African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships and the influence thereof on their well-being

VICKI KOEN

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VICKI KOEN

Bachelors Degree: Psychology & Communication

(NWU: Potchefstroom Campus)

Honours Degree: Psychology

(UNISA)

Masters Degree: Psychology (NWU: Vaal Triangle Campus)

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African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships and the influence thereof on their well-being

SUPERVISOR:

Prof C van Eeden

CO-SUPERVISOR:

Prof C Venter

LANGUAGE EDITOR:

C Terblanche

For my parents: Miller and Daleen

They taught me this:

Love suffers long and is kind;
Love does not envy;
Love does not parade itself,
Is not puffed up;
Does not behave rudely,
Does not seek its own,
Is not provoked,
Thinks no evil;
Does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;
Bears all things,
Believes all things,
Hopes all things,
Endures all things.
Love never fails.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

I am proud to be your daughter. I treasure every moment with you.
I love you.

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I would also like to thank the principal, teachers and learners of Randfontein High School for their participation.

My greatest thanks to God – throughout this process I felt His love, His warm embrace, His gentle guidance of my hand and thoughts.

"This is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best."

Philippians 1: 9-10

Summary

Adolescence is a phase that includes substantial physical, social and psychological changes (Department of Health, 1999) and is considered to be a psychologically turbulent and emotional period in a person's life (Strong, De Vault, Satad & Yarber, 2001) that can also have an influence on parent-child relationships. The purpose of this study is to specifically focus on parent- adolescent relationships of African female adolescents as research and literature is limited regarding African female adolescent s' experience of parent-adolescent relationships and the dynamics involved. Little is known of how African female adolescents experience the relationship they have with their parents and what their needs are regarding these relationships. The objectives of this study are to explore and describe African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships, and to explore aspects of African female adolescents' relationships with their parents that may influence their sense of well-being. Thirty and thirty-two African female adolescents participated voluntarily in graphic family sculpting and focus group interviews respectively. Six focus group interviews at Randfontein High School, Gauteng, provided rich data on African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships and aspects of the relationships that influence their sense of well-being. The findings suggest that the majority of the participants experience a more positive relationship with their mothers than with their fathers, and that positive and negative aspects in their relationships with their parents is perceived to influence their well-being. The importance of communication was a very prominent theme in the focus group discussions. With regard to graphic family sculpting, the findings also suggest that the mothers have a more prominent and positive role and participants experience their fathers as less involved.

Key words: Black/African; traditional African culture; adolescent; female; parent - adolescent relationship; well-being.

Opsomming

Adolessensie is ’n stadium van ontwikkeling wat verskeie aspekte van ontwikkeling insluit, naamlik fisiese, sosiale en psigologiese ontwikkeling (Department of Health, 1999) en word gesien as ‘n psigologies stormagtige en emosionele periode in ‘n persoon se lewe (Strong, De Vault, Satad & Yarber, 2001) wat ook ‘n invloed kan hê op die ouer-kind verhouding. Die doel van hierdie studie is om spesifiek te fokus op ouer-adolessentverhoudings van swart vroulike adolessente, aangesien navorsing en literatuur beperk is wanneer dit kom by swart vroulike adolessente se ondervinding van ouer-adolessentverhoudings en die dinamika wat daarby betrokke is. Min is bekend oor hoe swart vroulike adolessente die verhouding met hulle ouers ervaar en wat hulle behoeftes is met betrekking tot hierdie verhoudinge. Die doelwitte van die studie is om die ervaring van die ouer-adolessentverhouding van swart vroulike adolessente te ondersoek ten beskryf, en om aspekte daarvan wat hulle welstand beïnvloed, te ondersoek. Dertig en twee-en-dertig swart vroulike adolessente onderskeidelik het vrywillig deelgeneem aan grafiese gesinsbeelding en fokusgroeponderhoude. Ses fokusgroeponderhoude is by Randfontein High School, Gauteng gevoer, en dit het ryk data oor die swart vroulike adolessent se ervaring van die ouer-adolessentverhouding en aspekte van die verhouding wat haar welstand beïnvloed gebied. Uit die fokusgroeponderhoude het geblyk dat die meerderheid van die deelnemers ‘n meer positiewe verhouding ervaar met hulle moeders as met hulle vaders, en dat positiewe en negatiewe aspekte in hulle verhouding met hulle ouers hulle welstand kan beïnvloed. Die belangrike rol van kommunikasie was ‘n belangrike tema in die fokusgroepbesprekings. Die grafiese gesinsbeelding het aangetoon dat moeders ’n meer prominente en positiewe rol speel en dat deelnemers hulle vaders as minder betrokke ervaar.

Sleutelwoorde: Swart/Afrika kultuur; tradisionele Afrika kultuur; adolessent; vroulik; ouer-adolessentverhouding; welstand.

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"A happy family is but an early heaven."

Sir John Bowring

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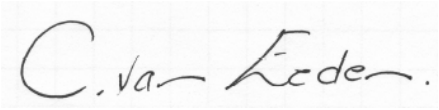
DIRECTOR: SCHOOL of BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES

PO Box 1174, Vanderbijlpark
South Africa, 1900

Tel: (016) 910-3419
Fax: (016) 910-3424
Web: http://www.nwu.ac.za

Letter of permission

Permission is hereby given that the mini-dissertation titled "African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships and the influence thereof on their well-being" may be submitted by Vicki Koen in partial fulfillment of the requirements to obtain a MA-degree in Psychology.



Study leader: Prof. C. van Eeden

Date: 4 October 2010

CHRISTIEN TERBLANCHE LANGUAGE SERVICES

BA (Pol Sc), BA Hons (Eng), MA (Eng), TEFL

Villa Louanne 65
Baillie Park
2526

Tel 082 821 3083
cmeterblanche@hotmail.com

DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

I, Christina Maria Etrecia Terblanche, id nr 771105 0031 082, hereby declare that I have edited the MA dissertation of Ms Vicki Koen entitled **AFRICAN FEMALE ADOLESCENTS' EXPERIENCE OF PARENT ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIPS AND THE INFLUENCE THEREOF ON THEIR WELL-BEING** without viewing the final product.

Regards,
CME Terblanche

"I've learned that parenthood is the most responsible job anyone can fill."

Leo Buscaglia

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This study is an investigation of African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships and its perceived influence on aspects of their well-being. The background and rationale that inspired the study are discussed first, followed by the problem statement, paradigmatic and theoretical statements and the research methodology. This overview serves as a background document (proposal) for the study and the manuscript that will be the research report. It is therefore acceptable that some duplication of content may occur between the overview and the manuscript, with the latter containing the detail of the empirical research.

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Adolescence is a phase that includes substantial physical, social and psychological change and it is considered to be a psychologically turbulent and emotional period in a person's life (Strong, De Vault, Satad & Yarber, 2001). Adolescents often feel confused, excited, anxious and uncomfortable due to the fact that they undergo rapid physical development and especially the cognitive development of abstract thinking skills and advanced reasoning skills (Louw & Louw, 2007). Erikson (1968) describes adolescence as a stage that involves identity versus role confusion, which accompanies the formation of an identity and the understanding of oneself. During this phase, adolescents start forming new relationships and they move away from emotional dependency on parents, thus developing emotional autonomy (Kaplan, 2000). The relationship between adolescents and their parents often undergoes an emotional distance due to adolescents' increased need for privacy as well as a decrease in affect towards parents which is usually temporary (Louw & Edwards, 2003). The influence of parents does not disappear during adolescence, and supportive parenting involving reciprocal positive emotions is correlated with positive adolescent development (Lerner, Brennan, Noh & Wilson, 1995).

Research regarding the role of parents and family is ongoing, but numerous studies suggest a strong association between the parent-child relationship and adolescents' well-

being (Zaff & Moore, 2002).Well -being, also seen as wellness, is described as a broad state of health, including physical, mental and social well-being. To this is added happiness, characterised by more experiences of positive affect than negative affect, and satisfaction with life that flows from the overall judgment that one's life is good, pleasant and satisfying to live (Peterson, 2006). In the ambit of Positive Psychology the term used is subjective well-being (Diener & Lucas, 1999). According to Carr (2004) and Hewitt (2002), self-esteem as a positive and integral sense of self based on a healthy personal and social identity, is an important and underpinning source of overall well-being. Furthermore, behavioural competence manifested in positive coping and resilience, as well as environmental adaptation and mastery could be included in the conceptualisation of well-being (Masten & Reed, 2005; Ryff & Singer, 2003). Adolescent mental and emotional well-being has been associated with the quality of parent-adolescent relationships (Hair, Moore, Garrett, Kinukawa, Lippmann & Michelsen, 2003), and Resnick, Bearman, Blum, Bauman, Harris and Jones (1997) have reported research that indicates high parent-child connectedness as predictive of decreased emotional distress and suicidal tendencies in adolescents. Adolescents' degree of emotional intelligence has also been shown to be affected by parental influence (Carr, 2004). Parents play an important part in the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual development of their children (Morris, 2005), and their roles include providing their children with safety, care, control and intellectual stimulation (Carr, 2004). The development of perceived control, perceptions of competence, self-esteem, coping, self-regulation and positive and negative emotionality are theorised to be influenced by early parent-child relationship characteristics for example, parental warmth, sensitivity, responsiveness and quality of attachment relationships (Harter, 1983).

Characteristics of a healthy, functional family include: clear, congruent communication, being able to adapt and a capacity for intimacy (Becvar & Becvar, 2006).The McMaster model of family functioning describes six dimensions of family functioning that contribute to the emotional and physical well-being of family members. These dimensions refer to the family's ability to solve problems, communicate, allocate roles appropriately, show affective responsiveness as well as empathic affective involvement

and to exert flexible behaviour control (Epstein, Ryan, Bishop, Miller & Keitner, 2003). Less fortunate families seem to seek control and ways to intimidate other members of the family (Becvar & Becvar, 2006) and parents who feel powerless are more likely to be hypervigilant with a child, to focus on the negative, engage in coercive and punitive parenting, misread neutral child cues as malevolent and derogate a child in an effort to restore power (The National Child Traumatic Stress Network [NCTSN], 1995). As a result of negative parent-child relationships adolescents are often unskilled to cope with the demands of life due to the fact that their emotional developmental needs remain unfulfilled (Fourie, Mojapelo-Batka, Mokgatlhe & Von Krosigk, 2007). Approximately 75 percent of teenagers successfully adapt to the physical, cognitive and emotional changes of adolescence (Sadock & Sadock, 2007). Others however, do not adapt successfully and experience serious problems once they have to leave behind the protection and dependence of childhood (Fourie et al., 2007). The World Health Organization (WHO, 1998) has estimated that up to 70 percent of premature deaths in adulthood are in large due to behaviour initiated in adolescence. Such risk taking behaviours that influence adolescent health can be attributed to the impact that the social environment (including parents and family) have on the thoughts and behaviours of adolescents (Department of Health, 1999).

Beukes (1994) found in a South African study that conflict in African families was more prevalent than in other population groups. James, Reddy and Jinabha (2004) further reported on the decline of many relational qualities between parents and adolescents in many African families. However, most information about the communication between parents and adolescents in African cultures come from research on sexual education practices. De Visser and Le Roux (1996) and Kelly (2000) found African parent-adolescent interactions relating to sexual issues seriously lacking and fathers in particular were found to be absent in the sexual education of their children. The research of De Visser and Le Roux (1996) indicated that parent-adolescent relationships were characterised by conflicts, and results indicated that adolescents disregard their parents' values and opinions. Kigozi (2006) also reported findings of poor communication and the lack of supportive relationship features between African parents and youth, but

further indicated that adolescent girls reported higher levels of dissatisfaction with parents mainly due to the power assertion through criticism, verbal punishment and quarrelling that they experienced from parents. Koen, Van Eeden and Williams (2009) found significant differences between African male and female adolescents on aspects of the parent-adolescent relationship such as attachment, communication and satisfaction with family life. The girls showed significantly less experience of positive relational features and more experience of relational stress such as attachment-anger, attachment-alienation and problematic communication experiences.

Research done on gender issues in African communities indicates that women often experience oppression, coercion and violence in their relationships (Eaton, Flisher & Aar, 2003). This may be a result of the fact that traditional African cultures are often patriarchal and oppress woman (Airhihenbuwa, 1995). The Department of Health (1999) report that female youths' lives are specifically framed within patriarchal assumptions and practices. In the family they are often controlled by men and frequently discriminated against. Traditional, cultural and gender stereotypes play a role as females are sometimes regarded as perpetually subordinate to males (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002; Motsemme, 2003; Nolen-Hoeksema & Rusting, 1999).

The negative impact of strained or dysfunctional parent-adolescent relationships have been mentioned before and therefore one would have a cause for concern about the well-being of African adolescent girls who experience these relationships in such defeating terms as anger, hostility and alienation, problem-filled communication patterns and a low sense of family satisfaction.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Based on the information discussed above, it seems that poor parent-child communication may exist with regard to relational aspects in some African families. Some research findings also indicate that African adolescent girls seem to experience the relational difficulties with parents more seriously and on a deeper level than the boys. One could

speculate that the patriarchal culture and traditional, cultural and gender stereotypes along with a collectivistic existence may have an impact on the relationship African female adolescents have with their parents.

Research and literature is limited regarding African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships and the dynamics involved. Little is known of how they experience the relationship they have with their parents and what the influence of these experiences might be on their subjective feelings of well-being.

Prompted by the above problem statement this study ask the following research questions:

- What is African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships?
- What is African female adolescents' perception of the influence of parent-adolescent relationships on aspects of their sense of well-being?

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Based on the above-mentioned research questions, the following objectives were identified:

- To determine African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships as conceptualized in literature.
- To explore and describe African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships.
- To explore African female adolescents' perception of the influence of parent-adolescent relationships on aspects of their sense of well-being.

The first objective refers to the literature study and the other two objectives refer to the empirical investigation.

1.4 CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENT

The exploration and description of African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships and aspects of the relationships with their parents that contribute to their sense of well-being will provide an in-depth description of the experiences of participants and add to the knowledge base of parent-adolescent relationships of African female adolescents.

1.5 CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS

The following definitions represent the researcher's use of core concepts that are applicable to this study:

1.5.1 Adolescent

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, an adolescent can be defined as a young person who is developing from a child into an adult (Hornby, 2001), or according to the Penguin Student Dictionary, as somebody in the period of life between puberty and maturity (Allen, 2006). For the purpose of this study an adolescent is defined as a young person experiencing physical, cognitive and emotional development and the focus will be on African adolescent females. The range of adolescent age in this study will be regarded as falling between 12 to 18 years, with the focus on the age groups 13 to 18 years.

1.5.2 Adolescence

Adolescence is considered to be a turbulent and emotional period in a person's life (Strong et al., 2001). Louw and Louw (2007) state that adolescence seems to be the 'weak link' concerning the different life stages, and when debilitating stress does occur, it is most likely to be in adolescence.

1.5.3 Parent-adolescent relationship

A relationship can be defined as the way in which two people behave towards each other (Hornby, 2001). The Dictionary of Psychology (Reber & Reber, 2001) defines a primary relationship as a basic, long lasting relationship that is founded upon emotional ties and a sense of commitment. For the purpose of this study the parent-adolescent relationship will be approached in terms of how parents and African adolescent females behave towards each other, and the impact of this on African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships.

1.5.4 Parent-adolescent communication

The Penguin Student Dictionary (Allen, 2006) defines communication as the exchange of information. It is also defined as the transmission of something from one location to another in the Dictionary of Psychology (Reber & Reber, 2001). For the purpose of this study parent-adolescent communication refers to how well information is exchanged between the parent and female adolescent.

1.5.5 Family

According to the Dictionary of Psychology (Reber & Reber, 2001), family is a fundamental form of kinship and in its minimal form consists of a father, mother and offspring. For the purpose of this study, the focus will be on the female adolescent and her parents or primary caregivers.

1.5.6 Family satisfaction

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Hornby, 2001), when something is satisfactory it is good enough for a particular purpose. For the purpose of this study the term 'family satisfaction' refers to whether or not African adolescent females perceive their parents as "good enough" in the parental role.

1.5.7 Culture

According to Louw and Louw (2007), culture is defined as the beliefs, norms, customs and general way of life of a certain group of people that is passed from

generation to generation. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Hornby, 2001) defines culture as a way of life and the social organization of a particular group or country. For the purpose of this study the focus will be on the African and traditional African cultures of South Africa.

1.5.8 Collective Existence

A collective existence places emphasis on the survival of the community and not primarily on individual survival. In a collective existence the focus is on 'us' rather than 'I' (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 2003).

1.5.9 African

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Hornby, 2001), defines an African as a person from Africa, especially a black person. For the purpose of this study the term African will be used to refer to South Africans who prefer to identify with the African identity.

