutor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Peers/ Friends/ Colleagues</strong></td>
<td>Friends’ good English standard</td>
<td>Friends’ encouragement</td>
<td>Better English makes more friends; Colleagues’ high qualification</td>
<td>Host family members/new friends only communicate in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Communications</strong></td>
<td>With foreigners overseas &amp; locally; Travel, bargain over price</td>
<td>With foreigners overseas &amp; in business field locally; Help in traveling</td>
<td>With Japanese colleagues &amp; customers</td>
<td>In-depth communications with foreigners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. English activities</strong></td>
<td>School’s English Speaking Day</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Overseas student exchange program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reasons to learn English:-</strong></td>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>Job</td>
<td>Job</td>
<td>Interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>Pass English subject</td>
<td>Pass examinations</td>
<td>Learn foreign culture; Travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read books &amp; film reviews</td>
<td>Read books about Law</td>
<td>Read story books</td>
<td>Read books &amp; newspapers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listen to songs</td>
<td>Study abroad</td>
<td>Watch foreign movies</td>
<td>Watch English programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Find a better job</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Interest in English</td>
<td>Help in work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-achievement</strong></td>
<td>Satisfied when able to use English</td>
<td>Sense of achievement when able to speak English</td>
<td>Feeling of success when able to talk with people</td>
<td>Feel happy when given correct answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>De-motivation</strong></td>
<td>Teachers’ negative attitude</td>
<td>Find that English is difficult</td>
<td>Change in MOI from Chinese to English</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitudes</strong></td>
<td>Joyful experience</td>
<td>Enjoy</td>
<td>Enjoy</td>
<td>Enjoy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continue learning English</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sure</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Change of motivation</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student B – an intrinsically motivated student

Student B’s motivation comes mainly from an intrinsic interest in English and the learning of it. She has a sense of competence and challenge (Alderman, 2008). She likes studying English because she has fun learning it. She wishes to go traveling and be able to communicate with others in English; to read English books, listen to English songs and find a better job. Although Student B is mainly motivated by an interest in English as such, social factors are also important to her.

One of the most important motivating factors for Student B to learn English is the influence of her English teacher. The teacher uses punishment to enhance students’ improvement in the English language.

Student B started to get interested in learning English the year she entered secondary Form one, when she had a very competent and kind English teacher. She had a very good English teacher at that time. Student B recalled:

In fact, I didn’t realize that she was a good teacher at the beginning because she was very strict. She forced us to memorize a lot of new words every day. The result of this was very good. I then realized that she was a very good teacher. [Student B1 (14)]

If students could not remember the words, she would punish them. The on-going enforcement and punishment made Student B work hard and obtain better results. With the improvement in her English skills, Student B recognized that the teacher used a strict but appropriate method to teach the class. The method of forcing students to learn led Student B to love English. The teacher also required the students to read a number of
story books each month followed by oral presentations of the stories to the teacher. Student B read English story books one after another. Eventually, she developed her interest in reading. Her English teacher’s ability to create an active learning environment instigated a shift from passive learning to the students taking responsibility for their own learning. This teacher also initiated activities that provided students with a sense of control over their academic outcomes, which enhances students’ intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1980).

From this experience, Student B realizes that she is a student who needs reinforcement from others to get improvement. When teachers required her to read books or hand in book reports, she would read them and write the reports. If she was left alone with nobody to supervise, she would not do any work at all. In fact, many students in Hong Kong exhibit the same behavior as Student B in that they depend on others, usually the significant others such as parents or teachers, in their learning process. As a result of this reading habit, Student B started to take more initiative to learn English. She selected movies to watch and more English books to read. She read reviews looking for positive comments about films before she watched them. Watching films inspired her to read the original novels.

The skilled English teacher described above greatly enhanced Student B’s motivation. Other English teachers, however, de-motivated her in learning English. Some English teachers criticized the poor English performance of Student B’s class. Criticism can encourage students when it conveys that they are competent and can perform better with more effort or better use of learning strategies (Schunk, 1995). The negative use of criticism by teachers as mentioned above discouraged the whole class in learning English. As a result, Student B lost interest in learning English. It was not until three
years later, when she was in Form four, that she became interested again. At this point, the importance of English became more explicit to her. Nearly all the subjects she was learning were in English, including Accounting and Commerce, which made her realize that English is very important in the business world.

In addition to teachers, Student B’s mother and her friends from church motivated her to learn English. Student B’s mother mentioned the importance of English but she did not exert pressure on her. The less her mother pushed her, the more initiative Student B showed in wanting to learn English. She thought of enrolling in an English pronunciation course that summer. Moreover, a church friend from Canada who spoke very good English heightened Student B’s motivation to upgrade her spoken English in order to communicate effectively with this friend. Student B said:

“Her English is very good. She always speaks in English. I sometimes speak English with her because she doesn’t speak Cantonese. I want to be able to communicate with her. So, I’ll push myself to improve my English.” [Student B2 (118)]

Also, some of Student B’s older friends always spoke English when talking about different current topics. To mix well with these friends, she needed to understand their conversations. For these reasons, she joined in more activities on the English Speaking Day at the college so as to maximize the chance to practice orally. Another friend of Student B introduced a book to her saying that it was worth reading; however, Student B did not know the meaning of many words in the book. This stimulated her to acquire better reading skills.

The second important motivating factor for Student B is her own interest in learning
English. She has fun learning English. The English activities provide a good opportunity for Student B to enhance her English skills and give her enjoyable experiences. The Wednesday English Speaking Day, according to Student B, is a part of the social life in the institute. When communicating with a native English speaker, she found that she did not have the requisite vocabulary to enable the listener to understand her. The interest in learning the English language was revealed in both interviews with Student B and in her diary. In her diary, she recorded her feelings and comments on listening to English songs, reading books and enjoying various activities on the English Speaking Days. She wrote about one of the talks on the topic of Thanksgiving Day:

I didn’t know about this festival before joining the activities of the English Speaking Day. After the talk, I know more about the Thanksgiving Day and I think it is a meaningful day! The lecturer told us that the Thanksgiving Day was to thank our God who gives us happiness, health, family and everything. That is a great day, so I hope that there is a Thanksgiving Day in Hong Kong. [Student B (d12)]

Among the reasons for learning English, communication with foreigners is the third one given by Student B to explain why she likes learning English. The usefulness of English emerged while traveling overseas as well as locally in Hong Kong. The fact that she was unable to bargain over prices when traveling in Thailand encouraged her to improve her English. Another incident occurred in her secondary school days. Student B was asked by her teachers to interview some foreigners. During the interview, the foreigners did not understand what she said. This experience made her realize that English is more than just a subject because it affected her everyday communications. On the occasions when she was able to talk to foreigners with mutual understanding, she felt happy all day.
Student B’s process of learning English is a joyful experience. She feels satisfied when she can make use of the language by reading books and listening to songs. Student B chooses to continue to learn English because she wants to communicate with people effectively.

**Student C – an instrumentally-oriented student**

Student C is an instrumentally-oriented student. His motivation is mainly driven by and directed towards a goal. His aim of getting a pass in English is reinforced by his goal of meeting the job requirements of a policeman. He also wishes to communicate with foreigners in English. Although Student C is mainly motivated by instrumental reasons, social factors and his own interest of learning English are also important to him. He has gradually developed interest in reading English books on the subject of law. He also expresses, in the phase 2 interview, an interest in studying abroad and says that he will put more effort towards enhancing his language skills to achieve this goal.

The most important motivating factor for Student C to learn English is for his future career. Like Student B, Student C started to get interested in learning English in Form one. Since then, he has decided to be a policeman.

Student C’s passion to become a policeman took root through his experience of joining the triad organization. In one of the informal talks with the researcher, Student C recalled that in his early secondary school years, he had quite a long–term acquaintance with members of the triad organization. The triad members would usually disguise themselves as junior secondary school students, to become friendly with classmates and attract them to join the organizations. For the de-motivated students who are targeted,
these bad influences can hinder, disturb and, at worse, destroy any possibility of their learning at school. Student C had some unforgettable experiences with the triad members. He frequently witnessed triad members engage in disgusting behavior which sickened him. He later got away from the members and left the organization. From that time onwards, it has been his ambition to be a policeman with a mission to destroy the triad organizations of Hong Kong. “I often see triad members and feel bad about them and I’ve had some bad experiences.” [Student C1 (8)] This strong intention has not changed since then. He repeated this desire several times in the interviews. “This is due to my own experience that makes me want to be a policeman.” [Student C1 (20)] He also confirmed that if it were not for the goal of achieving the post of a policeman, he would not have the motivation to continue to learn English. It is unusual for a junior secondary school student to have such a strong desire and determination in his choice of career. This also reflects his hatred of the triad members and their organizations. The incident also brings out the issue of the social problem of the influence of triad members in schools, as discussed earlier in section 5.4.

The second important motivating factor in Student C’s decision to learn English has been the influence of family members, peers and a teacher. Student C’s parents sincerely hoped that their son could go on with his studies after completing his secondary education. “They themselves received little education. After I finished my HKCEE, they said that they would rather give up smoking and gambling and that I must study. So I have to study.” [Student C1 (38)] The action of the parents is to save up for the required budget to enable Student C to further his study. Although the parents did not directly supervise Student C’s school work, they frequently reminded him to be serious about his study. This, however, is an unseen pressure for Student C.
Aside from his parents, another family member whose experience strongly influences Student C in studying English is his brother. Student C’s younger brother was expelled from school when he was in junior secondary school. “My younger brother stopped studying in Form 2. He has turned bad and this is why my parents want me to study better.” [Student C1 (48)] This is an additional reason why his parents urged him to work harder because Student C was the only one in the family who could carry on studying. An English teacher also played a role in initially motivating Student C in the process of learning. When he first entered secondary school, he found his English teacher was very kind to him and competent; she was willing to spend extra time after school tutoring Student C in English. The enthusiasm of this teacher stimulated him and gradually he became interested in learning English. Student C developed his interest in reading more English books during that year. In the following school year, however, he had another English teacher who did not convey the same enthusiasm, and Student C lost interest in learning English.

Peers have variously played a positive and negative role in motivating Student C to learn English. In conversing with friends from England, Student C could not express himself. His friends did not understand his spoken English. He realized that he needed to improve his language skills. Most of his friends discontinued their study after Form one and Form two. He was the only one of the group who carried on studying. These friends encouraged him to work hard and to carry on studying. He valued their encouragement and wanted to fulfill their wishes. At the same time, the negative influence of the triad members made Student C determined to acquire a better English standard in order to become a policeman.

The third motivating factor for Student C in learning English is to improve his
communication. Student C strongly feels that English is a useful and important language in society. It is particularly useful for communication with foreigners. Student C believes that when traveling, knowing English will enable him to read road signs and maps. Without the knowledge of English, he will be lost and not know where to go. There was one time when he asked a foreigner how to get to a place, but could not express himself in English. “I once asked a foreigner the direction but I didn’t know how to say it. After that I wanted to learn English so that I can communicate with others more easily.” [Student C2 (70)] He felt very disappointed with himself. He then decided to improve his English standard so that he could communicate with others fluently.

Student C’s motivation for learning English had changed slightly by the phase 2 interview. He liked to read books. “I’ll actively try to find some English books to read.” “I like to read books about law because I am studying law now.” [Student C2 (92&94)] He had a sense of achievement if he could speak English correctly. When he encountered difficulties in comprehension, however, he did not have the patience to go on reading. Nevertheless, he would choose to continue learning English if he had the option. He believes that in learning more and knowing more English, he is less likely to be cheated by others, especially in the business environment where English is frequently used; for example, in signing contracts.

The change that occurred in Student C’s motivation for learning the English language moved firstly from the strong desire of solely finding a job; to finding a job plus communication with foreigners; and, finally, to further study. In the phase 2 interview, he talked, for the first time, about going to the United Kingdom for further study. “I am thinking of going to a foreign country, to the UK” [Student C2 (102)] “I want to earn some money before I’ll further my studies. I don’t want to rely on my family.” [Student
C2 (120) It is for this reason that he is taking more initiative to improve his English skills. With better English skills, it will be easier for him to meet new friends and communicate with them when he studies abroad. Student C confirmed that he would study seriously in the coming years; unlike his secondary school time. He hopes to upgrade his English standard and believed that he already had made some improvement in language skills compared with the past. Studying in the institute has deepened his belief that in order to find a job, he needs to study seriously. “In fact, we study because we want to find a good job! Many people are like that. It’s a fact.” [Student C2 (128)] Despite his gradual change in motivation, at the end of the phase 2 interview he reaffirmed that the motivating factor for learning English was still for a job and for promotion.

**Student I – a goal-oriented student**

Student I is a goal-directed student, who has different goals at different stages. Student I’s initial motivation of learning English comes from his work in Japan which is different from Students B and C, who started to be interested in learning English in Form one. The factors in his learning English are: for finding a job, communications and watching foreign movies. Significant others such as colleagues, friends and family have also motivated Student I to learn English. He also became interested when he found that learning English was not very difficult. Student I’s aim in learning English in secondary school was to pass the examinations. His goal of getting a pass in the English subject at that time was because this was an exit requirement of secondary school education in Hong Kong. After his graduation, he worked in Japan for four years.

The most important motivating factor for Student I to learn the English language is for
communication in his current job. English is the only language that of any use when faced with meeting Japanese customers. All the documents were written in English. Initially, Student I could not communicate with people at work because of his low standard of English and poor skills in written and spoken Japanese. He recalled:

I went to Japan for three years. I didn’t know Japanese. English is a language that we must use. My English was poor, I didn’t know what people meant and people didn’t know what I meant. Later, my colleagues asked me to learn English by taking some English classes. [Student I (18)]

He realized for the first time that English is an important tool for communication and this forced him to improve his language skills. He took a two-month intensive English language course in Japan. “After I had a job, I had more chances to use English because the documents in the office were in English. This forced me to read more English and I found that it was not very difficult.” [Student I (12)] After he had acquired the basic skills, Student I started to develop an interest in learning English. From one who was “dumb and deaf” in English, Student I became one who managed to talk in English with more and more people in Japan. He actually performed better in English than his Japanese classmates in the intensive English course. This was because Hong Kong students started learning English much earlier than Japanese students, so he had a better foundation than his classmates. His good performance gave him a sense of achievement and a feeling of success.

Student I worked and learnt English at the same time. His experience through work has made him realize that the English language has a high status in local communities and worldwide. It is an essential skill for study and for one’s own further development. His
horizons have broadened as he has attained a better English standard. Gradually, he has found English more interesting. During his four-year term of work in Japan, he kept up his interest in learning English. Whenever Student I thought about his career prospects, he became determined to improve his English skills. Student I explicitly expressed that his goal of learning English at this stage was for the necessity of work. “The fact is that we may not be able to do business with them or present our ideas to them. In this process, I found that I need very much to improve my English” [Student I2 (28)] When Student I thinks about his own future, it motivates him to learn. He believes that his work ability is no lower than that of his colleagues, but his promotional prospects were not as good as theirs. This was because of his qualifications and a poor standard of English, the latter being the greatest obstacle to his career. He treated English as a skill and, at the same time, he became interested in it. The ratio, in percentage terms, of motivation in learning English for career purposes to motivation for the sake of interest is, he estimates, 60 percent for career and 40 percent for interest.

Peer acceptance is the second significant motivating factor for Student I to learn and improve himself in English. He wants to make more friends among those whose standard of English is similar. He believes that people with the same English level tend to group together as friends. If one knows more languages, one has the capacity to make more friends. He usually takes the initiative in making friends, as he did with his colleagues in Japan. These friends, in turn, encouraged him to learn English by taking English classes. Friends who had a higher English qualification were frequently encouraging him to improve his English skills. The more he learned, the more interest he had in English.

In Hong Kong, Student I has nine friends who are members of the Hong Kong Auxiliary
Force. They started to practice speaking English when they prepared to apply for the job of Inspector in this department. Since then speaking to each other in English has become a habit for this group of friends. They meet and talk in English weekly and sometimes twice a week. The goal of practicing English at this stage is to find a job in the government. The fact that all the friends in this group are university graduates helps Student I in solving his language problems. When he makes mistakes in conversation, these friends teach him to rephrase the sentence so that it has a better structure. He learns and improves his English language skills in this informal learning situation, which he finds enjoyable. Student I’s friends play a significant role, similar to that of Student B’s friends, in motivating him to learn and improve his English language skills.

In addition to his peers, family members support Student I in his learning process. The family encourages him to become an all-rounded person, helping him to become independent. His family supports Student I through all the language courses that he chooses to study.

The third motivating factor for Student I to learn English is for watching foreign movies. He kept improving his listening skills by watching films. When he first watched a foreign movie, he could not follow it even though he had looked at the subtitles. He then forced himself to listen and, at the same time, read the English subtitles. After he had learned more words, he could understand 70 percent of the content without looking at the subtitles. This has given him a sense of achievement. “I listen more and read more. I read many books and watch many movies at home. I find that watching movie is good. The words are not very difficult. I can practice my reading and listening.” [Student I (57)] Student I’s way of learning English is: “practice makes perfect”. He employed the same method in reading essays. He made use of a dictionary to help in his reading. After
some time, he could comprehend simple articles. Before practicing, he could not understand a simple business letter from the bank. He would continue to read more English story books by reading the easier ones first and followed with the more difficult ones. In this way, he developed an interest in learning the English language. The interest in learning English for Student I has expanded to exploring the difference between Chinese and foreign cultures. “English provides us one more channel to learn about foreign cultures. … If I know one more language, I will be able to see more things.” [Student I2 (4)] He said that he would certainly carry on learning English; continue to read more books and to learn more words by memorizing them. Student I works hard and tries his best to improve and learn more. At this stage, Student I’s goal is to acquire better English skills to satisfy his own interest. His motivation in learning English has changed to an intrinsic one.

In spite of his interest in English, Student I’s goal direction was nearly upset by the implementation of a change of medium of instruction (MOI). When he started studying in secondary school, he could not adapt to the change from a CMI primary school to an EMI secondary school. Teachers taught in Chinese (Cantonese) in his primary school, whereas in secondary school all subjects were taught in English. Student I was de-motivated to learn the English language at the time. He was depressed and resisted learning during this year. Lacking a good foundation of English at primary school, he found it difficult to study most of the subjects in English language. His results at primary school had been good; but in secondary school, he was moved from the top class to the bottom one. This was a serious setback to him. “I couldn’t adapt to this change. I could not find any good methods to help myself. After several exams, I felt very discouraged and then gave up.” [Student I1 (10)] Student I’s de-motivation for learning English is related to his lack of success in the task (Fisher, 1990). He has an
image of himself as ‘no good at English’ and the feelings of failure in his early study path lead to “a downward spiral of a self-perception of low ability – low motivation – low effort – low achievement – low motivation – low achievement” (Littlejohn, 2001, pp.6-7). It was not until three years later, when he realized that passing English was essential in the examinations, that he started to pay attention to the English subject again.

Student I’s motivation is initially based on a mastery goal orientation. He aims at acquiring knowledge, developing new skills in English and improving his level of competence for task mastery. He said:

Yes, it’s an essential skill for study and further development. Actually, if you don’t know what other people say and they don’t know what you say, how can you develop yourself? In Hong Kong, English is used in the lessons. If I can’t understand English in my lesson, it will be very difficult to further my study.” [Student I2 (65)]

While his motivation in learning the English language starts as a mastery goal oriented one, Student I has later become interested in the language itself. His motivation has gradually changed to an intrinsic one. This English language learning behavior is related to the process-oriented model in which motivation has been broken down into temporal segments. These segments are organized along the progression that describes how “initial wishes and desires are first transformed into goals and into operationalized intentions, and how these intentions are enacted, leading to the accomplishment of the goal and concluded by the final evaluation of the process” (Dornyei, 2003, p.18). Motivation, in Student I’s case, follows developmental paths that may change over time and may not remain in a definite framework of instrumental or intrinsic motivation.
Student J – a socially motivated student

Student J is a socially motivated student. The motivating factor for Student J to learn the English language stems directly from his mother. The active role of his mother has encouraged and helped him to develop an interest in learning English. This learning interest has been generated from a beneficial home environment. His interest in learning English was further enhanced when he was an exchange student in Australia, with the advantage of social contact with a family in a foreign country. Although Student J’s main motivational factors for learning English are intrinsic, such as learning more about foreign cultures, communication with foreigners, reading foreign books and newspapers, there are also instrumental factors like obtaining a higher salary.

One of the most important motivating factors for Student J to learn English is the influence of his mother. His mother is his tutor and teacher at home.

Student J liked learning English when he was in primary one. He thought that learning English was fun and the subject matter was easy as the content was simple at that time. Starting from an early age, Student J was encouraged by his mother to learn English. As soon as he was in primary school, she cut out news articles and bought a lot of English books for him to read. She told him of the importance of English in society. She taught her son a lot of new words. When he entered secondary school, Student J had difficulties in studying English; however, after he had learnt the meaning of new words and understood the tenses, he found English interesting. Student J then took the initiative in learning English by joining some English classes, and reading more English newspapers and books. He carried on practicing English and his mother continued to cut
Student J’s mother, as discussed in section 4.4.3 (pp.118-9) played an active role in motivating him to learn English. “When I was young, my mum always urged me to study English.” [Student J1 (18)] “She read books and watched English programs with me. When there were some words I didn’t know, she’d read them to me.” [Student J1 (22)] Student J’s mother monitored her son’s language learning performance; gave direct tuition which resulted in the child’s development of ethnic attitudes (Milner, 1981); and provided verbalization and feedback (Alderman, 2008, p.76) for his work. Due to his mother’s strong encouragement, Student J had no fear about the difficulties of learning English. Although the content of the English subject was more complicated at secondary school, it did not decrease his learning motivation. He “practiced more instead”. [Student J2 (38)]

Student J started to pay attention in class and did his revision in secondary Form 3. He realized that English is used in many situations, such as in work environments and in foreign countries. Although Hong Kong citizens have their own language – Cantonese, they use English to communicate. Student J wants to be able to answer foreigners’ questions when he encounters them. He once met a foreigner who asked him the way, but he was not capable of answering him in English. He had the same situation as occurred for Student C. At this point he felt that he must improve his English. Moreover, upgrading his English standard could help in his future work. He wants to work in the field of administration where he would need to communicate with many foreigners. Student J said, “Motivate me to learn English? I hope to improve my English so that I will be able to find a better job with a higher salary.” [Student J2 (80)] “At least they use English to interview you. You at least need to know how to answer them, to give a
good impression.” [Student J2 (82)]

The second factor that motivates Student J to learn English is a beneficial home environment. Student J has a good quality of home that relates positively to his development of intelligence (Schunk et al., 2008, p.283). Student J’s home environment comprises: the mother’s responsiveness and involvement with her son; and the availability of appropriate learning materials and opportunities for daily stimulation. The parents of Student J seemed to provide a warm, responsive and supportive home environment that encourages exploration and stimulates curiosity; and these accelerate the young person’s intellectual development (Schunk et al., 2008, p. 284). The fact that family members point out the importance of English and his mother’s work experience in society – these increase Student J’s learning motivation. “My father, mother, aunt and cousins, they think that English is very important. When you go out to work you can communicate with others. When you meet your clients or with foreigners you can communicate with them.” [Student J2 (46)] Student J also mentioned that his mother needed to communicate in English with her boss because: “Her boss is a foreigner.” [Student J2 (64)] “So, she often needs to speak English.” [Student J2 (66)] The real-life work situation of his mother provides evidence to Student J of the use of English in society.

The positive home environment of Student J includes it affording the resources to enable him to go abroad to interact with members of another society so as to broaden his horizon and, thus, increase his learning motivation. As early as his primary school days, Student J traveled abroad to Hawaii. He was then too small to know much English. He experienced the difficulty, however, in communicating with foreigners if one did not know English. The second time he traveled abroad was as an exchange student for two
weeks after his secondary school study. When he was in the Gold Coast, Australia, he lived with a local family. The family members were very interested in communicating with him and he wished to talk with them, too. “I stayed with a family. They talked about politics with me, and I didn’t know how to respond” [Student J2 (24)] “They asked me what my view point was; I found it hard to tell them.” [Student J2 (28)] At this point, he decided to improve his English vocabulary and language skills to cope with such situations. If he had another chance, he would like to join similar programs with a view to practicing English.

Student J enjoys learning English. His motivation comes from his family directly and he is an intrinsically motivated learner. He said, “In fact English is quite interesting. There are many different tenses, like the present, and the past. They are different, so I think English is quite interesting.” [Student J2 (106)] When asked whether he had ever felt de-motivated in learning English, he said that he had probably not experienced this. Occasionally, he felt that English was quite difficult. But he would try his best to learn it. It was because, he said, that when “I’ve learnt many new words, I can translate the words from Chinese into English and tell others about them. I won’t have any difficulty.” [Student J2 (108)] Moreover, with the experience of traveling abroad has enhanced his curiosity about foreign cultures. As this is a big world, knowing English will enable him to explore things that he wants to learn.

5.7 Chapter summary

Student B is an intrinsically motivated learner who engages in learning English and applying skills in different contexts. In student B’s case, a good English teacher plays the most important role in motivating her to learn the English language. The growth of
intrinsic motivation within Student B is that she is first stimulated by the strict English teacher. She then takes the initiative in improving her language skills. She interacts with peers, communicates with foreigners and learns from speaking with others in English. She also perceives her progress and feels efficacious about learning which, in turn, gives her a heightened self-efficacy and positive outcome expectations. Compared to Student B, Student C has a completely different motivation for learning. He has a very strong instrumental orientation. In Student C’s case, his goal of a career as a policeman influences him significantly in learning English. This desire has not changed since he was in junior secondary school. Student C makes his best effort to get a pass in the English subject to fulfill the entry requirement of the job of a policeman. Although Student C continues to insist that learning English is for the purpose of becoming a policeman, in the phase 2 interview, he mentions that he wishes to further his study overseas and that he has started to read books actively. Student C has a slight shift of motivation from learning English for career only, to learning English for career and for study.

The learning motivation of Student I has common characteristics with that of both Students B and C, respectively. His goal-directed learning behavior is similar to that of Student C’s instrumental motivation. Both of them employ English as a tool for work: Student I is for current work while Student C is for future work. Moreover, Student I has developed an interest in the English subject in that he focuses on self-improvement by using self-referenced standards. He becomes an intrinsically motivated student at a later stage. Student I uses effective learning strategies to perform more challenging tasks. He has a positive attitude towards the language, and has a strong belief that success follows from his effort. (Ames & Archer, 1988) The difference between Student B and Student I in regard to their intrinsic motivation is that Student B’s interest in learning English
started from the beginning, while Student I’s interest developed over a period of time while he was working in Japan. Student I’s motivation is also a process-oriented one in that he has specific behaviors at specific stages of learning (Gardner, 2001). Motivation in Student I’s case follows developmental paths that may change over time and may not remain in a definite framework of instrumental or intrinsic motivation (Oxford & Shearin, 1994).

Student J’s motivation is the same as that of Student B in that they are both intrinsic in nature. Student J’s learning motive is socially oriented from his own family locally and from a native English-speaking family overseas in Australia. Student J’s English learning process shows the positive benefits of parental involvement for motivational variables such as intrinsic motivation; perceived competence and control; self-regulation; mastery goal orientation; and motivation to read (Schunk, 2008, p. 287). Student J’s case reveals that strong parental influence and a beneficial home environment are significant factors in motivating students to learn the English language.
Chapter 6  Conclusions

6.1  Introduction

The final chapter comprises five main parts. The first one provides an overview of the aims of the study, the methodology employed, the data collection and analysis, and the results of the research. The second part examines the implications of the research findings in the areas of teaching, learning environment, educational policy, teachers’ attitude and learners’ autonomy. The third part presents the evaluations of the current study. The fourth part provides suggestions for further research; and the last part is the concluding section of this thesis.

6.2  Overview

The overall aim of this thesis is to find out the motivational factors of vocational students in learning the English language. The study was initiated by students’ differences in learning attitudes and the variations in their standard of English. As an English language teacher, the researcher aspires for the vocational students to attain a better standard in the subject. It is believed that by having a greater understanding of students’ motivation, teachers can more efficiently improve and modify their teaching strategies, and thus motivate students to learn the language more effectively.

A pilot case study was conducted in the year prior to the main study. This served as a trial run and refined the interview parameters for the researcher. A qualitative case study approach was found to be the most appropriate means of understanding the motivational
factors in the learning processes of the vocational students in this study. This approach was used because perceptions, attitudes and relationships cannot be objectively measured, as would be required in a quantitative approach. In contrast, qualitative methods, such as interviews and diary notes were more likely to yield rich and thick descriptive data for understanding the case of this study (Geertz, 1973). The limitations imposed by the scale and size of the present study meant that the case is confined to one vocational institute.

The three research questions of this study, as mentioned in section 1.5, together with the findings from the questionnaire survey on motivation, served as a guide in developing a semi-structured interview schedule. The sample selection was based on purposeful sampling. The researcher sought representatives that did not belong to the group of low achievers. This was because low achievers might not necessarily have exhibited their motivational development explicitly during the time of this study. And it was the researcher’s choice to select an equal number of male and female participants in order to have a balanced view of both sexes.

The data were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews and diaries. All the interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were verified by two professional teachers to ensure trustworthiness. The data analysis was done in three stages. In the first stage the method of microanalysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) or line-by-line analysis was employed to capture motivational concepts and to categorize them on the basis of similarities and differences. In the second stage the data were broken apart and reconstructed in an analytic and interpretive way and clustered into themes related to motivational issues. The third stage involved the integration of ideas, which were later reinterpreted by cross-checking the data based on comparative analysis
Data reveal that vocational students have strong instrumental motivation for learning English and they also have intrinsic motivation at the same time. Nine participants out of 10 find English an interesting language and enjoy the learning process. The findings show that it is a misconception of the researcher that vocational students are not motivated to learn the English language. Moreover, the motivational factors identified from this research are consistent with the theories and models of motivation of L2 learning literature; in particular, Dornyei’s (1998) seven dimensions of motivation, and the variables in Gardner’s (2001) socio-educational model. Students set up goals and have expectancy values in mind. Among these is the instrumental motive to find a job in the future. They all enjoy learning English and hold responsibility for their own learning. They have a personal and situational interest in learning English. Students’ motivations are influenced and encouraged by significant others like teachers, parents and peers. The importance of these influences is highlighted in the four Students’ individual profiles. Moreover, in education, academic results and the medium of instruction influence students’ motivations. Students also learn English for self-achievement and self-esteem. The English language is perceived by participants as a useful language for communication locally and internationally. It is a tool and a skill for study and performing daily activities.

### 6.3 Implications of the research

The following implications are derived from the findings in relation to the three research questions and the purpose of the study.
6.3.1 Implications for teaching

The first implication is for teaching. It is necessary to address the value and the importance of learning English. The findings show instrumental motivation operates among the vocational students and that their strong instrumental motivation is influenced by many factors directly and/or indirectly of the society. Vocational education in Hong Kong is gaining in importance because the courses provide the necessary training for students to enter the work force immediately after they have completed the courses satisfactorily. Most students have in mind when they enter the vocational institute the goal of getting a job. The choice of work among these students is largely their own; however, it is also influenced by other factors. Having a better standard of English, it is agreed by all participants, is the necessary requirement of many areas of work in the society and offers a better choice of career. The emphasis of learning English, on the one hand, is to show students the practicality of English and, on the other hand, to further cultivate students’ intrinsic motivation. It is found that many students’ interest in learning English is for traveling to other countries and communicating with foreigners. These elements could be incorporated into the curriculum, by means such as arranging study visits to English-speaking countries and inviting foreign speakers to take part in English activities. The curriculum might also include real-life English by linking the course contents and students’ lives in order to increase students’ opportunities to practice English in different kinds of social situations.

6.3.2 Implications for learning environment

The second implication is for the learning environment. Intrinsic motivation, it was found, exists among the students and they hold responsibility for their own English language learning. Significant others, particularly family members and teachers, play
important roles in motivating participants to learn intrinsically. Intrinsic motivation could be generated by the learner’s own interest with the support of a good learning environment. This finding implies that the family should provide freedom and a relaxed environment at home to enhance the student’s motivation. English teachers could create an active learning environment in the schools and promote English activities to arouse students’ interest in L2 learning. In doing so, the learners might select to engage in more language activities within informal contexts like watching movies, listening to songs and reading English books and magazines. The intrinsic motivation is further enforced if teachers give positive feedback, design interesting materials and offer rewards such as praise to boost children’s self-esteem when they perform well in English.

6.3.3 Implications for implementation of educational policy

The third implication is for educational policy. The change of medium of instruction (MOI) from Cantonese to English was found to be one of the de-motivating factors in the participants’ process of learning English. Students could not adapt to the sudden change of MOI, from one that is their mother tongue, Cantonese, to that of a foreign language, English; and, thus, they would lose their interest in learning. The implication of this for the education policy-maker is whether to consider introducing a gradual transitional period in launching the change of MOI, to ensure that students have enough time to cope with such a change. During the said transitional period, schools and teachers could provide tutorial classes or remedial lessons for the students who are finding difficulty in adapting to the change.

6.3.4 Implications for teachers

The fourth implication is for the attitude of English language teachers. The findings show that English teachers play a crucial role in affecting students’ motivation to learn
English. The teacher’s teaching style, teaching strategies and teaching characteristics influenced students’ learning. Teachers who had a negative attitude and criticized the poor performance of students would de-motivate their students to learn English. Students would lose interest and some would even give up learning English. This implies that teachers should present their criticism in a positive manner when commenting on students’ work or performance.

6.3.5 Implications for learner’s autonomy

The last implication is for learner’s autonomy. Although this area is not clearly shown in the present study, the findings of intrinsic motivation operating with vocational students imply that the attitude towards English language learning of this group of students could be further developed to the stage of autonomous learning. This can be done through an interactive learning environment whereby teachers are supportive and helpful in developing students’ sense of confidence and self-determination, which could be translated into the learning-oriented behaviors of the intrinsically motivated students. Teachers could also increase a student’s confidence in learning and performance by using care and praise in order to enhance the self-efficacy that leads to learner’s autonomy.

6.4 Evaluations of the research

Firstly, the research approach was based on qualitative methods, with a combination of semi-structured interviews and diary notes. Owing to the limitation of resources, the number of participants in this study was limited to 10. The lack of a larger sample size and the fact that the findings rely only on qualitative data may arouse criticism. The intention of the study is not to offer an explanation of the motivational factors that relate
to the English language learning attitudes of all vocational students but to develop a deep understanding of the participants’ motivation in the English language learning experience. It would have been better, however, to have had a bigger sample size of participants from different disciplines and from more than one vocational institute. In addition, if the research were a combination of both qualitative and quantitative study, with a bigger sample size, a more far-reaching generalization of the findings would have resulted.

Secondly, the duration of the interviews and survey was limited to one academic year. This may not fully reveal the motivational changes of the participants. The present study does not reveal a significant change of motivation in the learning behavior. A longer duration, for example two to three years’ study, would reflect in more detail learners’ motivation and their changes over time, if there were any.

Thirdly, there were limitations on sampling; a lack of time; data collection issues; and the translation of interview data from Cantonese to English. For sampling, low achievers were excluded in this research. The English language learning experiences and motivational factors of this group are, thus, ignored. A lack of time was an issue for the participants. Some of these students guarded their time carefully because they were busy with their studies. Data collection through the use of interviews may pose a risk of disparity between an informant’s later interpretation of an experience and what actually happened. Moreover, the data of diary notes may not be typical or true. There might be inadequate recalls, and a sample selection bias on activities that participants had recorded. In addition, not all participants handed in the diary notes in this research as this was done on a voluntary basis; however, there are sufficient data for analysis. The data were collected through different tools and were triangulated to ensure validity and
trustworthiness. In terms of the interview transcriptions, the translation of interview conversations from Cantonese to written English holds the possibility that the English vocabulary might not exactly match the saying of Cantonese. This limitation, however, is minimized by the verifications of two experienced English language teachers.

Fourthly, as the researcher and, at the same time, English teacher of the participants, it is difficult to convince readers that the participants provided answers openly and honestly. Participants may provide answers to please the teacher so that they may make a better impression and result in the teacher giving them higher marks in a test or examination. According to the structure of this Level 1 (year 1) English language course, however, none of the test is marked by the subject teacher. There is no grace mark, either. So the participants in the present study do not get any advantage from pleasing the researcher. The researcher believes that all data from the participants were trustworthy.

**6.5 Suggestions for further research**

There are four suggestions for further research. Firstly, it is worth exploring further about the autonomy of vocational students. Intrinsic motivation was found among vocational students in the present study. As these students’ motivation grows, through their experience, their attitudes towards the English language and the process of learning English could progress. Their confidence may increase as they use English as a genuine means of communication and self-expression. As a result of such a learning experience, they may find meaning in their learning in the society in which they live, and they could exhibit their motivated and self-regulated learning behavior. It is therefore suggested to carry out further research on learner’s autonomy among vocational students to enrich the analysis of motivation and, in particular, to illuminate
the interaction between the individual learner and social influences in shaping motivational growth and regulation.

Secondly, it is suggested to pursue further study to trace how vocational students’ motivation changes longitudinally. The present study reveals the factors of English language learning motivation of vocational students in Hong Kong. Most factors are covered in the literature on motivation in L2 learning. The findings in this research show the change of motivation from instrumental initially to the later stage of intrinsic, which demonstrates that motivation can change over time. The time element, however, is not explicitly shown in this research. It may be due to the limited period of time of carrying out this research, which has been confined to one year. In order to bring about a better understanding of how best to motivate vocational learners in learning English, it is necessary to trace how their motivation changes longitudinally; for example, over three to four years’ time.

Thirdly, it is suggested that research be initiated on the strategies used in combination with the motivation for learning English of vocational students in Hong Kong. It is worth examining how motivational factors affect students’ choice of learning strategies.

The last area of research suggested is in the area of parental influences on student’s learning development. In the process of analyzing the data in the present study, the researcher was impressed by the family support of parents, particularly the mother, in encouraging participants to learn English. It is the aspiration of the researcher to design another study which focuses on the mother’s role and influence on children’s motivation for learning English in Hong Kong.
6.6 Conclusions

L2 learning is a complex phenomenon in which motivation plays an important role. Motivation determines the extent of learners’ involvement in learning tasks at different stages. The present research has served to expand our understanding of Hong Kong vocational students’ motivation for learning English. This study reveals that vocational students exhibit motivation to learn English. It provides a picture that shows that students, in addition to having strong instrumental motivation, also have intrinsic motivation. Through their experience and increased knowledge, students’ motivation grows and their attitudes towards English change. They realize the usefulness of using English and their confidence increases when they actually use English as a means of communication and self-expression. As a result of this learning experience, they find meaning in their learning in the society in which they live. Eventually they exhibit their motivated and self-regulated learning behavior habitually.

The findings of this study are consistent with the motivational theories, models and approaches current in the field of motivation in L2 learning. The motivational factors in learning English have practical implications for both language teachers and learners. By recognizing students’ motivational factors, teachers can provide teaching material more relevant to their personal goals for learning the language, offer positive teacher feedback, and encourage de-motivated students to improve their English learning behavior.

