

**SOCIAL DESIRABILITY (SD) CONSTRUCTS IN RELATION TO THE CULTURAL
CONTEXT AMONG THE SETSWANA-SPEAKING YOUTH**

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**Mini Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
Master of Social Sciences in Clinical Psychology at the (Mafikeng Campus) of the
North-West University**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page No:</u>
1. Declaration	i
2. Dedication	ii
3. Acknowledgment	iii
4. Preface	iv
5. Letter of Consent	v
6. Summary	vi
7. Author's Guidelines	viii
8. Abstract	xii
9. Introduction	2
10. Background of the study	4
11. The concept of social desirability	5
12. Measures of Social desirability	6
13. Social desirability bias	8
14. Culture as a system of collectivity and individualism	8
15. Theoretical framework	11
16. Aim of the study	15
17. Significance of the study	16
18. Objectives of the study	16

19. Research Methodology and Design	16
20. Research Context and Participants	17
21. Procedure and Data collection	18
22. Data collection	18
23. Pilot study	18
24. Focus group discussions	19
25. Participant observation	19
26. Procedure	21
27. Data analysis	23
28. Trustworthiness of the study	24
29. Ethical consideration	25
30. Findings	25
31. Discussion	43
32. Limitations and Recommendations of the Study	48
33. Conclusion	48
34. References	50
35. Appendix A: Participation requisition form	58
36. Appendix B: Consent form	60

37. Appendix C: Permission to conduct research	61
38. Appendix D: Interview guide	63
39. Permission letter to collect data	66
40. Certificate of language editing	66

List of tables

41. Table 1: Trustworthiness of the study	24
42. Table 2: Themes extracted during thematic analysis	26
43. Table 3: Socially desirable themes	44

List of figures

44. <i>Figure 1</i> : Culture and the individual the model shows how cultural elements	09
45. Figure 2: An illustration showing the procedure that was followed throughout the process of data collection.	20
46. Figure 3: Socially undesirable but acceptable conduct that is consciously practised as a result of cultural norms and beliefs	46
47. Figure 4: Themes revealing socially undesirable conduct	47
48. Figure: 2.1: An illustration showing the pilot study, age, and participants	21

DECLARATION

I, Motlabeng Thabelo Walter, declare that *Social desirability (SD) constructs in relation to the cultural context among the Setswana-speaking Youth* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

.....
SIGNATURE DATE

DEDICATION

To my beautiful Wife

Motlabeng Fhulufhelo.

My Parents

Naledezani Robert Motlabeng

And

Tsumbedzo Violet Motlabeng

“Wisdom is better than wit,
and in the long run will certainly have the laugh on her side.”

– Jane Austen

“Dreams are necessary to life.”

– Anais Nin

“Mana a Mutukana asi vhumatshelo hawe”

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- My Parents Mr. Robert Motlabeng and Mrs. Violet Motlabeng for their unconditional and unlimited love
- My uncle Mr. Tshikonelo Maxley Mangalani for his support and guidance, may God bless him and his Family

PREFACE

Article Format

For the purpose of this mini dissertation, which is part of the requirements for the award of the Masters of Arts (Social Sciences) degree in Clinical Psychology, the article format as described by General Regulation A. 7.5.1.b of the North-West University was chosen.

Selected Journal

The target journal to which the current manuscript would be submitted is the Journal of Community Psychology. For the purpose of examination, tables are included in the text.

Letter of Consent

The letter of consent from the co-authors in which they granted permission that the manuscript "*Social desirability (SD) constructs in relation to the cultural context specific facets among the Setswana speaking students in the North West University*" may be submitted for the purposes of mini-dissertation, is attached.

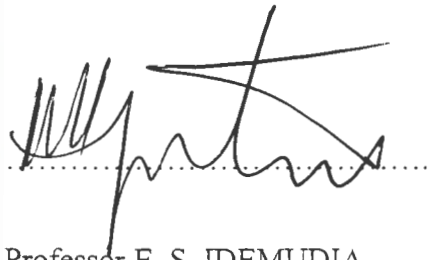
Page Numbering

In the mini-dissertation, page numbering is from the first page to the last. For the purpose of submitting the manuscript to the above mentioned journal, the manuscript is numbered according to the requirements of the JCP. In other words, the numbering is starts on the title page of the manuscript.

LETTER OF CONSENT

I, the undersigned, hereby give consent that Motlabeng Thabelo Walter may submit the manuscript titled "*Social desirability (SD) constructs in relation to the cultural context specific facets among the Setswana speaking students in the North West University*" for the purpose of meeting the required standards of the partial fulfillment of the degree of Masters of Social Sciences in Clinical Psychology at the North West University.

SUPERVISORS:



Professor E. S. IDEMUDIA

30-9-2013

Date

Mrs. KOLOBE

Date

SUMMARY

This study forms part of a broader international study focusing on developing a new psychological measure in South Africa, named South African Personality Inventory (SAPI). The aim of the study was to explore Social desirability (SD) constructs in relation to the cultural context specific facets among the Setswana speaking individuals aging from 16 to 35 in the North- West University, South Africa.

An ethnography design under a qualitative research approach was used to enable the participants to make sense out of their cultural experiences and thereafter make their own reality. Two data collection strategies being, participant observation and ethnographic interviews, were used and the principles of ethnographic interviews were applied during the focus group discussions

The study focused on 18 Setswana speaking (Youth) Students, 7 males and 11 females with their ages range between 19 – 35 years, who were staying in the campus residence during the period of data collection. The participants were purposefully selected in order to enable a detailed exploration and understanding of the concept as well as covering all the key constituencies of relevance to the culture of Batswana.

The research was guided by two guiding questions in order to explore SD in a Setswana cultural group. These questions were; what are the behaviours, attitudes and emotions considered socially desirable in Setswana culture? Secondly, what behaviours, attitudes and emotions are considered socially undesirable in Setswana culture? The study has contributed to the understanding of SDR in a Setswana cultural context with an explanation of why individuals present themselves in a socially desirable manner, appearing overly decent, moral and virtuous and denying the part of their undesirable common traits.

The results of this study revealed four major themes and sub-themes. Primarily it was discovered that Setswana culture is a collectivist culture. People are interdependent with their in- groups. Furthermore the results showed that the higher people conformed to their cultural norms and believes as a member, the more the social desirability and the potential to the bias factors loading on personality measurement.

Although the study was focused on two major aspects, which were, examining the desirable and undesirable Setswana cultural conduct, a collection of themes emerged categorized under three components which are, socially desirable conduct and the other two similar ones which are the socially undesirable but acceptable conduct practised because of cultural beliefs and the socially undesirable conduct.

Author's Guidelines

Journal of Community Psychology

The Journal of Community Psychology is a peer-reviewed journal devoted to research, evaluation, assessment and intervention. Although review articles that deal with human behaviour in community settings are occasionally accepted, the journal's primary emphasis is on empirical work that is based in or informs studies to understand community factors that influence, positively and negatively, human development, interaction and functioning.

Articles of interest include descriptions and evaluations of service programmes and projects; studies of youth, parenting, and family development; methodological studies for the identification and systematic alteration of risks; and protective factors for emotional and behavioural disorders and for positive development.

The journal also publishes the results of projects that inform processes relevant to the design of community-based interventions including strategies for gaining entry, engaging community in participatory action research, and creating sustainable interventions that remain after project development and empirical work are completed.

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Manuscript submission. The Journal of Community Psychology has adopted an online submission process, available at mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jcop

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Style. Authors should follow the stylistic guidelines detailed in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Fifth Edition, available from the American Psychological Association, Washington, DC. References should also follow APA style.

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Abstract

Background: Behavioural scientists have long been concerned with social desirability bias (SDB) which continues to be seen in various quarters as a source of infectivity that should be controlled in self-report measures. Social desirability (SD) is described as when an individual presents himself or herself in relation to certain characteristics that are valued by others. SD has led to the current study which forms part of a broader international study, focusing on developing a new psychological measure, named South African Personality Inventory (SAPI).

Method: Using a qualitative research approach and ethnography design, data was collected in 3 focus groups discussions, the principles of ethnographic interviews were also applied during this strategy. Three weeks observation of purposefully selected 7 males and 11 females with age ranging between 19 - 35 years, from the North-West University, Mafikeng campus, South Africa was also done. The data was audio taped and more data was gathered from participant observations. Data gathered from observations were recorded through writing and subsequently organized. Data collected through audio tape and observations were coded and themes were extracted using thematic content analysis.

Results: The results of this study revealed four major themes and sub-themes. Primarily it was discovered that Setswana culture is a collectivist culture. People are interdependent with their in- groups. Furthermore the results showed that the higher people conformed to their cultural norms and beliefs as a member, the more the social desirability and the potential to the bias factors loading on personality measurement.

Key words: Social desirability, social desirability bias, social desirability response, Cultural context, behaviours, attitudes and emotions

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1. INTRODUCTION

This study is part of a broader international study focusing on developing a new psychological measure in South Africa, named South African Personality Inventory (SAPI). The Inventory was initially developed in Western countries; therefore, the study was then expanded into South African's perspective and proposed to all South African official languages. This measure is basically aimed at addressing the limitation of personality measures such as 16PF, MMPI and other personality measures. The current study contributed to the already existing knowledge on the social desirability construct, culture and scientific research in social sciences focusing on the South African Setswana culture, since little attention has been paid into the relationship between social desirability and Setswana culture.

Social desirability (SD), in this study, is regarded as the tendency for people to give exaggeratedly positive self-descriptions, thus a trend to present themselves as good, understanding, decent and well-mannered people than they actually are, sometimes people present them-selves in a negative manner with an aim of achieving something with such act. Interest in this issue of SD developed as early as the 1930s, when researchers sought ways to detect dissimulators taking personnel selection inventories (Matthew, Douglas & MacDonald, 2012). SD has been identified as problem in the field of psychology as soon as psychological tests became popular in the early 1930s; their susceptibility to faking good/bad became a concern progressively raised by social researchers in the field (Paulhus, 2002). SD creates inaccuracy in a variety of the areas of life not only during communication but it also creates error during psychological assessment in a test taking environment (Barger, 2002). The tendency of SD may be problematic in test taking situation because it can be a source of common method bias, which may facade true reflections or produce false reflections among variables

It was reasoned that such a tendency in test-takers would lower the predictive validity of the tests. Sarah and Zemore (2012) attribute this behaviour to individual differences in need for approval. According to their view, individuals obtain approval by responding in a culturally appropriate and acceptable manner, in other words it is believed that cultural values may have influence on social desirability as individuals emerge to have a need of being accepted by others in the society.