1.5.10 Well- being

Well-being, also seen as wellness, is described as a broad state of health, including physical, mental and social well-being. To this is added happiness, characterised by more experiences of positive affect than negative affect and satisfaction with life which flows from the overall judgment that one's life is good, pleasant and satisfying to live (Peterson, 2006). In the ambit of Positive Psychology the term used is subjective well-being (Diener & Lucas, 1999). For the purpose of this study the term well-being will be used to refer to general well-being, which includes emotional, physical and psychological well-being.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.6.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

A qualitative explorative research design was used with the aim to explore and describe African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships and the

perceived influence of this on their sense of well-being. The qualitative data collection was done through the use of graphic family sculpting (Venter, 1993) as well as focus group interviews. The researcher held the ontological assumption that there are many realities/truths and subscribed to the epistemological assumption that knowledge is socially constructed and therefore the participants and researcher collaborated in providing an in-depth description of the experiences of the participants.

1.6.2 RESEARCH METHOD

1.6.2.1 Sampling

- **Population and Setting**

The population included African adolescent female learners of secondary schools in Randfontein, Gauteng. The setting for graphic family sculpting procedures and focus group interviews was the school that participating learners attend. Participants had to meet criteria relating to age, gender, culture, family context, language proficiency and consent given by parents and learners for voluntary participation.

- **Sampling method**

A purposeful voluntary sampling technique was used (Burns & Grove, 1997; Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). Participants in the purposeful sample were selected according to the purposes of the study. Female learners of a secondary school in the indicated area who fit the selection criteria were involved in the study.

- **Sample size**

The sample consisted of 30 African adolescent females between the ages of 13 and 18 years for graphic family sculpting and 32 African adolescent females between the ages of 13 and 18 years for focus group interviews. The sample size was determined by data saturation (Burns & Grove, 1997). Data saturation was achieved when the data became redundant and there was repetition of information from new participants (Polit & Hungler, 1995).

1.6.2.2 Data collection

Data collection took place with the use of graphic family sculpting and focus group interviews. A biographical questionnaire was also included to collect participants' socio-demographic information (Appendix E).

- Graphic family sculpting

Graphic family sculpting is a technique developed by Venter (1993, p.12) to "refine complex, and often vague family issues in a simple, workable form". Family members are enabled to understand and make sense of their emotional experiences of family matters. Graphic family sculpting was followed with thirty participants who volunteered and were facilitated by the researcher, who has been appropriately trained to use the technique. The technique required that the participants draw their present family on a blank sheet of A4 paper by representing each member with a circle and then give other relevant information on the sketch such as (Venter, 1993):

- Number each circle according to the order in which they drew them;
- Write next to each circle if the person is sitting, lying down or standing;
- Indicate the direction in which the person is looking by drawing an arrow pointing in the direction that the family member is looking;
- Give each member a name;
- Allocate a particular emotion to each member of the family;
- Finally, answer three questions namely:
- Whether they found the instructions easy to follow;
- Whether they learned anything in the process, and
- Whether they became emotional during the process.

- Focus group interviews

The focus group interviews consisted of four to six members in each interview (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006) and a total of six groups were held to ensure quality of the research and until data saturation was reached. A short list of open-ended questions based on literature was used to guide the discussion and probe for

relevant information (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). The first focus group interview served as a trial run to determine whether the questions were easily understood by participants, and to test the probing and communication skills of the researcher.

The focus group interview questions used were discussed with the study supervisor to ensure usefulness and clarity, and were as follows:

1. How do you feel about your relationship with your parents?
2. What aspects make the relationship good?
3. What aspects are problematic in the relationship?
4. How do you think these aspects influence your well-being?
5. What do you think will improve the relationship?

1.6.2.3 Field notes

Field notes were written immediately after each focus group interview (Appendix F) to ensure that observations during the focus groups were recorded whilst the researcher still remembered the observations clearly (Creswell, 1998). The purpose of these notes was to record additional information that may not have been disclosed by participants. Included in the notes are the researcher's observations and an account of circumstances prevailing during the focus group interviews. Notes were taken according to the format provided by Schatzman and Strauss (in De Vos, 1998) and are discussed as follows:

- **Observational notes**

An account of what happened during a focus group interview without attempting to interpret the events. These notes include who, what, when, where and how of the circumstances.

- **Theoretical notes**

These notes consist of the researcher's self-conscious and systematic interpretation of observations during the focus group interviews. These notes are described in relation to the observational notes and reflect the meaning and conceptualisation by linking the present to previous response.

- **Methodological notes**

These notes contain the researcher's awareness regarding the appropriateness of the methodology followed. In these notes, the researcher reflects on the process of focus group interviewing to ensure it is consistent with the selected methodology (Schatzman & Strauss, in De Vos, 1998).

The name codes of participants, dates and setting for focus group interviews were recorded and arranged appropriately, in readiness for data analysis.

1.6.2.4 Physical setting

The focus group interviews took place in a classroom at Randfontein High School. The classroom used was chosen for its location and was quiet with minimal distractions. The principal and teachers were requested to ensure that no disturbance occurred once focus group interviews and graphic family sculpting were in progress. The learners were asked to switch off their cell phones. The learners and researcher arranged their chairs in a circle and eye contact was possible. Tape recorders were checked beforehand for any defects.

1.6.2.5 The role of the researcher

The researcher attained approval from the Gauteng Department of Education and thereafter made an appointment with the principal of the school to establish his/her willingness to let learners participate in the study, as well as to explain the objectives of the research. Written informed consent was obtained from the learners, written consent was obtained from their parents, and the principal of the school gave approval

for the research. Appointments were confirmed at least one day before the date of graphic family sculpting work and focus group interviews.

1.6.2.6 Data analysis

The focus group interviews were recorded on a voice recorder and transcribed verbatim. Open coding, which was carried out manually, was used to analyse the transcribed data of the focus group interviews and data gathered via graphic family sculpting. An experienced co-coder coded the data independently (Brink, 2002). In a consensus discussion, the researcher and co-coder then discussed coding themes and reached consensus on categories to ensure trustworthiness with regard to data analysis (Polit & Hungler, 1987).

The graphic family sculptings were interpreted by the researcher and the co-supervisor, who developed the graphic family sculpting technique, according to the following guidelines (Venter, 1993):

- The "Gestalt" or wholeness of the sculptings;
- The placement of each family member in the "Gestalt" and the distance between them;
- The direction in which each member is looking;
- The horizontal/vertical position of each family member;
- The label allocated to each family member;
- The emotion allocated to each family member;
- The order in which the circles were drawn and the relative size of the circles;
- The line quality of the circles and the extent of erasures during the course of the sculpting;
- The amount of space taken up by the sculpture;
- The location of the sculpture on the paper, and
- The answers to the questions asked during and after the sculpture had been completed.

1.6.2.7 Data handling

The data will be stored for the period of time that is prescribed by the North West University. The voice recordings, transcriptions and graphic family sculptings will be safely stored by the researcher and after the prescribed time period has transpired the data will be destroyed in an appropriate manner.

1.6.2.8 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is the term used to refer to what quantitative researchers call validity and reliability of a study (Lincoln & Guba, in Krefting, 1991). The following four criteria were applied to ensure the trustworthiness of the study (De Vos, 1998; Woods & Catanzaro, 1988): Credibility, which was ensured by writing field notes that were the researcher's own observations of African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships; Transferability which refers to the applicability of the results in other contexts, settings and other groups. It also concerns whether the results can be generalised to the larger population; Dependability refers to the consistency and auditability of the data (Lincoln & Guba, in Krefting, 1991). In this study, the researcher explained to the participants that they were the experts with regard to the subject, and they were requested to be open and honest in their discussion; Confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, in Krefting, 1991) refers to the criterion of neutrality according to which the bias of the researcher should be avoided with regard to the procedures and findings.

1.6.2.9 Literature control

In a qualitative study such as this, a literature control is done so that the findings can be discussed within the context of what is already known about African adolescent females and their experience of parent -adolescent relationships (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). The literature, therefore, serves as a means of validating the data, identifying findings in literature that wasn't evident in this study, or findings unique to this study. Data confirmed by literature was also indicated (Burns & Grove, 2005).

1.7 DESIGN MAP

Below, a design map is given to summarise the research design that was used in this study.

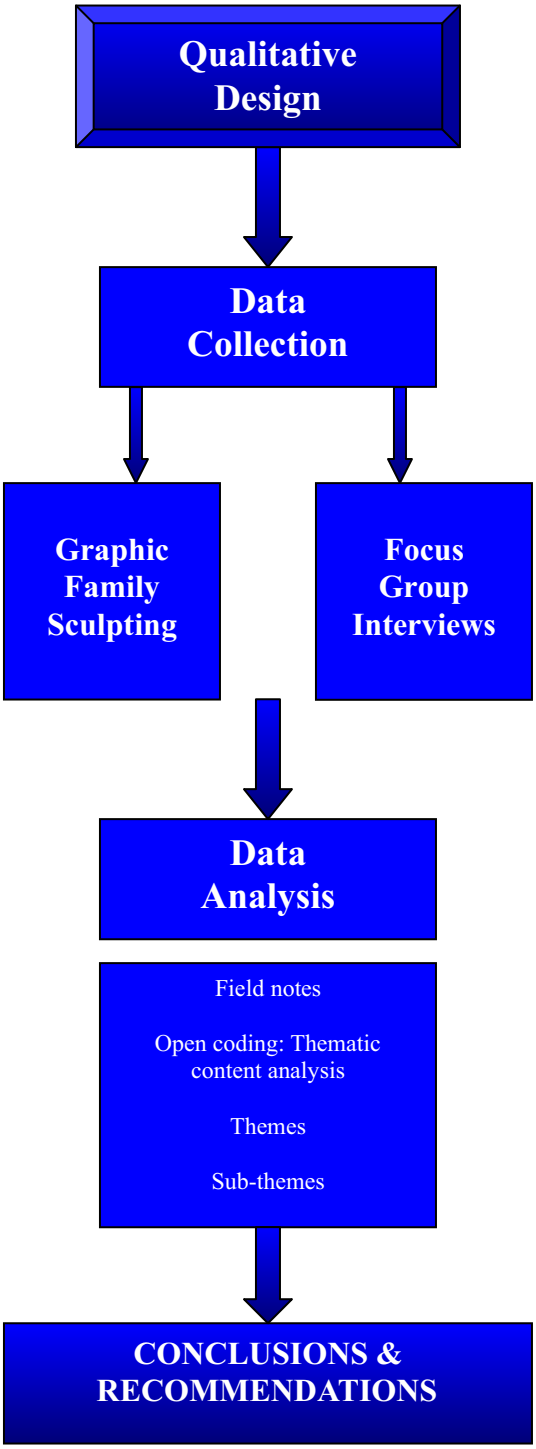


Figure 1.1: Design Map

1.8 RIGOR

The researcherquestioned andevaluated the research process as follows (Guba & Lincoln, 2005):

- Was the research well defined in order to promote theoretical validity?
- Were the research findings trustworthy and was credibility present in population choice, data collection and the analysis of data?
- Were the research findings transferable and able to be used elsewhere?
- Were the research findings consistent?
- Were the research findings neutral/unbiased?
- Did the research have operational value?
- Were the arguments logical?
- Could the research decisions and findings be justified?

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher made use of various international ethical principles such as the Helsinki declaration (Burns & Grove, 2005) in order to conduct the research in an ethical manner. Certain ethical issues were consideredn order to ensure tha t the rights of participants were obs erved, namely: anonymity, respect for the dignity of persons, nonma leficence and confidentiality (Terre Blanche, DurrheimPainter, 2006). Participation was voluntary and anonymous and participants could withdraw at any stage if they so wished. Permission for the study was obtained from the Department of Education, the secondary school where the research was conducted and informed voluntary consent was obtained in written form from both the participants and their parents/guardians. Permission was also obtained from the Ethical Committee of the North-West University (NWU00038-10-51). The researcher is a registered psychological counselor and was able to assist any learner who may have experienced emotional reactions to the graphic family sculpting exercise.

The following ethical principles were observed in the study (Burns & Grove, 2005; Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006):

TABLE 1.1: MEASURES FOR ETHICAL ACCOUNTABILITY

PRINCIPLE	IMPLICATIONS	MEASURES
Respect	Right to voluntary participation Right to withdraw voluntarily at any stage Right to withhold information	Permission from Ethics Committee Permission from Gauteng Department of Education Permission from principal Letter of consent to learners & their parents
Quality of research	The researcher maintained the highest standard of research by using credited and accepted methods as recommended by the supervisor of the study and literature on the topic	Focus group interviews & graphic family sculpting Data analysed according to acceptable qualitative methods and recommendations The researcher was trained in graphic family sculpting techniques and interviewing skills
Confidentiality & Anonymity	Right to anonymity Right to confidentiality of data	Participants' identities were protected throughout research procedure The identity of no participant can be linked with the research data Privacy, personal worth & dignity of participants were maintained

1.10 REPORT OUTLINE

The research report is presented in article format, as described by General Regulation A 14.4.2 of the North-West University and includes the following:

1. Overview of the study.
2. Manuscript: "African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships and the perceived influence thereof on aspects of t heir well-being," for publication in Journal of Psychology in Africa.
3. Conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study.

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MANUSCRIPT: AFRICAN FEMALE ADOLESCENTS' EXPERIENCE OF PARENT-ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIPS AND THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCE THEREOF ON ASPECTS OF THEIR WELL-BEING

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Psalm 127: 3

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Manuscript

African Female Adolescents' Experience of Parent-adolescent Relationships and the Perceived Influence Thereof on Aspects of Their Well-being

Authors:

Vicki Koen
daleenkoen@lantic.net

Chrizanne van Eeden *
School of Behavioural Sciences: NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY, Vaal Triangle Campus.
Chrizanne.vanEeden@nwu.ac.za

Chris Venter
School of Psycho-social Behavioural Sciences: NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY,
Potchefstroom Campus
Chris.Venter@nwu.ac.za

*** Author to whom correspondence should be addressed**

ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study were to explore and describe African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships and their perceptions of the influence of the parent-adolescent relationship on aspects of their sense of well-being. Thirty and thirty two African female adolescents respectively participated voluntarily in graphic family sculpting and focus group interviews. Six focus group interviews at Randfontein High School, Gauteng, provided rich data on African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships and aspects of the relationship that influence their sense of well-being. The findings suggest that the majority of the participants experience a more positive relationship with their mother than with their father, and both positive and negative aspects in their relationships with their parents is perceived to influence their well-being. The importance of communication was a very prominent theme in the focus group discussions. With regard to graphic family sculpting, the findings also suggest that the mothers have a more prominent and positive role and participants experience their fathers as less involved.

Key words: Black/African; traditional African culture; adolescent; female; parent-adolescent relationship; well-being.

OPSOMMING

Die doelstellings van hierdie navorsing was om die ervaring van swart vroulike adolessente van die ouer-adolessentverhouding te ondersoek, asook aspekte daarvan wat volgens hulle hulle welstand beïnvloed. Dertig en twee-en-dertig swart vroulike adolessente het vrywillig deelgeneem in onderskeidelik grafiese gesinsbeelding prosedures en fokusgroeponderhoude. Ses fokusgroeponderhoude is by Randfontein High School, Gauteng gevoer wat ryk data oor die swart vroulike adolessent se ervaring van die ouer-adolessentverhouding en aspekte van die verhouding wat volgens haar, haar welstand beïnvloed gebied het. Uit die fokusgroeponderhoude het geblyk dat die meerderheid van die deelnemers 'n meer positiewe verhouding ervaar met hulle moeders as met hulle vaders, en dat positiewe en negatiewe aspekte in hulle verhouding met hulle ouers hulle welstand kan beïnvloed. Die belangrike rol van kommunikasie was 'n belangrike tema in die fokusgroepbesprekings. Die grafiese gesinsbeelding het aangetoon dat moeders 'n meer prominente en positiewe rol speel en dat deelnemers hulle vaders as minder betrokke ervaar.

Sleutelwoorde: Swart/Afrika kultuur; tradisionele Afrika kultuur; adolessent; vroulik; ouer-adolessentverhouding; welstand.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Adolescence is considered to be a psychologically turbulent and emotional period in a person's life (Strong, De Vault, Satad & Yarber, 2001). Adolescents often feel confused, excited, anxious and uncomfortable because they undergo rapid physical development, especially the cognitive development of abstract thinking skills and advanced reasoning skills (Louw & Louw, 2007). They undergo emotional changes and development due to their hormonal changes, as well as cognitive and environmental factors and are inclined to experience more negative emotions than younger children and to have more mood swings than both younger children and adults (Louw & Louw, 2007). It is a phase characterised by uncertainty, discomfort, clumsiness and awkwardness, and as a result adolescents experience emotional problems during this period (Kang, 2005).