It is hoped that this study can draw greater attention to vocational students’ motivation for learning English. Through the findings of the present study, teachers and students may better understand what contributes to vocational students’ motivation for learning
English. It has been identified that students are motivated to learn English by many factors. The teacher is a crucial agent but not the only one that motivates students to learn. The most important agent is, in fact, the student’s own ability in self-learning. To succeed, students need to learn to maintain interest, set goals, exercise self-efficacy and manage their own learning responsibilities in order to enhance their English standard. In addition, the role of teachers is to present a quality and strategic instruction which can promote an active learning environment.
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Appendix 1  Time-table of semi-structured interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Date (Dec., 1)/ Time/Language (English, E/ Cantonese, C)</th>
<th>Date (May, 5)/ Time/Language (English, E/ Cantonese, C)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>11:30am / C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td></td>
<td>11:00am / E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>11:00am / E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td></td>
<td>11:30am / E &amp; C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>2:30pm / C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2:00pm / C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>3:00pm / C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2:30pm / E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E1</td>
<td>12:30pm / C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3:00pm / E &amp; C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>12:00pm / C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3:30pm / E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G1</td>
<td>11:00am / C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4:00pm / C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>3:30pm / C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1:20pm / E &amp; C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I1</td>
<td>4:00pm / C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I2</td>
<td></td>
<td>11:30am / C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J1</td>
<td>4:30pm / C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1:40pm / C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 2 Script of diary notes (Student E)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry/Date/Time</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Learning skills</th>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>d1 16/10 4:25~4:40</td>
<td>Write e-mail</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>This e-mail is to one of my good friends. I tell her about myself and what happens today. I say some special things to her.</td>
<td>I feel that it is very good. In this e-mail, she knows more about me and I can improve my English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d2 17/10 7:30~8:00</td>
<td>Watch TV</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>I watch the news about the men who go to space and come back. They are very successful and happy. It also talks about other countries’ news.</td>
<td>In this news, I know a lot of things about Hong Kong and other counties. But some English words are very difficult for me. Its speed is too fast. I hope that I can learn more next time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d3 23/10 2:30~2:45</td>
<td>Read web-site</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>There is a test in this web-site. After finishing this test, I know more about myself. I know the characters of girls.</td>
<td>I feel that it is very funny. I know and understand more about myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d4 5/11 10:00~11:00</td>
<td>Read books</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>The story is about two dogs. They have ninety-nine puppies in the house. They are very happy. One day, the woman Cruella de Vil sold the puppies for money. Two big dogs called their friends to solve the problem.</td>
<td>I feel that this story is very funny. The big dogs are very clever. They think of methods to save their puppies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d5 7/11 10:00~10:30</td>
<td>Do listening exercises</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>I do five listening exercises in ‘Language Proficiency’ on Internet. I finish two more later. It is about appointments, phones and food list.</td>
<td>I think that it is easy for me. There are answers for me to choose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d6 23/11</td>
<td>English Speaking Day</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>I go to the school playground and listen to the talk. They talk about different types of noodles in USA.</td>
<td>I think that it is very funny. I learnt some difficult new words and about the types of noodles. It makes me learn more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Task Description</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d7 9/11</td>
<td>Do reading exercises</td>
<td>I do one reading exercise on the website. This exercise has five short paragraphs.</td>
<td>I think that it is very useful for me. Because it can help me to learn and read more English. I learn some new words, too.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d8 19/12</td>
<td>Write e-mail</td>
<td>I sent e-mail to my friends. It is about our meeting.</td>
<td>I feel that English is very useful for writing an e-mail. We can use it for communication.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d9 3/1</td>
<td>Reading books</td>
<td>I read a book. The book’s name is <em>The Secret Garden</em>. I read a few pages. It is about the girl who lives with her mother. After her mother has died, she needs to live with her uncle. Her uncle is not kind to her. He does not look after her. She needs to take care of herself.</td>
<td>I feel that she is very sad because she has lost her parents, this is very sad for a child. After that, nobody looks after her. Nobody likes her.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d10 6/01</td>
<td>Do reading website</td>
<td>I finish 20 exercises on the website. This is looking for information, do true or false questions and fill in the blanks.</td>
<td>I think that the exercises are useful. But if it is a bit more difficult, it’ll be better. I hope that it will be good for my test.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d11 29/1</td>
<td>Write a e-mail</td>
<td>I write e-mail to my friend. I say thank you to her. It is because she sends the card to me. And I talk to her about myself.</td>
<td>I am very happy to receive her beautiful card. I know that she is care about me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d12 6/2–8/2</td>
<td>Read a book</td>
<td>It is a story book. It is about a girl whose parents have died. She lives in her uncle’s home. One day she went to the garden and found a door at the front part. The door was locked.</td>
<td>I am very interested in this book. I want to know what is behind this door. So, I will finish the story quickly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d13 28/2</td>
<td>Do exercises on website</td>
<td>I do the exercises in the lesson. This is about the telephone call. I listen to the call and write down some messages.</td>
<td>I think that it is very useful for me. In the future, I may need to take some calls in English at the office. Now I can learn it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d14 8/3</td>
<td>English Speaking Day</td>
<td>Singing</td>
<td>In this class, I sing some songs. For example, “Help”. I can speak simple English.</td>
<td>I think that it is very interesting. I can learn how to sing English songs. In this class, I feel very happy because I sing many songs with my friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d15 15/3</td>
<td>English Speaking Day</td>
<td>Singing</td>
<td>That day, I learnt how to use the words to write a song. We think of words and try to sing it.</td>
<td>It is very funny and special for me. This is the first time for me to learn how to write words for the song. The feeling is very good. I hope that in future, I will learn more about this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d16 29/3</td>
<td>English Speaking Day</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>On that day, we learnt how to make a story for a short film. We need to make some dialogues for the characters of the film.</td>
<td>I feel that it is very funny. I learnt how to write the dialogues in English. I can speak English in this activity. It is a very special experience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 3 Transcript of semi-structured interview (Student A1)

I= Interviewer (Teacher)  
S= Student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview transcriptions</th>
<th>Line-by-line analysis (1st level coding)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I: Thank you for coming today. Do you like learning English?</td>
<td>Q1. Like learning English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. S: Yes, I do.</td>
<td>Have interest in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I: Why?</td>
<td>Compare English to Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. S: Because I think that English is quite interesting and quite special. It is different from the Chinese language.</td>
<td>English is quite interesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I: How are they different?</td>
<td>Q2. Like English at primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. S: An English word can have different meanings. I need to pay attention to grammar when using it.</td>
<td>Later find it difficult &amp; stop liking English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I: Is it difficult?</td>
<td>In sec. school like English again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. S: It is quite difficult.</td>
<td>Regain interest because of learning atmosphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I: Though it’s difficult, you still like to learn English.</td>
<td>Regain interest at the end of Form 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. S: Yes, because I think English is quite interesting.</td>
<td>Teacher taught well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I: When did you start to like learning English?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. S: I think…, in a certain period of time, in primary school, I liked to learn English. But later, perhaps, I found that it was too difficult and did not like learning it. Then, in secondary school, I liked learning English again.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I: Why did you find it difficult to learn English in primary school?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. S: Maybe, I was too lazy to memorize the tenses, … etc. In secondary school, there was an atmosphere of learning. I regained the interest of learning English.</td>
<td>Regain interest because of learning atmosphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I: When did you regain the interest of learning in secondary school?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. S: At the end of Form 3.</td>
<td>Regain interest at the end of Form 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I: Why did you like it again at that time?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. S: It’s because I thought that the teacher taught quite well and I was interested as I was going to be</td>
<td>Teacher taught well</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
promoted to secondary four, if I didn’t work hard, then … yes … because it would help me to further my studies.

19. I: Which one is more important?
20. S: Hm… I am really interested in English.
21. I: Is it only because your English teacher taught well?
22. S: Hm… this is one of the reasons and I also think that English is special. Then I started to regain the interest of learning English.
23. I: What was the reason that made you start to regain the interest?
24. S: I started to think about my future. The thought my future pushed me to learn English and in the process of learning, I found interest in learning the subject. Maybe, the best thing I like is speaking. I like to communicate with others. Using English is a different way to communicate with others.
25. I: Whom did you communicate with?
27. I: I mean when you were in Form 3.
28. S: Yes. There were native English teachers at school and I liked to communicate with them. I found that when I learnt more, I spoke more. Sometimes I didn’t know how to say something and this could block the communications. I began to regain my interest and wanted to learn more English.
29. I: In addition to motivating by your school teacher and the thought about your future, does your family encourage you to learn English?
30. S: I don’t think so because my parents give a lot of freedom to me. There is no pressure from my family. They let me choose what I like. There is not much encouragement or … they just ask me to study hard but don’t put me under a lot of pressure.
31. I: In the process of learning English, what are the factors that make you like learning English?

**For further study**

**For interest greater than for study**

**The thought of future pushed to learn English and then found interest**

**For communication with foreigners and friends**

**Wish to communicate with native teachers**

**When learn more, speak more**

**Don’t know how to say**

**English may block communication, Regain interest**

**Parents provide freedom**

**Parents ask S to study harder**

**Q3. Greatest motivation is for better standard**
| 32. | S: Er., the greatest motivator is to acquire a better English standard. This will facilitate communication with others, socially. As for reading, e.g. when I look at the newspaper, I will be able to understand the news articles. I like to travel. It would be more convenient if my English is better. | Facilitate communication |
| 33. | I: I wonder if this is due to your interest more than other things. | Like to travel, knowing English is more convenient when traveling |
| 34. | S: Er..., yes, it could be. To a certain extent, I like to establish a better foundation for my future but actually I have an interest in learning. So my interest is a greater motivator. | Better foundation for future |
| 35. | I: So, if you are going to rate, that is, to prioritize, would you say that interest is the first motivator, and will you rate it higher than that of your future? | Rate for interest higher than for future |
| 36. | S: I may say yes. | |
| 37. | I: What do you find to be motivating in your English learning experience, from the beginning until now? | Q4. English is important |
| 38. | S: Actually, I think English is very important and this motivates me to continue to learn. Sometimes, when I see that the teachers communicate fluently with the foreigners, I have a desire to do the same. This, to a certain extent, pushes me to learn English and I think that this is the major reason. | Have the desire to learn, wish to communicate with foreigners |
| 39. | I: You said that you want to communicate with foreigners. | |
| 40. | S: Hm… | |
| 41. | I: Do you have a strong interest in foreign countries? | Like foreign countries’ environment |
| 42. | S: Yes. | |
| 43. | I: About foreigners or in foreign matters? | |
| 44. | S: Foreign places. I am quite interested about the environment of foreign countries. | |
| 45. | I: Have you been to any foreign countries before? | |
| 46. | S: No. | |
| 47. | I: Why are you interested in foreign countries? | Like the living style of foreign countries |
| 48. | S: I have relatives living in foreign countries. Their life style is better than that of Hong Kong. I like their living style. | |
| 49. | I: Do you communicate in English with them, in written or spoken form? | Q5. English is a useful language |
| 50. | S: Not often, only occasionally. | English makes communication easier |
| 51. | I: *Do you think English is a useful language?* | |
| 52. | S: Yes. | |
| 53. | I: Hm. | English is important in Hong Kong society |
| 54. | S: I find that English is common in many countries where people may not know Chinese but they can speak some English. So English is useful and makes communication easier. It’s easier to make friends with others if you know English. | English is used in work situations |
| 55. | I: Any others? | Feel inferior to others if English is weak |
| 56. | S: I think English is quite important, especially in a society like Hong Kong, we need to know English in order to work in a company or do certain jobs. If one is weak in English, there will be obstacles and one will feel that one is inferior to others in many ways. | English is important in Hong Kong society |
| 57. | I: Inferior to others in many ways, what do you mean? | English is used in work situations |
| 58. | S: For example, when you read the same newspaper as others, and your English standard is not high, you’ll learn less. You may not have common themes to chat with others when others talk in English, you may not be able to respond. This is an obstacle to your development. | Feel inferior to others if English is weak |
| 59. | I: After learning English for many years, *do you think you enjoy learning English?* | Enjoy learning English |
| 60. | S: I think er… overall, it is. But when I come across difficulties, for example, I don’t understand the meaning of a paragraph, it stops me from learning further, I would be discouraged. However, after I seek help from others, I feel better. Overall speaking, I enjoy the learning process. | Enjoy learning English |
| 61. | I: Did you recall any bad experience that made you think of giving up learning English? | Follow up question – not in interview schedule |
| 62. | S: Yes. For example, sometimes when I work on a multiple choice question in a reading comprehension exercise, I think that I have chosen the most suitable | |
answer. In fact it is not. Later I find that in the reading process, I miss some points. It is my carelessness that leads to the mistakes. If I hadn’t missed out that, I could get the right answer. I have problems in writing, like grammar. Sometimes I do not know which word to use but I don’t want to do a direct translation. I feel quite frustrated. I always need to find the words from the Internet.

63. I: Do you think you can overcome these problems?
64. S: Er...I need time to do this. I need to… first, understand the words and then use them later. I need to spend more time practicing.
65. I: Overall speaking, *if you could choose, would you like to choose to continue to learn English in the future?*
66. S: I would.
67. I: Hm…
68. S: Actually, we can’t have learnt all of it. Besides, the world keeps changing and we have to keep up with the time. I think English is an important international language. I should not stop learning. What I’ve learnt is not enough, so I would continue to learn the language. I’d like to upgrade my English standard. For example, instead of using simple words, I would like to use suitable words. I’ll enrich my knowledge and it’s not bad to learn more things. So I choose to continue to learn English.

69. I: Yes, good. Do you have any thing to add?
70. S: I think that’s all.
71. I: Thank you very much!
72. S: Thank you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q7. Choose to learn English</th>
<th>English is an important international language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Getting wrong answers because of carelessness</td>
<td>Wish to upgrade own standard of English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems in writing</td>
<td>Enrich knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel frustrated when don’t know which word to use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to try and practice more</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

End
# Appendix 4  Summary on diary notes analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants/ Frequency/ Themes</th>
<th>A 9/10 - 6/12 (18 entries)</th>
<th>B 18/10 - 30/11 (12 entries)</th>
<th>E 16/10 - 29/3 (16 entries)</th>
<th>F 23/10-3/11 1/3 -26/4 (9 entries)</th>
<th>G 8/3 – 9/4 (3 entries)</th>
<th>H 2/12 -16/1 (11 entries)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interest in foreign culture</td>
<td>d1, d4, d7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future job</td>
<td></td>
<td>d4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>d1, d8, d11</td>
<td>d3</td>
<td>d3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools -Eng. activities</td>
<td>d8, d14</td>
<td>d10, d12</td>
<td>d6, d14, d15, d16</td>
<td>D6, d9</td>
<td>d1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-achievement</td>
<td>d12, d13, d16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facing difficulty</td>
<td></td>
<td>d1</td>
<td>d5, d10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English as a skill for study</td>
<td>d11, d15, d18</td>
<td>d1, d2,d3, d4, d5, d6, d7, d8, d9, d11</td>
<td>d2, d3, d4, d5, d7, d9, d10, d12, d13</td>
<td>d2, d5, d7, d8</td>
<td>d1, d2, d4, d7, d8, d9, d11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily use</td>
<td>d2, d3, d9, d10, d16, d17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>d2, d3</td>
<td>d6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 5  Data analysis (Phase 1)

### Q1. Do you like learning English?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>2nd level coding</th>
<th>3rd level coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Like learning English</td>
<td>Like learning English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Like traveling</td>
<td>For travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Like English books &amp; music</td>
<td>Intrinsic motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Want to find a job</td>
<td>For career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Communicate with foreigners</td>
<td>For communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Find a good job, need a pass, E</td>
<td>For career/qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>For daily use</td>
<td>Social effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Useful when traveling</td>
<td>For travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Useful when reading books</td>
<td>For reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can learn more things</td>
<td>Intrinsic motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>For future job</td>
<td>For job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Got fluent English will not be frightened when traveling</td>
<td>For travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Most countries use English for communication</td>
<td>For communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Quite funny- many variations in English, slight change would affect the meaning</td>
<td>Intrinsic motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Interest in culture</td>
<td>For culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Like new things</td>
<td>Intrinsic motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>From primary school to secondary school English result was poor, so resist learning English</td>
<td>Poor result- resist learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friends’ qualification is higher, they motivate S to learn more English, so, broaden horizon &amp; arouse interest.</td>
<td>Motivate to learn for higher standard of English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In secondary school, from top class to bottom, a serious setback- a feeling of failure</td>
<td>De-motivation/ School effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can't adapt to EMI school</td>
<td>Education policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discouraged and then gave up</td>
<td>De-motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Can't adapt to EMI school</td>
<td>Education policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English is used in many places in foreign countries</td>
<td>International language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Used in work situations</td>
<td>For work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use English when being a tutor</td>
<td>For work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q2. When did you start to like learning English, at primary school, secondary school or at the college?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>2nd level coding</th>
<th>3rd level coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>H Started like learning English at primary school</td>
<td>Start at primary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td>Intrinsic motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Got atmosphere of learning</td>
<td>Learning environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDEFGH</td>
<td>Teacher got good teaching method</td>
<td>Teacher’s effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>For future study</td>
<td>For future study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>For communications</td>
<td>For communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents provide freedom</td>
<td>Parent’s effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Study abroad</td>
<td>For study abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>CEFJG Started like learning English in Form 1</td>
<td>Start at secondary sch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classmates introduced books to read</td>
<td>Peers’ effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Realize that English is very important</td>
<td>English is important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Mainly for study</td>
<td>For study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For qualification</td>
<td>Qualification oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Only for job, after getting what he wants, S would stop learning English</td>
<td>Mainly for job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Started like learning English at secondary school</td>
<td>Start at secondary Sch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Like foreign movies, want to learn meaning &amp; pronunciations</td>
<td>Intrinsic motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Need to watch movies in Form 1, then write report</td>
<td>Teacher’s/school’s effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Like English all the time</td>
<td>Intrinsic motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watch English programs after school</td>
<td>Self motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Started like learning English in Form 2</td>
<td>Start at Secondary Sch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good English teacher who taught many things</td>
<td>Teacher’s effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For examination</td>
<td>For examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Started reading English books in Form 3</td>
<td>Intrinsic motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>In secondary school, very happy to communicate with teachers</td>
<td>Teacher’s effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Own interest of learning greater than before</td>
<td>Intrinsic motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Begin to realize that English is very important</td>
<td>English is important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wish to talk with others but not up to standard</td>
<td>Intrinsic motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>In secondary school, suddenly got good results in English subject</td>
<td>Sense of achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewees</td>
<td>2nd level coding</td>
<td>3rd level coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A H</td>
<td>Most important factor is to have better standard</td>
<td>Better standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Better foundation for future, for interest greater than for future</td>
<td>For future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interest greater/Intrinsic motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B EF</td>
<td>For communication with foreigners while traveling</td>
<td>Intrinsic motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>For travel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q3. What are the most important factors that make you like or dislike learning English?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Parents tell S to work hard, so improve English</td>
<td>Parents’ effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Believe that English is very important</td>
<td>Believe- self efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English is important</td>
<td>English is important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Main reason for job</td>
<td>Main reason is for job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>English is important in society</td>
<td>English is important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Only motivation is for applying the job of policeman</td>
<td>Social factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents sacrifice to support S to study</td>
<td>For career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brother got negative experience</td>
<td>Family’s effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>To achieve a goal</td>
<td>Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curious about English, want to find more about it, so work hard until got the answer</td>
<td>Curiosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>For work, need English to handle document</td>
<td>For work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>English is used nearly in all countries</td>
<td>Practical use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Got better result in English subject</td>
<td>Better result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need to use English at school and feel that English is not good, so need to learn it</td>
<td>For study now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English is an important language</td>
<td>English is important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English is spoken everywhere &amp; understood by everyone</td>
<td>Practical use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>For future</td>
<td>For future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Like to travel, don't know English, can't communicate</td>
<td>For travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>For communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Need to use English while working in Japan because don't know Japanese. Study a 2-month English course in Japan and start to develop interest</td>
<td>For work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feeling successful</td>
<td>Intrinsic motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Able to communicate , a sense of achievement</td>
<td>Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work situation made to have interest in learning English</td>
<td>For communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work that lead to have interest</td>
<td>Work that lead to have interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Able to communicate with foreigners</td>
<td>For communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need English to communicate with foreigners e.g. when they ask about directions</td>
<td>Practical use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q4. What do you find to be motivating/de-motivating in your English learning experience?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>2nd level coding</th>
<th>3rd level coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>English is important</td>
<td>English is important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Communicate with foreigners</td>
<td>For communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Like living style &amp; environment of foreign countries</td>
<td>Intrinsic motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>English is important for future</td>
<td>English is important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For living</td>
<td>Social effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>For communication in society</td>
<td>For communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English is the most important language, more important than Chinese</td>
<td>Compare English to Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel embarrass if don't understand peers' English</td>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English ability affects work</td>
<td>Peers’ effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Able to communicate with foreigner, e.g. when ask about the directions - feel happy</td>
<td>Sense of achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>For work in future</td>
<td>For work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Family member encourages</td>
<td>Family’s effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Most important factor is for work in future</td>
<td>For work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need to use English in classes</td>
<td>For present study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read books, write e-mails</td>
<td>Intrinsic motivations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Want to have better standard of English</td>
<td>For better standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Find a better job</td>
<td>For better job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support family, buy a better house for family</td>
<td>Family’s effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employer would like to employ someone who knows English</td>
<td>For work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wish to meet overseas friends</td>
<td>Peer effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Write e-mails &amp; ICQ</td>
<td>Practical use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>In primary school, got interest in English, not difficult at that time, feel good</td>
<td>Motivated if English is not difficult</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teacher taught well
For examination in secondary school, need to pass examinations
Like to read literature, e.g. Shakespeare's work

Teacher’s effect
For examination
Intrinsic motivation

For future is the motive to learn
Poor English is the biggest problem, which is an obstacle to career
English is a skill, got interest in learning this skill

For future
For career
Learn a skill

The motivation is to improve English, hope English could help with work later like in administration
Need to contact more foreigners in admin. work

For better English
For work
For communication

Q5. Do you think English is a useful language? Why/Why not?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>2nd level coding</th>
<th>3rd level coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A BCDEFGHIJ</td>
<td>English is a useful language</td>
<td>Useful language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English makes communication easier</td>
<td>For communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English for work</td>
<td>For work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weak English can't communicate, it's an obstacle for future development</td>
<td>For career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B H</td>
<td>English is important as a tool for study</td>
<td>A tool for study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English is important in business world</td>
<td>For business, for work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A change of school environment in Form 4 from CMI to EMI</td>
<td>School environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From CMI to EMI/ Education policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>For communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travel to foreign countries, need English to read road signs</td>
<td>For travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communicate in e-mail, ICQ with friend in English</td>
<td>For communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D J</td>
<td>English is an international language</td>
<td>An international lang.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Most people communicate in English in many countries</td>
<td>For communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Books &amp; magazines are in English</td>
<td>Practical use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read English newspaper, guess the right meaning will feel happy</td>
<td>Sense of achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E I</td>
<td>English is used all over the world</td>
<td>Practical use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At college, every subject requires English, teacher teaches in English, so it's important. For study in college/English is important.

English is used in classes. For study

To talk to friends & family members overseas because they don't know Chinese. Peers and family communication

Write e-mail in English. Practical use

Need to use English to communicate. For communication

Hong Kong is a place of East meets West, don't know English can't communicate, lose competitiveness. Social effect

For future
Communicate with relatives to form better relationship. For communication

In Hong Kong, everyone needs to know English. Practical use

S wants to know more foreign culture, learn more English would help to learn more about foreign culture. Intrinsic motivation

Q6. Do you think you enjoy learning English? Why/Why not?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>2nd level coding</th>
<th>3rd level coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Enjoy learning English</td>
<td>Enjoy learning English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enrich knowledge</td>
<td>Practical use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wish to improve English standard</td>
<td>Improve English standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English is an international language</td>
<td>An international lang.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>English is a joyful experience</td>
<td>Joyful experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Got satisfaction when using English, upset if just got little improvement</td>
<td>Sense of achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wish to communicate in English but not confident</td>
<td>For communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Teacher spent time to give tutorial- so got interest</td>
<td>Teacher’s effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After this teacher has left, no more interest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Able to use English feel superior &amp; smarter than others</td>
<td>Pride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Sometimes want to give up English but insist because need to use it</td>
<td>Practical use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Now many people speak English including classmates and teachers</td>
<td>Commonly used for communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Need to recite many things which is different from Chinese, Mathematics and History.</td>
<td>Compare English to Chinese &amp; other subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning English is more relaxing</td>
<td>Intrinsic motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Would watch movies or listen to songs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Enjoy learning English especially when watching movies, now S can understand foreign movies without looking at subtitle</td>
<td>Intrinsic motivation/ Sense of achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>English words have different meaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q7. If you could choose, would you still want to learn English? Why/Why not?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>2nd level coding</th>
<th>3rd level coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Would choose to learn English</td>
<td>Choose to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Friends/peers</td>
<td>Peers’ effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No chance to use English in society except in English lesson</td>
<td>Social factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Would find chance to learn English</td>
<td>Self- motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Want to learn more things</td>
<td>Self- motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Won’t be deceived by others in business world, e.g. use English to sign documents</td>
<td>Work situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Will choose to learn because of future</td>
<td>For future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Good to learn one more language</td>
<td>For communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help to communicate with others, friends, classmates &amp; schoolmates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Must keep learning English</td>
<td>A must to learn English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Would choose to learn because weak in English</td>
<td>For improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need good foundation because English is really a very important language</td>
<td>Need good foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English is important</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is often used in the College</td>
<td>Commonly used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>60% for future prospect &amp; 40% for interest, try to learn more words</td>
<td>More for prospect/ Less for interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>It is essential in society</td>
<td>Social effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don't know English is like losing something</td>
<td>English is a must</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>While traveling, not knowing English need to rely on others</td>
<td>For travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improve English to facilitate communications</td>
<td>For communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motivating factor from mum, often cut articles for S to read since primary school. Tell the importance of English. So S initiated to learn &amp; join English classes</td>
<td>Mother’s effect/Intrinsic motivation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Others</th>
<th>(data obtained not directly from answering the seven interview questions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviewees</td>
<td>2nd level coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Recall bad experiences in learning English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Believe work hard in English will be useful in future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Wish to study seriously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wish to improve English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>S gives good advice &amp; have positive attitude of learning English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Family members encourage that better English would have better job and better life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brother &amp; sisters attach hope to S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel pressure when facing difficulty in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Feel shameful when can't answer foreigners' questions in a street but friends can help to answer This event enforces motivation because don't want this happen again which may give impression that secondary school student can't speak English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>For better future, for money, for competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poor English get poor job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To hold job &amp; for promotion, for a living in future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For communication and for a job is equally important, now job is more important. In future, communication would be more important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English is a language that one must learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Father feels better to have better foundation of English before working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family members ask to write English, family members watch English movies together, provide chances to learn English. Parents encourage to watch English TV programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents tell which book is good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Now S still keeps on reading more English newspapers, books, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mum still helps S, praises verbally when S learns some words. This is a strong motivation to S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6  Record of informal talk

Date: December, 3, 2005

I asked Student B and F how the week went. B said that she was reading a book and found that the book was very interesting. Although there were some difficult words that she didn’t know, she was able to guess the meaning without finding the words from the dictionary. She would continue to read the book and aimed at finishing it in two weeks’ time. She also listened to some English songs and enjoyed singing them and found that the lyrics were meaningful. She would remember them. Student F also mentioned that she had been reading books for some time. They were about Doctors and patients. And she would continue to read story books of the same topic.

I asked them what other English activities they had done. Both of them said that they joined some of the English Speaking Day’s activities. One of these activities was learning English through playing games. Both Students said that they were very frightened to speak English at first. But after a while, they enjoyed speaking English and played word games together with other students. They also said that they would join similar kind of English activities again.
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To my father

*Memories may fade but my memory of you will last forever*
Acknowledgements

As I look back on this journey, I am indebted to a large number of people who supported me along the way and have played an integral role in this accomplishment. Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr Heather Sequeira for her support, enthusiasm and guidance. She has become for me the role model of a successful researcher in the field of counselling psychology.

I would like to express my gratitude to my fellow Doctoral colleagues, Eva and Rebecca. Our grounded theory group helped me through to the end. Everyone’s contributions to the group have played an integral role in developing a sound knowledge of grounded theory methodology. I am also thankful to Dr Dee Danchev and to Dr Carla Willig who provided their time and insightful advice regarding grounded theory analysis. I must also thank Professor Cutcliffe who kindly supplied me with articles for my critical literature review.

I am also beholden to my parents who have always supported me. To my father, thank you for your unconditional love, to you I dedicate this thesis. To my mother who is a source of inspiration, your strength of character has given me the confidence to complete this thesis. Thank you for your encouragement and support, which has never faltered.

Special thanks to my twin brother William, who has always been there for me. Particular thanks to my older brother Victor, who deserves considerable thanks and acknowledgement, words cannot thank you enough for all your support throughout this challenging time.

My greatest debt of gratitude is to the participants who gave up their valuable time to be interviewed. This study would not have been possible without them sharing their personal experiences.
Declaration

“I grant powers of discretion to the University Library to allow this thesis to be copied in whole or in part without further reference to me. This permission covers only single copies made for study purposes, subject to normal conditions of acknowledgement”
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SECTION A: PREFACE

1.0 Overview
This preface is the first of four parts that comprise this thesis. It incorporates a reflection on the personal and professional experiences that led me to the research presented here. Additionally, this preface introduces the thesis, clarifies the provenance of the research study and gives an overview of how the various components of the thesis are inter-related. Finally, I will summarise all of the parts of the thesis.

The central theme of this thesis is loss and bereavement. As researchers have noted (Holms & Rahe 1967), one of the most profound losses and most significant negative life events is the death of a loved one. With such a profound impact, this topic seized my attention. It is also a topic which is highly relevant to counselling psychology practice.

The seeds of my interest in parental loss during young adulthood can be traced to a time when a combination of my personal experience of parental loss coincided with my professional development as a counselling psychologist, requiring me to undertake research as part of my role. This served to cement my interest in parental loss during young adulthood as an area of potential study.

A number of years prior to writing this thesis, my father was diagnosed with frontal lobe degeneration. Each stage of the illness involves memory degeneration. As I write this thesis my father is with me, but unfortunately his illness has caused many changes. Such changes include: gradual personality change and speech impairment. I am very lucky to have my father during my young adult life, but this experience has given me insight into the challenges faced as a young adult experiencing and anticipating loss. My personal experience of loss involved gradually losing a role model who was the most important influence in my life. This personal experience fuelled my interest in discovering more about parental loss. I have also witnessed a few close friends who have experienced bereavement which gave me the insight into the development changes, the psychological and social effects which they experienced after the loss of their parents.
In addition, I have worked in the area of loss and bereavement in my clinical practice. However, the majority of clients seeking support were older adults, which generated curiosity as to the potential difficulties involved in seeking support in young adulthood.

After conducting a review of the literature on parental loss it became apparent that parental loss during young adulthood is a neglected field of investigation. I wanted to address some of the deficits and bridge some of the gaps that currently exist in the literature on parental loss. Part of my motivation in undertaking this research topic was to raise the profile of the psychological effects of loss within the field of counselling psychology.

This thesis focuses on three different areas of loss (Sections B, C, and D) that are all linked to the practice of counselling psychology with this client group. An overview of each section is now provided.

1.1 SECTION B: RESEARCH

Section B is the empirical research study which explores the subjective experience of parental loss during young adulthood. The aim of this research study was to explore the subjective experiences in order to understand what young adults mean by parental loss, how they cope with the loss and the coping strategies adopted by young adults. The purpose is to develop a grounded theory that will help explain parental loss during young adulthood from the young adult’s perspective and so comprehend what influences the bereavement process and life after the loss.

The objectives are listed below:

- To generate detailed descriptions of the psychological and social processes involved in bereavement during young adult development (18-30 years of age).
- To generate a theoretical analysis of the shared meanings and behaviours of young adults who have experienced parental loss.
- To develop a substantive model that explains the process of parental loss.
- To identify changes in identity caused by parental loss.
• To identify what this research group have to do and what behaviours they employ in order to cope with life without their parent.
• To identify potential counselling and support needs for young adults who have experienced parental loss.

1.2 SECTION C: PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE
In this section I have presented a case study that focuses on my clinical practice in treating a client who experienced traumatic events with multiple losses and as a reaction is showing signs of posttraumatic stress disorder. I chose to present this particular case because I found it a valuable learning experience from both a personal and professional perspective. This case was my first experience of working with a refugee who experienced torture and multiple losses. This case led me to develop on a personal level by reflecting on and challenging my own concepts of the world and how it operates; it led me to explore my own cultural and racial identity whilst addressing my anxiety around war and torture and to gain insight into complicated grief and posttraumatic symptoms. It also led me to develop on a professional level by integrating cross-cultural sensitivity in therapy. Finally, this case contributed to my understanding of the experience of loss.

1.3 SECTION D: CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE
Lastly, section D of the thesis critically reviews the literature on the role of hope in clinical practice. My inspiration for carrying out this review emerged from my clinical practice. Working in the area of bereavement and posttraumatic stress disorder, I became increasingly aware of the complicated grief reactions and trauma reactions which contained an element of hopelessness.

For years, therapists and researchers have suggested that hope is an important catalyst in the process of change. I therefore thought it was worth examining the role of various interventions in the literature on inspiring hope within counselling practice, with a focus on bereavement counselling, as it is a topic which is highly relevant to counselling psychology practice.
The literature review considers the ways in which the role of hope has been applied to clinical practice. The aim of the review was to appraise the effectiveness of the current applications and to indicate directions for future development. A review of the psychological theories on hope was critiqued, in addition to the literature on hope-inspiring intervention. The role of hope in bereavement counselling highlighted the loss of hope amongst those experiencing loss and the need for hope inspiration. The review highlights the need for counselling psychology and other mental health professionals to gain a deeper understanding of the structure of hope, in order to progress further, which in turn can influence practice and enhance the care of patients.

1.4 Summary and conclusion
I found the process of conducting the research, reviewing the literature and reflecting on my client work immensely valuable in terms of my personal and professional development. The process has provided me with insight and understanding into this topic and client group in numerous ways.

One of the most important concerns arising from this thesis is the lack of understanding society has about loss and the bereavement process. This lack of understanding has a profound impact on those experiencing the loss. For this reason, I fully intend to raise the profile of this topic within the field of counselling psychology research and in my clinical practice as a counselling psychologist.

Overall, I found the process of conducting this thesis and working closely with the participants inspiring.
Coping with parental loss during young adult development:
The search for meaning and reconstruction of identity
ABSTRACT

A parental loss can be devastating. To date, studies that have been conducted suggest that the death of a parent can be a significant life event with consequences for one's sense of self, for one's life perspective, and for various social relationships (Scharlach & Fredriksen, 1993; Umberson, 2003).

An investigation of existing research literature was undertaken to explore the experience of parental loss in young adulthood. The review compromises an overview of theoretical approaches to bereavement and the various factors which determine the grief experience, with a particular focus on coping skills. Additionally, the review explores the meaning in response to loss.

Literature to date has focused on the loss of a parent in childhood, adolescence, and in older adults. The literature also places great emphasis on the loss of a parent through divorce. Little information exists about the impact of parent death on young adulthood. The young adulthood years, roughly defined as early twenties to thirties, represent a period of development, profound change and importance. At present, there is a lack of information on how the death of a parent influences identity at this development stage.

The study aimed to generate a grounded theory model that would help to explain parental loss in young adulthood from the perspectives of those who have experienced a parental loss so as to comprehend what influences the bereavement process and life after the loss.

The sample consisted of ten young adults who experienced parental death between the ages of 18-30 years. The sample consisted of eight women and two men. The study used a constructivist grounded theory methodology, incorporating qualitative methods and grounded theory analysis techniques to inform the process of sampling, data collection and data analysis. Initially data collection consisted of purposeful sampling, and was then superseded by theoretical sampling in that the data collection was driven by the emerging theory. I used a focus sample in order to seek out participants who had experienced the topic of interest. Participants were chosen
because of their expert knowledge of the phenomenon being investigated, rather than on the basis of their representativeness.

Participants described their personal stories and their perception of parental loss in young adulthood. Through these rich descriptions a model of parental loss in young adulthood was developed. The model helps to explain parental loss in young adulthood from the perspectives of the young adults. The model helps us to understand what influences the bereavement process and life after the loss. The results highlight the major life changes that a parental loss can provoke. There was significant evidence that the loss of a parent evokes dramatic self-assessment and change. The participants described a variety of ways in which the loss of their parent impacted on their sense of self, emotions, family and relationships. The overarching task of the young adult is to make sense of the loss and come to live and manage life without their parent. The findings suggest that the participants moved backward and forwards along the acceptance pathway. The journey was not linear. There was significant evidence in the data which suggests that the process of experiencing a parental loss is a self reliant process influenced by society.

The results of the study were examined within the context of existing theoretical and empirical literature in this field of interest. Although there is a growing body of research which supports some of the findings generated in this study, none of the studies relate to the young adult experience, hence making this an original study. It makes a unique contribution to understanding the impact of the loss and the coping strategies and reconstruction of meaning involved in life after the loss. The methods adapted proved to be capable of meeting the aims of the study. The study provides a sound platform for future research to verify and expand the model of parental loss in young adulthood. It also has an application in counselling psychology delivery.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction
This chapter begins to build a justification for this study. The study presented here examines the world of young adults (aged 18 to 30 years of age) who have experienced parental loss. The research concentrates on the meaning of parental loss at this developmental age. The primary aim is to explore the subjective experiences in order to understand what they mean by parental loss, how they cope with the loss and the coping strategies adopted by young adults. The purpose is to develop a grounded theory model that will help explain parental loss in young adulthood from the young adult’s perspective and so comprehend what influences the bereavement process and life after the loss and how psychological services can better facilitate this process.

This chapter discusses the statement of the problem and the significance of the study. Finally, this chapter ends with a description of the thesis structure.

1.2 Terminology used in the thesis
The use of terminology can be persistent; therefore, to avoid confusion, it seems appropriate to clarify the terms that will be used in this thesis before proceeding further.

The term ‘young adult’ refers to the stage between adolescence and mature adulthood. It refers to a person in the early years of adulthood, roughly between the ages of 18 to 30.

Bereavement often refers to the state of loss, and grief to the reaction to loss.

I have abbreviated the term Posttraumatic Stress Disorder to PTSD throughout the advanced case study. I have also abbreviated the term Cognitive Behaviour therapy to CBT throughout the advanced case study and critical literature review.
1.3 Statement of the Problem


Young adults are expected to be ‘grown up’ and ‘independent of their parents’. However, due to this generalised expectation young adults are not the focus of care when they experience the loss of a parent, but rather children or older adults are the focus. The young adulthood years, roughly defined as 18-30 years, represent a period of development, profound change and importance. According to Erikson, 1968, and Rindfuss, 1991, ‘it is a time of frequent change as various possibilities in love, work and world views are explored’ (cited in Arnett, 2000, p. 469). Young adults make decisions about choosing a life partner, pursuing a professional career, and planning a family. Arnett (2000, p. 469) argues that ‘this developmental period sees intrinsic psychological processes such as striving to attain authentic independence, engaging in intimate relationships without losing oneself, and formulating life aspirations’.

Cait (2008, p. 334) argues that the death of a parent can feel like the young adult’s world has crumbled and their sense of self may become confused. Their way of making meaning of the world is seriously challenged. Part of putting the pieces back together involves introspection and self-evaluation. Cait (2008, p. 334) suggests that this reconstruction can influence identity.
1.4 Significance of the Study

Pursuing this interest seemed appropriate on several fronts. Importantly, it was an area that fired my imagination, a key consideration if I were to engage in undertaking it as the research topic for my Doctorate. Moreover, there is a lack of information on parental loss in young adult development and the ways in which bereaved persons search for meaning in the aftermath of losing loved ones. In addition, there is a lack of information on and how the death of a parent influences identity at this development stage. A study of young adults who have experienced a parental death during young adulthood would inform psychologists and other mental health treatment providers of the psychological impact of such a loss in young adulthood and thus thus inform treatment practices, interventions and identify potential support needs. This study is important in its attention to a neglected field of investigation. The potential psychological impact of a parental loss can be devastating. It can challenge the view of the world and the future of those that experience the loss. This devastation prompts the questions central to the research presented here. These questions are:

- What are the psychological and social impacts of parental loss on young adults?
- How do young adults cope with the loss and what coping strategies do they adopt?
- How does bereavement affect the meaning structures or ‘assumptive worlds’ of bereaved young adults in terms of values and priorities, for their life perspectives, identities, social and interpersonal relationships?

The research problem emerging from this study highlights that there is currently an insufficient conceptual or theoretical understanding of what young adults mean by parental loss. This doctoral study therefore aimed to develop a model of bereavement as an active process of meaning making in the wake of the loss.
1.5 The structure of the thesis

The thesis comprises of a number of chapters which provide an overview of the existing knowledge related to the field at the outset of the study, clearly describing the research methods used and the subsequent findings. The thesis concludes with a consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of the study, the place of the theory with respect to current knowledge, and the implications arising from the study for practice and future research. The thesis compromises several chapters:

Chapter 2: Presents an overview of the literature related to development across the lifespan, depicted by traditional and relational theoretical models. The major theoretical models of bereavement are then presented. In addition, research and theory on the risk and protective factors which influence the bereavement process are then discussed with particular focus on coping models. Furthermore, the suitability of the different research methodologies and designs to provide information on the influence of parental loss is reviewed and critiqued. Finally, the chapter concludes by summarising the key issues which support conducting a study to explore the meaning in response to loss.