It is therefore essential to understand the meaning of culture in this respect, whereby in this study it is defined as a system of socially transmitted behaviour patterns that relate human communities to their ecological settings, these ways-of-life-of communities include modes of settlement patterns, modes of social grouping and political organization, modes of religious beliefs and practices. On the one hand, one may view culture as the heritage of learned symbolic behaviour that makes groups of humans a specified human character (Steenkamp, de Jong and Baumgartner, 2010). Moreover, all individuals are in some respects similar to some other individual, that is, all of us are born into a societal medium of beliefs, values, rules, and social practices which reframe us into one culture (Pauls & Stemmler, 2003). Sarah and Zemore (2012) argued that the need for cultural acceptance is one of the critical factors that lead people or respondents to try to be in good light or to be seen as decent, kind, well-mannered and faithful.

It has been realized that SD continues to be a problem during the process of psychological testing because it can result in inflated estimates (Helmes & Holden, 2003). This is so because it can significantly impact the validity of information that the practitioner will obtain from a test takers during assessments, as a result of this tendency, these can lead to misdiagnosis of the problem by practitioner. Hitherto, SDR has received attention and a great concern in more Western studies with less attention in the African perspective. As a result, there is need to

understand it in the South African social context which is characterized by eleven official languages and possible understand the cultural differences. It is important in this context to understand SD because, the potential role of self-construal which is individualism versus collectivism as markers of individual differences may be important to consider in the South African context especially as they are implied in many socio demographic aspects of the South African society. As it is clear that adequacy of the MCSDS scale is now questionable in different cultures, it may also be questionable in the African cultures (Paulhus, 2002). The current study specifically explores social desirability construct in relation to the cultural context-specific facets, thus attitude, emotions and behaviours (among the Setswana-speaking Youth in the North - West).

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Studies have revealed that due to SD personality assessment has long dealt with the possibility that individuals will respond to self-report instruments measures in a way that misrepresents their actual behaviour (Pauls & Crost, 2004). This distortion could either be positive or negative, however, in the clinical settings, these seem to have received little attention (King & Brunner, 2009). Such SD in test behaviour has led to the development of items and instruments that can assess such responses to discount or statistically adjust scores on measures of primary interests (Bressler & Balshine, 2006).

Scales have been developed and validated to detect Social Desirable response and the most widely used example is the 33-item Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Tan & Hall, 2005). (MCSDS) in which test takers answer true or false to a set of socially desirable but improbable statements, for example, *I have never intentionally said something that hurts*

someone's feelings (Paulhus, 2002). Short forms of the scale with acceptable reliability with the original scale have also been developed. Test takers who score high on an SD scale have a strong need for social approval and are more likely to represent themselves in a positive manner; the converse is true of low scorers (King & Bruner, 2009).

Subsequently, in more elucidation, while SD may distinguish self-deceptive enhancement, Steenkamp, de Jong and Baumgartner (2010), gave an emphasis that the SDR construct may be rooted, based and influenced by cultural norms about desirability of certain values, traits, attitudes, interests, norm and opinions. That is, SDB and SDR may symbolize the internalization of cultural values (Fisher & Katz, 2000), and the expression of constant personality traits like emotional steadiness and carefulness ~~or~~ an overly favourable but honest self-evaluation devised to maintain self-esteem within a cultural and societal background (Steenkamp *et al.*, 2010).

2.1 The concept of social desirability

Nunnally (2010) argued that there is evidence that SD has a numerous factors of influence; for example, the person's level of psychological adjustment, self-awareness, and his or her level of honesty. Nunnally's view of SD clearly encompasses more than another commonly held view that SD is merely a response bias in large part caused by the inventory items themselves.

Individuals who present themselves in a socially desirable manner attempt to appear excessively decent, moral, good and honest, according to this view they deny their unpleasant part such as, being jealous, angry, engaging in stealing, untruthfulness and never steal (Paulhus,

2002). Paulhus and Reid (1991) suggest that there are two Personality and Individual differences that are found in social desirability: (a) Self-Deception, which can be described as tendency to see oneself in a favourable light unconsciously (both by promoting one's positive qualities and disavowing negative qualities), and (b) Impression Management, which is a conscious self-misrepresentation towards others (Paulhus & Reid, 1991). Both of these aspects of social desirability might possibly influence responses on psychological measures, and impression management might have a false perception viewed by others. Social desirability can be considered either as a way of an individual's self description which is biased, or as a useful trait that can be used as self defense mechanism. The first view is most typical, implying that social desirability is a contaminant of substantive constructs, and variability due to this should be removed or corrected by using a variety of techniques (Paulhus, 2002).

Some studies, however, have revealed that the trend to act in a socially desirable manner, whether due to conscious dissimulation or unconscious self-enhancement processes, has the aptitude to bring systematic mistake into scores on self-report measures.

2.1.1 Measures of Social desirability

Further than reflecting just SDB, SDR has been found to be able to represent the internalization of cultural values (Fisher & Katz, 2000), the expression of ongoing personality traits like emotional stability and conscientiousness or an overly favourable but honest self-evaluation devised to maintain self-esteem, among other factors.

Stober (2001) proposed a new measure of social desirability bias named the SDS-17 which was intended to overcome particular limitations of the most used scales of SDR, the

Marlowe–Crowne Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960) and its shorter subscales. Initial validation studies and applications were strongly supportive (Stober, 2001). Social desirability bias occurs because of a possible mismatch between an individual's "real" intentions/ motivations and being pre occupied about what is to be considered socially appropriate by others. Importantly, both "real" intentions/ motivations and beliefs about socially appropriate motivations are rooted on an individual's cultural background (Wiechman, Smith, Smoll & Ptacek, 2000). However, as its true for psychological measures in general, the validity of SDR measures may not be directly generalizable across cultures (Johnson & Van de Vijver, 2003). Although efforts have been made to evaluate and control the influence of SDB and SDR, gaps exist in relation to cultural facets, social context and personality style (Brian, Kimberly & Jacqueline, 2006).

Attempts to unravel the role of SDB face the problem that there is no consensually agreed-upon measure of SDB hence another measure of social desirability bias was proposed that was planned to prevail over particular limitations of the most used index of SDR of the Marlowe–Crowne Scale and its shorter subscales (Barger, 2002). The most broadly used Scale is the 33-item Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSDS) which was developed with intension to measure social desirability, defined as "the need of social acceptances to obtain approval by responding in a culturally appropriate and acceptable manner" (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960,p.89).

SD has been considered significant in measures validation by its effects of producing of biased responses which can also compromise construct validity and significant for discriminant validity. In other words social desirability might affect the validity of the measure that is being used which results in the measure giving false picture of the client or patient in the testing environment (Barger, Jillian, Kimberly & Jacqueline, 2006).

2.1.2 Social desirability bias

Matthew, Douglas & MacDonald (2012) argue that social scientists have long been fretful with this phenomenon of distorting one's self-presentation to make a favourable impression upon others, which is defined as social desirability bias (SDB). SDB has been recognized in a way that it may be a factor of a more general multidimensional phenomenon of socially desirable responding (SDR), defined as a situation whereby an individual presents him or herself as having characteristics that are valued by others (Brian, Jullian, Kimberly & Jacqueline, 2006).

The observation of the SDB measures was constructed to isolate the contaminating factor that is arguably a major source of variance in self-report measures (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Barger, 2002; Fisher & Katz, 2000). Paul, Luliama & Silvia (2011) explained that SDR is also considered to be of theoretical and practical interest. Theoretical precepts of SDR are premised on the assumption that SDR reflects only a style of response which could be explained as a trend to reply in a way that makes the respondent look superior.

2.2 Culture as a system of collective individualism

Culture differs along a number of dimensions that can affect personality (Triandis, & Suh, 2002). Some of the dimensions of culture are that it can be composite, that is, it encompasses some characteristics that lead or direct the individual culture and in some cultures these can be; norms, values, habitual ways of behaviour, beliefs and attitudes that play along in the moulding of an individual character. In some, there is nothing that urges the individual to go along some uniformed principles and boundaries. On the one hand, culture may also be interdependent, that is, it can differ profoundly in the extent to which interdependence is weighed

(Triandis, & Suh, 2002). It will influence what its members perceive, how they perceive that and relate to the selves and others, and how their decisions are directed, therefore leading to diversity and conflict of values and behavioural norms within the individual member of the culture (Rogers & Lea, 2010; Holt, Bremner, Sutherland, Smith & Vliek, 2012). In a general view, culture is found to be one of the influential factor as to how people reflect on things and decide on their conclusion in their communities (Nisbett, Peng, Choi & Norenzayan, 2001).

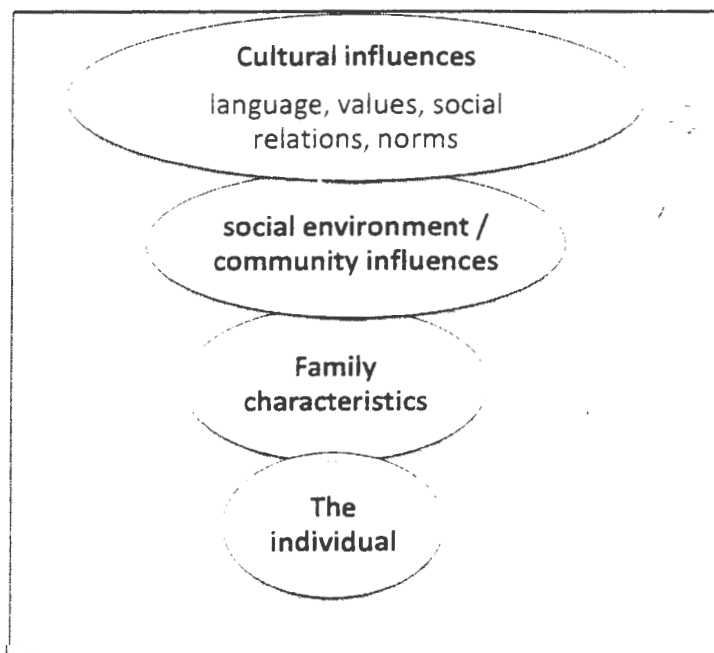


Figure 1: Culture and the individual the model shows how cultural elements can be conveyed from the cultural influences, the social environment, family characteristics into the individual within a collective culture.