Puberty (sexual maturation) is one of the most dramatic events in the development of adolescents. Puberty in girls begins with the enlargement of the sex organs as primary sex characteristics and at the same time the secondary sexual characteristics also start to develop, such as the appearance of breast buds, bodily hair and broadening of the hips. The most dramatic sign of sexual maturation in girls is the first menstruation, or menarche. Adolescent girls often make critical comparisons between themselves and their peers regarding these physical changes, and as a result they become emotionally unstable, suffering from a sense of inferiority, self-doubt and hypersensitivity (Kim, 2000). Adolescents may experience dissatisfaction, anxiety and depression due to their bodily changes. This dissatisfaction can be exacerbated by inadequate support from parents (Duncan, Van Niekerk, Mufamadi & Martin, 2008).

The relationship between adolescents and their parents becomes more emotionally distant due to adolescents' increased need for privacy, as well as a decrease in affect towards parents, which is usually temporary (Louw & Edwards, 2003). However, parental influence does not disappear during adolescence and supportive parenting involving positive emotions is correlated with positive adolescent development (Lerner, Brennan, Noh & Wilson, 1995).

The role of the family seems crucial in adolescent development. Characteristics of a healthy, functional family include clear, congruent communication, the ability to adapt (resilience) and a capacity for intimacy (Becvar & Becvar, 2006). According to the McMaster model of family functioning, six features of healthy and well functioning families are that they can solve problems, communicate, have appropriate role allocation, show affective responsiveness, have empathic affective involvement and apply flexible behaviour control (Epstein, Ryan, Bishop, Miller & Keitner, 2003). The family is not only a collection of people that share physical and psychological space (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2004), as studies on families describe the family as a support system to which adolescents can turn when they have fears and doubts about themselves and their future (Caprara, Pastorelli, Regalia, Scabini & Bandura, 2005). Family satisfaction has an influence on various aspects of adolescent development, such as individuation and differentiation (Scabini, Lanz & Marta, 1999) and has been found to correlate with the quality of the parent-adolescent relationship (Belsky, Jaffee, Hsieh & Silva, 2001) and with self-esteem in adolescence (Gilman, 2001). Dissatisfaction with regard to family life may result in the experience of emotional turmoil in adolescence (Valois, Zullig, Huebner & Drane, 2001) and impact negatively on the overall well-being of adolescents.

Well-being refers to a broad state of health, including physical, mental and social well-being. To this is added happiness, characterised by more experiences of positive affect than negative affect and satisfaction with life, which flows from the overall judgment that one's life is good, pleasant and satisfying to live (Peterson, 2006). Self-esteem according to Carr (2004) and Hewitt (2002), is an important and underpinning source of overall well-being. Furthermore, behavioural competence manifested in positive coping and resilience, as well as environmental adaptation and mastery could be included in the conceptualisation of well-being (Masten & Reed, 2005; Ryff & Singer, 2003).

In a South African study by Beukes (1994) it was reported that conflict in African families is more prevalent than in other population groups. This is supported by James, Reddy and Jinabha (2004) who reported on the decline of many relational qualities between parents and adolescents in African families. However, most of the information

about the communication between parents and adolescents in African cultures come from research on sexual education practices. With regard to communication about sexual matters, De Visser and Le Roux (1996) and Kelly (2000) found paucity in African parent-adolescent interactions, and fathers in particular were found to be negligent in the sexual education of their children. In De Visser and Le Roux's study (1996), parent-adolescent relationships are also characterised by conflict, and results indicated that adolescents often disregard their parents' values and opinions. Kigozi (2006) supports the findings on poor communication and supportive relationship features between African parents and youth, but further indicates that adolescent girls reported higher levels of dissatisfaction with parents mainly due to the power assertion through criticism, verbal punishment and quarrelling that they experienced from parents. A study by Koen, Van Eeden and Williams (2009) found significant differences between African male and female adolescents on aspects of the parent-adolescent relationship such as attachment, communication and satisfaction with family life, with girls obtaining lower scores on all the positive features and higher scores on all the negative features of the relationship, such as attachment-anger and- alienation and problematic communication experiences. The negative impact of strained or dysfunctional parent-adolescent relationships has been mentioned before. It is therefore a cause for concern about the well-being of African adolescent girls who experience these relationships in such defeating terms as anger, hostility and alienation, problem filled communication patterns and a low sense of family satisfaction. According to Papalia, Olds and Feldman (2009), the mental health of female adolescents are more seriously affected by family relations than that of male adolescents.

Research conducted on gender issues in African communities indicates that women often experience oppression, coercion and violence in their relationships (Eaton, Flisher & Aar, 2003). This may be a result of the fact that traditional African cultures are often patriarchal and oppress women (Airhihenbuwa, 1995). The Department of Health (1999) reports that female youths' lives are specifically framed within patriarchal assumptions and practices – in the family they are often controlled by men and frequently discriminated against. Traditional, cultural and gender stereotypes play a role, as females are sometimes regarded as perpetually subordinate to males(Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002;

Motsemme, 2003; Nolen-Hoeksema & Rusting, 1999). African families are in no way homogeneous as far as family culture, child rearing practices and therefore parent-adolescent relationships are concerned (Carter & Murdock, 2001; McAdoo, 2002). Therefore, despite the research cited above, indicating relational problems within some African families as experienced in parent-adolescent relationships by adolescent girls, one must assume that there are warm, supportive and caring parent-adolescent relationships among African families (Logan, 2001; Okagaki, 2001) and that adolescent girls from such families will express their satisfaction with family life.

From the above certain conclusions could be drawn about the experience of the African adolescent girl as far as family relational aspects such as attachment, communication, quality of family relationship and satisfaction with family life is concerned. On the one hand, it would seem that poor parent-child communication with regard to relational aspects may exist in some African families. It is also indicated by some research findings that African adolescent girls seem to experience the relational difficulties with parents as more serious and on a deeper level than the boys. One could speculate that the patriarchal culture and traditional, cultural and gender stereotypes could have an impact on the relationship African female adolescents have with their parents. However, there are also other factors that could play a role in such a relational context, such as poverty, parents' working conditions and marital problems. On the other hand, open, supportive and caring parent-adolescent relationships abound and African adolescent girls from such families will attest to their experience of well-being in such family contexts.

Research and literature is limited regarding African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships and the dynamics involved. Little is known of how they experience the relationship they have with their parents and what influence these experiences might have on their subjective feelings of well-being. The research question that flows from the above is: How do African female adolescents experience parent - adolescent relationships, and what is African female adolescents' perception of the influence of parent-adolescent relationships on aspects of their sense of well-being?

METHOD

Aims

The general aim of this study is to explore how African adolescent females experience parent-adolescent relationships, with the specific aim to:

- Determine how African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships is conceptualized in literature.
- Explore and describe African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships.
- Explore African female adolescents' perceptions of the influence of parent-adolescent relationships on aspects of their sense of well-being.

Research design

A qualitative explorative research design is used with the aim to explore and describe African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships and African female adolescents' perceptions of the influence of parent-adolescent relationships on aspects of their sense of well-being. The qualitative data collection is done through the use of graphic family sculpting (Venter, 1993) as well as focus group interviews. The researcher held the ontological assumption that there are many realities/truths, and subscribed to the epistemological assumption that knowledge is socially constructed and therefore the participants and researcher collaborated in providing an in-depth description of the experiences of the participants.

Participants and setting

The sample included African adolescent female learners of a secondary school in Randfontein, Gauteng. The setting for graphic family sculpting and focus group interviews was the school that participating learners attend.

Participants had to meet the following criteria:

- They had to be grade 8 to 12 learners.

- They had to be between the ages of 13 to 18 years.
- They had to be African females.
- They had to live with either one or both parents.
- They had to give voluntary consent to participate in the study and had to be open and willing to share their experience in a focus group.
- They had to be willing to be recorded on a voice recorder.
- Their parents had to give written consent.
- Language use and proficiency in English had to be adequate.

A purposeful voluntary sampling technique was used (Burns & Grove, 1997; Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). Participants in the purposeful sample were selected according to the needs of the study. Female learners of a secondary school in the indicated area who met the selection criteria were involved in the study. The sample consisted of 30 and 32 African adolescent females between the ages of 13 and 18 for the graphic family sculpting and focus group interviews respectively. The sample size was determined by data saturation (Burns & Grove, 1997), which was achieved when the data became redundant and there was repetition of information from new participants (Polit & Hungler, 1995).

Data collection

Data collection took place through the use of graphic family sculpting and focus group interviews.

- **Graphic family sculpting**

Graphic family sculpting is a technique developed by Venter (1993, p.12) to "refine complex, and often vague family issues in a simple, workable form". Family members are enabled to understand and make sense of their emotional experiences of family matters. Graphic family sculpting was done with thirty participants who volunteered and were facilitated by the researcher who has been appropriately trained to use the technique. Research done on graphic family sculpting shows that sculptures done by adolescents are often more honest and displays the essence of the family dynamics The technique required that the African female adolescent participants draw their present

family on a blank sheet of A4 paper by representing each person with a circle and to then provide other relevant information on the sketch (Venter, 1993).

The following instructions were given (Venter, 1993):

- Draw your family on one side of the paper by presenting each member with a circle. Draw the circles as big as you like and use as much space on the paper as you wish. Now write (in the circle or next to it) the name and age of the family member.
- Number each circle according to the order in which you drew them.
- On the back of the paper, next to number 1, write down if you have discovered or learned anything new about your family and what it is that you have learned/discovered.
- Write next to each circle if the person is sitting, lying down or standing. You can describe the positions in more detail if you like, e.g. sitting comfortably.
- On the back of the paper, next to number 2, write down if you have learned or discovered anything new about your family and what it is that you have learned/discovered.
- Indicate the direction in which the person is looking by drawing an arrow pointing in the direction that the family member is looking. Each member can only look in one direction. If it is too difficult to let a member only look in one direction you can use dotted lines to indicate if that member is looking in more than one direction.
- On the back of the paper, next to number 3, write down if you have learned or discovered anything new about your family and what it is that you have learned/ discovered.
- Give each member a name. Choose a name that you think represents the way in which the family has labeled that person, e.g. the quiet one, the smart one, the pretty one. Write down the name that you gave each member next to each circle and indicate it with a (N).
- On the back of the paper, next to number 4, write down if you have learned or discovered anything new about your family and what it is that you have learned/ discovered.

- Allocate a particular emotion to each member of the family and write down the emotion next to each circle by indicating it with an (E).
- On the back of the paper, next to number 5, write down if you have learned or discovered anything new about your family and what it is that you learned/ discovered.
- Finally, answer these questions on the back of the paper:

- Next to number 6, write down whether you found the instructions easy to follow. Yes or no?
- Next to number 7, write down whether you have learned anything in the process. Yes or no? Then indicate what it is you have learned.
- Next to number 8, write down whether you became emotional during the process. Yes or no?

- **Focus group interviews**

The focus group interviews consisted of four to six members, and a total of six groups were held to ensure quality of the research and data saturation. A short list of open-ended questions based on literature was used to guide the discussion and probe for relevant information (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006).

The focus group interview questions were as follows:

1. How do you feel about your relationship with your parents?
2. What aspects make the relationship good?
3. What aspects are problematic in the relationship?
4. How do you think these aspects influence your well-being?
5. What do you think will improve the relationship?

Field notes

Field notes were written immediately after each focus group interview (Appendix F) to ensure that observations during the focus groups were recorded whilst the researcher still remembered the observations clearly (Creswell, 1998). The purpose of these notes was to record additional information that may not have been disclosed by participants.

Included in the notes are the researcher's observations and an account of circumstances prevailing during the focus group interviews. Notes were taken according to the format provided by Schatzman and Strauss (in De Vos, 1998) and are discussed as follows:

Data analysis

The focus group interviews were recorded on a voice recorder and transcribed verbatim. Open coding, which was carried out manually, was used to analyse the transcribed data of the focus group interviews and data gathered via graphic family sculpting. An experienced co-coder coded the data independently for both sets of data (Brink, 2002). In a consensus discussion, the researcher and co-coder discussed coding themes and reached consensus on categories to ensure trustworthiness with regard to data analysis (Polit & Hungler, 1987). The graphic family sculptings were interpreted by the researcher and the co-supervisor, who developed the graphic family sculpting technique, according to the following guidelines (Venter, 1993):

- The "Gestalt" or wholeness of the sculptings. Why were circles arranged in a certain way (e.g – a circle or horizontal line).
- The placement of each family member in the "Gestalt" and the distance between them.
- The direction in which each member is looking as it can provide important information about the members' relationships.
- The horizontal/vertical position of each family member as it might suggest a person's power or assertiveness.
- The label allocated to each family member.
- The emotion allocated to each family member, for example: are the emotions ascribed predominantly positive or negative?
- The order in which the circles were drawn and the relative size of the circles. Why, for example, was a certain person either drawn first or last and why was a certain circle drawn larger than the others?
- The line quality of the circles and the extent of erasures during the course of the sculpting. Is the line quality of circles similar? Did the person often erase and redrew certain circles?

- The amount of space taken up by the sculpture.
- The location of the sculpture on the paper.
- The answers to the questions asked during and after the sculpture had been completed.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is the term used to refer to what quantitative researchers call validity and reliability of a study (Lincoln & Guba, in Krefting, 1991). The following criteria were applied to ensure the trustworthiness of the study (De Vos, 1998; Woods & Catanzaro, 1988):

- **Credibility**

Credibility was ensured by writing field notes that were the researcher's own observations of African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships. The notes reflected the behaviour of the learners in the context of the situation they found themselves in. The observations consisted of the who, what, when, where and how of the circumstances. Theoretical field notes included the researcher's inferences and associations of what she observed from the setting.

The researcher also considered certain threats to validity (Woods & Catanzaro, 1988). The researcher guarded against observer effects, selection of participants, regression and mortality. Bracketing and intuiting (Burns & Grove, in De V os, 1998) also ensured credibility as the researcher put aside all she knew about African female adolescents' parent-adolescent relationships and focused on the experience under study, so as not to misconstrue or misinterpret what was heard and observed.The researcher described in the report her engagement in the whole research situation and process.

- **Transferability**

Transferability refers to the applicability of the results to other contexts, settings and other groups. It also concerns whether the resul ts can be generalised to the larger population. It is argued, however, that generalisation is not applicable in qualitative

research because the research took place in real and natural settings where there were few controlling variables (Krefting, in De Vos, 1998). The criterion was therefore determined by the strength of the qualitative method. Transferability of the study was not the researcher's responsibility, but rather that of the individual who wishes to apply the findings to another situation or apply the method to another setting (Lincoln & Guba, in De Vos, 1998).

- **Dependability**

Dependability refers to the consistency and auditability of the data (Lincoln & Guba, in Krefting, 1991). In this study, the researcher explained to the participants that they were the experts with regard to the subject, and requested that they should be open and honest in their discussion. The researcher also considered the following in order to avoid a threat to consistency (Woods & Catanzaro, 1988):

- Co-coders were used for both the focus group interview data and the graphic family sculpting data to eliminate a lack in consistency.
- The study made use of mediators at the school who identified potential participants that met the set criteria.
- The learners were required to sign consent forms and their parents/guardians were required to sign consent forms to allow their participation in the study.

- **Confirmability**

According to Lincoln and Guba (in Krefting, 1991), confirmability refers to the criterion of neutrality according to which the bias of the researcher should be avoided with regard to the procedures and findings. All documents required for auditing including the raw data, field notes and data analysis records were and will in future be made available by the researcher for this purpose.

Literature control

In a qualitative study such as this, a literature control is done so that the findings can be discussed within the context of what is already written about African adolescent females

and their experience of parent-adolescent relationships (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). The literature, therefore, serves as a means of validating the data, identifying findings in other literature that wasn't evident in this study, or findings unique to this study. Data confirmed by literature was also indicated (Burns & Grove, 2005).

Ethical considerations

The researcher made use of various international ethical principles such as the Helsinki declaration (Burns & Grove, 2005) in order to conduct the research in an ethical manner. The researcher considered certain ethical issues in order to ensure that the rights of participants were observed, namely: anonymity, respect for the dignity of persons, nonmaleficence and confidentiality (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Permission for the study was obtained from the Department of Education, the secondary school where the research was conducted and informed voluntary consent was obtained in written form from both the participants and their parents/guardians. Permission was also obtained from the Ethical Committee of the North-West University. The researcher is a registered psychological counselor and would have assisted any learner who may have experienced emotional reactions to the graphic family sculpting.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Following is a discussion of the results, with the findings obtained from the focus group interviews presented first, followed by a discussion of the graphic family sculpting findings.