Chapter 3: Considers the factors influencing the study methodology and justifies the decision to adopt a constructivist grounded theory approach.

Chapter 4: Provides a comprehensive account of the methods used in the study. Consideration is given to the ethical issues pertinent to the study as well as issues relating to the trustworthiness of the study.

Chapter 5: Describes and explains the analysis of the data.

Chapter 6: Presents the findings of the study.
**Chapter 7:** Provides a detailed discussion of the findings in relation to previous research. It then considers some of the limitations of the study, a critical reflection on the methodology and application of findings.

**Chapter 8:** Provides the storyline and concluding remarks.

The following chapter therefore aims to provide a background to the study by providing an overview of literature relevant to parental loss.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction
The purpose of the present chapter is to review and synthesize the literature addressing parental loss in young adult development. This chapter examines pre-existing knowledge and literature that provides contextual information about the impact of parental loss on identity in young adulthood development. Another area of exploration is in regard to how people cope with loss and the various coping strategies adopted. In addition the literature on the process of finding meaning in response to loss will be reviewed.

Research and theory on young adult development will be presented first with a specific focus on the development tasks of young adulthood which contribute to identity development as depicted by traditional and relational theoretical models. Secondly, theories on bereavement will be presented. In addition, research and theory on the risk and protective factors which influence the bereavement process will be discussed with particular focus on coping models. Furthermore, the suitability of the different research methodologies and designs to provide information on the influence of parental loss is reviewed and critiqued. Finally, the chapter concludes by summarising key issues raised that support conducting a study to explore the meaning of bereavement in young adult development.

Particular emphasis is placed on the social constructivist perspective as it is the model on which this dissertation is grounded.
2.2 Searching the literature

The aim at this stage of the research was to conduct a selective but comprehensive review of the relevant literature. The rationale for the review was to provide a contextual and theoretical understanding of previous research and theoretical study that related to the field of parental loss. The goal was to identify any work that was relevant, identify gaps in knowledge in existing published literature and develop an understanding for the study that was conducted.

The review aimed to identify all relevant, up-to-date studies published in peer-reviewed journals. Papers were identified by searching several electronic databases such as:

- NISS EBSCO (includes databases such as PsychLIT)
- NLM Gateway (includes MEDLINE, and Medline Plus)
- CINAHL – Nursing and Allied Literature
- Ingenta database (www.ingenta.com)
- Cochrane library

Commercial directories searched:
- Google (www.google.com)

Also, papers were identified by searching libraries such as:
- The British Library
- City University Library
- Senate House Library

The search keywords included: ‘Parental loss’, ‘young adults experiencing parental loss’, ‘adjustment’, ‘coping with loss’, ‘social impact of parental loss’ ‘psychological impact of parental loss’, ‘emotional impact of parental loss’, ‘the meaning of loss’. The search was limited to English language articles. Randomised control trials, observational studies, systematic reviews and descriptive studies were included in the literature search. Additional articles were identified in relation to
concepts emerging from the analysis. The literature is incorporated into the thesis discussion (Chapter 6).

Due to the lack of research explicitly focusing on parental loss in young adulthood a broad approach was taken which included parental loss during childhood and adolescence. These two developmental periods are intended to serve as a benchmark for understanding issues of parental loss during young adulthood.

2.3 Developmental Literature
Recent reviews of theory and research regarding bereavement in children (Oltjenbruns, 2001) and adolescents (Balk & Corr, 2001; Christ, Siegel & Christ, 2002) highlight the critical importance of taking a developmental perspective in investigating and understanding the effects of bereavement.

There have been a number of important theoretical contributions to the understanding of development across the lifespan. Much theorising and research has been generated by Erikson’s psycho-social development model (Erikson, 1968) including the work of Grotevant (1987), Berzonsky (1999), Marcia (1993) and Meeus (1996).

Great figures in the study of child development include Freud and Piaget. According to Freud, early experiences play a large role in personality development and continue to influence behaviour later in life. Freud depicted adulthood as a canvas in which the early unconscious conflicts of childhood were re-enacted, rather than as a period of further development (Levinson, 1978). Freud and Piaget assumed that development is largely completed at the end of adolescence. Given these assumptions, they had no basis for concerning themselves with the possibilities of adult development or with the nature of the life cycle as a whole (Levinson, 1978).

The work of Erikson (1968), Levinson (1978), and Keniston (1971) all contributed to the theoretical groundwork for young adulthood. According to developmental theorists (Erikson, 1963 and Havighurst, 1952), this developmental stage presents a number of developmental tasks that must be successfully completed in order to
move onto the next stage in the life cycle. As such, there is evidence in the literature which indicates that stress can accompany the transition during this developmental stage (Havighurst, 1952, cited in Bocknek, 1986). Havighurst and Erikson viewed development as social and psychological – a learning experience, in which the developmental tasks are ‘bio-socio-psychological tasks’, midway between an individual need and a societal demand (Bocknek, 1986). Erikson’s concept crucially incorporates cultural and social aspects. Erikson believed that his psychosocial principle is genetically inevitable in shaping human development.

Developmental psychologists have tended to put emphasis on the role of identity during this developmental stage as it is a stage which offers the greatest opportunity to identify exploration in the areas of love, work, and worldviews (Arnett, 2000, p. 473). The groundbreaking theoretical work by Levinson (1978) and Erikson (1963, 1968), Keniston (1971), as well as the empirical advances of Marcia (1966, 1967, 1987), have paved the way for much of the research on identity development (Beronsky & Adams, 1999). Developmental psychologists have theorised that identity is developed over the course and stages in life. Most of the body of research on identity has been focused on adolescence (Adams, 1999. However, Erikson (1950, 1968) argued that industrialised societies allow a prolonged adolescence for extended identity explorations. This leads to the assumption that most identity exploration takes place in young adulthood rather than adolescence (cited in Arnett, 2000, p. 473).

According to Arnett (2000, p. 473) ‘identity formation involves trying out various life possibilities and gradually moving toward making enduring decisions’. Erickson (1963) proposed in his theory on development, that individuals reach a clear sense of identity, known as ‘identity achievement’, where they have explored their identity and gained self-knowledge. Identity is the aggregate of past experiences, endowed abilities, and social-role opportunities, matched by the recognition of significant others in one’s environment (Bocknek, 1980). Yet, Erickson also acknowledged that others experience difficulties forming an identity which can lead to ‘identity confusion’. ‘Erickson placed identity on one pole on a dimension pertaining to self-knowledge, which extended to identity confusion at the opposite pole (Schwartz. et al., 2000, p. 505).
Erikson’s model of psycho-social development (1968) provides a framework for understanding the key tasks of development, including the development of identity. According to Erikson, individuals are confronted with developmental stages throughout the lifespan which require resolution. The model has eight distinct stages, each with two possible outcomes: Trust versus Mistrust, Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt, Initiative versus Guilt, Industry versus Inferiority, Identity versus Role Confusion, Intimacy versus Isolation, Generativity versus Stagnation, and Ego Integrity versus Despair. Each of these stages is governed by a central conflict that deals with the self in relation to the external world. According to the theory, successful completion of each stage results in a healthy personality and successful interactions with others. Failure to successfully complete a stage can result in a reduced ability to complete further stages and therefore, a more unhealthy personality and sense of self.

Erikson maintained that the transition to young adulthood begins once individuals forge an identity from the various roles and skills they have cultivated during childhood and adolescence. For Erikson the core issue and stage of young adulthood is the conflict between ‘intimacy versus isolation’. It is at this stage that intimate relationships are formed. Erikson proposed that success leads to strong relationships, while failure results in loneliness and isolation.

Erikson (1968) further purports that individuals who avoid intimacy may experience a ‘deep sense of isolation and consequent self-absorption’ (p.264). Erickson believes that intimacy is the critical component of development in young adulthood because it provides the cornerstone for developing committed mutual relationships and thus the developmental ‘armour’ to succeed at such cultural practices as marriage, parenthood and professional affiliation. Once individuals ‘master’ the developmental task of intimacy, they are equipped to move to the crisis of Generativity vs. Stagnation.

Erikson maintained that ego ‘identity is never ‘established’ as an ‘achievement’, as something static or unchangeable, but is a ‘forever to-be-revised sense of reality of the Self within social reality’” (Erikson, 1968, 24, 211). Erikson (1968) further suggests that identity remains a life long concern and that a redefinition of one’s
ego-identity emerges quite commonly when major role changes occur. Other issues that tend to renew identity concerns are: one’s first job, marriage, parenthood, the death of one’s parents, divorce, illness, unemployment and retirement. The ability to cope with these later identity issues that result from major changes in one’s role in life may well depend on the degree of success with which one has mastered the adolescent identity crises.

A number of researchers have empirically examined Erikson’s theory of young adult development (Ryff & Migdal, 1984; Patterson & Stewart, 1993). Ryff and Migdal (1984) examined the self-perceived importance of intimacy and generativity in a sample of young adult women (aged 18 to 30) and middle-aged women (aged 40 to 55) using personality scales to define intimacy (e.g. affiliation and interpersonal affect) and ‘generativity’ (i.e. dominance, breadth of interests and innovation). Ryff and Migdal (1984) found intimacy to be more highly valued in young adult and middle-aged women, therefore their results support Erikson’s theory. Patterson and Stewart (1993) examined motives of generativity in a sample of young adult men and women at an average of 28 years of age. Their findings indicate that individuals begin to struggle with generative issues in young adulthood, thus supporting Erikson’s developmental theory.

Recent developmental studies (Bagnoli, 2003; Nadeau, 1998, 2001) view identity development as socially constructed. Bagnoli (2003) suggests that young people construct and reconstruct their identities and uses a relational approach that ‘relies on the assumption that we construct our identities in a dialogue with the other’ (p. 203). Theorists studying women’s development outline the centrality of interconnectedness and interpersonal relationships for identity development (Miller, 1976; Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1987; Lyons, 1990; Surrey, 1991; Mahoney, 1996).
2.4 Theoretical Underpinnings in Bereavement and Grief Research

Balk (1996) argues that the complexity of young adult grief requires the use of models to guide researchers and practitioners’ in their interpretations of young adult bereavement and practitioners in their work with young adult grievers. The major theoretical models represented in the literature are discussed below.

A number of key theories of bereavement can be identified in the literature, each having an impact on the conceptualisation of bereavement and coping with bereavement. Although an integrated theory of bereavement has not yet been achieved, several theories have attempted to explain this phenomenon. Historically the five most influential theories are: psychodynamic theory, attachment theory, psychoanalytic cognitive theory, behaviourally orientated theory, and sociological theory.

**Psychodynamic theory of bereavement**

Aranda & Milne (2000) give a brief summary of the backdrop of the psychodynamic theory. They make clear that the main tenet of psychoanalytic theory is that intrapsychic processes dictate the course of grief. Internalisation of the dead is part of grief work and is the preliminary stage of letting go of the deceased. Differences in functioning are explained by characteristics of early bonding or cathartic experiences of the bereaved. The bereaved person identifies with the lost figure and the shared relationship influences the bereavement process.

The first systematic study on loss is credited to Sigmund Freud (1957). According to Freud (1991), normal grief is the person’s reaction to the loss of a loved one which may be resolved after an unspecified period of time. Freud purported that a person’s libido is attached (cathected) to the loved object: the beloved person and their loss requires all thoughts about the deceased person to be brought to consciousness in order for the libido to be detached from them (decathected). The mourner’s struggle to maintain the original attachment means that completing this grief work, or catharsis, is long, difficult and painful, hence the term ‘grief work’. Decathexis ensures that the love object does not offer gratification to the bereaved person any more, and that the libido is freed for investment in a new attachment object.
In Freud’s work on ‘Mourning and Melancholia’, which originates from 1917, Freud described melancholia as a ‘profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings, and culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment’ (Penguin Freud Library, Vol. 11, p. 248). Freud further purports that ‘in mourning it is the world that has become poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego itself’ (p. 254). Freud noted that melancholics experienced remorse, guilt and self-criticism as a way for the ego to express this ambivalence.

Freud theorised that the intense and unreasoning nature of melancholia indicated that what had been lost was not just the external person for whom one mourns but an internalisation of the object to which there had been an intense and probably ambivalent unconscious attachment of desire. Such an attachment implies a degree of narcissistic identification. In such cases the loss of the person in the real world then precipitates an internal loss which is experienced as a psychic wound, as a lesion on one’s self-esteem (Clark, 2005).

Grief, as Freud saw it, ‘freed the mourner from his or her attachments to the deceased, so that when the work of mourning was completed, mourners were free to move ahead and become involved in new relationships’ (Neimeyer, Baldwin & Gillies, 2006, p. 716). Although Freud’s theory is a well supported theory, it does not account for such issues as social, environmental factors, or developmental phases.

**Attachment theory**


Bowlby described attachment theory as ‘a way of conceptualizing the propensity of human beings to make strong affectional bonds to particular others and of explaining the many forms of emotional distress and personality disturbance, including anxiety, anger, depression, and emotional detachment, to which unwilling
separation and loss give rise’ (Bowlby, 1979, p. 127). Bowlby proposed that ‘attachment begins during infancy, where the infant forms an attachment to one or more figures’ (cited in Browne and Shlosberg, 2006, p. 134). Bowlby (1969) also contended that attachment behaviour continues to play a necessary role into adulthood (cited in Browne and Shlosberg, 2006). The literature on adult attachment has since expanded and shows empirical support that attachment remains a key feature in relationships throughout adult life and that the primary attachment figure is often a friend or partner (Hazan & Shaver, 1987), although Ainsworth (1991) argues that the attachment to parents has not disappeared (cited in Browne and Shlosberg, 2006, p. 134). To conclude this statement, Browne and Shlosberg (2006, p. 135) shared a finding from Ainsworth (1991), which suggests that many adults continue a meaningful association with their parents and response to the death of a parent often demonstrates that the initial attachment bond has endured.

Bowlby (1960) researched grief and mourning and the relationship to attachment. He claimed that ‘grief and mourning processes in children and adults appear whenever attachment behaviours are activated but the attachment figure continues to be unavailable’ (cited in Bretherton, 1992, p. 764). With regards to the literature on loss, Bowlby (1980) uses information-processing theories to explain the increasing stability of internal working models as well as their defensive distortion. Bowlby proposed that ‘defensive exclusion protects the individual from experiencing unbearable mental pain, confusion, or conflict, which is predicted to interfere with the accommodation of internal working models to external reality’ (cited in Bretherton, 1992, p. 764).

Bowlby’s model suggests that recovery from bereavement occurs in four phases: numbness, craving and searching for the deceased, disorganization and despair, and reorganization (Balk, 1998). A critical implication of attachment theory for bereavement research is that of ‘styles’ of attachment developed in childhood relationships. Secure, anxious/ambivalent, dismissing, and unresolved/disorganised attachment can affect one’s response to subsequent losses (Shaver & Tancredy, 2001, cited in Gillies & Neimeyer, 2006). Thus, early childhood attachment patterns can affect responses to bereavement by configuring the meaning of the loss, in such
a way that it is more radically threatening for individuals with less secure attachment histories.

Attachment theory provides a framework for understanding emotional reactions involved in relationships, isolation, and loss in adults. Currently, attachment theories and research are expanding and branching out which will aid future psychological research on this subject.

*Psychoanalytic-cognitive theories*

A growing body of literature addressing theories of bereavement emerged in response to Freud’s theory. Examples of psychoanalytic-cognitive theories include the work of Bowlby in his attachment theory (1960), Klass, Silverman and Nickman (1996) and Parkes (1972) whose work has been influential in the bereavement field.

Research on bereavement in adult life was stimulated by Parkes’ (1972) studies. Parkes focused on cognitive functioning and goal-orientedness in adaption. According to Parkes, ‘normal bereavement involves a period of grieving characterised by distress and impaired functioning, followed by recovery. Recovery involves replanning and attaining a new level of functioning’ (Aranda & Milne, 2000, p. 34). Parkes’ theory highlights the psychosocial aspect of bereavement. Parkes (1972) argues that stigma and deprivation play a significant part in the overall outcome of the grief process’. Lydall (2002, p. 12) defines stigma as ‘the attitude of society to the bereaved person while deprivation refers to the absence of those psychological benefits which the deceased had provided to the bereaved person during their lifetime’. Lydall (2002, p. 12) suggests that ‘recognition of these psychosocial factors can be important when providing therapeutic intervention to bereaved individuals as they may exacerbate the intensity of the grief process’.
**Behaviourally oriented theories**

Behavioural approaches to bereavement tend to be more change-oriented and primarily concerned with how to promote change after bereavement. In contrast with the psychoanalytically-oriented models, Cleiren (1993) states that behaviourally-orientated theories tend to view grief as a natural phenomenon which can be reinforced or inhibited by external stimuli rather than by intrapsychic process. Therefore, behavioural approaches tend to focus on observable manifestations.

Some behavioural theorists suggest a biological basis to physiological and psychological symptoms of grief while others view the environment as the basis of grief symptoms (cited in Aranda & Milne, 2000, p. 35). According to Gauthier and Marshall (1977), ‘the suddenness of the loss, the significance of the loss and the availability of a replacement for the deceased determine the severity of the bereavement reaction. In addition, social reinforcement for grieving or avoidance of grieving may contribute to complicated bereavement outcomes’ (cited in Aranda & Milne, 2000, p. 35).

**Sociological theory**

Sociological perspectives on bereavement pay particular attention to the grief responses of family members and their wider social network. Some studies focus upon ways in which classic social variables, such as gender, class or ethnicity, affect bereavement (Field, Hockey, & Small, 1997, cited in Aranda & Milne, 2000). With every society come cultural norm and values. Martin & Doka (2000) propose that ‘society has norms regulating the expression of emotion and these define who may grieve, what one may grieve and how to express such grief” (cited in Lydall, 2002, p. 26). Walter (1997 & 1999) researched how society influences the way people grieve. Walter (1997) investigated the English culture of grieving. In light of his findings, it is suggested that emotional and spiritual responses to personal dilemmas are regarded as private matters, so the public response expected of mourners is that of stoical reserve, albeit with covert indications of private pain (cited in Aranda & Milne, 2000, p. 36).
The sociological theory highlights the influence society has on the bereavement process. ‘In particular they call attention to the dominance of expressive models of grief and to the importance attached to professional intervention’ (Aranda & Milne, 2000, p. 36).

Neimeyer (1998) argues that grief theory should be unique to each bereaved individual, with each individual seen as an active agent in the shaping of their world. This view of grief suggests that grief is essentially a process of meaning reconstruction and narrative revision. According to Neimeyer (1998) ‘meaning reconstruction in response to a loss is the central process in grieving’ (p.110). He further argues that the ‘act of retelling the story of grief is a social one and through it the bereaved can step out of isolation’ (Neimeyer, 1998, p. 110). Through personal and communal rituals there is a possibility of self-transformation, as well as the conversion of the relationship between the bereaved person and the deceased and their social world to one where an ongoing connection with the deceased is possible to one where an ongoing connection to the deceased is possible. Grieving, then, is understood as a process of reconstructing the world of meaning and the re-learning of the self (Neimeyer, 1998, cited in Aranda & Milne, 2000).

In conclusion, there are a number of theories which have been developed to explain the process of bereavement. Taken together, they contribute to the current understanding of grief and bereavement and may provide guidance for clinicians.

2.5 Risk and protective factors – coping with the loss

Predictors of psychological adjustment after bereavement

Loss is a complex phenomenon, influenced by many factors. There have been various attempts to determine what personal or other factors influence grief (Rando, 1984; Sanders, 1988; Worden, 1988). Risk and protective factors have frequently been cited as influencing outcome following parental death (Dowdney, 2000). During the past decade, the concept of ‘protective factors’ has become firmly established in the field of psychological risk research (Masten & Garmezy, 1985; Rutter, 1979, 1985).
The research literature on young adults and bereavement provides theories which can aid our understanding of the changes and challenges young adults face during development. According to the literature, the loss of a parent can lead to developmental risk (Kiser, Ostoja, Pruitt, 1988 & Goodman, 2002). As previously mentioned, the stage of young adulthood (18-30 years old) presents the developmental task of forming intimate relationships which involves achieving emotional separation from parents (Balk, 1996). This task must be successfully completed in order to move on to the next stage of the life cycle. Most adolescents and young adults do not experience any major crises or events that completely change their lives. However, some adolescents do experience some form of trauma or crisis that can create chaos and instability in their lives.

Balk (1996) claims that coping with grief is not a normative life transition for an adolescent. Although Balk directs this comment towards adolescents, it can be argued that it applies also to young adults. Balk (1998) further argues that adolescents do not have the luxury of putting developmental tasks on hold while engaging in grief work. If experienced, the significant loss is coming at a time in a young adult’s life where they are making life decisions, such as devising a career and developing intimate relationships.

Patterson et al. (1992) note that parents have a significant impact on the development of self-identity and self-esteem in children, adolescence and young adulthood. Worden (1996) found evidence that children who experience parental loss display lower levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy. This finding is also supported by Stroebe & Stroebe, 1987; Vachon, Sheldon, Lancee, Lyall, Rogers & Freeman, 1982; Windholz, Marmar & Horowitz, 1985.

Few events would seem to hold as much potential to disrupt a child’s familiar patterns of living, challenge assumptive worlds, or place a child at risk of enduring psychological distress as the death of a parent (Siegel, Karus, & Raveis, 1996). It has been noted that the death of a loved one can be life changing for children and that the death of a parent may be the defining moment of a child’s life for many years afterwards (Robinson, 1998). The literature points to predictions that the loss of a parent during this developmental stage might lead to depression, suicide,
anxiety, guilt, despair, anger, academic problems and loss of friendships (Dowdney, 2000, Goodman, 2002). Detailed analyses of the evidence in support of this conclusion are presented elsewhere in childhood research (Raveis, Siegal & Karus, 1999, Bowlby, 1980, Weller, Weller, Fristad & Bowes, 1991). However, further evidence is needed to support these claims in the young adult literature.

Scharlach and Fredriksen (1993) were interested in the long-term impact of parent death on adults. In-depth, structured interviews were conducted with eighty-three adults who had lost a parent between one and five years prior to the date of the study. This study suggests that the death of a parent can be a significant life event with consequences for one's sense of self, for one's life perspective, and for various social relationships. The respondents in Scharlach and Fredriksen’s (1993) study reported that their experience of parental death impacted on their sense of maturity, personal priorities, career plans, feelings about their own mortality, and the importance and nature of various social relationships.

Research has drawn attention to the importance of variations in the ways people deal with threat and challenge. The experience of loss may be universal, but responses to loss are widely variable and there is no one clearly defined course or process of bereavement. As discovered in the study by Thompson et al. (1998), not all children who experience parental death suffer severe adversity. There may be a subset, however, which does end up with clinically significant problems. Dowdney (2000, p. 823) stated that ‘the factors associated with bereavement influence the outcome rather than the bereavement itself’. These factors include characteristics such as age, gender, the nature and quality of relationship to the deceased, type of loss (e.g, anticipated, unanticipated, violent or traumatic), amongst many more other factors.

Adolf Meyer (1957) found evidence to support the importance of person-environment interactions at these key turning points in people’s lives (Rutter, 1986). Factors outside as well as within the individual needed to be considered within the context of person-environment interactions. External factors are found within the individual’s environment and include familial social resources. Internal factors
include: coping style, mental health history, self-regulation of emotions, developmental level, self-esteem, locus of control, and beliefs.

Thompson et al. (1998) speculate that a minority of youths may have developed a repertoire of coping skills to deal with traumatic events or may have a broader kin network that serves to buffer the negative impact of parental death. In other words, certain minority groups may have specific protective factors present in their lives that serve to decrease or wipe out any long-standing negative repercussions of parental death on the developing adolescent.

The literature examining the various factors which influence the bereavement process will now be undertaken.

**Relationship of the deceased to the bereaved person**

When considering the variables which impact the experience of bereavement, it is no surprise that one's relationship with the deceased greatly influences an individual's emotional response to the loss (Meshot & Leitner, 1993; Rubin, 1992). The quality of the emotional attachment to the deceased acts as an additional variable in one's response to death. The nature of the bond influences the intensity of one's grief and one's adjustment to a loss (Levy et al., 1994; Meshot & Leitner, 1993; Moss, Resch, & Moss, 1997; Rubin, cited in Muller & Thompson, 2003). Evidence (Bonanno, 1999; Moss, Rubinstein, & Moss, 1997, cited in Muller & Thompson, 2003) in the literature shows that bereaved individuals who had a more positive relationship with the deceased report more intense grief than do those with a less positive relationship.

**Circumstances surrounding the loss**

Regarding type of death, one's reaction to a death is greatly influenced by the manner in which the death occurs. Deaths can be categorized as natural anticipated (e.g., cancer), natural unanticipated (e.g., heart attack), accidental, homicidal, or suicidal (Range, Walston, & Pollard, 1992; Silverman, Range, & Overholser, 1994). Although there is some evidence that type of death is unrelated to resolution of grief (Campbell, Swank, & Vincent, 1991), there is much evidence that type of death
does influence the grief experience or reaction (Drenovsky, 1994; Ginzburg et al., 2002; Levy et al., 1994; Silverman et al. 1994, cited in Muller & Thomson, 2003).

Society plays a role in what is constructed as an ‘acceptable’ or ‘unacceptable’ death. Geneuro (2003) notes that the loss of loved ones through violent means (e.g., suicide or homicide) has been hypothesised to be potentially more traumatic than bereavement through other causes of death. Bailey, Kral and Durham (1999, p. 268) confirm that where the cause of death is suicide, the bereaved experience more feelings of rejection, responsibility and more total grief reactions. These researchers speculate that these reactions are linked to increased levels of shame and perceived stigmatisation associated with such a mode of death.

Lindeman (1944) investigated anticipatory grief and found that prior knowledge of the anticipated death results in mourning prior to the actual death, rather than after it. Worden (1988) suggests that awareness of the impending demise facilitates an acceptance of it, even though this acceptance alternates with denial.

Lydall (2002, p. 28) argues that ‘while there is agreement that anticipatory grief does have an effect on the mourning process, there does not appear to be consensus as to whether the effects of anticipatory grief are beneficial or detrimental once the bereavement occurs’.

Umberson (2003) investigated anticipatory loss. Her sample who reported anticipatory loss reported grieving in the time before the loss. Umberson (2003) found that anticipatory loss helped individuals to prepare for the loss; however this anticipation came at a cost. Daughters in this study reported that as their mother became increasingly impaired, the daughters gradually lost the relationship with their mother.

Several studies (Glick, Weiss & Parkes, 1974; Parkes & Weiss, 1983) have investigated the differences in experiences following anticipatory loss and unanticipated loss. These studies found evidence to support that unanticipated loss overwhelms the adaptive capacities of the individual, seriously compromising his or her functioning to the point that uncomplicated recovery cannot be expected. Since
the adaptive capacities are severely assaulted in unanticipated grief, mourners are often unable to grasp the full implications of their loss. Despite intellectual recognition of the death, there is difficulty as regards to psychological and emotional acceptance of the loss which may continue to seem inexplicable.

**Personal factors**

Age and gender of the bereaved person have been researched and hypothesized to be significant factors which influence the bereavement process. A model developed by Stephen Fleming and Rhena Adolph in the 1980s (Goodman, 2000) suggested that bereavement is handled differently depending on age. This is also supported by Woods (1999). Woods highlights the evidence which suggests that in comparison with younger adults, older adults tend to experience fewer severe grief reactions, showing lower levels of distress and mental health problems (e.g., Breckenridge et al., 1986; McKiernan, 1996, cited Woods, 1999).

Few studies have examined gender differences in grief reactions following the death of a parent. Studies to date have shown similar themes. Worden (1996) found evidence that girls, regardless of age, exhibited more anxiety and somatic symptoms than boys. This study also found that girls tended to idealise the deceased parent more and indicated an increased sensitivity to changes in the family following the parent’s death. In comparison, boys were more likely to self-report their conduct as worse, suggesting that some of their grief was manifested in acting out behaviours. The treatment of grievers also differed by gender of the child. Boys were more frequently admonished to be strong, while girls were more able to share feelings with other friends and family members.

Lydall (2002, p. 21) argues that the social constructivist view of grief posits that society has a ‘template’ for how grief should look, and hence how it ought to be expressed. The accepted ‘look of grief’ as portrayed in the media is characterised more by qualities associated with femininity such as sighing, crying and slowness, rather than those associated with masculinity such as anger, irritability and impatience. Zinner (cited in Lydall, 2002) notes that women do not necessarily feel their loss more painfully than men, but there is evidence that they are far more prepared to express it (cited in Lydall, 2002, p. 22).
The effect on the family

Research by Shapiro (1994) and Umberson (2003) found evidence to show that the loss of a family member alters the dynamic of the family. Shapiro (1994) argues that ‘grief over a death of a family member is twofold: it is both a crisis of attachment and a crisis of identity impacting on the family’s interactions and social roles which may need to be renegotiated’ (cited in Lydall, 2002, p. 32). While sharing one’s grief experience would be important in order to allow family members to feel understood and to re-establish a coherent sense of the continuity of the family over time, Shapiro (1994) and Umberson (2003) found evidence to show that family members refrain from expressing their grief, fearing that this sharing might threaten the family’s emotional stability.

Gilbert (1996, p. 271) believes that family members influence the experience of loss and argues that ‘grief within a family consists of the interplay of individual family members grieving in the social and relational context of the family, with each member affecting and being affected by the others’. Gilbert (1996) found that family members had a strong desire to share a particular view of their common loss.

Loss brings with it a review of one’s role within the family. In terms of functioning of the family, once the nature of the loss has been recognised, the family needs to reorganise itself to function without the now-deceased member. Gilbert (1996) found that rituals can serve to facilitate the passing-down of a role from the deceased to a surviving family member.

Cait (2008) examined female’s experience of parental death and found evidence to support that many young women were expected to take on a care-giving role to support the surviving parent and replace the deceased.

Richter (1986, cited in DeMinco, 1995) found that after parental loss, adolescents described being strong for the mother or father or putting their feelings aside and doing things better to make life easier for the parents. Adolescents in this study sensed that hiding their feelings is the accepted form of behaviour. Richter argues that the adolescent can be seen to be coping from an outsider’s perspective. Cook & Dworkin (1992), note that “viewing their grieving parents as vulnerable and in need
of protection . . . they [young adults] often sacrifice their own need to grieve in an effort to spare their parents because they think that talking about their own grief will just upset them more” (Cook & Dworkin, 1992, p. 127). Research also focuses on life before parental death, focusing on the young adult taking responsibility for the dying parent and taking on the caregiver role. Evidence based research (Caregiving in the US 2004; Stone, Cafferata & Sangl, 1987, cited in Marks et al., 2007) found that women tend to assume a caregiving role for a parent more than men. Marks et al. (2007, p. 1615) argue that ‘many young adults, who lose a parent to death, have participated in some challenging care-giving close to the time of death, and this factor, too, may contribute to the negative effects on mental and physical health that we might expect derive from the loss of a parent to death’.

**Cultural and social aspects**

Lydall (2006, p. 26) argues that ‘society has norms regulating the expression of emotion and these define who may grieve, what one may grieve and how to express such grief’. Martin and Docka (2000, cited in Lydall, 2006, p. 26) argue that ‘when the individual experiences grief which is beyond these socially accepted parameters, it is termed disenfranchised grief’.

Lazare (1989, cited in Worden, 1988) highlighted the importance of the social setting as this is the context of the grief process. Research to date has hypothesised that social conditions may serve to complicate the grief reaction. Lazare (1989) suggests that, when the cause of death is seen as socially unacceptable to the extent that it cannot be spoken of, it might result in a ‘conspiracy of silence’ that isolates the bereaved person who needs to talk about the event. Patterns of social relationships may change, resulting in a sense of abandonment for the bereaved, at a time when the need for social support is great. Boston and Tresize (1988) found evidence that others fear the bereaved person, and that once the socially recognised period of mourning has passed there is considerable pressure exerted on the bereaved person to pretend to be well again. Consequently the bereaved feel that their misery makes them socially unacceptable as their presence spoils the fun of others. The finding by Rando (1983) that the grief of bereaved parents who have
lost a child worsened during the third year, highlighted the gap between the social expectation and the experience of the bereaved, accounting to some degree for the sense of isolation.

Umberson (2003) carried out a quantitative study with qualitative interviews of persons who had experienced the loss of a parent. These interviews highlight the major life changes that a parental loss can provoke. Most of the people she interviewed spoke about how dramatic this change was and how those who had not experienced this yet just did not understand what they were going through. Respondents also remarked on how little place has been made for the expression of grief in contemporary American society (a theme also replicated in Klapper, Moss, Moss, & Rubinstein’s 1994 study on parental death).

2.6 Coping with the loss
Hafen et al. (1996) theorised that what determines how any crisis can be coped with, is not simply the precipitating event and its nature, but also the coping style of the individual. Much of the recent research on coping has derived from the theoretical work of Lazarus (1991). Central to Lazarus’s theory is an argument that, when faced with a stressful event, an appraisal takes place to reduce negative and maintain positive emotions. The appraisal assesses whether an event is relevant to a person’s wellbeing and identifies coping options. A person’s emotional response will, therefore, be influenced by these appraisals.

Moos and Schaefer (1986) researched coping strategies that people use to deal with stressful life events and found three different types of coping strategies. This conceptualization is wellsuited to understanding how individuals cope with the death of a loved parent. The first category is “appraisal-focused coping”, which involves analyzing issues around the death event and processing cognitions around the loss. For example, following the initial shock that occurs shortly after the loss, surviving family members and friends search for some explanation or justification that may account for this death. With time and soul-searching, feelings of anger, guilt, and blame often become supplanted by their efforts to reframe the situation and attach some sort of meaning to the loss (Folkman, 1997).
The second domain of coping involves “problem-focused coping”. This form of coping involves seeking information and support, identifying alternatives, and taking action. Here, bereaved persons search for social support from friends, other family members, or professionals (Cohen, 1988). Sharing the loss with others, either formally or informally, helps individuals unburden themselves of emotional pain, gain acceptance of feelings, and return to a positive psychological state (Lagrand, 1986).

The third domain of coping discussed within this framework involves “emotion-focused coping”, which aims to manage the feelings that a crisis sets off so as to maintain a balance in the emotional sphere. It requires affective regulation, emotional discharge and resigned acceptance.

According to the Dual Process Model (Stroebe & Schut, 1999 & 2001), a bereaved person faces tasks in two distinct domains. The first, ‘loss-oriented stressors’, refers to those activities that deal with separation from a lost attachment figure, and includes crying, missing, yearning, remembering, and all activities dealing with the loss itself – challenges often referred to as ‘grief work’. ‘Restoration-orientated coping’, on the other hand, refers to the activities by which one begins to build a new life and identity in which the lost person may be present in a spiritual and symbolic, but not physical way (cited in Gillies & Neimeyer, 2006). Strobe and Schut (1999) argue that while loss-oriented coping normally occurs with greater frequency immediately following the death and restoration-oriented coping dominates later on, these two mechanisms interact in a dynamic back-and-forth process throughout bereavement.
Aspects of coping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of coping</th>
<th>Aspect of coping</th>
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| Problem-focused coping          | • Active coping  
                             | • Planning             
                             | • Suppression of competing activities  
                             | • Restraint coping        
                             | • Seeking of instrumental social support                                     |
| Emotion-focused coping          | • Seeking of emotional social support  
                             | • Positive reinterpretation  
                             | • Acceptance               
                             | • Denial                     
                             | • Turning to religion         |
| ‘Less useful’ coping            | • Focus on and venting of emotions  
                             | • Behavioural disengagement  
                             | • Mental disengagement       |

**Table 1:** (Carver, Scheier & Weinreaub, 1989)

The majority of research on coping theory is quantitative and is aimed at identifying and measuring coping strategies. Using a quantitative approach to understand coping strategies can pose limitations because responses do not inform us of the reason for the responses, thus limiting our understanding. The adoption of coping strategies is considered to be a contextually driven process. However, the questionnaire-based survey only generates limited contextual information. It is therefore not possible to explain variations and inconsistencies between groups. Consequently, further studies, exploring subjective experience of coping with parental loss are therefore needed.
2.7 Finding meaning and post-loss adjustment

Victor Frankl’s (1962) seminal work, *Man’s Search for Meaning*, asserted that people are driven by a psychological need to find or create a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives, and that this drive can facilitate their capacity to face and transcend even the most horrific of experiences (cited in Gillies & Neimeyer, 2006).

The theories described earlier contribute insights into the grief experience. Neimeyer (2001, cited in Gillies & Neimeyer, 2006) propose that the effort to find, create, or reconstruct meaning is the core element linking these theories.

Bowlby (1980) argues that the loss of an intimate attachment relationship creates profound challenges. Neimeyer (2001) notes that grieving individuals struggle to find meaning which has been challenged by loss. Harvey, Strein and Scott (1995, cited in Gilbert, 2002) found that developing and telling one’s story served as a tool for dealing with loss and trauma.

Neimeyer (2001) argues that a loss prompts people to review their lives in order to move forward in a hoped-for direction. Moreover, Neimeyer (2001) contends that the loss of those who have been the intimate witnesses to our past can undermine even our basic self-definition, because no one any longer occupies the special relational stance toward us needed to call forth and validate the unique fund of shared memories that sustains our sense of who we have been. Therefore, bereavement prompts us to ‘relearn the self’ and ‘relearn the world’ in the wake of loss (Attig, 1996).

The social-cognitive models of coping and adjustment (Jannoff-Bulman, 1992; Parkes, 1988; Taylor, 1983), propose that meaning-making plays a central role in the process of adjusting to loss and trauma because it serves to maintain two aspects of our sense of self that often are most threatened by loss and trauma: our sense of self-worth and our most fundamental beliefs or assumptions about how the world works.
Crossley (2000b) emphasised the role of language as the vehicle for making the lived experience meaningful and that ‘individuals understand themselves through the medium of language, through talking and writing, and it is through these processes that individuals are constantly engaged in the process of creating themselves’ (p.10).

Rosenbalt (1993, p. 103) suggests that parental loss will compel people to search for an alternative basis for defining situation and self. When a relationship that has defined oneself and one’s world has been lost, people may turn to things – both as reminders of the definitions that were maintained in the relationship with the person now lost and in the search for a new meaning that takes the loss into account (cited in Strobe et al. 1993).

The findings of Cait’s (2008) evidence based study suggest that constructing an ongoing relationship with the deceased parent through remembering and maintaining similar interests as the parent are fundamental aspects of young adult behaviour after the death of a parent. This is also evident in Brotherson’s (2000) study on parental behaviour after child death. Findings from this study show that possessions including clothing, photographs, letters and mementoes relating to the deceased may take on particular significance. According to Rosenblatt (1993, p. 103) this is because the meaning inherent in them can assist in the definition of the relationship to the deceased.

Stroebe et al. (1994) offer a dual process model where it is suggested that although bereaved people attempt to make meaning of their loss, they also struggle with the process and therefore it is reported that they use avoidance as a way of coping with the painful feelings. Research (Dowdney, 2000, Goodman, 2002) has found that, when people struggle with finding meaning it can lead to depression, suicide, anxiety, guilt, despair, anger, academic problems, attention difficulty and loss of friendships. Detailed analyses of the evidence in support of this conclusion are presented elsewhere among children samples (Raveis, Siegal & Karus, 1999, Bowlby, 1980, Weller, Weller, Fristad & Bowes, 1991). Although the research indicates that parental loss is linked to increased depression and distress, Moos (1986) and Umberson’s (2003) study found that the bereaved were able to
reconstruct their worlds and reported positive outcomes. Positive outcome categories included statements such as becoming more aware of the importance of loved ones, aware of the fragility of life, appreciative, serious about life and having a greater understanding of life and death. These findings are also similar to those of McMillan et al. (1997); Park et al. (1996); and Tedeschi & Calhoun (1995). The benefits that people reported in these studies typically fell into three categories (growth in character, change in life perspective, and strengthened relationships or an increased sense of connectedness with others). The data suggests that making sense of loss only influences the process of emotional adjustment when such meaning is found within the first few months of loss. When people report making sense for the first time later in the process, the meanings that they report tend to suggest that the world is not as predictable, fair, or benign as they once thought, and these reports of meaning are not significantly associated with emotional adjustment.

Umberson (2003) suggests that the occurrence of the major life event evokes dramatic self-assessment and change. Stress researcher Jill Kiecolt argues that this reassessment occurs because it may help the individual to cope with the life transition and to reduce any resulting stress and emotional upset.