Adopted from: Holt, Bremner, Sutherland, Smith & Vliek, (2012: 599)

South African culture needs to be understood in the context of their orientation and background in clarity to its impact on SDR. Some studies have found out that black and white South Africans despite living in the same country show a tendency of collectivism and

individualism, whereby the whites reflect an individualistic culture and the blacks reflect and maintain a collectivists' culture, leading to insinuations for the display of SDR in their responses and behaviour (Steenkamp *et al.* 2010).

By virtue of social, cultural and political distinction made in our society, perceived group membership exerts' powerful influence over how a society views socio-demographic groups and how its members view themselves and others (Steenkamp *et al.*, 2010). In other words, most of our African cultures are perceived as collectivist whereby an individual's actions, decisions and perceptions are influenced by the norms and values of the society and culture they are raised in (Paul, Luliana & Silvia, 2011). Therefore in this point, culture reflects a system of collectively held values, a collective programming of a human mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from those of another by using some common socializing elements and mechanisms, common features of some SDB or a configuration of personality features typical for the members of a society will be formed. Within each society, there are one or several types of social desirable behaviours that the individual society will hold as its culture. The culture in a form of socialization will then transmit to the children, these features whereby their conformation is being controlled at a societal level (Paul, Lulian & Silvia, 2011).

In most of the African cultures, most types of the SDB are associated with the following personality features: sociability, tolerance, kindness, considerate, co-operation, loyalty and mutual support. The Setswana culture studied in this research is not an exception (Steenkamp *et al.*, 2010). Moreover, culture is transmitted through language and the modelling of behaviour when conditions permit humans to communicate through shared language, by living in the same historic period, and when they are sufficiently proximal to influence each other (Matthew *et al.*,

2012). Ecology, among other factors, shapes culture, which in turn shapes the socialization patterns, which shape some of the variance of personality (Matthew *et al*, 2012).

Lalwani, Shavitt and Timothy (2006) state that individualism and collectivism pertain to the degree to which people prefer to act as individuals or as members of a group. Members of individualist societies place their personal goals and desires ahead of those of the in-group while collectivists reflect their views and actions based on the interests of the members of the group (Steenkamp *et al.*, 2010). Agency traits, such as self-determination, independence, and individuality, are socially desirable in individualist culture and overstated self-perceptions on these qualities are likely to be beneficial.

In contrast, socialist cultures are conformity oriented and trustworthiness to the group and concern with promoting the group's continued existence, are rewarded as orientated in a collectivist. Communal traits, such as belongingness and preservation of social relationships, are socially desirable in collectivist cultures, which should encourage people to present themselves in a favourable brightness on these traits to meet interpersonal goals (Lalwani *et al.* 2006).

2.3 Theoretical framework

2.3.1 The Social identity theory

Social identity theory (SIT) emphasises intergroup relations as a key concept of the meaning attributed to the theory. It deals with how individuals perceive themselves as members within a group or category of belonging in comparison to other outside groups (Stets & Burke, 2000). This implies that social identity is a person's knowledge that he or she belongs to a social category or group. A social group represents a set of individuals who are categorised by a common social identity, viewing themselves as a big family or system (Rogers and Lea, 2010).

SIT assumes that social identity is primarily a product of specific memberships working towards common characteristics, striving towards achieving or maintaining a positive social identity. Through this social relation process, individuals who are similar to the group categorized with the group and are considered the in-group (Brown, 2000). The categorization of the group is directed by attitudes, beliefs and values, emotional reactions, behavioural norms, styles of speech, and other properties that are believed to be correlated with the relevant intergroup categorization (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). As Rogers and Lea (2010) state, from a social identity perspective, group members live together to communicate and collaborate in a distributed virtual environment bring to the collaboration a variety of possible identities. These could include identities relating to their gender, organization affiliation, nationality and work interests, as well as a personal identity and the identity relating to the virtual collaborating group (Hoog, 2001).

In the proposed study SIT has been used to help find out whether culture may influence social desirability responding and if positive, in what measure. The theory was also applied to distinguish and identify the Setswana group' norms, beliefs and other characteristics of their cultural group that direct their values, decisions and the expected type of personality (Stets & Burke, 2000). The STI leads to the understanding of why individuals in the Setswana culture display some roles and characters that may seem unacceptable to other cultures that do not follow in the same group category (Roccas & Brewer, 2002).

2.3.2 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

This study is framed under Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System' Theory. The theory is focused on an individual' development within the context of the system' of development, the focus is basically on the relationships and interactions within these individuals' environment and

the surrounding community (Green & Kreuter, 2004). Bronfenbrenner's theory defines the child's development as process which is affected by some complex "layers" of environment (Kawachi & Berkman, 2000).

This theory is also named the Bio-ecological Systems Theory due to the fact that it emphasizes the child's own biology being the primary environment influencing her development, later, interaction with their immediate family, their community environment and the societal landscape beliefs. Changes or conflict in any one layer will ripple throughout other layers. To study a child's development then, we must look not only at the child and her immediate environment, but also at the interaction of the larger environment as well which also plays a major role on the decision makings, priorities, attitudes and behaviour displayed by the individual (Kawachi & Berkman, 2000; Macintyre & Ellaway, 2000).

The focus of the study is on the fourth layer of the system which is the "Macrosystem layer". The layer encompasses cultural values, customs, and laws practised within the child's community, whereby the individual child's life is framed and directed into a specific character (Berk, 2000). The structure of the parental functioning within the system's family is affected and costumed by their environment and cultural background of their community. This is emphasised by Boon, Cottrell, King, Stevensen & Millar (2012) when pointing out that whatever is the belief of the cultural community, it becomes the belief of the parents raising the child and later in life becomes the child's beliefs, values, ethics, and morals directing the child's life even on the absence of the parents and the community. This theory implies that the whole system is affected by its environment, that is the child, the family and the society in general from the individual community. This study therefore advocates the use of Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological theory as

a framework to analyse SD among the Setswana culture. Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological theory can be employed to scale social desirability within a group of community members, how the community has impacted the Setswana young people as from their childhood until their developmental stage (Boon *et al*, 2012). The theory also helped point out the level of to which the community as a society can have an influence on the SDR and its effects.

2.3.3 The Social Desirable Responding model

A debate on style in socially desirable responding was brought forward by the work of Paulhus (1984). In his theory, Paulhus proposed a two-factor model of SDR that distinguishes self-deceptive enhancement (SDE), whereby the respondent really believes in his or her positive self-reports, from impression management (IM) respondent consciously dissembles especially under public conditions. The IM items were also wisely developed on the assumption that some respondents gradually over report their performance of a broad variety of desirable behaviours and report little on the undesirable ones, since the claims involve obvious behaviours such as "I never steal" any distortion was assumed to be a conscious lie (Pauls & Stemmler, 2003).

According to Paulhus (2002), the various versions of self-favouring tendencies or self-deceptive styles cluster into two themes. The first is an egoistic tendency to see oneself as exceptionally talented and socially prominent; the second is a moralistic tendency to see oneself as an exceptionally good member of society (Pauls & Stemmler, 2003).

However, Edward's integrated theory on the other hand asserts that respondents may be tempted to give the socially desirable response rather than describe what they actually think, believe or do (Phillips & Clancy, 1972). This has typically been assumed to be a function of two factors, the general strength of need for approval felt by an individual (personality trait) and the

demands of a particular situation (Phillips & Clancy, 1972). The SDR model assisted the researcher by clarifying the circumstances that lead the respondents to at times give false responds to personality tests. That is, the participants' minds are clouded with the socially desirable response as they go through tests which make them to strictly think and avoid describing their socially undesirable traits or conducts in fear of being rejected by their society.

3. AIM OF THE STUDY

The present study consequently was aimed to explore Social desirability (SD) constructs in relation to the cultural context among the Setswana-speaking youth aging from 16 to 35 in the North - West Province of South Africa.

This study was guided by the following questions to come up with a clear interpretation: What are the behaviours, attitudes and emotions considered socially desirable in Setswana culture? Secondly, what behaviours, attitudes and emotions are considered socially undesirable in Setswana culture?

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study has contributed to the understanding of SDR in a Setswana cultural context with an explanation of why individuals present themselves in a socially desirable manner, appearing overly decent, moral and virtuous and denying the part of their undesirable common traits (Peter, 2010).

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the current study were as follows:

- To investigate behaviours, attitudes and emotions considered socially desirable in the Setswana culture.
- To explore behaviours, attitudes and emotions considered socially undesirable in the Setswana culture.
- To explore themes/ facets that could be used in construction of the new measure (SAPI) to be used in Setswana culture.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

A qualitative research approach was used. Qualitative research has been recognized as a legitimate way of obtaining knowledge that might not be accessible by other methods and to provide extensive data on how people interpret and act on social desirability (Smith, Pope & Botha, 2005). The qualitative research was used to enable the people to make sense out of their cultural experiences and thereafter make their own reality. This enabled the researcher to understand the participants' social, complex holistic picture of their culture through well detailed reports conducted in a natural setting (Gray, 2009).

The ethnography design was used to identify specific Setswana facets in order to understand and interpret the meaning of socio-cultural phenomena that subjects give to their everyday lives that might be influential to their social desirability responding (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont, 2005). Ethnography is a qualitative research method whereby the researcher describes, analyses and interprets the shared patterns of behaviour, beliefs, and language of a

cultural organization that develops over time (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). The researcher as a student in the same institution, lived with the participants, interacted with their everyday lives and was therefore part of their culture and able to observe their behaviour on daily basis (Streubert & Carpenter, 2002). Although theoretical generation was used in this study, the ethnography design was more focused on the understanding of the Setswana cultural facets through the participants' descriptions, elaborations and behaviour and therefore, a vivid, holistic cultural description of the represented Setswana group was reached (Maree, 2007). In reaching this point, the researcher explored the participants' rituals and customs during their daily interactions. The groups' life, ways and patterns of their culture were studied and analyzed by the researcher in order to grasp their Social desirable and none desirable attitudes, behaviour, emotions and beliefs (Maree, 2007).