Focus group interviews

Data saturation was obtained with six focus group interviews. The details of the results are discussed in themes and sub-themes as analysed by the first author and co-coder from the transcribed interviews and agreed upon in a consensus discussion. The data is discussed according to the interview schedule, which had five questions.

Question 1: How do you feel about your relationship with your parents?

Theme 1: Negative feelings

Sub-theme 1: A troubled relationship with both parents

This theme is the most prominent according to frequency (17 reports). The main reasons offered by participants for this negative relationship are a lack of communication and regular conflict with their parents. One participant said: *"My relationship isn't well at all with my parents. We can't talk without fighting;"* Another said: *"I feel bad because with my mom I haven't…we don't have an open relationship…with my father we don't have a good relationship because we fight a lot."* Literature that refers to a negative experience of the parent-adolescent relationship by African female adolescents, includes Koen, Van Eeden & Williams (2009) who found that African female youths report the least positive relationship with their parents. James, Reddy and Jinabha (2004) report on the decline of many relational qualities between parents and adolescents in African families.

Sub-theme 2: A stressed relationship with fathers

This theme came up often during the interviews (13 reports). Participants indicated that they often fight with their fathers and that there is no communication between them and their fathers. Examples of this included: *"With my father ma'm, we don't talk…we don't talk about anything;" "With my father it's sometimes a negative relationship because we always fight;" "Isometimes feel like if I could choose who my parents would be, my father wouldn't be my father;"* and *"…it is better with my mother, my father is just there. I don't really know him."* Literature about a more negative relationship with fathers than with mothers includes Kelly (2000), who reports poor communication between adolescents and their fathers, especially with regard to sexual education. Literature regarding this theme includes research conducted by the HSRC (Human Science Research Council) cited by Louw and Louw (2007), showing that many South African men are absent in the lives of their children, do not engage in intimate interaction with their children and that negative views of Black fathers in particular, are pervasive. Shek (2000) reports that fathers were found to be less responsive when compared to mothers and that the father-adolescent relationship was evaluated more negatively in a study done with Chinese participants.

Sub-theme 3: A distant relationship with mothers

Fewer of the participants indicated that they have a more negative relationship with their mothers (8 reports) than with their fathers, mostly due to a lack of communication. They said: *"I don't talk to my mother;" "My mom doesn't like to listen so I don't really talk to her;" "...with my mother it's just that we don't talk"* and *"I don't ever speak to my mom, we're not close."* Literature refers to the fact that mothers are more central in the socialization of adolescents and that when conflict occurs it is more common between mothers and adolescents, with detrimental emotional effects (Holmbeck & Hill, 1991; Louw & Louw, 2007; Montemayor, 1983).

Theme 2: Positive feelings

Sub-theme 1: Caring relationship with mother

This theme is by far the most prominent according to frequency (19 reports). Many participants indicated that they have a more positive relationship with their mothers than with their fathers because they can talk to them and because their mother does everything for them. Participants said: *"My relationship with my mother is very good. I always talk to her about everything;" "I'm closer with my mother, like she does everything for me;"* and *"We have a very open relationship and I can talk to my mother about anything."* Several studies suggest that mothers are more accessible and available to adolescents with respect to time spent in face-to-face interactions, resulting in a more positive relationship (Hill, 1988; O'Leary & Smith, 1991). Furthermore, mothers are considered to be the best 'window' to understanding the adolescent (Paikoff, 1991). Noller and Bagi (1985) report that overall, adolescents tend to communicate more with mothers than fathers on a wide range of subjects.

Sub-theme 2: Warm relationship with both parents

Participants who indicated that they have a positive relationship with both parents (6 reports) indicated that the main reason for this is that they experience their parents as approachable. They said: *"My relationship with my parents is very good because we can talk about anything;" "I feel fantastic…I can talk with my father about everything. I can even talk with my mother;"* and *"My relationship with my parents is very good 'cause I trust them with anything and they make me feel safe."* Literature reports a positive parent-child relationship in adolescence when both parents model the cognitive,

emotional and behavioural attributes they desire to see in their children (Eisenberg & McNally, 1993; Larson & Richards, 1994). Patterson (2008) indicates that warmth and a responsive nature from the parental couple lead to autonomy and behavioural competence in adolescents.

Sub-theme 3: Closer relationship with father

Some participants did say that they experience their fathers to be emotionally available (4 reports) mostly due to the fact that they can talk to their fathers. Examples included: *"My relationship with my dad is very good, but not with my mom because I don't communicate with my mom;" "I'm close to my father…because I trust him and he trusts me;"* and *"With me it is better with my father, my mom left us and my father carries all the responsibility."* Literature indicates that some adolescents turn away from the mother to the father as they mature physically, and that those fathers tend to spend more time with them and participate in activities with them (Almeida & Galambos, 1991). Louw and Louw (2007) are of the opinion that father involvement leads to intellectual and emotional well-being benefits for adolescents.

Question 2: What aspects make the relationship good?

Theme 1: Communication is open and rewarding

Communication is by far the most prominent theme based on frequency (14 reports). Participants said: *"Communication. If we can talk about things at least we manage things better;" "Communication. What you talk about. I talk to my mom about almost everything;" "I think when I talk more with my mom, somehow she understands where I come from;"* and *"…what makes our relationship good is the fact that she knows me and I know her because we are always communicating."* Literature suggests that parental warmth and communication is crucial for the well-being of adolescents (Choo, 2000). Open and regular communication is linked to emotional and social maturity in adolescents (Louw & Louw, 2007).

Theme 2: Loving, caring, supportive parenting

This theme is the second most prominent according to frequency (10 reports). One participant said: *"My mom is very supportive. 'Cause I do a lot sports, academics,*

band…she always picks me up and gets me information and stuff. She's very supportive;" others said: *"Love, care and trust. 'Cause that's the most important thing in the relationship that you have with your parents;" "It is all about love, care and respect. If we can have that, opening up to each other so that there is no secrets and we can trust each other;"* and *"I also think that my mom does support me."* Lerner, Brennan, Noh and Wilson (1995) report that support from parents is associated with positive adolescent emotional development. Strong parent-child attachment bonds include providing adolescents with support and a secure base that serves as a protective factor against negative environmental influences (Louw & Louw, 2007).

Theme 3: Honesty and trust in secure disclosure

Honesty and trust were mentioned by 8 participants. Examples included: *"Honest. You have to be honest. And your parents have to be honest. That makes the relationship good;" "I think its honesty, because I can't just be open with my mother, but I try my best to be honest with her;"* and *"I think we can trust each other and everything we do…we don't need to hide things from each other."* Literature indicates that when parents show trust in their child (with appropriate limits and restrictions) it builds confidence in teenagers and that not trusting them may result in them not taking responsibility for themselves (Dinkmeyer & McKay, 1990). In disclosing thoughts and feelings with parents, adolescents develop identity clarity and learn to commit in close relationships (Papalia et al., 2009)

Theme 4: Quality time

Some participants indicated that spending quality time with their parents makes the relationship good (6 reports). They said *"...I can talk to my mother, we spend time together and then I feel I can discuss things with her. She makes time for me;" "I think time determines how close you are to someone. Because I grew up…everywhere I went I went with my mother, everything she did, I was there. So I had more time to actually bond with her;"* and *"...we always have fun together."* Literature refers to the importance of time investment to establish a fulfilling relationship (Almeida & Galambos, 1991; Montemayor, Eberly & Flannery, 1993).

Theme 5: Discipline

Participants indicated that some form of discipline, for example responsibilities and boundaries can be effective in making a relationship good (5 reports). Examples included: *"Sometimes I think I'm at peace with my mother being so strict because she looks out for me…So sometimes it's nice that she's so strict;" "Boundaries. You should know which boundaries to keep with your mother. I can't just speak to my mother the way I speak to my friends. Certain boundaries determine how your relationship is;"* and *"The responsibilities we have. Like everybody has a certain thing to do…"* Literature on discipline suggests that positive and effective forms of discipline encourage good conduct and builds a mutually respectful bond between the parent and adolescent (Zahn-Waxler & Robinson, 1995). According to Patterson (2008), the discipline of authoritative parenting leads to self-esteem and social competence in adolescents.

Negative themes

Although the question in the above discussion was about what aspects make the relationship good, participants mentioned quite a few negative themes. These themes were included in the discussion of the next interview question "What aspects are problematic in the relationship?"

Question 3: What aspects are problematic in the relationship?

Theme 1: Traditions

This theme is the most prominent with regard to frequency (15 reports). Participants indicated they feel their parents want to stick to traditions and old ways and don't want to accept that times have changed. Participants said: *"I think our parents don't understand us because back then things were different;" "I'm living in the 21st century and I'm not used to that because she is trying to bring me up the way her parents brought her up;"* and *"I think they think we still live like they did. Like the old century…Ag it's the 21st century. We don't live like that anymore."* Literature reports that culture and traditional beliefs do play a role in the conflicts between parents and adolescents, but that it relates more to the day-to-day issues than to deep conflicting values (Louw & Louw, 2007).

Sub-theme 1: Not allowed to date

This theme came up in every group and many participants complained about not being allowed to date or being able to talk to their parents about boyfriends or dating (there were 6 reports that received much agreement from group members during interviews). The main reasons indicated by participants for this included: parents are afraid they will get pregnant or get infected with HIV, parents don't trust them, parents blame dating for all their failures and mistakes, and parents, especially mothers, are afraid that they will repeat the parents mistakes. They say: *"Really, she would kill me ma'm. So I can't talk to my mother about this stuff or even my sister, because my sister is gonna tell my mother. They are gonna throw it in my face whenever I do something;" "Because the minute you tell your parents you're dating they're like 'No, what about your education? You should look to your education, not a boy'…they become aggressive;" "If you start dating they think you're gonna get pregnant. That's how it is. It happened to her and she thinks it will happen to me. I can only consider…not start, consider dating after matric;"* and *"When you have a boyfriend that's the first thing they think you are gonna get pregnant."*

Sub-theme 2: Children don't have a say

Some participants indicated that they don't have a say because they are children (5 reports). Examples included: *"They don't want to listen. Like let's say I did something wrong and I have an explanation…what she says is what I did and finish and klaar;" "It's mostly about 'I'm the parent, you're the child'. That's what happens at my house. 'I'm the parent and you're the child and whatever I say flies.'"* Literature indicates that children find it hard to respect parents who believe they are always right and therefore don't give children a chance to share their views (Guilamo-Ramos & Bouris, 2008). Arnett (2001) indicates that parents who adhere to traditional cultural practices use power assertion to enforce their authority and expect to be obeyed without question and without requiring an explanation.

Theme 2: Poor communication

Some participants feel that there is poor communication, and it was mentioned often that parents don't listen or understand (8 reports). They said: *"They don't listen. They don't*

want to understand;" "When we don't take time to listen and misinterpret what the other one is saying. Like we don't understand or try to understand each other; and *"'Cause it's like she doesn't hear my side of the story."* Literature that supports this theme includes Kigozi (2006) who reports poor communication between African parents and youths and Kelly (2000) who reports paucity in parent-adolescent interactions, especially with regard to sexual education. Adolescents who experience less warm, open communication at home have been found to go through identity diffusion where they are not committed to anything and do not attempt to develop any commitment (Louw & Louw, 2007).

Theme 3: Lack of respect

It came out in the discussions that the girls feel their parents don't respect them (5 reports). They said: *"I think it mostly a lack of respect that causes problems;" "We respect them, but they don't respect us…they don't care about our feelings;"* and *"…I think my parents don't respect the fact that I am different and need to be my own person."* Literature reports that by showing respect to children, for example admitting when you have made a mistake and being honest, evokes counter respect (Guilamo-Ramos & Bouris, 2008).

Sub-theme 1: Don't feel special or loved

Some participants indicated that they don't feel special or loved by their parents (3 reports). Examples included: *"…I feel even if they look at me they don't really see me as a person. I am nothing. Just somebody to blame;" "…that's how you get to the point where you don't feel loved;"* and *"For me, normally we don't have an open relationship. But in my case I like it because my father isn't there for me and he is dead to me."* Hostile behaviour and emotional neglect or detachment from parents result in poor social and academic competence and often in behavioural problems and risk behaviour of youth (Papalia et al., 2009)

Sub-theme 2: Conflict

In the interviews, some participants indicated that they fight with their parents a lot and it is problematic in the relationship (3 reports). They said: *"With us there is nothing good*

ma'm. It is really bad. Eish, I don't know what more I can say, it is just bad. With us it is mostly yelling, blaming and fighting. We have a lot of conflict and we are out to get each other;" and *"Nothing! Nothing is good about the relationship. We only fight."* In a South African study Beukes (1994) reports that conflict in African families seems to be more prevalent than in other population groups. Continuous and unresolved conflict between parents and adolescent children may result in serious self-esteem, autonomy and self control deficiencies and adolescent depression and suicide (Patterson, 2008).

Question 4: How do you think these aspects influence your well-being?

Theme 1: Negative influence

Sub-theme 1: Affects eating patterns

According to frequency, this theme is the most prominent (7 reports). It often came up in interviews that a negative relationship or negative phase in the relationship with parents affects how much they eat. Participants said: *"…it has an exhausting effect…physically, emotionally…I couldn't eat and other times I would just eat, eat, eat;" "With me, I eat a lot. I sometimes feel I can't stop eating. But I eat at school. I don't eat at the house;"* and *"I eat a lot ma'm. So when I stress I eat."*

Sub-theme 2: Emotional turmoil

Participants indicated different kinds of emotional turmoil when their relationship with their parents is negative (6 reports). Examples included: *"It is breaking me up inside. I feel like I am falling apart;" "I think it can impact your well-being. 'Cause I know the way I live. I don't want anybody to experience the way I live with my parents. Well with my father. I don't wish that kind of relationship on anybody;" "…it tears you down inside…it hurts inside because you can't tell your mother anything;"* and *"It sometimes does. Sometimes I cry to a point where I get sick and I just can't take it anymore…I just cry and it gets to a point where I get sick and my body just gives in."*

Sub-theme 3: Can't concentrate at school

Participants indicated that when things are going negatively in their relationship with their parents they often find it hard to concentrate at school (6 reports). They said: *"…you can't concentrate on your schoolwork. And the next thing is you don't achieve well;" "…when you come to school you're just thinking about everything that happened*

and you can't concentrate, you can't listen…" and *"Me and my brother aren't doing that well at school anymore…"* Crosnoe and Elder (2004) report that poor parent-adolescent relationships are a significant risk-factor with regard to academic difficulties and Unger, McLeod, Brown and Tressel (2000) found that the quality of the parent-child relationship is a strong predictor of academic achievement.

Sub-theme 4: Affects relationships with others

Some participants indicated that a negative relationship with your parents can affect your relationship with others negatively (5 reports). Participants said: *"It influences us, because it doesn't only influence the relationship that I have with my parents, it influences the relationships I have with everybody;" "...you become mean to your friends. Even if they didn't do something because you're thinking about what happened;"* and *"I've been shouting at people lately. I get irritated because of that."* Patterson (2008) mentions that due to serious self-esteem problems in adolescence that results from parent-adolescent estrangement, social skills and other behavioural competencies may suffer.

Sub-theme 5: Bottling up emotions

Participants indicated a negative relationship with their parents can result in them bottling up emotions and not being able to talk about what they feel (5 reports). They said *"...I'm a person who bottles everything up. I can't share how I feel…I just don't…I just say I'm fine;" "...you keep bottling things up. And the day the bottle bursts you don't know who to go to;"* and *"...I try to hide it, pretending that everything is fine. And it is hard when you carry this weight."*

Sub-theme 6: Defiant behaviour

It came up in interviews that a negative relationship with parents can result in defiant behaviour by children (4 reports). Examples included: *"I even go and buy cigarettes and I take pills. Anything to make me sleep. Ai, it's not good. I sometimes think I'm losing it;" "...it's stuff like this that lead us to drugs and alcohol and stuff, 'cause we feel those stuff will make us happy inside;" "...when people start having sex and doing drugs it's because most of the time they lack their parents' love at home and they look for it somewhere else…"* and *"I think if it's not going well it can lead to you going out, coming home late, smoking and drinking alcohol."* Several studies indicate that frequent

and intense relationship breakdowns between parents and children can lead to adolescent delinquency, running away from home and substance abuse (Dekovic, 1999; Caldwell, Wright, Zimmerman, Walseman, Williams & Isichel, 2004).

Sub-theme 7: Affects sleeping patterns

Another theme that presented itself with regard to a problematic relationship with parents is a lack of sleep (4 reports). Participants said: *"With me I don't sleep at all. Everything is just going around and around in my head;" "I'm alone. I can't even sleep sometimes;"* and *"I also struggle to sleep."* Literature reports that anxiety and stress can disrupt sleep (Barlow & Durand, 2005). Adolescent loneliness, depression and suicide ideation often flow from disengaged parenting (Patterson, 2008).