Genevro’s (2004) study found that people experiencing loss were motivated to find something positive in their experience. The participants in this study reported that they accrued some benefit from the loss (typically in terms of reported growth in character, change in life perspective, or strengthening of relationships). Evidence found that with time this sample of participants showed significant improvements in emotional adjustment. Genevro (2004) argues that, sense making and benefit finding represent two distinct processes in the meaning-making process and suggests that they represent two distinguished psychological issues for the bereaved. Whereas making sense of loss involves the tasks of maintaining threatened worldviews (or assumptions of the world), finding benefit seems to involve the task of maintaining or rebuilding a threatened sense of self. In many cases, the loss has forced people to redefine key aspects of their sense of self. Genevro (2004) argues that, whether the benefit that people report involves a change in identity, a change in how one perceives one’s abilities (for example, as able to cope with an event as significant as this), or a change in the importance or value one attributes to positive
relationships, the focus tends to be on the sense of self. In Genevro’s (2004) study, people who were unable to find positive aspects to the event sometimes seemed to suggest that they were unwilling to give up the aspect of the self that had been lost. This study parallels with the findings of other studies of loss and trauma (e.g., McIntosh et al., 1993; McMillen et al., 1997).

Davis & Nolen-Hoeksema (2001) also studied the ways in which the bereaved person makes meaning of the loss of a loved one in a longitudinal study of 205 adults (74 per cent women, 81 per cent white, mean age slightly over 51 years) who were followed for 18 months after the death. Interviews with participants included questions about whether they had been able to make sense of the death and if they had found anything positive in their experience. The researchers found that participants seem to make sense of their loss by seeking to understand the event in terms of their existing worldviews. If the event is comprehensible in terms of existing worldviews, then making sense of the loss does not appear to be a significant challenge. If the event is perceived to be at odds with existing worldviews, the bereaved individual is faced with the task of revisiting either their interpretations of the loss or their worldviews. Differences in the ability to make sense of the loss were related to having religious or spiritual beliefs. Participants who were not able to make sense of the loss within the first six months after the death were also likely to be unable to make sense of it later. A majority of respondents (70 to 80 per cent) at each interview reported that they had perceived benefits in the loss experience. These individuals also showed improvements in emotional adjustment with time. The most commonly reported benefits were that the experience led to growth of character, the strengthening of relationships and changes in perspective. Making sense of the loss and finding benefit in it were not related, indicating that these are two distinct processes.

Gamino and colleagues (Gamino, Sewell & Easterling, 2000; Gamino, Hogan & Sewell, 2002) also examined survivors’ efforts to make meaning of a loss, distress and personal growth in qualitative and quantitative analysis of data from 85 respondents, with an average age of almost 51 years of age. Qualitative analysis indicated that people use multiple forms of meaning in seeking to come to terms with the reality of a loved one’s death. Categories of meaning that emerged from
participants’ responses appeared to refer primarily to the pain and suffering associated with bereavement (e.g., feeling the absence, disbelieving the death) or to more positive and hopeful dimensions of loss (e.g., experiencing relief, continuing the connection). Quantitative analysis indicated that personal growth following bereavement is associated with factors such as having an opportunity to say goodbye to the loved one and seeing some good resulting from the death. Factors associated with higher levels of negative affect were: traumatic death and a perception that the death was in some way preventable.

There is little doubt that the search for meaning following loss represents a distinct part of many peoples’ grief experiences. Clinical reports, and a growing body of research data suggest that meaning is an important issue for many, if not most, people coping with loss and trauma (e.g., Bulman & Worthman, 1977, cited in Davis & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2001).

**2.8 Review and critique of the current methodology used in bereavement research**

Research to date has used both quantitative and qualitative research designs to explore parental loss. However, most of the research on bereavement has been done using quantitative methods (Henschen & Heil, 1992; Horgan, Morse, & Tason, 1996).

Quantitative investigation of grief reactions involves the use of self report rating scales focusing specifically on personal reactions to bereavement. While early research was characterised by the use of nonvalidated measures, in recent years much effort has gone into examining the psychometric properties of the measures used and even into comparing different measures according to their psychometric properties (Neimeyer and Hogan, 2001). Quantitative and experimental research designs have been useful in measuring the psychological impact after parental loss over time. However, depression is generally the main outcome measure in most bereavement studies.

Quantitative research designs to explore parental loss pose a number of limitations. The first to be considered is measurement or instrumentation. There has been a
heavy reliance on questionnaires. Such structured methods prevent participants from constructing and reporting their own reality, as reality is already defined by a limited and predetermined set of responses. The responses may not truly or completely reflect their perceptions (Faux, Walsh, & Deatrick, 1988).

Qualitative research provides an alternative paradigm for bereavement research, one that has the potential to add depth to the assessment of the grieving process, through the use of a broad range of techniques for study design, data collection, analysis and interpretation. These techniques are also reviewed by Neimeyer and Hogan (2001). Qualitative approaches explore socially and personally constructed realities, with the goal being to discover unique and common perspectives of the persons being studied, rather than to generate incontestable ‘facts’ (Strobe et al., 2003).

Qualitative data describe content, contexts, motivations, and process in meaning reconstruction activities compared to the relative sparseness of quantitative methods, assessing these activities with a few self-report responses to questions such as ‘Have you made sense or found meaning in this experience?’ Although multiple choice questions are relevant, to a constructivist eye they take only a snapshot of the process of meaning reconstruction, whereas the qualitative data present a full-length cinematic feature of the experience. Numbers alone cannot convey the emotions underlying reactions to loss. Additionally, it can be argued that not everyone experiences depression, some may experience a ‘deep sadness’ and therefore quantitative measures are not sensitive enough to capture this data.

It is easy to see that qualitative research methods have the potential to broaden and deepen the study of bereavement. However, one of the main disadvantages of qualitative methods is that the descriptive orientation limits the extent to which they can provide casual explanations for grief phenomena, assess the efficacy of grief interventions, or identify correlations of complicated grief (Strobe et al., 2003). However, the quantitative studies reviewed in this chapter raise more questions than answers. These quantitative studies do not have the capacity to explain the difference of experience and subjectivity between participants. The nature and extent of variation does not just apply to the actual loss, but to a wide range of psychological and social impacts during the bereavement process. The complex
variation of psychological and social impacts of parental loss is difficult to encapsulate using standard quantitative measurement tools.

2.9 Conclusion
Due to the emerging literature on parental bereavement focusing on childhood and adolescents, these two developmental periods served as a benchmark for understanding issues of parental loss during young adulthood. Research on adolescent grief (Fleming & Adolph, 1986; Gordon, 1986; Rosen, 1991; Balk, 1995; Christ, 2000; Silverman, 2000) suggests that a death during this period may hold distinct significance for adolescent development. In particular, parental death may influence friendships and intimate relationships.

Nadeau (1998, 2001, cited in Cait, 2008) discusses how, through a symbolic interaction lens, meanings of events can be constructed through personal interactions. Identity and finding meaning are bound by helping people understand experiences. A collaborative process of making sense of death can be particularly important for young adults therefore.


The literature also focuses on how to assist bereaved persons and groups, includes guidelines for clinical caregivers (Rando, 1984), proposals for helping children (Wass & Corr, 1984), strategies for assisting adolescents (Corr & Balk, 1996), and proposals to guide work with specific populations such as persons with AIDS and their survivors (Nord, 1996) and the bereaved elderly (Caserta & Lund, 1992). Again, little information exists on how to assist bereaved young adults.
2.10 Justification for the study

Despite the attention to and interest in identity development (Erikson, 1963; Douvan and Adelson, 1966; Marcia, 1966, 1980; Offer, 1969; Hodgson & Fischer, 1981; Hopkins, 1982; Lytle et al., 1997; Marcia & Friedman, 1970; Orlofsky, 1977; Prager, 1982) it is evident that there are gaps in the literature, as such; there is a pressing need for further conceptual and empirical work in this area. The literature illustrates the many challenges that young adults face after the death of a parent and for some prior to the death. Greater awareness of the challenges and difficulties faced by these young adults is needed.

On the basis of the literature reviewed, further empirical work is warranted to establish more clearly the impact of parental loss on young adult lives. Consequently, there is a need to consider the support that this client group is missing. Given the lack of information and gaps in the literature, the literature therefore reaffirms the general aims of the study which is to explore the subjective experiences in order to understand what young adults mean by parental loss, how they cope with the loss and the coping strategies adopted by young adults. The purpose is to develop a grounded theory model that will help explain parental loss in young adulthood from the young adult’s perspective and so comprehend what influences the bereavement process and life after the loss.

The objectives are listed below:

- To generate detailed descriptions of the psychological and social processes involved in bereavement during young adult development (18-30 years of age).
- To generate a theoretical analysis of the shared meanings and behaviours of young adults who have experienced parental loss.
- To develop a substantive model that explains the process of parental loss.
- To identify changes in identity caused by parental loss.
- To identify what this research group have to do and what behaviours they employ in order to cope with life without their parent.
- To identify potential counselling and support needs for young adults who have experienced parental loss.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY EMPLOYED IN THE RESEARCH

3.0 ESTABLISHING THE RESEARCH PARADIGM

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the methodology selected for conducting this study is presented with justifications for the choices which shaped this study. Methodology encompasses the philosophical principles, the building blocks from which the method and techniques used to uncover the grounded theory are developed. Easterby-Smith et al. (1997, cited in Crossan, 2003) identify three reasons why the exploration of philosophy may be significant with particular reference to research methodology:

1) Firstly, it can help the researcher to refine and specify the research methods to be used in a study, that is, to clarify the overall research strategy to be used. This would include the type of evidence gathered and its origin, the way in which such evidence is interpreted, and how it helps to answer the research questions posed.
2) Secondly, knowledge of research philosophy will enable and assist the researcher to evaluate different methodologies and methods and avoid inappropriate use and unnecessary work by identifying the limitations of particular approaches at an early stage.
3) Thirdly, it may help the researcher to be creative and innovative in either selection or adaptation of methods that were previously outside the researcher’s experience.

This chapter describes and explains the paradigm adopted for this research study. It establishes the context of the study from a philosophical and methodological perspective. It is essential that the ontological and epistemological stance of the study has the capacity to direct the design and conduct of the research in such a way that it achieves the core purpose of the study. The chapter therefore begins with a review of key aspects of the research purpose that dictated choices regarding the paradigm.
Guba (1990, p. 18) defines a paradigm as a ‘*basic set of beliefs that guide action*’. Research paradigms are concerned with the fundamental principles underpinning the research and reflect the worldview of the researcher (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

Guba (1990, p. 18) identify three components of a research paradigm:

1) **Ontology**: Beliefs about the nature of reality.
2) **Epistemology**: Beliefs regarding the nature of knowledge and how knowledge is acquired.
3) **Methodology**: The best mechanism and approach to gain knowledge.

These three components are used to describe the research paradigm and philosophical structure that provide the foundation for this study. Each component will be discussed in this chapter in order to show how grounded theory directs the design and conduct of this in such a way that it achieves the core purpose of the study.

### 3.2 Research dimensions

There are two dimensions to this research that fundamentally influenced decisions regarding the appropriate paradigm.

1) **Psychological and social influences**

The first dimension relates to the requirement to incorporate a consideration of the psychological and social influences on experience and the meanings ascribed to parental loss. We do not know how the loss of a parent in young adulthood influences the identity development, experience of bereavement and life after the parental loss. Additionally, we do not know how social factors such as relationships with peers or family members impact upon the experience of bereavement and life after parental loss. Therefore, the chosen research paradigm incorporated consideration of the psychological and social influences.

2) **Variation and similarities in experience**

It was anticipated that each participant would carry with them their personal experience of parental loss. I wanted to explore the differences and variation in individual subjective experience. This is in addition to generating a theoretical understanding that captures the experience of all.
3.3 Research paradigms
Hughes (1994) makes clear that the philosophical level of research relates to its assumptions based on the most general features of the world, encompassing such aspects as the mind, matter, reality, reason, truth, nature of knowledge, and proofs for knowledge. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) argue that the researcher’s experience, understanding of philosophy and personal beliefs may have some bearing on the method adapted. My personal beliefs had an impact on choosing a paradigm but my main goal was to choose a paradigm that would suit the study and meet the research objectives. As Shih (1998) advises, I took into consideration the nature of the phenomena of interest, the level and nature of the research questions, the chosen methods and my personal beliefs when choosing the most appropriate paradigm for this study. Proctor (1998) suggests that researchers should understand and explore the two extremes of research philosophy i.e. positivism and post-positivism, before choosing a research method. I will therefore discuss these paradigms, their underlying philosophy and describe the strengths and weaknesses of both approaches in order to show how the grounded theory paradigm directs the design and conduct of this study in such a way that it achieves the core purpose of the study.

Positivism
The traditional scientific approach has its underpinnings in positivist philosophy. Guba, (1990, p. 19) argues that the basic belief system of positivism is rooted in realist ontology, which is the belief that there exists a reality ‘out there’. Positivism aims to discover the ‘true’ nature of reality and how it ‘truly’ works by ‘predicting’ and ‘controlling’ natural phenomena (Guba, 1990, p. 19). The positivist paradigm argues that real knowledge of a particular situation can only be gained from valid and reliable scientific knowledge that has been subjected to rigorous empirical testing. According to Guba (1990, p. 19), ‘once committed to realist ontology, the positivist is constrained to practice an objectivist epistemology’. The basic reasoning of positivism assumes that an objective reality exists which is independent of human behaviour and is therefore not a creation of the human mind. Positivist research generates hypotheses from theoretical propositions, uses evidence to test hypotheses, measures observable phenomena and seeks to demonstrate a truth about reality.
Chrisrensen (1997) argues that the advantage of the positivist approach to psychology is that it enables us to make observations that are independent of opinion, bias, and prejudice. The positivist approach tends to be characterised by a number of other qualities. ‘It enables us to establish the superiority of one belief over another. It also tends to use structured questionnaires or observations, often conducted with large numbers of participants’ (Langdridge, 2004, p. 14).

Crossan (2003) argues that the general elements of positivist philosophy have a number of implications for social research based on this approach. These implications, adapted from Easterby-Smith (1997) and Hughes (1994) are:

- **Methodological:** All research should be quantitative, and that only research which is quantitative can be the basis for valid generalisations and laws.
- **Value-freedom:** The choice of what to study, and how to study it, should be determined by objective criteria rather than human beliefs and interests.
- **Causality:** The aim should be to identify causal explanations and fundamental laws that explain human behaviour.
- **Operationalisation:** Concepts need to be operationalised in a way that enables facts to be measured quantitatively.
- **Independence:** The role of the researcher is independent of the subject under examination.
- **Reductionism:** Problems are better understood if they are reduced to the simplest possible elements.

A major criticism of the positivist approach is that it focuses too narrowly on measurement, rather than the people in the study (Bowling, 2000). Crossley (2000) argues from a critical psychology perspective, that the attempt to study human beings as ‘objects’, in the traditional scientific manner, remains fundamentally misguided. This is because such an attempt fails to appreciate the unique ‘order of meaning’ lying at the heart of being human. Finally, Crossan (2003, p. 51) argues that ‘positivist philosophy embraces a conception of truth in which verifiable statements concur with the ascertainable facts of reality’. Crossan (2003, p. 52) further argues that ‘truth is therefore not dependent on belief alone, but on belief
that can be verified through the examination and observation of external reality’. He concludes by stating that ‘the exploration and examination of human behaviours such as feelings are beyond the scope of positivism’ (Crossan, 2003, p. 52). As a result of the limitations that are derived from a positivist view of science, philosophers and social scientists have offered an alternative path to discovery that places value on the study of human experience. This became known as ‘Postmodernism’.

Postmodernism / Interpretive inquiry

Postmodernism provides an alternative to the traditions and foundations of positivism for conducting disciplined inquiry. Crossan (2003, p. 52) makes clear that ‘the post-positivist researcher’s reality is not a rigid thing; instead it is a creation of those individuals involved in the research’. This approach explores issues relating to experience that adopt an interpretive and naturalist paradigm. There is also recognition of the importance of social context and processes on experience and on perceptions of truth and reality.

Densin and Lincoln (2003) make clear that this approach seeks to understand subjective human meaning and interpretations of phenomenon. Research with a postmodern frame moves us into areas where subjectivity is both assumed and appreciated. This framework provides an opportunity to attend to how subjectivity (of researcher[s] and participant[s]) and intersubjectivity (between/among researcher[s] and between researcher[s] and participant[s]) can enhance the research process (Russell & Kelly, 2002).

The subjectivity found in research information originates with both the researcher(s) and the participant(s) each of whom brings individual experiences and pre-existing perspectives into the research event. These subjective views have been initiated and deepened through interaction with multiple nested systems of the environment (Russell & Kelly, 2002), and they serve to consistently evaluate and mediate one’s unique expectations and understandings of the world. These lenses of subjectivity inform and mediate each element of the research project (Russell & Kelly, 2002). The basic belief system of postmodern, interpretive inquiry is rooted in idealist ontology, which is, the belief in multiple truths and realities. Postmodernism
acknowledges and values the existence of these different explanations of reality and actively seeks them out. This is in an effort to build greater, more comprehensive knowledge, and understanding of the processes of social existence. For the idealist, the purpose of research is not to prove a theory to be true or ‘the ultimate truth’, but rather to reveal different perspectives regarding a phenomenon. The fundamental aim of qualitative research is to search and clarify the meaning that surrounds or is attached to biological, social and psychological issues.

The limitations of postmodern/interpretive approaches generally relate to researcher bias. It is argued that qualitative research lacks reproducibility. Madill, Jordan and Shirley (2000) gave two researchers the same set of data to analyse using qualitative methods. The resulting categories were different. They found that the researcher’s training and research interests influenced choice of codes and categories. Therefore qualitative research is criticised for lack of reproducibility and generalisability, consequently creating criticism over reliability and validity.

In summary, ‘postmodern approaches assume that reality is multiple, subjective, and mentally constructed by individuals. The use of flexible and multiple methods is desirable as a way of studying a small sample in depth over time that can establish warranted assertibility as opposed to absolute truth. The researcher interacts with those being researched, and findings are the outcome of this interactive process with a focus on meaning and understanding the situation or phenomenon of interest’ (Crossan, 2003, p. 54).

3.4 Summary
From the above discussion an interpretive, constructivist research approach would appear to lend itself to in-depth analysis of young adults’ experience of parental loss. Strauss and Corbin (1990) claim that qualitative methods can be used to better understand any phenomenon about which little is yet known. Therefore, as relatively little is known about the phenomena of interest, a qualitative approach was deemed as being the most appropriate. Adopting a broader definition of scientific enquiry allows for much greater flexibility in methodology and a deeper understanding of the unique characteristics of a domain and the individuals who comprise it. Berger and Luckman (1966, cited in Darlaston-Jones, 2007) argue that
it allows for the examination of human agency and thought and the relationship between this and the context in which it occurs. Qualitative methodologies provide the means to seek a deeper understanding and to explore the experiences not available through quantification. Darlaston-Jones (2007, P. 25) argue that, by ‘utilising these methodologies we are able to expand on the ‘what’ questions of human existence asked by positivism to include the ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions asked by an interpretive, constructionist approach’. In addition, the postmodern places emphasis on the use of subjectivity and drawing on one's inner experience in order to better understand the subject of a study (Schneider, 1999), therefore by exploring subjectivity and intersubjectivity it was hoped to enhance the research process. Finally, in order to understand the experience of parental loss it was important to explore the social and psychological aspects; therefore, a qualitative methodology was required for this.

3.5 Selecting an epistemology

Epistemology is a branch of knowledge concerned with the theory of knowledge. It is concerned with the varieties and validity of our knowledge of aspects of the world (Langdridge, 2004, p. 250). There are many disagreements about epistemological foundations of a theory or approach within psychology which has led to a number of philosophical and politically informed positions within the social sciences. The study epistemology drives the theoretical framework of a research project. As Willig (2001) makes clear, methodology concerns the ‘general approach to studying research topics which will be strongly influenced by their epistemological standpoint’ (Langdridge, 2004, p. 258). Willig (2001) also makes clear that research methods provide ways of approaching, and hopefully answering, our research questions; therefore I needed to adopt an epistemological position. The qualitative methodology, which governs the choice of method for this piece of research, is underpinned by the epistemological theory of symbolic interactionism. A brief explanation and justification of how symbolic interactionism fits to the research purpose is provided here.
3.6 Symbolic Interactionism

The symbolic interactionist tradition evolved from the work of social psychologist George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) and Charles Cooley (1864-1929) (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, Mead, 1934, Goulding, 1999). Mead acknowledged the contribution of social interaction and situation on the individual in developing a sense of self. Cooley argued that a person’s self-identity grows out of their relationship with others; he claimed ‘in other people our self is mirrored’ (Goulding, 1999). Mead proposed that the most profound aspect of human conduct is symbolism, the greatest symbolism being language. Kindall (1999, p. 744) argued that ‘social interactionism was developed as a perspective which was concerned with the generation, persistence, and transformation of meaning and claimed that meaning could only be established though interaction with others’. According to research literature (Lindesmith, Strauss & Denzin, 1988; Mead, 1934; Strauss, 1969; Weigert & Teitge, 1986; Charmaz, 1990), symbolic interactionism assumes that human action depends upon the meanings that people ascribe to their situations. These meanings held by the individual are products of social interaction and context-bound (Woodgate, 1998). Kindall (1999, p. 744) argues, ‘with whom, with what, and how one interacts becomes a major determinant in how one perceives and defines reality’. The literature on symbolic interactionism highlights the importance of language as a means to understanding people’s perspective. A symbolic interactionist’s perspective argues that it is only through dialogue that one can become aware of the perceptions, feelings and attitudes of others and interpret their meaning and intent (Crotty, 1998).

Charmaz (1990), from a constructionist approach, argues that individual psychology is both shaped and constrained by social structure, thus a researcher needs to explore how society impinges upon the individual and how individuals reproduce dominant ideas within society.

Symbolic interactionism was one of the early theories that influenced the conduct of qualitative, interpretive research. According to Gerhardt (1990), early symbolic interactionist research has been accused of being too descriptive in terms of the level of interpretation and construction of meaning. The development of grounded theory went some way to address these criticisms. It did this by developing
qualitative research methods that incorporated symbolic interactionism but also provided systematic, inductive and rigorous guidelines to develop theoretical interpretations of research data (Charmaz, 2003; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Therefore, adopting a grounded theory methodological approach in this study protected against the symbolic interactionist research being merely descriptive.

Symbolic interactionism provides an appropriate theoretical backdrop to this research endeavour. There are four main points of justification. First, symbolic interactionism focuses on the meanings which the participants assigned to their experience of parental loss. Secondly, it acknowledges the influence of social context, peoples’ interaction with their social and cultural world and how this influences meaning. Thirdly, symbolic interactionist theory recognises that an event such as parental loss can have a fundamental effect on individual’s sense of meaning and change how a person views the world and their place in it. Finally, the last justification comes from the work of Charmaz (1999) who argues that people continually develop and change according to experience and the environment. This conceptualisation of the self as ‘always in process and never a static final product’ (Charmaz, 1999, p367) provided an epistemological framework within which to explore loss as a process. Strengthened by the grounded theory methodology, symbolic interactionism offered a sound epistemological base for the research.

METHODOLOGY

3.7 Rationale for adopting a grounded theory approach
The epistemological foundation of this study helped frame the research design and the methods adopted to conduct it. For this study, a qualitative, grounded theory methodology was deemed most appropriate.

The study used a constructionist grounded theory methodology as recommended by Charmaz (2003), incorporating qualitative methods and grounded theory analysis techniques. The justification for my selection will be discussed, incorporating the decisions involved in selecting grounded theory over other methodologies, followed by an overview of grounded theory. To conclude, I will briefly review the debate regarding grounded theory approaches and my own position as the researcher in relation to these discussions.
It was anticipated that a grounded theory approach would facilitate the identification of key categories and the relationship between these categories, leading to a model that would explain the process involved in experiencing the loss of a parent during young adulthood.

3.8 Grounded theory versus other qualitative methods
There are a number of different approaches to the analysis of qualitative research. Before adopting a grounded theory approach, other approaches were considered. I carried out a literature review, examining interpretive phenomenological analysis, grounded theory, discourse analysis and triangulation of research methods. Below is a brief summary of the various approaches considered for this study, followed by justification for adopting a grounded theory approach.

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis
Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis, also known as IPA, is becoming increasingly popular as a qualitative methodology in health psychology and counselling psychology. Eatough and Smith (2008) provide a clear definition of IPA, stating that ‘the IPA approach is concerned with the detailed examination of individual lived experience and how individuals make sense of that experience’ (Willig, 2008 P. 179). IPA has its theoretical origins in phenomenology (which focuses on individual experience) and hermeneutics (how people interpret experiences), and ‘involves the joint reflections of both participant and the researcher’ (Osborn & Smith, 1998; Smith et al., 1997, as cited in Brocki & Wearden, 2006, p. 88), through a process of interpretative activity.

Grounded theory
Grounded theory places emphasis on action, meaning and process. The aim of grounded theory is to produce theory to help explain basic social process. It has its theoretical underpinnings in symbolic interactionism and therefore the influence of the social world in constructing meaning is central to grounded theory. Grounded theory differs from other qualitative methodologies in that the unit of analysis is the incident not the person.
Discourse analysis

The texts most commonly referenced in the discussion of discourse analysis are Potter & Wetherell (1987), Burman & Parker (1992, 1993) and Hallway (1989). The commonalities in these authors’ approaches centre on the significance of language in constructing meaning. Willig (2001, p. 87) argues that the main focus of discourse analysis is on the use of language and how it is employed both socially and psychologically in order to establish social positions and ‘ways-of-being’. Langdriddle (2004, p. 325) argues that discourse analysis is not concerned with understanding the experiences of participants, but is concerned instead with how people construct meaning through language use. Discourse analysis explores the use and social significance of language. I decided against discourse analysis in favour of grounded theory. My reasons for this was influenced by Willig’s (2001, p. 101) argument, which questions the extent to which participants’ subjective experience and their perception of reality and social position can be theorised using discourse alone. Secondly, Parker (1997, p. 479) acknowledges that ‘discourse analysis risks neglecting individual experience by employing a quasi-behaviourist notion of blank subjectivity’.

The aim of this research was to understand young adults’ experience and meaning of parental loss and to examine how social context influences meaning and life after the loss. Although IPA can contribute to an understanding of an area of ‘personal’ interest it does not take into account the basic psychological and social problems and processes. I considered using two qualitative approaches; grounded theory and hermeneutic phenomenology. I took into account the practical considerations and the research to date on triangulation of research methods before making a decision. Below is a review of the possibility of using two qualitative research methodologies – Heideggerian hermeneutics and grounded theory.

Triangulation of Qualitative Methods: Heideggerian Hermeneutics and Grounded Theory

A literature review was conducted in an attempt to encompass articles relating to triangulation of qualitative methods. As I was interested in triangulation of grounded theory and hermeneutic phenomenology, I carried out a selective but comprehensive review of the relevant literature.
It is evident throughout the research literature (and in particular the qualitative literature) that there is a lively debate about the extent to which research methods should be triangulated. Wilson and Hutchinson (1991) have dominated the literature on triangulation of hermeneutical phenomenology and grounded theory. They have provided a comprehensive discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of triangulation. Wilson and Hutchinson (1991, p. 274) argue that the disadvantages include the length of time required for data collection and analysis. Research by Baker et al. (1992) supports this perspective and cautions researchers to ‘avoid the method slurring that could occur when triangulating methods’ (cited in Annells, 2006, p. 56). Baker et al. (1992) suggest that ‘the purposes and assumptions of the two approaches are significantly different for them to be sensibly combined’ (Johnson et al. 2001, p. 245).

Wilson and Hutchinson (1991) argue that using both methods has advantages. In their opinion, ‘grounded theory can inform practical intervention and future research, whilst the rich and insightful detail of hermeneutics provides a depth of personal understanding’ (p.275). In response to Wilson and Hutchinson’s (1991) study, Annells (2006) supports the use of grounded theory and hermeneutic phenomenology, asserting that the two approaches are complementary and beneficial in terms of research in gaining a deeper understanding of both human experience and the social processes of the phenomenon. However, Annells (2006) highlights the difficulties and practical considerations inherent when using these approaches in one study. Annells (2006) agrees with Wilson and Hutchinson (1991) regarding the disadvantage of the length of time needed to utilise both methods. In addition, Wilson and Hutchinson (1991) and Annells (2006) emphasise that when using both approaches in a study ‘it is vital to maintain the integrity of each approach not only through separate data collection but also through the use of different interview styles and data analysis’ (Annells, 2006, p. 56). With this in mind, I was aware of time constraints in terms of the completion of this piece of research and the length of time required if I was to pursue separate data collection, different interview styles and data analysis. Having reviewed the literature and weighed up all the practical considerations of triangulation, I decided against using two qualitative approaches in favour of using constructivist grounded theory methodology as recommended by Charmaz (2003). This approach allows the
researcher to assume an active (rather than neutral) role and allows the researcher and the participant to work together. In addition, it allowed me to reflect on my personal experience and to be involved in the co-creation of the study. Consequently grounded theory was deemed a good fit with the research aims.

3.9 Selecting grounded theory
Grounded theory emerged as the most appropriate methodology for this study. The aim of grounded theory is to produce theory. Grounded theory methods consist of systematic procedures (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and guidelines (Charmaz, 2003) for collecting and analysing qualitative data in order to construct theories grounded in the data itself. The process in grounded theory involves data collection, coding and constant comparison in order to produce the theory grounded in the data (Moghaddam, 2006). The goals of grounded theory are to explore what is the participant’s primary concern regarding the incident or phenomenon, how the participant tries to resolve these concerns and what meaning this has for him or her. The objective of the researcher in developing a theory is to explore the psychological and social processes involved in the phenomenon. In this study, the process under examination is parental loss, with a focus on the impact that this has on interpersonal relationships and patterns of everyday life. Grounded theorists start with an area or a phenomenon that they wish to understand more about and allow the theory to emerge from the data. Theory development is one of two central features of grounded theory. The other central feature is the interactive nature of the process. The researcher continually moves between data collection and analysis whilst developing the theory. However, controversies regarding different approaches and the use of grounded theory have generated much debate. For this reason, the following section will discuss the methodological detail regarding grounded theory in greater depth and clarify the exact approach adopted for this study.

3.10 Overview of grounded theory
The development of grounded theory
Grounded theory was originally developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967. They sought to develop a qualitative research methodology based on the theoretical foundations of symbolic interactionism (Fassinger, 2005, p. 156). Moving away
from the popularity of quantitative research, Glaser and Strauss (1967) intended to show how such research projects could produce outcomes of equal significance to those produced by quantitative methods. Glaser and Strauss offered a method with a solid core of data analysis and theory construction. Maintaining a positivist approach, Glaser and Strauss argue that ‘reality is unitary, knowable, and waiting to be discovered’ (cited in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 34). Glaser and Strauss (1967, cited in Charmaz, 1990, p. 1163) demonstrated that their approach allows hypothesis to emerge first which then enables the analyst to generate theory.

Since its development in 1967 the methodology has evolved and Glaser and Strauss subsequently went on to debate the theory-generation aspects of grounded theory between them (Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). Since then, multiple approaches to, or versions, of the method have evolved (e.g., Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 1998; Charmaz, 1994, 1995, 2000). These versions primarily reflect different ideas about how data is analysed to the point that a theory results. However, despite the differences in approach, key methods are common to all the approaches, e.g. theoretical sampling, constant comparative data analysis, memo writing, theoretical sampling, identification of a core category and a resultant explanatory theory. Throughout the critical literature review, it has been argued that the Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1994, 1998) version of grounded theory uses a systematic set of procedures in order to develop an inductively derived grounded theory. This approach moved away from the traditional positivism. Although this approach is widely supported, researchers have argued that the approach is complex and technical. However, despite its complexity, this approach continues to be successful and widely used in the field of qualitative research.

**Criticism and debates of grounded theory**

Within the growing body of literature, there are still conflicting opinions and unresolved issues regarding the nature and process of grounded theory. In the following section, a thorough review of the debates will be presented.

In the qualitative literature there has been controversy regarding the ‘correct’ approach. Central to this debate is the argument over when to conduct the literature review. Researchers such as Stern (1980), Stern & Allen (1984), Lincoln & Guba
(1985), Stern (1994), Strauss & Corbin (1994), Hickey (1997), have argued that researchers should avoid conducting a literature review prior to commencing the data collection and analysis. These researchers argue that by avoiding a literature review at the beginning of the study it is more likely that the emergent theory will be grounded in the data (cited in Cutcliffe, 2000, p. 1480). Another perspective is given by Hulchinson (1993), who suggests that ‘a literature review should precede data collection and analysis, in that it is the review of the literature that can identify the current gaps in knowledge’ (Cutcliffe, 2000, p. 1480). Charmaz, (1990, p. 1163) argues in favor of delaying the literature review in the research process, stating that ‘by doing so, it can contribute to exploring various ways of analysing the data’.

Cutcliffe (2000, p. 1480) argues that ‘no potential researcher is an empty vessel, a person with no history or background’. It is common for many researchers to pursue a particular interest in an area in which they may already possess some background knowledge. Strauss and Corbin (1994) argue that by having some background knowledge or interest in the research area, it may ‘help the researcher to reach conceptual density, enhance the richness of concept development and subsequently the process of theory development’ (Cutcliffe, 2000, p. 1480). Consequently, the stage at which the researcher begins to read the existing literature depends on which version of grounded theory is being used (Cutcliffe, 2000).

Additional debates have arisen regarding the data analysis procedures in grounded theory. It has been argued that grounded theory draws too heavily on a restrictive set of procedures and techniques to analyse the data. Rennie (2000) and Robinson (2000) argue that real scientific results arise from imagination, creativity and common sense, rather than deduction and induction (cited in Salmon, 2003). In more recent years a more flexible approach has emerged. This is due in part to an acknowledgement that grounded theory, like any other method, is evolving and should resist being ‘completely codified and structured’ (Chamberlain, 1999, p194).

It is evident that grounded theory remains open to criticism and debates due to the various perspectives and the ‘correct’ approach. However, despite these criticisms the methodology has gained in popularity and by the late 1990’s surveys indicated that among published papers reporting on qualitative research, two out of every

**Constructivist grounded theory**

While an increasing amount of grounded theory research is developing and accumulating, many researchers have moved beyond the traditional approaches and towards the constructivist approach advocated by Charmaz (1990, 2003).

The constructivist approach offers an open-ended, active and flexible process. Charmaz (1990) places emphasis on the importance of the relationship between the participants and the researcher throughout the research process. Rather than writing about participants, Charmaz encourages researchers to develop relationships with them in order to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena under observation and therefore enhance the research process. Charmaz (1995) also argues that a pitfall of postmodernism is that researchers presume to know what experience means without exploring what it means to the people involved. Some postmodernists argue that the researcher-respondent relation is exploitive. Charmaz (1995) argues against this statement and suggests that postmodernists need to think about what researchers contribute to the qualitative field. For a respondent, to have someone listen to your story and hear about your life without imparting didactic judgments can be tremendously validating. The most significant aspect of constructivist epistemology is that it is concerned with the relationships between the people involved in the study.

Charmaz (1995) makes clear that grounded theorists should seek to write the construction of social processes through the mutual production of relationships. Charmaz (1995) advises grounded theorists to invite respondents to read, critique, or collaborate on drafts of chapters in order to make the research into a collective and collaborative study.
The constructivist approach seeks to capture multiple viewpoints and realities rather than one single truth. This approach therefore provided a methodological fit with two of the goals of the study:

1) To incorporate a consideration of the psychological and social influences on experience and the meanings assigned to parental loss.
2) To uncover variations and similarities in experiences.

An additional interest in this approach was the recognition that I, the researcher, would assume an active, not a neutral role. In keeping with an interpretive ontology, this research was conducted in the belief that ‘the interaction between the researcher and the participant produces the data’ (Charmaz, 1995b, p. 35).

3.11 Summary
After an exploration of the different approaches in grounded theory, I decided to adopt a constructivist grounded theory methodology as recommended by Charmaz (2003), incorporating qualitative methods and grounded theory analysis techniques. Glaser and Strauss’s inflexibility of techniques and use of more technical features of data analysis contributed to my decision. In addition, Hall and Callery (2001), argue that Glaser (1978, 1992) and particularly Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998), have neglected the social construction of data. Blumer (1969, cited in Hall & Callery, 2001) argues that Glaser’s (1978), and to a greater extent, Strauss and Corbin’s (1990, 1998), criteria for rigour are problematic because they assume that a natural world is available for observation and analysis. The constructivist approach allows for the active involvement of investigators who can respond to statements made by participants with questions that may clarify or extend certain aspects of dialog. Kvale (1995, cited in Hall & Callery, 2001) argues that truth develops in a communicative process. Therefore, a constructivist approach places emphasis on researchers’ and participants’ co-creation of psychological and social processes. Furthermore, this approach encourages participants to validate and develop hypotheses, therefore gaining in-depth detailed descriptions of the psychological and social processes. For these reasons a constructionist grounded theory methodology as recommended by Charmaz (2003) seemed the most appropriate methodology for this study.
3.12 Compatibility of Qualitative Research with Counselling Psychology

In addition to the compatibility of a qualitative design with the aims of the research, the epistemological assumptions underlying qualitative research outlined in the previous section, have many parallels with the theory and practice of counselling psychology. These parallels will be briefly outlined in the following paragraph.

A further strength of utilising a qualitative approach in this research is that it is similar to the process of therapy. McLeod (1984) argues that a skilled qualitative researcher uses empathy and acceptance in the development of relationships with participants. During the interview it is necessary to adopt a patient, supportive and unhurried stance (Barnett, 2000). Charmaz (1995) places emphasis on constructing relationships with participants. She argues that as symbolic interactionists, researchers conduct much of our research from the empathetic, understanding standpoint. Blumer’s (1969, cited in Charmaz, 1995, p. 58) dictum to ‘respect your subjects’, leads to compassionate relationships with participants, which is similar to the process of therapy.

Fassinger (2005, p. 165) argues that the greatest strength of the grounded theory approach for counselling psychology is that ‘it integrates theory and practice in ways that few other approaches can boast, constituting a methodological exemplar of the scientist-practitioner’.
CHAPTER 4
METHODS

4.0 Introduction
The aim of this chapter is to outline the methods used for this study. By doing so, I have given a clear description of the participants, components and techniques employed in the study.

4.1 Aim
The aim of the study was to explore subjective experiences in order to understand what young adults mean by parental loss, how they cope with the loss and the coping strategies adopted by young adults. The purpose was to develop a grounded theory that will help explain parental loss in young adulthood from the young adult’s perspective and so comprehend what influences the bereavement process and life after the loss.

4.2 Objectives
The objectives are listed below:

- To generate detailed descriptions of the psychological and social processes involved in bereavement during young adult development (18-30 years of age).
- To generate a theoretical analysis of the shared meanings and behaviours of young adults who have experienced parental loss.
- To develop a substantive model that explains the process of parental loss.
- To identify changes in identity caused by parental loss.
- To identify what this research group have to do and what behaviours they employ in order to cope with life without their parent.
- To identify potential counselling and support needs for young adults who have experienced parental loss.
4.3 Research questions

- What are the psychological and social impacts of parental loss on young adults?
- How do young adults cope with the loss and what coping strategies do they adopt?
- How does bereavement affect the meaning structures or ‘assumptive worlds’ of bereaved young adults in values and priorities, for their life perspectives, identities, social and interpersonal relationships?

In order to meet these aims and objectives, thoughts, feelings, perceptions and behaviours of those who have experienced parental loss were explored.

4.4 Methodology

As the intention was to explore a complex human phenomenon, that of parental bereavement and to gain an insight into the psychological and social impact of parental loss, grounded theory was selected as the method of choice. After a consideration of the relevant methodological literature a decision was made to adopt a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2000), as this would engage the young adults as active participants in the research process.

4.5 Design

The study employed qualitative methods including individual, semi-structured interviews, and grounded theory analysis techniques.

4.6 Ethical considerations

The topic of parental loss is a highly sensitive topic. In developing the interpersonal relationship that is critical to qualitative research, it allowed the participants and me to engage in a dialogic process which had the potential to evoke strong emotions or underlying unexplored feelings (Eide & Kann, 2008). It was my responsibility to safeguard the participants. The ethical conduct of the study was considered seriously. The ethical principle governing research is that respondents should not be harmed as a result of participating in the research, and that they should give their informed consent to participate (Bowling, 1997). Beauchamp and Childress (1994)
and Kitchener (1984) have identified five ethical principles that are relevant to counselling psychology (Shillito–Clarke, 2003). Shillito-Clarke (2003) suggests that these principles can be used to check the ethical viability of practice. These are non-maleficence, beneficence, autonomy, justice and fidelity. In relation to non-maleficence (doing no harm), the nature of my research project was such that it was difficult to envisage harm arising from exploration of the subject matter. There was no deception of any kind involved and participants were fully informed about the nature of the enterprise beforehand. Everybody who became involved in the study received written information relating to the study (see Appendix A).