7. RESEARCH CONTEXT AND PARTICIPANTS

The research context was North-West University, Mafikeng campus, in the North-West Province of South Africa. North-West Province is located in the North West area of South Africa and is a province consisting of Setswana speaking population of the country with a background of a Setswana culture although separated in different places and settlements. Since the proposed assessment measure (SAPI) needs to be developed in all South African official languages Setswana culture is amongst them, due to the location of the researcher the study focused on 18 Setswana speaking (Youth) Students from the university, 7 males and 11 females with an age range of 19 and 35, who were staying in campus residence during the period of data collection. The participants were purposefully selected since they enabled a detailed exploration and understanding of the concept and covered all the key constituencies of relevance to the culture of Batswana (De Vos *et al.*, 2005). As all the participants belonged to the Setswana culture, had

same characteristics with same life experiences, there was an opportunity for a detailed exploration of their social process in the context (Ritchie & Lewis, 2009).

8. PROCEDURE AND DATA COLLECTION

8.1 Data collection

According to Macintyre & Ellaway (2000), in an ethnographic research, multiple data collection devices are used in order to arrive at grounded and triangulated interpretations of the culture of the studied group. In this research, two data collection strategies being participant observation and ethnographic interviews, were used. The principles of ethnographic interviews were applied during the focus group discussions. The study also engaged in two pilot studies as the preliminary part of the data collection.

8.1.1. Pilot study.

To ensure the trustworthiness of this study, the researcher conducted two pilot studies of 5 participants each. The pilot studies were done as preliminary studies on small samples intended to verify the reliability of the guiding questions, whether they were clear and would provide the expected results (Bless, Higson & Kagee, 2006). This allowed for evaluations that led to the rephrasing of the research question. It was then during the first pilot study that the researcher realized that for best results, the question required translation into a Setswana version as the participants could not comprehend the expectations. After the second pilot study, questions were translated and were asked in a translated version and it became easy for the participants to understand and provided information on the phenomenon being studied (Holt, Bremner, Sutherland, Smith & Vliek, 2012).

8.1.2 Focus group discussions

Ethnographic interviews are used in an ethnographic design (Wortham & Chernoff, 2012). Macintyre & Ellaway (2000) describe ethnographic interviews as types of interviews that are usually purposeful, employing open-ended items so that the subject's reality and perceptions can be documented, understood, and interpreted. These interviews were done within a focus group discussion.

A focus group discussion was conducted to stimulate group interaction and to widen the range of responses and discussion thus activating forgotten details of the experience. The focus group discussion strategy was based on the assumption that group interaction will be productive in widening the range of response, activating the forgotten details of the cultural background through member checking (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). According to Creswell (2007), focus group discussions are beneficial when the interaction between participants yields in-depth information and when participants give each other time to speak and listen to each other respectfully. Through the discussions and member checking, understanding of the cultural background of the Setswana group was presented. The values, norms and morals of the culture were comprehensibly laid out, leading to a better understanding of the socially undesirable and desirable behaviours, attitudes, beliefs and emotions within a Setswana culture (Wortham & Chernoff, 2012).

8.1.3 Participant observation

Participant observation whereby the researcher lived with the participants on daily basis for the period of a year and was part of the culture was employed in this study (Ritchie & Lewis, 2009). The researcher had an opportunity to make objective observations of the socially desirable

and undesirable attitudes, behaviour, emotions and believes on daily basis. Field notes were taken and records were made on the observed feelings, actions, speech, emotions of the participants when developing field notes which formed part of the analysis (Whitehaed, 2005).

8.2 Procedure

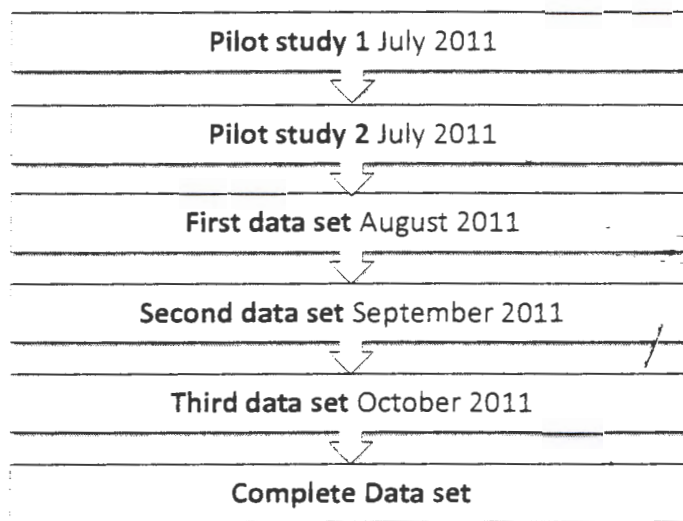


Figure 2: An illustration showing the procedure that was followed throughout the process of data collection.

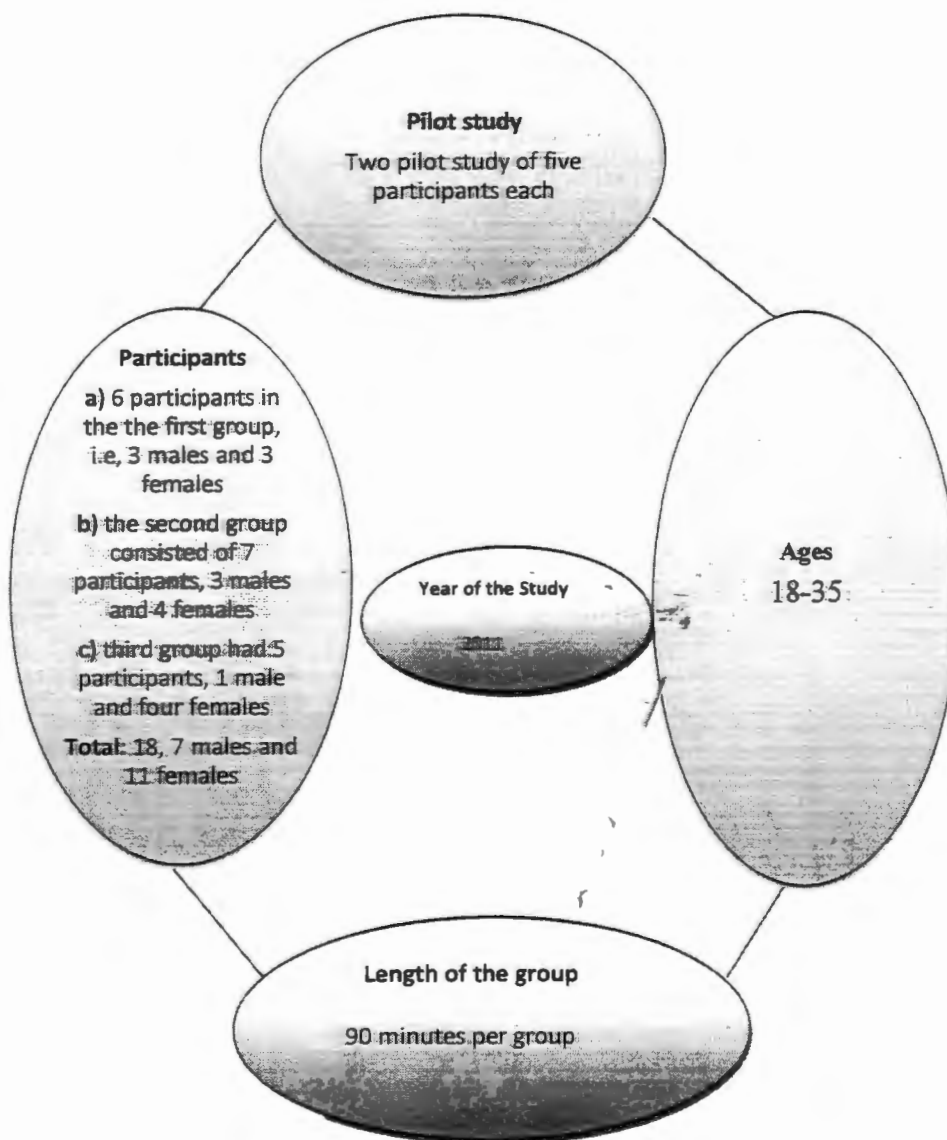


Figure 2.1: An illustration showing the pilot study, age, and participants

Two pilot studies were conducted in order to confirm the reliability of the guiding question set for data collection. After the researcher established access, and established the skills needed for a comprehensible way of conducting the interview, the guiding question was translated and reconstructed according to the understanding and language of the participants (De

Vos *et al.*, 2005). Subsequently, three focus group discussions were conducted at different times with at least a month interval in between, giving the researcher some sufficient time in between the interviews to observe, make sense of and understand the cultural life style of the participants that may have been omitted during the group interviews (Rubin and Babbie, 2001). The actual data was as follows; there were 6 participants for the first group, that is, 3 males and 3 females, the second group consisted of 7 participants, 3 males and 4 females while the third group had 5 participants, 1 male and four females. The total number of the interviewed participants were 18, 7 males and 11 females. Females became more than the males as they responded positively to the invitation. Audio tapes were used for recording essential information that the participants were providing. Field notes were also used to record the data capturing and verification. The following general question was translated in to Setswana from English after the pilot studies and asked as a base for the group interview and there after followed by many specific and guiding questions:

"Sometimes we do things that are slightly positive but nobody does always, and negative things that are slightly but sometimes we all do, in such a way, we would like you to tell us what are those behaviours, thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, events, etc. that can fall into this description."

Each focus group discussion lasted for about 90 minutes as member checking with the group was actively practiced for best results (Patton, 2002.) Data was analyzed from the targeted focus groups which consisted of 18 participants from the first, the second and third focus groups. Each set of data was digitally recorded, there after transcribed and translated in order to ensure accuracy during the analysis of the data. The audio-tapes were locked away and after the results of the study, all documents and information provided were shredded and tapes were erased to maintain confidentiality regarding the identity of the participants (Ritchie & Lewis, 2009).

9. DATA ANALYSIS

In this study, analysis of data adopted an “emic” approach (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). This means that the researcher interpreted data based on the perspective of the population under study which were Setswana speaking young people. The results are expressed as though they were being expressed by the subjects themselves, local language and terminology was used to describe culture (Macintyre & Ellaway, 2000).