Theme 2: Positive influence

Sub-theme 1: Working harder

Some participants indicated that even if the relationship is going negatively it makes them stronger and makes them want to work harder (4 reports). They said: *"It is making me stronger as a person. Like I won't give up and I do my best in the school. I want to achieve things;" "I think it makes me work harder 'cause I just feel I wanna work harder and become something;"* and *"It makes me work harder. I just think they make me stronger 'cause I want to be a better person."* Resilience in youth to overcome relational adversity has received much attention in literature (see Dawes & Donald, 2000; Masten & Reed, 2005).

Sub-theme 2: Emotional well-being

Some participants indicated that when their relationship is going well with their parents, they experience a positive sense of emotional well-being (3 reports). Examples included: *"I'm so happy and excited when my father asks me if I'm dating. He speaks to me openly;" "It does. It really does, because when I look at this I do know where's my right and wrong, how to look at life…this is what I should do, this is definitely not the way to go;"* and "*It also makes me happy when my parents ask me if I'm dating."*

Question 5: What do you think will improve the relationship?

Theme 1: Communication

This theme is by far the most prominent based on frequency (19 reports). Participants said: *"It is all about communication. If we can talk we can learn to understand each other;" "...if we can just sit down and talk and listen so that we can get to know and understand each other;" "Should listen to one another. Communicate and talk about things in life;"* and *"...better communication. Like instead of her shouting at me she should just ask me and not get all angry and stuff."* Literature that refers to parent-child communication indicates that parental warmth and willingness to communicate is crucial for the well-being of adolescents (Choo, 2000).

Theme 2: Understanding and non-judgmental environment

This theme is the second most prominent theme according to frequency (11 reports). Examples included: *"...if I want to do something you mustn't judge me;" "We need to support one another and not look down on one another;" "...knowing they are not gonna judge you if you tell them something..."* and *"Maybe if they understand and they know what we are going through."* Literature by Lerner, Brennan, Noh and Wilson (1995) indicates that support and acceptance by parents are associated with positive adolescent development. Warm and nurturing parents can result in children being more securely attached than children of cold and detached parents (Louw & Louw, 2007).

Theme 3: Distance or time away

Some participants, especially older participants (grade 11 & 12), indicated that distance or time away from their parents will improve the relationship (8 reports). They said *"I think moving away from my dad...whenever I'm with him I just think– When is this man going away;" "I think time away from my parents. That will definitely improve it. I can't wait to leave home and start fresh;"* and *"I think moving away from my family. I think if we only see each other now and again it will be better. It is too much to be together each day."* Literature indicates that adolescence is a time of achieving autonomy, where adolescents start forming new relationships and moving away from emotional dependency on parents: this is known as emotional autonomy (Kaplan, 2000). The relationship between adolescents and their parents becomes more emotionally distant

due to adolescents' increased need for privacy as well as a decrease in affect towards parents, which is usually temporary (Louw & Edwards, 2003).

Theme 4: Trust

Some participants indicated that trust between them and their parents will improve the relationship (6 reports). Participants said: *"Trust. If they trust you more;" "...trust is important in a relationship because it keeps you going;"* and *"By being open with your parents, and they should be open with you."* Dinkmeyer and McKay (1990) indicate that showing trust in the child (with appropriate limits and restrictions) builds confidence in teenagers and that not trusting them may result in them not taking responsibility for themselves.

Sub-theme 1: Allowed to experience things/freedom

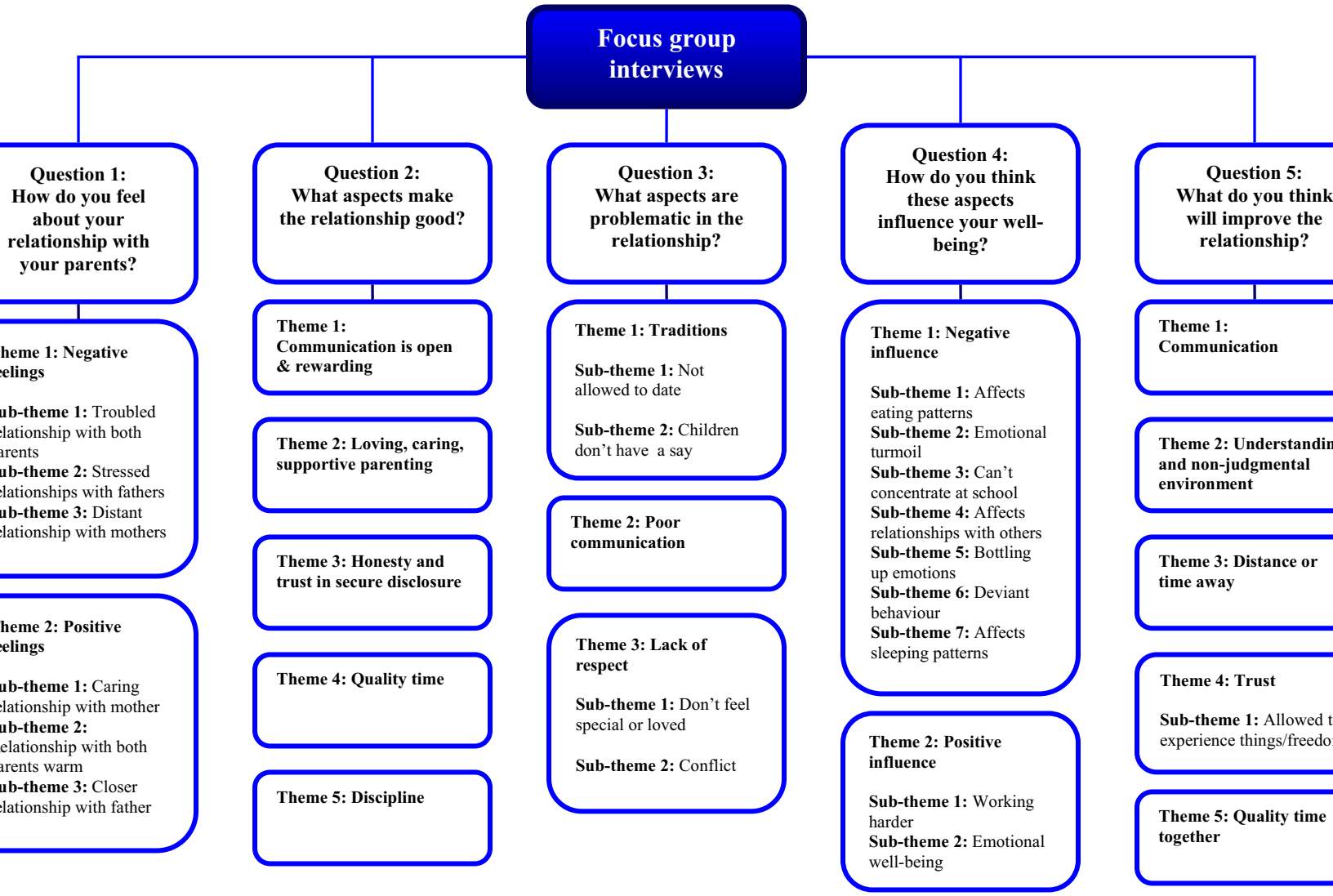
It was mentioned that if parents trust adolescents enough and allow them to experience things and give them more freedom, it will improve the relationship (3 reports). Examples included: *"We need to fly and experience things;" "They must trust me to make my own choices not always thinking if I go out that I will have sex and get pregnant;"* and *"...they must trust us. Just give us a chance to do stuff and see how it goes. If we make mistakes, we learn from our mistakes. But they don't understand that."* Louw and Louw (2007) indicate that the freedom to explore can enhance adolescent development of identity achievement and fulfill their need for autonomy (independence). The authoritative parenting style has been found to enhance aspects of competence in adolescents as it involves the granting of appropriate autonomy (Louw, Van Ede & Louw, 2004)

Theme 5: Quality time together

Participants, especially younger participants (grade 8– 10) indicated spending time with their parents will improve the relationship (2 reports). They said: *"We should spend a lot of time together;"* and *"We should stay at home a little bit and watch movies and talk about whatever."* Quality time together has been found to establish a positive

relationship between a parent and child (Almeida & Galambos, 1991; Montemayor, Eberly & Flannery, 1993).

The focus group interviews themes and sub themes are presented visually in the following figure (Figure 1).



gure 1: Focus group interviews themes and sub-themes

Graphic family sculpting

Data saturation was obtained with 30 individual graphic family sculptings. The details of the results are discussed in themes and sub-themes as analysed by the first author and co-coder from the graphic family sculptings and agreed upon in a consensus discussion. It is important to note that each family is unique and therefore graphic family sculptings are also unique. The coder and co coder were therefore careful not to over -interpret the sculptings of participants.

Theme 1: Mothers have a more prominent and positive role than fathers

This theme is the most prominent according to frequency. Interpretation seems to show a more prominent and positive role of mothers in the majority of the sculptings . The main indications of this include: mothers are labeled positively (25 sculptings), the mother's circle was drawn first (12 sculptings), the mother's circle was drawn bigger or darker than other circles (4 sculptings) and the mother looks at everyone else in the family (9 sculptings). In a study done with Chinese participants Shek (2000) found that adolescents evaluate their relationship with their mothers more positively than their relationship with their fathers. This theme along with the following sub -themes are supported by literature that indicate that the mother in the traditional African family is often seen as the most important member and centre of the family (Mbiti, 1988).

Sub-theme 1: Mothers care and provide

Participants' sculptings seem to indicate that the mothers are more caring and provide for them. In 11 sculptings the mother is described as *'provider', 'rock'* or *'strong'* . In 5 sculptings the mother is described as *'loving'* and *'caring'* . The mothers are often described as *'worried'* or *'stressed'* (13 sculptings), which seems to be connected to providing and caring for the family and showing concern for their well-being.

Sub-theme 2: Mothers more active and assertive than fathers

The mothers seem to be more active in the family as mothers are often standing (16 sculptings) and described as *'hard-working'* or *'provider'* (4 sculptings). The mothers also seem to be more assertive or dominant as participants describe them with words such as *'the master', 'in charge'* and *'strict'* (7 sculptings). Costigan, Cauce and Etchison

(2007) found that adolescents interact far more with their mothers, have more conflict with their mothers but experiencing their mothers as supportive and knowing them better than fathers.

Theme 2: Fathers are distant/detached

The second most prominent theme with regard to frequency is that fathers seem to be uninvolved and uncommitted. Fathers are often described negatively, for example, *'outsider', 'angry', 'ruthless'* and *'dependent'* (10 sculptings), the father's circle is drawn last in 6 sculptings and not drawn at all in 7 sculptings. Some sculptings indicate that fathers look away from family members or don't look at anything (6 sculptings) and fathers are more often described as sitting or lying down (14 sculptings). Literature that refers to a more negative relationship with fathers as experienced by adolescents includes findings by the HSRC (Human Science Research Counsil) cited by Louw and Louw (2007), which shows that many South African men are perceived to be absent in the lives of their children, do not engage in intimate interaction with their children and that negative views of Black fathers in particular, are pervasive. Sheeber, Davis, Leve, Hops and Tildesley (2007) found that adverse relationships with fathers are likely to be causative of depression in adolescents.

Theme 3: A negative view of the self for African adolescent females

The majority of the sculptings seemed to indicate that the female participants have a negative view of themselves. In 19 sculptings participants assign negative emotions to themselves such as *'depressed', 'numb', 'angry'* and *'sad'*. In 11 sculptings they gave themselves both negative emotions and labels, for example *'outcast', 'resented'* and *'nobody'*. Approximately half of the participants drew themselves as not looking at anyone in their family. This finding seems to support the indication of Papalia et al. (2009) that the mental health of adolescent girls is dependent on good family relationships. Possible factors that may affect self-esteem in adolescent girls are the ways in which they are socialized and their greater vulnerability to stress in social relationships (Hankin, Mermelstein & Roesch, 2007). The African cultural view of females discussed

before, is a further factor that is reflected in the self-perception of adolescent girls of African descent (Airhihenbuwa, 1995).

Theme 4: The adolescent's well-being corresponds with the parents' well-being

The sculptings seem to indicate that when the mother's or father's description is positive or negative in the sculpture, the daughter's well-being and view of self corresponds with that (16 sculptings). In most cases the child's well-being or description of self seems to correspond with that of the mother's (9 sculptings). Various studies suggest that the quality of the parent-adolescent relationship can influence adolescents' well-being (Hair et al., 2003; Koen, Van Eeden and Williams, 2009; Zaff & Moore, 2002). Literature also reports that negative emotions between parents and adolescents can result in various problems for adolescents (Lerner, Brennan, Noh & Wilson, 1995). Parental stress and depression, for example, is linked to adolescent mental problems (Compas, Howell, Phares & Williams, 1989; Gallimore & Kurdek, 1992). Waller, Hallfors, Halpern, Iritani, Ford and Guo (2006) found that having a parent with a history of depression is closely related to depression in adolescent girls.

Other themes

The following themes presented in the graphic family sculpting procedures don't form part of the objectives of study, but are still valuable findings.

Theme 1: Negative marital relationships of parents

In the majority of cases (22 sculptings) the marital relationships of the parents were presented negatively. These marital problems and conflict experienced in the home can impact on children's well-being negatively (Louw & Louw, 2007). Research indicates that children of divorce are more likely to have conduct disorders, drug abuse, poor academic achievement, lack of self-esteem and a decline in physical health (Amato, 2006; Rathus, 2010; Troxel & Matthews, 2004).

Theme 2: Extended families

A few of the participants drew their extended family (aunts, uncles, grandmothers and grandfathers) in their sculptings spontaneously and without it being requested of them (5 sculptings). This finding supports literature that the traditional African culture is collectivistic in nature(Mbiti, 1989). In her book on the collective nature of African families, Magona (1990, p. 3) states that "One could, conceivably, be minus parent, or issue; have neither spouse nor sibling; but to be alone, with no relative, no one to care for or lean on, is virtually unheard of…" The fact that only a small number of participants drew their extended family, however, might also point to this statement being less true in the families of this group of participants.

The graphic family sculpting themes and sub themes are presented visually in the following figure (Figure 2).

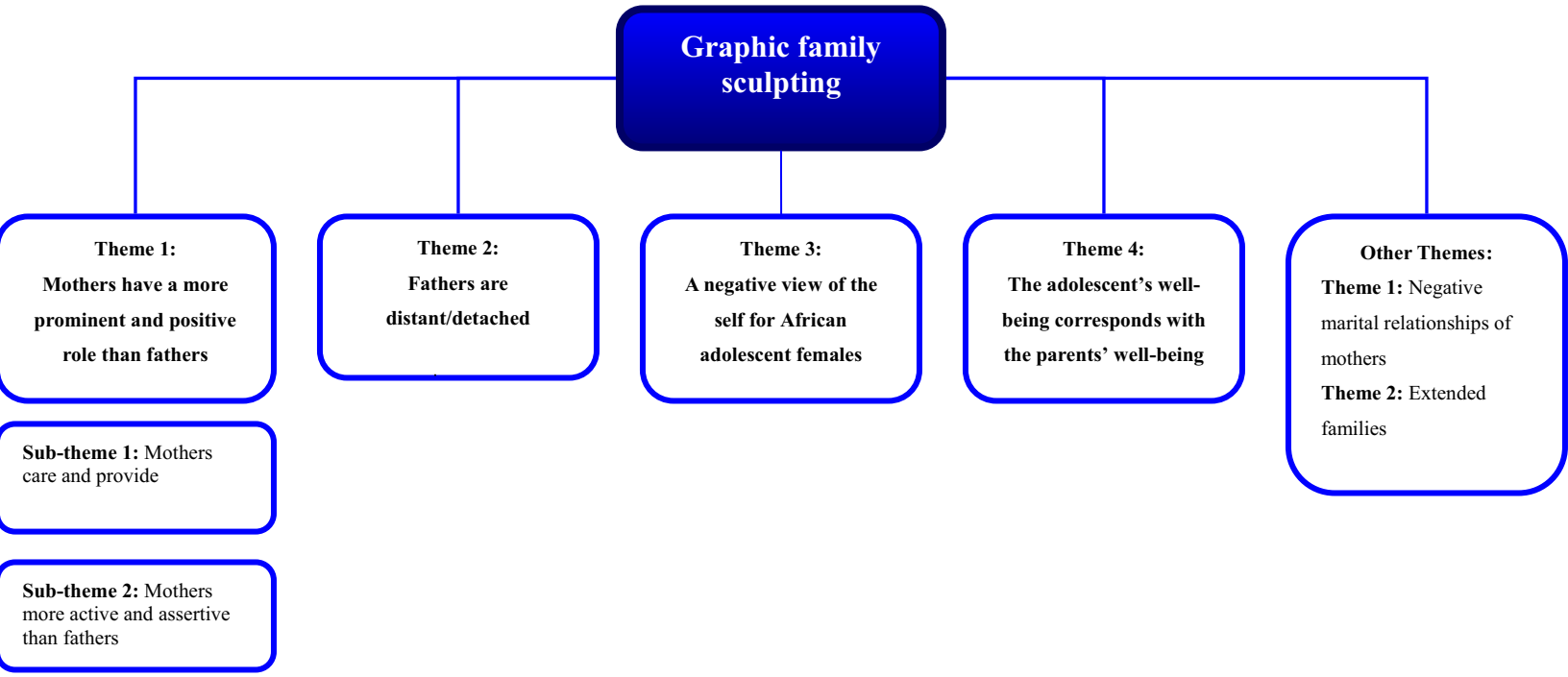


Figure 2: Graphic family sculpting themes and sub-themes

Finally, the following narrative is presented to give a brief overview of the essential themes and sub-themes of focus group interviews and graphic family sculptings with the participants. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005) it is valuable to report results by building a narrative or a story. The following narrative is therefore written as the voice of the African female adolescent.