In relation to beneficence, the aim for the research was to have a positive outcome for the participants and for myself. As the interviews unfolded it became apparent that there were indeed some personal benefits for some participants. Generally people felt that they had gained a deeper understanding of their loss by talking about it and reflecting on the questions. Also, most of the participants felt that it was important for them to talk about their loss and were pleased that they had been able to talk openly about the experience. It is hoped that there will be a benefit for health professionals and the general public through the raising of the profile of the psychological and social impact of bereavement in young adulthood, highlighting the importance of social support. I myself have benefited in that I had a personal interest in the research topic and a qualification that I hoped to gain. This experience has developed my research skills, expanded my reading and thinking and communication skills and the engagement with participants’ views has stretched and developed my own perspectives. Overall, I feel that I have benefited personally and professionally. I hope that this research will also be of benefit to my colleagues, clients and supervisees in the future.

Participants’ autonomy was respected at all times throughout the process. I ensured that participants were aware of the potential issues before they agreed to take part in the study. Consent forms (see Appendix B) to take part in the study were obtained following a personal conversation with the participants, in which anonymity and confidentiality were assured.
Permission for the audiotape-recording of the interviews was sought from all participants. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Furthermore, I undertook to either erase the recordings, in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1984), or to return them to participants (after the examination of the thesis was completed). The tapes and files of participants’ details were kept together in a locked filing cabinet in my house. Each interviewee was assured of complete confidentiality by not using their real names in the study. All identifying information such as names was replaced with pseudonyms for computer storage and for writing up. A password was used to protect the transcript computer file.

Participants were made aware of their right to withdraw at any time during the interview if they were not feeling comfortable with answering the questions and that they could take as much time as they wanted to answer the questions. The questions were worded carefully so as not to harm or upset the participants. Participants were regarded as equals and co-researchers and I was mindful of this in my interaction with them. Justice and fidelity encompassed being reliable in my dealings with participants and rigorous in my research methods, analysis and reporting.

Additionally, debriefing support information was given to all participants prior to the interviews and mentioned again following the interviews. This sheet gave a list of organisations offering counselling and support. Most of the organisations specialised in bereavement counselling and support. The reason for this was to provide participants with additional support if the study evoked new or underlying feelings. (See Appendix C for debriefing information.)

4.7 Sampling
As I adopted a grounded theory approach for data collection and analysis, I entered into the process of purposeful sampling, and then superseded this by theoretical sampling in that the data collection was driven by the emerging theory. I used a ‘focus sample in order to seek out participants who had experienced the topic of interest’ (Morse, 1998, cited in Cutcliffe, 2000, p. 1478). Glaser and Strauss (1967) highlight how the choice between sampling narrow or wider substantive groups is directed by the conceptual level of the theory that the researcher intends to induce.
They indicated that if the researcher intends to induce a substantive theory that is applicable to one substantive group, then the researcher needs to sample groups of the same substantive type (e.g., a narrow, focused sample). My aim was only to explore the individuals who have experienced a parental death; therefore I used a focus sample. Participants were chosen because of their expert knowledge of the phenomenon being investigated, rather than on the basis of their representiveness. This relevance is determined by what is necessary to generate and delimit the theoretical codes (Reed, Proctor, & Murray, 1996; Smith & Baily, 1997). Therefore, purposeful sampling was used for the first two interviews, following this, theoretical sampling was used to guide sample selection. Amongst the literature, researchers (Goulding, 1998; Schreiber, 2001; Smith & Bailey, 1997) have suggested that theoretical sampling enables the researcher to investigate the variations in the data and develop hypotheses. They further argue that this process of sampling continues as categories emerge. The researcher targets particular groups, firstly to test and refine emerging categories and later to expand and develop these categories (Goulding, 1998; Smith & Bailey, 1997).

4.8 Characteristics of sample
The sample consisted of ten young adults who experienced parental death between the ages of 18-30 years. A minimum of one year had to have elapsed since the occurrence of the death. I put this criterion in place for several reasons. Firstly, it was my duty to protect the participants and I believed that taking part in a research study might be too overwhelming for participants if they had recently experienced a loss. Secondly, the aim of the study was to investigate the process of parental loss and change over time.

The sample consisted of eight women and two men. Demographic information was collected from each participant (see table on following page.)
Table 2: Participant demographic data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Pseudonym names</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Age at interview</th>
<th>Age at loss</th>
<th>Years in between</th>
<th>Type of death</th>
<th>Siblings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Josh</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Heart attack</td>
<td>Two sisters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Stroke</td>
<td>Two brothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Kate</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>Only child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Hanna</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kidney failure</td>
<td>Only child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Heart attack</td>
<td>Six siblings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Abbey</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Suicide</td>
<td>Two brothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>One brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Tia</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>Only child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Sophie</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Suicide</td>
<td>One sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Alcoholic</td>
<td>Five siblings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.9 Recruitment

Following ethics approval from City University, flyers informing potential participants were posted at City University and an advert was placed on the internet site ‘Gumtree’, under the ‘Community Chest’ section. Following advertising, potential participants contacted me by e-mail to seek further information. They were given information sheets (see Appendix A) at this point which outlined the aims of the study. The necessity for tape recording of interviews was explained as well as confidentiality. All participants were assured that to maintain confidentiality tape recordings would be codified and they would not be identified in any way. I also informed participants that they would be asked for further inputs of time to engage in a discussion regarding the outcomes of the data analysis, the aim of which was for theory validation and to test and develop hypotheses as recommended by Charmaz (1990). Once the participants volunteered to take part in the study, a consent form (see Appendix B) and de-briefing information (see Appendix C) were sent to each candidate. Arrangements for a time and place to conduct the interview were then established.
4.10 Data Collection

Twelve interviews were conducted in total. Two of these interviews were used as pilot interviews which helped me to anticipate potential issues. Interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 60 minutes. Data was collected from all participants via a semi-structured interview format. My questions reflected social constructivist concerns. I went into each interview session with a set of general areas of questioning, which had been enhanced by analyses of the data collected at previous interviews. I always began and ended each interview by thanking the participant for their time and reassuring them that what they said was completely confidential. I would then start the tape recorder and note the date, time and participant number. Examples of questions on the interview schedule included:

- Can you tell me the story of your mother’s/father’s death?
- Can you tell me about your relationship with your parent that is still alive, has your relationship with him/her changed since the death of your other parent?
- Could you tell me about your social relationships – for example: Has the death of your parent affected your relationship with your peers or partner?

Most of the participants spoke in depth about their experience of parental loss. However, I still found it necessary to probe for clarification or for expanded answers on their answers. This probing was guided by analysis of data gathered from previous interviews. The focus of the interviews became more specific as the theory emerged.

During the interviews, I had ethical responsibilities to manage boundaries and maintain an awareness of the interviewee’s feelings and to monitor my own feelings. This was particularly relevant given my position as the role of the interviewer, which was different to my role as a counselling psychologist. Time boundaries proved to be a challenge as most of the participants expressed their desire to speak for longer. However, I adhered to the time-frame that was scheduled; this was done with respect and sensitivity. The purpose of adhering to the interview format was to reduce the risk of participants disclosing more than they had planned. None of the
participants voiced or indicated at any time that they were uncomfortable or unhappy with the topics under discussion. Throughout each interview, attention was paid to establish trust and rapport with the participants through the use of selective questioning and being attentive and listening (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003; Field & Morse, 1985).

4.11 Enhancing the Rigour of the Study
One of the biggest challenges in qualitative research is how to assure the quality and trustworthiness of research. It is essential for the qualitative researcher to justify their choice of criteria which needs to be compatible with the topic of the research in question (its methodology, aims and assumptions). I incorporated three criteria to the study to create a rigorous form of grounded theory: those of reflexivity, relationality and trustworthiness. These will be briefly outlined.

Reflexivity
In keeping with a constructivist approach, my aim was to develop a mutual construction of meaning during the interviews and a meaningful reconstruction of the participants stories. I was aware from the methodology literature (Hammersley, 1987; Popay, Rogers, & Williams, 1998, cited in Hall & Callery, 2001) that the quality of the data would be influenced by the nature of the relationship between researcher and participant. Streubert and Carpender (1999) suggest that rigour is demonstrated by ‘accurately representing participant’s experiences’. In qualitative methodology, the researcher is encouraged to reflect on the values and objectives which they bring to their research and how these affect the research project. I was bringing my personal experience of parental loss; therefore I was aware that I was bringing pre-existing perspective into the research event. Moving away from being an objective, neutral researcher, I acknowledge active participation in the research. Throughout the data analysis I critically examined myself as a researcher in the research process and acknowledged the social construction of the interviews and participant observation. By incorporating reflexivity, it allowed me to address ‘what is going on’ in the research process and to be critically reflective and reflexive about my thoughts and influences throughout the study. Reflexivity was incorporated to prevent prior knowledge, beliefs and personal experience distorting my perceptions of the data. Strategies for reflexivity included keeping a research
journal and memo taking throughout the research process as recommended by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Charmaz (2003). The goal of reflexivity is to ‘turn the researcher’s gaze back upon oneself for the purpose of separation and differentiation’ (Hawes, 1998, p. 100. cited in Russell & Kelly). Strauss and Corbin advocate that the researcher use a journal in which to record his or her thinking about the research area and how it might influence the data analysis. Both traditional and evolved grounded theorists use memoing as a reflective tool to record the researcher’s abstract thinking about the data. Fassinger (2005) suggests that memo writing captures the evolving ideas, assumptions, hunches, uncertainties, insights, feelings, and choices the researcher makes as a study is implemented and as a theory is developed, providing a means for making transparent the interpretive, constructive process of the researcher. Charmaz (2006) argues that the view you have as an observer shapes everything you see, therefore the observer’s standpoint is a way of seeing. She further argues that the researcher must be self-reflective about where they come from to have any conception of their own values. Therefore, ongoing reflection and memo writing helped to keep account of and make clear the influences in the construction of theory.

Rationality

Effort was made to build trust and rapport with the participants through the use of active listening, empathy and by providing debriefing support information to all participants about the resources in their area that were available to address their concerns and offer support. Most of these organisations specialised in bereavement counselling and support. The reasons for this were to provide them with additional support if the study evoked new or underlying feelings. Acker, Barry and Esseveld (1983) emphasised the importance of trust in the researcher-participant relationship. They suggested that unless a relationship of trust is developed with participants, confidence is undermined about whether the research findings accurately represent what is significant to them in their everyday lives. The concept of rationality within the research process acknowledges the connectedness between the researcher and participant and excludes any recognition of subject as object as constructed within the positivist paradigm. The understanding that develops out of the communicative process of the interview is a result of two human parties in conversation about meaning. Tannen (1984, cited in Russell & Kelly, 2002) suggested that ‘the
dialogue of research may be enhanced and deepened by conversation that emerges from the joint production and coordinated interaction of the interview process’.

Russell & Kelly (2002) argue that the dialogue of research must sustain an awareness of each participant’s perspective. Buber (1970, cited in Russell & Kelly, 2002) suggested that ‘it should foster the I-and-Thou relationship that allows and promotes the humanity of both the researcher and the participant’.

**Trustworthiness**

An expert in qualitative methods and two colleagues examined some of the interview transcripts and coding sheets to establish the trustworthiness of the data collection. Member checks were conducted by four of the participants. Each participant examined the results to check for consistency with his/her experience, this again is a process that establishes the trustworthiness of the data collection and enhances the likelihood that findings will be credible the trustworthiness of the data collection and enhances the likelihood that the findings will be credible.

By adding these criteria to this grounded theory study, rigour was increased through achieving more valid and reliable results.

4.12 Equipment

Interviews were recorded on a Sony, ICD digital recorder, model 320.

4.13 Conclusion

This chapter provides the reader with an understanding of the philosophical perspective on which this study was based and explains and describes the methods used to gather and analyse the data.

The foundational philosophical principles that underpin this study have been identified, explained and justified. Choosing the most appropriate method to apply to the research entailed a process of learning about, weighing up and selecting the methodology that would best suit my beliefs and my research aim of discovering the meanings attached to parental loss in young adulthood.
Symbolic interactionism with its focus on meaningful realities based on interactions between people emerged as the most suitable approach for this study. An inductive approach allowed me to generate theory from the research. Furthermore, utilising qualitative research methods and particularly the use of grounded theory enabled me to gather the data and extract from it the full meaning and complexity I was seeking. These methods also allowed for flexibility which was a further attraction to this study.

This study discovered, using symbolic interactionism and constructionist grounded theory, the multiple realities of parental loss as experienced by young adults.

The setting for the study was described to situate the reader within the context from which the data would generate. The sample, the number of individuals who met the criteria for this study, and who agreed to participate in the research, were clarified with demographic characteristics provided in table format. The methods employed in participant recruitment were then detailed and described. Data collection methods used, such as semi-structured interviews, was discussed with a brief example of some of the questions on the interview schedule. In addition, the criteria for evaluating this study to create a rigorous form of grounded theory, that is, reflexivity, relationality and trustworthiness were explained.

In the following chapter, the process of data analysis will be discussed, followed by the substance theory and its major elements, which will be outlined and explained in chapter 5. Chapter 6 will provide the reader with a discussion of the findings with recommendations being made for counselling psychology practice and further research.
CHAPTER 5
METHODODOLOGY
DATA ANALYSIS

5.0 Overview
This chapter is concerned with describing and explaining the analysis of the data. A step-by-step guide to the analysis process is presented in this chapter. The aim of the analysis was to develop a model of the phenomenon studied that reflected and resonated with the experience of the participants. The analysis outlined was carried out for each interview. The process is described in ‘stages’ for purposes of illustration; however it was not a linear process. There was a constant interplay between data analysis, collection and the developing model. Consistent with grounded theory, I focused on studying action and processes. An example of the analysis process taken from Interview 1 can be found in Appendix F.

In keeping with the Charmaz’s (2006) version of grounded theory, coding consisted of two main phases: 1) an initial phase involving naming each line of data followed by 2) a focused, selective phase that uses the most significant or frequent initial codes to sort, synthesize, integrate, and organise large amounts of data (Charmaz, 2006).

5.1 Stage 1 – Initial coding
Analysis began immediately after the first interviews (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I listened to the interviews once without taking any notes. At this stage I was interested in getting an overall sense of the data, observing what tone was used and when. I also compared my perception of the tone of the interviews with notes taken during interviews regarding observed body language that accompanied comments and what impact my questions had on participants’ responses.

The next process involved further listening and frequent replays of the interview tapes. Interviews were transcribed and then carefully read. The transcripts were then analysed into meaningful units. The identification of meaningful units followed Charmaz’s (2006) recommendation of line-by-line coding, involving naming each line of my written data and in vivo coding (Charmaz, 2006) and setting aside
preconceptions and attempting to see ‘even apparently ordinary comments in new ways’ (Charmaz, 1995, p. 38). By using line by line coding, I gained a close look at what the participants said. This type of coding helped me to identify implicit concerns as well as explicit statements and to identify gaps in the data. At this point, I began memo writing where ‘I raised the codes to concepts with the intention of treating the code as a conceptual category, rather than merely as a descriptive topic or code’ (Charmaz, 1990, p. 1168). I soon built up a substantial body of codes and memos that fitted the phenomenon described in the data. This process involved constant comparison and continued questioning. Constant comparative analysis was used to examine the similarities and differences of codes and concepts.

5.2 Stage 2 – Focused coding
The next phase of data analysis was focused coding. Through focused coding I identified the most significant and frequent codes which emerged through initial coding. Focused coding allowed me to sift through large amounts of data. Focused coding required raising a term to a conceptual level and making a decision that the term reflected a significant process. It also meant explicitly deciding to follow up on it during subsequent data collection and finally it meant making connections between it and other conceptual categories (Charmaz, 1990).

Memo writing helped to refine conceptual categories by specifying properties, noting the conditions under which they arose, relating how they changed, describing the consequences and making links between categories.

5.3 Stage 3 - Theoretical coding
Finally theoretical coding was conducted to choose a core category, to relate categories to one another, and to integrate them into a model. The aim was to build a model that accounted for the young adult’s experience of parental loss and only categories that specifically related to the overall model and which were a good fit with the core category were included. Two core categories emerged which had more codes and subcategories than any other categories. These were selected as the core categories for young adult experience of parental loss – Insecurity and Self Reliant. Once this was achieved, the eight remaining categories were selected and organised in terms of their relationship with the core categories: Time before loss,
emotional disequilibrium, change in the family system, sense of isolation, disengagement, self-control, empowerment, and acceptance.

5.4 Memo writing
Memos were kept throughout the analysis. They were used to conceptualise the data in narrative form, ‘to create social reality’ (Richardson, 1998, p. 349) by discursively organising and interpreting the social worlds of the respondents (Lempert, cited in Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). Memos were used to describe and expand categories and to capture my evolving ideas and choices as the theory developed. They also helped to represent relationships between concepts, to guide theoretical sampling and help organise vast amount of data. All memos and diagrams were dated, noted with the participant interview code, given a title and any other relevant information (see Appendix H).

In keeping with a social constructivist approach, I used the literature extensively as I was collecting, coding, and memo writing. Therefore my memos incorporated both literature and analysis.

5.5 Concluding remarks
The process of identifying meaning units, categories, memo writing and refining categories was a circular process that occurred concurrently with data collection. Within this circular process, the analysis informed the interviews. Towards the later interviews, the emerging theory was tested and enriched by theoretical sampling.

5.6 Credibility of current research
As discussed previously (Chapter 3), one of the biggest challenges in qualitative research is how to ensure the quality and trustworthiness of research. I was actively involved in the research process. Charmaz (2006) encourages the researcher to examine hidden assumptions in our own use of language as well as that of our participants. As a researcher, I have constructed the codes and defined what I believe to be happening, therefore moving away from being neutral and acknowledging my role and what I bring to the research process at appropriate points throughout. My psychology background contributed to category names. Throughout the process, I interacted with the participants. As the analysis evolved, I
tried to understand the participants’ views and actions from their perspectives. Steps were taken both during and following the analysis process to demonstrate the credibility of the research. This was done in the following ways:

- **Self-reflection, participant-researcher intersubjectivity**
  As mentioned previously in Chapter 3, notes were taken after each interview and a journal was kept for ongoing personal reflection. Hermeneutic reflection can be understood as a ‘process of continually reflecting on our experience as researchers, alongside the phenomenon being studied, so as to move beyond the partiality and investments of our previous understandings’ (Gadamer, 1975, p. 384). Furthermore, in order to understand something in another we need to link it to something familiar to ourselves. Therefore, I kept a journal for ongoing reflection which facilitated reflexivity and produced a co-construction of meaning of parental loss. This exercise of keeping a journal for ongoing reflection is referred to by Padgett (1998) as an ‘audit trail’.

- **Respondents’ validation: Member checks**
  During data analysis, as concepts and categories were being developed and when gaps in the data emerged, participants were contacted to clarify their previous account and/or were asked specific questions relating to concepts. Also, at the end of the data analysis, I asked participants to validate the categories in order to check for consistency with their experiences, this again was used to establish the trustworthiness of the data collection and enhance the likelihood that the findings would be credible.

- **Trustworthiness**
  An expert in qualitative methods and two colleagues examined some of the interview transcripts and coding sheets to establish the trustworthiness of the data collection. This again established the trustworthiness of the data collection and enhances the likelihood that the findings will be credible.
• *Transferability*

Following analysis, I spoke with two further bereaved young adults. The parental loss experience as described by these young adults seemed to fit well with the model. Furthermore, on seeing the model, they reflected that it accurately mirrored their overall experience. This suggests that the findings of the present study are relevant and applicable to other young adults going through the experience of parental loss beyond the present sample.
CHAPTER 6
FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

6.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the substantial component of the study results.

The process of gathering data and data analysis was challenging and invigorating. Throughout the process I was confronted with various emotions from each participant as well as experiencing strong emotion within myself. It was necessary throughout the research journey to monitor what was being said and observed in the participants’ stories; in addition it was necessary to watch myself carefully to see what my responses were and why these responses were happening. Reflexivity at this point in the process is critical for alerting us to what allows us to see and to what inhibits our seeing (Michalowski, 1997, cited in Russell & Kelly, 2002). Throughout the data analysis, I have incorporated extracts from my reflexive diary in order to highlight the co-creation of meaning involved in the data analysis which created and shaped the research process.

The research results are presented in alignment with the components of the model of young adult experience of parental loss.

Two core categories emerged which had more codes and subcategories than any other category. The psychological impact of the loss resulted in the first core category being formed, ‘Insecurity’. How the young adult coped, the strategies which they adopted to cope and the process of reconstruction of meaning resulted in the second core category, ‘Self Reliant’. At this stage the other categories were organised in terms of their relationship with the core categories. A full description of the core categories, major categories and their subcategories, complete with comments from the interviews, are presented in this chapter. This enables the participants’ voices to be heard and also demonstrates that the results of the analysis are grounded in the participants’ perspectives. It facilitates a human connection with the results but also validates the research process and analysis. Quotations
from the interviews with participants are in italics. The quotes have great power and value. In conducting this study, I have found them invaluable in displaying the young adult experience of parental loss. Following a full description of the categories, the model of the young adult experience of parental loss will be presented.

6.1 Categories

6.2: First major category: Time before loss

6.3: **First core category: Insecurity**

6.4: First major category of Impact: Emotional Disequilibrium

- *Helplessness*
- *Fear*
- *Guilt*

6.5: Second major category of impact: Change in the family system

- *Change of role and responsibility*
- *Change in relationship in the family system*

6.6: Third major category of impact: Sense of isolation

- *Not feeling understood or supported*

6.7: **Second core category: Self-reliant**

6.8: First major category of coping: Disengagement

- *Distraction*

6.9: Second major category of coping: Self-control

- *Avoiding disclosure*

6.10: Third major category of coping: Empowerment

- *Finding meaning*
- *Finding benefit*
- *Constructing an ongoing relationship to the deceased*

6.11: Fourth major category of coping: Acceptance

- *Reappraisal*
6.2 FIRST MAJOR CATEGORY: TIME BEFORE LOSS

The time before the loss emerged to be an important factor in the participants’ response to the loss. Participants described having never encountered a loss prior to losing their parent. They described feeling naive to the fragility of life before this time. They explained that they saw the world as a safe and predictable place before their loss. Those anticipating the death, who were caregivers for their parent reported that their relationship with their parent changed due to the stressful demands of caring and responsibilities during this development stage. However, regardless of anticipating or not anticipating the loss, for all, the loss of their parent was a shock and shattered the equilibrium of life for the young adult. The following quotations illustrate the pre-loss versus post-loss reconstruction of life’s meaning for the young adult experiencing the loss.

Interview Comments:

“You have to be an adult……. in all fairness I was 22 not 12 but it takes away I suppose your innocence……. people go around with rose-tinted glasses……. thinking that everything works out but it doesn’t and that’s really hard…. That’s a very hard thing at 22 it’s a very bitter pill to swallow that it doesn’t work out and good things don’t happen to nice people and bad things are inevitable’’ (Laura).

“He had a heart attack overnight and died and yeah… that’s when it all… well for me when it all blew up it began… it was shocking’’ (Nick).

“I think they told us after they had operated that actually it had spread too far and they couldn’t do anything about it and at the time they didn’t know how long she would have to live…….. although we were expecting it…….. it still came as a shock…..’’ (Kate).

As I was listening to the participants’ words, I noticed an emphasis on the time before and after the loss, and I began to reflect on my experience of loss. Laura’s comment “good things don’t happen to nice people and bad things are inevitable”, was a feeling that challenges me throughout my father’s illness. I could relate to the feeling of being naive to life.
Nick’s words ‘when it all blew up it began… it was shocking’ highlights the significant impact the loss had on him. The word ‘blew up’ emphasises the shock and the eruption of life for the participant.

6.3 CORE CATEGORY: INSECURITY

During the pilot interviews, I explored the impact of parental loss. A strong emphasis on feelings of insecurity emerged from the data. It generated more codes and subcategories than any other category which resulted in the first core category and the first research question being formed.

Once I decided on the research question, I actively pursued the ‘sense of insecurity’ further, I actively engaged myself in the dialogic interaction in pursing this area, in the process of listening to the information and noticing my reactions to it.

Throughout the interviews the feeling of insecurity echoed throughout people’s stories of parental loss in differing levels of intensity. Participants described initially perceiving that they had little control over events and circumstances, which led to the feeling of insecurity. They felt nothing was safe and predictable. At the early stages of bereavement they described having no words to help them understand what had happened. When a parent dies, they are gone forever; this shattered the equilibrium of life for the young adult. The same sense of safety and control experienced before the loss cannot be recaptured and as a result they felt less secure.

From the data of this study, insecurity applies to the young adult experience of parental loss, as illustrated in the following quotations:

**Interviewee Comments:**

“I think there was definitely something there where I felt unsettled definitely just less secure” (Kate).

“I struggled with knowing what I wanted…… because having someone there who is completely there for you like your parent they can say I think that’s a bad idea or a good idea and even if you don’t agree with them they’re still coming from your best
interests..... It was really difficult for me. I felt like I didn't have a strong sense of self like knowing who I was so that's a challenge’’ (Hanna).

‘‘I had this unspoken belief that mum would live till she was 90 and babysit her grandchildren and all that we just had that unspoken assumption and when she died that sort of thought shattered so’’ (Sophie).

These quotations impacted on me during the interviews. I remember feeling a deep sadness upon hearing the participants’ words. I was able to identify with these participants. I too felt unsettled for quite some time in my own experience of parental loss. I remember feeling that my sense of self was challenged as I had a close, reliant relationship with my father who guided me and always had ‘in my eyes’ the best advice. The same sense of insecurity that the participants’ were describing, I too could relate. I felt a strange sensation within myself, a sense of closing in on myself, protecting myself. I was mirroring something in the participants. One way into understanding the participants experience was to try to understand what was happening within me. It was a feeling of vulnerability in my loss, an overall feeling of insecurity. By examining my own response I felt I could better understand the participants. This finding led to the formation of the core category ‘Insecurity’. This sudden, frightening experience was seen to have changed the people experiencing it in various ways. This led to three major categories to signify the impact of parental loss: ‘Emotional disequilibrium’, ‘Change in family system’, and ‘Sense of isolation’.

6.4 FIRST MAJOR CATEGORY OF IMPACT: EMOTIONAL DISEQUILIBRIUM

A prevalent theme in the data was how the loss impacted on the participants’ emotional state. Strong emotions were expressed throughout the interviews. As recommended by Manning & Callum-Swan (1994, cited in Russell & Kelly, 2002), I sat with the information for quite some time, remaining open to understand not what it first said, but rather how it wants to talk with us. There were three emotions which were repeatedly expressed: Helplessness, fear and guilt.
• **Helplessness**

All participants reported feelings of helplessness initially after the loss. This was due to feeling that they had little or no control over what had happened. Participants also reported feeling helpless watching their family members suffer. This feeling of helplessness went with time.

**Interviewee Comments:**

‘‘You just get into your head that people can be taken away from you very quickly without any warning and there is nothing you can do’’ (Josh).

‘‘I’ve never lost anyone close to me before….. so I remember saying to my sister-in-law at the time that I don’t know how to deal with this …I was absolutely at a loss ……’’ (Nick).

• **Fear:**

As a result of helplessness, fear was experienced. Participants worried about their surviving parent and siblings, whether the surviving parent could cope, afraid of losing the surviving parent and with a fear of losing friends. This emotion is understandable when one considers the nature of the experience, that is, the loss of a parent and previous world views being shattered. The participants described feeling fearful that people can be taken away without any warning. Fear echoed throughout the participants’ stories of parental loss in differing levels of intensity. The suddenness of the event, and being the first time to experience a loss, also made an impact. The feeling of fear that was experienced by many of the participants is illustrated by the following quotations:

**Interviewee Comments:**

‘‘I think the most relevant thing is my fear…. My biggest fear was losing her and it happened so for me it was a really big shock and when my uncle said it to me I said I am going to die with her cause there is no way I’m going to live without her so yeah… it was the biggest shock to begin with’’ (Emily).

‘‘I remember the girl I was going out with at the time ………I remember at the start of our relationship when dad was alive I was laid back and then when he died I got
paranoid that something might happen to her, I would worry a lot about people, you start to worry that something would happen to people and I would get really worried which made my girlfriend annoyed cause I was over-protective” (Josh).

“I know that this will happen again cause I’m the youngest of seven so I’ve got mum and six siblings to go through and it’s certainly a bit of a wake-up call…. It really shook me” (Nick).

Fear was especially evident in the case of only children, who understandably feared losing the surviving parent and being alone. In addition, fear of being alone and not having siblings or either parent was expressed.

Interviewee Comments:
“I was caught up thinking that I could lose him and he’s the only person I’ve got” (Kate).

“I was living in my mum’s house with no family left……so I was alone in the same house feeling really really lonely and afraid” (Tia).

Upon hearing and reflecting on the interviews, I remember feeling surprised as their feelings of helplessness and fear mirrored my feelings. I too have felt helpless watching my family members suffer. I also have felt the worry of losing my other parent and family members. I sat with this feeling; by reflecting on my experience I could better understand the participants’ experience. This was a moment when I moved between subjectivity and intersubjectivity’. Through intersubjectivity, self-understanding and other-understanding are intimately linked.

• Guilt
The feeling of guilt was experienced by those who expressed having conflicts with their parent before the death. Guilt was experienced by participants who felt that they could have done more for their parent when they were alive. In addition, guilt was experienced by the two participants who experienced parental loss by suicide. For the latter participants, their guilt has remained and is linked to feeling
responsible for the death. This was described by the participants in the following ways:

**Interviewee Comments:**

“The weekend before I argued with her about ridiculous things and for a long time that made me feel really guilty and just that feeling of why did I get cross and why did I say that and storm out but it was fine the morning after apart from waking up to this horrendous ear infection. I was moaning about that and phoned up for an appointment at the GP’s and when I was at the phone she had collapsed so that was really hard” (Emma).

“The last conversation I had with her was…. I had made a decision to….tell her to sort everything out and I was quite harsh with her… very harsh with her and I said that she was to stop drinking and make some commitment to sorting herself out and I didn’t want to talk to her so having that as my last conversation with her is really regrettable em… what I didn’t realise was how close to the edge she was… how serious she was… but having that as my last conversation with her is not…… it doesn’t sit very comfortably with me like I’m feeling guilty about things that I said and em… and I feel like I let her down” (Emily).

It became evident throughout Emily’s interview that this feeling of guilt was preventing Emily from moving forward in her grief. Her feeling of guilt impacted on me. I felt deeply saddened to hear that she felt responsible and throughout the interview to hear of the lack of support from professionals and the stigma associated with the cause of her death which led her to avoid disclosure and in turn question her own mental health. I also felt extremely motivated after this interview; I felt the importance of the research area and the need to raise awareness of parental loss.
6.5 SECOND MAJOR CATEGORY OF IMPACT: CHANGE IN THE FAMILY SYSTEM

A key theme that emerged was how the family system changed; this category led to two subcategories: ‘role change and responsibility’ and ‘change in relationships in the family system’.

- **Change of role and responsibility**

  Participants spoke about how they felt they were expected to take on the care giving roles supporting the surviving parent. They perceived taking responsibility for the tasks the deceased parent previously carried out. This change was taken on for several reasons. Firstly, participants spoke about how they observed their families’ reactions to the death. They wanted to protect their family and gain some control over the situation, therefore adopting a new role. Secondly, participants stated that they felt the obligation and expectations from the family members to take responsibility for the tasks the deceased parent previously carried out.

  **Interviewee Comment: -**

  ‘I think once he died I was the only man in the house so I kind of thought that I had to be there for my sisters. They all fell apart when dad died and I felt like I couldn’t ’cause I had to be the man of the house… I never went off the rails ’cause I didn’t want my mum having extra problems so I didn’t go off the rails I wish I had in a way’’ (Josh).

  ‘I’m the one who cleans and hoovers the house and sorts out my dad’s washing, I mean he does it on the whole but I was the one that had to teach him how to use the washing machine…. you do have to take on a different role’’ (Emma).

  Upon hearing these stories it reminded me of the role my older brother has taken within the family. My brother filled the responsibilities of a parent and as with the participants; there was a certain expectation from him when he did take on the role.
• **Change in relationships in the family system:**

The changes in the relationships in the family system were highlighted by those who had siblings and a surviving parent. Participants’ accounts varied in their perceptions of their relationship to their families. Some participants felt the loss brought them closer to the family, in particular the surviving parent, as illustrated in the following quotations:

**Interviewee Comments:**

“I’m REALLY close to my mum …… I always had a good relationship with her but I’m very close to her now because I worry about her ……… I’ve given away two of my sisters at their weddings so I suppose I feel quite protective of them and I feel I know that two of them are married and one engaged but I do sort of feel the responsibility I still feel like the man of the house…. When I go home for Sunday dinner and all my brother-in-laws are there I still have my seat at the top of the table’” (Josh).

“I have an amazing relationship with my father but definitely stronger since the loss and quite reliant” (Emma).

“It meant that I had to put a lot more effort into the family than I would have done before and also I developed a relationship with my mum which was formed from my dad’s death but also brought us together…… The relationship within the family has definitely got better the whole dynamic…. My mum found it really hard when he….. It took her breath away it did…….so we were there really supporting mum that’s what the idea of it was and eh…..”’ (Nick).

Upon hearing how participants became closer to their siblings and surviving parent I felt it too mirrored my experience. I also have noticed that I have become closer to my family. Participants expressed their awareness of the fragility of life and how important their loved ones are to them and as a result a stronger relationship developed within the family. However, it is important to state that not all participants developed a closer relationship with their family members. There were also examples of people feeling angry towards the surviving parent due to perceiving that their parent ‘abdicated responsibility’. There was a sense of
resentment and unfairness throughout their stories. The repetition of the word ‘‘expected to be an adult’’ echoed throughout the participants’ stories. There was a sense of unfairness throughout their stories. They felt that their innocence had been taken away from them and they perceived themselves as being responsible for the surviving parent. Although I have not experienced the same feeling of anger, I sat with their expressions and tried to imagine myself in their shoes. I could understand the sense of unfairness as at their age young adults are building their own lives and moving away from their family. The anger that was experienced is illustrated by the following quotations:

**Interviewee Comments:**

‘‘And then when she died that was very painful and I know its difficult but you just kind of think well actually I’m the child here like I’m not really the person that should be supporting you the parent but at the same time you don’t really feel like you have a choice you nearly become the parent……’’ (Emily).

‘‘I think dad kind of abdicated responsibility…. dad was very angry and quite aggressive towards me and demanded that I looked after him because he was annoyed and lonely and he was hurt and angry and there was no one else around so obviously I was going to get it in the neck but that was very difficult……I think that dad was quite happy to ignore what was going on with…… I couldn’t leave dad I still can’t like I couldn’t but dad and I are as close as we’ve ever been now and we’ve got as good a relationship now’’ (Laura).

Two of the participants described hiding this anger due to fears of losing the surviving parent.

**Interviewee Comments:**

‘‘My relationship with my brother became closer and also my father was very difficult when my mum died so we were quite united back then we really had to lean on each other cause he was really really difficult so we used to call each other after each of us had spoken to our father and talk about it so it was nice to have someone who was having the same difficulties with my dad and we could just sit there and
moan about it which was really important to have someone understanding you’’
(Emily).

‘‘And there was a lot of kind of me wanting his attention and becoming the person
he wanted me to be ………..it’s taken me that long to process it all and kind of think
about it and try to talk to him about it but I didn’t find it easy to talk to him about
it ‘cause I was caught up thinking that I could lose him and he’s the only person
I’ve got’’ (Kate).

6.6 THIRD MAJOR CATEGORY OF IMPACT: SENSE OF ISOLATION

There was significant evidence in the data that some peoples’ friendships had
changed dramatically since the loss. This came across as what was perhaps the most
disappointing change participants spoke about, as they were both surprised and hurt
by the lack of support they received from people who they thought would always
“be there” for them. In the majority of cases, while some friends were sympathetic
at first, with time they often became uncomfortable, and lacked the patience
required to provide support. Others described their friends as feeling uncomfortable
from the moment of the loss.

The young adult parental loss experience is characterised by an intense state of
isolation from friends. This perception formed the third major category of impact:
‘sense of isolation’.

• Not feeling understood or supported

Throughout the experience there was a strong sense that the participants felt that no
one understood what they were going through. They described feeling that there
was an unspoken desire by their friends that they would be feeling better after a
couple of months. This perception resulted in distancing themselves from peers in
order to ease this unspoken demand.
Interviewee Comments:

“I think certain friends were very frightened to talk to me about it ‘cause being of this age not many a lot of my peers haven’t experienced anyone dying so some of my oldest friends haven’t spoken to me about it’” (Emma).

“Friends can be understanding that you’re going through something but most of them would never have lost someone so they expect after a couple of months for you to be on the road to recovery or getting on with things” (Abbey).

“It’s really misunderstood and that people almost thought of it like having a head cold or the flu or something and that in a couple of months people should be back on track………it’s a natural event that people have but for people that haven’t experienced it they don’t get it” (Abbey).

I was struck by the participants’ words. There was a sense of profound connection between the participants and me. Their experience of feeling isolated by friends mirrored my experience. During a couple of the interviews I shared with the participants that their experience mirrored mine. I was aware that this could have resulted in re-directing the focus of the interview from the participant on to me. However, it enhanced the co-creation of meaning and resulted in the participants’ expanding on their experience.

One of the participants described “feeling like being a member of a very exclusive club”. Her rich description gives a sense of the alienation resulting from peoples’ lack of understanding.

Interviewee Comment:

“Once you go through it you’re like a member of a very exclusive club that you don’t particularly want to be a member of…….” (Laura).
Feelings of being misunderstood by friends also linked in with health professionals as illustrated in the following quotation:

**Interviewee Comments:**

“It would just be nice for people to have research to look at and to try and relate and understand people a bit better especially professionals ’cause they’re in a position to help people so they need as much accurate information as they can so that they don’t just get out their prescription pad so that’s why I thought I should take part” (Abbey).

The young adult experience of parental loss is a lonely one on the whole. Not feeling understood, feeling unsupported, and losing a strong attachment contributed to a sense of loneliness as illustrated in the following quotation:

**Interviewee Comment:**

“That’s the hardest thing ’cause you can feel utterly utterly isolated when you were that close to someone and they go it’s…ridiculous how isolating it is and I think that was my overriding…….that was the most difficult part of my grief…. It was the loneliness factor ’cause the one person you would confide in em isn’t there” (Laura).

The repetition of the word ‘utterly’ emphasises the complete isolation felt. However on the whole, it was more the lack of people understanding, than the lack of presence of people which exacerbated the loneliness for the bereaved individual.

**6.7 SECOND CORE CATEGORY: SELF-RELIANT**

I was particularly interested in how people coped with the loss. It was an area I wanted to place extra attention to. In doing so, a core category and four major categories were formed which contributed to understanding how young adults cope after a parental loss. A dominant theme placed ‘self reliant’ as the core category.

As described earlier, the death of a parent is experienced as a sudden and frightening event. Through participants’ stories it became evident that loss of control is a fundamental feature of the parental loss experience and that making
sense of the experience and regaining control is an essential component of adjusting to life after the loss for young adults. Participants spoke about how they felt that they had to cope alone and work through the process of bereavement alone, placing self-reliant as a dominant theme. This is illustrated in the rich description presented below:

**Interviewee Comment:**

“Yeah. I think I’ve had to rely on myself and that’s the way I think about things…. I think that it’s just me and I’ve to do it myself” (Emily).

Four major categories represent this process of becoming self-reliant. These categories are ‘Disengagement’, ‘Self-control’, ‘Empowering’ and ‘Acceptance’. Each category and their subcategories followed by comments will be presented to illustrate the participants’ perceived coping strategies during parental bereavement.

### 6.8 FIRST MAJOR CATEGORY OF COPING: DISENGAGEMENT

Participants gave rich descriptions throughout their stories of the various ways they attempted to cope along the adjustment pathway. A recurrent theme which emerged from the data was the attempt through which they tried to stabilise their emotions, orient away from the stressor or their emotions and protect themselves from their grief. This is illustrated in the following subcategory, ‘Distraction’:

- **Distraction**

  A prevalent theme in the data was how the participants actively distracted themselves in order to draw attention away from their uncomfortable emotions. However, these behavioural distractions led to positive changes including keeping physically active and travelling which, although it led to running away from the problem, also led to actively socialising. This is described in the following extracts.