9.1 Thematic content analysis of textual data.

Thematic content analysis was followed in this research in order to provide knowledge, new insight and represent the synthesized facts under themes and subthemes. Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as capturing ideas that are important about the data in relation to the research topic. The researcher used Thematic analysis to link Setswana speaking people's beliefs, attitude, behaviour, emotions, settings and meanings together by identifying salient themes from their ideas, language and patterns from data (De Vos *et al.*, 2005).

This stage involved reading the transcripts in their entirety several times, so as to try and get a sense of the interview as a whole, before attempting to break it into parts. During this process, the researcher listed the data available, perform some necessary editing to make field notes retrievable and generally “clean up” what seems overwhelming and unmanageable. The stage also involved writing memos in the margins of field notes or transcripts. These were short phrases, ideas or key concepts that occurred to the reader (Vithal & Jansen, 2010).

The researcher identified salient themes, recurring words, ideas or language and patterns of belief that linked people and situations together and the categories of meaning held by

participants in the setting. This enabled the researcher to step back and form broader opinions of what was going on in the situation. The data was then evaluated for their usefulness and centrality, that is, the researcher determined how useful the data collected was in illuminating the questions being explored and how central they were to the story that was being unfolded about the phenomenon being studied.

10. TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Table 1

Trustworthiness of the study

Strategy	Application
Credibility	The researcher adequately placed boundaries around the study, by adequately stating the parameters such as the variables, the population and theoretical framework (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
Transferability	In this study, the researcher used multiple methods of data collection such as, interviews, member checking, observation and observation notes. This led to more valid, reliable and diverse construction of realities and was viewed as a way of strengthening the study's usefulness for other settings.
Conformability	The researcher involved several investigators or peer researchers to assist with interpretation of the data at different time or location, so as to improve the analysis and understanding of construction of others (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

11. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus, and the project title was: *Social desirability (SD) constructs in relation to the cultural context among the Setswana-speaking Youth*. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the participants. The consent form was read and clarified to the participants. They were informed that their participation was voluntary, that the data would be treated with confidentiality and that they were free to withdraw at any stage of the research. The researchers were culturally sensitive towards the young people in order not to violate their rights and culture. The participants were informed of every possible benefits, risks and limitations of their participation in the study. The researchers made it a point that the participants understood every step and reason why they took part in the research. The data collected was kept confidential and safe by both the researcher and the supervisor. The final result of the investigation presented as a research article adheres to the North-West University (Mafikeng Campus) after submission for examination.

12. FINDINGS

The findings of this study have shown that there are things that almost every person in the culture may conform to, not because they want to but because they are forced; but in most cases because they are bound by their culture to react or behave in such a way.

The major themes and the subthemes have been presented on Table 2 below:

Table 2

Themes extracted during thematic analysis

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Setswana culture as a collective culture	Family support Togetherness and mutual neighbourhood support Oneness of the community through Cultural values (acceptance)
Socially desirable attitudes, behaviour, emotions and believes	Cultural values and responsibility (communication, dressing, language, taboos, idioms, proverbs) Gender and behavioural Identity and responsibility Age and behavioural Identity
Socially undesirable but acceptable attitudes, behaviour, emotions and believes mostly done because of cultural beliefs	Group versus individualisation • Lies (white lie) • Respect versus honesty (women and children) • Culture versus loyalty • Peace versus truth • Compromising feelings
Socially undesirable attitudes, behaviour, emotions and beliefs	• Emotions • Drivers (Relevant findings) • Behaviour • Attitudes

Setswana culture as a collective culture.

Setswana culture was identified as a collective culture, whereby this was expressed among others through Family support, Togetherness and mutual neighbourhood support as well as Oneness of the community through Cultural values (Holt, *et al*, (2012: 599) The participants stated that although Setswana culture may differ depending on the place of origination at the end

the culture generally come to a conclusion of one culture same beliefs and same proverbs. *"all these behaviours, characters and feelings we have been talking about may differ... according to the place where you originate from and the way you have been raised... but there is where they meet or what their foundation is... It doesn't matter whether you are a Motswana from Taung or Mafikeng, respect for elders always stays the same ... it goes along with core values of the Setswana custom in general."*

Family support. The participants expressed their culture as a culture based on family support, that is, members of the family are expected to give support to one another even if it may compromise one's own life interests. *"... in a Setswana context... we are brought up to be one as a family... This means that as somebody's elder or younger sister, you have to take care of one another."*

"You feel that you as a human being also have your own goals and dreams you want to fulfill and therefore having to take care of the family, delays you from arriving at them."

Togetherness and mutual neighbourhood support. According to the participants, *"Neighbours work out together as one big family which shows that people are there for one another. "Showing mutual support and working together and taking care of one another as neighbours as one big family is some of the things we see happening in Setswana." (Yes, yes [others stressing the point])*

"Every elder in the Setswana culture has to treat every child as his or her own, the same way, and every child should treat every elder as their parents."

Oneness of the community through Cultural values. The community of the Batswana work as one big family whereby individuals' behaviour, feelings and attitudes are most of the time influenced by what the community and culture believe. In order to be socially acceptable, you should behave and do things the way the community or your society wants and speak their language in order to fit in their society.

"...to fit in the society, ... I think it is for you to live with the society [do what they want] (ok, yes)... so if you are used to call elders with their title, when you come back from universities you don't change and say X. (yes) they will be surprised at you...so in other words we don't have to adapt to the environment we are in, we have to do things the way they are done at home."

"We live in much diversity... so in order for us to click well, we should speak the way they speak and do things the way they do them (yes)"

Responding to the following question: *"So what you mean in other words is, the reality is, do what you know is right, but what if you do not want to do it?"* one respondent stated that: *"I think in that context, for you to live with that society... [do what they want]... yes, so that you become socially acceptable ([yes, yes] others stressing).*

On the other hand, the participants believe in ones and togetherness and communication in order to know how the other member of the community is. *"like where I come from, I have been taught that whoever you meet as an older person you greet them (yes)..."* others confirmed with some stressed yes to confirm that what the other participant is saying is the truth. *"When I am in Mafikeng I don't just greet anybody, but when I am home I make sure that I greet and talk to whoever I see, he or she also greets me and it becomes nice (ok)"* The greetings are culture for the young and old.

The participants further indicated that as one collective culture as Batswana, they are one big family, they have characters, behavior, feelings and beliefs that are commonly expected by and portrayed within their culture. Some are portrayed as attitudes, behaviours and emotions considered socially desirable where as some are socially undesirable attitudes, behaviours and emotions mostly done because of cultural believes

Socially desirable attitudes, behaviour, emotions and beliefs. According to the participants, there are some attitudes, behavior, emotions and believes that are expected to be practiced in their customs and are considered to be desirable and valuable to every member of the community. The principal desirable behavior emphasized by the participants is, *"To make a good impression, is that number one, self-respect... have self-respect (emphasizing)... show self-love and love others... you should behave in a well-accepted manner in the society."*

Cultural values and responsibilities. There are some cultural values in the Setswana culture that are considered to be sociably desirable and bringing the community together. The participants related some values to attitudes which are communication ways of dressing and conduct. Some of the values were related to behaviour which are, expression of language, behavioural conduct in social groups which the Batswana are fond of practising wherever place of origin.

Communication as an accepted attitude within the Setswana culture is shown through greetings. *"The older people in the streets out there are supposed to be respected, according to Setswana culture, when I meet them, I have to greet them."*

"... maybe you arrive at work, you just pass, the thing is you are bound to look around greet people that you pass by in their office, if the person in the office is visible, knock and greet

so that when you sit down you know that, okay, the people that I have passed by I have greeted them all. I believe they are also pleased that I have made a day for them"

"Greeting people help since if something bad happens to you one day, people will remember your good morals and behaviour and thus help you."

Communication was extended to the behaviour and way of talking including politeness, humbleness, low and calm voices.

Dressing and conduct were identified as accepted attitude and good morals in the Setswana culture. Both gender and all age groups have acceptable ways of dressing while in their community. *"As we have said about the issue of dressing, that is, a girl is supposed to dress this way... as a woman you wear things that cover up the knees and the breasts... as a married woman we cannot see you on a mini skirt... and they are not supposed to put on pants... mostly when she goes to see her in-laws or going to the village chief"*

The participants stated that although the culture seems to be more oppressive on women, men also have a restricted way of dressing, *"a married man cannot go to his in-laws without wearing a jacket... he is not supposed to put on training or sports shorts as it shows less man and less responsible enough to be a husband"* *"Setswana men are not supposed to go around in shorts... Setswana culture believes that a real man is identified and dignified through... the way of dressing and types of clothes he puts on communicates his status and seriousness in marriage."*

Taboos, idioms and proverbs.⁴ Taboos, idioms and proverbs are not supposed to be questioned or confronted in Setswana but are to be obeyed in order to build cultural morals.

Some of these are not practised nowadays but most of them are practised. The following idioms were mentioned most during the data collection process.

Idioms. Are societal cultural aspects believed to restrict the behavioural conduct of the Setswana culture? According to the Setswana culture,

"A pregnant woman should not plait her hair as it will stop her from delivering at the right time or cause difficulties during child birth"

"When you are pregnant you don't eat eggs"

"A girl or young woman should not eat eggs as she grows up"

"A boy should not eat from a pot"

"A girl does not eat from a pot because she will not get married"

"A girl is not supposed to eat some certain part of meat (a cow) ... until you receive at the right time from an elderly person"

To the question "why do you think our culture created all these cultural restrictions", some participants added to that by stating that,

"I believe parents gave us these orders for the fact that even if they may not affect us at the present time, as time goes on and we are growing, we will see the after effect of these...and there will be no time to reverse the problem"

"I Believe this was kind of trying to make children live a moral life... some are practised by those who believe but all have to practice them... I cannot tell you the reason why I believe them but I just find myself abiding with the rules"

Taboos and Beliefs. Taboos are the Setswana practices that are forbidden and never supposed to be done because if one does them they will cause trouble to themselves, people and the environment around them. The participants mentioned the following taboos:

"If we can see two men looking at each other, it is a taboo... but as for women, it is believed that woman can look each other in the eyes, and they can even kiss."

"A girl is not supposed to trespass the field crops and on a kraal for cattle"

"You are not supposed to bring salt or water into the yard after sunset"

"A lady who has miscarriage (lost a baby) does not walk about in the street or at the lands"

"A widow does not walk about or talk to people out there before ritual cleansing after twelve months"

"All the gates are supposed to be opened at 12 noon as it is believed that it is the time of the passing of the ancestors, both the front and the back one."