Narrator: The African adolescent girl

The majority of us experience caring relationships with our mothers, who feature more prominently in our lives, and stressed relationships with our fathers, who are more distant and detached. We experience our relationship with our parents as positive when we can communicate with them openly, have loving and supportive relations with them, experience trust and honesty inour interactions , spend quality time withthem and when there is some form of discipline enforced by them. These positive aspects can influence our emotional well-being in a positive way by creating feelings of being okay andbeing important to them. This makes us happy and gives us direction and advice. The aspects that affect our relationship with our parents in a negative way include them clinging to old traditions, us not being allowed to date as young people do, not having a say in issues that matter to us, poor communication between us andthem , a lack of respect toward us, not feeling special or loved, and too much conflict in the relationship. These negative aspects can influence our well-being. It affects our eating patterns, brings about emotional turmoil, we can't concentrate at school, it disturbs our relationships with others, we bottle up our emotions, it may cause us to partake in negative or risky behaviour and it affects our sleeping patterns. These aspects may also contribute to the sometimes negative view that we have of ourselves with feelings of anger, sadness, not being good enough and even feeling rejected. On the other hand, some of the negative aspects in our relationships with our parents can also influence us in a positive way because it makes us want to work harder and in a way, makes us stronger. Our well-being is also influenced by our parents' well-being and especially that of our mothers because we are often closer to them. We deeply want to communicate with our parents and want them to be understanding and non-judgmental. Sometimes we need distance or time away from our parents, but overall we want a trusting relationship with them , and

spend quality time with them. We also want to be allowed to try new things and experience a sense of freedom.

CONCLUSION

The objectives of this study were to explore and describe African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships and to explore aspects of African female adolescents' relationships with their parents that may influence their sense of well-being. Focus group interviews and graphic family sculpting were used to collect data. In the focus group interviews some of the more prominent themes included: A more positive relationship with mothers, a troublesome relationship with fathers, positive and negative aspects in the relationship with their parents that influence their well being and the importance of communication. In the graphic family sculpting the four main themes were: mothers have a more prominent and positive role, fathers are more detached, a negative view of the self, and the adolescent's well-being corresponds with the parents' well-being. It is thus clear that the findings in the focus group interviews and graphic family sculpting procedures correspond as far as the more prominent role of African mothers, less involved African fathers and the influence of the parent-adolescent relationship on the well being of African female adolescents, while emphasizing the importance of a good relationship between adolescents and their parents.

Although focus group interviews provided richer data with regard to the participants' experiences, graphic family sculpting contributed to the quality of the data. Furthermore, care was taken to not over-interpret the sculptings. Other themes were identified in the sculptings but not explored, because of the focus of the study. These themes include: African families are drawn as extended, and the marital relationships of mothers are presented negatively in the majority of sculptings (22 sculptings).

Data collection through the use of a combination of focus group interviews and graphic family sculpting procedures limits the richness of data with regard to graphic family sculpting because their individual sculptings could not be explored with the participants.

A combination of individual interviews with graphic family sculpting will provide an in-depth understanding of the individual's experience of the family context. Larger samples can be used to provide a broader perspective with regard to the data collected. Longitudinal research on African female adolescents' experience of family relationships is recommended. Research with regard to the experience of the parent-adolescent relationship in other cultural groups (the coloured culture specifically) might contribute to a better understanding of parent-adolescent relationship experiences of youth in South Africa overall.

Despite the identified limitations of the current research, it is concluded that this study was a successful investigation of African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships and the influence of this on aspects of their well-being. The aims that were stated to guide the research were all achieved.

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CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

"Your children may forget what you have taught them, but they will never forget how you made them feel."

Carl W. Buchner

INTRODUCTION

In the overview and the preceding article (manuscript), research results and conclusions were described. These results and conclusions were synthesised and are here presented as the final conclusions and recommendations derived from this research project. The following discussion offers a retrospective evaluation of the research, and discusses the limitations of the research.

1. LITERATURE CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions based on existing literature on African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships

Based on literature that was examined for the purpose of this study, it is clear that adolescence is a popular topic for research and that there is a wealth of information available with regard to adolescents and parent-adolescent relationships.

Due to the uniqueness of the study, it was difficult to find literature that specifically focuses on African female adolescents with regard to parent-adolescent relationships. Most of the existing literature focuses on parent-adolescent communication with an emphasis on the sexual education of African youths.

With most of the themes and sub-themes identified in the focus group interviews and graphic family sculpting, it was easy to find literature confirming the information with regard to adolescents and the youth in general. Literature that specifically focuses on African female adolescents and African families in general, however, was difficult to find. No literature could be found with regard to the following themes or sub-themes:

- African female adolescents not allowed to date;
- African female adolescents don't feel special or loved;
- Culture specific literature on activeness and assertiveness of African mothers, and
- A negative view of the self for African female adolescents.

These themes or sub-themes therefore seem to be some of the more unique findings of the current study.

Furthermore, much of the information used for the literature control of identified themes and sub-themes was found in older literature. It was surprising that the literature on the various topics seemed repetitive and the more recent sources did not reveal anything completely new or different when compared to older sources.

To conclude, there seems to be a paucity of culture specific literature with regard to the African cultures in South Africa and the adolescents and parent-adolescent relationships within these cultures. This poses a challenge considering the visibility of and prominence given by political structures to issues of the youth and the youthful discourse in various matters relating to African societal well being. The parent-adolescent relationship remains a core interpersonal dynamic in the psycho-social well-being of all young people, and African cultures in South Africa can only gain from more research and literature on relational strength and weaknesses in these cultural and family contexts.

2. EMPIRICAL CONCLUSIONS

The research method and design used in the article proved to be successful, as the aims stated to guide the research were all achieved. The findings were in line with what was theoretically expected from developmental psychological perspectives. The findings suggest that the majority of the participants experience a more positive relationship with their mother than with their father, and that both positive and negative aspects in their relationships with their parents are perceived to influence their well-being. The importance of communication was a very prominent theme in four of the five focus group interview questions. With regard to graphic family sculpting, the findings also suggest that the mothers have a more influential and positive role and participants experience their fathers as less involved or distanced.

Although the data obtained by focus group interviews was richer, graphic family sculpting proved to be a user-friendly, in-depth technique that contributed to a better understanding of the data from focus group discussions about African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships. Furthermore, participants seemed to enjoy doing graphic family sculpting and reported to find the process therapeutic. In retrospect, the two methods of data collection complemented each other and contributed to the quality of the data. The aims of this study were therefore reached and the research questions posed were answered.

3. LIMITATIONS

The following limitations regarding this study and recommendations for future research were identified:

- Data collection through the use of a combination of focus group interviews and graphic family sculpting detracted from the richness of data that could have flowed from graphic family sculpting if participants had been questioned about their sculptings individually. A combination of explorative individual interviews with graphic family sculpting will provide an integrated data set with deeper nuances.
- Larger samples can be used to provide a broader perspective with regard to the data collected.
- Longitudinal research on African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships is recommended.
- Research on the parent-adolescent relationship experiences of other cultural groups (the coloured culture specifically) might contribute to a more diverse understanding of the experiences of youths in South Africa on this subject overall.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations related to African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships include:

- The findings of research such as this can be useful in programmes for workshops and life skills classes in schools and other youth structures, as it can empower African female youths to improve relationships.
- The findings can be useful in therapy and parent-adolescent guidance and should be made available through publication and presentations both popular and professional.
- Graphic family sculpting seems to be a user friendly and culture free procedure and can be included in family well-being programmes across cultures.
- The need for trained counsellors at schools was raised in focus group interviews. It is recommended that schools (especially secondary) employ trained and registered counsellors for their learners.

5. PERSONAL NARRATIVE

The research process was very informative and emotionally touching. The fact that the study was qualitative gave me an opportunity to enter the African female adolescent's world for a short while, and what I have discovered there has touched me. The participants were willing to share, were trusting and in some cases really needed someone to listen and talk to. Something else that greatly surprised me was the fact that many Coloured female adolescents wanted to participate. I think this study has shown me that adolescents of today are reaching out – they do want to make a difference and contribute to their own and their family's well-being and that of society in some way.

To me, the adolescent developmental phase of life will always be intriguing, filled with mysteries and unanswered questions. I hope that this study will answer at least some of those questions and contribute to the parent-adolescent relationship – especially where the African female adolescent is concerned. I also hope that other researchers, especially those from an African background, will be inspired to do much more research on family

dynamics and well-being and to publish their findings. Thereby the value of the African experience of relational matters can become known.

To conclude, the study's value lies in the fact that it is formative with regard to African female youth's parent-adolescent relationship experiences and the perceived influence of these relationships on their general well-being. It can be concluded that this was a successful exploration of African female adolescent's experience of parent-adolescent relationships and its perceived influence on their well-being. The aims stated to guide the research were all achieved.

APPENDIX A: Request to do research at participating secondary school

Miss V Koen
P.O Box 2431
Kocksvlei
1764

REQUEST FOR LEARNERS TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Mrs Pretorius

Request: To do research at Randfontein High School

I am a Masters student in Research Psychology at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus). The title of my study is "African female adolescent s' experience of parent- adolescent relationships and the influence thereof ont heir well-being". The objectives of this research will be:

- To determine African female adolescent s' experience of parent-adolescent relationships is conceptualized in literature.
- To explore and describe African female adolescent s' experience of parent-adolescent relationships.
- To explore aspects of African female adolescent s' relationships with parents that influence aspects of their sense of well-being.

I am attaching my proposal for your referral. Participation is voluntary, and the learners and their parents must give informed consent before a learner participates. Permission for this research will also be obtained from the Ethical Committee of the North-West University and Department of Education before any research is undertaken. My study leader is Prof C van Eeden. If you have any questions you can contact her at: (016) 910 3419 or Chrizanne.VanEeden@nwu.ac.za. If my request is approved, please sign the attached letter.

Kind regards,
V Koen (Researcher)
071 266 6807

APPENDIX B: Request for learner consent

INFORMATION AND REQUEST FOR LEARNERS TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Dear Learner

THE LEARNERS' PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH: AFRICAN FEMALE ADOLESCENTS' EXPERIENCE OF PARENT-ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIPS AND THE INFLUENCE THEREOF ON THEIR WELL-BEING

I am studying for a Masters degree in Research Psychology at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus). I am doing research on the above topic and will appreciate it if you can take part in this research. The objectives of this research will be:

- To determine how African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships is conceptualized in literature.
- To explore and describe African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships.
- To explore aspects of African female adolescents' relationships with parents that influence aspects of their sense of well-being.

A graphic family sculpting technique and focus group interviews will be used to gather information. Voice recording will be used for focus group interviews. The information gathered will be **confidential** between the researcher, research leader and the co-coders only. Your name will **not** be disclosed during the research or publication of the results.

Participation is **voluntary** and you are kindly requested to complete the attached consent form to indicate that you are willing to participate in this research.

Thanking you in anticipation

……..
V KOEN (Researcher)

ASSENT BY LEARNERS TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

I …… hereby give my assent to voluntarily participate in the above research project and to the use of voice recording during focus group interviews.

Signed ……. (Date)

……
Participant's Signature

APPENDIX C : Request for parental consent

INFORMATION AND REQUEST FOR LEARNERS TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Dear Parent

THE LEARNERS' PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH: AFRICAN FEMALE ADOLESCENTS' EXPERIENCE OF PARENT-ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIPS AND THE INFLUENCE THEREOF ON THEIR WELL-BEING

I am studying for a Masters degree in Research Psychology at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus). I am doing research on the above topic and will appreciate it if your child can take part in this research. The objectives of this research will be:

- To determine how African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships is conceptualized in literature.
- To explore and describe African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships.
- To explore aspects of African female adolescents' relationships with parents that influence aspects of their sense of well-being.

A graphic family sculpting technique and focus group interviews will be used to gather information. Voice recording will be used for focus group interviews. The information gathered will be **confidential** between the researcher, research leader and the co-coders only. Your child's name will **not** be disclosed during the research or publication of the results.

Participation is **voluntary** and you are kindly requested to complete the attached consent form to indicate that you are willing to let your child participate in this research.

Thanking you in anticipation

…….
V KOEN (Researcher)

CONSENT BY PARENTS FOR LEARNERS TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

I …… hereby consent to voluntary participation of my child and the use of voice recording during focus group interviews in the above research project.

Signed ……. (Date)

……
Parent's Signature

APPENDIX D: Permission from various authorities to conduct research

UMnyango WezeMfundo
Department of Education

Lefapha la Thuto
Departement van Onderwys

Enquiries: Nomvula Ubisi (011)3550488

Date:	26 March 2010
Name of Researcher:	Vicki Koen
Address of Researcher:	Po Box 2431
	Kocksvlei
	1764
Telephone Number:	071 266 6807
Fax Number:	
Research Topic:	An Exploration of the African Female adolescent's of Family relationships
Number and type of schools:	1 Secondary School
District/s/HO	Johannesburg Westh

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

Permission has been granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met, and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted:

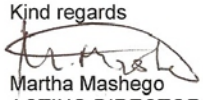
1. ***The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.***
2. ***The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.***
3. ***A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.***

Office of the Chief Director: Information and Knowledge Management
Room 501, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2000 P.O.Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000
Tel: (011) 355-0809 Fax: (011) 355-0734

4. ***A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.***
5. ***The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.***
6. ***Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.***
7. ***Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year.***
8. ***Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.***
9. ***It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.***
10. ***The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.***
11. ***The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.***
12. ***On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and one Ring bound copy of the final, approved research report. The researcher would also provide the said manager with an electronic copy of the research abstract/summary and/or annotation.***
13. ***The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.***
14. ***Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.***

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards



Martha Mashego
ACTING DIRECTOR: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT & RESEARCH

The contents of this letter has been read and understood by the researcher.	
Signature of Researcher:	
Date:	26/03/2010

Miss Koen,

Re: Research - An exploration of the African female adolescent's experience of family relationships

Your request to do research regarding the above mentioned title during April/May 2010 has been approved.

Mrs Pretorius

APPENDIX E: Biographical questionnaire

Research: African female adolescents' experience of parent-adolescent relationships and the influence thereof on their well-being

BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Name:…….

Age:……

To which culture do you belong? (e.g – Zulu, Xhosa, etc)

……

Do you have any siblings?

☐ No ☐ Yes

If yes, please indicate whether they are male or female and how old they are:

……

……

……

……

Please indicate if:

☐ You live with both your parents ☐ You live with your father only

☐ You live with your mother only ☐ Your parents have been divorced

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX F: Focus group interviews: Field notes

Field notes: Focus group interview 1/Trial interview 18/05/2010

- Observational notes
- Group held during break time (10:30 – 11:15)
- Group started late: confusion over arrangements, many African female learners want to participate.
- 6 Females: 4 – 14 years of age, 2 – 15 years of age (All African).
- Language: English (all fluent in English).
- Setting: classroom at Randfontein High School.

- Theoretical notes
- Eager to participate, atmosphere is relaxed (laughing together).
- Active participation – leaning forward, concentrating, not shy to talk in front of each other.
- Two participants talked easier.
- One participant a bit more quiet, but did give input.

- Methodological notes
- Good rapport between researcher and learners.
- The participants had a clear understanding of the questions.
- Researcher used probing skills (concluded and summarized), explained questions where needed, listened actively and didn't have to ask over and over – participation good.

Field notes: Focus group interview 2 19/05/2010

- Observational notes
- Group held during break time (10:10 – 11:10)
- Group started on time.
- 5 Females: 3 -16 years of age, 1– 17 years of age, 1– 18 years of age (All African).
- Language: English (all fluent in English).
- Setting: classroom at Randfontein High School.