**Interviewee Comments:**

“A lot of it is a distraction strategy. I find that if I sit on my own I don’t get low but I just think my mum wouldn’t want me, or be terribly impressed so I go out and meet friends make sure I’ve got something to do” (Emma).
‘I finished work after a year and then went travelling. I wanted to go travelling and I think it did me good but I think it was about running away from things and from my career ’cause I didn’t know what to do… I suppose it was good ’cause it made me make the effort to socialise and to gain some confidence back again’” (Kate).

I spent time reflecting on this category, moving between subjectivity and intersubjectivity. While reflecting on this category I felt an uncomfortable reaction within me, an anxious feeling I made a note of this reaction in my reflective diary and I explored it in personal therapy. Personal therapy helped me to become mindful and to observe this reaction, this helped me identify where I was feeling it in my body and to notice why I was experiencing it. I noticed my body tensing up. I felt a connection to the participants as I too was using distraction in my day to day life as a way of avoiding the uncomfortable feeling of reality of my loss. Once I tuned into these bodily responses I was then able to recognise my identification with the participants. These words had meaning for me and for the participants.

6.9 SECOND MAJOR CATEGORY OF COPING: SELF-CONTROL

A coping theme which repeatedly emerged from the data was how participants used self-control to keep emotions at the desired level. There was a sense that participants used self-control to cope with how they perceived others’ reactions. Participants’ responses varied with regards to their reasons for using self-control as a way of coping. This led to the subcategory avoiding disclosure, which will illustrate the perceived discipline in controlling and disguising their true feelings.

- Avoiding disclosure

Avoiding disclosure of feelings echoed throughout people’s stories of parental loss experience. Participants described withholding from their friends the extent to which the parental bereavement was being experienced. This in turn affected their social relationships and led to inadequate support being provided by friends who had not experienced a parental loss.

The disclosure of feelings affects how others view and treat the bereaved person. The participants described withholding from their friends because it prevented alienation, judgment and criticism. Their perception of criticism was linked to their
experience of not feeling understood and people’s expectations for those experiencing the loss to make a fast recovery. Participants believed that peoples’ ignorance of loss would lead to this perception of alienation, judgment and criticism. A recurrent theme throughout the participants’ stories was the feeling that they would “embarrass” people if they disclosed their feelings of loss. This is illustrated by the following quotations:

**Interviewee Comments:**

“I never really got sympathy but then again I never asked for it… I never talked about it that much to my friends I don’t think I had any heart-to-hearts…… I often thought that they felt awkward about it………….. Yeah I sort of felt they didn’t know what was going on and I didn’t want to embarrass them” (Josh).

“I thought that I could deal with it myself…… Looking back maybe it wouldn’t have been a bad idea being in a support group with others that were in the same situation and not associated with me” (Josh).

“I don’t think….. my friends….. I don’t think they were aware of how bad I was…… ‘cause I think outside I appeared to be coping quite well and was looking very strong but…… if people tell you you’re doing well you can’t turn around and say well actually I’m not so I did find it very hard to talk about it to a certain extent………… I could talk about it and say, you know, the platitudes in the norm things but I couldn’t actually say this is completely killing me and I don’t particularly care if I don’t wake up tomorrow” (Laura).

Some participants, with the experience of time, regretted not disclosing their grief but felt it was too late to disclose their loss.

**Interviewee Comment:**

“I accept that my situation is different than it was and almost the longer it goes on these people not asking me how I am then the less they feel able to so it’s like I didn’t ask when I should have done or I didn’t talk to her about it then so I can’t really now so yeah I guess friendships change a lot” (Emma).
Disclosing takes a further twist. Some participants perceived that disclosing their feelings would have worried their family and the living parent and 'caused them to suffer. This disclosure and suffering become intertwined.

**Interviewee Comments:**

‘‘They all fell apart when dad died and I felt like I couldn’t ’cause I had to be the man of the house……I was worried about my mum cause she was falling apart so I held myself together’’ (Josh).

‘‘Well I remember one of my sisters saying to me that she was worried because I didn’t talk about it she thought I needed to get it out of my system but .......... for me not so much now but over the years you definitely do it behind closed doors when no one is around and I didn’t want to worry my family’’ (Josh).

‘‘I told my mum I was getting counselling from work… I didn’t really want to or feel comfortable telling her how I was feeling.... I didn’t want to worry her... awareness of mum is relevant’’ (Nick).

In my analysis of this concept, I found myself reading and re-reading the transcripts with a growing sense of familiarity with the participants’ experience with avoiding disclosure to friends and family. At an early stage of my experience of parental loss, I felt I should be handling my feelings and therefore avoided disclosing to my friends. Like the participants I also avoided disclosing as I did not want to worry my family. When I explored this personal feeling it gave me further insight and understanding the participants’ reasons for avoiding. Most of the participants expressed pressure to control their emotions as well as avoiding due to society’s stigma associated with parental loss. I too felt the pressure the participants described which helped me to understand their reasons for not disclosing. Although I felt I could relate to the participants I returned to the participants, in order to deepen the analysis and to seek their assessment for accuracy on the meanings analysed from the interviews. Participants agreed with the findings which increased validatedity of the concept.
As I reflected on the transcripts of the conversations between the participants and me, I felt honored as the participants disclosed their stories to me and shared their tears. I reflected this back to them which seemed to strengthen the relationship between us and in turn enhanced the research process. The participants highlighted the difference between disclosing to me and avoiding disclosing to friends. They felt it was easier to express their feelings to a stranger because it prevented alienation, judgment and criticism. This is in line with Charmaz (1995) argument that having someone listen to your story without the listener imparting should’s and don’ts is tremendously validating. This allowed the participants to openly disclose their experience of their parental loss which in turn has enhanced the research process by discovering categories to help explain the meaning of parental loss in young adulthood

6.10 THIRD MAJOR CATEGORY OF COPING: EMPOWERMENT

In order to cope with the imbalance of emotions and address the feeling of insecurity, some of the young adults in this study engaged in a process of empowering strategies to regain balance and make sense of their experience. The participants who engaged in this process of empowering were participants who experienced the loss a few years ago. For those who experienced their loss more recently and the two participants that experienced loss by suicide, the process was not linear, they described moving backwards and forwards along the recovery path and slipped in and out of empowering strategies. This category gives a rich variation of experiences. This led to the formation of the third major category ‘Empowerment’. Four subcategories describe this process of regaining balance and the sense of feeling ‘empowered’.

- **Finding meaning**
Finding meaning refers to the attempt to make sense of the loss. From the participants’ stories it became apparent that in order to move forward in the bereavement process they had to engage in a process of finding meaning and making sense of what happened. Without this they experienced confusion, which compounded the lack of confidence they experienced as a result of the loss.
There was significant evidence in the data that the young adults who experienced a parental loss engaged in a process of personal reassessment and reconstruction of identity. This reconstruction moved them away from their actual developmental stage. As mentioned previously, the young adults described feeling that they had to be ‘a grown up’ with ‘responsibilities’. As a result, some participants explained that they encountered identity confusion working through this developmental stage, and isolation. This confusion was linked to being unable to make sense of their loss. It is worth noting that not all participants have made sense of their loss but, for those that have, they explained that making sense played a key role in working through this identity confusion. This identity confusion is illustrated in the rich description presented below:

**Interviewee Comment:**

“I think being in your 20s are like the coolest years ‘cause it’s when you develop who you are and if you have like this trauma it makes it so difficult to know who you are……. knowing who I am…. I struggled with that a lot…” (Hanna).

Some people made sense of the loss and found meaning through the process of counselling, as illustrated in the following comment:

**Interviewee Comment:**

“It’s hard for people to understand what you’re going through and it’s also hard to let them know so it’s a two-way dilemma but counselling gave me that support and helped me get my life back on track…. when the most important person in your life dies you can get swallowed up with negativity about life in general and you can get extremely low and angry but counselling helped me to cope with her death and work through all these feelings so in that respect I would definitely recommend counselling to others” (Laura).

However, not all participants found meaning and made sense of the loss through counselling. The majority of people found that “comparing with others” was crucial in facilitating finding meaning. Participants compared themselves for several reasons. For some it helped to provide the explanations that were so important to understanding the bereavement process. It also helped them to validate
their own feelings. During member checks, Abbey emphasised the importance of getting validation that her feelings were ‘normal’. She experienced a parental loss by suicide and questioned her own mental state. Although she found comparison helpful she explained that she was still struggling with making sense of her mother’s loss.

**Interviewee Comment:**

‘‘The main point to take away really is that knowing that what we experienced is ‘normal’ because when no one is really talking about it you don’t really know if what you are feeling is normal. Last thing you want is to feel like you are developing a mental illness on top of losing one of the most important people in your life’’ (Abbey).

For others participants, comparing helped the young adults to put a positive outlook on their future as illustrated in the following comments:

**Interviewee Comments:**

‘‘The most helpful have been friends that have been though the same experience and just chatting it through with them’’ (Emma).

‘‘My best friend’s dad had died and my girlfriend at the time her father had passed away also so they had lost important people and they could certainly understand’’ (Nick).

When I reflected on the participants’ rich descriptions of finding meaning, I reflected on the possibility of them finding meaning in taking part in the actual research process. This led me to reflect on Banyard and Miller’s (1998) observation, that it is empowering for people to tell their stories; and it is especially powerful to have their stories heard. I decided to pursue this reflection; towards the end of the interviews I asked participants their reasons for taking part in the research, in addition to asking for feedback on the interview. Participants explained that they found the interview enjoyable and insightful. For some participants, they learned something new about their loss through talking about it, for others, they were
hoping to learn something new from reading the thesis. Again, this fits with the importance of finding meaning for those who have experienced a loss.

I also reflected on my reasons for carrying out this research process and became aware that I may have been looking for meaning for my experience of parental loss. I was learning and discovering both personally and professionally through carrying out the research.

• **Finding benefit:**
The second thematic subcategory to support the feeling of ‘empowering’ involved the process of finding benefit in some way. Setting new targets and goals was a recurrent theme throughout the participants’ stories.

**Interviewee Comment:**

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visiting places with special meaning to the deceased and engaging in similar interests to the parent.

The two male participants expressed regret regarding the relationship they had with their parent prior to the death. They described their relationship as immature and wished they had an adult relationship with their parent. A meaning which the two male participants have made of their relationship with their parent is that it did not evolve.

**Interviewee Comments:**

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‘The relationship I had with him was probably a childish relationship it wasn’t really em……. I never really had an adult relationship with him…….. he was an older father so he wasn’t a young father and I’d just finished school……..so it didn’t change because it was a shock but not having an adult relationship is one thing I regret I wish I could have talked to him as an adult” (Josh).
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‘We had never been particularly close… he was an older father and he was pretty busy ’cause of having such a big family…. I had moved out of home at 19…. We weren’t close but we had a good relationship…. ‘’ (Nick).
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A connection to the deceased was perceived to be important for the young adult. They found themselves actively striving to integrate aspects of their parent into their identities, thereby keeping their parent’s legacies alive in their own lives. Examples of the ways the participants constructed an ongoing relationship are illustrated in the following comments:

**Interviewee Comments:**

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‘I used to do a lot of walking with him and I still do that now…. I feel close to him when I do it and I know that he liked country and western and when I was younger I hated it but now I love it but it makes me feel a bit sad ’cause I never enjoyed it with him’” (Josh).
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“I guess it’s important to me that my mum’s not forgotten and particularly my friends that know her…... the ones that do mention her… I appreciate that” (Abbey).

Furthermore, participants who were caregivers to their parent prior to the loss spoke of actively striving to integrate aspects of their parent into their identities, thereby keeping their parent’s legacies alive in their own lives through their career.

**Interviewee Comments:**

“Working on the stroke ward might be sort of therapeutic in terms of not having that chance to have cared for my mum I think as you get older you expect to take on that role of looking after your parents and care for them and now I can always do that in working with other people but still feel close to mum” (Emma).

“Cause I cared for her when she was sick and then I went into that kind of profession……. One of the reasons I didn’t go into nursing or medicine initially was because I thought that I was too weak for it that I would be too upset or too emotionally involved and that I couldn’t handle it but once you’ve actually nursed a very very sick parent who you love more than anything and know that you can handle it and know that you can stomach it then you can look after anyone else” (Laura).

I spent time reflecting on the participants stories and reflecting on my own experience of loss. Although I am experiencing a different loss I used empathy to deepen the research. I sat with their expressions and tried to imagine myself in their shoes. I then began to reflect on my loss and felt a connection to the process that the participants described. By writing this piece of research and dedicating it to my father I am maintaining the relationship with my father. Again I reflected on my reasons for carrying out this research process and became aware that I may have been looking for meaning for my experience of parental loss, in addition to keeping an ongoing relationship with my father. Through empathy, it has enabled both understanding of the participants’ and self understanding which in turn has deepened the research process.
6.11 FOURTH MAJOR CATEGORY OF COPING: ACCEPTANCE
The last major category generated from the data looks at the process of acceptance. The young adults face a future without their parent and the reality of that is the need to become independent and accept the loss. The process of acceptance refers to coming to terms with the loss. It should be acknowledged that there were a few participants who have not reached acceptance and are struggling to make sense of their loss. For others acceptance was the key factor in facilitating the bereavement process. These participants explained how for them this acceptance came with time. However, there was a sense of resistance connected to the process of acceptance, as illustrated by the quotations on the following page:

**Interviewee Comment**

‘‘You get moments where you wish dad was here to chat and you can’t but I think my attitude is that you can’t do anything about it and I’ve got my own life to life so I can’t be miserable for the rest of my life you need to get on with it… it’s bad enough that he’s not there but there is no point wasting time thinking and getting upset about it’’ (Josh).

‘‘It’s the amount of time that passes that you feel less close to them….which is very difficult because the further you move on with your life the further you move away from the way things were. It’s really really tough… but what else are you going to do, you have to move on with your life’’ (Laura).

‘‘Even though I was in my early twenties em yeah it just made me realise that things in life just do happen you think I’m an adult now and I have to deal with it… you just have to deal with it’’ (Sophie).

Upon hearing the participants describe their experience of acceptance, I noticed my body tensing up and a moment of sadness came over me. I made a note of this response in my reflective diary and spent time reflecting on why I experienced this reaction. I looked back over the transcripts and felt this reaction again when reading Laura’s words ‘‘the further you move away from the way things were, is really really tough’’. This occurred again when reading Josh’s transcript, ‘‘You get moments where you wish dad was here to chat and you can’t but I think my attitude
is that you can’t do anything about it”. I felt a connection to the participants as their words also described my feeling, a feeling where you have a moment of sadness but realise that you have to carry on, it is the feeling of acceptance. Once I tuned into these bodily responses I was then able to recognise my identification with the participants and therefore gained a better understanding of their experience.

- **Reappraisal**

Reappraisal refers to the cognitive strategy used to make sense of the loss. This subcategory links into finding meaning. Making comparisons with others who have experienced parental loss was echoed throughout the stories. People saw benefit and reappraised their sense of self, seeing themselves as “optimistic” and having a new perspective on life as a result of the loss.

**Interviewee Comments:**

“It’s kind of changed my perception of life having never lost anyone close to me before but it just kind of changes your perception of life” (Nick).

“It put things into perspective more so when something seems really big and worrying its just like nah it doesn’t matter I’ve been through worse so it puts things into perspective” (Emily).

“Yeah because you start to appreciate life and realise that people are only human and you are going to die it’s sort of…. it brings things into perspective, like if going through a tough time with work or something it makes you think that it’s not really a huge issue yeah it’s probably brought things into perspective and I’d like to think that I’d appreciate people more” (Abbey).

I spent time reflecting on this category. It was a category which surprised me when it emerged. Before carrying out the research project I expected that the results would highlight the sadness of the loss; although this did come out in the research, so too emerged a positive slant. Participants grew from the experience and felt optimistic about the future.
For all concepts, I returned to the participants, seeking their assessment for accuracy on the meanings analysed from the interviews. Participants agreed with the findings, which added validity.
Figure 1. The Young Adult Experience of Parental loss

Time before Loss

Parental loss

Emotional Disequilibrium
Helplessness
Fear
Guilt

Impact of Parental loss
INSECURITY

Change in Family System
Change of role & responsibility
Change in relationship

Sense of Isolation
Not feeling understood or supported

Process of self-assessment and change

COPING STRATEGIES

Disengagement
Distraction

Self-control
Avoiding disclosure

Empowerment
Finding meaning
Finding benefit
Constructing ongoing relationship

Acceptance
Reappraisal

Psychological Adjustment
SELF RELIANT
6.12 CONCLUSION
This chapter described the emergent model of the young adult experience of parental loss. In doing so it has generated descriptions of the process involved in bereavement during young adult development, which led to the formation of a substantive model to explain the process of parental loss.

The results section has described the main factors that participants attribute to their process of bereavement. It has been identified that the death of a parent is a turning point in young adult development. The death of a parent introduces a period of self-reflection, making sense and the transformation of a new identity. In particular, the impact of the loss and the ways of coping were described as central to the process of bereavement. However, some participants moved backwards and forwards along the recovery pathway. Their journey was not linear. Through the collaborative work, the creation of meaning was established. The results generated similarities and variation of experiences of parental loss, in addition to generating a model that captures the experience of all.

The following chapter therefore aims to discuss in detail the findings of the study in relation to previous research.
CHAPTER 7
DISCUSSION

7.0 Introduction

The research aims have been met. A qualitative research paradigm was adopted throughout. Use of a qualitative research design provided a rich variety of subjective accounts of the meaning of bereavement as experienced by the bereaved young adult. The philosophy of symbolic interactionism guided the study which suggests that perceptions, categories and concepts are historically and culturally influenced (Burr, 1995) and that ‘meanings can only be established through interaction with others’ (Kindall, 1999, p. 744). Through exploring subjectivity and intersubjectivity it enhanced the research process.

A model of the young adult experience of parental loss has been developed from the results of the study. This chapter will provide a detailed discussion of these findings in relation to previous research. It will then consider some of the limitations of this study, the impact the research had on me as the researcher, a critical reflection on the methodology, application of findings, and suggestions for future recommendations.

Prior to embarking on this research a gap in the literature was identified. There did not appear to be a coherent account of the young adult experience of parental loss. This was addressed, and a substantive model that explains the process of parental loss has been developed.

7.1 Interpretation of the findings

A model emerged from the rich data as a result of an interaction process between me as the researcher, and the data which resulted in ‘discovering’ categories to help explain the meaning of parental loss in young adulthood. Participants gave a variety of experiences which generated eight major categories, 12 subcategories and two core categories. Some of the findings relate to previous research, however, the analysis also generated findings which have not been found before and contribute to gaining a deeper understanding of the young adult experience of parental loss which
has been a neglected research area to date. A discussion of the results in relation to previous research will now be presented.

**Time before loss**

The time before the loss emerged to be an important factor in the participants’ responses to their loss. Variations in the stories became evident at this point. Some participants described their experience as caregiver to their ill parent. The participants that took on the caregiving role were female. This finding mirrors previous research (Caregiving in the US, 2004; Cait, 2008; Marks, 1996; Stone, Cafferata & Sabgk, 1987), who found that women tend to assume a caregiving role for a parent more than men.

For the participants who experienced taking on the role of the caregiver, they reported that their relationship with their parent changed due to the stressful demands of caring, responsibilities and burden during this development stage. This finding supports Umberson’s (2003) study, investigating anticipatory loss. Daughters in this study reported that as their parent became increasingly impaired, the daughters gradually lost the relationship with their parent. It also supports Marks et al.’s (2007) study, who argued that children who experience parent loss have participated in some challenging caregiving close to the time of death, and this, too may contribute to the negative effects on adapting to life after the loss.

The literature review and the results section refer to the time before the loss as an important factor in adjusting to life after the loss. Participants talked about how their parent died which links into the literature on circumstances of the loss which impacts the grieving process (Levy et al, 1994; Range et al., 1992; Silverman et al., 1994); and the effects of expected and unexpected loss. While the themes that emerged from this study validate earlier studies (Umberson, 2003; Marks et al., 2007), further analysis revealed that regardless of anticipating or not anticipating the loss, for all, the loss of their parent was a shock and shattered the equilibrium of life for the young adult. This finding has not been found previously. There was no mention in the literature of participants who anticipated the loss feeling shocked. Some participants in this study described anticipating the loss but regardless of anticipating the loss they felt overwhelmed when it did occur which indicates that
their beliefs about the world were challenged but not shattered until the loss actually occurred.

**Insecurity**

The first core category focuses on the psychological impact of the loss on the young adult. For most young adults, death is a new experience. And like all new experiences, the unknown can be confusing and frightening. Loss of control was a dominant theme throughout the participants’ stories. The lack of control and security was felt due to the new awakening to the fragility of life and how people in your life can be taken away from you without any warning. The same sense of safety and control experienced before the loss could not be recaptured and as a result they felt less secure. The majority of participants could not make sense of the loss initially. Although the participants in this research gave a variety of experiences, the feelings of loss of control, safety, chaos, instability and the struggle to make sense of the loss led to the first core category being formed: ‘Insecurity’. The impact of the loss initially caused the participants to feel insecure. This finding ties in with Neimeyer’s (2001) research who notes that grieving individuals struggle to affirm or reconstruct a personal world of meaning that has been challenged by loss. Neimeyer (2001) also contends that the loss of those who have been the intimate witnesses to our past can undermine even our basic self-definition, because no one any longer occupies the special relational stance towards us needed to call forth and validate the unique fund of shared memories that sustains our sense of who we have been.

**Emotional Disequilibrium**

A prevalent theme in the data was how the loss impacted on the participants’ emotional state. Participants’ overall descriptions of their feelings and of the general grieving process might be characterized as disequilibrium; the death of a parent led to an imbalance of emotions. It has been well documented in the literature on children that grief brings with it a range of emotions when a parent dies (Becvar, 2001; Bowlby, 1980; Steinberg, 1997; Weller et al., 1991; Worden, 1996). However, a limitation to this well-documented literature is that it focuses on one developmental stage. Therefore, a closer inspection of emotions experienced after parental loss warranted further investigation in the sample of young adults. In an
examination of data collected, feelings such as helplessness, fear and guilt were repeatedly expressed throughout people’s stories of parental loss in differing levels of intensity. Feelings of helplessness and fear link into lack of control. This finding is consistent with the existing literature (Scharlack and Fredriksen 1993) that fear and helplessness are the most prominent responses to the death of a loved one. Feelings of guilt were experienced by those who expressed having conflicts with their parent before the death. Guilt was also experienced by the two participants who experienced parental loss by suicide. For the latter participants, their guilt has remained and is linked to feeling responsible for the death. Feelings of guilt mirror Bailey, Kral and Durham’s (1999) findings. They confirm that where the cause of death is suicide, the bereaved experience more feelings of rejection, responsibility and more grief reactions which they link to the increased levels of shame and perceived stigmatisation associated with such a mode of death.

Change of role & responsibility

Participants spoke about how they felt they were expected to take on the care giving roles supporting the surviving parent. They perceived taking responsibility for the tasks the deceased parent previously carried out. Participants spoke about how they observed their families’ reactions to the death, wanted to protect their family and gain some control over the situation, and therefore adopted a new role. Secondly, participants stated that they felt the obligation and expectation to take on a mature role from their family members. The findings tie into the Sociological perspective (Aranda & Milne, 2000; Walter 1997; Neimeyer, 1998) on bereavement which pays particular attention to the grief responses of family members and their wider social network. However, to date, the literature on bereavement contains little about this perceived sense of responsibility.

Analysis also revealed that there was a change in relationships in the family system. The majority of participants felt the loss brought them closer to the family, in particular to the surviving parent. For others in this study, they felt angry with the surviving parent due to perceiving that their parent ‘abdicated responsibility’. This anger is conceivable as the surviving parent is grieving and is often emotionally unavailable. However, the majority of participants who felt angry described hiding this anger due to fears of losing the parent. This coincides with Richter’s (1986)
study, whose participants also described being strong for the surviving parent and described putting their feelings aside in order to make life easier for the parents. Cook & Dworkin (1992) also note that ‘viewing their grieving parents as vulnerable and in need of protection, they often sacrifice their own need to grieve in an effort to spare their parents because they think that talking about their own grief will just upset them more’ (Cook & Dworkin, 1992, p. 127). Although this finding has been found previously in children and adolescent populations, this study has contributed to an understanding of the young adult population in which this finding has not been found before. This finding shows that young adults are at an early developmental phase which can be misperceived as an age when they should be able to cope with life’s demands. This finding therefore highlights the need for support and for awareness of how social influence impacts the bereavement process in order to help people cope with such a devastating loss.

*Sense of Isolation*

There was significant evidence in the data which revealed that parental loss during young adulthood is characterised by an intense state of feeling ‘alone’. Overall, the young adults felt lonely, unsupported and misunderstood. This sense of isolation has previously been described and theorised by psychoanalytic-cognitive theories (Bowlby’s attachment theory, 1960; Klass, Silverman and Nickman, 1996; Parkes, 1972). Parkes’ theory highlights the psychosocial aspect of bereavement. Parkes (1972) argues that stigma and deprivation play a significant part in the overall outcome of the grief process. In addition, Sociological theories acknowledge how society influences the bereavement process. Martin and Doka (2000) proposed that society has norms regulating the expression of emotion and these define who may grieve, what one may grieve and how to express such grief. Furthermore, the findings of isolation echo Boston and Tresize’s (1988) study which suggests that the bereaved perceive others to fear them, and that once the socially recognised period of mourning has passed there is a considerable pressure exerted on the bereaved person to pretend to be well again. As a result the bereaved feel that their misery makes them socially unacceptable as their presence spoils the fun of others. Rondo’s (1983) study which focused on bereaved parents, found that their grief worsened, highlighting the gap between the social expectation and the experience of the bereaved, accounting to some degree for the sense of isolation. Furthermore,
Umberson’s (2003) study mirrors this finding of a sense of isolation in that her sample spoke about how dramatic the change was to their life and how those who had not experienced a parental loss just did not understand what they were going through. Although this finding has been found before in mature adult populations, this finding will now make a contribution to understanding the young adult population. Bearing in mind Erikson’s (1968) theory of development, young adulthood is a time of developing intimate relationships. With this in mind it is worth noting that the sense of isolation that has been brought to light in the young adult population may have a negative effect on the task of development. Therefore this finding will contribute to addressing this problem for the young adult population.

**Coping Strategies**

The second research question explored how people coped with the loss. Literature to date on coping in response to loss has been well documented (Lazarus, 1991; Moos & Schefer, 1986; Stroebe & Schut, 1999, 2000). However, there still remains a gap in the young adult literature. Therefore, a closer inspection of coping in response to parental loss warranted further investigation in the sample of young adults.

Participants in this study gave rich descriptions throughout their stories on the various ways they attempted to cope along the adjustment pathway. Loss of control was a recurrent theme throughout the participants’ stories and is therefore a fundamental feature of the parental loss experience. Participants described tactics they used in order to gain some element of control and adjust to life after the loss. This led to four major categories being formed: Disengagement, Self-Control, Empowerment and Acceptance.

**Disengagement**

A recurrent theme, which emerged from the data, was the attempt through which participants tried to stabilise their emotions, orient away from the stressor or their emotions and to protect themselves from grief. Participants described using distraction as a means of coping with their loss. Participants in this study reflected and verified aspects of cognitive theories such as Strobe et al.’s (1994) model of
coping. Strobe et al.’s (1994) dual process model of coping suggests that although bereaved people often attempt to make meaning of their experience, they also struggle to restore the lost order, using avoidance to cope with the painful feelings. The findings are also similar to Bowlby’s (1980) theory, which proposed that defensive exclusion protects the individual from experiencing unbearable mental pain, confusion, or conflict, which is predicted to interfere with the accommodation of internal working models to external reality. This finding therefore highlights the need for support and awareness of how young adults cope emotionally during the bereavement process in order to help people cope with such a devastating loss.

**Self-control**
There was significant evidence in the data which revealed that participants made a great effort to control their emotions, keeping their emotions at a desired level. The skill for this category involved avoiding disclosure, which entailed keeping feelings to themselves and presenting themselves as emotionally stable to others. This finding coincides with the sociological theory which highlights the influence society has on the bereavement process. Telling is a significant social act. Lydall (2002) suggests that the social constructivist view of grief posits that society has a ‘template’ for how grief should look and hence how it ought to be expressed. The findings of this study however differ with respect to how males and females express their grief. In this study, both males and females avoided expressing their feelings. This is in contrast to previous research which contends that males are far less prepared to express their grief. Although the intensity of the participants varied and the males showed more reluctance to express their feelings to their friends and family, overall both males and females in this study adopted a form of ‘silence’ and portrayed to society that they were coping. The model formulated in this study therefore provides a framework to explain this in relation to how young adults cope with the loss.

**Empowerment**
In order to cope with the imbalance of emotions and address the feeling of insecurity, the young adults in this study engaged in a process of empowering strategies to regain balance and make sense of their experience. Variations of experience led to participants making sense of the loss. There was significant
evidence in the data that the young adults who experienced a parental loss engaged in a process of personal reassessment and reconstruction of identity. This reconstruction moved them away from their actual developmental stage. This finding makes a significant contribution to an understanding of the young adult population. Some participants in this study described feeling confused due to being unable to make sense of their loss. It is worth noting that not all participants have made sense of their loss but, for those that have, they explained that making sense played a key role in working through this identity confusion. They described that with time and making sense they were able to form a strong sense of self. Prior research (Scharlach and Fredriksen, 1993) has found that the death of a parent can have consequences for one’s sense of self. Additionally, Umberson’s (2003) study revealed that participants reappraised their loss which evoked dramatic self-assessment and change.

Some people made sense of the loss and found meaning through the process of counselling, others described comparing themselves with others which they found crucial in facilitating finding meaning. Finding meaning helped the participants to validate their own feelings; it gave answers to questions and provided them with a positive outlook in relation to their future. Searching for meaning supports the current literature. Neimeyer (2001) notes that grieving individuals can be viewed as struggling to affirm or reconstruct a personal world of meaning that has been challenged by loss. Neimeyer (2001) further, places emphasis on the apparently ubiquitous human tendency to organise experience in narrative form, to construct accounts that ‘make sense’ of the troubling transitions in our lives by fitting them into a meaningful plot structure.

The social-cognitive models of coping and adjusting (Jannoff-Bulmann 1992; Parkes, 1988; Taylor, 1983), propose that meaning-making plays a central role in the process of adjusting to loss and trauma because it serves to maintain aspects of our self that often are most threatened by loss and trauma: our sense of self-worth and our most fundamental beliefs or assumptions about how the world works. Clinical reports, and a growing body of research data, suggest that meaning is an important issue for many, if not most people coping with loss and trauma (e.g., Bulman & Worthman, 1977; Davis & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2001). However, although
there is a growing body of research which supports finding meaning, these studies have not mentioned finding meaning through counselling or comparing to others who have experienced a similar loss. These two forms of finding meaning involve co-construction of meaning which links into the epistemology of this study. Also, the majority of studies on examining how the bereaved person makes meaning of the loss have been quantitative.

There was significant evidence in the data which revealed benefit finding. This finding is consistent with other studies of benefit finding such as McMillan et al., 1997; Park et al., 1996; Schaefer & Moos, 1992; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995. The types of benefits that people in this study reported were very similar to those reported not only in bereavement studies (e.g., Lehman et al., 1993) but also in studies of people coping with other adversities (e.g., Collins, Taylor, & Skokan, 1990; McMillen, Smith, & Fisher, 1997; Park, Cohen & Murch, 1996). The most common benefits reported in this study were that the experience led to a growth in character, awareness of the importance of loved ones, awareness of the fragility of life, and a gain in perspective. There is little doubt that the search for meaning following loss represents a distinct part of many people’s grief experience.

There was also significant evidence in the data which revealed that participants constructed an ongoing relationship with the deceased. This finding is consistent with Cait’s (2008) findings. The most common ways in which this was achieved were talking about the parent in order to keep the memory of the parent alive, visiting places with special meaning to the deceased and engaging in similar interests to the parent. These findings also mirror Rosenblatt’s (1990) study, which argued that people construct an ongoing relationship with the deceased because the meaning inherent in them can assist in the definition of the relationship to the deceased. Furthermore, the findings tie into Stroebe & Schut’s (1999, 2001) model of coping. Gillies and Neimeyer (2006) argue that restoration-orientated coping involves building a new life and identity in which the lost person may be present in a spiritual and symbolic, but not physical way. Again, it is worth noting that, although these findings mirror previous research findings, they are a unique contribution to the young adult population.
Acceptance
The process of acceptance refers to coming to terms with the loss. It should be acknowledged that there were a few participants who had not reached acceptance and were struggling to make sense of their loss. For others acceptance was the key factor in facilitating the bereavement process. Participants explained that this acceptance came with time. This finding supports the ideas underpinning coping theories. Much of the recent research on coping has derived from the theoretical work of Lazarus (1991). Central to Lazarus’s theory is the way people appraise a stressful event. People in this study saw benefit and reappraised their sense of self, seeing themselves as ‘optimistic’ and having a new perspective on life as a result of the loss. This finding also ties into Kiecolt-Glaser (2001) who argued that reappraisal occurs because it may help the individual to cope with the life transition and to reduce any resulting stress and emotional upset.

Self-reliant
The overall experience of parental loss in young adulthood is a road of reassessment and maturity. The young adult copes alone and engages in a search for meaning. Through this search, they tackle the development tasks and life without their parent. The process of working through bereavement is influenced by society and the construction of meaning. A common theme throughout their stories was that the participants felt that they had to cope alone and work through the process of bereavement alone. They relied on themselves which involved gaining control and making sense of the loss which helped them move away from the feeling of insecurity and establish a strong sense of self. This dominant theme placed self-reliant as the second core category. This finding is a unique finding which has not been found in the bereavement literature.

Overall, participants moved backwards and forwards along the recovery pathway. The journey was not linear. The results generated similarities and variation of experiences of parental loss. In addition to generating a model that captures the experience of all.
In conclusion, although there is a growing body of research which supports some of the findings generated in this study, none of the studies relate to the young adult experience, hence making this an original study. It makes a contribution to understanding the young adult experience of parental loss, in addition to contributing to counselling psychology practice which entails a large amount of work in the area of bereavement.

7.2 Limitations of the study
While this study provides useful insights into the perceptions of young adult parental loss, it should be recognised that there are limitations in this study, which need to be considered. The first limitation is concerned with the imbalance of gender in the study. In this study only two out of the 10 participants were male, suggesting that females are more open to discussing their feelings on the psychosocial difficulties which they have experienced. It is conceivable that male and female perceptions may differ, which may result in different reports of psychosocial experience and the meaning of parental loss. Although the study had two males it would have been in the study’s advantage to have a balance of male and female perceptions. This issue should be addressed in future studies. However, the lack of males in this study links into the core category of avoiding disclosure which would validate the findings.

While the following is not a limitation per se, it is important in understanding the context of the study. Some of the participants experienced the loss eight years prior to the study and as a result, their understanding of the death had likely been revised over the years. However, this long period of time had contributed to gaining a deeper understanding of the process of finding meaning.

7.3 Impact of research on researcher
Staying committed to reflexivity I reflected on my research and the impact it had on me. It was necessary to observe my responses and why these responses were happening throughout the research. I began the research process with an active interest, with the aim to learn something new and develop personally and professionally from the experience.
Undertaking this research topic has been an inspiring journey. I was moved in an emotional as well as intellectual way by the research findings while committing to reflexivity. In a way that mirrors Freire’s (1993, cited in Russell & Kelly, 2002) observation of and lessons about education: I am educating and have been educated; I am learning about myself as well as others. In addition, in a way that mirrors Russell and Kelly’s (2002) argument for the impact of research (p. 14), I was changed by many aspects of the research process both personally and professionally. Professionally, the process has strengthened my methodology skills, writing ability, critical thinking skills, problem solving skills and the skill of patience and persistence. It has provided me with insight and understanding into this topic and client group. In addition, conducting this research project has built on my skills both as a researcher and in my clinical practice. As Halling and Goldfarb (1991, p. 328), point out, ‘being a researcher requires that one become fully and thoughtfully involved. It is as if one is engaged in a dance of moving forward and moving back: one steps closer and steps away, one has an effect and is affected, all as an embodied being’. My task as a researcher and in my clinical practice is not just to listen to another’s story, but to be open to being-with the participant in a relationship. My capacity to understand the participants’ has been enhanced through reflexive awareness. In addition, I have built upon empathy. Davidson (2003) argues there are no short cuts for the cultivation of such empathic, intuitive understanding – it requires practice, skill, talent and grace. Empathy, he says, is ‘“a highly disciplined and demanding posture involving an active and artful use of all of one’s faculties of memory, imagination, sensitivity, and awareness in coming to understand another person’s experience from his or her own perspective.”’ (2003, p.121). Through an empathic research relationship, it has helped to shape and deepen the findings of the research.

The most enlightening process of the research was the transcribing of the interviews. When listening to the participants I was drawn into each story and enriched by emotions experienced. Transcribing the interviews involved listening and re-listening to participants stories, relaying a particular phrase as often as needed to capture the spoken word as well as exploring my own reactions to the words. This process gave me the opportunity to analyze the data as accurately as
possible as well as exploring my own responses to the data which contributed to deepening the findings of the research.

During this experience, I undertook personal therapy and wrote a reflexive diary. Personal therapy helped me to explore my reactions during the research process. I experienced feelings of sadness, anxiety, excitement and joy during this process. I inwardly underwent the process of ‘working out’ and ‘confronting’ my loss in addition to being confronted with the participants’ strong emotions connected to their loss. This process of being confronted with strong emotions was difficult but it has given me insight and understanding, in addition to developing professionally and personally. By keeping an ongoing reflexive diary it helped to facilitate reflexivity therefore prevented distorting of my perceptions of the data and enhanced a co-construction of meaning of parental loss. Engaged in understanding my participations, I was also engaging in self-understanding. I began to reflect and find meaning in my loss, which helped me to gain insight into my participants and in turn enhanced and deepened the research process.

I became aware during the research process of how mutually engaging and intersubjective the process of fieldwork is. My life is influenced by the research both from the respondents’ stories and through the methodology. It has provided me with insight and understanding of loss in young adulthood in addition to understanding, finding meaning and acceptance in my own personal experience of parental loss.

7.4 Critical reflection on methodology
As the intention was to explore experience and to gain an insight into changes occurring in social situations, grounded theory was selected as the method of choice. Charmaz’s (2006) constructivist approach was adhered to. The chosen approach permitted an in-depth exploration of the meaning of parental loss from the perspective of the young adult who experienced the loss. This resulted in a set of categories that are firmly grounded in the data.

The methodology process was anxiety-provoking, time-consuming and complicated. It proved to be a challenging experience and a road of discovery. There were a
number of analysis procedures occurring at the one time, which felt overwhelming at times. My initial plan was to adopt Strauss and Corbin’s (1998) grounded theory approach. However, as I began the first round of data collection, I began to feel uncomfortable. The techniques advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1990) seemed to promote an objective stance in which the researcher was seen largely as the ‘expert’ in determining what was important. I was therefore concerned that using Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) approach to the development of grounded theory might not enable the expertise of the young adult who had experienced parental loss to be captured fully. Also, this approach was not straightforward and did not seem to fit appropriately to the study. Charmaz’s (2006) approach to grounded theory allows for flexibility. Rather than using technical procedures as suggested by Strauss and Corbin, Charmaz (2006) emphasises flexible guidelines, not methodological rules, recipes and requirements.

At the beginning of the analysis I found myself falling into the trap of ‘forcing’ the data into categories (Glaser, 1990). Conducting memo writing and getting an expert in qualitative methods and two colleagues to examine some of the interview transcripts and coding sheets established trustworthiness of data collection and highlighted at an early stage the problem of ‘forcing’ the data. The analysis became less confusing with experience. I feel confident that these findings give a realistic account of the young adult experience of bereavement.

Theoretical sampling and constant comparative data analysis continue until the theory is said to be ‘saturated’. However, as this research was conducted within a short time-frame ‘satisfaction’ could not be achieved but a substantial theory that explains the process of parental loss has been developed. The model which has been developed provides a firm platform from which further investigation can be conducted with a view to elaborating and validating it.

The ontology and epistemology underpinning this study provided the ability to capture individual subjective experience, and the similarities and variations within those experiences. The approach taken was sufficient to examine and generate new understandings of the meaning of parental loss as a psychological and social process. In addition, the model that was generated offered greater depth and insight.
about the impact of parental loss in young adulthood and life after the loss, and contributes to the gap in the literature focusing on parental loss at this development stage.