"A new born baby is supposed to be kept indoors for up to 3 full months together with the mother"

†

Gender and behavioural Identity and responsibility. The findings revealed that the fundamental establishment of the Setswana culture is based on gender roles and

responsibility. A man plays the most important role in the culture and has a lot of power hence male children are respected and considered older. According to the Setswana culture, *"A man plays a bigger role in almost everything... despite the fact that women are working nowadays, it is still the man's role to make sure that the family is secured and well taken care of while on the other hand it is the wife's responsibility to make sure that the house is clean and children well taken care of for the husband to find things in order when he comes back from work."*

"According to our culture, a male child is always older than a female child no matter their age or birth line... a male child is a community builder and carries the name of the family to another generation."

"A young man or a male child of maybe in his thirties is not supposed to be questioned about his whereabouts... or should be questioned in a polite way but a girl is not supposed to be out of the yard after sunset."

The participants further specified the authority of a man over a woman by asserting that, *"Women are not supposed to sit on chairs, they are supposed to sit on the mat in social gatherings... chairs are for men ... this is not just done... it is communication of power and position, that a man is always higher than a woman and a woman submit"* The authority of a man over a woman was more expressed by the participants, *"women are not involved in marriage negotiations like Lobola (bride price), only men do that, they play a different role much less responsible than men's."*

Some participants stated that, "Although it's not good, it is okay for a man to be angry but as for a woman it's not allowed in Setswana and it is even a taboo... you are regarded as an ill-mannered woman"

The study further revealed that women are expected to behave in a different way than men, "as a woman you have to be faithful in marriage whereas it is acceptable for a man to go out with another woman "(girl friend) "

More gender responsibilities were stated. "It is acceptable for a boy to walk around the streets during late hours but it is not at all allowed for a girl..."

Age roles and behavioural Identity. The findings revealed different age roles played by people at home, community and ceremonies across the generation and that some of them carry some meanings with them. According to the participants, the presence of older people in a ceremony means a lot of blessings to those who invited them. *" When many elderly persons go to somebody's ceremony either marriage or any function it shows the person is blessed... just your presence but you are not supposed to do any kind of work. as an elder you just go there to sit be given food and show support."* Another participant added that, *"Very old women come and sit just for support... early old age sit, watch and coach middle aged and young women to cook well and do things the right way... while young girls of late teenage hood and early twenties give out food to people."* According to the participants, these practices are carried out from home throughout to the community.

"An elderly person is always more knowledgeable than the child...whatever they tell you, you have to accept it and respect it, even if you feel that my mother cannot say this to me whereas I want to do things that way."

"Even if you are married, your father will be your father and your mother will be your mother until they [stressing the word] decide you are grown enough to take care of yourself and your family."

"In funerals young girls or young ladies like us (university age group) are supposed to give people food after dishing but they are not supposed to cook for people... after marriage age or at late twenties that's when you can cook, check whether people sleep well and make all necessary arrangements for the funeral to go well"

"Certain meat in funerals is only eaten by males after young men come back from digging grave yards... elderly men eat and give the remains to young ones if any despite the fact that the boys and young men are the ones who worked at the grave yards."

"Elders have all the knowledge about life, we go and talk to them if we want to know some things in life... they need to be taken care of."

Group versus individualisation. The participants stated a lot of issues that show that as a collectivist cultural group, the cultural group is consciously influential as they always conform to the group in order to belong. Their behaviour and personality are built around the interest of the group, not of an interest of an individual (Kurtz, Tarquini, & Lobst, 2008). It was further revealed that due to this conformity, the life of the Batswana is surrounded and characterised by a lot of white lies. A white lie is when somebody tells something that is not true with the intentions of rescuing a situation and not with evil intentions. These white lies have been characterized based on their intended end results, that is, telling a lie to show respect, to make peace and for cultural identity and acceptance. The group conformity also leads to individuals compromising their emotional feelings in order to belong.

Lies (white lie). According to the participants, lying is not good but they do it most of the time because truth leads to a lot of trouble. *"Lying is not good. Even if it is not allowed, we end up telling lies in order to protect people we live with, those that we love, it may be the partner or those at home. So we end up lying to protect them... because truth causes trouble."*

Respect versus honesty (women and children). The Setswana culture mostly encourages women and children to tell lies in favour of respect to their husbands and parents. In most cases *"... You will always be under the oppression of the parent to show respect."*

you are saying I may not say the truth and tell a lie not because I want to deliberately, but because I realize that my parents want me to live this way and I do not want to show them that I don't want to in order to show respect."

The woman should always be the one who should show respect in marriage, always observed and carefully analyzed by her in-laws... [like if you don't clean the glass properly, you are not a real woman] that one favours the man. Whether the man visits his in-laws or not that is not important, but is very important for the wife to always visit her in-laws." ... "Even if you know you do not like something about them, to show respect you should always pretend and say you like it."

Peace versus truth. In this culture, motives of making peace have lead to lies and pains. One participant stated that even if they know the truth concerning major issues of the family, they would never reveal it to keep peace and the family together. *"...the thing is that, like fathers who would rape children, if the child realises that the father is the bread winner of the family, she fears to tell that my father is the one who did this, looking at the fact that the marriage will break up and my mother will blame me (another participant interrupting with a voice reflecting*

pain [yes even if its deep pain, the child bears it...] then a big silence and sigh) for the sake of peace."

Another added by stating that, although it seems this is changing, nowadays when *the husband impregnated the house keeper, those days it was supposed to be major secrets that you would not hear a hint about them. It will just be okay if there is a new born as a wife you accept it and life goes on and nobody out there will ever know. maybe only the elders and the family will continue to take care of the child secretly."*

Cultural identity versus loyalty. In the Setswana culture, men are heads of the family and women are to accept that they are to be promiscuous. Participants proved this, *"I think that a man as the head of the family has a lot of power (ok) isn't it that he will be satisfying his needs out there although it will be wrong to do that because he has a wife..."* Another one adds, *"Although this seems to be now fading away, a wife does not question a man in anything to show respect, the man is the head of the family [yes] so if the husband has done something wrong, the wife does not have to react in Setswana culture."*

According to the participants, their culture created some back up proverbs to influence this kind of unfaithfulness and oppression to women. These proverbs motivate and encourage men to be unfaithful and not loyal to their wives. The following are some of the proverbs and idioms as stated by the participants to confirm why Tswana men cheat:

The participants indicated that the following proverbs are some of the ones used when elderly women train the bride on how to behave with the husband and the in-laws:

"Monnaselepe o a adimisanwa" (The meaning of the proverb is that a wife does not have a problem when her husband is with another woman because according to the custom he has to be shared)

"Monnatlhotse o namela gotlhe" (The proverb means that a man can go wherever he wants to go and be wherever he wants to be)

"Monna ga a botswe o tswa kae" (The meaning of the proverb is that a wife should not ask her husband any questions of his movements)

A proverb for the groom was stated as follows: *"Mosāditshwene o jewa mabogo" (he should not look at the beauty of the girl he wants to marry, he should choose less beauty but yet a hard worker)* this may lead to the man going out with beautiful women out there.

According to the participants, the Batswana created some proverbs in order to justify their misconduct and immorality as one of the participants emphasises below. *"When the Batswana want to make things work for them, even if it hurts others, they come up with a proverb or idiom..."*

On the other hand, this culture and loyalty is not showing unfairness at home but even in the community at large and goes along with a Setswana proverb that was stated by one of the participants, *"The chief's voice is always protected and carried."* The participants further mentioned that, *"with the elders, concerning the chief of the tribe, the chief will say a word... from the chief, what has been said by the chief despite how it is and how it hurts whoever, the community has to behave in a way that they show the chief that they listen to him [some will even*

tell the chief that we are very happy about that and some even give him a big cow to thank the chief...] just to show obedience.

Compromising feelings. The participants stated that despite the fact that they would always understand their feelings, they will lie about them for peace making. According to the participants, the major responsibility of a Motswana (a member of a Setswana culture) is to conform to the group. One participant stated, *"I believe what is accepted in our culture is that, you as an individual, even if you are not satisfied with what has been said or done, you just have to pretend you are happy about it so that you can be accepted by others."*

Children do not have any say when parents talk. *"When my father shouts at me on something I have not done... even if I burn inside, I will continue to burn... for sure I am not supposed to talk back to an elder, I am not supposed to walk away when they are talking to me... It is a must for a child to be humble and listen to the parents when they talk,"* another one added, *"even if you are not happy about what you hear being said to you [as a child] you are not supposed to show it, you just sit and listen, keep on showing that you are wrong and ask for forgiveness while you know that the elderly person is the one who is wrong."*

Moreover, for the fact that the culture gives a man all the respect, wives are bound to keep secrets to themselves concerning their feelings, even sexually.

"I believe a white lie is also spoken at the bedroom between a husband and a wife... when the wife is not sexually satisfied and realising that the husband thinks he has done his best, she will think if she tells him the truth he will be hurt and think he is not man enough and in this case pretend she is very satisfied."

The fact that the culture considers the man as the respected member in the community, it, and this also oppresses men because they have to always show bravery and never cry. This was indicated by the participants that, *"a male child does not cry."* another participant added, *"you are not allowed as a Tswana man to be emotional or easily feels hurt. you must not cry... you should be brave as a man, show that you are strong and that you can stand for your family and be responsible."*

Socially undesirable attitudes, behavior, emotions and beliefs

The participants talked about undesirable attitudes, behaviour, emotions and beliefs considered bad if practised in their culture. Some of them were said to be showing weakness while some show disrespect and lack of self-control.

Emotions. Feelings of anger are also mostly oppressed. *"According to the culture, anger is not supposed to be revealed through beatings, shouting or something that does not show respect or love or an act that hurts the other party."*

Emotions that reveal intimate feelings are not supposed to be shown around in public. *"Actions on feelings of intimacy are to be done in secret in our culture since those kind of actions in our culture are considered bad... you cannot just come out of your car and hit your lover or wife with a kiss in public, people will be surprised at you [even walking hand in hand will surprise people because that is a western culture not ours...] With us it is done in secret."*

Beliefs. The participants highlighted some point of contradiction in the Setswana culture and Christianity whereby the Setswana culture is gradually fading away. According to some of them it is against their culture to abandon their gods. One participant stated, *"The issue of*

Christianity has drawn us away from our ancestors...another one continued, "I believe Christianity was always there, it was orderly done, that is, in order for one to go to God, you are to pass through your ancestors first and thereafter confirm with God. Instead, nowadays people have abandoned their ancestors [our gods] and are worshiping God only which is not good and is not acceptable according to Setswana culture."