- Theoretical notes
- Eager to participate.
- Active participation – willing to share, gave the questions some thought and considered carefully.
- Three participants spoke more.
- Two participant a bit more quiet, but did give input.
- Encouraged each otherto speak and share and in some cases spoke to each other directly when giving an answer.

- Methodological notes
- Good rapport between researcher and learners.
- The participants had a clear understanding of the questions.
- Researcher used probing skills (concluded and summarized), explained questions where needed, listened actively and didn't have to ask over –and over participation good.

Field notes: Focus group interview 3 20/05/2010

- Observational notes
- Group held during break time (10:40 – 11:15)
- Group started late: confusion over arrangements.
- 4 Females: 4 – 17 years of age (All African).
- Language: English (all fluent in English).
- Setting: classroom at Randfontein High School.

- Theoretical notes
- Active participation from all participants.
- Positive atmosphere in group: very relaxed and open.
- Participants very willing to share.

- Methodological notes
- Good rapport between researcher and learners.
- The participants had a clear understanding of the questions.
- Researcher used probing skills (concluded and summarized), explained questions where needed, listened actively and didn't have to repeat questions.

Field notes: Focus group interview 4 25/05/2010

- Observational notes
- Group held during free study period (8:30 – 9:00)
- Group started on time.
- 6 Females: 15 years of age (All African).
- Language: English (all fluent in English).
- Setting: classroom at Randfontein High School.

- Theoretical notes
- Eager to participate, but a bit nervous in the beginning of the interview (they seem eager to please)
- Active participation – leaning forward, concentrating, not shy to talk in front of each other.
- Two participants quieter and less eager to share but actively involved (nodding, etc).

- Methodological notes
- Good rapport between researcher and learners.
- Researcher commented about their nervousness in the beginning and they laughed and started to relax.
- Researcher used probing skills (concluded and summarized), explained questions where needed, listened actively and didn't have to ask over and over participation good.

Field notes: Focus group interview 5 26/05/2010

- Observational notes
- Group held during free study period (9:45-10:30)
- Group started on time.
- 6 Females: 14-15 years of age (All African).
- Language: English (all fluent in English).
- Setting: classroom at Randfontein High School.

- Theoretical notes
- Eager to participate and interested in research.
- One participant started to take over because she seemed to enjoy the attention and diverted the discussion from the actual question. She, for example, started talking about wanting a cell phone and the whole group started talking about mxit, etc. (they seem to have a pre-occupation with cell phones). She was a bit destructive to the interview and the researcher had to ask her to give other participants a chance and focus on the questions.
- The group seemed lessmature in the information they shared and they seem to judge the quality of a relationship be what they can get from it (e.g money, cell phones, going out).

- Methodological notes
- Good rapport between researcher and learners.
- The participants had a clear understanding of the questions.
- Researcher used probing skills (concluded and summarized), explained questions where needed, listened actively but often had to remind participants what the question was as they seemed to dwell off topic.

Field notes: Focus group interview 6 26/05/2010

- Observational notes

- Group held during break time (10:30 – 11:15)
- Group started on time.
- 6 Females: 17-19 years of age (All African).
- Language: English (all fluent in English).
- Setting: classroom at Randfontein High School.

- Theoretical notes

- All participants willing and eager.
- They seemed a bit anxious at the beginning but quickly got into the interview.
- Two participants quieter, but still actively participated.
- One participant vented a lot of anger and struggled to find something positive but the last two questions helped.
- One participant struggled with the fact that her mother left and the father carries all the responsibility.
- They all thanked the researcher for the opportunity to share.

- Methodological notes

- Good rapport between researcher and learners.
- The participants had a clear understanding of the questions.
- Researcher used probing skills (concluded and summarized), explained questions where needed and listened actively.

APPENDIX G: Examples of transcribed focus group interviews

Focus group interview 1 **18/05/2010**

6 Participants (14 – 15 years of age)
Obtained informed consent
Time: 10:35 – 11:10

R = Researcher
P1- P6 = Participants 1 – 6

R = Introduction (what research is about, name, etc.) and thanking them for participation.
"***How do you feel about your relationship with your parents?***"

P 1: "I feel bad because with my mom I haven't…we don't have an open relationship. She is very strict and I can't tell her everything, but we get along. And with my father we don't have a good relationship because we fight a lot and often he is doing stuff that make me feel bad and we fight a lot".

R: "Do any of you guys feel the same? Do you agree with her?"

Some participants indicate that they do and say "Yes we do". Some participants say "No".

R: "So how is your relationship with your parents?", "Why do you feel differently?"

P 2: "Ma'm, we have a very open relationship, and I can talk to my mother about anything. It doesn't matter what it is. Then there's some stuff, maybe stuff that happened at school that I tell friends that my mother can get really angry about that stuff, I can't talk to her about it. But anything else, like if I don't feel comfortable for my moods just change all of the sudden then I can talk to my mother about it. Then she

understands. But with my father ma'm, we don't talk. We don't talk. We don't talk about anything"

R: "Do the others of you also feel that way? Like you might have a more open relationship with your mother?"

P 3: "Sometimes it's better because I don't have a good with relationship with my mother and my father, but I have a good relationship with my cousin. I have my cousin."

P 4: "Ok, ma'm and in my case I have a good relationship with my mother. Not with my step father. But my real father, my biological father I have a good relationship with him. I can tell him anything that I can't tell my stepfather, 'cause he is over-protective."

R: (To P5). "And you? How do you feel?"

P5: "My mom doesn't like to listen, so I don't really talk to her."

P6: "I have a really good relationship with my mother, but with my father, I don't talk to my father at all. And my stepfather, he's like…I feel like he is my real dad 'cause he listens to everything and he lets me do everything and I can tell him anything that I can't tell my mother."

R: "Would any of you like to add something more?"

They all indicate "No"

R: "***What aspects make the relationship good?",*** "What do you think makes the relationship work or makes it better?"

P1: "Sometimes I think I'm at peace with my mother being so strict because she looks out for me and if she lets me do all the stuff that I sometimes feel like I want to do all that

stuff, it is gonna make a better person out of me because she knows what is best for me. So sometimes it's nice that she's so strict."

P2: "Ma'm, what makes it good for me is that my mother also has an open relationship with me. Like anything…everything in her past that happened – she told me everything and when something comes to mind she will just call me and talk to me. That's what makes the relationship good because she is so open with me."

P5: "My mother has moods, but sometimes then she will be quiet and then there are times that I know she would like to talk and then there are times when we can talk and have a good relationship and just talk about anything."

P6: "For me, normally, we don't always have an open relationship. But in my case I like it because my father is not there for me and he is dead to me."

P4: "In my relationship with my mother I think we have a good relationship because she knows me in and out, she knows when I'm angry, she knows when I'm sad. Sometimes I can't always tell her why and I lie and tell her it is this, but really it is about something else. But what makes our relationship good is the fact that she knows me and I know her because we are always communicating"

P5: "Ok, also a little bit of that, but we always have fun together. We don't like talking about our problems. I talk to my sister mostly about our problems and then we all laugh together, watch movies together, look at…blah"

Everyone laughs.

R: "Ja, it is important to have fun together. So ***what aspects would you say are problematic in the relationship***?"

P3: “Well the fact that we can’t talk about boyfriends (many of them say this together) and stuff like that”

P1: “Ma’m, because our parents don’t understand they think we don’t know about this stuff, but we do experience it and it’s hard to tell your mother because my mother would kill me, she would kill me physically.”

Everyone laughs.

P1: “Really, she would kill me ma’m, so I can’t talk to my mother about this stuff or even my sister, because my sister is gonna tell my mother. They are gonna throw it in my face whenever I do something. Because they are gonna say ‘Like ja, because you have a boyfriend, because you have boy stress. You’re so young you don’t understand what this stuff is.”

P4: “Ma’m, I think it’s ‘cause my mother is very over-protective, so then she still wants me to be a child. I know I’m still a child, but she still wants me to be all over her, everywhere where she goes I must go with her, must do everything with her. I’m not so comfortable with that and then I don’t tell her everything, because some things I wanna tell her like maybe I have a boyfriend or stuff and then she will shout (murmurs of agreement from the group) or go and shout and kill that boy or something.”

Laughter.

P2: “Because our parents don’t trust us, they always hear of their friend’s kids doing stuff (agreement from group) and then suspect us of doing it. So they don’t trust us and you can’t go to them or talk to them about anything like that”.

R: “And the rest of you?”, “Do you agree with them?”

P6: “No, I don’t agree with it. My mother, she allows you to date in the house and everything. But my brother when you come home with someone he will tell you how ugly he is and that.”

Group laughs.

P6: “Like my sister was dating a boy but if he comes in he will tell her how ugly he is. So that’s why we don’t take people home so easily”.

Everyone laughs.

R: “So ***how do you think these aspects that we spoke about impacts your well-being?***”

P1: “Terribly ma’m, because when say you come to school in the morning, like then school pressures you, you have stress about you, because you keeping everything in, you can’t talk to your parents. You come to school, you come sit and cry. Your friends also, some of your friends don’t know what your going through and they pressurize you to do something that you don’t want to. Not like peer pressure to do something bad. Like when you have this strong feeling and no one understands, you can just cry and ok, they will be there for you. But sometimes you need your mother or sister or just someone in the family to be there for you.” (Murmurs of agreement).

R: “And the rest of you guys? How do you think it impacts your well-being?”

P2: “Ma’m sometimes, you keep bottling things up. And the day the bottle bursts you don’t know who to go to. Cause you can’t discuss it with your mother. How do you tell her what’s wrong? You tell her you don’t wanna listen to me when I tell you something and you’re being rude. And you tell your friends– maybe they are gonna laugh at you. You don’t know how to present yourself or who to tell the day the bottle bursts.”

P3: “So it effects a person in a very negative way.”

R: "And what do the rest of you think?"

P5: "Ma'm it tears you down inside because sometimes you get jealous of your friends telling you the whole time they can tell their mother this or that and you know it hurts inside because you can't tell your mother anything. So then sometimes it tears you down because you would rather go to your friends that to your mother and that's not great, because sometimes it's just gonna be you and your mother and you are gonna want to tell her everything but you can't."

R: "So you feel it impacts you emotionally and it impacts your well-being?"

Group answers "Yes"

P1: "You don't want to eat".

P3: "Ja, you don't want to eat. Sometimes you even eat a lot. For example, I eat a lot now than what I used to."

P1: "I eat a lot ma'm. So when I stress, I eat."

P3: "Me too. And I am hungry all the time."

P1: "Sometimes when I stress I can't eat. But like the other night I was sitting and there was something also happening, like I wanted to cry all the time. I was sitting in the kitchen doing homework and my father went past me. I just…I felt so bad, because I couldn't tell him what's wrong with me. I just wanted someone to talk to and then you go on mxit and want to speak to your friends and the network isn't working!" (Laughter) "You can't tell your friends what's going on so I rather didn't do any homework and I went to go sleep ma'm."

P5: “Ma’m, and it’s stuff like this that lead us to drugs and alcohol and stuff, (agreement from others) ‘cause we feel those stuff will make us happy inside.”

P2: “You know what I would like, if our parents could understand that they were also once young.”

P4: “But the times are different from when they were young.”

P2: “Ok, but…they know how it feels.”

P3: “And it’s because their parents over-protected them (agreement from group) that makes them want to over-protect us.”

P2: “They must realize it is the 21st century ma’m. Everything is happening now. You are in the world now, you’re in reality. You can’t live in the 19…then.”

P1:” Ma’m, it’s also not bad that they are over-protective, it’s just too much. Like my grandmother used to be like I couldn’t even stand at the gate or just something like that the way they were raised.”

P4: “Terrible. Like having a phone call. I can’t walk with my mother and a friend greets me. My mom would kill me. That’s how my mom acts.”

R: “***So what do you think will improve the relationship?*** I’m sure you have many ideas.”

Laughter.

P5: “Maybe if they understand and they know what we are going through. Just understand and listen to what we have to say so that they can also have a good relationship with us and we will be able more often to go and speak with them.”

P1: “Ja, and knowing they are not gonna judge you if you tell them something and they’re not gonna go ballistic if you tell them that this happened or that happened. That’s when maybe you’ll feel better if you have the confidence to tell them.” Agreement from group.

P4: “Just listen for once in their lives and realize we are growing up.”

P2: “And they should actually know how it feels to not be able to talk to them. Like my mother’s mother was also strict. So she should know how it feels to not be able to tell your mother. She must understand how I feel”

P5: “And they must trust us (agreement from group) just give us a chance to do stuff and see how it goes. If we make mistakes, we learn from our mistakes. But they don’t understand that.”

P2: “I also think they should understand. I mean, how would you feel if a cute boy walks up and asks your number and you can’t give it to him, because if my mother finds out she’ll kill me.”

P3: “You just wanna hang out sometimes and then it’s wrong.”

P2: “It’s always sex. Teenage sex and pregnancy. Drugs.”

Agreement from group.

P1: “Exactly. My mother always tells me like…when she tells me something why did you do that and then I say ‘No, but other children…” and then she says “I don’t want to hear about other children’, but when you tell her something then it’s always ‘The other children are not like that…’ (agreement from group).

P3: “They always compare you to other children.”

R: “And what do you think?” (Tom P6)

P6: “If we move away from this place then it will be better, ‘cause this place is just dead. The neighborhood, the people… And we go out to much. We should stay at home a little bit and watch movies and talk about whatever.”

R: “Is there anything else that someone would like to say or addwith regard to any of the questions?”

The group indicated “No” and we closed the session.

Focus group interview 6 **26/05/2010**

6 Participants (17-19 years of age)
Obtained informed consent
Time: 10h38-11h10

R = researcher
P1-P6 = Participants 1 – 6

R = Introduction

"How do you feel about your relationship with your parents?"

P 2: "My relationship isn't well at all with my parents we can't talk without fighting, there is a lot of yelling in the house but at least it is a bit better with my mom. I think it is bad in the house. We don't listen to each other it is just the fighting going on".

P5: "With me it is better with my father, my mother left us and my father carries all the responsibility".

P3: "Sometimes it is ok but mostly it is as if we don't even know each other. It is better with my mom at least she listens to me. The rest of us we only live together, we don't care or even talk."

P4: "I don't agree for me it is actually better with my dad, my mom is always looking for things I do wrong, there is a lot of blaming going around and mostly I am the one they blame".

P6: "I guess my relationship with my parents is good although we can't talk about everything, and it is better with my mother my father is just there, I don't really know him."

P1: “I love my mother dearly, but my dad, I don’t even know him ma’m, I don’t even know him, I don’t know the man. He is there but he is not there.”

R: “I can hear that there are both negative and positive aspects and that each of you are unique with your own special circumstances. Is there anything you want to add or shall we move on because of time.”

They are all happy to move on.

R: *“What aspects make the relationship good?”*

P1: “Communication, if we can talk about things at least we manage things better. Ma’m I think it is all about listening to each other, making time for each other.”

P3: “Yes I agree that is why I can talk to my mother, we spend time together and then I feel I can discuss things with her. She makes time for me”

R: “So spending quality time with each other seems to be a positive aspect.”

P4: “It is all about love, care and respect, if we can have that, opening up to each other so that there is no secrets and we can trust each other”.

P5: “I agree, I know my father loves us, he has to do everything for us. He works and still has to care for us. I have a brother and 3 sisters and it is hard for him but he doesn’t give up.”

P2: “With us there is nothing good ma’m it is really bad, aich I don’t know what more I can say, it is just bad. With us it is mostly yelling, blaming and fighting we have a lot of conflict and we are out to get each other.”

R: “Thank you for your input is there anything else you want to add?”

Everybody happy with their input.

“What aspects are making the relationship problematic?”

P2: “Constantly blaming each other and yelling. We are always fighting nobody wants to take responsibility but is always looking for somebody to blame. The yelling at each other never ends.”

R: “Like looking for a scapegoat.”

P2: “Exactly ma’m, nobody wants to take responsibility.”

P1: “When we don’t take time to listen and misinterpret what the other one is saying. Like we don’t understand or try to understand each other.”

P3: “I also think that we don’t respect each other and we don’t listen or take time for each other.”

P5: “Yes it is the same for us we are busy with our own stuff and don’t make time for each other. I think it is mostly a lack of respect that causes problems.”

P4: “With me it is because my mom she doesn’t trust me, she thinks I am up to something and that is why I have secrets, I feel I can’t share openly.”

R: “It seems that you think honesty and trust is important and if it is not there it causes problems.”

P3: “Yes ma’m I think my parents don’t respect the fact that I am different and need to be my own person. The generations are so different and they want to hang on to traditions that isn’t relevant anymore”.

The others laugh and they all seem to agree with this.

R: “Does anybody want to add to this?”