7.5 Recommendations for future research
A number of areas for future research, to build on the current findings and limitations of this research study, have been identified. Although the sample consisted of various cultures from around the world, all the participants were white and from working class history and culture. A future recommendation would be to include black and ethnic minority populations and from areas of social deprivation. Research that explores the relevance of the model in a broader population would be informative. The resonance of the data from this study with those of other studies, suggests that the model and theory of parental loss may well apply to wider populations. However, this needs to be tested and cannot be assumed.

In addition, the conduct of incorporating a wider sample of male participants would be helpful in future research. The two males that did partake generated rich data however, therefore it is recommended to conduct further research to generate a broader idea of the male experience of parental loss.

7.6 Implications for clinical work
Several implications for counselling psychologists and mental health professionals may be drawn from the research. Levy et al. (1994, p. 85) suggested that knowing how bereaved individuals ‘experience their present circumstances and future prospects and make sense of them should make for a much more finely tuned approach in helping, as well as understanding’. Additionally, Gillies and Neimeyer (2006) suggest that the clinician’s role in working with a bereaved client is to facilitate a constructive process in which meanings can be found or developed that help the client reshape his or her shattered world, restore a sense of order, promote new insight and personal growth, guide meaningful actions in response to the loss, and bring some degree of relief from the common and undeniable pain of grief. In light of this, it is hoped that the present model provides some useful guidance in further studying and facilitating this process.
One of my arguments in this study revealed that young adults experience a sense of isolation which includes loneliness and feelings of not being understood. Feelings of not being understood were related to some participants’ experiences of counselling. It is important for clinicians to be aware of this in order to engage the person seeking therapy. Rogers (1958, p. 9) argues that “the therapist’s attitudes and feelings are more important than their theoretical orientation, procedures and techniques, and that furthermore, it is the way in which his attitudes and procedures are perceived which makes a difference to the client, and that it is this perception which is crucial”.

Moreover, findings revealed that some of the participants did not seek counselling, due to not knowing what counselling is, how it can be of benefit, or how to find a therapist. Some participants reported that their GPs discouraged counselling and encouraged medication. Also, people reported not seeking counselling due to the stigma attached to it; this again links into people not understanding how to talk about the loss. My clinical experience also supports this. Therefore, it is important that information is available in order to support this client group and to promote societal understanding. This could be achieved through talks in schools to reduce the stigma at an early age. Also, increasing health professionals’ awareness of counselling is important in order to refer to appropriate services; this could be achieved through presentation of findings at conferences and dissemination of findings in professional journals.

The model devised from this study is important to the field of counselling psychology and bereavement for a number of reasons:

1) This model could be used as a tool for educating professionals working in the field of bereavement about the psychosocial impact of parental loss in young adulthood and the coping strategies adopted to adjust to the loss.

2) It can be used in clinical work as a means to understanding and validating the client’s feelings, thereby addressing the feeling of being understood.

3) The model could also be used for psycho-education in client sessions. It could be used to normalise the experience for the clients and facilitate their understanding.
Another suggestion towards implications for clinical practice is to run support groups. One of my arguments in this study highlights the importance of finding meaning through comparing with other people’s experiences. Support groups could offer this process of comparing and searching for meaning as well as providing therapeutic support.

7.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study makes a unique contribution to understanding the impact of the loss, the coping strategies, and the reconstruction of meaning involved in life after the loss for the young adult. In addition, the methods adopted proved to be capable of meeting the aims of the study. Furthermore, my study provides a sound basis for future research to verify and expand the model of parental loss in young adulthood. It also has application to practice in Counselling Psychology.
CHAPTER 8

STORYLINE AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The storyline

The story concerns young adults’ experiences after a parental loss and how young adults cope with the crisis and move forward in their life without their parent. What was the psychosocial impact of parental loss? How did they cope?

Everyone saw themselves as a different person after the loss of their parent. Life before the loss was described as ‘very different’. The process of adjusting to life and accepting life without their parent involved overcoming a number of emotional (fear, vulnerability, insecurity, guilt, helplessness), physical (tired, fatigued), social (isolation, no-control, new responsibilities) and cognitive (confused, questioning, uncertain) experiences that were encountered along the way.

The initial experience of the loss was one of shock for all the participants. There was a universal experience of feeling out of control, a lack of confidence and an insecure sense of self. To move towards adjusting to life after the loss required the ability to mobilize a number of recovery mechanisms. Some people were impeded in doing so by social and cultural norms, for example, avoiding disclosure and withdrawing from certain friends whom they felt ‘didn’t understand’. The process of putting on a brave face, and disguising real feelings echoed throughout the participants’ stories. In addition, the majority had difficulty getting the information, support and reassurance necessary to employ the coping mechanisms at different points along the adjustment pathway. As a result of this, other disruptions occurred, e.g. avoidance, frustration, overprotection, and avoiding disclosure occurred. Some moved backwards and forwards along the recovery pathway. The journey was not linear.

The mechanisms people employed to help with adjustment included: 1) Finding meaning – making sense of the loss; 2) Finding benefit and forming new goals; 3) Endurance, and motivation to keep going even when they found it difficult; 4) Appraisal: They reappraised the event, which evoked dramatic self-assessment and
change. This process was one the young adult confronted alone; it was a process involving self reliance. Overall, the young adults emerged from the experience with an enhanced sense of self reliance, capability and maturity.

The above mechanisms emerged from accounts by people who had achieved and not achieved adjustment and meaning. Those who were struggling were still trying to find meaning and make sense of the loss. Those young adults that saw themselves as adjusted and as accepting of the loss commented on feeling optimistic, stronger and having an enhanced sense of self.

8.2 Conclusion
In conclusion, the process of completing this piece of research has been a challenging and enlightening process. It has made me become aware of the challenges this client group presents, such as loneliness, and feeling the need to rely on themselves to get through such a difficult time in their life. Young adults are at an early developmental phase which is often misperceived as an age when they should be able to cope with life’s demands. However, this study highlights the need for support and for awareness of how social influence impacts the bereavement process, in order to help people cope with such a devastating loss.

I fully intend on raising awareness of this research topic and the results with colleagues through publication, and with those young adults experiencing parental loss in my clinical practice.
References


Gilbert, K. R. (1996). ‘We’ve had the same loss, why don’t we have the same grief?’ Loss and differential grief in families. Death Studies, 20, 269-283.


APPENDICES

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APPENDIX 1

Parental loss Study

INFORMATION SHEET

You are being invited to take part in a research study. I am currently looking for young adults who have:

- Experienced the loss of a parent, through death

I am seeking your permission to take part in the study. Before you decide whether to do so, it is important for you to understand why the research is being carried out and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information and discuss it with others if you wish. Take time also to decide whether or not to participate in the study.

Purpose of study
This study is for a dissertation for a Doctorate in Counselling Psychology, which I am hoping to gain from City University in London. I have chosen this topic because of a personal interest in young adults who have experienced bereavement of a parent. This is an area I hope to work in after the completion of the Doctorate. You are invited to take part in an informal interview to discuss your thoughts on your experience of losing a parent and how you coped with your loss. Young adults’ perceptions are sometimes overlooked; therefore this piece of research gives young adults a voice.

Why have you been chosen?
I have chosen to research the impact the loss of a parent has on young adults. The reason I have decided to study this area is because it is overlooked. Therefore I have approached you as I am interested in your experience of loss. The reason you have been chosen is to further research on the loss of a parent between the ages of eighteen to thirty.

This research project will not be completed without full consent.

Do you have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw at any stage will not affect you in any way. I would like to express my thanks to all the participants who take part, and to say that taking part in this study is completely voluntary.
What will happen if you take part?
You will take part in a one-to-one interview with me. You have the right to withdraw at any time during the interview if you feel uncomfortable with answering the questions. You are the experts of your own experience of loss; therefore, you will be encouraged to describe your experience in your own words in response to a series of questions.

Are there any disadvantages of taking part in the study?
The disadvantages of taking part in the study would involve giving up the time for the interview. I am happy to be flexible in arranging times to suit you. There is also the possibility that discussing the loss of your parent may evoke emotional feelings and cause you to feel upset. If this does occur you are free to withdraw from the study. Also, for additional support, I will give you information on support groups and counselling services should the interviews evoke strong emotions.

Are there any benefits of taking part?
A knowledge of how the loss of a parent affects the young adult can improve our understanding of how to provide adequate psychosocial support for people in this age group. This study aims to identify potential counselling and support needs for young adults who have experienced parental loss.

Confidentiality
The interviews will be recorded on tape. Only I will have access to the information for analysis. All recordings will be codified to maintain confidentiality. No names will be given on the research report and you will not be identified in any way in the report.

What will happen to the results of the study?
The results of the study will contribute to the dissertation and will be submitted to City University London for them to consider whether it merits a Doctorate. The information you give may be published in an academic journal so that professionals may learn from the findings. If you would like a copy of the report I will ensure that you have one.

Contact for further information
If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.
I can be contacted on e-mail at lc_cityuniversity@hotmail.co.uk

Finally, if you decide to take part, I should like to thank you in advance. I am most grateful to you for giving up your time.

Date:

Kind regards,

Louise Clarke
Candidate for the Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology
lc_cityuniversity@hotmail.co.uk
APPENDIX 2

**Parental loss Study**

CONSENT FORM

**Name of Researcher:** Louise Clarke

- I understand that my participation in this study is strictly voluntary and that I may discontinue my participation at any time. □

- I understand that the purpose of this study is to research young adults who have experienced parental death. □

- I understand that any information about me will be kept strictly confidential and that I will not be identified any way in the report. Further, I understand all hard copies and records of the interview will be erased, in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1984) □

- I confirm that I have read and fully understand the information sheet, dated ………………… for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions and had my questions answered. □

- I agree to take part in the above study □

___________________     _________________        __ ____________________
Name of Participant                           Date                               Signature

_____________________    ___________________     ____________________
Name of Researcher                         Date                                Signature
**APPENDIX 3**

**Debriefing External Agencies**

**Support groups**
This study is researching personal experiences of parental loss. As it is a sensitive area it may evoke strong emotions. I have given a list of bereavement support groups and counselling services for young adults should the study evoke strong emotions, distress or if you need extra support. These support groups/counselling services are trained specifically in helping bereaved people and will be particularly good at listening to your story. Whatever you tell them will be kept in confidence. The service they give is free.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support group</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cruse Bereavement Care</strong></td>
<td>For people bereaved in any way, whatever age, nationality or belief.</td>
<td>Cruse House, 126 Sheen Road, Richmond TW9 1UR  Tel: 020 8939 9530  Website:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk">www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>British Association of Counselling</strong></td>
<td>Provides information about local counselling organizations and individual</td>
<td>1 Regent Place, Rugby CV1 2PJ  Information Line: 01788 578328  Website:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>counsellors who are accredited.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bacp.co.uk">www.bacp.co.uk</a>  <a href="http://www.bacp.co.uk/seeking_therapist">www.bacp.co.uk/seeking_therapist</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Samaritans</strong></td>
<td>Emotional support 24 hours a day for people experiencing feelings of distress and despair.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.samaritans.org.uk">www.samaritans.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Childhood Bereavement Network</strong></td>
<td>For children and Young Adults.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncp.org.uk/cbn">www.ncp.org.uk/cbn</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS) Support Group</strong></td>
<td>Organisation provides information, publications, and a number of support groups around the UK for people bereaved by suicide.</td>
<td>Website: <a href="http://www.uk-sobs.org.uk">www.uk-sobs.org.uk</a>  Helpline: 0870 2413 337.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bereavement services in your area in London</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.bereavement.org.uk">http://www.bereavement.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data was collected from the participants through a semi-structured interview format. My questions reflected social constructivist concerns. I went into each interview with a set of general areas of questioning, which had been enhanced by analysis of the data collected at previous interviews. Examples of questions included the following:

- How long has it been since your parent passed away?
- Could you tell me the story of your mother’s/father’s death?
- In what way did your relationship change in the last years of his/her life?
- Can you tell me about your relationship with your parent that is still alive, has your relationship with him/her changed since the death of your other parent?
- If you have siblings, can you tell me about your relationships with them - for example: Has the death of your parent affected your relationship with your siblings?
- Could you tell me about your social relationships – for example: Has the death of your parent affected your relationship with your peers or partner?
- Do your peers and/or partner understand your grief?
- Looking back on your parent’s death, what if anything, was left unsaid between you and the parent?
- When your parent died, did you seek help from a therapist or support group? If so, has this support been helpful and if so how? If not, would you consider seeking therapeutic support?
- Has your career been affected by the death of your parent?
- Can you tell me what things you miss about your parent and how this change has impacted on your life?
- What past enjoyments did you share with your parent when he/she was alive and do you now enjoy this past time?
- What expectations do you have for the future?
- Finally, is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for this study.
From a social constructivist view, I took these questions a step further. As the interviews progressed, the emerging theory was tested and enriched by theoretical sampling. When rapport was established, I brought in reflective questions and feeling questions. For example:

- How did your parent’s death affect you?
- How did you cope?
- How would you compare the person you were before your parent’s death with the person you are now?
- Do you feel you had to mature quickly after your parent died?
- How did you feel having to take on that responsibility?
- Did you talk to anyone about how you were feeling?

As the data emerged there was significant evidence on experiencing positive growth as a result of the loss; I therefore pursued this area further. I built questions about growth into the later interviews. Doing so helped me to frame a more complete picture of it.

- Do you feel anything positive has come from the loss?

Similarly, the feeling of not being understood echoed throughout the participants’ stories. I therefore investigated this area further, exploring their perception of health professionals’ interaction and understanding in addition to that of their peers, i.e. asking:

- Do you feel health professionals were supportive? Did they give you information or did they refer you to a counsellor?

During the analysis, as concepts and categories were being developed and when gaps in the data emerged, participants were contacted to clarify their previous account and were asked specific questions relating to the developing concepts.
APPENDIX 5

Example of Transcript

Initial coding

Analysis process – Initial coding

Interview 1

Male

I = Interviewer and P = Participant.
Note to self: What is happening? What do I hear, see, sense, observations and interactions?
What is occurring, how did it occur and did anyone influence their actions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes &amp; Code No</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Memo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>I: How long has it been since your parent passed away?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 duration of loss</td>
<td>P: Eight years ago</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>I: Was it your mother or father that died?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>P: My father</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>I: Can you tell me the story of your father’s death?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 chose to have a heart attack. 1.7 no illness 1.8 no warning, shock.</td>
<td>P: He took a heart attack. I went off for the day and when I came back he had died….. (looks down and sighs) There was no illness it was a complete shock…………..</td>
<td>He ‘took’ a heart attack: Implies unfairness. Did he feel angry?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9 1.10</td>
<td>I: So did your relationship change in the last few years of his life?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.11 unexpected 1.12 immature relationship 1.13 childish relationship 1.14 regret, didn’t have an adult relationship with father 1.15 older father 1.16 shock 1.17 regret, would have liked to have an adult relationship with father.</td>
<td>P: Well because it wasn’t expected it’s like any relationship you have when you’re a late teenager and the relationship I had with him was probably a childish relationship it wasn’t really em……. I never really had an adult relationship with him……….. he was an older father so he wasn’t a young father and I’d just finished school………..so it didn’t change because it was a shock but not having a adult relationship is one thing I regret I wish I could have talked to him as an adult.</td>
<td>Describes father as being an older father. There is a sense that having a heart attack was expected as he was an older father but at the same time it was a complete shock.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I: Can you tell me about your relationship with your parent that is still alive, your mother?

P: I'm REALLY close to my mum. I think once he died I was the only man in the house 'cause I have two other sisters........... my father had two brothers one had been ill for a long time and the other brother I didn't get along with and mum has one brother who she doesn't get on with so I kind of felt like I was the man of the house so I kind of thought that I had to be there for my sisters. They all fell apart when dad died and I felt like I couldn't 'cause I had to be the man of the house. So my sisters were all living away from home at that stage but I...... didn't go away to university cause I was worried about my mum 'cause she was falling apart so I decided to stay at home with my mum....... I just went to university locally rather than going away.... Originally I had planned on moving away but that idea went once dad died also when he died I really wanted to prove myself and decided on a different career path I became really ambitious....My dad had a shop which I could have taken over but I really wanted to prove myself to my family and I really wanted... like I had this drive inside me I wanted to do well for myself 'cause I wanted to show people that my dad died and he had a family business but I didn't need that.... I wasn't that ambitious before he died but maybe that's just part of growing up but I do feel I matured very fast once he died

'I felt like I couldn't fall apart 'cause I had to be the man of the house'. Was this an internal pressure/society pressure or family expectation?

Code 1.29: What does falling apart mean?

'I wanted to show people that my dad died and he had a family business but I didn’t need that’. Does this link to not wanting sympathy?

I: So there was a lot of responsibility once your father died, you had to take care of your family and mature quite fast. Do you think that was a bad thing or a good thing?

P: Well I kind of felt like I was missing out on a lot of fun. I never went off the rails 'cause I didn't want my mum having extra problems so I didn't go off the rails I wish I had in a way. I remember the first weekend I went out after he died I went to a party and I drove 'cause I just didn't want to drink 'cause I thought that mum was under so much pressure so I thought I didn't want to be an extra problem or worry and better be

'I wanted to show people that my dad died and he had a family business but I didn’t need that’ Does this link to not wanting sympathy?
<p>| 1.47 | I: So overall your relationship with your mother is much stronger now? |
| 1.48 close to surviving parent | P: Yeah well I always had a good relationship with her but I’m very close to her now because I worry about her |
| 1.49 worries about losing mother |  |
| 1.50 | I: So what about your siblings your three sisters, how is your relationship with them? and did the death of your father affect your relationship with them? |
| 1.51 |  |
| 1.52 |  |
| 1.53 taken on father’s role – new role | P: I’ve given away two of them at their weddings so I suppose I feel quite protective of them and I feel I know that two of them are married and one engaged but I do sort of feel the responsibility I still feel like the man of the house…. When I go home for Sunday dinner and all my brother in laws are there I still have my seat at the top of the table |
| 1.54 protective of family |  |
| 1.55 -1.56 feels responsible for family, overprotective of family | He is saying he is protective of his family. Is this related to fear of losing them or protecting them from being upset? |
| 1.57 – 1.58 people have assigned this role to him, they influence his actions |  |
| 1.59 | I: Is your relationship with your sisters different now compared to before your father died? |
| 1.60 |  |
| 1.61 closer to siblings since loss | P: Yeah….. I’d say I’m closer to them now in a way I was………… I don’t know if I’d be any closer to them if he hadn’t died I don’t know I’m not sure |
| 1.62 uncertain if parent’s death has made him closer to family |  |
| 1.63 | I: Can you tell me about your social relationships for example has the death of your parent affected your relationship with your peers/partner? |
| 1.64 |  |
| 1.65 |  |
| 1.66 relationship at the time of loss | P: ………………….. I remember the girl I was going out with at the time I remember at the start of our relationship when dad was alive I was laid back and then when he died I got paranoid that something might happen to her I would worry a lot about people you start to worry that something would happen to people and I would get really worried which made my girlfriend annoyed cause I was over-protective |
| 1.67 previous to loss felt relaxed |  |
| 1.68-70 after loss began to worry about people close to him | He uses the word ‘protective’ again here. Is this linked to fear of loss? |
| 1.71 -72 feeling of anxiety surrounding another loss |  |
| 1.73 | I: Are you still like that? |
| 1.74 | …level of anxiety has decreased | P: No…… I would worry about stuff but not like that |
| 1.75 | I: How long did you feel like that? |
| 1.76 | experience of time, duration of separation anxiety. 1.77 ‘people can be taken away from you’ | P: About a year I think. You just get into your head that people can be taken away from you very quickly without any warning |
| 1.78 | I: Did your peers at the time and even now understand what you were going through, your grief? |
| 1.80 | lack of compassion, empathy. 1.81 didn’t ask for sympathy 1.82-1.83 not communicating feelings | P: I would never really got sympathy but then again I never asked for it…. I never talked about it that much to my friends I don’t think I had any heart to hearts |
| 1.84 | I: Why is that, did you feel that they didn’t want to listen or did you not want to talk about it? |
| 1.86 | social reactions to death – people feeling awkward 1.87 – 1.88 communication difficulties around the concept of death 1.89 keeping problems within the family | P: I often thought that they felt awkward about it………………. Yeah I sort of felt they didn’t know what was going on and I didn’t want to embarrass them. I didn’t feel like I needed to talk to someone I talked to my family about it |
| 1.90 | I: Do you think you were in denial? |
| 1.91-92 | not communicating feelings of loss. Concerns within the family about coping with the loss. 1.93-1.94 dealt with loss internally. Not wanting people to see him grieve 1.95-1.96 moments when you want to talk to parent 1.97 out of his control Re shifting focus back | P: Well I remember one of my sisters saying to me that she was worried because I didn’t talk about it she thought I needed to get it out of my system but …….. for me not so much now but over the years you definitely do it in closed doors when no one is around and it’s….. You get moments where you wish dad was here to chat and you can’t but I think my attitude is that you can’t do anything about it and I’ve got my own life to live so I can’t be miserable for the rest of my life you need to get on with it… it’s bad enough that he’s not there but there is no point wasting time thinking and getting upset about it. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code 1.101-1.102</th>
<th>I: So looking back was there anything left unsaid between you and your father?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.103-1.104</td>
<td><strong>did not take notice of advice during teenage years</strong>&lt;br&gt;1.105 wanting to be guided, missing his advice&lt;br&gt;1.106-1.108 regret of not having a mature relationship with parent&lt;br&gt;1.109-1.110 young adults appreciate parent's advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.111-1.112</td>
<td>P: ……………… I wish……. He used to give me advice when I was a teenager but at that age you just brush it off and take no notice but I wish that I had him around to give me advice and have discussions about things. You're always going to wish that you got to know them better and spent more time with them but when you're a teenager you're not interested in getting to know them but I think when you get into your mid twenties you start to appreciate your parents’ advice and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.113</td>
<td>P: No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.114</td>
<td>I: Would you ever consider it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.115</td>
<td><strong>informed of support groups/counselling.</strong>&lt;br&gt;1.116-1.117 dealing with loss internally. Stigma around psychology&lt;br&gt;1.118 hindsight support group would have been helpful&lt;br&gt;1.119 talk about loss amongst people that wouldn’t know him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.119</td>
<td>P: ……………… I remember people saying to me at the time but I used to think that going to a psychologist was for people who had lost it and I thought that I could deal with it myself……. Looking back maybe it wouldn’t have been a bad idea being in a support group with others that were in the same situation and not associated with me but I never did and knew nothing about it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Relationship did not evolve.**

**Code 1.119:** He talks about loss amongst people that don’t know him. There is a sense of being judged.
| 1.120 | I: Has your career been affected by the death of your father? |
| 1.121-1.122 **wanting to prove himself to people** | P: Like I was saying to you early on I was going to go into the family business and then I kinda felt like I had to do something else to prove myself and I’m so glad now that I made that decision cause I would hate to be at home when all my friends moved away and now I feel like I have achieved something that I’ve really worked hard for which I don’t think I’d feel if I’d stayed at home and run the business | Link to feelings of sympathy. |
| 1.123 – 1.124 **goals achieved, feeling of being proud of his achievements** | |
| 1.125 | I: Is there anything else that you miss about him? |
| 1.126-1.127 **reminder of loss in all situations** | P: I miss him when I hear my friends saying what they are doing with their dad and when it's his birthday and of course everyday life situations….. I miss guidance on life having someone to say do this do that… My relatives or my mum never gave me any guidance after he died so I miss someone giving me advice |
| 1.128-1.129 **missing his parental guidance** | |
| 1.130 **no guidance as a result of the death** | |
| 1.131 | I: For enjoyment, the things that you used to do for enjoyment with your father can you still do those things? |
| 1.132 | |
| 1.133 -1.134 **engaging in past, shared enjoyments makes him feel close to parent** | P: I used to do a lot of walking with him and I still do that now…. I feel close to him when I do it and I know that he liked country and western and when I was younger I hated it but now I love it but it makes me feel a bit sad ’cause I never enjoyed it with him |
| 1.135 -1.136 **regret of not sharing the same interests as parent when he was alive** | |
| 1.137 | I: What challenges do you face without him being around? |
| 1.138 - 1.139 **feeling the loss during every milestone in young adulthood** | P: Just sort of………. You get married one day you got children you’re making big decisions in your life whether it be social or work decisions big milestones it’s eh…… it’s going to be a challenge…. I think about him every day |
| 1.140 **thinking about parent every day** | |
| 1.141 | I: Is there anything else you would like to add? |
| 1.142 | P: No I think we’ve covered everything |
APPENDIX 6
EXAMPLE OF A MEMO

28/3/08

Interview 1

Avoiding Disclosure
Reflects control.

He is avoiding expressing his feelings. He takes silence as the only strategy. Why? - He does not want sympathy or to be judged. Disclosing feelings affects how others view and treat him. Electing silence prevents alienation/judgement/criticism. This process holds profound implications for self and identity. The category fosters a certain behaviour, it emerges under certain conditions, and has consequences. There is a sense of social value. There seems to be an empowered identity by avoiding true feelings.

When does it happen? Where is it happening and with whom? He is avoiding telling his peers - why? By avoiding disclosing his feelings he is hiding his vulnerability, why? Avoiding disclosure becomes a strategy for handling emotions/feelings, for exerting some control over the situation, for handling society’s pressure on self. Avoiding disclosure limits the reality of the loss for self and for others. Avoiding limits stigma and portrays a preferred self-image.

Disclosing takes a further twist. He is avoiding telling his family his feelings. Disclosing feelings can ‘worry’ loved ones and cause them to suffer.

Avoiding disclosure links to regulating emotions and having control and a sense of empowerment. The social constructivist view of grief posits that society has a ‘template’ for how grief should look and hence how it ought to be expressed. This view links into what is happening in the data. The participant is avoiding disclosing his true feelings due to his perception of society’s unspoken rules on how grief ought to be expressed.
APPENDIX 7
THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Writing the first draft

Integrating memos

Sorting memos

Theoretical memo writing
Further refining of concepts

Theoretical sampling

Memo writing
Refining categories

Data collection ………Focused coding

Memo writing
Raising terms to concepts

Data collection
Initial coding

Research problems and questions

1 Taken from Charmaz, K. (1990). Discovering chronic illness using grounded theory. Social Science and Medicine, 30, 1161-1172.
SECTION C  ADVANCED CASE STUDY

FROM POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER TO MULTIPLE LOSSES:
A REFLECTIVE EXPLORATION OF THE CHALLENGES
ENCOUNTERED IN THE WORK OF A SUDANESE REFUGEE.
1.0 PART A: INTRODUCTION AND THE START OF THERAPY

1.1 Introduction

The client that I have chosen to write my case study on is a 50-year-old Sudanese male, who has experienced traumatic events with multiple losses and as a reaction is showing signs of posttraumatic stress disorder.

I have chosen to present this client for my case study because it was my first opportunity to work with a client from an ethnic minority population as well as work in a Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Service. This case led me to develop on a personal level by reflecting and challenging my own concepts of the world, how it operates, explore my own cultural and racial identity whilst addressing my anxiety around war and torture. It also led me to develop on a professional level by integrating cross-cultural sensitivity in therapy. I have gained an enormous insight into the many challenges this client group present such as cultural, political, and religious beliefs. This is of supreme importance in the therapeutic space and process and in the interactive process between therapist and client (Alayarian, 2007). For these reasons the work with this client was a key learning experience both personally and professionally.

I employed a Cognitive Behavioural framework in the work with this client. I felt this approach was the most appropriate as ‘Cognitive Behaviour Therapy techniques address the conditioned fear and cognitive distortions associated with posttraumatic stress disorder’ (Friedman 2006).

Consent to write about this case was obtained from this client. ²

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² All names and indentifying features have been changed to preserve client anonymity.
1.2 Summary of theoretical orientation
Cognitive Behaviour Therapy is an active, directive, time-limited and structured approach. It is based on an underlying theoretical rationale that an individual’s affect and behaviour is largely determined by the way in which they structure the world (Beck, 1967, 1976). Cognitions are based on attitudes or assumptions (schemas), developed from previous experiences. The therapeutic techniques are designed to identify, reality-test, and correct distorted conceptualisations and the dysfunctional beliefs (schemas) underlying these cognitions. Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, also known as CBT, has three main goals (Moorey, 2002):

1) To relieve symptoms and to resolve problems
2) To help the client acquire coping strategies
3) To help the client modify underlying cognitive structures in order to prevent relapse

In relation to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder treatment guidelines, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy has been designed as the treatment of choice for PTSD (Ehlers & Clark, 2000; Grey, Young & Holmes, 2002; Friedman 2006). Ehlers & Clark’s (2000) cognitive model of PTSD focuses on factors that help to maintain PTSD and explain its persistence. They illustrate that PTSD becomes persistent when individuals process the trauma in a way that leads to a sense of serious and current threat. The sense of threat arises as a consequence of: 1) excessively negative appraisals of the trauma and 2) a disturbance of autobiographical memory characterised by poor elaboration and contextualisation and strong associative memory. Change in the negative appraisals and the trauma memory are prevented by a series of problematic behavioural and cognitive strategies (Ehlers & Clark, 2000).

Outcome studies for cognitive behavioural interventions for PTSD support the use of repeated exposure to the trauma memory in order to facilitate the habituation of anxiety about beliefs regarding danger; focusing on imaginal exposure (exposure to trauma memories) and/or *vivo* exposure (exposure to real life situations or stimuli) (Foa & Meadows, 1997; Riggs, Cahill & Foa, 2006). However clients with PTSD often present with many other problems such as intense anger or profound shame
which may not be resolved by exposure. The outcome research has found that clients often benefit from cognitive restructuring aimed at beliefs that drive non-anxiety emotions, such as guilt, shame, and anger (Jaycox, Zoellner, & Foa, 2002; Kubany et al., 2004; Kubany & Watson, 2002; Zayfert & Becker, 2007). Results indicate that a treatment combining anxiety management, cognitive restructuring, and exposure is likely to yield the best results (Leahy & Holland, 2000, Zayfert & Becker, 2007).

In light of working with refugees and asylum seekers who present with traumatic stress symptoms, I used cognitive models to better understand the theoretical issues in these cases. A number of elements of Ehlers & Clark’s (2000) cognitive model of PTSD are of particular application to this client group. Grey & Young (2007) focus on this application. They explain that a sense of threat in PTSD can be further reinforced by a fear of repatriation (Steel et al., 2006). Therefore it would be predicted that levels of PTSD are maintained by uncertain asylum status, and that granting refugee status should reduce the sense of threat and hence potentially PTSD symptoms. They also argue that refugees can experience ‘a well founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality and membership of a political opinion’ (United Nations, 1951, cited in Grey & Young, p. 3).

Acknowledging that the range of events that lead to a decision to flee such as war, political repression, detention and torture can lead to negative appraisals such as perceived permanent change including the multiple losses that refugees experience and this clearly overlaps with depression (Grey & Young, 2007).

1.3 The Context and Referral:
Therapy was undertaken within a Community Mental Health Service in West London. My client ‘Amit’ was referred through his medical centre. His referral was reviewed by the multidisciplinary team and then initially assessed by a Clinical Psychologist as requiring therapy for PTSD. He was prescribed Citalopram 20mg to assist with depression. Referral was in anticipation of a reduction in PTSD and depressive symptoms, and an increase in psychological functioning.

The context of the work was twelve sessions. I employed a cognitive behavioural framework based on the treatment guidelines and based on my clinical judgement
as to what would best suit this client. The case formulation, assessment strategy and treatment plan were informed by the relevant experimental literature and empirically supported treatments using a cognitive behavioural perspective.

1.4 Biographical details:
My client, ‘Amit’, is a 50-year-old, refugee, Sudanese male. His first language is Arabic, his religion is Muslim and he is of black/African ethnic background. He speaks and understands the English language and has been living in the United Kingdom for three years. Amit was on the psychology waiting list for a year before we began our work together.

Amit is from a large family of four brothers and two sisters who currently live in Sudan. His mother died of cancer when he was in his twenties. His father is alive and lives in Sudan. There is no contact between Amit and his family in Sudan. Amit has been married to a Sudanese woman for twenty years and has one son aged seventeen who lives in the UK with Amit and his wife. His relationship with his wife is distant which he describes as being due to his problems.

Amit worked as a trade unionist in Sudan and has a degree in architecture and economics. Amit had strong political beliefs and as a result of his beliefs and his job he was tortured, forced to leave his job and for the safety of his family, he left Sudan and moved to the UK. He has been unemployed since entering the United Kingdom.

In addition to trauma, Amit, like most refugees, was suffering from multiple losses. As a result of being forced to leave his homeland and culture with little hope of returning, he lost family members, his social network, lost his role within a culture, his vocation and income and lost his status in Sudan. Amit lost a lifetime of memories, familiarity, customs, and values; as a result he was experiencing cultural displacement which impacted on his identity role. According to Foa (1987) post trauma factors contribute to the severity and duration of PTSD.
1.5 Initial assessment and formulation of the problem

The initial assessment and treatment plan occurred over two sessions. Amit arrived on time for our session. He was tall and smartly dressed. Although visibly nervous, he was warm and polite. He maintained good eye rapport throughout the assessment. He spoke and understood the English language. He gave a summary, in his own words, of the difficulties he was experiencing.

Amit stated that he would like help with ‘feeling depressed and being afraid to go to sleep at night’. He explained that he had nightmares every night which began shortly after the torture he suffered while living in Sudan. At this time he was working as a trade unionist and was arrested by Sudanese security forces. Amit reported being held in a detention place known as a ‘ghost house’. He reported being detained on three separate occasions where he was subjected to torture during interrogation, three times a day. He was released after signing forms that he would cease his activities as a trade unionist.

As a result of the abuse, Amit was suffering from nightmares, flashbacks, inability to concentrate, diminished interest in activities and emotional numbness, including avoiding affection and sex. He was engaging in avoidance behaviours to control his symptoms, which serves to maintain PTSD and prevent change in the negative appraisals of the trauma and in the nature of the trauma memory (Ehlers & Clark, 2000, Steil & Ehlers, 2000).

During the assessment, I worked towards identifying problematic appraisals and predominant emotions. Amit exhibited intense guilt, humiliation and shame. Amit described feeling humiliated as a result of the torture he received in Sudan, where he was held at gunpoint and felt powerless, helpless and personally inadequate to reverse the course of adverse experience. According to Drozdek, Turovic and Wilson (2000), shame can result from situations of interpersonal violence where the perpetrator exploits these psychological states of vulnerability to their advantage. Powerful emotions of PTSD such as shame are associated with a broad range of avoidance behaviours such as isolation, detachment and withdrawal (Drozdek, Turovic & Wilson, 2000). Amit also reported appraisals concerning his responsibility for the traumatic event e.g. ‘it is my fault’, and appraisals concerning
perceived loss e.g. ‘my life will never be the same again’. In addition to the emotions Amit was experiencing due to the torture he experienced in Sudan, he also expressed feeling nostalgic due to his social loss and was struggling to adjust to Western culture. He reported ‘leaving behind everything he once was’. I made a note of this for supervision as I was aware of the importance of understanding about the circumstances and motivation for migration, the impact of migration on identity, the ‘bereavement’ process and other psychological problems of settlement. Understanding these factors is important for positive therapeutic outcomes (Vallianatou, Leavey & Brown, 2007). Nick & Grey (2007) argue that it is important to recognise the normal processes of adjustment and grieving that are likely to occur following such experiences. They also argue that low mood associated to the process of adjustment and grieving can lead to a more isolated lifestyle, which in turn increases the number of such losses.

Amit was unable to remember all of the details of the trauma and had difficulty recalling the exact temporal order of the trauma during the assessment. Recent cognitive behavioural models of PTSD (Brewin, Dalgleish and Joseph, 1996; Ehlers and Clark, 2000) have highlighted the roles of inadequate processing of the trauma memory which can contribute to the erroneous appraisal of being responsible for the event. (Ehlers & Clark, 2000; Grey & Young, 2007).

Once the initial assessment was complete, I was in a position to formulate a coherent explanation that incorporated factors believed to contribute to the development and maintenance of PTSD symptoms. This formulation served to direct treatment. The precipitating factor was the torture he experienced by Sudanese security forces. Upon exploration of previous experiences and prior beliefs in order to take into account background factors that were likely to influence cognitive processing during the traumatic event, the traumatic event, the nature of the trauma memory, appraisals of the trauma/its sequelae and the strategies used to control the perceived threat/symptoms (Ehlers & Clark, 2000), it became apparent that the trauma triggered access to a deeply seated view of himself learned through formative developmental experiences, this being his father’s criticism towards Amit’s choice in career, political beliefs and his failings. These maladaptive beliefs which led him to perceive himself as a failure and were precipitated by political
violence, giving his beliefs additional negative meaning. Perpetuating factors included a range of cognitive processes. These included all-or-nothing thinking, dissociation and poor memory recall. As a result, when presented with matching triggers in his current environment, he re-experienced traumatic memories. These led him to feel afraid, guilty and ashamed. Understandably, he would avoid any situations that would trigger these memories (such as a regular sleep routine, work, watching TV programmes and news reports on the war and torture). Grey & Young (2007) argue that negative media coverage may serve to increase a person’s perceived (and indeed actual) vulnerability. I viewed Amit’s depression as secondary to his PTSD, as it had developed more recently. Clearly a number of factors could have contributed to its development, such as loss of country, status, family, as well as feelings of shame and guilt. (See Appendix A, for a cognitive model of PTSD devised by Ehlers and Clark (2000) which was adapted to incorporate Amit’s cognitions, emotions and behavioural strategies).

Following the assessment, I shared the formulation with Amit. Research suggests that a shared formulation may decrease the risk for dropout of therapy (Epperson, Bushway, & Warman, 1983; Perkarik & Steohenson, 1988). According to McLeon & Woody (2001), presenting the case formulation to the client creates the opportunity to motivate the client, build trust, and explain the treatment model. It also forms the basis for consent and expectations of treatment in terms of roles and tasks.

Therapeutic aims were discussed, which included a reduction of PTSD symptoms and a reversal of maintaining factors, which involves reactivating and updating the memory by processing the trauma through reliving and re-structuring any cognitive distortions (Ehlers & Clark, 2000; Ehlers et al., 2005). I was aware that we needed to work towards goals that were achievable in the time framework which we were given. I was also aware that Amit expressed strong feelings of failure; therefore I did not want him failing in therapy and enhancing that belief. Goals included confronting the trauma memories, nightmares, exploring and challenging problematic thoughts and beliefs, working towards symptom reduction and re-engaging in life.
I was aware of the language barriers and although Amit’s English was excellent, I offered him language support by giving him the choice of having an interpreter present. Although results demonstrate that treatment of PTSD is highly effective whether delivered directly or through an interpreter (Schulz, Resick, Huber, & Griffin, 2006), the aim was to offer him as much support and to make him feel as comfortable whether speaking in his native language or in English. I was aware that his trust might be affected due to the treatment received in his host country. Confidentiality was also explained to Amit. He turned down my offer of having an interpreter present. As advised by Grey & Young, (2007), I planned on working at a slower pace, with more explanation and checking of understanding.

Amit was offered twelve weekly, 90-minute sessions of cognitive-behavioural treatment. I advocated this time-frame in order to stay as true to the research as possible. It is recommended to use 90-minute sessions, if possible, because CBT for PTSD is often delivered in 90-120 minute sessions in research trials (Bryant et al., 2003; Foa et al., 1991, 1999; Paunovic & Ost, 2001; Resick et al., 2002). Procedures for cancellations were made clear. The aim was to highlight my commitment to him and provide him with a sense of security, reliability and regularity during this difficult time.

2.0 PART B – DEVELOPMENT OF THE THERAPY

Initial sessions with Amit focused on establishing rapport and building a trusting relationship. The main techniques used within the CBT framework were psycho-education, identifying triggers for the intrusions and reliving. As Amit was exhibiting intense guilt and shame, cognitive restructuring was used to modify guilt and thoughts about responsibility and failure (Resick et al., 2002; Smucker, Grunert, & Weis, 2003). Regular identification of thinking errors (Beck, 1995) was encouraged. Anxiety management techniques were used throughout treatment with the aim of reducing his anxiety and to help him realise that he had control over his symptoms (Clark, 1989). While there are a few available translated and validated self-report questionnaires, I used idiosyncratic empirical measurement throughout the treatment. I recorded the frequency and intensity of specific symptoms using subjective units of distress (SUDS) ratings where appropriate.
Psychoeducation formed the foundation of the treatment and set the stage for exposure. The goal of psychoeducation was to normalise his symptoms and motivate him for the next stage of therapy. This work coincided with progressive muscle relaxation, as advocated by Clark (1989) for anxiety states.