More concerns from participants, *"A child has to be dedicated to the ancestors, nowadays people take their children to church to baptise which is not right."* Another added, *"Men go to hospitals to circumcise but the Setswana culture says, a man is a man after going for cultural initiation if done in hospitals, you are less man or rather a boy, no matter your age"*

Behaviour. Although this seemed to differ with places of origin among the Batswana (members of the Setswana culture), eye contact with an elderly person does not show respect and is considered unacceptable. *"... in Setswana as a child you are not supposed to look at an elderly person on the eyes when they talk to you... it does not show respect... it shows disrespect (stressing the point)"* on the other hand one participant indicated a point of contradiction although still sending the same meaning that, *"with us when we were being raised, even if my mother would shout at me, I would look at her (keep eye contact) not meaning that I despise her, although it would depend on how I keep that contact and the expression on the face... the expression of the face should show humbleness, politeness and guiltiness."* One would realise that although they differ, still the message of respect is sent through eye contact. That is, either you look down and avoid eye contact or you keep eye contact with a self guilty face.

Some kinds of behaviours were mentioned as unacceptable in the community as they are considered bad and showing cruelty. *"Vengeance [yes], jealous and pride are considered some*

of the bad behaviours that are not to be practised within our culture."... "The other ones are hurting others deliberately, self praise or self centeredness"... "You cannot just come from the university as I am, sit with people at home may be in a funeral and start talking about your university life and making the conversation to center around you, it shows lack of consideration to your follow community, members and they will avoid you... instead let them talk about what was happening when you were not there."

Attitudes. The most emphasized attitude that all the participants considered bad was raising your voice when talking to other people, whether angry or not because according to their custom, that shows being rude. *"in our custom, to raise your voice to others when talking to them, whether it is your friend, teacher, lover, parent, despite whoever it is, it shows you are fighting, disrespectful, humiliating and being inhuman and it is not good."... Yes, it is just similar to the one of talking back when parents talk to you."*

Fights between mother and daughter in-law are also regarded as bad. *"You will find that you have married somebody but she does not like your mother... or your mother does not like her... those fittings are unacceptable bad habits although very common in our culture, they are socially undesirable."*

The findings of this study generally enlightened that the Setswana culture is fond of compromising and conforming and hence more of consciously faked behaviour, attitude and emotions caused by their values, morals and beliefs. The people modify their expressions, conversations and character on the basis of their cultural display rules learned early in life (Macintyre & Ellaway, 2000).

13. DISCUSSION

The effects of social desirability on personality measures have been much examined in different aspects but less studied in cultural influences (Paulhus, 2002). This research broadens social desirability responding by demonstrating how cultural behaviours, attitudes and emotions considered socially desirable and undesirable in a Setswana ethnic group might influence self-deception and biasness in responding to Personality Inventory measures. The prime result of the study revealed the Setswana culture as a collective culture with individuals influenced by collective thinking, collective actions and collective decisions and relationships. It was found that the cultural background is mostly driven by its proverbs, idioms and taboos that lead to the structuring of their values and cultural norms. According to Boaduo (2012: 107), Proverbs and idioms are phrases used to emphasize statements or arguments where it is desired to show that there is precedent action to be taken. That is, they direct the rules and regulations of the Setswana culture and cousin the people from generation to generation. The proverbs and the idioms provide richness of poetic imagery and vision and give inspiration to original language. They are used symbolically on many occasions of stool paraphernalia (p. 108), meaning, they are respected and valued as the original frame of the culture of the Setswana people.

The respect to the originality of the nature of the culture leads to togetherness, mutual neighbourhood support and oneness of the community through cultural values in the Setswana culture have proven to lead to self-deception towards personal behaviour, attitudes, beliefs and emotional display (social conduct). This collectivity unconsciously facade the true reflection of a person in order to portray a favourable behaviour and personality and hence false social desirability responding (Kurtz *et al.*, 2008). This condones with the macrosystem layer in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. The layer involves learning and practising the

cultural values, customs and laws practised within an individual's community, leading to the individual's life being framed and directed into a specific character which in this case is related to the Setswana culture (Berk, 2000).

Although the study was focused on two major aspects which were examining the desirable and undesirable Setswana cultural conduct, a collection of themes emerged categorized under three components which are socially desirable conduct and the other two similar ones which are the socially undesirable but acceptable conduct practised because of cultural beliefs and the socially undesirable conduct. While the themes were categorized under three aspects, some of them were used interchangeably under all the three depending on the reason for their specific representation and the purpose of communication thereof (Kurtz *et al.*, 2008).

The study revealed themes under socially desirable conduct as tabulated in Table 3 below

Table 3:

Socially desirable themes

	Attitudes	Behaviors	Believes (Relevant findings)	Emotions
Socially desirable	• Forgiveness • Respect • Interpersonal relations • Self-discipline • Acceptance • Kindness • Disciplined • Sensitivity • Tolerance • Consideration • Self-control • Humility • Obedience • Devoted	• Social interaction • Good communication • Self-respect • Well-mannered	• Age roles and responsibility • Gender roles and responsibility • Submissiveness • A widow wears black • Women sit down and men sit on chairs • Females are younger than males	• Loving • Anger control • Intimacy • Control of intense emotion

- Loyalty
- Good communication
- Honesty
- Unconditional acceptance
- Intergenerational interaction
- Compassion
- Empathy
- Care
- Helping others
- Submissive
- Tolerance
- Open hearted
- Honesty
- Acceptance
- Kindness

The themes tabulated above were specified as culturally desirable as they depict an acceptable character in a Setswana culture. This implies that, to see oneself in a favourable light (both by promoting ones positive qualities and disavowing negative qualities and to impress the social audience out there), the socially desirable themes should be the portrayed features of a Setswana personal character, and should impress the viewers or audience which in this fact is a conscious self-presentation tailored to an external audience (Paulhus, 2002). The idea leads to the fact that self-conscious presentation of social desirability might conceivably influence responses on self-report measures.

The study revealed some characters that are displayed in order for one to fit into and be accepted by the society. Figure 1 below displays the socially undesirable but acceptable conduct that is consciously practised as a result of cultural norms and beliefs.

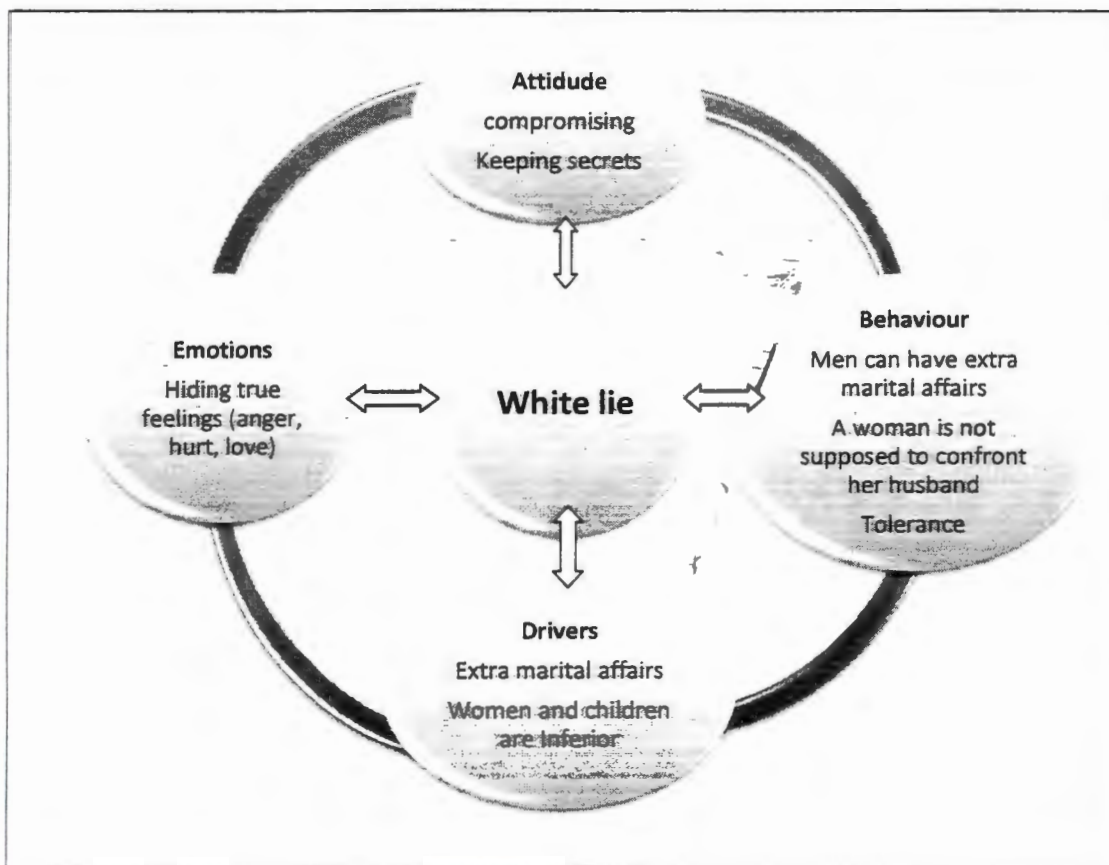


Figure 3. Themes revealing socially undesirable but acceptable conducts consciously practised as a result of conforming to cultural norms and beliefs.

The results revealed that some characters are socially undesirable yet bound to be presented in the Setswana collective culture and mostly displayed for peace, affirming the fact that SDR normally aims at presenting the self in a favourable light of the society (Kurtz *et al.*,

2008). Kurtz *et al.* (2008) further state that, SDR is primarily a tendency to conform, attitudinally and behaviourally, which can explain positive self-report. Fleming and Zizzo (2010) on the other hand state that participants who score highly on SDR are not only characterized by agreement with social norms; they are also more conforming to group and experimental norms leading to high SDR being linked to an increased likelihood to agree with confederates' false perceptual judgments hence this study's results.

While there is a socially undesirable conduct that is consciously practiced due to conforming to the culture, there is still an undesirable conduct that seem to be a taboo if practiced in the society stipulated as themes in figure 2 below.