P2: “Yes ma’m I feel even if they look at me they don’t really see me as a person, I am nothing, just somebody to blame.”

R: “I can hear that it is important to feel you are somebody special in the family.”

P3: “Exactly, I also want to feel that I am important”

R: “Let’s move on to the next question and if you feel you want to add something feel free to do so.”

R: ***“How do you think these aspects, the positive and negative that we have spoken about impacts your well-being as a person?”***

P3: “To me it is mostly good, I know they do care about me and is looking out for me”

P2: “To me it is all bad”

R: “If you say bad what do you mean by it, what is it doing to you as a person?”

P2: “It is breaking me up inside me, I feel like I am falling apart although I try to focus on other things and don’t take it personally. I carry on and do the things I must do even though I am hurting so much inside.”

P4: “It is making me stronger as a person, like I won’t give up and I do my best in the school, I want to achieve things.”

R: “So instead of dwelling on the bad you learn from it becoming stronger.”

P3: “Yes it is like that for me as well what happens in the house stay in the house. I am not going to let it influence my schoolwork negatively.”

R: “Are you saying that you can manage no matter what? For instance are your sleeping or eating patterns not influenced at all?”

P2: “With me I don’t sleep at all everything is just going around and around in my head. Ai ma’m I am so tired and I can’t really concentrate the way I should and I try not to think about it but it is there all the time.”

P5: “With me I eat and eat a lot, I sometimes feel I can’t stop eating, but I eat at school I don’t eat at the house.”

R: “That was what I was getting at that well-being involves…”

P6: “I also struggle to sleep and then I can’t concentrate at school and I try to hide it pretending that everything is fine and it is hard when you carry this weight.”

P4:“I also eat a lot and then I worry about getting fat.”

P2: “I even go and buy cigarettes and I take pills, like sleeping pills anything to make me sleep, ai it is not good, I sometimes think I am losing it.”

R: “It does seem that it has an impact on your well-being and some of you mentioned the negative effects and concerns that you have.”

They all agreed

R: I am moving on to the last question and again if you want to go back to a question and add we can do it.

R: ***"What do you think will improve the relationship?"***

P6: "It is all about communication, if we can talk we can learn to understand each other."

P1: "I agree if we can just sit down and talk and listen so that we can get to know and understand each other."

R: "Talk and listen respectfully."

P2: "Yes I think also sharing our weaknesses so that we can try and understand and maybe take responsibility and stop blaming each other."

P4: "I think moving away from my family, I think if we only see each other now and again it will be better." It is to much to be together each day."

P3: "Yes distance will be nice and again I think if my parents can learn to trust and respect me as a person."

P2: "Ai ma'm I think the fathers is a big problem they don't care and love us, I go out to find attention from other men because I don't know my dad."

P5" With me my dad is ok he is there for us, my mom left us, he looks after us but I also thing that talking with each other is good."

P4: "I also think prioritising will be good."

R: “What do you mean by prioritising?”

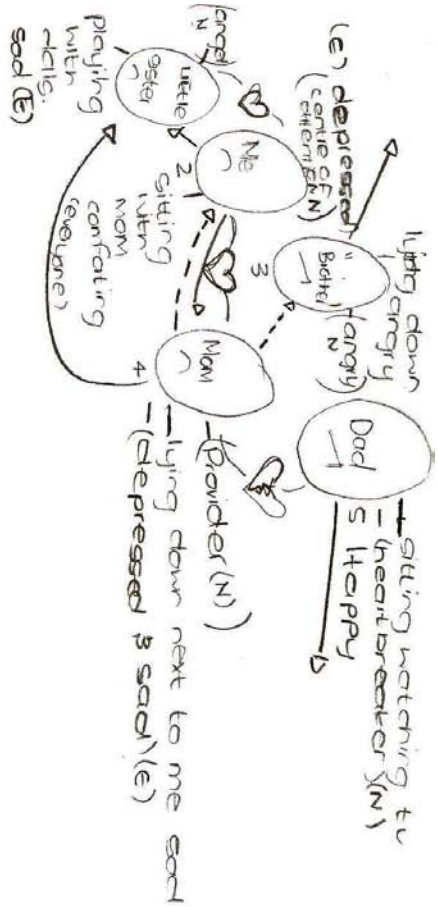
P4: “Like my parents must realise that I have needs and sometimes I must have something for school and they don’t care and I must run around and try to manage. They must acknowledge that I have needs. It goes hand in hand with the traditional issues they must realise that I am different and that things have changed. They must trust me to make my own choices not always thinking if I go out that I will have sex and get pregnant”.

R: “So you are saying that you are also important and your parents must remember that you have needs and that times have changed.”

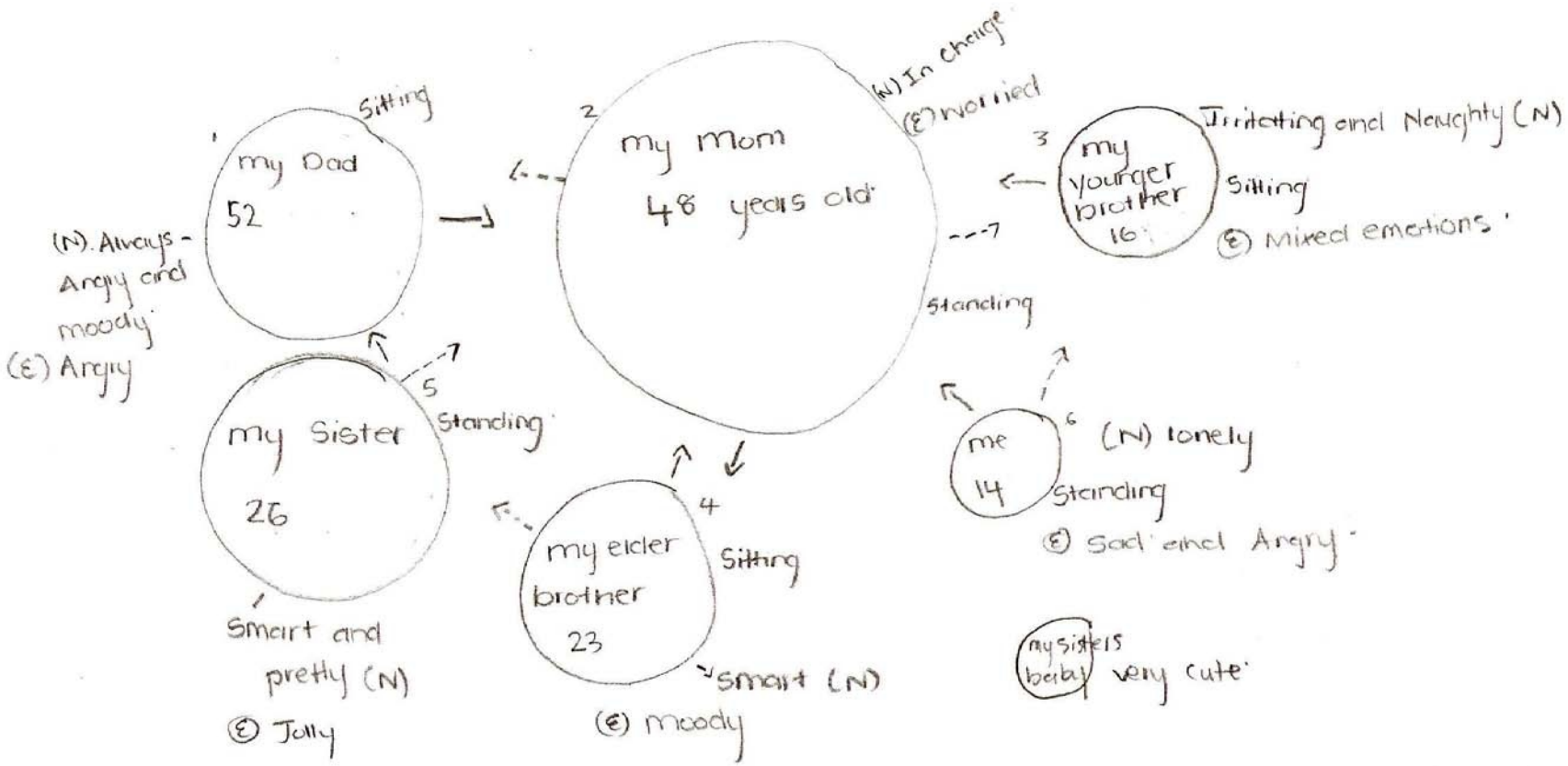
The others agreed.

The researcher thanked them summarised and asked if they wanted to add something.

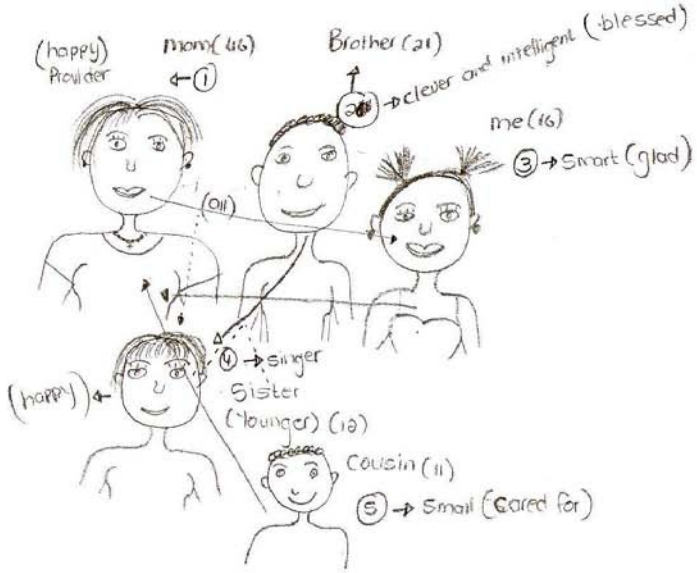
APPENDIX H: Examples of graphic family sculptings



1) No
2) No Yes, its not a pleasant picture.
3) Yes, nobody is looking out for my dad
4) No
5) No
6) Yes
7) Yes because from a simple drawing I can see that my home is not a happy home with my dad around and my brother also at home.


my Dad
52
Sitting
(N). Always - Angry and moody.
(E) Angry
my Mom
48 years old
2
(N) In charge
(E) worried
Standing
my younger brother
16
3
Irritating and Naughty (N)
Sitting
(E) Mixed emotions.
my Sister
26
5
Standing
Smart and pretty (N)
(E) Jolly
my elder brother
23
4
Sitting
Smart (N)
(E) moody
me
14
6
(N) lonely
Standing
(E) Sad and Angry.
my sisters baby
very cute.

① yes
② yes; in my family we refer to my mother as the head of the family; because she does everything for us. my father do stuff for us, but he should do more.
③ yes; my mother is there for us; but sometimes she brags about my elder brother and tells us how good he is; etc; and she pay little attention to my dad; because he is nagging and always moody.
④ yes; we are all in our own worlds.
⑤ yes; we all want something different; and is unable to get it.
⑥ yes; because we all make it difficult for eachother and its so obvious I know them all very well
⑦ yes; we should pay more attention to eachother
⑧ yes, We are not a very good family and that's sad.


(happy)
Provider
Mom (46)
①
Brother (21)
② → clever and intelligent (blessed)
me (16)
③ → Smart (glad)
(all)
④ → singer
Sister
(Younger) (10)
(happy)
Cousin (11)
⑤ → Small (cared for)

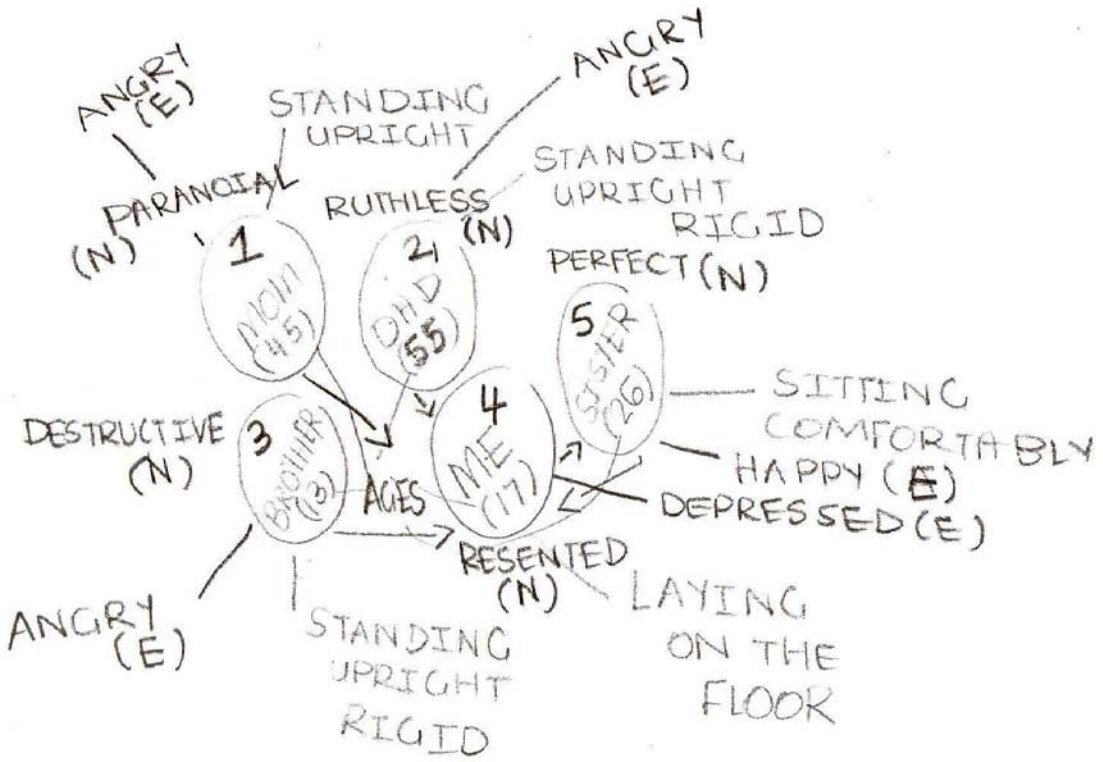
1.) Yes, we are not the family we used to be

2.) Yes, My mom and brother are standing while me and ~~sister~~ siblings are sitting down comfortably

3.) Yes, My mother and brother care alot for us, I care for my mother

4.) Yes, Everyone has their own unique identities

5.) Yes, We all feel the same about our situation


ANGRY (E)
PARANOIAL (N)
STANDING UPRIGHT
RUTHLESS (N)
ANGRY (E)
STANDING UPRIGHT RIGID
PERFECT (N)
1
MOM (45)
2
DAD (55)
5
SISTER (26)
SITTING COMFORTABLY
HAPPY (E)
DEPRESSED (E)
DESTRUCTIVE (N)
3
BROTHER (3)
AGES
4
ME (17)
RESENTED (N)
ANGRY (E)
STANDING UPRIGHT RIGID
LAYING ON THE FLOOR

1. NO

2. Yes, that the men (dad & bro) are alike but it's because of how we were raised, I'm the last level and I envy my sister for not being with a destructive family. My mom is also the bad guy.

3 Yes, they all looking at me, my sister cares for me and the rest are out to get me interms of breaking me down.

4. Yes, that everyone is playing a role in how our lives are. They SELFISH

5. Yes, it's a WAR! - I can't live with them >.<

6. YES

7. YES, to take a look at my position & them to see the truth & not shovered under.

APPENDIX I: Work protocol for co-coders (focus groups)

Dear co-coder

Work protocol for analysis (open-coding) for focus group interviews

Please follow the following guidelines when analysing the transcriptions of the focus group interviews.

Important notes: The opinions of participants (words and themes) are the units of analysis. Look for statements/judgements that can be linked to the words: I/we feel, I/we believe, I/we think, I/we know, I/we agree, I/we recommend.

The level of analysis: focus on proximity analysis (recurrent opinions (concepts), and when affect is apparent (e.g. descriptive words, punctuation marks, metaphors) note these as well.

Guidelines:

1. Get sense of the whole by browsing through transcriptions, asking: what is it about?
2. Keep the research objectives in mind, which are:
- To explore and describe African female adolescents' experience ofparent - adolescent relationships.
- To explore aspects of African female adolescent s' relationships with parents that influence aspects of their sense of well-being.
3. Read through transcripts carefully identifying opinions by underlying/highlighting relevant phases.
4. Note opinions in the left margin, note own thoughts (relating to underlying meaning), affect as identified appropriateness of responses in right margin
5. Cluster similar opinions together to form columns.
6. Give descriptive names to columns to form categories and sub-categories.
7. Identify similarities in categories and sub-categories and re-group or reduce if necessary.
8. Write summary of own thoughts/impressions.

Please contact me if you need more information.

Kind regards

Miss V Koen

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