By session 4, Amit was ready to relive the trauma. I took a note of his anxiety using subjective units of distress (SUDS) at various points. As Amit was unable to remember all of the details of the trauma and had difficulty recalling the exact temporal order of the trauma during the assessment, I was aware that he may experience dissociation. Turner (2000) claims that refugee clients may experience dissociation during therapy where thoughts, emotions and memories become compartmentalised because they are too overwhelming. Although Ehlers & Clark’s (2000) model for PTSD advises therapists to use the first person during reliving, I encouraged Amit to use the present tense but to use the third person during reliving. My reason for this was to protect Amit from dissociation; this served to distance him from the emotional experience but relive the memory and identify hot spots. My supervisor advised me to use this strategy as a way to facilitate retrieval of the trauma memory, while also helping the client to cope with the strong emotions elicited. During the reliving I prompted with questions of his thoughts and emotions and of the five senses, thereby facilitating recall of additional details he had forgotten. I identified hot spots by noting changes in SUDS rating over the course of the memory description and observing his facial expressions and behaviour.

During reliving, Amit talked about feeling angry about the torture he experienced. He described the torture in detail as sessions progressed. He described feeling terrified while being detained and tortured and worried about his family’s safety. Feelings of hopelessness were expressed about his inability to protect himself and his family. He said on many occasions that the torture had ‘taken away his pride, I am nothing’ (with a belief rating of 90%). This caused him great distress and prevented him from thinking about or discussing his experiences prior to therapy. Amit also expressed feeling guilty about surviving when fellow prisoners had been executed (SUDS 90%). I helped Amit to depersonalise his experience and to understand that shaming the victim is a major aim of the torturer (Grey & Young,
Kubany (1998) proposes that trauma-related guilt plays an important role in maintaining PTSD and depression.

After each reliving exercise, Amit and I identified and discussed problematic thoughts and beliefs that were associated with key moments of the trauma, using the relevant cognitive restructuring techniques (Ehlers & Clark, 2000). As dysfunctional appraisals need to be modified to reduce the sense of current threat (Ehlers & Clark, 2000; Foa & Rothbaum, 1998; Resick & Schnicke, 1993) we conducted cognitive restructuring to establish possible alternative perspectives. Once an alternative perspective was identified, efforts were made to incorporate this information into the next reliving. Using the cognitive model of Kubany (1998) to approach the trauma-related guilt, I explored the cognitions involved in hindsight bias, justification distortion, responsibility distortion and wrongdoing distortion. This model identifies numerous errors of logic that can lead trauma victims to draw faulty conclusions about their role in traumatic events. Within the proposed model, correcting these thinking errors is considered the best way to alleviate guilt and is the primary task of cognitive therapy for trauma-related guilt (Kubany & Manke, 1995).

Work also involved Amit working outside of the sessions. However, Amit experienced difficulty completing homework exercises. Amit had difficulties with his initial efforts at cognitive restructuring and returned to the session with a blank homework sheet. The frustration he felt revealed negative automatic thoughts of ‘I should be able to do this. It shows what a failure I am’. He also experienced these negative beliefs with his initial effort at activity scheduling. When this happened, I immediately used these thoughts for the next example of cognitive restructuring. I also asked Amit to identify the advantages and disadvantages of continuing to hold this belief. According to Zayfert & Becker (2007), this approach is useful when clients are very reluctant to give up a particular belief. I sensed his vulnerability so I provided encouragement throughout. Once this belief was explored and challenged it provided an opening for further homework tasks. Other homework tasks involved exposure to situations that evoked moderate levels of anxiety (e.g. SUDS 50%). I instructed Amit to remain in each situation for 30-45 minutes, or until his anxiety
decreased considerably. I emphasised the importance of remaining in the situation until SUDS decreased by at least 50%. I gave him a SUDS rating scale to complete.

I was aware of the language barriers and the importance of not traumatising him out of therapy. Therefore, as suggested by Grey & Young (2007), I ensured to work at a slower pace, with more explanation and checking of understanding.

2.1 Making use of Supervision
Supervision played a pivotal role in the work with Amit. PTSD experts have focused on the need for ongoing supervision and support for less experienced therapists (e.g., Foa, Zoellner, Fenny, Henbree, & Alvarwz-Conrad, 2002). Supervision and personal therapy provided a safe space for me to openly explore my thoughts and feelings about working in a traumatic setting. This was essential as I did not want to react inappropriately to such vivid traumas in the therapy. It was important for me to debrief after hearing vivid details of Amit’s abuse. Supervision also provided me with knowledge about working within a multicultural setting which was important in order to build a therapeutic alliance.

3.0 PART C - THE CONCLUSION OF THERAPY AND REVIEW
3.1 The therapeutic ending
The final sessions focused on phasing out treatment. Amit was no longer depressed. Some PTSD symptoms remained, but they did not cause him significant distress. He began engaging in past enjoyments such as painting. The frequency of his nightmares had reduced and his ratings of distress were also reduced (although still present): guilt (20%), anger (20%), humiliation (20%) and feeling defeated (30%). It is possible that the level of defeat may reduce further as he increases his levels of activity and re-integrates into his local community. I encouraged Amit to explore employment opportunities. I felt he could benefit from re-establishing a work status as a means to building his self-esteem and re-establishing what he felt he once was, which was significantly important to him. I made a note of this for his care worker. Also, in order to help this process we explored relapse prevention and a ‘blueprint’ was drawn up with Amit, detailing what he learnt from therapy, how he may continue to make progress, and how he could attempt to overcome any future
setbacks and obstacles. I let Amit know that he was welcome to return to therapy should he feel the need.

3.2 Evaluation of the work
Working within a specific framework of CBT for PTSD (Ehlers & Clark, 2000; Ehlers et al., 2005; Grey et al., 2002; Kubany, 1998) provided a solid structure to adhere to, guided by empirical research. This facilitated the successful integration of practice with theory. Through cognitive behaviour interventions, PTSD symptoms were reduced substantially to an acceptable level whereby Amit felt confident and able to re-engage with life. Although Amit’s negative thoughts and other cognitive distortions had been modified, some PTSD symptoms remained. He was also still having difficulty recalling everything that happened during his detainment. I felt this would take time to expose but for now the symptoms had decreased significantly and did not cause him significant distress. I also felt he would have benefited greatly if we explored in more detail the grief he was experiencing but this was not possible with limited time and a structured approach.

3.3 Reflection -What I have learnt from the case about myself as a therapist
In order to work with this client group Cognitive Behaviour Therapy requires you to tolerate anxiety and other negative emotions. As it was my first case working in PTSD, I developed confidence through seeking supervision from an experienced CBT therapist in addition to reviewing the literature. With this extra support and with a positive therapeutic relationship, I became more confident which in turn made me feel less anxious. The supervision I received supported my role within the therapeutic alliance and helped me explore my work as a practitioner. Being aware of and accounting for these different aspects within the therapeutic space allowed my client to engage and elicit positive changes in behaviour as well as giving me the opportunity to develop within my own practice as a therapist and draw from new experiences/challenges to aid my personal and professional development.

This case has been a major learning curve in my training. I have learnt the importance of cultural awareness and sensitivity within practice. I have developed personally and professionally by reflecting on my own cultural and racial identity which I believe has contributed to my training as a Counselling Psychologist. I have
learnt the importance of the therapeutic alliance and encouraging both myself and my client to engage in the reflective process. This client work has also given me the opportunity to introduce and utilise different materials to aide the process of change. Additionally I found this a challenging and demanding case and I feel that my knowledge and experience of therapy for PTSD has strengthened. I have thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of working with clients from an ethnic background. I believe that working with ethnic minorities is a growing area and I am keen to work on developing my skills so that I can work effectively with this client group. In addition, working with Amit has given me insight into the multiple losses which refugees experience. This insight will contribute to my knowledge of loss from a cross-cultural perspective. Overall, I found it liberating and enriching to work with this client group.
References


A cognitive model of PTSD devised by Ehlers and Clark (2000) was adapted to incorporate Amit’s cognitions, emotions and behavioural strategies.

**Appendix 1**

Prior Experiences/Beliefs
Developmental experience - critical father - highlighted failures and disagreed with choice of career. Failure belief.

Cognitive Processing during Trauma

Nature of Trauma Memory
Detained by Sudan security forces.

Negative Appraisal of Trauma and/or its Sequelae
‘I am a failure’
‘It’s all my fault’
‘I can’t concentrate’

Matching Triggers
TV programmes/news reporting war.

Current Threat
Strong negative emotions:
Humiliation, guilt, shame, sadness.
Intrusions, nightmares and flashbacks.

Strategies Intended to Control Threat/Symptoms
Avoid TV programmes, news, newspapers, conversations.
Attempts to prevent nightmares by going to bed very late and getting up early.
Actively trying not to think about the event.
1.0 Introduction & Aims
My inspiration for carrying out this review emerged from my clinical practice. Working in the area of bereavement and posttraumatic stress disorder, I became increasingly aware of the complicated grief reactions and trauma reactions which contained an element of hopelessness. There is a wealth of literature, both anecdotal and empirical, indicating that one of the most profound losses is the loss of a loved one (Holmes & Rahe, 1967; Strobe, van Son & Strobe, 2000; Worden, 1988). The range of experiences, emotions, and responses this loss brings about in an individual are diverse and highly individualised. However, one key theme repeated in the literature is the loss of hope (Harvey, Orbuch, Weber, & Merbach, 1992). The individuals in this client group appear to have an implicit need for hope inspiration (Cutcliffe, 2004).

In the practice of counselling psychology, a necessary step in understanding the process of change is to identify interventions that produce change, how the therapist knows when to use these interventions and how these interventions are carried out. Over the years, therapists and researchers have suggested that hope is an important catalyst in the process of change. I therefore thought it was worth examining the role of various interventions in the literature on inspiring hope within counselling practice, with a focus on bereavement counselling as it is a topic which is highly relevant to counselling psychology practice.

The literature review considers the ways in which the role of hope has been applied to clinical practice. The aim of the review was to appraise the effectiveness of the current applications and to indicate directions for future development. As well as reviewing the literature on the role of hope in counselling, I have also drawn on the literature from nursing, social science, psychology and the therapeutic professional in an effort to attain a more effective critique and balanced perspective.

To provide a basis for this critical review, I begin by reviewing the theories on hope. This section is followed by a review of the literature on the strategies to inspire hope. The review critiques the literature on hope in psychology, followed by the literature from nursing and therapeutic professions. I conclude by making suggestions for improving research in this area. Although I review the role of hope
which has been applied to various illnesses, a focus on the role of hope inspiration in bereavement counselling is presented.

The concept of hope is not new; references to hope can be traced back to ancient times. Despite this long-term interest, it is only within the past two decades that hope has become a focal point of disciplined inquiry (Nekoliachuk, 2005). Cutcliffe argues that “despite this increased interest there remain gaps in the substantive knowledge base” (p. 598). A considerable amount of literature exists that focuses on hope in regard to clients with cancer (Stoner & Keampfer 1985, Herth 1989, Owen 1989), some work has examined hope and the critically ill (Miller 1989, Perakyla 1991, Cutcliffe 1996) and the terminally ill (Dufault & Martocchio 1985, Hall 1990, Herth 1990, Cutcliffe 1995). The body of research focusing on hope has continued to expand (Kylma et al. 2001, Elliot & Oliver 2002, Lin et al. 2003).

Among the literature, it has been argued that hope is necessary for healthy living (Dufault and Martocchio, 1985), and as a result, the role of hope and hope inspiration has received increased attention in counselling practice and bereavement counselling. The concept is gaining recognition for its influence and importance in an individual’s life, and in particular domains of life; nowhere more so than the domain of health and well-being (Cutcliffe, 2004). Specifically, it has been suggested that hope plays an integral role in client healing (Monk, Winslade, Crocket, & Epston, 1997; Yalom, 1998), as well as practitioner experience and intervention (Jevne, 2005; Snyder, 1995, cited in Larsen et al., 2007). Given the growing recognition of the importance of hope, and the purpose of counselling theory, the aim of this review is to critically explore how the role of hope has been viewed in the academic research and literature which has been published to date.

1.2 Search strategy
The literature search was conducted in an attempt to encompass articles relating to hope and counselling theory and practice. To allow for both the provision of research findings and a discussion on conceptual ideas, the review included empirical studies (quantitative and qualitative) as well as theoretical/clinical review articles. Criteria for inclusion in the review were: (1) published between 1980 to 2008 – with the focus on more recent articles; (2) peer-reviewed publications; (3)
English; (4) the role of hope and counselling. Search terms included ‘hope’, ‘the role of hope in counselling’. The CINAHL, MEDLINE and PsychINFO databases were searched as well as searching with the Google search engine. Most of the articles identifying hope-facilitating strategies were found in nursing literature and in the context of illness, hopelessness, and other significant life challenges. The British Library supplied most of the articles and Professor Cutcliffe kindly furnished me with related articles which he published on hope.

1.3 What is hope? Overview of psychological theory and research: Hope theories

Throughout the literature on hope, it is argued that there is a clear need to understand what is meant by hope before one can produce validated theories of hope inspiration with a sound theoretical underpinning (Cutcliffe, 1997, 2004; O’Conner, 1996; Larsen et al. 2007). However, the lack of definitional and theoretical clarity on the topic of hope continues to present challenges for researchers interested in the topic. In a recent article, McGeer (2004) states that among the few theorists who discuss hope ‘‘there is found no clear or agreed-upon use of the concept’’ (p. 101). This confusion can be attributed partly to the disagreement about the nature of hope. In this section, I will give a few examples of the various definitions of hope contained within the literature to illustrate the confusion.

Miller (1983) drew together the relevant literature on hope in order to define what hope is, and how it can be inspired in those with chronic illness. Cutcliffe (2004) critically examined Miller’s (1983) study and argued that the literature that Miller accessed was theoretical rather than empirical. Thus, Cutcliffe (2004) argued that, as it had not been subjected to the process of peer review and external critique, the conceptual validity lacked credibility. Furthermore, he contended that Miller (1983) does not provide any description of any systematic approach in the literature review, stating that it is possible that certain texts may not have been included in the review. However, Cutcliffe (2004) concluded that, given the paucity of literature on hope at the time, it is possible that the 40 references used represented a comprehensive and thorough literature review.
Miller’s (1983) review identified the conceptual attributes of hope and described hope as:

1) Valued
2) Private
3) Powerful
4) An intrinsic component of life
5) Providing dynamism for the spirit
6) An expectation
7) An inner readiness
8) Central to human existence

Dafault and Martocchio (1985) collected data over a two-year period from 35 elderly cancer patients, then collected similar data over a further two years from 47 terminally ill patients of various ages. This study is somewhat limited as it fails to describe the methods of data collection, the process of data analysis and theory induction, and makes no reference to any attempt to check the representativeness of the data. However, despite these limitations, it provides some thought-provoking propositions regarding the spheres and dimensions of hope (Cutcliffe 2004).

Dafault and Martocchio (1985) identified six dimensions of hope. They drew these six dimensions together and defined hope as: ‘A multidimensional dynamic life force characterised by a confident yet uncertain expectation of achieving a future goal which to the hoping person, is realistically possible and personally significant’’ (p. 380). Cutcliffe (1997) supports the Dafault and Martocchio (1985) argument, embracing hope as a future orientation where the individual hopes that the future is better than the present.

Frank’s (1973) definition appears to focus on the cognitive and behavioural aspects of hope. He defined hope as ‘‘a perceived possibility of achieving a goal. It is aroused by cues in the immediate situation associated with progress toward a goal in the past and is strengthened by evidence of progress toward a goal, regardless of how this process is produced’’ (p. 136-137).
In contrast, Spencer, Davidson, and White (1997) intertwine the cognitive (imagining possibilities and establishing goals, gauging limitations and testing realities), emotional (understanding limits and experiencing the negative emotions they evoke, such as grief and despair, as well as rejoicing in the discovery of possibilities for the future), and spiritual (finding meaning in suffering, viewing life as purposeful) aspects of hope.

Stephenson (1991) undertook a concept analysis in order to define hope. He reviewed 52 theoretical and empirical papers that focused on hope. Stephenson (1991) defined hope as: “a process of anticipation that involves the interaction of thinking, acting, feeling and relating, and is directed towards a future fulfilment that is personally meaningful”. (p. 1459).

However, not all researchers conceptualise hope as focused exclusively on the future. Most notably models developed with the seriously and terminally ill often include a strong focus on the present and finding hope in the moment (e.g. Benzein, Norberg & Saveman, 2001).

In yet another example, Snyder, Irving, and Anderson (1991) define hope in cognitive terms. “Hope is a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy), and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)” (p. 287). As such, hopeful thinking includes three components: goals, pathways thinking, and agency thinking.

It is evident that a concise and agreed-upon definition of hope is lacking. However, there is more agreement on what hope is not than what it is. This has led to researchers examining what hope is not in order to move towards clarity. The literature states that hope is not optimism, expectation, or wishful or positive thinking (Groopman, 2004; Jevne & Miller). “Wishing can be defined as desiring or longing for something” (Farren, Herth, & Popovich, 1995, p. 11). Optimism speaks to the probability of an outcome and says things will turn out. Stechynsky (1999) argues that hope leaves room for doubt and negative feelings. Magaletta and Oliver (1999) compared the constructs of hope, self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), and optimism (Scheier & Carver, 1985). Correlational analysis suggested some overlap
in the constructs, but when included in a regression to predict general well-being, hope provided unique predictive power. They suggest that hope, self-efficacy, and optimism are all related by the central core of expectancies and cognitive sets, but that hope incorporates essential features of both self-efficacy and optimism. Hope and optimism however diverge in that hope focuses on expectancies of outcome obtained through others and forces outside the self. In addition, self-efficacy only captures the “will” component of the hope construct (the belief in one’s ability to accomplish a task), but not the “way” component of the hope construct (one’s ability to generate successful plans to meet goals).

Finally, Farren et al. (1995) distinguish hope from optimism in emotional terms. Whereas optimism takes a more positive stance and is more likely to be closed to painful feelings, “hope” is expressed in more open terms – the situation may be difficult and painful, but the person remains open to the pain and to its eventual possibilities.

Comparisons of the above definitions of hope appear to indicate that although the concept of hope has been discussed in health care literature since the 1960s, it is still difficult to find one definition that encompasses all that hope is and specifically, how it relates to health, disease and healthcare. Cutcliffe (2004) argues that the reviewed literature on hope reads as a collection of separate entities and possibly lacks a sense of logical sequence, whereby each subsequent study does not make it explicit that the study is an attempt to build upon or add to the previous subsequent knowledge base. He further argues that this may be the case because the studies appear to have been undertaken within different cultures, different substantive areas and different client groups, rather than further subsequent exploration of the identified dynamics and components of hope. Cutcliffe (2004) concludes that the many authors have captured or identified various elements of the phenomenon we call hope (Cutcliffe, 2004, p. 33). Although a clear, concise and agreed-upon definition of hope is lacking, research pursuing clarification of the different facets of hope should continue to be made.
1.4 Hope in counselling

Although the conceptualisation of hope may differ somewhat, support for the importance of hope in counselling is consistent throughout the literature. Hope has been linked to hopelessness throughout the mental health care literature. Findings appear to indicate hope and hopelessness should be viewed as a continuum with absolute hopelessness at one end, and absolute hopefulness at the other end (Miller 1989, Weisharr and Beck 1992, Cutcliffe, 1997). For example, a complicated grief reaction, or a terminal illness may well contain an element of hopelessness. Frank (1973, cited in Larsen et al. 2007) cogently argued that, ‘‘hopelessness can retard recovery or even hasten death, while mobilization of hope plays an important part in many forms of healing’’ (p. 136). Larsen et al. (2007) highlighted the consistency throughout studies on hope to date to confirm that hope is an important variable contributing to therapeutic effectiveness across theoretical orientations (Asay & Lambert, 1999; Hubble & Miller, 2004; Lamber, 1992). Some researchers have gone so far as to suggest that hope is one of four universal factors responsible for client change (Hubble & Miller, 2004). Lopez et al. (2004) claim that ‘‘whatever the system of psychotherapy, beneficial change may be attributable, in part, to hope’’ (p. 389). With that said, a thorough review of the strategies to inspire hope is presented.

Psychology: Hope theory

Literature in the field of psychology has been dominated by a cognitive-based theory of hope: Snyder’s Hope Theory (Snyder et al., 2000).

This model focuses on goal attainment as a means of eliciting hope. Snyder and colleagues defined hope as the perceived capability to (1) derive pathways to desired goals and (2) motivate oneself via agented thinking and sustain movement along those pathways. Given the strong emphasis on thought, this theory is cognitive in nature. It contrasts sharply with older, emotion-based models of hope (Farran, Herth & Popovich, 1995; Stotland, 1969).
In this model of hope, stress, negative emotions, and difficulties in coping are considered a result of being unable to envision a pathway or make movement toward a desired goal (Klinger, 1975; Synder, 1996, 1998). This view is in fact supported by both correlational and causal research showing that people experience negative emotional responses when blocked from achieving their goals (Brunstein, 1993; Omodei & Wearing, 1990, Snyder et al., 1996, cited in Synder et al. 1999). To date, studies suggest that 56% to 71% of the variance related to total client change can be accounted for by change occurring in the early stages of treatment (Fennell & Teasdale, 1987, Howard et al., 1993). Snyder et al. (1999) argue that such dramatic improvement occurring so early in the treatment process can hardly be the result of specific treatment effects. Ilardi and Craighead (1994) expand on this perspective, suggesting that clients have usually not even learned the supposedly “active” mechanism for change by the time improvement occurs in the early stages of treatment. These authors come to the same conclusion, suggesting that the rapid response of clients must be a product of the common factors – especially hope (Snyder, 1999).

Snyder et al. (2000) see goals, agency, and pathways as related and that any increase in one will lead to increase in the others. For example, someone who is depressed and develops goals and steps to carry out these goals will increase their sense that they can overcome their depression which will lead to carrying out the pathways behaviour. The increase in pathways behaviour will in turn increase their sense that they can accomplish their goal, which will in turn increase their ability to develop further pathways. This theory can be debated however, in that people who are extremely depressed often find it difficult to form goals.

Several theoretical approaches link into Hope Theory perspective. Such approaches include cognitive behaviour therapy and solution focused therapy. A brief review of these approaches will now be outlined.
Cognitive Behaviour Therapy: CBT
Taylor et al. (2000, p. 115) argue in favour of cognitive behaviour therapy as a means to instil hope in clients, stating, ‘because of its strong emphasis on goal-setting, and regular feedback, the use of CBT seems especially likely to fortify hope’. He further describes how CBT sets out clearly defined goals which are broken down into manageable subgroups, sometimes referred to as creating a hierarchy of goals (Taylor et al., 2000).

In addition, the CBT intervention of challenging negative thoughts and identifying cognitive distortions increases both pathway and agency thinking. Finally, Taylor et al. (2000) suggest that CBT also enhances hope by incorporating homework assignments into therapy. Homework assignments provide pathways to attain goals. Agency is increased by the process of recalling past successes as well as creating a collaborative working relationship and supportive environment (Taylor et al., 2000).

Solution focused therapy
Solution focused therapy is goal orientated and future orientated. Interventions like ‘The Miracle Question’ invite clients to imagine a future without their problems and to then choose steps to getting there. Creating a detailed picture of what it will be like when life is better creates a feeling of hope, and this makes the solution seem possible. This implies that the clients have control over their future. The emphasis is on the future, not on the past. Solution focused therapy is a process that helps people change by constructing solutions rather than dwelling on problems.

Hope Theory
Lopez et al. (2000) developed a therapeutic model based on Snyder’s Hope theory. Lopez and colleagues claim that “Hope therapy is designed to help clients in conceptualising clearer goals, producing numerous pathways to attainment, summoning the mental energy to maintain the goal pursuit and reframing insurmountable obstacles as challenges to be overcome” (Lopez et al., 2000, p. 123). This therapy model is an integration of solution focused, narrative, and cognitive behavioural interventions and is comprised of two stages: Instilling hope through hope finding and hope bonding, and increasing hope through hope enhancing and hope reminding.
Lopez et al. (2000) describe ‘‘hope finding’’ as a process of helping the clients find the hope that they already possess. He further suggests that therapists are encouraged to use the client’s narrative to understand how their hope has developed, diminished, or been stagnant throughout their life. In addition, in hope therapy, past stories that are filled with emotional pain and negativity are not denied, but therapists dispute the sense of powerlessness over adversity and pain that often accompanies these painful pasts.

Lopez et al. (2000) describe ‘hope bonding’ as the ‘‘formation of a sound hopeful therapeutic alliance and grounds the clients in that helpful context’’ (Lopez et al., 2000, p. 136). Therapists explicitly acknowledge hope and point out that making and attending the initial session is an act of hope and during that session they attempt to bring a client’s expectations in line with what therapy can actually do.

This review of hope strategies in the field of psychology reveals an emphasis on cognitive strategies. While the psychology literature provides evidence of inspiring hope from the interventions mentioned above, there are still gaps in the literature. The hope literature in the nursing field has invested more time and effort into testing the effectiveness of hope interventions, and will now be reviewed.

**Nursing theories on hope**

In contrast to the cognitive nature of hope in psychology, nurses appear to contain a more comprehensive view of hope. The most recent conceptualisation of hope is Farren et al.’s (1995) theory of hope. This model includes four key processes: Experiential, spiritual, rational and relational. From each of these processes spring several interventions.

Farren and colleagues (1995) maintain that the experiential process of hope examines the dialectical relationship between hope and hopelessness, and asserts that hope is expanded when people are confronted with powerlessness and yet learn to hope in spite of these circumstances. It is the idea that hope is ‘‘tested and born in suffering and loss’’ (p. 108) and is strengthened when it is challenged.
From this theoretical standpoint of hope as an experimental process, several interventions surface. Farren et al. (1995) argue that hopelessness is an essential part of hope and the expression of fears, sadness questions, despair, and the like are encouraged. Farren et al. (1995) admonish nurses to encourage expression of how hope may be uncertain and to assist people in acknowledging that hopelessness is a part of life. By doing so: “a piece of information is incorporated into a broader picture in a way that neutralises or limits its negative impact…. The individual may need to be helped to see that the present situation can serve to enlarge the boundaries of the possible, thereby freeing the individual to seek alternatives” (p. 108).

Spencer et al. (1997) agree with the importance of honouring the process and that recognising and acknowledging grief and despair “is often much more important than converting clients to our goals prematurely” (p. 196).

Farren et al. (1995) further expand on this model and describe the spiritual process incorporated in the model. They suggest that the spiritual process of hope links faith and hope and a “belief in oneself and others, a conviction about something that has not yet been proven, or a sense of certainty about that which is uncertain” (Farren et al. 1995, pp. 7–8). Interventions suggested by Farran et al. (1995) include nurses acknowledging and respecting the client's belief system.

Farran et al. (1995) describe the rational process component of hope as having similar elements to Snyder’s model of hope in that it focuses on goal setting and feedback. The most important aspect of rational hope is control. Hopelessness occurs when people perceive that they have little control over their lives. Farren et al. suggest several ways to assist clients to attain a sense of control. These include: respecting the client as a competent decision maker; giving permission to hope for what is not yet known or understood, and finding ways to give as much control over a situation as possible to the client (e.g. offer choices).
In addition, the rational process component of hope places emphasis on the aspect of time in maintaining hope. This is a sense of one’s past, present, and future, and how life’s lessons contribute to hopeful thinking. Farren et al. (1995) suggest several techniques for working with time. These include: identifying the client’s areas of success and usefulness; emphasising past accomplishments, encouraging identification of joyful life experience in both the past and the present, and teaching the client to appreciate the fullness of each day.

**Approaching hope implicitly**

In the nursing research there has been controversy over working with hope implicitly and explicitly in order to inspire hope. Studies supporting approaching hope implicitly will first be reviewed.

Cutcliffe (2004) rejects the idea of working with hope explicitly. He argues that while it is important to be intentional about hope in therapy, it is nevertheless inadvisable to speak of hope explicitly. Larsen and colleagues (2007) agree with Cutcliffe (2004) and state that, “this perspective offers the important recognition that it is both disrespectful and counter-therapeutic to force a client onto a counsellor’s agenda” (p. 404). Hanna (2002) supports this perspective, suggesting that hope is an essential healing element in the therapeutic process, yet he warns against therapists moving explicitly toward hope during therapy (Larsen et al. 2007).

In a grounded theory study of hope in bereavement counselling, Cutcliffe (2004) investigated different approaches in counselling in order to assess whether the various approaches affected the basic social process of hope inspiration. Data in his study was collected from counsellors who used psychodynamic (psychoanalytical), humanistic (person-centered), gestalt, and eclectic approach to counselling. Cutcliffe (2004) found that the philosophical underpinnings and resultant ways of working of each of these approaches share some similarities, but also show clear differences (e.g. the temporal focus of the therapy, the use of interventions or focusing on the core conditions within the therapy, the degree of challenge or confrontation within the therapy). Cutcliffe’s (2004) results found that hope was an element essential to client healing but its influence was tied most closely to the therapeutic benefits of a strong counsellor-client relationship. Participants in his
study believed that hope should remain implicit and should not be raised directly by the therapist in the session. Cutcliffe (2004) concludes by placing emphasis on the connection between the clients and the counsellors, noting that hope inspiration needs to remain subtle and implicit rather than overt. The theory of grief therapy needs to reflect this finding and, more importantly, to acknowledge that, whilst some inspiration of hope does appear to occur as a result of specific interventions (e.g. identifying and addressing conflicts of separation), the essence of hope inspiration appears to reside in the caring, interpersonal relationship. Cutcliffe (2004) further claims that ‘‘forging the connection, the relationship, in bereavement counselling could be regarded as the beginning of new hope for the client’’ (p. 74). Findings from earlier studies support Cutcliffe’s (2004) findings. Arguments have been constructed that suggest that the ways individuals are treated ultimately has an influence on how these individuals feel about themselves (Rogers 1952, Rogers, 1957, Peplau 1988).

Cutcliffe’s (1996) research further supports the link between hope and caring, and the actions of the nurse, his/her non-verbal communication influencing patients’ levels of hope. Cutcliffe (1996) explored critically ill individuals’ perceptions of hope by interviewing patients in a coronary care unit. Data was obtained from four patients aged from 42 to 56 years old, each of whom had been in-patients for at least seven days. Using a method described as thematic moments, whereby each individual’s story was characterised by a particular theme and elements of these themes were evident in other interviewee’s accounts, a theory comprising four core themes was induced. Cutcliffe (2004) argues that the number of interviewees may have limited the possibility that each of the themes would have been saturated and therefore the induced theory may be incomplete. However, he further argues, that despite this possible limitation, critically ill patients reported that a higher level of hope was synonymous with the nurse demonstrating caring practice. Patients in this study stated that feeling somebody (the nurse) cared about them was uplifting and healing in itself. It also transpired that when nurses attempted to be understanding, the patient felt more hopeful. Additionally, findings suggest that when the nurse established an emotional involvement, arising out of concern for the patient’s well being, and when the nurse formed an interpersonal relationship with the patient, the outcome resulted in increased hope in the patient (Cutcliffe, 2004).
A similar study carried out by Vaillot (1970) used a simple, single care study to describe and explore the dynamics of hoping and hope inspiration when caring for an 82-year-old client who had suffered a cerebrovascular accident. Her aim was to explore health carers’ role in hope inspiration. In response to Vaillot’s (1970) study, Cutcliffe (2004) took a stronger line and rejected the idea that Vaillot’s (1970) findings are valid, suggesting that the study lacks the appropriate empirical evidence to support the study. It should be noted that one person in a study would not be enough to facilitate evidence based care, therefore supporting Cutcliffe’s (2004) argument. The main shortcoming of this text is the author’s reliance on personal opinion rather than empirical data, so there is no way of judging the validity or reliability of the conclusions of this study, which seriously undermines the value of the work.

Findings from subsequent research (Koehn & Cutcliffe, 2007) emphasise that ‘‘a therapeutic relationship characterised by trust and understanding is a prerequisite to successful hope inspiration’’ (p. 138). Additional research by Langley & Klopper (2005) also linked the establishment of trust to the emergence of hope. Furthermore, it has been documented in bereavement literature that people experiencing grief do not feel understood by those that have not experienced a similar loss (Umberson 2003, Parkes 1972). Larsen et al. (2007) agree with Cutcliffe’s (2004) findings but take a strong line and argue that ‘therapists-participants may not have explored the possibility that clients can be interested in a conversation about hope if it is offered. This raises the important question of whether it is possible to address hope explicitly in therapy in ways that address the client’s need for hope without imposing the counsellor’s own agenda’’ (p. 404).

Approaching hope explicitly
Although the literature provides ample evidence to support that hope should remain implicit, this concept has been challenged. Proponents of addressing hope explicitly in counselling suggest that hope can be a clearly stated and effective focus of therapeutic conversation. The advantages of many of these approaches are empirically documented, (e.g. Herth, 2001, Ripley & Worthington, 2002; Wright & Duggleby, 2006). Herth (1990) interviewed 30 terminally ill adults about what hope meant to them. Additionally, Herth (2001) developed and evaluated the Herth
Intervention Plan (HIP) an eight-session group programme based on a multi-dimensional framework of hope that was designed to enhance hope. Implemented with 38 adults shortly following their first recurrence of cancer, evaluation results suggested the HIP program positively affected participants’ rebuilding and maintenance of hope. Other recent research also suggests the effectiveness of intentional and explicit hope-focused practice. Turner and Stokes (2006) investigated hope promotion. Incorporating qualitative methods and a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology, the results showed that promoting hope was vital. Turner and Stokes (2006) conclude that we can now ‘lay to rest speculation that hope ought to be regarded as a dangerous activity and hence avoided’’ (p. 7 cited in Lasen et al., 2007).

Rustoen & Hanestad (1998) described a group intervention as a means to increase hope in patients. They argued that their reason for choosing a group as a method of increasing hope is based on the beneficial effect of ‘symbolic interactionism’, whereby the meaning is derived, or arises from, the social interaction that one has with one’s fellows. This intervention used cognitive and behavioural techniques. Instruction in cognitive techniques involved talking about the characteristics of hope, written material instructions, problem-solving strategies and identifying negative thoughts. Behavioural techniques involved relaxation training, activity scheduling, setting goals and information seeking. It was hypothesised that these techniques would impact positively on patients’ feelings of hope and are initiated by the interactional process in the group. It can be argued that a group intervention would promote hope as the intervention can normalise a client’s feelings of fear and uncertainty. Others have supported normalising as a means of instilling hope (Cooper et al., 1993; Stone, 1998). However, it can also have a negative effect as it can feel overwhelming. The authors of this study, however, do highlight the positives and negatives of such an intervention and suggest that a trained and skilled group leader could prevent and deal with negative effects and problematic group processes.
Specific to counselling psychology practice, Edey and Jevne (2003) describe the exploration of counselling from a ‘hope-focused’ perspective, i.e., sessions in which counsellors and clients agree to make hope a visible, explicit, and intentional focus of therapeutic work. According to Edey and Jevne, several approaches to working explicitly with hope are possible. They place emphasis on the use of language. For example, a counsellor may query a client asking, “what would you do if you were a hopeful person?”, ‘who taught you about hope?’, or ‘how hopeful are you on a scale of one to ten? Why are you not a zero? Why are you not a ten?’’. Employing specific questioning strategies such as scaling questions, hope-focused language often builds on variations drawn from positive psychology and constructivist approaches. Questions such as these invite an explicit focus on hope (Larsen et al. 2007).

1.5 Hope in Bereavement Counselling
Cutcliffe (2004, 2006) has dominated the literature on hope in bereavement counselling. As mentioned earlier in this review, Cutcliffe (2004) investigated if bereavement counsellors inspired hope in their clients and how they did so. The study used a modified grounded theory method and collected data, by means of interviews, from a sample of 12 participants, comprising bereavement counsellors and ex-clients who had received bereavement counselling. The theory that emerged from the data included a core variable which I previously mentioned in this review: The implicit projection of hope. In addition, three sub-core variables emerged: Forging the connection and the relationship; facilitating a cathartic release; and experiencing a good (healthy) ending.

Cutcliffe (2006) suggests that facilitating a cathartic release can be achieved by 1) the releasing of painful emotions; 2) supplying the opportunity for reflection; 3) providing support; 4) freeing the client to talk about the deceased; 5) employing therapeutic touch; 6) purposefully utilising silence; 7) avoiding colluding with the client’s denial and/or hopelessness; and 8) realise the potential for growth in bereavement. For the purpose of this review I will discuss a couple of Cutcliffe’s (2004) findings.
Cutcliffe (2006) argues that by facilitating the release of painful emotions, the client is able to consider their future in a more hopeful way. He further argues that, for the counsellors to facilitate the release of painful emotions, this removes the ‘‘emotional lodestone’’ that holds the clients in the fixed position of hopelessness. He also claims that it ‘‘enables clients to begin to visualise a future that is pain free, that is less burdened with a sense of overwhelming loss, a future that is more hopeful’’ (p. 605).

Supplying the opportunity to reflect is concerned with the clients reflecting on their loss and involves the counsellor reflecting back certain feelings and words that they hear. Cutcliffe (2006) suggests that, as a result of the reflection, the clients raise some negative constructs or disabling beliefs; this provides the opportunity for the counsellor to gently and subtly challenge false assumptions and constructs.

The main discussion from Cutcliffe’s (2004) study related to the process of time. The theory outlined in Cutcliffe’s (2004) study indicated that clients need time to form a connection and relationship with the counsellor. Clients needed to learn to trust again and discharge their painful feelings. Cutcliffe (2004) highlights that this type of hope-inspiring intervention is competing with short-term therapies such as brief solution focused therapy. However, Cutcliffe (2004, 2006) argues that time limited therapy is unlikely to be appropriate for people in need of hope as a result of their bereavement.

1.6 Conclusion
As mentioned previously in this review, in the practice of counselling psychology, a necessary step in understanding the process of change is to identify interventions that produce change. For many years, therapists and researchers have suggested that hope is an important catalyst in the process of change and is a powerful force in both healing and adjustment. As such, integration of hope-enhancing strategies into the everyday practice of health professionals is strongly endorsed. Therefore, understanding the role of hope and hope inspiring interventions in counselling psychology practice is essential.
The critical literature review of the relevant literature has examined the ways in which hope interventions have been applied to counselling practice. It has shown that psychology theory and practice are laden with hope inspiring interventions.

While a growing body of literature is accumulating, it needs to be acknowledged that the area of hope and hope inspiration remains under-researched and is consequently not well understood. Although support for the importance of hope in counselling is consistent throughout the literature, there appear to be divergent opinions and modules in the literature regarding hope interventions. A lack of definition and theoretical clarity on the topic of hope continues to present challenges for researchers interested in the topic. Future research is needed to gain clarification of the different facets of hope in order for greater consensus to be achieved.

Interdisciplinary research (nursing, medicine, psychology, philosophy and social behavioural science), using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, have enhanced our understanding of hope across the health-illness continuum over the past two decades. There remain, however, many questions to be answered and much is yet to be done to enhance our understanding of this complex construct (Herth and Cutcliffe, 2002).

Herth & Cutcliffe (2002) argue that a science of hope is necessary to ensure a credible practice of hope so as to maximise our ability to use hope ethically and constructively. They further argue that much work needs to be carried out and suggest that future development in the area of hope should focus on cross-cultural, interdisciplinary, and international collaboration.

Researchers have started to look at the ‘lived experience’ of hope and have challenged us to look at the unique experience of hope. Research is needed to test and compare these models in both ill and healthy populations across various ages, cultures, and educational backgrounds, as well as longitudinally across time as it is related to developmental stages, phase and treatment of illness, physical and mental health, before and after stressful events, and during times of crisis and loss (Herth and Cutcliffe, 2002).
No studies to date have compared cultural perspectives of hope among cultures, nor among people living in extreme poverty or in developing countries. As a result, Herth and Cutcliffe (2002) propose that future research needs to focus on how hope differs within and across those cultures and how these cultural differences have an impact on the experience of hope.

In conclusion, the area of hope in counselling is expanding. However, there remain many gaps in the knowledge base and many unanswered questions. Something that is clearly needed is a deeper understanding of the structure of hope in order to progress further. A greater understanding should in turn influence practice and enhance the care of patients.
References