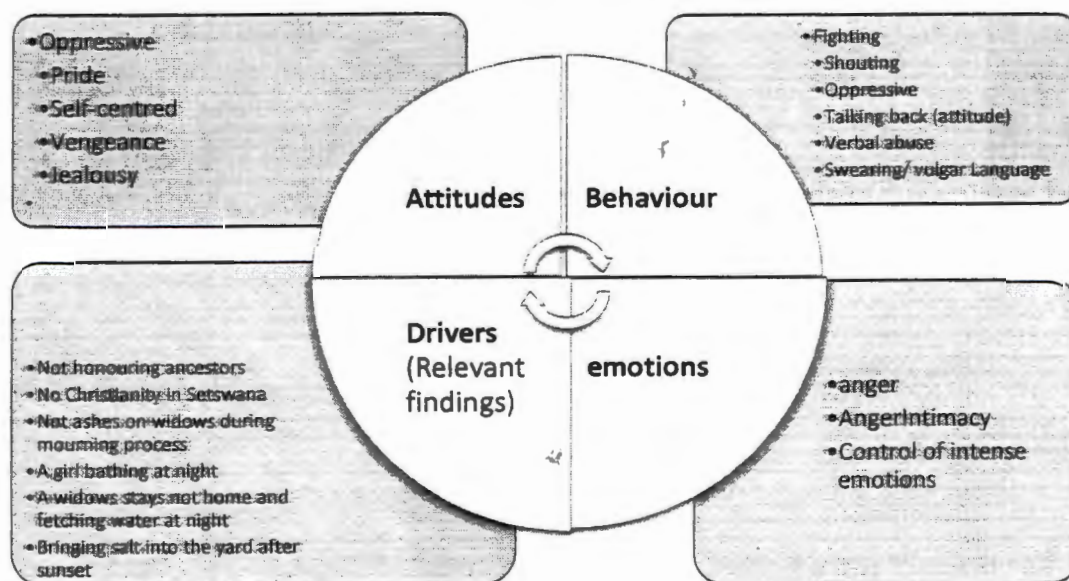


Figure 4. Themes revealing socially undesirable conduct

14. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

It has been noted that although the respondents were sampled from different Setswana cultural backgrounds, the current study did not include all generational groups within the Setswana culture as the respondents were limited to students and quite young people who may have had an impact on the themes specified. Further research is suggested to address the limitation whereby all generational groups will be part of the study and the conclusion for the use of the suggested themes linked and confirmed with those results. At this point, we also do not advocate the sample used as it does not cover the general population of the culture and as a result, future investigations using comparative quantitative studies based on the current findings are suggested for a larger population input. As the results of the study will be used on the initial phase of the Psychological measure (SAPI) to be developed, further studies are recommended to continue exploring the concept of social desirability on the process of constructing the items of the measure.

15. CONCLUSION

As the study was expected to bring an understanding of SDR in a Setswana cultural context as to why individuals present themselves in a socially desirable manner that is, appearing exaggeratedly well-mannered, denying the part of their undesirable common traits, the result has revealed two general conclusions. Primarily, the Setswana culture was identified as a collectivist culture (Paul *et al.*, 2011). It means the people are interdependent with their in-groups, that is, the family, tribe and the nation and give priority to the goals of their in-groups, shape their behaviour and personality primarily on the basis of in-group norms, and behave in a communal way (Paulhus & Reid, 1991). Secondly, it was established that, the higher the conformity to the

Setswana cultural norms and beliefs as a member, the higher the SDR and the potential to the bias factor loadings on personality measurements.

The likely effects of social desirability in this culture would be that the individual performance outcomes are suppressed leading to self-deception while consciously and unconsciously considering the societal conformity and acceptance (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). This suggests that the potentials for social desirability bias are effective during SDR on psychological research and that cultural aspects should be considered important on the development of the scale there of, hence the specified themes being the key words on the formulation of the personality scale for Setswana culture.

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APPENDIX A: PARTICIPATION REQUISITION FORM

Department of Psychology

North West University (Mafikeng Campus)

Private Bag

Mmabatho

Date _____

Dear Participant

I Motlabeng T.W will be conducting a research study on: *Social desirability (SD) constructs in relation to the cultural context among the Setswana-speaking Youth*. The purpose of this study is mainly to explore behaviours, attitudes and emotions considered socially undesirable/desirable in the Setswana culture.

You are therefore invited to participate in this research. Your responses to this research project will be treated as highly confidential and the researchers will treat your identity and name as confidential and will not in any way disclose them with the results of this study. Please be informed that participation in this study is voluntary and you thus have the right to terminate continuing with the interview at any time.

Kindly answer all the questions to the best of your ability; your participation in this study is very important. Thank you for your time. 4

Yours Sincerely

Motlabeng T.W

Date

Student Number (23294973)

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM TO BE SIGNED BY THE PARTICIPANT

CONSENT FORM

I _____ hereby agree to participate in this research project which focuses on Social desirability (SD) constructs in relation to the cultural context among the Setswana-speaking Youth. The purpose, terms and conditions of the study have been thoroughly explained to me and I thus understand my rights and freedom in participating in this study. I also understand my freedom and the right to terminate the continuing with this study should I feel like that at any time.

I understand that the outcomes of this study will not benefit me personally, and I also understand that my identifying details provided in this form will not, in any way be linked to the results of this study. I understand that my name and my answers in this study will remain confidential.

Signature _____

Date _____

**APPENDIX C: Re: Permission to conduct research within North West University
Mafikeng Campus**

Department of Psychology

North West University (Mafikeng Campus)

Private Bag

Mmabatho

Date _____

I am a registered student in the above- mentioned institution. As part of the requirement for the Master's degree in Psychology, I am doing a research project. The title of the research project is: *Social desirability (SD) constructs in relation to the cultural context among the Setswana-speaking Youth*. The purpose of this study is mainly to explore behaviours, attitudes and emotions considered socially undesirable/desirable in the Setswana culture.

I hereby apply to be granted permission to conduct this research within the University Mafikeng Campus. It is important to point out that the researcher undertakes to maintain confidentiality regarding the identity of the participants in this research project. The participants will be assured about the voluntary nature of this study and further that they are free to withdraw from the study at any time should they wish to do so.

Yours Sincerely

Motlabeng T.W

Date

Student Number (23294973)

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Guided questions

- I want you to tell me what BEHAVIORS are appropriate / socially desirable in our culture? are not appropriate / socially desirable? What are the reasons for saying that? give me a more detailed description of what you are describing me.

Ask for examples or situations.

- Now I want to tell me what EMOTIONS are appropriate / socially desirable in our culture?, What are not appropriate / socially desirable? In that rely for saying that? or give me a more detailed description of what you are describing me.

Ask for examples or situations.

- Now I want to tell me What ATTITUDES or THOUGHTS are appropriate / socially desirable in our culture?, What are not appropriate / socially desirable? In that rely for saying that? or give me a more detailed description of this.

Ask for examples or situations.

Group differences

Of all that you have indicated , do we have differences according to sex, depend on the appropriateness or inappropriateness of a person's sex? if not, why?

- Explore reasons for the distinction.
- If yes, ask what would be specific to women, and which for men.
- Ask for examples and explore the three areas (behavior, emotions and attitudes)

If there are differences by sex, do we have differences according to age? If not, why?

- Explore reasons for the distinction.
- If yes, ask what would be specific to adolescents, youth, adults, and elderly.
- Ask for examples and explore the three areas (behavior, emotions and attitudes)

Do you think it would be no difference depending on where you live? if not, why?

- Explore reasons for the distinction.
- If yes, ask what would be specific for example, to [.....] than other countries, [.....] to other states or cities, etc.
- Ask for examples and explore the three areas (behavior, emotions and attitudes)

Specific area

We talked about what in general is socially desirable, now we want to know the same thing in reference to your own circle of friends?

- Behaviors, what, why they are classified that way?, Who says that?
- Emotions, what, why they are classified that way?, Who says that?
- What thoughts or attitudes, why they are classified in this way?, Who says that?

And in your circle of work (school)?

- Behaviors, what, why they are classified that way?, Who says that?
- Emotions, what, why they are classified that way?, Who says that?
- What thoughts or attitudes, why they are classified in this way?, Who says that?

What about your family?

- Behaviors, what, why they are classified that way?, Who says that?
- Emotions, what, why they are classified that way?, Who says that?

- What thoughts or attitudes, why they are classified in this way?, Who says that?

FONS SUGGESTION

If you want to make a good/bad impression, what will you do? (In general)...

And what will you do at your home, with your family?

And what will you do at your work/school, with your boss/ teachers?

And what will you do with your friends? Or what to impress someone you like (girls or boys)

And what will you do to cause an impression to your partner?

ANOTHER SECTION

Give me examples of *white lies* in your daily life.

END

and we approach the end of the session. we found that Are desirable things while are socially undesirable, we saw that there are / there are no differences between The only thing left is to ask you, what often you think these events occur?

- Why? What do you attribute this to happen?
- do you believe that will they change over time? If not, why?



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2013/03/28

ETHICS APPROVAL OF PROJECT

This is to certify that the next project was approved by the NWU Ethics Committee:

Project title.

Burden of Disease Research: A Psychological Approach

Subproject title:

An exploration of social desirability in relation to the cultural context and Culture-specific Facets
(Among the Setswana-speaking (Youth) Students in the NWU, North West University Mafikeng)

Project leader: Prof. ES IDEMUDIA

Student : Mr. MT Walter

NWU Ethics approval no: NWU-00029-13-A9

The Ethics Committee would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project.
Please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Committee for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Me. Marietjie Halgryn
NWU Ethics Secretariate

18 Boipelo Street
Unit 3
MMABATHO
2735

6th March 2013

CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITING

TITLE OF DISSERTATION

**Social desirability (SD) constructs in relation to the cultural context
specific facets among the Setswana speaking Youth in the North-West
University, Mafikeng Campus**

SUBMITTED BY

T.W. Motlabeng

FOR THE DEGREE OF

**Master of Social Sciences
(Clinical Psychology)**

IN THE

Faculty of Human and Social Sciences

North-West University

Mafikeng Campus

Has been edited for language by:

Prof. S.A. Awudetsey



**Prof. S.A. Awudetsey
0722371390**